

Big education publisher to end printed textbooks

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The world's largest education publisher, Pearson, has said it will gradually phase out printed textbooks. It has taken a decision to make all of its learning resources "digital first". Pearson said the future of the industry is in e-books and digital services. Pearson CEO John

Fallon explained more about the company's future direction. He told the BBC: "We are now over the digital tipping point. Over half our annual revenues come from digital sales, so we've decided, a little bit like in other industries like newspapers or music or in broadcast, that it is time to flick the switch in how we primarily make and create our products." He added: "I am increasingly confident and excited about this."

Pearson said a huge advantage of digital books is that they can be continually updated, which means teachers will always have access to the latest versions of textbooks. Mr Fallon said Pearson would stop its current business model of revising printed course books every three years. He said this model has dominated the industry for over four decades and is now past its use-by date. Fallon said: "We learn by engaging and sharing with others, and a digital environment enables you to do that in a much more effective way." He added the digital books will appeal to the "Netflix and Spotify generation". Textbook writers are worried they will earn less from their books as digital products are sold on a subscription basis.

Sources: bbc.com / reuters.com / ft.com

Writing

Printed textbooks are better than digital textbooks. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

education / publisher / phase out / decision / learning resource / tipping point / digital advantage / access / textbooks / four decades / sharing / books / generation / earn

True / False

- a) The name of the publisher is Oxford University Press. T / F
- b) The company has called its policy "Digital At Last". T / F
- c) Nearly half of the publisher's revenue is from digital sales. T / F
- d) The publisher's CEO is confident about the digital services. T / F
- e) The publisher updates its printed textbooks every three years. T / F
- f) The current textbook business model has been in place for over 40 years. T / F
- g) The publisher thinks the "Netflix" generation will like the digital products. T / F
- h) Textbook writers are happy with the subscription service. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. phase out | a. successful |
| 2. direction | b. use of |
| 3. revenues | c. more and more |
| 4. primarily | d. controlled |
| 5. increasingly | e. course |
| 6. huge | f. membership fee |
| 7. access | g. withdraw |
| 8. dominated | h. first and foremost |
| 9. effective | i. enormous |
| 10. subscription | j. income |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of English textbooks?
- b) What will English textbooks be like in the future?
- c) Would you prefer to buy or subscribe to a textbook?
- d) What are the disadvantages of e-books?
- e) What are the disadvantages of printed textbooks?
- f) Would you like more grammar and pronunciation in English textbooks?
- g) Do learners of English need a textbook?
- h) What three adjectives best describe your English textbook?

Phrase Match

1. it will gradually phase
 2. Over half our annual revenues
 3. it is time to flick
 4. how we primarily make and
 5. I am increasingly confident
 6. they can be continually
 7. this model has dominated the industry
 8. appeal to the "Netflix and Spotify
 9. Textbook writers are worried they
 10. digital products are sold
- a. will earn less
 - b. and excited
 - c. generation
 - d. out printed textbooks
 - e. the switch
 - f. on a subscription basis
 - g. come from digital sales
 - h. for over four decades
 - i. create our products
 - j. updated

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Do you have a favourite English textbook?
- c) How could English textbooks be improved?
- d) Are printed textbooks or digital textbooks best?
- e) What topics are best for English textbooks?
- f) How much do you learn from English textbooks?
- g) Will the 'Spotify generation' prefer digital textbooks?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Pearson's CEO?

Spelling

1. it will adulayrlg phase out printed textbooks
2. make all of its learning scorurees "digital first"
3. the future of the snrutyid is in e-books
4. annual euresevn come from digital sales
5. how we rplimariy make and create
6. I am increasingly fenndtcoi and excited
7. a huge tagdvnaea of digital books
8. have access to the latest eirsnvos
9. edidatmon the industry for over four decades
10. a much more efvefteci way
11. the Netflix and Spotify otneigrena
12. sold on a nsicpoubtirs basis

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. j	4. h	5. c
6. i	7. b	8. d	9. a	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Grammar

You think grammar is the most important element of a textbook. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): pronunciation, writing or news.

Role B – Pronunciation

You think pronunciation is the most important element of a textbook. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): grammar, writing or news.

Role C – Writing

You think writing is the most important element of a textbook. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): pronunciation, grammar or news.

Role D – News

You think news is the most important element of a textbook. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): pronunciation, writing or grammar.

Speaking – Textbooks

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important activities that should be in English textbooks at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Reading
- Writing
- Vocabulary
- News
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Pronunciation
- Role Plays

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.