

Accessing Past eBooks

Last Modified on 06/02/2026 8:45 am MDT

Accessing Past eBooks:

While the Canvas course is the "front door" to your book, the license itself lives in **VitalSource Bookshelf**, not Canvas. Students should check with the booklist on their student portal to determine how long they have access to the title (pay close attention to the term as the duration might change depending on which term the student was enrolled). If the access exceeds the duration of the term, students can access their book after the term ends by bypassing Canvas entirely once the initial link is established. It is easiest to set this up while you still have access to Canvas. Follow these steps to access the book outside of Canvas:

1. Create a Native VitalSource Account

If you've only ever clicked the link inside Canvas, you may not have a password set up for VitalSource.

- **Go to:** bookshelf.vitalsource.com
- **Use your School Email:** Enter the same email address associated with your Canvas account.
- **Reset/Create Password:** If you don't have a password, click "**Forgot Password**" to create one. This "pairs" your Canvas-linked license to a standalone account you can use anywhere.

2. Download the VitalSource Bookshelf App

This is the most reliable way to ensure you never lose access.

- **Mobile/Tablet:** Download the "VitalSource Bookshelf" app from the iOS App Store or Google Play.
- **Desktop:** Download the Mac or Windows version.
- **Offline Access:** Once you sign in with the account you created in Step 1, you can download the entire book to your device. This allows you to read it without an internet connection and ensures you have it regardless of what happens to the LMS.

3. Use the QR Code "Fast Pass"

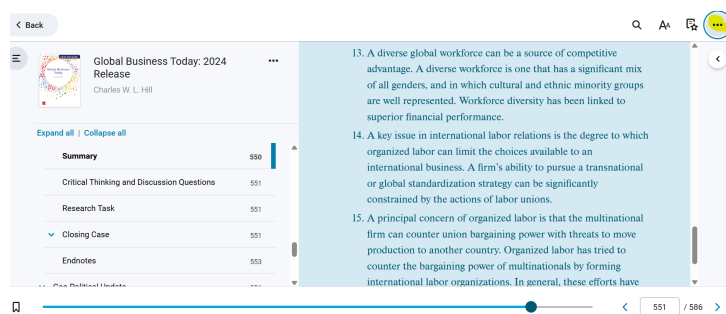
If you still have access to Canvas *right now*, you can bridge the gap quickly:

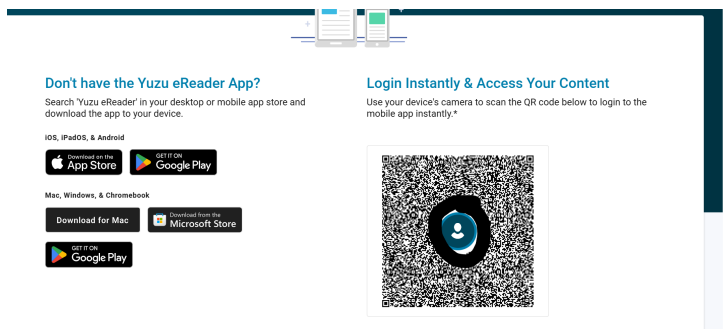
Open the book in Canvas.

Click the **More Options** (three dots) menu inside the reader.

Select "**Mobile App**" or "**Download App.**"

A QR code will appear. Scan this with your phone's camera while the Bookshelf app is open to instantly sign in without needing to type a password.





Note on "Access Codes": If the book you accessed through Canvas was actually a "Courseware" product (like Pearson MyLab or McGraw Hill Connect) rather than just a standard eBook, the access rules might be different. Courseware usually expires when the course ends, but a standard VitalSource eBook license will honor that full 5-year window.

If the student no longer has access to Canvas, they can still reclaim their book. VitalSource essentially treats the Canvas link as a "key" that unlocks the book in their system; once that key has been used, the book is permanently tied to the student's email address in the VitalSource database.

Here is how to get it back without Canvas:

1. The "Password Reset" Workaround

Most students who use Canvas-integrated books never actually set a VitalSource password—they just clicked the link in the course. Even without Canvas, the account exists.

- Go to the [VitalSource Bookshelf Login page](#).
- Enter the **school email address** used in Canvas.
- Click "**Forgot Password.**"
- VitalSource will send a reset link to that school email. Once the student sets a password, they can log in directly to the website or the Bookshelf app to see their library.

2. Use the Bookshelf App

If the student previously signed into the **Bookshelf App** on a phone or laptop during the term, the book should still be there.

- Apps often stay logged in even after the LMS link is severed.
- If they are logged out, they should use the password reset method above to get back in.

3. Contact VitalSource Support

If the school email address itself has been deactivated (the student graduated or left), the student will need to contact VitalSource Support directly.

- **What to provide:** Proof of purchase (if applicable) or the name of the school and the course where the book was used.
- **The Goal:** Ask them to **merge** the old "Canvas-created" account with a new personal email address.
- **Support Link:** support.vitalsource.com (They have 24/7 chat and phone support).

If you have tried these steps and are still not able to locate your title, please contact BNC support services:

Email:

