



How to Save Money on Textbooks

High Cost of Textbooks

Reading is absolutely crucial to your learning and success as a college student. Keuka College is aware of the increasing costs of textbooks and the impact on your college finances. You need to know what choices and options exist for acquiring your textbooks.

Here are five steps to help you save money on textbooks:

1) Plan. The first step to saving money on textbooks is to find out what books your professors are using. Key information you will need is the ISBN number, the author/title, and edition. Find out as early as possible, or else you won't be able to take advantage of good deals on textbooks.

- Expect your textbooks to cost around \$800/semester.
- Make sure that you think about textbook costs when you apply for financial aid/loans.
- Textbooks can be purchased through the College bookstore or on the Internet.
- Students can find out what textbooks they will need before the semester begins by:
 - ~ contacting their faculty members,
 - ~ checking with the bookstore, and
 - ~ checking the Keuka Web site for the College catalog at <http://keuka.edu/go/catalogue>.
- Some textbooks are available on reserve in the library.

2) Buy. You can easily find good deals on used college textbooks. Here's how to find the deals:

- Online stores. Go to any online bookstore that offers used books. Look up your textbook, and see if anyone is selling a used copy. When looking at the price, remember that there's always a shipping fee, usually about \$3.50. But you can often find textbooks significantly less expensive this way, even when you figure in the shipping.

Another important point to remember: it can take up to two weeks for used books from online sellers to reach you, so buy early. And the most important tip? Buy used books online *at the end of the semester*. There will be many students selling then and fewer buying, so the books will be cheaper.

- You can use the following site to learn more about online textbook price comparison engines: www.lifehacker.com/5043180/best-places-to-save-money-on-textbooks.
- Buy from a friend. This low-tech solution will save you shipping fees. Find someone who's selling the books for the class you're about to take. Just check ahead of time to make sure the professor is using the same books.
- Buy an older edition, but check first with your professor on this point. Here's the problem: every few years a new edition of the textbook is published. When the new edition is published, college bookstores won't sell the older edition. But you can still find used copies of the old editions in used bookstores, online, and from your friends. Older editions often can be bought dirt cheap online, sometimes for a penny plus shipping charges.



If you buy an older edition, though, proceed with much caution.

- ~ Look at both editions of the book. (You can probably see the table of contents for each edition on Amazon.com). If there are significant changes in the new edition, it might not be realistic to buy the old one.
- ~ And never buy an edition older than the last one. If the professor assigns the sixth edition of a textbook, you might be able to use the fifth, but don't bother getting an edition older than the fifth.

3) Renting your textbooks is an option, but not all of your faculty members recommend this choice for the following reasons:

- You are not allowed to mark up the textbooks, and research shows that students learn best by actively reading, that is, by writing while they read, taking notes, and asking questions of the texts. (For excellent tips on reading academic materials, see www.isu.edu/~kingkath/readstr.html).
- Also, your textbooks can be an important resource for you after the course ends, especially those in your major. If you rent a book, you may end up wishing you were able to keep it.
- You can compare the different rental companies at: www.textbookrentalreviews.com/compare. Prices are competitive, and renting is easy, with delivery directly to you. Follow directions carefully, however, for returning your books. Although return shipping is free, some will require you to send back the textbooks at the end of the semester in the same packaging used for shipping them to you.

4) Borrow. Get a library copy. If you know what books are being used ahead of time, you can beat the rush and get the books out of the library. This isn't necessarily efficient, though, as someone else can recall the books. Also, you are not allowed to mark up the library books, but you will still need to take good notes so as to understand and learn the material.

5) Sell. You can sell your books back to the college bookstore, but you can probably make more money selling books online or to a friend. Some tips:

- Keep your books in good condition, and you'll be able to sell them for more money.
- Avoid highlighting, but take good notes on your reading.
- Sell online. It's easy to set up an account to sell books on an online bookstore Web site. If you're confused, get help from a friend.
- Here's an important tip: buy your used books at the end of the semester, but sell them online at the beginning of the semester when demand is highest.

If you sell online, ship your books out promptly or you'll get poor feedback on the site and won't be able to sell books as easily.

Remember, just as important as acquiring cheaper books is **READING THEM**. To be successful in your studies, you need to invest **TIME** as well as **MONEY** into your textbooks. It's your responsibility to complete (and reflect upon) the required reading, and to attend your classes with the textbooks and materials you need. You will both enjoy and learn more from your classes, if you are well prepared.

Best wishes for a good semester!