

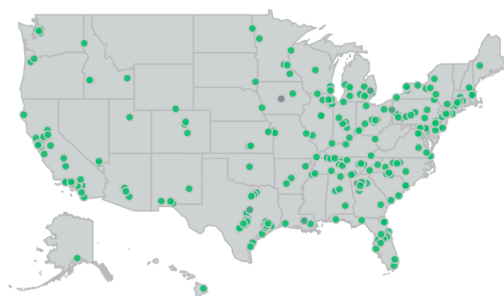
FlatWorld Textbook Cost & Purchasing Study

Published March 2019



This report examines US higher education student opinion on textbook costs. 368 students from 2 and 4 year universities across the United States were surveyed from March 7–8, 2019. All respondents came from SurveyMonkey Audience, a third-party panel. The composition of the sample was balanced to the basic census. The survey was conducted anonymously online. The margin of error is +/- 5.7 percent.

Sample Composition:



About SurveyMonkey:

Founded in 1999, SurveyMonkey changed the way people gather feedback by making it easy for anyone to create their own online surveys. Today, SurveyMonkey's mission is to power curious individuals and organizations to measure, benchmark and act on the opinions that drive success. Our People Powered Data platform enables conversations at scale to deliver impactful customer, employee and market insights. The company's 750+ employees are dedicated to fueling the curiosity of over 16 million active users globally.

SurveyMonkey Audience is a panel made up of 2.5m respondents across the United States. To learn more, visit www.surveymonkey.com.



About FlatWorld

FlatWorld publishes the most affordable high-quality learning materials, including both digital and print textbooks, and a robust homework platform which is included at no additional charge. FlatWorld's rapidly growing catalog features more than 135 titles, and FlatWorld's textbooks cost between \$24.95 and \$39.95. Professors at more than 1,400 universities across the US have adopted a FlatWorld textbook. To learn more, visit www.flatworld.com.



Study on College Textbook Costs and Purchasing Habits for Spring 2019 Semester

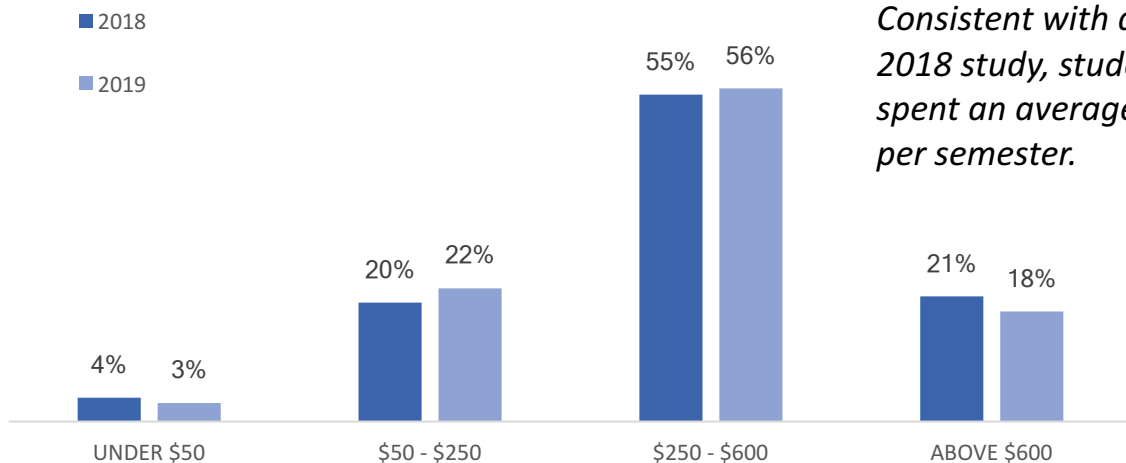
Survey of 368 active college students reveals persistent negative attitudes towards textbook prices, a preference for used print over digital formats, and Amazon's dominance of the market

