

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research materials that are **free to access, adapt, and share** thanks to open licenses that explicitly permit retention, reuse, revision, remixing, and redistribution —the “5 Rs”.

Why Use OER?

- **Cost savings** for students by replacing high-priced textbooks with free alternatives.
- **Pedagogical freedom** for instructors to customize, localize, and update materials.
- **Equitable access** for learners worldwide, removing paywalls and permission barriers.

Major OER Platforms & Repositories

Platform	Primary Focus	Key Features	License Scope
MERLOT	Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning & Online Teaching	100,000+ peer-reviewed learning objects across disciplines; member ratings and comments	Varies; most under Creative Commons
MIT OpenCourseWare	Full course content from MIT (syllabi, lectures, assessments)	2,600+ courses; high-quality STEM & humanities materials; translated into multiple languages	CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Platform	Primary Focus	Key Features	License Scope
<u>OER Commons</u>	Aggregator of lesson plans, textbooks, simulations, etc.	Advanced search, alignment to curricula, authoring & remix tools, hubs for institutions	Predominantly CC licenses
<u>Open Textbook Library</u>	Peer-reviewed open textbooks	1,400+ titles; faculty reviews; PDF & editable formats	CC BY or similar
<u>Wikimedia Commons</u>	95+ million media files (images, audio, video)	Free cultural & educational media; integrates with Wikipedia; category and quality ratings	CC BY, CC BY-SA, or public domain
<u>OpenStax</u>	High-quality college textbooks	Professionally developed textbooks with ancillaries; print copies at low cost	CC BY 4.0
<u>LibreTexts</u>	Dynamic, modular textbooks & homework systems	400+ books in STEM, social sciences, humanities; Remix tool; integration with LMS	CC BY-NC-SA (default)
<u>Teaching Commons</u>	Aggregated scholarly teaching materials from university repositories	Faculty-authored syllabi, modules, multimedia	Varies; mostly CC licenses
<u>Open Case Studies</u>	Real-world case studies (public policy, health, environment)	Editable case repositories; interdisciplinary	CC BY

Creating & Sharing Your Own OER

- Author in open formats (Markdown, HTML, [Pressbooks](#)).
- Apply a suitable [CC license](#) (e.g., CC BY for maximal reuse).
- Deposit in a visible repository ([Whitecliffe Research Repository](#), OER Commons, MERLOT).
- Supply editable source files (e.g., .docx, .xml) to enable remixing.

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