

Palace/CommonShelf of Massachusetts FAQs

What is Palace?

Palace is a free, open-source e-reader mobile app and digital content platform for public libraries. It brings eBooks, audiobooks, and digital collections from multiple vendors into a single, user-friendly app.

The Palace Project was born of the belief that the public library is the digital center of knowledge and creativity for their community. In his book *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*, author Eric Klinenberg writes, "The library really is a palace. It bestows nobility on people who otherwise couldn't afford a shred of it."

What is CommonShelf of Massachusetts?

CommonShelf is a collection of 20,000+ eBooks and audiobooks available to Massachusetts residents in the Palace app. Patrons can access the CommonShelf collection by downloading the Palace app and registering with an email address while located in Massachusetts. After registering, use the "find my library" search function to access "CommonShelf of Massachusetts."

CommonShelf is made possible by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Boston Public Library, the Massachusetts Library System and your local library with federal funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Is Palace the same as Libby/Hoopla?

Palace is separate from Libby and Hoopla and patrons are welcome to use all three platforms.

Palace provides access to Amazon/Audible-exclusive titles and indie publishers and authors which may not be available on Libby or Hoopla.

Do I need an Auburn library card to use Palace?

You do not need a physical library card to use Palace. Massachusetts residents can sign up for a virtual card in the Palace app.

If you already have a Boston Public Library eCard, you can log in with that card number and PIN instead.

The Palace Bookshelf is a free collection of over 30,000 public domain, open-access, and openly licensed e-books and audiobooks curated by librarians, always accessible to anyone without needing a library card, or account.

How do I sign up for a virtual card?

After downloading the Palace app, choose the option to create a virtual card and then complete the details in the form. Look in your email for your library card number. You can borrow items using that number and the password you created.

Do I need to be in Massachusetts to use Palace?

You will need to enable the app's permission to use your specific location, just one time, for the creation of your library card. Once you have registered your virtual card you can use the app anywhere!

Is Palace free to use?

Yes, Palace is completely free. The app is free to install, and all the digital content in Palace is free to borrow with your virtual library card. There are no subscription costs, no in-app purchases, and no late fees.

What are the borrowing limits for Palace?

The loan period for eBooks and audiobooks on Palace is 21 days.

You may borrow up to 10 titles and place up to 10 holds at a time.

Browsing & Borrowing

You can browse by xxx or search for a specific title by selecting the magnifying glass in the upper right corner of the screen.

Select a desired title and click "Get."

If your book is currently unavailable, click "Reserve" to place a hold. When an item is available to checkout, go to the Reservations tab and click Get to checkout.

Once your book has been downloaded, click "Read" or "Listen" and enjoy!

Can I download titles to read offline?

Yes, once you've borrowed a title, tap "Read" while you're connected to Wi-Fi to download it.

Can I renew a title?

The app does not have a "renew" option, but if an item is not on hold for another patron, you can simply re-borrow and download the title again once the loan period ends

How do I return a title?

If a book reaches its loan limit, it will automatically return. From the book details screen, click "Return" to return an item early.

What devices are compatible with Palace?

The Palace app is available in both the Apple App Store for iOS phones and devices running iOS 17+, and the Google Play Store for Android phones and devices running Android 8.0+.

Online reading and listening via desktop and mobile browsers varies by publisher/distributor — not all content is currently available. All content is available to read or listen to in the Palace mobile apps.

The following devices and operating systems will not work with the Palace app:

- Nook HD/HX+, Nook Tablet, Nook Color
- Kindle Fire, Kindle Paperwhite
- Kobo e-readers

Does Palace work with Apple CarPlay?

The Palace App fully supports Apple CarPlay. Users can browse their bookshelf and control audiobook playback (play/pause, skip, chapter navigation) directly from the car's screen.

What accessibility features does Palace offer?

Palace is built on Radium, a software in which basic accessibility support has been implemented. Palace should also work with mobile device assistive technologies such as Voice Over (iOS) and Talkback (Android) for those with visual impairments.

Palace offers multiple font options, including Open Dyslexic, Sans Serif, and Serif, various background color schemes, a range of adjustable font sizes, and adaptable screen brightness within its reader. These features are accessed by opening an ebook, tapping the middle of the screen, and then tapping the icon in the top right corner (TT on iOS, the cogwheel on Android).