- **Students view textbooks as being too expensive:** 30% of respondents reported spending more money on textbooks during the spring 2019 semester than the fall 2018 semester, and 28% reported spending about the same amount of money. When asked if they would like to leave additional comments related to textbook prices, more than 80 students wrote about college textbooks being too expensive. Select responses can be found in the full copy of the report.
- **Many students pay extra for homework:** 42% of respondents reported paying extra for access to homework, in addition to the cost of their learning materials. The average amount these respondents paid for homework was \$92.
- **Students continue to buy old editions of assigned textbook, or don't buy the book at all:** 49% of respondents reported buying all of their textbooks used, and 31% purchased both used and new copies. Of the students who purchased at least one used textbook, 47% reported buying an older edition of their assigned textbook to save money. 40% reported not buying at least one assigned textbook because it was too expensive, and 39% said that the price of a textbook affected their decision on whether to take a class.
- **Digital formats lag in popularity:** When asked how many textbooks they purchased in digital format, 30% of respondents reported not purchasing any digital books, and an additional 29% reported purchasing only one book in digital format. For the students who did buy digital textbooks, the majority (65%) reported buying them individually, with 29% purchasing them as part of a subscription offering.
- **School bookstore popularity was only bested by Amazon:** When asked where they purchased their textbooks, 58% of respondents reported buying at least one book through Amazon, and 51% reported buying at least one book in person at their school. 17% of students reported buying a book directly through a publisher online, and 30% reported buying at least one through a website other than Amazon.



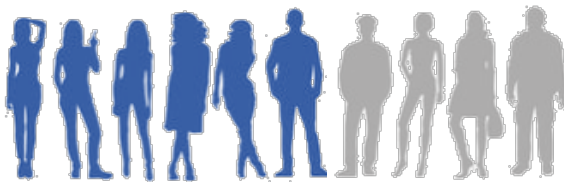
Students continue to pay a significant amount for textbooks.

Q. How much did you spend on college course materials this semester?



Consistent with a fall 2018 study, students spent an average of \$396 per semester.

Q. Are you currently taking any classes where you did not buy a required textbook because it was too expensive?



4 in 10 students did not buy the book

Students say:

"The prices are completely unreasonable and honestly absurd. I think it is a reflection on this country's lack of care for the education system."

"They're prohibitively high and the model has to change. They're taking advantage of students."

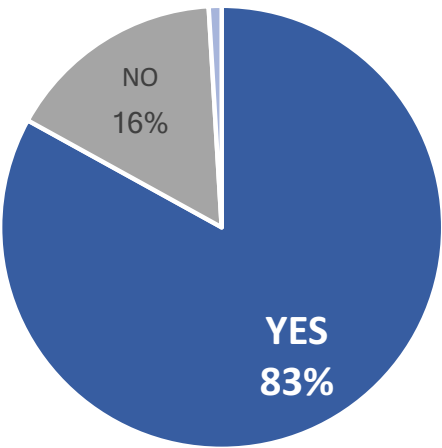
"Textbook prices are way too high considering how much money I have to pay for tuition, parking, etc."

"Textbook prices are too high and serve as an added cost barrier for education."



