

# Saving Money on Textbooks

Text books are expensive. It is estimated that a typical undergraduate spends \$900 to \$1,200 annually for books and the price of textbooks has been increasing at four times the rate of inflation. But there are ways to save a lot of money, and the law mandates that students have the option of buying books without "bells and whistles" like Compact Discs, study guides and other additions that add to the cost. Colleges are required to make the list of textbooks assigned for each class available to students at registration so that students have time to shop around for bargains. If you're not given this list, make sure you ask for it!

## Tips for buying your books:

- **Use ISBN numbers to comparison shop.** While at the on-campus bookstore, write down ISBN numbers (on back cover of every book) and prices for both new and used books, and then use that information to shop around online. Check prices on the web sites of [www.half.com](http://www.half.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.cheapesttextbooks.com](http://www.cheapesttextbooks.com) and [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com). A comparison shopping site such as [BestBookBuys.com](http://BestBookBuys.com) or [bigwords.com](http://bigwords.com) can also be helpful.

**As with all online purchases, you'll need a credit or debit card. If you don't have a debit card, and think one would be helpful, talk to your parents or mentor about how to go about getting one. Look for used text books at your school, or try any of the sites listed below for potential savings. It might take more time, but you'll probably save some money that you can use to buy something else you need.**

- **Be open to new forms of reading and studying.** At several of the sites mentioned, you'll be given the option of choosing from print, digital or audio forms of the textbooks you need. eBooks cost significantly less money, and in many cases you can highlight areas and make notes in the margins as you read your books online. Another option: iChapters allows you to buy single book chapters for as little as \$1.99.
- **Check out CourseSmart.** In 2007, five of the largest textbook publishers teamed up to make thousands of textbooks available in eBook format via [CourseSmart.com](http://CourseSmart.com). You can read those textbooks on a variety of devices and highlight, take notes and search the text.
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