

# Using OER Textbooks: Student Guide

| Jen Booth

# USING OER TEXTBOOKS: STUDENT GUIDE

JEN BOOTH



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# INTRODUCTION

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## 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.

Your OER textbook is:

- openly accessible (free) and available to all students on the web.
- designed to be accessible using standard web browsers, mobile devices, screen readers and other assistive technology
- available in multiple formats
- printable
- downloadable

## How can I Access and Use an OER Textbook?

Even if you decide you will mainly access your textbook through your web browser, we recommend that you download and save a copy of your textbook on your device. This ensures you will have access in the event of internet access outages or website issues.

### Typical OER Textbook Formats, Requirements, Features & Access Options

Book Format	Requirements	Features	Access Options
<b>Online web book</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Web browser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimized for online access (web browser)</li> <li>• Embedded interactive and text-based activities</li> <li>• Embedded videos</li> <li>• Embedded glossary terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read online with your device or assistive technology</li> <li>• Use Text-to-Speech to listen to the book</li> <li>• Take Digital notes while you read</li> </ul>
<b>Digital PDF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• PDF viewer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimized for reading with internet (PDF viewer)</li> <li>• Text-based activities</li> <li>• Clickable Links to videos and other resources</li> <li>• Glossary of terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save to a device or drive as desired</li> <li>• Access from your device with/without internet</li> <li>• Use internet access for clickable links/videos</li> <li>• Take Digital notes while you read</li> </ul>
<b>Print PDF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access for initial download</li> <li>• PDF viewer to open file</li> <li>• Ability to print or access to a print shop (recommended)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimized for printing/ accessing offline</li> <li>• Text-based activities</li> <li>• Glossary of terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save to a device or drive as desired</li> <li>• Read offline on device (no active/clickable links)</li> <li>• Print chapters or whole book as needed</li> <li>• Refer back to web book to access links/interactive activities</li> </ul>

Don't forget to cite/reference your textbook if you use it in your research or assignments.

## Do you prefer a printed textbook?

OER textbooks are **free** to access, use and print in any of the above formats for students and faculty use for non-commercial/educational purposes. Please check with the OER Design Studio if you have questions about licensing & Copyright.

- Check within your book for PDF options, as many have PDFs that are optimized for printing
- Check your syllabus to see what sections of the book you will need to read
- Print the entire book OR just the sections you need
- See Downloading & Printing your OER Textbook (optional) for more details

## Attribution & References

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# ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

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## Accessibility features of the web version of this resource

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.
- Information is not conveyed by colour alone.
- Pressbooks has built in features such as the ability to change font size.

## Other file formats available

This book is also available in PDF formats that you may save, print, access offline or use with internet access.

Efforts have been made to improve the user experience in all formats – if you encounter any access issues or barriers, please connect with your professor.

## Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

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"> <li>• Use web version of text</li> <li>• Some features have been added using Adobe Acrobat Pro to attempt to improve overall file</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Effort has been made to select videos with accurate captions</li> <li>• Alternatives will be added when possible</li> </ul>

## Accessibility standards

The web version of this resource has been designed to meet AODA requirements (<https://www.aoda.ca/the-act/>), along with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>), level AA. In addition, it follows all guidelines in Appendix A: Checklist for Accessibility (<https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/back-matter/appendix-checklist-for-accessibility-toolkit/>) of the *Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition* (<https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/>).

**This statement was last updated on February 17, 2023.**

## Attribution & References

This information was adapted from “Accessibility statement (<https://opentextbc.ca/pressbooks/front-matter/accessibility-statement/>)” In *Pressbooks Guide* (<https://opentextbc.ca/pressbooks>) by BCcampus , licensed under CC BY 4.0. / Adapted to match the current OER with relevant deficiencies noted.

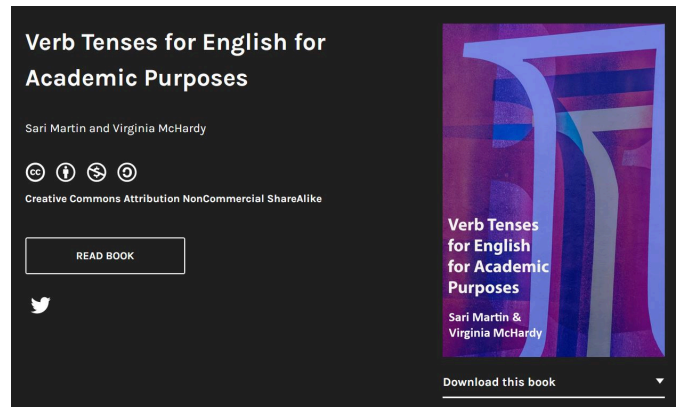
# NAVIGATING YOUR TEXTBOOK

# 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) (<https://youtu.be/x6DqwLFrbJk>)**

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
- Taking notes while reading
- Citing and Referencing your textbook
- Use Text-to-Speech tools to listen to your textbook

