

# FIVE TIPS

## for Saving Money on Buying Textbooks

**1** Go to class first and make sure your professor will be using the textbooks on the syllabus. Sometimes profs change their minds after telling the store to order the books.

**2** Be sure you understand the store's return policy before you buy, especially the deadline for refunds.

**3** Save your sales receipt. You will need it in order to return a textbook for a refund.

**4** Keep new books in pristine condition until you are sure you will be using them. You can't get a full refund for a book that's been marked or shows wear, or for an opened shrinkwrap package, even if you drop the class.

**5** When available, buy used textbooks, if you don't mind someone else's marks. Shop early. Only limited quantities are available, and they go quickly.



## BUYING ONLINE?

### Read the Fine Print

You might be thinking of buying your textbooks from an online seller. Be sure to check these things out before you place your order, or you may be stuck paying more than you planned.

***Does the seller have the correct edition of the book you need?*** Some online sellers offer old editions. Make sure the ISBN matches.

***Will you get the book in time for class?*** Many sellers do not keep stock on hand. They have to order the book from a distributor first and it may be weeks before they can ship it to you.

***What are the shipping charges?*** This varies from seller to seller.

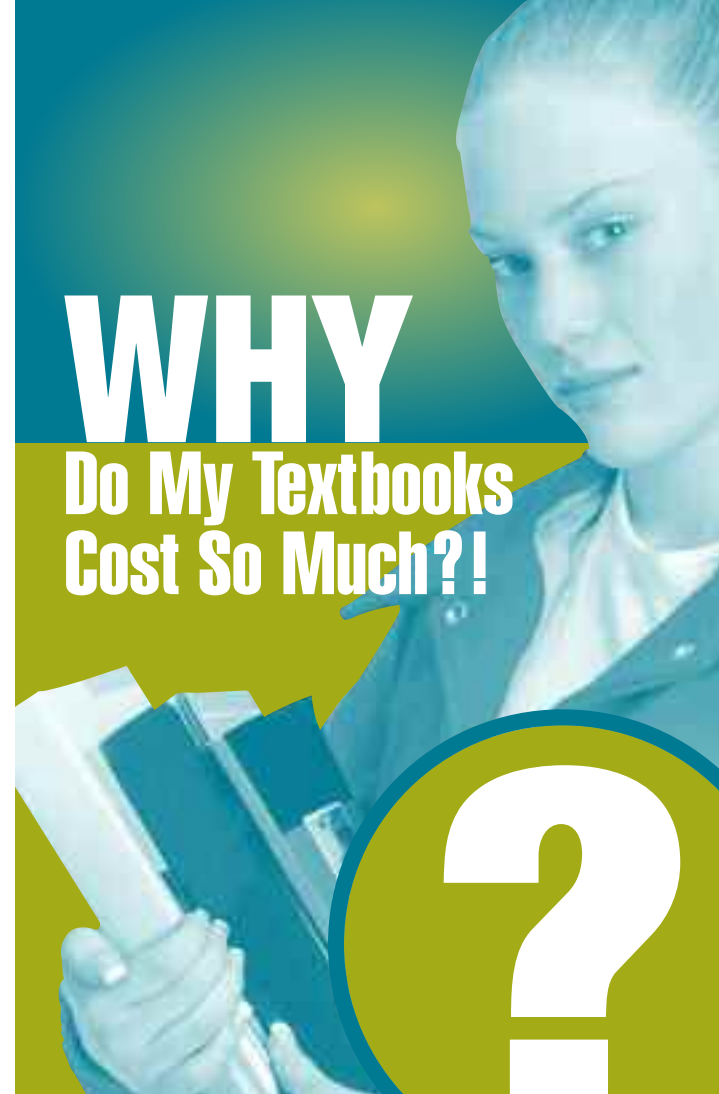
***Is your purchase taxable?*** Depending on certain factors, you may have to pay sales tax.

***Will you be able to return the book for a refund?*** Many online sellers do not give refunds or have very restrictive requirements.

***Are those discounts for real?*** Be wary of advertising claims. Some online sellers promise huge discounts that don't actually exist. If you really want to save money, be sure to compare the price of each book.

## WHY

### Do My Textbooks Cost So Much?!



What college students  
need to know about  
textbook pricing.

- Money saving tips
- Online buying hints

# ? WHAT'S UP with Textbook Pricing?

After shelling out big bucks for tuition, room and board, and other college expenses, students may be taken aback by the prices on textbooks for class. National statistics show students spend hundreds of dollars each year on textbooks—and they're not happy about it.

According to old campus newspapers, students were complaining about textbook prices back in the 1930s, when the average textbook cost about \$3. Things haven't changed. Today's students are still raising questions about why textbooks cost as much as they do. Here are some of students' most frequently asked questions and answers.

## Why is the store gouging me? Textbook prices are so high, I know the store is making a ton of money.

In reality, the store doesn't make much on textbooks. On average, 75.9% of the sticker price on new books goes back to the publisher, mostly to cover development of the book, and normal business expenses, and royalties to the author. The freight company that shipped the book gets 1%.

The rest goes to the store, but out of that amount the store has to pay for staff wages and benefits; insurance and taxes; electricity, heat, water, and AC; checkout systems; shelving; office and storage equipment; security; rent or mortgage payments; cleaning and repairs; supplies; and other expenses. In the end, on average, just 6.3 cents (before taxes) on every dollar you pay for new textbooks represents profit to the store.

## Why doesn't the store pick cheaper books?

The store is not involved in textbook selection. Your professors spend many hours reviewing dozens, maybe hundreds, of books to find just the right ones for your courses. The pros then tell the store which books to order.

Your store does put a lot of effort into keeping textbook

prices as affordable as possible, like encouraging faculty to make their book decisions early so that the store has time to search out more used copies.

## But novels and other books don't cost as much as textbooks.

Textbooks are not like novels or general-interest nonfiction books, which can be sold to a broad audience. Most textbooks are specialized and will be purchased by only a relatively small number of people. Also, textbooks require considerably more time and effort to develop. To ensure accuracy, they must undergo rigorous academic review and fact-checking, and must be updated every few years to stay current.

Photos, color, graphs, charts, exercises, and quizzes also add to the production cost of textbooks. Students say these graphics aren't important, especially if they make books more expensive. But sales histories tell a different story. Professors are more likely

to choose textbooks with contemporary, inviting graphics, and students are more likely to buy them.

## Some textbooks are shrinkwrapped with extras I don't need or use. Why does the store make me pay for these?

These ancillary materials have been developed by the publisher, and are normally included with the book at no extra cost to students. These supplementary materials are intended to help you succeed with the class. As of July 2010, when the Higher Education Opportunity Act goes into effect, publishers are required to offer all bundle parts for sale separately, unless the components are designed solely as integrated materials.

