

Post-Seminary

Suggested Reading List

INTRODUCTION

1. This suggested reading list has evolved in response to the demand from young women leaving seminary for a guide to how to continue their Jewish reading and learning once they leave the 'bubble' of Seminary life.

2. There are thousands of wonderful sefarim on the market and my list is not intended to be comprehensive or definitive. It also unavoidably reflects my own particular tastes. These are the books that have had and continue to have a significant impact on me, and which I feel could be useful for a broad range of students. The list is aimed at an intelligent (although not necessarily 'intellectual'¹) student who is interested in seeing a range of perspectives and approaches. Inevitably, given the broad range of halachic and hashkafic approaches within the contemporary orthodox world, not every book will appeal to every reader. Some will be too 'academic' for some people and some will be too 'frummy' for others. Individuals can, and should, seek the advice of their own religious mentors as to what material will best suit them personally. I also recommend that you do your own on-line research about the authors I have listed. Many of them have written and audio shiurim on line and you can get your own feel for their style and substance.

3. There are around 160 books on the list. Don't be overwhelmed. You don't have to read them all! I have divided the list into 30 categories. Look into the areas you're most interested in and try some out.

4. This list is limited to books, rather than digital and on-line resources. Many students today are more likely to look on-line before opening a sefer. For a detailed list of on-line sites and resources see the following link on my website - <http://www.rabbimanning.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/On-Line-Web-Resources1.pdf> . I hope to keep this updated fairly regularly.

¹ For the student interested in a more 'academic' selection of books on some of these topics, I have suggestions which I would be happy to share.

5. I have purposely limited the recommendations to secondary sources, mostly in English. I have also included a few Hebrew sefarim which should be accessible (at least to some degree) by many seminary leavers.
6. Students MUST also look to the primary sources – Tanach, Gemara, Midrash, Rishonim, Acharonim and their respective commentaries – where they are able. I have not included these classics (such as the Sefer HaChinuch or the Kuzari etc) in my list but HUNDREDS of these primary sources are now available in English translation and I strongly advice that you read them.
7. Most of the books on this list are available from good Jewish book stores² or from online stores – both Jewish (eg Artscroll, Feldheim etc) and Amazon.
8. I have chosen only a few books in each heading. There are thousands more. If there is an area or issue that specifically interests you, please feel free to be in touch with me and I will try to make other suggestions.
9. If YOU have comments, thoughts and ideas of books that you think I should read and/or should be added to the list, please be in touch with me – rabbi@rabbimanning.com

² As for recommended book stores - in Jerusalem, Manny's Book Store in Mea Shearim has a wide range of English titles. But for a broader and more eclectic range which crosses many hashkafic boundaries try Pomeranz Bookseller near Ben Yehuda. A great bookstore in Teaneck is The Judaica House. Good annual book sales are the YU Seforim Sale at YU in February, the Mosad HaRav Kook sale in Kiryat Moshe in Nissan (mostly Hebrew sefarim) and the sales at the Yemei Iyun BaTanach at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shevut at the beginning of Av.

1. CHUMASH AND COMMENTARIES

The Living Torah ³	R' Aryeh Kaplan
Rav Hirsch on Chumash ⁴	
Frameworks	R' Mattis Weinberg ⁵
Between the Lines of the Bible (2 Parts)	R' Yitzchak Etshalom ⁶

2. TANACH AND COMMENTARIES⁷

The Queen You Thought You Knew	R' Dovid Fohrman ⁸
The Beast that Crouches at the Door	R' Dovid Fohrman

3. SHABBAT

The Sabbath	Dayan Dr. Isidor Grunfield
Sabbath: Day of Eternity	R' Aryeh Kaplan ⁹
The Sabbath	R' Abraham J Heschel ¹⁰

³ An interesting English translation of the Chumash, with helpful historical and contextual notes, maps and charts.

⁴ Available in an older and also a more recently published English translation. Read it slowly and carefully to build a picture of Rav Hirsch's worldview.

⁵ A very out-of-the-box thinker drawing unconventional conclusions from a massive range of sources. Like nothing you've seen before.

