

Using OER Textbooks: Student Guide

| Jen Booth

USING OER TEXTBOOKS: STUDENT GUIDE

JEN BOOTH



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INTRODUCTION

What is an OER?

Open Educational Resources (aka OER) are resources available digitally, for free, on the web. OER can take many forms, including textbooks.

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- downloadable

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Typical OER Textbook Formats, Requirements, Features & Access Options

Book Format	Requirements	Features	Access Options
Online web book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet access Web browser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimized for online access (web browser) Embedded interactive and text-based activities Embedded videos Embedded glossary terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read online with your device or assistive technology Use Text-to-Speech to listen to the book Take Digital notes while you read
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- Check your syllabus to see what sections of the book you will need to read
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- See [Downloading & Printing your OER Textbook \(optional\)](#) for more details

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The web version of *Using OER Textbooks: Student Guide* has been designed with accessibility in mind by incorporating the following features:

- It has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology.
 - all content can be navigated using a keyboard.
 - links, headings, and tables are formatted to work with screen readers.
- All images in this guide are described fully in the text, alt-tag or in an image description section for complex images.
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This book's adapters have attempted to improve upon existing features from the original sources and improve these materials for all users.

While we strive to ensure that this resource is as accessible and usable as possible, we might not always get it right. Any issues we identify will be listed below. If you encounter issues with this text, please notify your Professor.

List of Known Accessibility Issues

Location of Issue	Need for Improvement	Timeline	Work Around
PDF version (Print & Digital)	PDF is auto-generated by Pressbooks, and may not meet all accessibility guidelines	As soon as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use web version of text • Some features have been added using Adobe Acrobat Pro to attempt to improve overall file
Embedded YouTube videos	Videos may be auto-captioned by their creators. Videos will not normally have descriptive captions	As alternatives are available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort has been made to select videos with accurate captions • Alternatives will be added when possible

Accessibility standards

The web version of this resource has been designed to meet [AODA requirements](#), along with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#), level AA. In addition, it follows all guidelines in [Appendix A: Checklist for Accessibility](#) of the [Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition](#).

This statement was last updated on February 17, 2023.

Attribution & References

This information was adapted from “[Accessibility statement](#)” In [Pressbooks Guide](#) by [BCcampus](#), licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). / Adapted to match the current OER with relevant deficiencies noted.

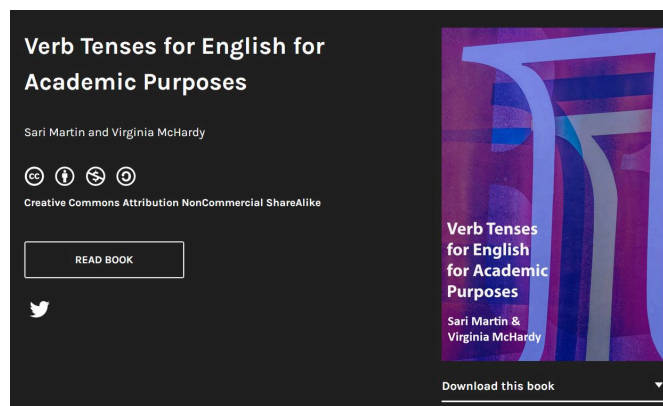
NAVIGATING YOUR TEXTBOOK

NAVIGATING AND USING A PRESSBOOKS OER

Using the online web book version of your textbook

The web version of your textbook contains all the same text as the PDF versions. Depending on the book's creators, it may also contain:

- Interactive activities or simulations
- Embedded videos
- Text based review questions or activities
- Clickable footnotes
- Glossary terms (click while reading to see the definition of a word or phrase)



What kind of OER textbook do you have?

Pressbooks OER are easily identifiable by checking the URL for the word “Pressbooks”. They also typically have a dark backyard and a landing page that looks like this screenshot (**Source:** [Verb Tenses for English for Academic Purposes](#), CC BY-NC-SA)

How to get started

- Access your OER textbook via the web link your professor provided
- Read the “Accessing and Using this textbook” page for an introduction (first page in Georgian-created OER)

Navigating in Pressbooks

Watch [How to Navigate a Pressbook on YouTube \(1 min\)](#)

The web version of your textbook is built on a platform with:

- a navigation menu labelled “Contents” that:
 - appears to the left hand side of a typical web browser on a computer
 - appears at the top of your screen on a mobile device, labelled “Contents”
 - is accessible to screenreaders
- a search box that will allow you to search the entire book for key terms or sections
 - appears in the top right corner on a typical web browser on a computer
 - appears under a waffle menu on the top right corner of your phone/mobile device
- previous & next buttons to allow you to move between pages
 - appear at the bottom of typical web browsers on a computer or tablet and on mobile devices

Experiencing navigation issues?

If you encounter navigation issues while accessing this text via a link from your course in Blackboard (or other learning management system), please try accessing the online web book by using the web address in your browser. The bottom left and right corners of the web book allow you to navigate through the book (previous/next) and the top left hand corner of the web book features a drop down table of contents.

