

Open Educational Resources (OER)

What Are OER?

OER are any resources that are available for educators or researchers to use at little to no cost. These resources can include videos, games, textbooks, worksheets, quizzes, and basically anything that can be used to facilitate learning in any way, shape, or form. Some people have a little bit of a stigma against using OER because there are OER out there that are of poor quality and may do more harm than good when used in an educational setting. However, quality OER do exist and if you know where to find them they can be very useful in your course and help offset the costs students normally pay for textbooks.

Where Can I Find OER

Here is a list of some places that provide OER (the logos are linked):



OER Commons is a digital library where you can search for OER. It also has tools for creating lessons and places to network with other educators.



TED-Ed has short animated videos that cover a wide range of topics from logic skills to literature. Each video is accompanied by quizzes and discussion prompts which can be customized to meet your needs.



The Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources (CCCOER) is an online repository for OER. Not only does it allow you to search for OER, but it is also a great place to learn more about OER.



Bookboon offers free textbooks that are written by professors from some of the world's top universities.

How Can I Evaluate OER?

As previously mentioned, not all OER suitable for use in your course. Some OER is of poor quality and contains things like misinformation or spelling and grammar errors. It is important to review and evaluate any OER before using them in your course. Fortunately, many tools exist for doing so:

- [Faculty Guide for Evaluating Open Education Resources](#)
- [iRubric: Evaluating OER](#)
- [Open Education Resources Evaluation Rubric](#)

Something else to look out for is openwashing. This is when a company claims that its resources are open for use when in reality there are restrictions on the use of the content. You can learn more about openwashing at <http://openwashing.org/>.

Can I Modify OER?

This depends on how the OER is licensed. Many OER have pretty open licenses that give you free range to use them as you see fit. However, other OER have licenses that might prevent you from modifying them or using them in certain cases. Thus, it is important to read and understand the license for an OER before using it. Two of the most common groups of licenses are the [Creative Commons Licenses](#) and [GNU Licenses](#). You can learn more about other common types of licenses [here](#).