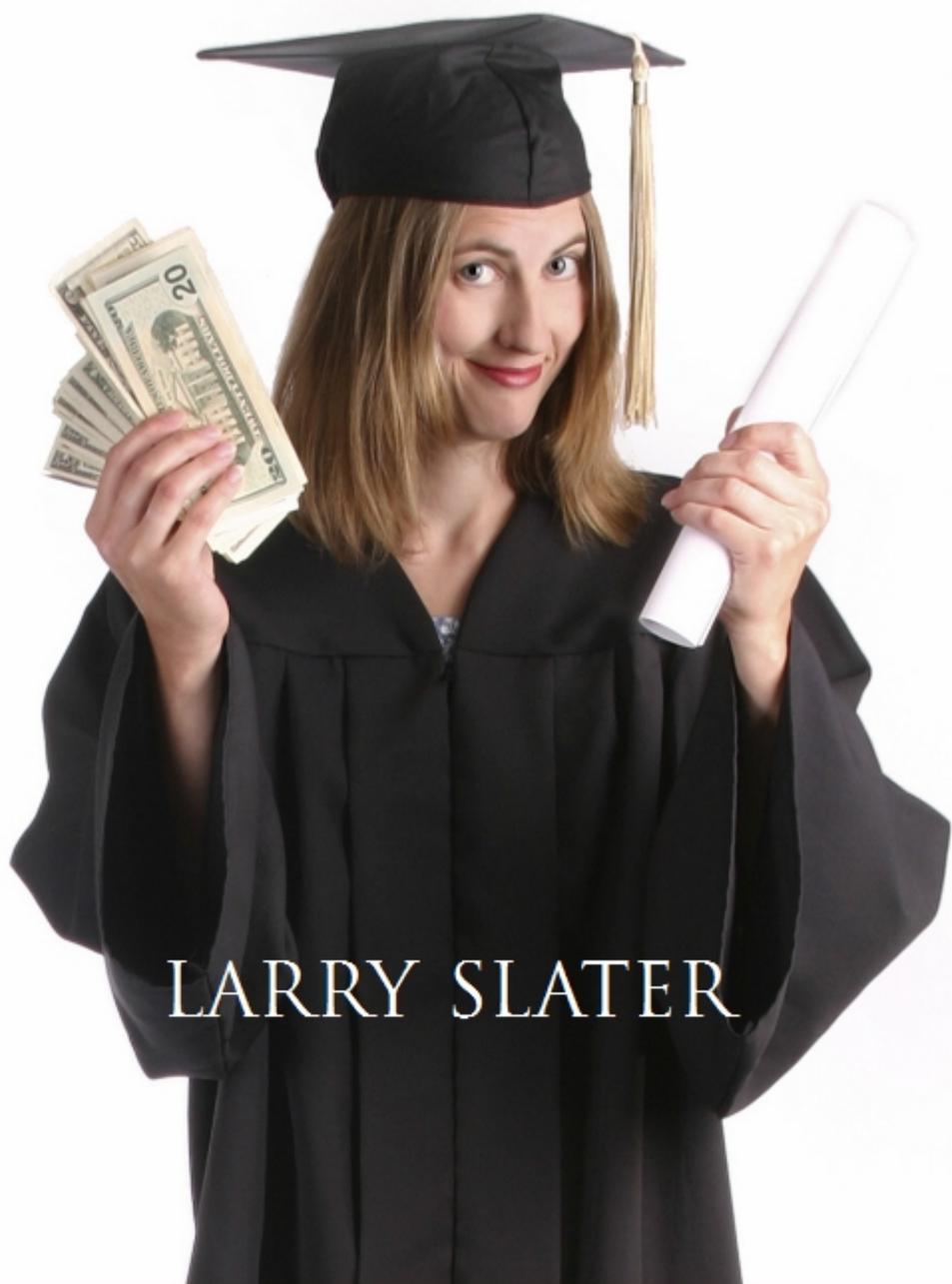


# COLLEGE STUDY GUIDE



LARRY SLATER

College Cost Cutting Tips

# Cheap College Textbooks

*by Larry Slater*

Published by Slater Press

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# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Buy Used.....	5
Advertise.....	5
Buy On-line.....	6
Sell It.....	8
It's In The Library.....	10
Inter-Library Loan.....	10
Reserve It.....	11
eBooks.....	12
Buy eBooks Online.....	12
FREE eBooks.....	13
Listen Up!.....	14

# Introduction

Whether we like it or not, going to college involves reading lots of books and that usually means we have to spend lots of cash on large and overly expensive textbooks. These are books we may only read once in our lifetime but will cost us as much per semester as the down payment on a car. Of course we could find better uses for this cash but what are we to do? What a scam! But there are ways to beat this scam that so many of us have fallen victim to but you have to be willing to think differently.

Are you up to the task?

Larry Slater

Published by Slater Press

<http://slaterpress.com>

## Buy Used

**Problem:** Buy only new books for your classes because that's what the class requires. Pay the most you can and don't whine about how ungodly the prices are.

**Answer:** Go bargain hunting.

**Savings:** \$100s

After you sign up for your classes, the next thing you need to do is get your textbooks. Where do you do that? Why at the college's bookstore of course. How convenient. Have you ever heard the term "company store?" But before you sell your soul to that company store, check out the many alternatives.

Why spend money on new textbooks when you can spend it on clothes, or music, or movies, or...whatever? Buy used! You can even buy used textbooks at your college bookstore for a fraction of the cost of new ones; sometimes as much at 50% of the original price. Even they realize that a used textbook is just as good as a new one or they wouldn't be selling them in the first place. And if you're a bit lazy, most even have the highlighting done for you. But if you do get used textbooks you should get them as early as you can. Just as in getting any bargain sale, the best items go fast. Why would you want to forfeit a pizza to pay for a new textbook? They don't taste near as good. Buy used and have a party with the money you save.

## Advertise

If you can't get used books quick enough, say you didn't want to shorten your vacation just to buy used textbooks, you might be able to get them by putting up an add on bulletin boards around campus. Sometimes other students will be trying to unload their old textbooks to students such as you. You might also do an email ad blitz to all your friends and acquaintances that might have the books you need. But

beware. Many times students want more money for their books than you can get elsewhere. Supply-and-Demand baby!

## Buy On-line

You aren't relegated to buying your textbooks only at a traditional bookstore. There are many great online bookstores where you can find bargains on your textbooks. Here are my favorites.

*A1 Books* (<http://www.a1books.com/>) – A1 Books has over a million bargain books. What more do you want? If you're looking for a general read book, they will probably have it.

*Abe Books* (<http://www.abebooks.com/>) – Low prices and fast delivery for your textbooks is what Abe Book promises. Be sure to check out their After School Specials.

*Allworth Press* (<http://www.allworth.com/>) – If you are into the Fine or Performing Arts then you should check out Allworth Press. Get the specialty books that others don't have so you can learn skills that others will envy. Why waste time only learning what everyone else knows. "Seize the day" my friend.

*Amazon* (<http://www.amazon.com/>) – By far the largest on-line bookstore in the world, Amazon even has used textbooks. In fact, you can sell your used books on Amazon.

*Bigger Books* (<http://www.biggerbooks.com/>) – Don't let the simple front-end of this site fool you. Google is simple too but oh the power. Search for the book you want via Author, Title or ISBN number or browse around a little. Just don't get lost in the vastness.

*Book Close Outs* (<http://www.bookcloseouts.com/>) – Do you love those closeout stores that have books at such a ridiculously low price you just can't pass them up? Try 50-90% off new books. You'll LOVE Book Close Outs. Find the books you need and fight the urge to fill up your eshopping cart.

*Books-A-Million* (<http://www.booksamillion.com/>) – Free shipping on all orders over \$49 makes this an attractive place to shop on-line. But their selection is fantastic for fans of buying books at a great price.

*Ebay* (<http://www.ebay.com>)- Have you ever thought about buying textbooks on eBay? Why not? If you can buy a jet plane on eBay, then you can buy textbooks; right?

*eCampus* (<http://www.ecampus.com/>) – Need some money?

Have some textbooks lying around? Then go on over to [ecampus.com](http://ecampus.com) and find the price you can get for it. Just put in your ISBN number and click. They even pay shipping! Do you have any DVDs lying around gathering dust. Get some pizza money by selling them to eCampus. Come on! What would you rather have? A dusty old DVD or a tasty pizza that will get you through another late night study session?