⁶ One of the few English speaking representatives of the 'Gush' school of Parshanut. See also R' Menachem Leibtag's website – www.tanach.org

⁷ In general terms most of the exciting new ideas in Tanach are emerging from the 'New School' of Tanach study based in Yeshivat Har Etzion ('Gush') and its sister college, Michlelet Herzog. Most of this is in Hebrew although some is emerging in English, for example R' Menachem Leibtag – tanach.org, and through writers such as Yael Ziegler.

⁸ One of the few Rabbanim outside Israel producing really exciting and novel work on Tanach.

⁹ Read **EVERYTHING** you can by R' Aryeh Kaplan. You can pick up many of his works together in The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology.

¹⁰ A controversial figure who was closely associated with the Conservative movement and JTS for much of his life. Some of R' Heschel's views on other issues are outside the 'comfort zone' of most Orthodox thinkers today, but this specific sefer on the meaning of Shabbat is a classic and a must read.

4. CHAGIM AND THE HOLIDAYS

Book of Our Heritage
The Festivals in Halacha
Patterns in Time

Eliyahu Kitov
R' Shlomo Zevin
R' Mattis Weinberg¹¹

5. PRAYER

The World of Prayer

R' Eli Munk

6. MIDRASH

The Juggler and the King
Learning to Read Midrash

R' Aharon Feldman
Simi Peters

7. CONTEMPORARY HALACHIC ISSUES

Contemporary Halachic Problems
Gray Matter
Dalet Amot & others

R' J. David Bleich (6 vols)
R' Chaim Jachter (4 vols)
R' Ari Enkin (7 vols)

8. HALACHA

8.1 Generally

פניני הלכה – ר' אליעזר מלמד¹²

¹¹ Only 2 vols ever came out – Chanukah (a mind-stretching read) and Rosh Hashana.

¹² An important and senior posek in the Dati Leumi world in Israel.

8.2 Hilchot Shabbat

The 39 Melochos

The series (now 6 or 7 sefarim) by

The Halachos of Shabbos

The Halachos of Muktzeh

The Halachos of Refuah

¹⁵שמירת שבת כהלכתה – ר' יהושע נויברייט

R' Dovid Ribiat¹³

R' Simcha Bunim Cohen

R' Shimon Eider¹⁴

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

8.3 Hilchot Chagim

Chol HaMoed

The Halachos of Pesach

R' Dovid Zucker/R' Moshe Francis

R' Shimon Eider

8.4 Hilchot Berachot

The Halachos of Brochos

Halachos of K'zayis

The Laws of B'rachos

וזאת הברכה – ר' אלכסדר מנדלבוים

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Binyomin Forst

8.5 Monetary Halacha

The Laws of Tzedakka and Maaser

Halachos of Other People's Money

The Laws of Ribbis

R' Shimon Taub

R' Yisrael Pinchas Bodner

R' Yisroel Reisman

8.6 Hilchot Bein Adam Lechavero

The Right and the Good

Divine Footsteps

R' Daniel Feldman¹⁶

R' Daniel Feldman

¹³ Very comprehensive. Try to read at least some of the detailed Hebrew foot notes at the back.

¹⁴ Unfortunately only on a few of the melachot up to Bishul.

¹⁵ Now in third edition in Hebrew. There is an English translation of the second edition, but the Hebrew (with footnotes) is far better – worth struggling through!

¹⁶ One of the senior and inspiring talmidei chachamim from the world of YU.

8.7 Hilchot Tefilla

Priority in Prayer
Rigshei Lev (on women's tefilla)
אשי ישראל – ר' ירשאל פופיופר

R' Yisroel Feinhandler
R' Menachem Nissel

8.8 Hilchot Kashrut

Kashrus in the Kitchen Q&A
The Laws of Kashrus

R' Avi Wiesenfeld
R' Binyamin Forst

8.9 Hilchot Shemitta

Shemitta

R' Yosef Zvi Rimon¹⁷

9. HASHKAFA

The Nineteen Letters
Chorev¹⁸
Introduction to Horeb¹⁹
The Lonely Man of Faith
Handbook of Jewish Thought (2 vols)
The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology (2 vols)
Living Inspired
Worldmask
Letters to a Buddhist Jew
Permission to Believe/Receive²⁰
Essential Essays on Judaism
The Eye of the Storm²¹

R' Shimon Refael Hirsch
R' Shimon Refael Hirsch
R' I.Grunfield
R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
R' Aryeh Kaplan
R' Aryeh Kaplan
R' Akiva Tatz
R' Akiva Tatz
R' Akiva Tatz
R' Lawrence Keleman
R' Eliezer Berkovits
R' Aharon Feldman

¹⁷ One of the leading poskim in the Religious Zionist world.

