You're listening to You've Got This, episode 389.

Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr.

Katie Linder.

On this episode, I thought I would share all of the tips and tricks that I use for getting cheap books.

If you've been listening for a while, you know that I am a voracious reader in all different modalities - physical, audiobook, and ebook.

I read the equivalent of about a book a day, so I am always getting new books to add to my 2B Red pile.

I thought I would share some of the ways that I've found to pick up and find cheap ebooks, audiobooks, and physical books.

I use all of these on a pretty regular basis.

First I'm going to start with the most obvious option, which is your library.

This is completely free, other than the taxes we pay.

You have an option within your library to have an app to do digital copies of things.

The one that is the most popular is Libby.

You may have heard of this before.

The Libby app allows you to download ebooks, audiobooks, and even magazines.

There's a section in Libby which I really love called "Coming Soon," and it's something that you can filter books by in the app.

This allows you to put books on hold in advance of their release date so you can be notified when they come out, which is a really great thing if you're trying to stay on top of new books that are coming out in a series.

On my Libby app I can check out up to 20 digital books at a time.

I can also reserve up to 15 books at a time, and that is ebooks and audiobooks combined.

I think that mileage will vary on that, depending on what your library does.

There are other apps like I think Overdrive became Libby.

There's also another one called Hoopla, so it kind of depends on what your library does, but Libby I have found is a great user experience, and I really love using it.

The other thing I'll mention about libraries is they often have sales.

If you are looking for physical copies of books, check out to see if your local library is having a sale anytime soon.

There was a great time for that.

The next option that is also usually pretty cheap, and by cheap I mean free, is Little Free Libraries.

These are often free with a trade.

The concept of a Little Free Library is that someone has started to curate a small library like in front of their home, and then you take a book from the library and you add a book to the library.

You want to make sure that you are adding good quality books, just things maybe you don't want anymore.

There is an app to find Little Free Libraries in your geographic area.

I will add a link to that app in the show notes in case you want to check it out.

The next thing that I do to find cheap books is I do keep an Amazon wish list.

What I do with this is I add all of the books that I'm interested in, and I have a few different wish lists that I've curated.

One of them is just ebooks or Kindle books.

One of them is physical books that for some reason I want them in the physical form.

This might be they're like a box set or there's some reason why I want a physical copy.

There's actually a lot of textbook-y type books that I'm interested in, and those are usually cheaper to get physical used copies of, and so I put those in a separate list.

Then I also have a wish list for Kindle Unlimited.

I'm going to talk about Kindle Unlimited in just a moment, but one of the things to know about Kindle Unlimited books is sometimes they become free.

What you do is you create this Amazon wish list.

Now recently, Amazon has changed something on the mobile user experience where when you go into your list area, this is something that's part of your profile when you go into just Amazon on the web, on your phone, there's a dropdown and you can go to lists.

When you go into that list area, it gives you a selection of an area where prices have dropped and also an area called deals.

Now I go in and check these every day to see what has dropped and what deals might be coming in because it takes everything that's on all of your lists and kind of merges them into these new areas where there's price drops and deals.

Now one of the things that I have noticed is the Kindle Unlimited books, sometimes they will drop all the way to zero.

So when I go to the price drops, I will sort from lowest to highest, and also recently, Amazon has made a change where they just mark all Kindle Unlimited books as zero if you are a Kindle Unlimited user.

And so I just take the lowest priced book and I click on it and check to see what is actually the lowest price.

Sometimes it's like 99 cents, but sometimes it is completely free.

So if it's completely free, I will pick it up.

Now the other thing that you will note when you go into like the deals category or the price drops category is there'll be a number of books on your list that have dropped to like 99 cents or $1.99 or $2.99.

And whatever you consider to be cheap, of course you might decide to pick up those books.

Now sometimes what I have found is if you wait long enough, pretty much every book will go on sale.

So unless it's something that feels really urgent to you, you can just kind of hang around and leave these things on your list and check them periodically or every day like me to see if you have some cheap book options.

The other thing that Amazon has added recently is something called Kindle Points.

So you can get points for every Kindle book that you are purchasing.

I think it's typically like a point for every dollar or something like that, but then they have two times days and three times days.

