

**Compare and Contrast: Print vs. eBooks**

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## **Print vs. eBook**

Reading print books and reading on screens are two different forms of reading that have unique advantages and disadvantages. While print books have been around for centuries and remain a popular choice for reading, digital reading on screens has become increasingly popular in recent years. Conventional print books offer the advantages of a tangible experience, convenience, and deeper learning, but e-books have large storage capacity and accessibility features; both versions carry a similar impact on the environment. Whether a reader chooses a Kindle, or an old-fashioned print book, there are many advantages to each option.

Traditional print books have several advantages, and are often the ones readers say they prefer, as they offer a tangible experience away from digital devices, deeper learning, and are convenient. Readers enjoy being able to hold physical copies of books, enjoying the feel of the texture of the pages. Several surveys show that print books are strongly preferred (Johnston & Salaz, 2019). When average screen time increased during the pandemic, many people saw print books as an opportunity to take a break from their digital devices (Wright, 2020). In addition to offering a rest from screens, print books boost reading comprehension. Several studies show that comprehension increases significantly for students who read printed materials compared to those who read digital texts (Mangen et al., 2013). Print is generally considered better for the learning and deep understanding of complex texts (Stoop et al., 2013). Also, print books are convenient, and they do not need to be plugged in or connected to the internet, making them a more accessible option for those who do not have access to these resources. Furthermore, print books are often viewed as more reliable and less prone to technical problems, such as malfunctions or

lost data. Overall, traditional print books have many advantages and offer several benefits over their digital counterparts.

On the other hand, reading on screens offers several advantages that reading print books does not, including the ability to store multiple books, to adjust accessibility settings, and to navigate easily. Digital reading allows the reader to access and store a large number of books on a single device, which is useful for travel or in small homes. Additionally, e-books often allow the reader to customize the font size, background colour, and other reading settings, such as text to speech, making them easier to read for those with visual impairments or who struggle with reading. Studies show that E-books with audio functions assisted in language learning (Hsieh & Huang, 2020), and digital books with pictures also improved retention of information for learners (Wang & Chiu, 2020). Many findings show that electronic screens are best for quick information gathering, communication, and navigation (Stoop et al., 2013). While print may be preferred by those who want a physical book in their hands, e-books offer several advantages to readers.

The environmental impact of e-books and print books is a complex issue and ultimately, neither format offers a clear advantage. E-books may have a lower impact in terms of production than paper books (Tahara et al., 2018), but the disposal of electronic devices has to be taken into account. While production of print books has a direct environmental impact, they can be recycled and repurposed. Overall, the environmental impact depends on how often the e-book reader is used, and current studies challenge the bias that e-books offer a more environmentally sustainable experience than printed books (Kang et al., 2021). Research indicates that the environmental impact of both printed and digital books seems to be about the same, showing no clear “winner” in environmental friendliness.

In conclusion, both print books and e-books have their own unique advantages and disadvantages. While print books offer a tangible and more immersive reading experience, digital reading is more convenient and can be more accessible. Neither one has been proven to be a superior option in terms of environmental impact. Ultimately, the best form of reading depends on individual preferences and the specific needs of the reader.

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