Half-Price Books (<http://www.halfpricebooks.com/>) – Half-Price Books is the place to go for buying computer books. Why? Because you can get them for half-price. Duh? Their selection is fantastic and now they are branching off into other genres.

## Sell It

**Problem:** Once you buy your textbooks you're stuck with them. Just think about keeping them for "reference" material just in case in some far distant future you MIGHT want to know something contained in these very expensive tomes. Be glad the bookstore even sold them to you in the first place. They really make you look impressive sitting on your bookshelf gathering dust don't they?

**Answer:** Sell 'um!

**Savings:** \$100s to \$1000s

Yes you can get money from your textbooks after using them for the semester or for the year. Just as soon as you're done with them take them down to your school's bookstore and sell them back. Try doing that at any other bookstore. Of course they have to be set up for buy-backs but do it as soon as possible. Why? Because they usually only buy back a percentage of the books they will need for the next time the class is offered. That means if you wait and they buy their quota you're out of luck. Keep your books in reasonably good shape and you should get a good price for them. Ripped covers, torn pages and excessive marking lowers their resale value.

*If your not certain that you really want to take a class don't start marking up the textbook. I once had a classmate who decided to drop a Psychology class after the first week. She had bought a new textbook and had highlighted the first chapter. When she tried to return it and get the new book price she was told all she could get was the used book price. Fortunately I had the same book and hadn't marked in it yet. We traded books, she got all her money back, I made a friend and everyone was happy.*

Oh, and one more thing. When it comes to getting money for your old textbooks, take the old adage "the early bird catches the worm" to heart. What do I mean? Read this:

*I worked in my college's bookstore at the end of the semester and I*

*couldn't believe what I heard. When I would tell them they could get 30% of their original purchase price for their now used textbooks, some students refused to sell their books back because they thought they should get more someplace else. But where else can you get half your money back for a book after you've already read it and marked it up? Some said that they would just keep it for "reference". Yea, right! Once I thought that but after lugging heavy textbooks around for years and never once cracking them open I decided that I could have used the money more than the backaches. Unfortunately, after all those years, there wasn't anyone around who would pay me anything for them. I was just out of luck.*

And of course if you can buy textbooks on eBay, why can't YOU sell your textbooks on eBay? It is sooo simple to set up an account and sell your stuff that you might find your dorm room getting empty and your bank account getting fuller and what's wrong with that?

*One semester I purchased a new computer book when I couldn't find it used or in the library. As it turned out I hardly used it at all. For a while I debated about whether I should sell it or not, thinking that since it pertained to my major maybe I should keep it. (The old "keep it for reference" trap.) Luckily I had the class during the early summer semester and by the fall semester I came to my senses and realized that the new edition was coming out soon and then my book would be impossible to sell. Since I needed the money badly I sold the book to the school bookstore. They gave me half the price I paid for it. The meal I bought with the money was sure more enjoyable than looking at an out-of-date computer book on my bookshelf gathering dust.*

*Want to make some easy money? Who doesn't? You may have friends who have books they don't want but do want to get rid of them. Maybe they're leaving in the middle of the semester. Maybe they're just too lazy to care about selling their books back. But for whatever reason they have textbooks and you have the means to make money from them. You can help by taking them off their hands and then you are free to sell them. Hey, it's better than selling beer cans and you can make a good deal of money if you're willing to do a little work and you're up on which books are selling.*

## It's In The Library

**Problem:** The library is only for research or for meeting friends or for sleeping. There's no way it can save you money so just forget about it.

**Answer:** To borrow is better than to own.

**Savings:** \$100s to \$1000s

Something few people realize is that most college libraries usually carry books for just about every class offered at the school. They may be an older version of the textbook but usually there are so few changes made from one version to the next that it isn't worth spending all that money just to get a few updates. If there are substantial changes, find a friend or make a friend in your class that has bought the newest version and ask them if you can read the updated material. Saving the money from not having to buy the book can allow you to buy your friend a pizza, or at least a Coke. Finding your required book in the library is especially easy if you need a "non-textbook" such as a book of literature. Depending on the lending policies of the library you may be able to check out the book for up to three months which is more than enough time to read it and use it in class.

## Inter-Library Loan

If your library doesn't have your particular books in their collection you can check to see if you can get the book via inter-library loan. The length of time you can check out a book this way is usually shorter than you can from your own school's library so make sure you're aware of when you need to return it. However, if you took my advice in reading your textbooks before your classes began then you won't have to worry about the time limit.

