



# OPEN eBooks FAQs

Prepared by the State Library of Ohio, using information found on <http://openebooks.net/> and <https://www.firstbook.org> and information provided by the Digital Public Library of America.

## What is Open eBooks?

Open eBooks is an app containing thousands of popular and award-winning titles that are free for children from low-income households. These eBooks can be read without checkouts or holds. Participating children can access these eBooks using the Open eBooks app, and read as many as they like without incurring any costs. Open eBooks includes some of the most popular works of the present and past. The goal of Open eBooks is to encourage a love of reading and serve as a gateway to children reading even more often, whether in school, at libraries, or through other eBook reading apps.

## Who is responsible for Open eBooks?

Open eBooks is a partnership among **Digital Public Library of America**, **The New York Public Library**, and **First Book**, with content support from Baker & Taylor. This effort is made possible by generous commitments of publishers, with funding support provided in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

## How does it work?

Librarians and other professionals can apply for passcodes for Open eBooks by first signing up with First Book. Once signed up with First Book, these educators can request Open eBooks access for the children they serve. Children can download the app to their individual devices and enter their access code to start enjoying Open eBooks. Participating children will have unlimited access to titles in the app.

To be able to get passcodes, one of the following qualifiers must apply to your library system or your library branch:

- At least 70% of the children I serve come from low-income families
- I work in a classroom or with a program primarily serving children with disabilities
- I represent a USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Meals Site
- I work at a school or library branch that has an E-Rate of 90%

Open eBooks:

1. **SIGN UP** – If you meet one of the above qualifiers, you may sign up with First Book for free.
2. **REQUEST YOUR FREE CODES** — Visit the First Book Marketplace and request as many free access codes as you need for the number of children you serve. There are different codes for different age ranges, but you may request as many codes as you need for any age range. Note: You will not be asked to enter the names or any personal identifying information about the children. Read the privacy policy at <https://www.firstbook.org/first-book-story/privacy-and-compliance-policies>.
3. **DOWNLOAD AND ACCESS** — You will then receive an email with the requested access codes and download instructions for the app.

## Do the passcodes expire?

No, codes do not expire. Codes may be used on up to 6 devices. Librarians can get more codes by adding more to their cart in the First Book Marketplace.

## How long can an item check out for?

The checkout length is 8 weeks, and the child can renew the item when the loan period is over. It just involves downloading again.

## What age ranges are the codes grouped into?

The codes are grouped into High School, Middle Grades, and Early Grades. There is also an option to get access codes that make all three collections available.

## What platforms will the Open eBooks app be available on?

Initially the app will be available on iOS and Android and will be available to download from the App Store or Google Play, respectively. Subsequent versions of Open eBooks will be optimized to support as many open platforms as possible.

## Where can I find instructions on how to use the app?

Instructions can be found here:

<http://openebooks.net/app.html>



## What titles are available on the Open eBooks app?

Below is the list of the contributing publishers:

- **Bloomsbury:** Providing unlimited access to over 1,000 of its most popular titles.
- **Candlewick:** Providing unlimited access to all relevant children's and young adult eBook titles in their catalog.
- **Cricket Media:** Offering full digital access to all of its market-leading magazines for children and young adults, including Ladybug and Cricket.
- **Hachette:** Offering access to a robust catalog of their popular and award-winning titles.
- **HarperCollins:** Providing a vast selection of their award-winning and popular titles.
- **Lee & Low:** Providing unlimited access to over 700 titles from this leading independent publisher of multicultural books.
- **Macmillan:** Providing unlimited access to all of the K-12 age-appropriate titles in their catalog of approximately 2,500 books.
- **National Geographic:** Providing unlimited access to all of their age-appropriate content.
- **Penguin Random House:** Committing to provide an extensive offering of their popular and award-winning books.
- **Simon & Schuster:** Providing access to their entire e-catalog of books for children ages 4-14, comprised of 3,000 titles.

## Is there a limit to the number of items a person can have checked out at one time?

Yes, a reader can check out up to 10 items. They can return a book to check out another. There are about 120 DRM-free titles from Recovering the Classics that readers can keep indefinitely.

## If my library circulates eReaders or other devices to kids, can I assign a passcode to a device? Or, should passcodes be distributed only to individual children?

That is up to the library and whatever is easiest logistically. It may make more sense to keep a code logged in on a device. Libraries can request an unlimited number of codes, so if a student wants one to use individually on other devices, the librarian can distribute a code to that student and track who it was given to, while also have codes tied to library-owned devices.

## As a librarian I don't know the income level of most visiting families. How can I register for First Book?

If your library hosts a program specifically focused on supporting children from low income families, you can register that particular library program. For example, if you partner with a local Title I school, nearby Head Start, food pantry or other agency to deliver programming through your library, you can register with First Book and distribute First Book books and resources to those participating in the eligible programs.

In step one of registration, select "At least 70% of the children I serve come from low-income families." Then, indicate which eligibility criteria your partner uses to verify low income status.

## Why do I need to register in order for my patrons to use Open eBooks?

First Book is able to make new, high-quality books and educational resources available to schools and programs serving children in need thanks to generous support from its partners in the publishing industry. By signing up with First Book, you are verifying that the books and educational resources you receive, including content in the Open eBooks app, will be used by children in need.

## What if none of the qualifiers apply to me?

If none of the qualifiers above apply to your system or branch, you will not be eligible to register for First Book. However, if a subset of your services, such as a particular outreach program, serves at least 70% children from low-income families, please contact the First Book Help Team directly at [help@firstbook.org](mailto:help@firstbook.org) to discuss eligibility.

If your library is not eligible, you are also encouraged to refer eligible agencies in your area, such as Title 1 schools, Summer Food Service Program sites, and Federally Qualified Health Centers, to register with First Book and provide access to Open eBooks to the children they serve.

More information about the project can be found here:  
<http://dp.la/info/get-involved/dpla-ebooks/open-ebooks/>

You may also contact First Book at 866-READ-NOW or via email at [help@firstbook.org](mailto:help@firstbook.org) for more information.