Using the PDF version of your textbook

Most Pressbooks will feature both a print (best for printing/offline use) and digital (best for use with internet access) PDF version of the book, which is accessible from the main page, or on a special page titled Accessing and Using this OER.

Take a look at [Navigating and Using the PDF version of your Textbook](#) for more information about using a textbook in PDF format.

Further Resources & Tips

- [Download & read your textbook offline](#)
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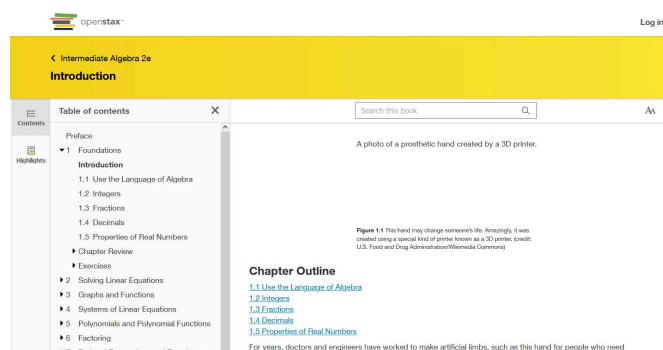
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- Text based review questions or activities
- Clickable footnotes
- Glossary terms (click while reading to see the definition of a word or phrase, or view the glossary list)



What kind of OER textbook are you using?

OpenStax textbooks typically have a light coloured background and look similar to the screenshot shown. They will feature the OpenStax logo, which includes a stack of books (Source: [OpenStax Intermediate Algebra 2e](#), CC BY 4.0)

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 - appear at the bottom of the content page for typical web browsers on a computer/tablet/mobile devices

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Take a look at [Navigating and Using the PDF version of your Textbook](#) for more information, including how to locate the PDF file.

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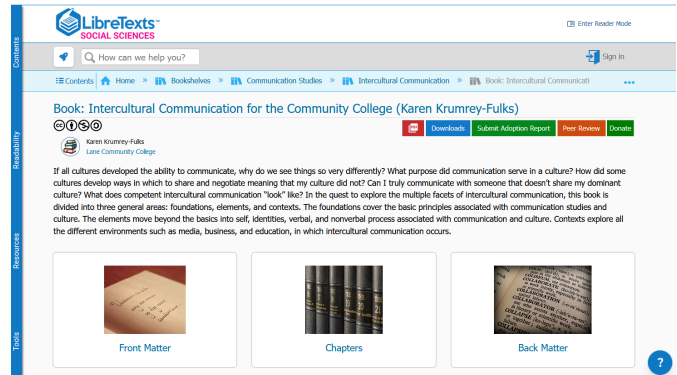
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 - appear about the middle of the content page for typical web browsers on a computer, at the top of the page on a mobile device, directly underneath the page title

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Here are some suggestions for digital note-taking. Make sure you investigate to see how to save/backup your notes, so you can be assured your notes are safe and accessible. Suggested software and applications have not been extensively tested in all scenarios. Please take responsibility and consider your own privacy and security before installing any apps or software on your device.

You may need to experiment to determine what works best for you.

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USING TEXT-TO-SPEECH TOOLS TO LISTEN TO YOUR TEXTBOOK

Most OER do not currently exist in audio book or mp3 format, however, you can use the tools on your mobile device or computer to read the book aloud to you. Many systems have this function built in. You may want to experiment until you find an app or system that works best for you.

Common Text-to-Speech Tools

- [Read & Write for Georgian College Students](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat: Read Out Loud](#)
- [Android Devices: Select to Speak](#)
- [Apple Devices: SpeakScreen](#)
- [Chromebook: Select-to-Speak](#)

Remember to review privacy and security options for any software/apps that you install on your device.

Read & Write for Georgian College Students

Read & Write is available on Windows computers in the library and other student-access computers on campus.

- Access via the start menu or search for Read & Write
- Don't forget to bring headphones for use in Library/labs.
- Free versions of this software may be available for download to your device running [Microsoft](#), [MacOS](#) or other system

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Watch [Read&Write: Back to Basics \(10 mins\) on YouTube](#)

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- Review the instructions for the [Read Out Loud](#) feature or
- Watch the following video for tips on how to get started

Using Reading Aloud

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Android Devices: Select to Speak

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Using Select to Speak

Watch [How to Turn On Text To Speech Read Aloud on Android/Samsung – 2022 \(5 mins\) on YouTube](#)

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Using Speak Screen

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CITING AND REFERENCING YOUR TEXTBOOK

Georgian College courses typically use APA citation & referencing style, but some courses and professors may have specific requests about how materials are cited.

Citation & Referencing – General Tips

- Use the APA 7th edition in print (available at GC Libraries) or refer to the [Library's Citation guide](#)
- [Georgian College Writing Centre](#) offers support for writing and citation
- Check your syllabus and/or Blackboard for citation requirements for each class
- If you're unsure, connect with your Professor to clarify expectations

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Online web book

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- Add section/chapter name and URL if applicable
- Include a retrieval date, as OER are frequently updated

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Updates

February 17, 2024

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- Streamlining of content for PDF export
- PDF for Print/Digital added
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Spring 2023

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