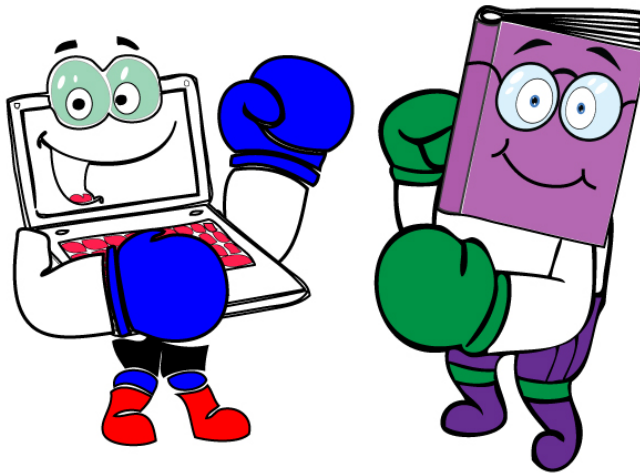


EBOOK VS. PRINT

by Kate Johnson

The good news: You get to choose between purchasing the eBook format of a course or the print edition. The bad news: You have to choose between the eBook format and the print edition. Both formats have their advantages, and there are some significant differences, even though the **course content is exactly the same**. Let's take a closer look at the contenders. (Or, you can just trust me and jump to [My 2¢](#))



In this corner . . . weighing in over one pound, and requiring the service of planes, trains, and/or automobiles—we have Print.

The Advantages of Print:

- ❖ **Tangible**. You can hold it, feel it, listen to the pages flip, smell it (when no one's looking), liven up a bookshelf, and throw it at your brother (and if it's Biology 2, it'll hurt).
- ❖ **No setup required**. No need for a printer, expensive ink cartridges, and loads of patience dealing with paper jams while trying to print out worksheets and maps.
- ❖ **Hearty**. Have you heard the giggle coming from your bookshelf as your computer crashes? That's Print by a knockout.

While in this corner . . . weighing in at nothing, and requiring a high-speed Internet connection—we have eBook.

The Advantages of eBook:

- ❖ **Instantaneous**. Faster than you can say, "I'm delayed gratification-challenged," your eBook download link is in your Inbox.
- ❖ **Cheaper**. Notice I did not say "cheap." eBooks cost significantly less than their print counterparts, and don't forget: none of those pesky shipping & handling fees.
- ❖ **Environmentally correct**. For all the granolas out there: no trees were killed in the making or delivery of eBooks. (Now, if you choose to print out your entire eBook, well that's on your head.)

- ❖ **Interactive.** eBooks are social. (And that’s a big deal—right, homeschoolers?) eBooks are easy to navigate, search, and make Internet research a breeze.
- ❖ **Forgiving.** If your child feeds his worksheet to the dog, no problem—just smile and print another one.
- ❖ **Colorful.** There’s a little color in the interior of many of our eBooks (all of History Odyssey and RSO level 2). While all of our print courses have a black and white interior. (For most titles, the use of color is aesthetic only, it has little to no academic purpose.)

Based on this list, you might think eBook wins. But not so fast, our sales of eBook vs. print are 50/50. I think it is mostly a personal preference; but I have found that some titles work better as one format over the other.

MY 2¢

For RSO Biology 2 (the student text) and History Odyssey levels 2 and 3, I prefer Print

Why?

Mostly because these are “independent” study books (not teacher guides), and I whole-heartily recommend each student have his or her own book. (You could purchase an eBook and print copies for the children in your family, but I find that the price of paper and ink, not to mention time and headache, does not make the eBook more cost effective for these titles.)

RSO Biology 2 is a whooper of a course that combines textbook, lab manual, workbook, and test bank all in one huge spiral-bound book. The pages that the student writes on are scattered throughout the course and are numerous. Almost the entire eBook would have to be printed out, and at 754 pages . . . well, this one is also Print by a knockout!

For RSO level 1 and History Odyssey level 1 courses, I prefer eBook.

Also, for RSO Biology 2 Teacher Guide, I prefer eBook. Why?

RSO level 1 and *History Odyssey level 1* books are really teacher guides with student worksheets. I find it easiest to keep the teacher pages on my computer screen and print out the student worksheets and maps (one for each of my children).

RSO Biology 2 Teacher Guide can be used easily from a computer screen. There is no need to print out any pages, and the use of a little color does help with evaluating some of the microscope views. Also, there are numerous website links in this book that are accessed with a click of the mouse in the eBook.

History Odyssey Modern Times 2 Teacher Guide is only available as an eBook. This is because of its size, Internet connections, and the fact that color is instructionally significant for maps and worksheet answer keys.

Now your eBook/Print decision is as clear as day. If it’s still mud, then flip a coin—you really can’t lose.