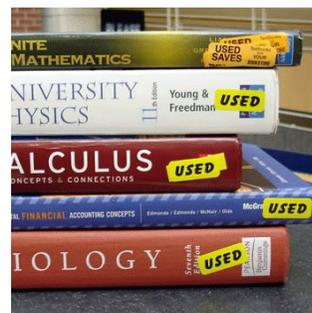


CheapScholar's Guide To Saving on Textbooks

When you are looking at college expenses, the little things (like textbooks) seem to usually take a backseat to the larger fees (like tuition, room and board). Textbooks are small in size and comparably inexpensive when you think about them individually. However, the amount of money a student will invest in their books over the course of their academic career should not be taken lightly. Because of this, I have come up with the following tips to help guide students down the path to finding cheaper textbooks.

Buy Online: Brick and mortar bookstores carry a larger overhead expense than their online counterparts, so it is only natural that their costs would be higher. Now that the *Higher Education Opportunity Act* requires colleges and universities to put ISBN numbers online with their course listings, it is easier for students to purchase books via more competitive methods (such as online). However, if you are purchasing a book online make sure you allow enough time for the book to be shipped to you before your class starts and always make sure you are getting the correct edition (these are the two most common pitfalls associated with online textbook shopping).

Buy Used: I could see reasons why you would buy a new car over a used car but do you really need to have a new textbook verses a used one? There really is no reason why you should ever purchase a new textbook if a cheaper but equally effective used book is available. Now if the used book looks like a dog ate through half of it and the remaining half smells like a garbage dump, then I would probably splurge for the new book... otherwise... always go used.



Rent: Renting textbooks has increased in popularity in the past few years. It is a nice way to gain access to crazy expensive books but only pay for the time that you are going to use it. Keeping with my car analogy above, this could probably be compared to leasing.

Network With Friends: You know that there are probably a good portion of people on campus that have already had that bio-molecular chemistry course last semester and are looking to unload the book for cheap. Use your network of friends to track those people down. Facebook and Twitter should hopefully make quick work of this task.

The Good Old Library: Amazingly, the campus and community library are keeping more and more textbooks on the shelves and for the cost of a library card (which is usually free) you could check your book out for the semester. The downside is that you had better be first in line or on the waiting list because other poor college students are probably going to have the same idea.



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