Many students pay extra for homework

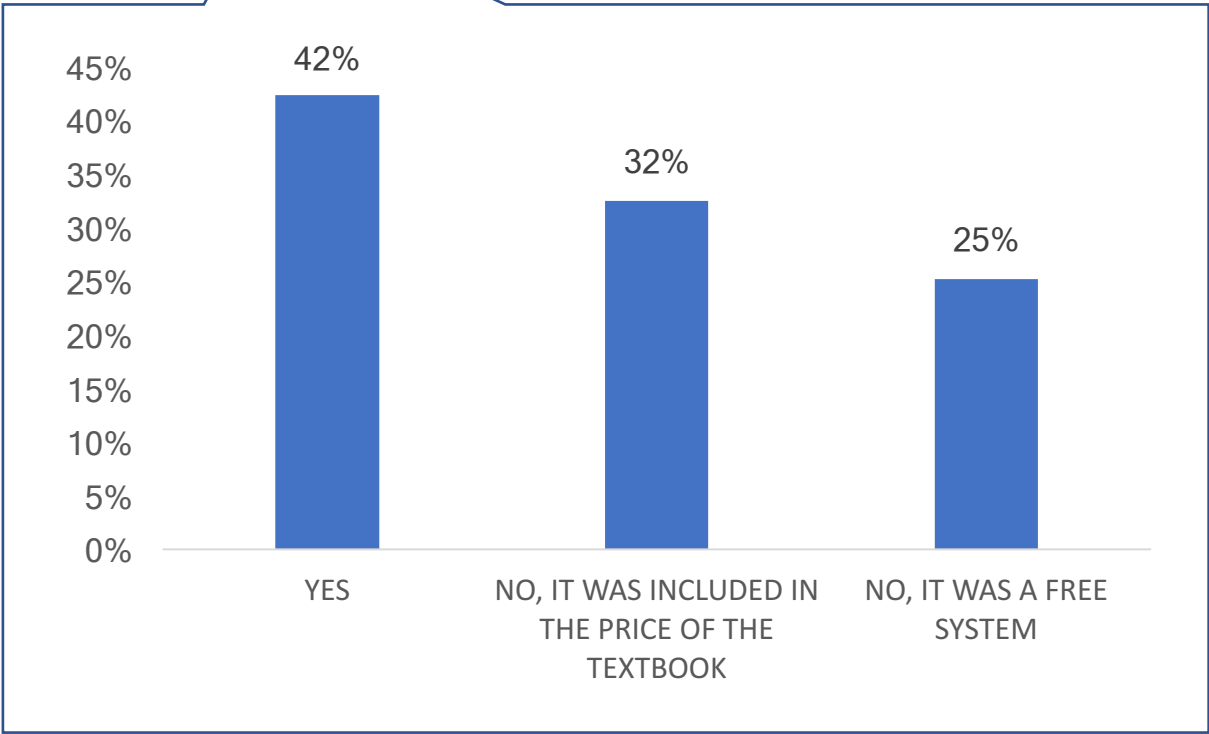
ASSIGNED ONLINE HOMEWORK



Students say:

"[Textbooks are] too expensive, but the online access codes for homework are way too expensive."

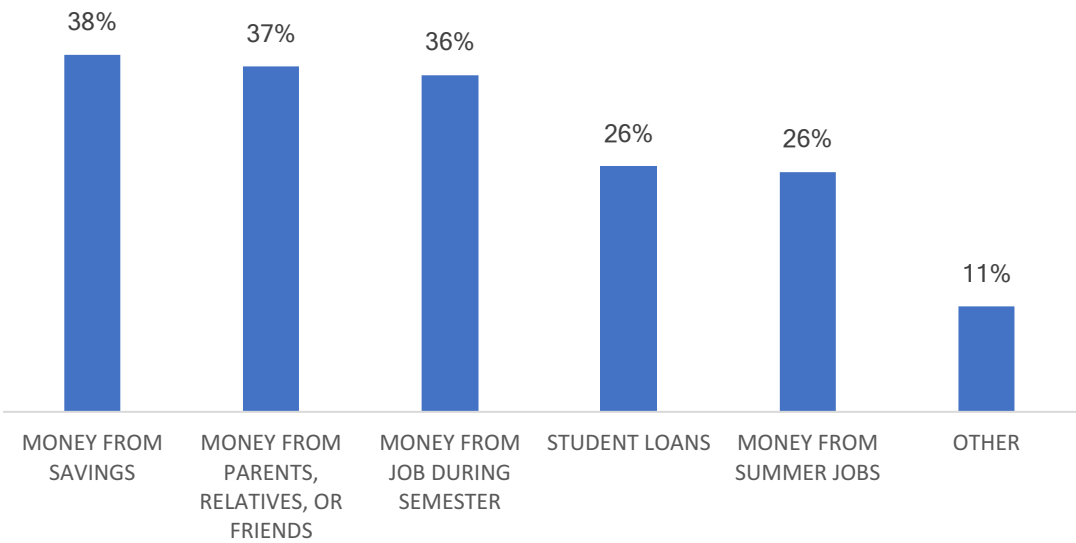
"It's an absolute bloody racket. I shouldn't have to pay extra for a class just to do the homework"



