When it comes to obtaining credit for the first time, it can be a true catch-22: Creditors usually won’t grant a person credit unless they have a good credit score. But how can that person have a credit score if they can’t obtain credit? Below are a few simple tips to start building that excellent credit score!

1. **Open a gas card or store card** – Creditors regarding gas credit cards (EX: Chevron, Shell, Exxon, etc.) or store cards (EX: Walmart, Target, Macy’s, etc.) are very lenient. Granted, these cards don’t build your score quickly, it does establish your credit history.

2. **Obtain a secured credit card from your bank/credit union** – Many banks have a program where they’ll issue you credit as long as you have money as collateral. For example, you can open up a credit card with a $500 limit by giving the bank $500 in cash as collateral. If you don’t pay your bills, the bank can simply take the cash (your credit will be hurt, though).

3. **Student loans** – Many people do not realize that student loans build credit. I don’t recommend taking out a student loan just for the sake of building credit, but if you need to take one out anyways, your credit will begin to be established.

4. **Open a credit card in college** – Major companies like Visa, MasterCard, and Discover spend millions of dollars each year in an attempt to make college students loyal to their brands for the rest of their lives. Since this is the first card for most students, the interest rate and possible annual fee is unattractive, but it will start building your credit. Just remember to keep up on your payments of course! Once your credit is a little stronger, feel free to cancel your first card.

**Purchasing Textbook Tips**

Whether you are shopping for the summer semester or know what materials are required for next fall, at some point, all students are going to need to purchase a textbook. Textbooks are not cheap and they come out with newer editions all the time. Because of this, they are not always easy to sell back. The revolving cycle will go on until you’re done with classes so you should get the best deal you can. Here are some tips that have worked best for me:

1. If it is a class you are only taking as a requirement for your degree or something you are not very interested in, I recommend you **rent the textbooks**. In most cases, students buy the textbooks and sell them back for a fraction of what they paid. While renting, I pay a fraction of what the book actually costs. The only thing you need to worry about is taking care of the book; if you ruin it they may not let you return it. Here are a couple trusted places I have used for renting books:
• **Campus Bookstore** - This way, I know I have the correct edition the Professor wants. It’s also at a convenient location for picking up and returning. I was even able to rent online and pick-up only took a few minutes.

• **Book Renter** - I have always been very satisfied with the books I have rented from [www.bookrenter.com](http://www.bookrenter.com). They have been in good/fair condition every time I have rented from them (which is at least once a semester), and the shipping to and back is free!

*You may want to read other reviews too before renting anywhere to see what experiences other users have had.*

2. If you do not feel like renting is the best choice for you and want to keep your books after the semester is over, then I would tell you to **buy used textbooks**. They are always cheaper than buying new. Unless your Professor is requiring the newest edition that came out recently, you will most likely be able to find a used textbook, whether it is from your campus store or online. Just make sure you buy the correct edition because they may change the page numbers and chapters enough to throw you off. Also, when shopping for used textbooks, notice the condition. Often they will mention condition and note if it has been written in or if some pages are torn.

3. My next tip would be to **shop around for the best deal**. If you don’t feel comfortable renting a book or would like to buy brand new you can still look for the best deal. I like to buy new when it is for a course I know will be useful for my career or something I am very interested in. For the best deal, sometimes you will be able to find websites that compare prices of the book you are looking for. I always look on the campus website when I am looking at my required materials and it shows prices from other places for the same book and same edition. That way you know you are getting the right one for your class. You are also going to be able to get the most money selling it back if you bought it brand new although it could be much lower than you bought it for.

I hope you are able to save yourself some money next semester when shopping for these pricey but necessary materials for your classes. Good luck!

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**Come visit us today to see what resources we have to help you reach your financial needs and goals!**

*Olpin Student Union Bldg., Room 317*

*Visit our website at: [http://personal-money-management.utah.edu/](http://personal-money-management.utah.edu/)*