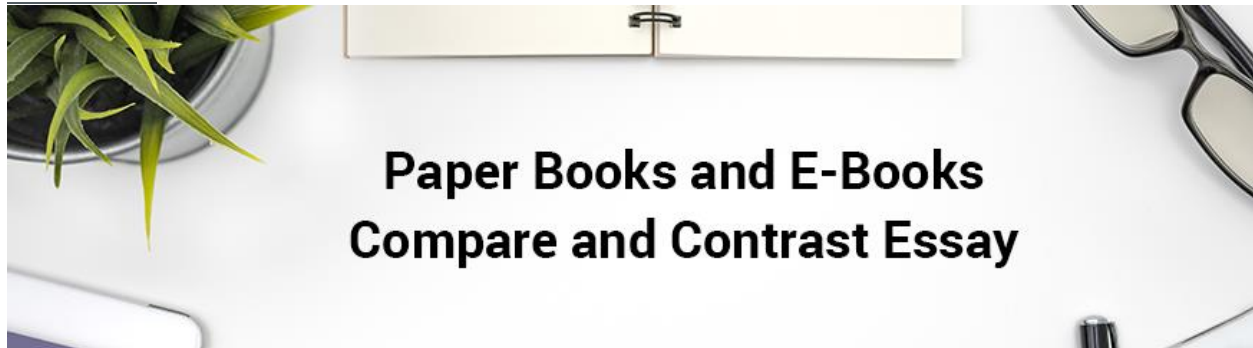


PAPER BOOKS AND E-BOOKS: COMPARE AND CONTRAST

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Despite the growing concerns that mass media and digital technologies decrease the time spent on reading, people all over the world still like books. Reading is a great pleasure because you have a chance to immerse into the exciting world and learn something new. Thousands of new books are published every year, and given the number of already existing books, every person has unlimited opportunities in selecting some interesting pieces of literary work. During the past several years, e-books have gained immense popularity around the world. Due to their accessibility and convenience, they easily won the market and now successfully compete with traditional paper books (Staiger, 2012). In this essay, I aim to explore differences and similarities between e-books and paper books to understand how the form affects readers' experience.

Let me begin by stating that despite all their visible differences, digital versions and paper books are similar in many ways (Daradkeh, Selimi, & Gouveia, 2012). First, they both have the same text structure including the cover, title page, copyright page, table of content, chapters, etc. Second, they have the same function – provide readers with new information. Irrespectively of the form, all readers use paper books and e-readers for the same purposes, that is, to study, relax, work, and learn some valuable information that can be applied in everyday life. E-books and regular books offer the same literary works, so there is no need to choose a particular form to read some book. Both e-readers and paper books can be used to make notes, although e-books are slightly more difficult to use for this purpose.

At the same time, there are many differences that explain the long-term opposition of e-reader lovers and those preferring traditional reading experience. Thus, for example, e-books are sleek and thin, which makes them easier to carry. They have a huge capacity, meaning that users can download thousands of books at once and spare themselves of the necessity of carrying large volumes. Some opponents of e-books claim that contrary to regular books, electronic devices are not so pleasant to smell and touch. They are made of plastic and metal that have no smell, whereas traditional books smell of paper, ink, dust, someone's perfumes, and many other things related to their history. Some people love old library books for this unique, authentic smell that cannot be compared to the coldness and impersonality of digital devices.

Another important difference relates to books' durability. Traditional paper books can stand the test of time. They easily withstand heat, falls, moisture, tearing, and so on, which allows to keep them for hundreds and even thousands of years. E-readers do not have this amazing quality. They are easier to carry and hold, yet they may break at any time, while files kept on them can be damaged by computer viruses. Besides, as technologies develop, some e-book models come out of use, which means that a person will have to buy new models to be able to download and use digital books.

The cost is another point of comparison (Tosun, 2014). While e-books themselves can be expensive, users can save much money by buying electronic versions of printed books. They often cost half the price of traditional books and can be downloaded immediately. Paper books, especially rare ones, can be very expensive and hard to find. Moreover, buying many paper books to use for a limited period of time (e.g., for studying) is impractical. At the same time, the value of some paper books may increase with time, which allows collecting and reselling them later for much profit. To conclude, the selection of a form depends on the purpose, readers' taste, financial resources, etc. E-books and traditional books have their similarities and differences, and it seems there is no better choice. Ultimately, it is information that matters, so everything works as long as you can get it.

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