

It's time to make textbooks affordable

Textbook prices are out of control.

- Individual textbooks now **often cost over \$200**, and sometimes cost as much as \$400.
- Over the past decade, textbook **prices increased 88%**—that's three times the rate of inflation.
- **65% of students** report that they skipped buying or renting an assigned textbook because of cost.
- Without access to books, many students struggle to succeed in their classes. **Nearly half** of all students say that the **cost of course materials** impacts which classes and how many classes they are able to take.



Why are textbook prices so high?

The broken textbook market allows publishers to keep driving up prices without consequences.

Prices are usually kept in check by two things:

The buying power of customers who **shop around** for the best deal.

Competition between companies.

But in the textbook market, those checks don't apply.

The customers – the students – don't choose their textbooks, so **they can't shop around**. Instead, books are assigned by faculty members, who don't buy the books themselves.

Just **five publishers control 80%** of the textbook market, so they rarely compete directly on price.

Meanwhile, publishers keep **inventing creative new ways to increase profits**, like high-priced, single-use access codes or other products that eliminate used alternatives, prevent sharing, and limit consumer choice.



Open textbooks provide a solution.

Open textbooks provide an exciting alternative to traditional books that can save students money and improve the educational experience.

- Open textbooks are just like traditional textbooks except that the authors have decided to publish them under an **open copyright license**.
- Open textbooks are available **free online and for very low cost in print**.
- Recent research has shown that open textbooks are **as effective, if not more effective**, than traditionally-published course materials.
- Individual faculty members can customize open textbooks to make them **better fit their classes**.

How open & traditional textbooks compare

	Traditional Textbooks	Open Textbooks
Written by expert authors	✓	✓
Peer reviewed	✓	✓
High educational quality	✓	✓
Can include problem sets, sample exercises, etc.	✓	✓
Can be sold in campus bookstores	✓	✓
Cost up to \$400	✓	✗
Publish unnecessary new editions	✓	✗
Bundle books with expensive add-ons	✓	✗
Available free and unrestricted online	✗	✓
Available in print for \$20-\$40	✗	✓
Electronic versions never expire	✗	✓
Can be customized by faculty	✗	✓

Open textbooks can save millions for students.

- Open textbooks have the potential to save students nationwide **up to a billion dollars** per year.
- In subjects where traditional textbooks cost \$100-\$300, switching a single classroom of 100 students to an open textbook can save students up to \$30,000.
- At the University of Massachusetts, a small pilot program to help classes switch to open textbooks saved UMass students over **\$1 million** in just four years.
- At Kansas State University, an open textbooks program run by the library, Provost's office, and the Center for Advancement of Teaching and Learning has **saved students over \$1.1 million**.

What you can do:

Join the effort to bring more open textbooks to your campus.

- Help your **student government** take up this issue. They can create a committee to promote open textbooks, pass a resolution in support of open textbooks, and more.
- **Ask your professors** to consider using open textbooks in their classes.



Learn more at OpenTextbookAlliance.org

The Open Textbook Alliance is a nationwide coalition of student government leaders who are working to bring open textbooks to college campuses.