¹⁸ A MUST!!! Not the easiest of quick-reads but so worth tackling. Look at the 19 Letters first and then graduate to Chorev.

¹⁹ Effectively a book in itself. Often printed in the front of English editions of Chorev.

²⁰ Two short books setting out a basic outline of some of the classic philosophical and traditional proofs for the existence of God and the Authenticity of the Torah. There is MUCH more to say and R' Keleman's books are (intentionally) fairly simplified. Read them as a starting primer and then research the individual topics in more depth.

Hashgachah Pratis ²²	R' Aryeh Leibowitz
The Paths of Providence ²³	Chaim Gross
Rupture and Reconstruction ²⁴	R' Haym Soloveitchik
The Choice to Be ²⁵	R' Jeremy Kagan
Torah U'Madda ²⁶	R' Norman Lamm
Maimonides Confrontation with Mysticism ²⁷	Menachem Kellner ²⁸
Science in the Beit Midrash ²⁹	Menachem Kellner
Torah in the Observatory ³⁰	Menachem Kellner
The Limits of Orthodox Theology ³¹	Marc Shapiro
Must a Jew Believe Anything? ³²	Menachem Kellner
The Rebbe, The Messiah and the Scandal of Orthodox Indifference ³³	R' David Berger
The Messiah Problem ³⁴	R' Chaim Rappaport
Orthodox Forum Publications ³⁵	

²¹ A collection of thought-through essays outlining the Charedi hashkafic position on many contemporary issues. Quite fiery in places!

²² A good analysis of some of the key questions surrounding Divine Providence.

²³ An excellent and comprehensive work on all of the key issues surrounding Divine Providence – also nicely written in a very readable way.

²⁴ Really a long article and available free online. An important insight into how 20C Orthodox Judaism emerged.

²⁵ An excellent contemporary presentation of classic hashkafic themes from the Maharal and other mystical sources on the issue of free choice. Much of this hashkafa is the backbone of modern Jewish teaching on these issues.

²⁶ An analysis of the fundamental defining doctrine on Modern Orthodoxy and the synthesis between Kodesh and Chol. A critical read for someone trying to work out what the Modern Orthodox world stands for.

²⁷ Kellner deals with around 10 key hashkafic issues, showing how the Rambam's perspective differed from that of the proto-kabbalists of the day. Highly recommended.

²⁸ Kellner is an academic in Haifa University with a specialism in the Rambam. He combines a fairly traditional personal approach (coming from an observant background) with a sharp academic analysis and a very readable writing style. He has many other books too, most of which I would recommend.

²⁹ On the Rambam's philosophy and hashkafa.

³⁰ On the Ralbag - Gersonides

³¹ A controversial book. Shapiro analyses positions in the history of Jewish thought on the 13 Ikarim of the Rambam. The book is designed to show that many authorities disputed the Rambam's conception of the Ikarim. Given that these Ikarim are central to many people's definition of Orthodoxy today, the book was bound to raise a storm, and it did! Read with care.

³² Like Shapiro's book, Kellner analyses the 13 Ikarim, asking if they are as simply defined as we sometimes think.

³³ A sharp critique of the post-Rebbe messianism of the Chabad movement

³⁴ An intelligent and spirited response to R' Berger's book from a major talmid chacham connected with Chabad

³⁵ The Orthodox Form produces a book every year or so containing excellent articles on contemporary hashkafic issues, especially those affecting the Modern Orthodox world.

10. JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

God, Man and History	R' Eliezer Berkowitz
The Dignity of Difference	R' Jonathan Sacks
Maimonides and the Book that Changed Judaism ³⁶	Micah Goodman
Introduction to Medieval Jewish Philosophy ³⁷	Daniel Rynhold

11. HOLOCAUST ISSUES

Man's Search for Meaning	Viktor Frankl
Out of the Depths	R' Israel Meir Lau

12. RAV SOLOVEITCHIK

The Lonely Man of Faith ³⁸	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Halachic Man	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
The Emergence of Ethical Man	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik

13. RAV KOOK

The Essential Writings of Rav Kook	Ben Zion Bokser
Orot	trans R' Bezalel Meor
The Limit of Intellectual Freedom	
- The Letters of Rav Kook	R' Bezalel Naor

14. DEATH AND MOURNING

The Bridge of Life	R' Yechiel Michel Tukichinsky
The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning	R' Maurice Lamm

³⁶ An introduction to understanding Moreh Nevuchim

³⁷ A very readable and helpful book. Very highly recommended.