Often there are several libraries in your town so check out these as well. You will have to establish an account with them in order to check out materials but that usually isn't too difficult to satisfy. Think of it as

shopping for Christmas gifts only you're the beneficiary since the money you save can buy you lots of presents. Sometimes these libraries have an agreement so you can check out books from another college's library using your own college's library card.

*In the city where I went to college there were several other small colleges in addition to my own that had worked out a deal to allow each of their respective patrons to check out materials from the other's library. There was also a great public library system in addition to these college libraries. When I needed a book and my college library didn't carry it, I would just go "shopping" at one of the other libraries for my books. After I learned this trick I never had to buy a textbook again and I saved a bundle.*

## Reserve It

Often the professor will place copies of the required textbooks on Reserve. While you aren't allowed to check these out of the library, it does allow you to read them in the library. It may not be the best policy if you are a commuting student but it does save you money and who doesn't need that?

## eBooks

**Problem:** Buy the biggest, heaviest books you can, lug them all around all semester in your book bag, get a back ache and then have to move them around with you the rest of your life because you think you will need them "for reference."

**Answer:** Think outside the box, or in this case, the book.

**Savings:** \$100s to \$1000s

Why struggle under the load of huge paper-bound books when you can get the same content in digital format? The advantages are endless. First, ebooks are everywhere. Most of the books in public domain, such as most of your literature books, are being published digitally and distributed for FREE at various web sites. They are so much more convenient to use than paper books. You can read them on just about any computer on campus and can be carried on a thumb-drive.

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Why buy paper? At [ebooks.com](http://ebooks.com) you can buy the latest bestseller or the specialty book you need in electronic format thus saving yourself the wear and tear of lugging it around all day. And why wait for the delivery when you can download it immediately. Simply download it to your hand-held and read it on the bus or on your next car trip. In other words, take your books with you with the same ease you take your music with you.

Kindle (<http://tinyurl.com/5nebzf>) - Amazon's Kindle is a stand-alone ebook reader. It uses an electronic paper display and only reads the proprietary Kindle (AZW) format. You can download content over Amazon's Whispernet which uses the Sprint EVDO network. They have an ever expanding selection of their books in the Kindle format and sell them for a fraction of what they sell their paper-based books for.

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Bartleby (<http://www.bartleby.com/>) - Bartleby claims to be "the preeminent Internet publisher of literature, reference and verse providing students, researchers and the intellectually curious with unlimited access to books and information on the web, FREE of charge." Wow! With a statement like that who am I to argue?

Book Rags (<http://www.bookrags.com/>) - While this site is completely supported by ad revenues, it has lots of the books college professors love to assign. Go here and view the Top 100 Classics or search their other 1,500 offerings. You're sure to save buku bucks here.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library (<http://www.ccel.org/>) - Located at Calvin College, this on-line library contains Christian works spanning 800 years. They have multiple formats so you are sure to be able to view their offerings and they even have some in audio (MP3) format.

Munseys (a.k.a. Blackmask, <http://www.blackmask.com/>) - This treasure-trove has over 10,000 FREE ebooks in a variety of formats. I would make sure I tried here before I gave up on finding an ebook.

Project Gutenberg (<http://tinyurl.com/nkse6>) - One of the first websites to make available public domain books in digital format and all of these books are FREE. You could spend hours just browsing their collections. If you can't find it here; then good luck.

University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center (<http://tinyurl.com/6p9umk>) - 1,800 digital volumes are available from the University of Virginia Library's E-text Center, including classic British and American fiction, major authors, children's literature, American history, Shakespeare, African-American documents, the Bible, and much more. Thomas Jefferson would be proud.

## Listen Up!

What if you just don't have the time to read all those books? After all, you do have a life outside the classroom don't you? Well, even if you don't you can still get the information you need without having to resort to using your eyes. You can just listen to them on your drive, doing errands, during your daily commute to class, or whenever you have the ability to listen up.

Let's say you need to read Beowulf and you're on your way for a quick trip home. Just buy Beowulf at Audible.com (<http://www.audible.com>), download it to your iPod, and listen to it while you wait at the airport, or train station or on the train. Just don't waste your valuable time.