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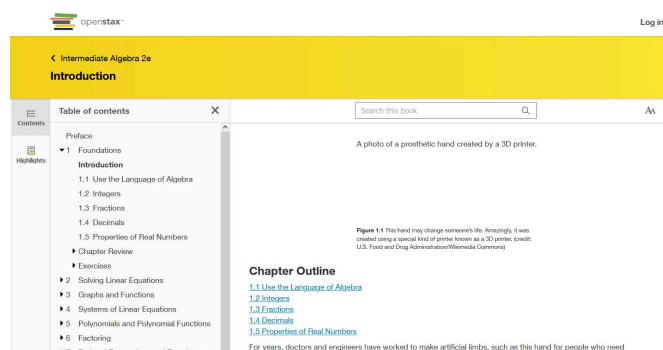
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# NAVIGATING AND USING AN OPENSTAX OER

## Using the online web book version of your OpenStax textbook

The web version of your textbook contains all the same text as the PDF versions. 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, 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)

## How to get started

- Access your OER textbook via the web link your professor provided

## Accessing OpenStax Textbooks

Watch Accessing your OpenStax Textbook (3 mins) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/UntCX-E6vRc>)

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

- a navigation menu labelled “Table of Contents” that:
  - appears to the left hand side of a typical web browser on a computer
  - appears at the top left of your screen on a mobile device, under the menu item that looks like 3 horizontal bars
  - 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 centre of page on a typical web browser on a computer
  - appears to the right/top of your browser on a mobile device, with a magnifying glass icon
- previous & next buttons to allow you to move between pages
  - appear at the bottom of the content page for typical web browsers on a computer/tablet/mobile devices

## Using the PDF version of your textbook

OpenStax textbooks are usually available in PDF format, but you’ll have to navigate to the main page of the book to find a downloadable file.

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

## Further Resources & Tips

- Download & read your textbook offline
- Taking notes while reading
- Citing and Referencing your textbook
- Use Text-to-Speech tools to listen to your textbook

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- *OpenStax Intermediate Algebra 2e* is licensed under CC BY 4.0. Access for free at *Intermediate Algebra 2e (OpenStax)* (<https://openstax.org/books/intermediate-algebra-2e/pages/1-introduction>)



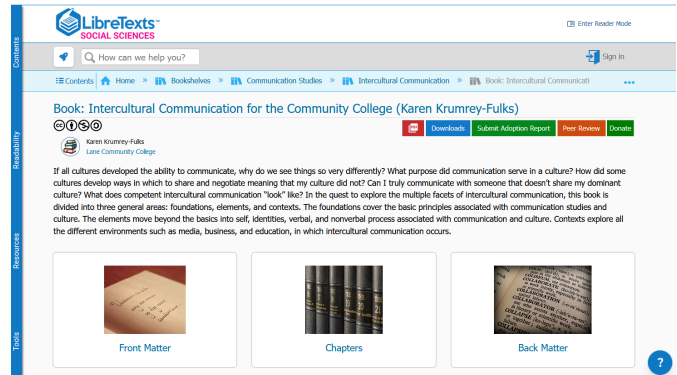
# NAVIGATING AND USING A LIBRETEXTS OER

## Using the online web book version of your LibreTexts textbook

The web version of your textbook contains all the same text as the PDF versions. In a LibreTexts, your book will be accessible via a web link, and within the page you're looking at, you can find and download a PDF version.

### How to get started

- Access your OER textbook via the web link your professor provided



What kind of OER textbook are you using? LibreTexts books typically have a light coloured background and look similar to the screenshot shown. They have a light blue LibreTexts Logo, along with a navigation bar down the left hand side of the screen. Image source: Book by Karen Krumney-Fulks, LibreTexts, CC BY-NC-SA

## Accessing LibreTexts Textbooks

**Watch Navigating through a LibreTexts Book (2 mins) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/r4auROJ2zb4>)**

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 left of your screen on a mobile device, under the menu item that looks like 3 horizontal bars
  - 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 left of page on a typical web browser on a computer
  - appears to the bottom/left of your browser on a mobile device, with a magnifying glass icon
- previous & next buttons to allow you to move between pages
  - 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

## Using the PDF version of your textbook

LibreTexts books are available in PDF format by the page/section or the whole book. On any page in the book:

- Use the downloads icon on the navigation menu (top of page)
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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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# NAVIGATING AND USING THE PDF VERSION OF YOUR TEXTBOOK