³⁸ Read them in this order. Go on-line to get guidance in how to learn these sefarim – YUTorah and also www.hashkafacircle.com.

15. ORAL LAW AND HALACHIC PROCESS³⁹

15.1 Introductory

The Infinite Chain: Torah, Mesorah & Man	R' Nathan Lopes-Cardozo
The Oral and the Written Torah	R' Nathan Lopes-Cardozo
The Oral Law	R' H. Chaim Schimmel ⁴⁰
The Oral Law of Sinai (Mishnah)	R' Berel Wein ⁴¹
Vision & Valor (Talmud)	R' Berel Wein
תורה מסיני – יהודה איזנברג ועמירם דומוביץ	
The Making of a Halachic Decision	R' Moshe Walter
Halachic Man	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
The Essential Talmud	R' Adin Steinsaltz
Challenge/Anvil/Legacy of Sinai	R' Zechariah Fendel ⁴²

15.2 Advanced

The Dynamics of Dispute	R' Zvi Lampel ⁴³
The Open Canon	Avi Sagi ⁴⁴
How Do We Know This	Jay M Harris ⁴⁵
Meta-Halakhah	Moshe Kopel
Not In Heaven	R' Eliezer Berkovitz ⁴⁶
The Student's Guide Through the Talmud	R. Zvi Hirsch Chajes ⁴⁷
מסיני ללשכת הגזית – שלמה קסירר ושלמה גליקסברג	
מסורת התורה שבעל-פה – שלמה זלמן הבלין	

³⁹ This particular topic is a special interest of mine. I have categorised the books by level. I am producing a separate detailed reading list dedicated to this topic alone. Please contact me if you would like a copy.

⁴⁰ Probably the best initial primer in English.

⁴¹ These sefarim by Rabbi Wein chart the development of the Mishna and Talmud. Also nicely illustrated.

⁴² 3 sefarim containing charts, maps and analysis of the history of Oral Law, based entirely on classic Torah sources.

⁴³ A detailed look at the origins of machloket with a clear perspective from within the yeshiva world.

⁴⁴ Written using a more academic method and style but based on classic sources - a very comprehensive look at 'Elu v'elu'.

⁴⁵ Written as a fully academic study by a Harvard academic - a fascinating insight into the workings of halachic Drash and approaches to Drash throughout history. Only for the more academically inclined.

⁴⁶ A controversial figure in the mid-late 20C Orthodox world. Most of the book is a superb analysis of Oral Law. The end sections on R' Berkovits vision of halachic development often strain at (and beyond?) the fringes of Orthodox thought.

⁴⁷ Classic Torah work translated from Hebrew and annotated - detailed and technical analysis for the serious student.

ההלכה כוחה ותפקידה – אליעזר ברקוביץ
והלכה כבית הלל – יובל שרלו

15.3 Classic Sources available in English translation

The Path of Torah	Netziv (trans R' Elchanan Greenman)
Maimonides Introduction to the Talmud	trans Tzvi Lampel
The Students Guide through the Talmud	R' Tzvi H. Chayes (trans Jacob Shachter)
The Iggeret of R' Sherira Gaon	R' Nosson Dovid Rabinowitz

16. ISRAEL AND ZIONISM

Kol Dodi Dofek (Eng trans)	R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik
Israel – A History	Martin Gilbert
Like Dreamers ⁴⁸	Yossi Klein HaLevi
Rebels in the Holy Land ⁴⁹	Sam Finkel
Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism ⁵⁰	Aviezer Ravitsky

17. BIOGRAPHY

Rav Kook - An Angel Among Men	Simcha Raz
Rav Kook - Mystic in a time of Revolution ⁵¹	Yehuda Mirsky
R' Yehiel Jacob Weinberg	
(Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy)	Marc Shapiro ⁵²
Maimonides	Joel Kraemer
Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer	David Ellenson
My Uncle The Netziv/ Recollections ⁵³	trans Moshe Dombey

⁴⁸ A fantastic insight into Israeli history and politics since 1967 through the life stories of the Paratroopers that took Har HaBayit during the 6 Day War. An important read if you want to understand Left/Right/Religious/Secular issues in Israel today.