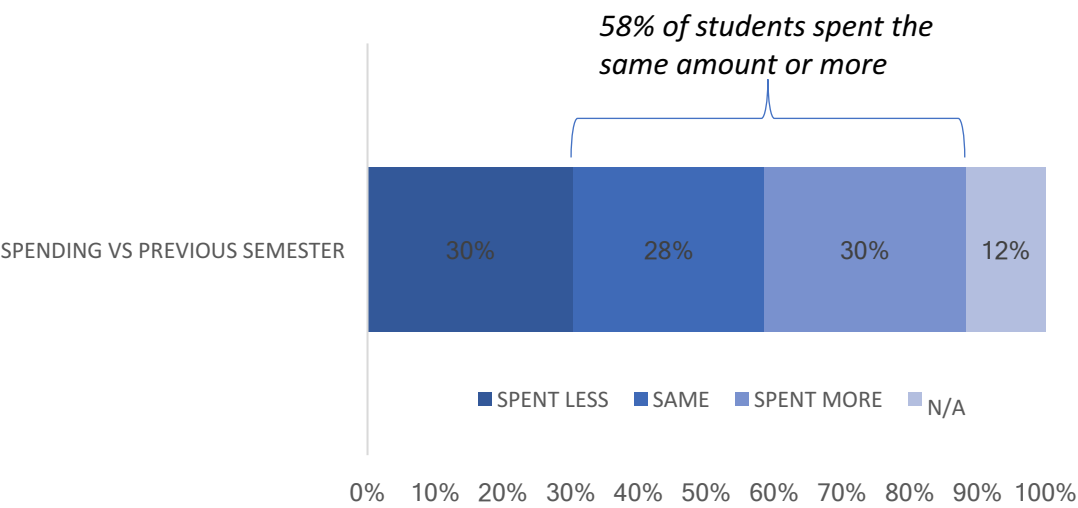
\$ The average amount additional paid for homework was \$92.