So if you join the Kindle like newsletter list, you get advance notice when you have these days where you're getting kind of multiplier of points.

And that is something that once you reach 300 points, you get a $3 coupon to spend on Kindle books.

So that's an option.

The other thing that also is kind of interesting about Kindle is they do monthly deals and they also do daily deals.

So if you go into Kindle and look on a regular basis, and I usually do check this out at the first of every month just to kind of see what's in there.

And then I will go check out the daily deals, which I get via email as well, just to see if there's anything that looks interesting to me.

I will say there's a number of books that come into these deals that are like almost brand new and that are very popular.

And maybe they were very popular like a year or two ago, but if you're looking for some of those books that you've been like seeing around, but you want to check out, this might be a great place to look.

And then the last thing in kind of the Amazon universe that I will mention around Kindle is there's something called Prime First Reads.

And if you are a Prime account holder in Amazon, once a month at the first of the month, you get these books released to you that are kind of books that are coming out in advance and that are being hyped by their editors.

And you can pick one of those books to read for free.

You can just own that book.

You can purchase it for free.

So that's something else that I look at at the very beginning of the month is to see if there's anything in Prime First Reads that looks interesting to me.

Sometimes there's short stories and things in there, but usually they have a really wide mix of genres.

And so I'll go in there and kind of check those out and often grab a free book.

Sometimes they even have two free books that are available to you through that program.

Okay.

So moving on to subscriptions.

So I have a number of different subscriptions that I purchase on a regular basis to give me access to different kinds of books.

So one of those subscriptions is called Everand.

This is formerly known as Scribd.

They rebranded in this past year and I am currently paying $11.99 per month.

And the thing that I find really helpful about Scribd is they have really great backlist options.

So if I'm looking for something that's a series from like a long time ago, it is highly likely that it's going to be in this app.

And I think I'm probably going to confuse this and call it Scribd versus Everand because I knew it as Scribd first, but the new brand is called Everand.

So I usually listen to, I would say two to three audio books in this app per month, if not more.

So I'm getting these audio books for about $4 to $6 or less a piece, depending on kind of my use of the app.

I will say I don't like reading eBooks in this app as much.

I just don't like the user experience, but audio books I have found to be really great.

So it is for me less than the price of a typical audio book per month to purchase this.

And audio books can be incredibly expensive.

They can range from $20 to $30 or more, depending on the length and the quality.

So to have an app where I can go in and have, you know, multiple audio books and I can have access to every month has been really great.

I've also found that there are some things in this particular app like Harvard Business Review books and things like that, that I haven't really been able to find elsewhere in an easy way.

So like I said, that backlist option is really interesting because there's just some stuff in here that I don't typically find in other places.

The second subscription that I will talk about is Kindle Unlimited.

So I briefly mentioned this before.

This is a ebook option that includes some audio books from Amazon.

And what I ended up doing for this after a little bit of research is they have a gift option for 24 months of Kindle Unlimited that's $172.66 and that's a little over $7 a month.

So basically I had my partner gift me this 24 month option so that I could have it for basically as cheap as I could get it.

I've read about, I just went back into my account to see like what is my usage of Kindle Unlimited and I've read over 70 books in about 18 months.

So the average book price for Kindle Unlimited is usually like $1.99 to $2.99.

So I would say I've pretty much broken even at this point in terms of what I'm paying for it.

The main reason why I went into Kindle Unlimited I would say is twofold.

So two main reasons.

One is there are a ton of trendy books on this platform that a lot of people talk about and that I like to follow along with the trends.

So social media will often kind of emphasize what's on Kindle Unlimited.

And so I like having access to that and not have to pay for all of these trendy books.

The second thing that I like about Kindle Unlimited is it unlocks some audiobook options.

Some of the books that are in Kindle Unlimited automatically come with an audio version or if you rent them through Kindle Unlimited sometimes you can get them as a cheaper audiobook version.

And so I appreciate that as an option as well.

The third subscription that I have is Audible and this is the audiobook option through Amazon.

I also want to mention Libro FM which is another audiobook platform that highlights independent bookstores if that's something that's important to you.

I have found that because I use so many Kindle ebooks this is kind of the universe that I'm in in terms of the platforms that I'm using.

Audible is the best fit for me.

