

Open Source Books

Reading original authors is far more interesting and compelling than reading over-processed text books.

Open Source books are books that are in the public domain and free to use. There is a phenomenal amount of free knowledge out there if we are willing to input it all into Moodle. All copy-rights' age out and eventually all copy-righted books will be in the public domain. Usually copy rights last TBD years. [Internet Archive](#) and [Project Gutenberg](#) provide many complete books.

Text documents found on Project Gutenberg are much cleaner than any other source and preferable, however you will have to replace carriage returns at the end of every - discussed below.

Internet Archive provides a greater variety of documents, and the document are available as PDFs or less-cleaned-up text files. It may be better to convert the PDF directly to a Microsoft Word Document using adobe for Internet Archive documents, this is considerable more effort.

Fixing Carriage Returns

Open source books generally made available as text document or PDF documents. Many text version contain a 'carriage return' at the end of each line of text. When you hit the enter key on your computer, you are putting in a carriage return. When you copy/paste directly from a PDF document, you always end up with a carriage return at the end of the line. This carriage return can be viewed in any editor by click on the paragraph symbol. The carriage return makes formatting the text very difficult. There are two methods for removing the carriage returns:

Search and Replace Method

Microsoft Word is the best application to use for this function. Open the find and Replace tool in your document. To find the paragraph returns, enter ^p, replace with a space, ie. hit the space bar one time in the replace field.

This approach will eliminate all normal paragraph breaks, and you will have a monolithic text where you need to go back and re-enter the normal paragraphs.

If your text has two carriage returns for normal paragraphs, one for the end of the line, and one for the paragraph, you are in luck. In this case you will replace any two carriage returns in a row with a special character sequence, such as &%. Use an odd combination not likely to be found in your text, so as not to replace any actual text.

For Microsoft Word Document:

- Open the find/replace tool and find ^p^p, then replace with &%.
- Open the find/replace tool and find ^p and replace with a space bar.
- Go back and find/replace the &% with a single ^p

Using the above method, you will preserve the normal paragraphs while eliminating the unnecessary carriage returns.

For LibreOffice or other Word Processors, refer to the [Apache Open Office Standards](#)

Adobe Converting Method

PDFs are created using software provided by the company Adobe. Adobe provides a version of its software free to all to use. However, if you want to convert the PDF back to a Microsoft Word document, you will need a paid version. Be careful to sign up for the lowest cost version that allows converting to Microsoft Word documents.

- Upload your PDF to the Adobe Site
- Convert the PDF to Microsoft Word

Formatting

Select all the text of the document and clear formatting. When you copy text in to Moodle that is formatted, you want you have clean text.

Fixing OCR mistakes

There is no way around the fact that OCR creates text documents with many errors. Read all text carefully and fix the errors. When you open the document in a program like Word or Only Office, the errors will be underlined in red.

You may find patterns where words are routinely spelled incorrectly, use the find/replace function to your advantage.

Creating Book Activities in Moodle

Prepare the text as clean as possible. Once the formatting is off in Moodle, it is very hard to clean up.

Create a Moodle activity called a "book". A book has multiple pages the student can read through. The book activity is meant to break up the original book into assignable amounts to read on either a daily or weekly basis. The Moodle book activity does not have to follow the chapters in the original book, but it may. In general

- For non-fiction text, plan for 20 minutes on the topic daily
- For fiction texts, plan for 40-50 minutes of reading daily.

In your word processing application, you can find the number of words in a given text. To determine much text can be read, use an average reading rate of about 200 words per minute.

Alternatively, if you are creating audio files, then use the length of the audio file as your guide.

Images and figures

Usually images and figures get lost in the text processing. You will need to go back to the original PDF and screenshot the images and paste back into the Moodle Book.

Audio Files

Audio read-along files are extremely helpful to pace the student through the text, so that they don't just skim and answer the question.

Record your own voice

Use the microphone icon in the Moodle editor to start your voice recording.

Use a Robot Voice

Robot voices with paid subscriptions are quite good. Free robot voices are poor quality. If you are going to go through the trouble of creating audio files, get the best rendering possible. Create the audio file then upload with the audio/visual media tool in the Moodle editor.

Creating Questions

When you create a Book Activity in Moodle, this is a resource, not points can be given directly for reading the book, the points are only given through the activities that follow the text. Another method that provide more control is to use a question in the question bank. The best type of question is a fill in the blank question, as just one question can easily test on multiple ideas.

Guidelines for Moodle Text-Based Questions

- Use Fill in the Blank style questions
- Number the questions that reflect the order of the text in the original document, including a numbering system that reflect the original chapters.
- Give a descriptive title to the question.
- For the fill in the blank style question, just write a summary of the text and let the students complete key missing words.
- Do not add more text that would fit on a page, too much scrolling is annoying.
- When creating the quiz, only allow one long text question per page.

Categories

Managing your question bank is really important. Create a category of each author you are using, under the author, create a category for each book. It is best if your open source library is at the system level, so that the information can be used in any class, rather than at the course level.

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