Q. Which of the following did you rely on to pay your college textbook bill? Please select all that apply.

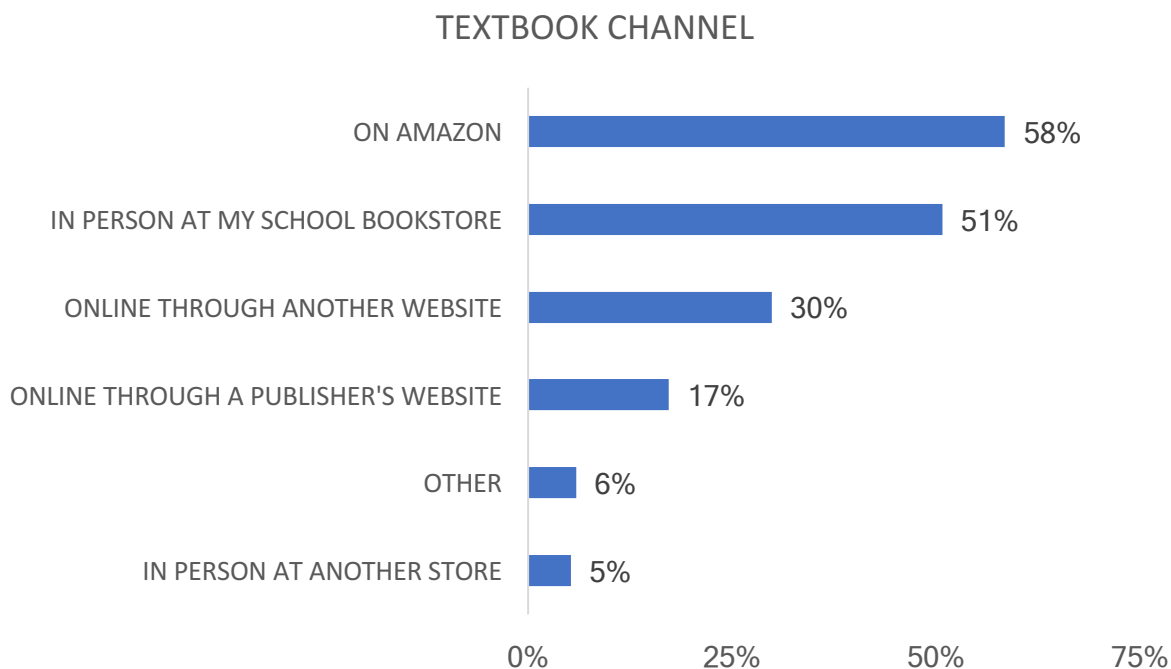


Q. Did you spend more on textbooks during the spring 2019 semester than the fall 2019 semester?



Amazon is the primary purchase channel

