

CNET Reviews

[iPad Atlas](#)

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# How to find free e-books for your iPad

by [Scott Stein](#)

There are a lot of advantages to the [iPad](#) as an e-reader, chief among them its capability to be a true multiformat product supporting Kindle, ePubs, PDFs, and others.

One little difficulty remains: finding ways to get free books.

Sure, Apple and others don't exactly want you to stock up on free literature if they can help it, especially in the case of books that aren't public domain. Still, we have to try, don't we? Here are the best (legal) ways not to pay.

- **The iBooks Store** does have over 30,000 free books, mostly from Project Gutenberg, and many of them with surprisingly decent formatting. There is a trick, though: you'll have to be fastidious. Searching for an author in the iBooks Store will often bring up only for-pay versions of many books, whereas entering their specific titles will bring up free versions, too. It's extremely odd, but we discovered the bug when looking for many titles, including "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse and Thomas Hobbes' "Leviathan."

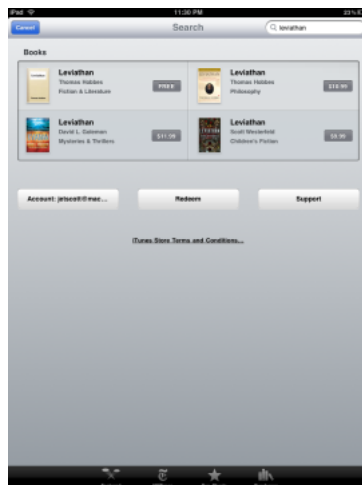
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- **Check other apps:** Free Books and Kobo are two other iPad book apps that have their own slightly different supplies of titles. We've found luck getting a free book on one that we couldn't get on another. It's a hassle to swap back and forth, but it might be the only way to get what you're looking for.

And, of course, there's always good old-fashioned Web browsing if you're online, or Instapaper Pro (\$4.99, also a free version) for downloading any HTML page for easy offline reading.



Finding free iBooks can be a challenge depending on what search term you use.  
(Credit: Scott Stein/CNET)

Any other tips? Let us know in the comments.



Scott Stein, a New York Jets fan and CNET senior associate editor, has written about tech, entertainment, video games, and viral culture for outlets including Laptop, Wired, Maxim, Esquire Online, Asylum, and Men's Journal. He also appears on the Digital City podcast. In his spare time, you might see him performing improv in New York City (when he's not being a dad).