

# Open Educational Resources (OER): A Fact Sheet for Adult Education



## What are OER?

OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits sharing, accessing, repurposing—including for commercial purposes—and collaborating with others.

## What is the value of OER in adult education (AE)?

Quality OER can be powerful tools to enhance learning and instruction in adult education. OER help students achieve their learning goals by providing flexible and accessible supplements to instruction. OER encourage life-long learning habits in students by providing them with personalized and readily available learning materials. OER also help educators by augmenting instruction, strengthening their content knowledge, and providing access to free online professional development.

## What is the difference between free and open?

Free resources serve a meaningful purpose in AE by providing teachers with tools to support teaching and learning. "Free" means that materials are free to access but not remix or revise. However, when a resource is open, a user can remix or revise with other open resources or self-generated content to produce new material that directly targets the adult learner's needs.

## The 5Rs\*

Another way to think about OER is through the Five R Framework, developed by David Wiley. It supports a deeper understanding of what it means to consider an object (i.e., resource) an OER.

1. **Retain** – the right to make, own, and control copies of the content
2. **Reuse** – the right to reuse the content as verbatim or in its unaltered form
3. **Revise** – the right to adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself
4. **Remix** – the right to combine the original or revised content with other content to create something new
5. **Redistribute** – the right to make and share copies of the original content, your revisions, or your remixes with others

## What are the benefits of using and creating OER for adult education?

Creating and using OER may improve student persistence because the materials can be tailored to their current needs and interests; increase student use of online tools; encourage educators to collaborate and share; save costs; and serve as a model for lifelong learning.

## Where can I create and remix OER?

OER Commons Open Author

[www.oercommons.org/open-author-about](http://www.oercommons.org/open-author-about)

Gooru Learning

<http://about.goorulearning.org>

WikiEducator

[wikieducator.org/](http://wikieducator.org/)

Open Tapestry

[www.opentapestry.com/](http://www.opentapestry.com/)

YouTube Video Editor

[www.youtube.com/editor](http://www.youtube.com/editor)

TedEd

<http://ed.ted.com>

# OER in Action

## Classroom Scenario

You are teaching English Language Arts to GED students. Some students are struggling to learn vocabulary and text structure so you decide to provide them with supplemental materials.

While searching for materials, you find an almost perfect OER. However, you do not feel the directions are clear enough and you do not want the students to struggle, since the material is already challenging. You rewrite the directions because it is an OER.

Another problem you notice is that the text is very small and close together. Since the resource is an OER, you enlarge the text size, increase spacing between sentences so the material is less intimidating to students, and then add a text box with lines so students can take notes while they read.

You have **revised** (refined directions, increased text size and added spacing, and added a textbox for note taking) the lesson to support student needs.

## What are the teaching and learning implications of OER?

- Personalized teaching and learning
- Development of high interest materials
- Greater ability to support various learning styles
- Teacher-directed professional development

## What is the future of OER?

OER are here to stay. The movement to increase open resources for teaching and learning is continuously growing because OER provide a means of addressing the cost of education and the need for more student-centered materials, particularly in adult education. It is important to ensure that this growing body of resources has a method of evaluation (see Achieve Rubrics found at [www.oercommons.org](http://www.oercommons.org)) to make sure that materials are high quality. Providing teachers with more training on evaluating, creating, and remixing OER has the potential to transform teaching and learning for adult education.

## What are some types of OER?

- Activities
- Lesson Plans
- Full course
- Online textbooks
- Interactive/simulations

## Where to find OER:

OER Commons  
[www.oercommons.org](http://www.oercommons.org)

Merlot  
[www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm](http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm)

Creative Commons Search  
<http://search.creativecommons.org>

National Science Digital Library  
<https://nsdl.org/>

To learn more visit:

**OER Research Hub**

<http://oerresearchhub.org/>

“I love the way OER have sparked curiosity in my students via the various media delivery systems that OER offer.”

— Adult Educator, Alabama