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## Using the PDF version of your textbook

Most OER will have both an online/web book and PDF versions. The PDF versions of your textbook contain all the same text as the web-based versions. They may also contain:

- Text based versions of the interactive activities found in the online web book
- Text based review questions or activities
- Links to embedded videos and external resources
- Footnotes listed at bottom of the PDF page, or the end of the chapter
- Glossary terms (listed at end of PDF file in alphabetical order)

## Digital PDF vs Print PDF – What's the difference?

- A digital PDF (see an example of this guide in digital PDF) contains active links (just like a website) that you can click, and will lead you to websites, videos and other resources. You will need internet access to use a digital PDF effectively
- A print PDF (see an example of this guide in digital PDF) is optimized for printing, saving and using offline (without internet access). In some cases, the only difference you'll notice is the lack of clickable links in the print PDF. Most PDF versions of OER should show you typed out links in a print PDF, rather than clickable ones. You should see an actual URL typed out – such as <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/georgianoer/>.

In most cases, the content of a digital, print, or web-based OER should be the same, or very similar, but the layout and presentation of the information may look different. When we create OER at Georgian for student use, an effort is made to ensure that the web book, the digital PDF and the print PDF all provide equivalent experiences.

## How to get started

- Download Adobe Acrobat Reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>) for your device (free download) if

you do not already have a PDF viewer

- Review Navigating PDF pages, Adobe Acrobat (<https://helpx.adobe.com/ca/acrobat/using/navigating-pdf-pages.html>) for help working with the PDF of the full book

## Downloading Acrobat Reader

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([https://youtu.be/8f\\_Lnf9njR4?si](https://youtu.be/8f_Lnf9njR4?si))

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### How to Download your textbook in PDF format (Text version)

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- download just the chapters you will use (check your syllabus)

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  - Print PDF – optimized for printing, no clickable links

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## Download a LibreTexts OER

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- Use the PDF icon on the navigation menu (top of page)
- Select whether you’d like to download the whole book or just the page

## Navigating & Reading your PDF textbook

The full PDF version of your textbook is similar to a book or eBook. It contains

- A table of contents (clickable links in Digital PDF)
- Bookmarks to specific chapters/sections
- Page numbers

### Navigating a PDF file

**Watch How to Open a PDF and Navigate Acrobat (10 mins) on YouTube**  
(<https://youtu.be/jlgNQoSgbLk>)

## Further Resources & Tips

- Taking Notes while Reading
- Citing and Referencing your Textbook

## Attribution & References

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# DOWNLOADING & PRINTING YOUR OER TEXTBOOK (OPTIONAL)

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Some students prefer a printed textbook. The good news is that with an OER, you have the option of printing some or all of the textbook, at low cost. Some OER textbooks are even available, in printed format, from sites such as Amazon. If you believe you'd benefit from a print/physical copy of your text, please review the following suggestions.

OER textbooks are **free** to access, use and print in any of the above formats for students and faculty use for non-commercial/educational purposes. Please check with the OER Design Studio by emailing OER[at]GeorgianCollege.ca if you have questions about licensing & Copyright.

- Check within your book for PDF options, as many have PDFs that are optimized for printing (see info below)
- Check your syllabus to see what sections of the book you will need to read
- Print the entire book OR just the sections you need

## How to Download your textbook in PDF format

### How to Download your textbook in PDF format (Text version)

#### Download Georgian OER – Pressbooks

If your class is using an OER created at Georgian

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- download just the chapters you will use (check your syllabus)

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- select either:
  - ePUB – used with some eBook readers
  - Digital PDF – clickable links, use with internet connection
  - Print PDF – optimized for printing, no clickable links

## Download OpenStax OER

On the main page of the book:

- Access the Book Details page
- Look for the Download a PDF link
- Click “go to your File”

From any page in the book:

- Go to Book details using the link at top left to book title
- Look for the Download a PDF link
- Click “go to your File”

Note: You do not need to donate in order to access the file.

## How to keep your printing costs low – General Tips

Some OER may have links to buy a print copy of your textbook – from an academic bookstore, Amazon, or other. Before ordering, check:

- Print only the chapters needed (check your syllabus)
- Check printing costs at a local print shop (Staples, etc)
- Print your textbook in black & white (***not full colour***), and refer to the web-book or PDF where you need to examine the colour



diagrams or images- this will save considerable money

- Printing a large document is often significantly less expensive at a print shop than it is to print on your home printer or at the Library
- Ask about binding or 3 hole punching when you order, as this is usually low cost and will make your textbook easier to use

**Remember, OER are free for you to print for your personal use. Printing or purchasing a printed copy of the textbook is optional. Some systems may ask you to create a free login, but you should not have to purchase, pay or donate any money in order to access your textbook.**

- Canadian or US site?
- Website ships to Canada/ your location?
- Cheaper to print selected sections of the book at a print shop such as Staples?