Q. Where did you buy or rent your textbooks? (Select all that apply)



Students observed that costs in the bookstore are normally higher

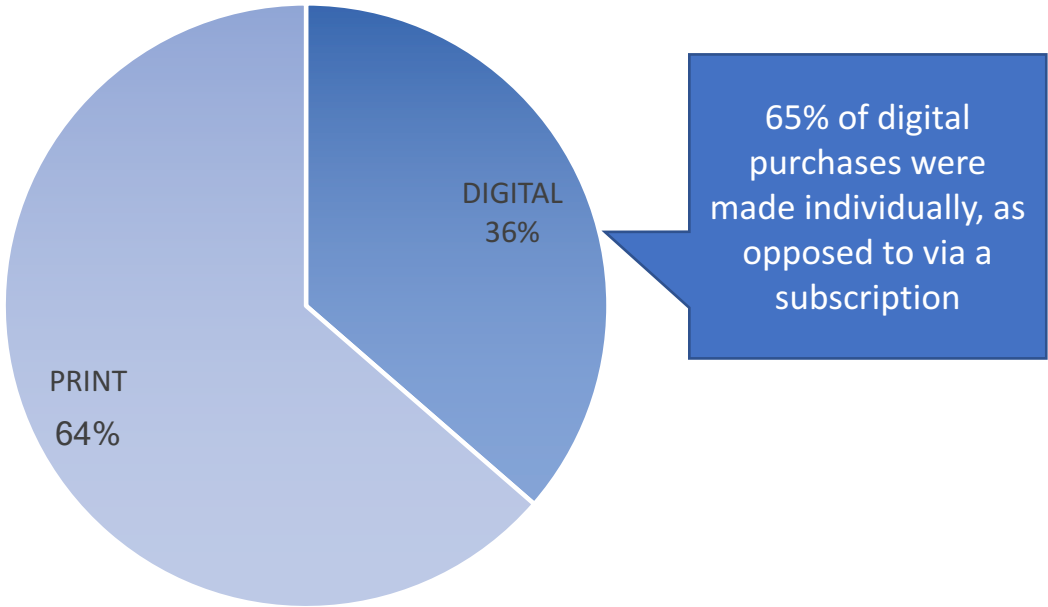
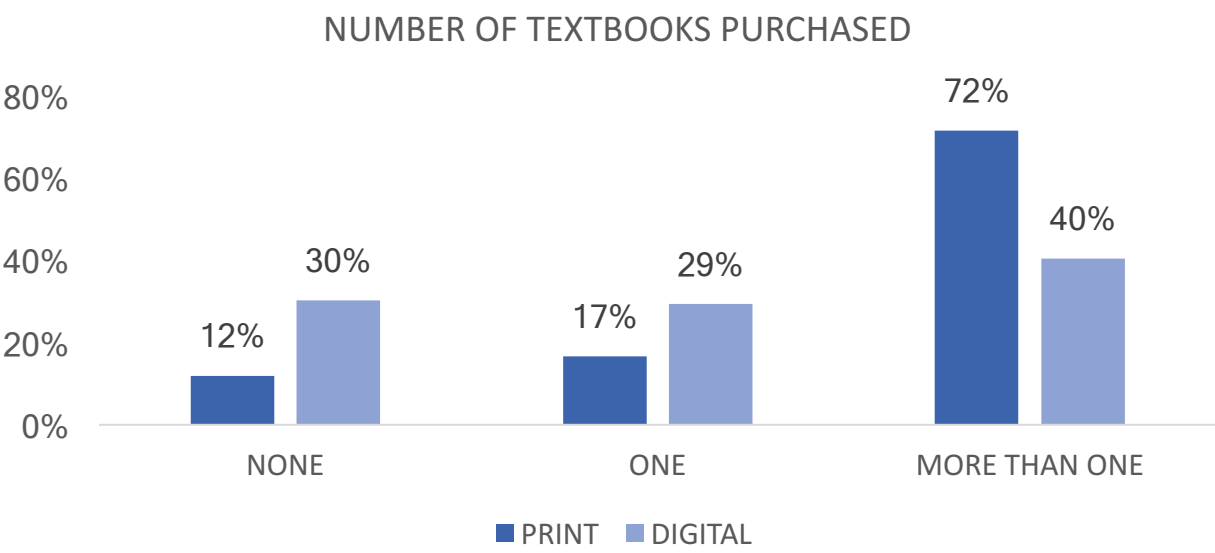
“School Bookstore typically charges 3x as much as ordering from Amazon or another site.”

