

Open Educational Resources

INTRODUCTION

An Open Educational Resource (OER) is a learning resource that is made available to the public at little to no cost. Typically OERs are electronic, not copyrighted, and made available on the Web.

A CLOSER LOOK

Examples of OERs include full courses, syllabi, lectures, assignments, exams, lab and classroom activities, games, simulations, and videos that are created and offered by colleges or universities as a collaborative effort between departments of various separate institutions, as well as from individuals.

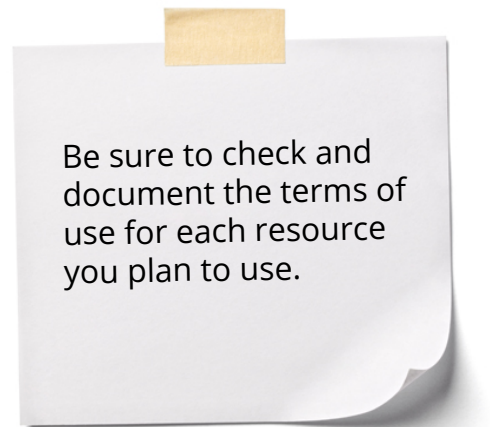
A major benefit of utilizing OERs is flexibility. In a relatively short time, faculty members can construct a course for no expense other than their time.

It is important to carefully evaluate each resource you plan to use for quality. Posted resources are not necessarily always accurate or of high quality.

You should also check the “fine print” for each resource. Some are available for you to use without any stipulations, while others come with special requirements or fees.

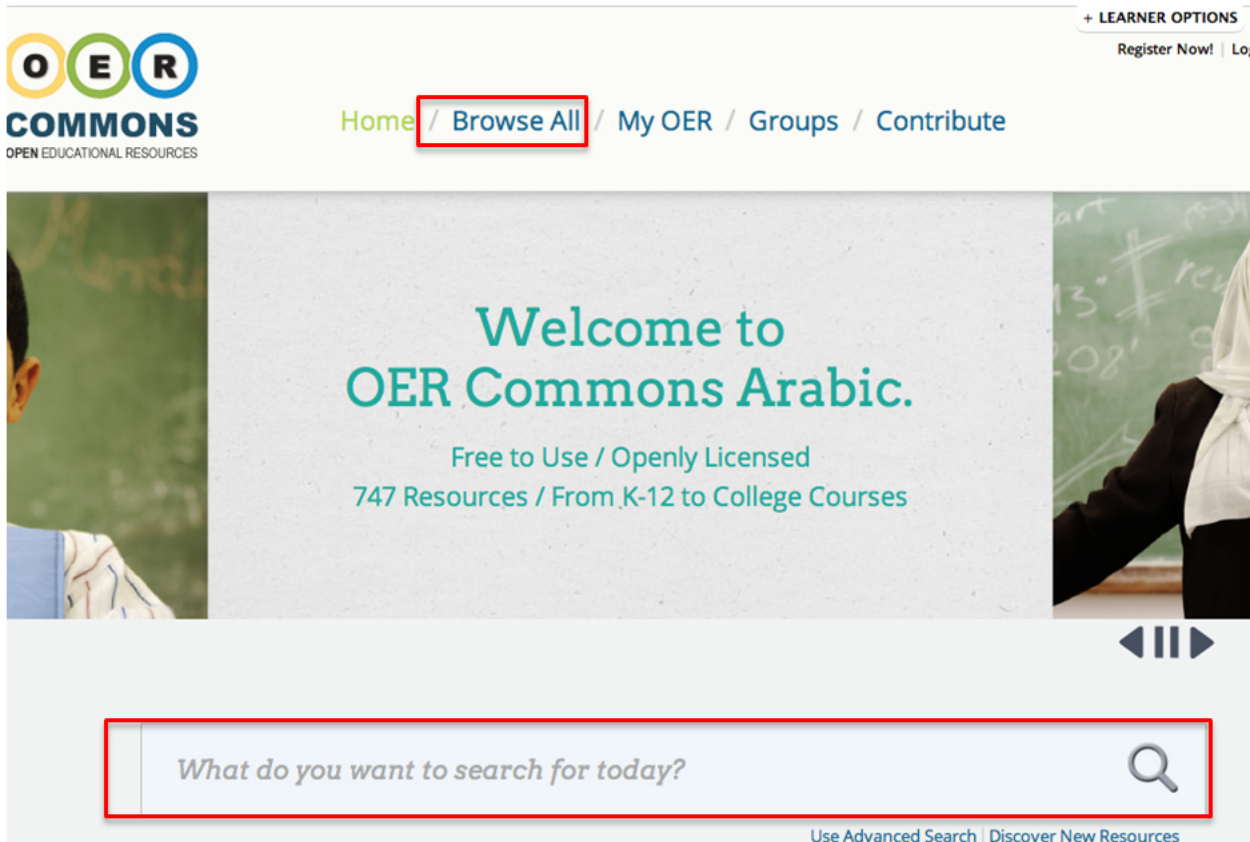
A few helpful resources on OERs are the following:

- UW Madison’s guide to Open Educational Resources (<http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=403447&sid=3302864>): Links to collections, articles, and more.
- UMass Amherst Libraries’ list of OERs for Educators (<http://guides.library.umass.edu/content.php?pid=87648&sid=4778756>): Contains good links to various collections.
- OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org/>): Many, though not all, of the resources here can be freely used. Check the terms of use for each item.
- MIT OpenCourseWare (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>): Everything here can be freely used.
- Open Textbook Library (<http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>): A source of textbooks that can be freely used and adapted.
- Merlot II (<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>): Free and open peer-reviewed collection of online teaching and learning materials.
- Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>): Many of these resources can be used from this collection, but you must check the terms of use for each item.



EXAMPLE

With most OER repositories, it's very easy to search and find what you're looking for. OER Commons offers a search box on their home page as well as an opportunity to browse all items in the repository.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

UW Madison's list of resources authors can use and share (<http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=462083>): Has good information about copyright guidelines and links to useful databases.