So I'm currently paying for an Audible Premium Plus annual plan.

This is 24 credits all at once for about $230 a year.

So if you do the math it's about $950 per audiobook when using a credit.

And as I mentioned before full priced audiobooks can be $20 to $30 similar to hardback books.

So they're pretty expensive.

Now I also mentioned that Kindle books are often discounted on audio and there is this special thing that not a lot of people know about called the Kindle Matchmaker Program.

And if you Google Kindle Matchmaker and you're signed in to your Amazon account and you have Kindle ebooks it will show you all of the equivalent audiobooks and their prices for the Kindle books that you already own.

So recently Audible had a site wide sale for premium users and I went into the Kindle Matchmaker to see which of the books I already have were deeply discounted for that sale.

And I am slightly embarrassed to admit but I will be transparent about it.

I think I bought about 40 audiobooks on this sale because they were all averaging about $3 a piece which is based on what they are typically costing so deeply discounted.

One reason why that number is so high is one of my favorite series like the entire set of audiobooks were on sale for like $3 a piece so I grabbed all of them.

So Kindle Unlimited rental books also can have those audio discounts and there's obviously a lot happening between the Audible ecosystem and the Kindle ecosystem in terms of trying to A) keep you in those ecosystems and B) discounting across and allowing you to have kind of multiple modalities of the same book.

So when I search for audiobooks on the Audible platform if they are more than roughly $9.50 I consider using a credit because that means I'm getting more of a deal.

If they are less than $9.50 then I might purchase it with cash so it kind of just depends on you know what the audiobook is costing.

There are also Audible sales as I mentioned.

The one that was recently site-wide was significant in terms of like everything was basically discounted and there's also monthly deals and daily deals on Audible.

So I'm pretty much in that site you know kind of browsing and looking around all the time.

When I have certain books that I pick off my Kindle every month that I'm like looking to read I will often go there and see if there is an audiobook equivalent there.

I do check Everand and I do check the library before I will go to Audible but just depending on what is available on what platform sometimes going to Audible makes the most sense.

Okay some other cheap book options to consider.

One is a platform called Chirp for audiobooks.

This is a kind of discounted site where you can get audiobooks that are on sale.

I have actually found some really great deals on this particular site for series books.

There's a couple trilogies and things like that that I've been looking for that were deeply discounted and I was able to get them there.

There's also some free or discounted ebook email services that you can sign up for.

One is called Bookbub and one is called Free Booksy and these basically send you daily digests of books that are discounted.

I would say there are a lot of independent authors that are out there with books that are cheaper or discounted but every once in a while I'll see something come through one of these services that is a little bit more kind of traditionally published and something that I'm interested in.

I also do want to mention for physical copies of books you can check out BookOutlet which is a website that also has hard copies of books that are discounted.

When I was doing a recent research project that I've mentioned on the show before on Neurodiversity I went to BookOutlet and found a ton of the books that I was looking for for discounts for the physical copies and was able to pick those up.

The other place that I like to go for cheap physical copies of books is my local thrift store.

If you go to a Goodwill or some other kind of thrift store there are often like new copies of hardbacks for just a few dollars a piece.

Now every thrift store is a little bit different in terms of what they charge but my local thrift store charges I think $1.99 for hard copies and there are so many great finds.

You do have to kind of comb around but there are definitely things I've picked up there that were basically like new.

The other one that I'll mention just because we are in kind of a high-ride environment is that when you complete academic publisher tasks like reviewing a book proposal or reviewing a book manuscript or something along those lines you can sometimes get credit with that publisher for free books.

So now that credit doesn't often go very far.

They might say it's like $100 and that might be the equivalent of like two books or three books depending on the pricing of academic publishers but that is definitely something that you can keep in your back pocket if you're looking for academic books that are a little bit more cheaply priced.

So I would love to hear if you have other tips or tricks that you use when seeking out discounted books.

I will definitely be linking to a ton of these resources in the show notes if there's anything that you want to follow up on and check out at a later point.

As always, thanks for listening.

Thanks for listening to this episode of You've Got This.

You can access show notes and transcripts for each episode at drkatylinder.com/podcasts.

If you found this episode helpful, please also consider reading and/or reviewing the show through Apple Podcasts.

Thanks for watching.

[Music]