“The school textbook prices are greater than the ones online.”



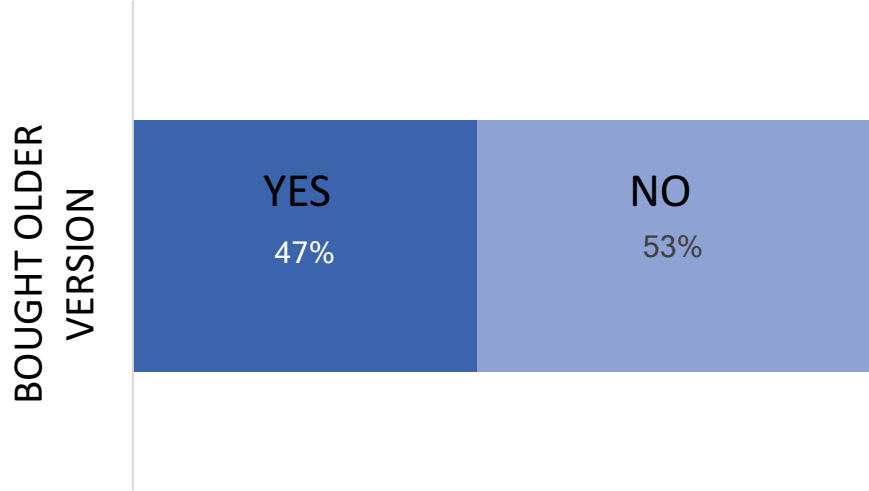
Digital formats lag in popularity

Q. How many textbooks did you purchase this semester in print / digital form?

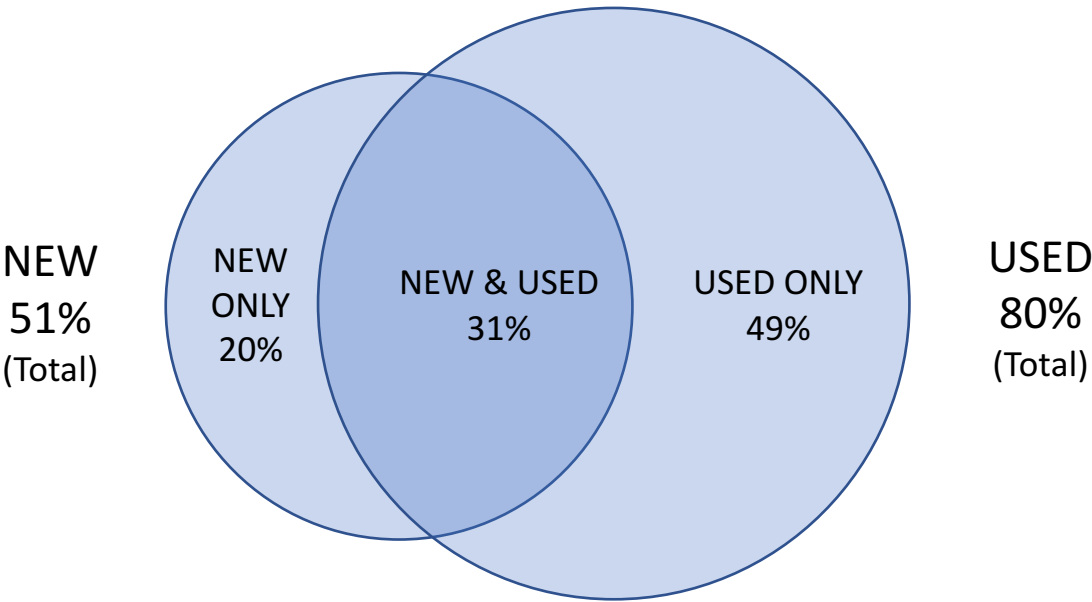


Students continue to buy old editions of assigned textbook, or don't buy the book at all.

Q. Are you currently taking any classes where you decided to buy an older edition of the assigned book to save money?



Q. Did you buy your print copies new or used?



Students view textbooks as being too expensive.

Q. Any other comments for us?

Selection of over 80 comments on high prices of textbooks

The prices are completely unreasonable and honestly absurd. I think it is a reflection on this country's lack of care for the education system.

They're prohibitively high and the model has to change. They're taking advantage of students.

Textbook prices are way too high considering how much money I have to pay for tuition, parking, etc.

Textbook prices are too high and serve as an added cost barrier for education.

They're stupid. But even more stupid is the inability to buy required online access without a textbook bundle. Rarely is the online access sold by itself.

They are just going high and high.

Textbooks are too damn expensive

Without question, textbook prices are ridiculously high

Publishers constantly issuing, and schools constantly requiring new editions that have only minor if any changes is an obvious rip-off and devaluation of previous editions. The textbook industry should be ashamed of their thuggish behavior.

Too expensive. Sometimes we only use it for a couple chapters and over half the book is never covered. I feel that is a waste of money.

Course materials including textbooks should be cheaper. How can you better yourself and further your education if you can't afford the materials.

They are too high for a lot of students, even when using book vouchers through financial aid.

More schools should be providing books or having them available on reserve in the library.

Current textbook prices are far too expensive, especially because they're only used for the span on the one course.

Lower them please. The cost of school semesters is already enough.

Next semester I will have to spend \$800 on only 2 textbooks. That is outrageous but I can't not buy them because they are required and I can't not take the class that requires them because it is a course necessary for my major.

While not this semester or fall 2018 semester, in previous semesters I did have to purchase required textbooks with required online homework that cost +\$200 each

They shouldn't be so high especially being as the buyback price is never as much as you paid.

They're exorbitant, and the resale value is awful

Books keep getting more and more expensive

