



OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Open Educational Resources (OER) are being promoted at Iowa State University by groups across campus, including the ISU Book Store, University Library, CELT, Senior Vice President & Provost, Student Government, and faculty. These resources are freely available to all students.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES OFFER:

- Free electronic materials for students, with low-cost print options available
- Free access to course materials both before and after a course
- Instructor freedom to modify or add content to course materials
- Increased student retention and lower drop rates due to course material costs
- Improved student performance and student satisfaction
- A wide variety of materials types: syllabi, lesson plans, videos, and full textbooks

HOW DO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES WORK?

For Faculty

- Faculty can locate OER by searching online or setting up a consultation with the University's Open Access Librarian.
- Open Educational Resources can be edited or used as-is.
- Notify the ISU Book Store when materials are chosen, including print version (if desired).
- Students will have access to the materials as soon as a link to the resource is posted.

For Students

- When a faculty member chooses OER for a course, details will be posted in the student book list.
- Students can access the materials at any time at no charge.
- If a low-cost print version of the resource is available, students may purchase it through the ISU Book Store.
- If the OER have been integrated into Canvas, the student will have access on the first day of class.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are Open Educational Resources?

We utilize the Hewlett Foundation’s definition: “Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.”

What is the difference between OER and other free resources online?

All Open Educational Resources are free to access, but not all free resources are OER. What makes OER different is their open licenses, customizable copyright licenses that allow users to edit, redistribute, and remix content. Free-but-not-open resources cannot be edited without obtaining permission from the copyright holder.

Are Open Educational Resources Peer Reviewed?

Many OER, especially open textbooks like those created by [OpenStax](#), are developed through rigorous production and peer review processes that mirror traditional methods. After production, OER can be updated, tailored, and improved locally to fit the needs of students.

REMINDER: Being open or closed does not inherently affect the quality of a resource. Instructors should carefully review the materials they select for use in class, regardless of their source.

Are OER authors credited for their work?

Openly licensed content can be reused without the need to contact an author for permission; however, this does not mean that OER can be used without proper attribution. The most common open license, the Creative Commons Attribution license, requires that users who edit, redistribute, or remix a work provide information about its original author, license, and source. You can learn more about these licenses on the Creative Commons website: creativecommons.org

Do I need to use a code or special software to access Open Educational Resources?

Users have the right to adapt OER into any format they wish. As a result, OER are not tied to a particular type of device or software. This gives students and instructors freedom in what technology they purchase and how they interact with the resource. OER can be hosted on a Canvas course site, accessed via the publisher-provided online version, or downloaded as a pdf. If the resource is not interactive or web-based, there is always the option to print.

Are Open Educational Resources only available online?

Most OER start as digital files, but like traditional resources, OER can be made available to students in both digital and print formats. This flexibility is important, because it no longer makes print and digital a choice of one or the other. OER textbooks can typically be printed for \$5-50 while still being freely available online.