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# GETTING MORE FROM YOUR OER TEXTBOOK

# TAKING NOTES WHILE READING: DIGITAL OPTIONS

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Taking notes while reading your textbooks is strongly recommended. To learn more about note-taking strategies, check out Note-Taking in *Communication Essentials for College*.

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.

## Online web book

- Try an extension for Chrome (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/search/note%20taking>), Firefox (<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-CA/firefox/search/?q=note%20taking>), or other browser
- Google Keep (<https://keep.google.com/>), Evernote or Evernote Web Clipper
- Note taking or annotation apps for your mobile device – search your app store for note taking or web annotation tools
- Using an OpenStax textbook? Try the OpenStax built in highlighting feature (<https://openstax.org/blog/tips-successful-reading-highlight-and-take-notes-openstax-books>)

## Electronic or Print PDF

- Try Adobe Acrobat PDF reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>) (free download for many operating systems) and annotate your PDF using the highlighter, comments and sticky notes
- Download and save **specific chapters** before using with Acrobat PDF reader to take notes – the full PDF is quite long and the file size could become unmanageable
- Use Pen/Highlighter as you would normally if you've printed your readings

Taking notes in PDF files

**Watch Annotating PDFs | Acrobat for Education (2 mins) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/Zz53EgZShHQ>)**

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

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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 (<https://apps.microsoft.com/store/detail/readwrite-for-windows-us-english/9NBLGGH51W5N?hl=en-ca&gl=ca&rtc=1>), MacOS (<https://www.texthelp.com/products/read-and-write-education/for-mac/>) or other system

## Using Read&Write

**Watch Read&Write: Back to Basics (10 mins) on YouTube** (<https://youtu.be/oVfeWdqUuvU>)

## Adobe Acrobat: Read Out Loud

The PDF versions of your textbook can be read to you by Adobe Acrobat Reader.

- Review the instructions for the Read Out Loud (<https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/hub/how-to/how-to-read-pdf-aloud>) feature or
- Watch the following video for tips on how to get started

## Using Reading Aloud

**Watch Reading Aloud PDFs | Acrobat DC for Educators (2 mins) on YouTube** (<https://youtu.be/qXJlazKGTuo>)

## Android Devices: Select to Speak

- Review the Select to Speak (<https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/7349565?hl=en>) instructions or
- Watch the following video for tips on how to get started

## Using Select to Speak

**Watch How to Turn On Text To Speech Read Aloud on Android/Samsung – 2022 (5 mins) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/Ka5AdeLt43o>)**

## Apple Devices: SpeakScreen

- Review the SpeakScreen (<https://support.apple.com/en-ca/guide/iphone/iph96b214f0/ios>) instructions or
- Watch the following video for tips on how to get started

## Using Speak Screen

**Watch How to use Speak Screen on iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch (1 min) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/tBfcPu61nSI>)**

## Chromebook: Select-to-Speak

- Review the Select-to-Speak (<https://support.google.com/chromebook/answer/7031755?hl=en>) instructions or
- Watch the following video for tips on how to get started

## Using Select-to-Speak

**Watch How to use Select-to-Speak on your Chromebook (5 mins) on YouTube**  
([https://youtu.be/\\_gz4lXWDzTQ](https://youtu.be/_gz4lXWDzTQ))

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# CITING AND REFERENCING YOUR TEXTBOOK

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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 (<http://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing>)
- Georgian College Writing Centre ([https://library.georgiancollege.ca/writing\\_centre](https://library.georgiancollege.ca/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

## Cite your textbook in APA 7th format – Samples

### Online web book

- Cite as an OER textbook (<https://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing/media-webpages#s-lg-box-wrapper-19074113>)
- Add section/chapter name and URL if applicable
- Include a retrieval date, as OER are frequently updated

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# UPDATE & CHANGE LOG

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## Updates

### February 17, 2024

This update is supported by the eCampusOntario OER Rangers program.

- Accessibility statement added
- Navigating and Using an OpenStax OER created & added
- Downloading & Printing your OER Textbook (optional) created & added
- Reorganize content in book for better linking/usability
- Created & added H5P content to demonstrate PDF access for different types of OER
- Addition of screenshots to help students identify what type of OER they are using
- Streamlining of content for PDF export
- PDF for Print/Digital added
- Updates to page structure for better accessibility in Attribution & References (all pages)

### Spring 2023

View this version of the text (archived Jan 1, 2024) in PDF for Print

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