⁴⁹ A fantastic work, with great maps and photos, charting the First Aliyah, the early creation of the New Yishuv and the Shemitta crises of the late 19C.

⁵⁰ A clear analysis of the contemporary religious positions on Zionism – pro-, neutral and anti-.

⁵¹ Also a great initial primer for the thought of Rav Kook.

⁵² Another controversial figure from the Modern Orthodox world. Superb researcher and sharp social commentator!

A Tzaddik in our Time⁵⁴
 Rebbe⁵⁵

Simcha Raz
 Joseph Telushkin

18. MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

Tradition Journal⁵⁶
 Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society
 Hakira Journal⁵⁷
 Orthodox Forum series
 Torah U'Madda Journal⁵⁸

19. JEWISH HISTORY

Jewish History Trilogy	
Triumph of Survival, Echoes of Glory, Herald of Destiny	R' Berel Wein
The Sages (4 vols)	R' Benny Lau ⁵⁹
Atlas of Jewish History	Martin Gilbert
The Aleppo Codex	Matti Friedman
Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls	Prof. Lawrence Schiffman
From Text to Tradition	Prof. Lawrence Schiffman
Sacred Trash ⁶⁰	Adina Hoffman & Peter Cole

⁵³ Two different books, both translated selections from the Mekor Baruch by R' Baruch HaLevi Epstein. A window into the 19C Lithuanian world.

⁵⁴ On the life of R' Aryeh Levine.

⁵⁵ A fascinating and inspiring account of the life of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

⁵⁶ Also available free on line at <http://traditionarchive.org/archives/>.

⁵⁷ Available free on line at <http://173.203.154.59/rhsweb/hakirahbrowsedb.asp>.

⁵⁸ Many of which can be downloaded free from YU Torah.

⁵⁹ A leading Rabbi in the Modern Orthodox world in Israel. These are more than just history or biography. Rabbi Lau seeks to use academic tools to develop classic sources to build a picture of the lives and thought of Chazal.

⁶⁰ On the discovery of the Cairo Genieza.

20. MARRIAGE

Made in Heaven
The Jewish Way in Love and Marriage

R' Aryeh Kaplan
R' Maurice Lamm

21. MYSTICISM

Endless Light
The Torah as God's Mind

R' David Aaron⁶¹
R' Nathan Lopes-Cardozo

22. WOMEN AND JUDAISM

Circle, Arrow, Spiral - Exploring Gender in Judaism⁶²
Jewish Women in Jewish Law⁶³
Serving the Creator, The Modest Way, Partners in Life⁶⁴
Women, Jewish Law and Modernity⁶⁵
Understanding Tzniut

Miriam Kosman
R' Moshe Meiselman
R' Getsel Ellinson
R' Joel Wolowelsky
R' Yehuda Henkin⁶⁶

23. TORAH AND SCIENCE

The Great Partnership
In The Beginning
Fossils and Faith

R' Jonathan Sacks⁶⁷
Nathan Aviezer⁶⁸
Nathan Aviezer

⁶¹ An unconventional thinking with a strong leaning towards the mystical and kabbalistic and new way of integrating these ideas into real life.

⁶² A recent sefer setting out clearly kabbalistic perspectives on 'male' and 'female'. An important read to understand a well-argued and intelligent presentation from a Charedi perspective.

⁶³ Also a very clear and thoughtful presentation by a well know Charedi Rosh Yeshiva.

⁶⁴ Mostly sources rather than commentary – great for learning through with a chavruta.

⁶⁵ A more 'centrist' presentation by a senior YU rabbi.

⁶⁶ Rabbi Henkin is a senior posek from the Modern Orthodox/Religious Zoinist world. His approach is quite unique. For another (hopefully helpful) perspective on Tzniut see <http://www.rabbimanning.com/index.php/audio-shiurim/understanding-tzniut/>

⁶⁷ Perhaps the most important book in the list. A MUST read for a thinking Jew in the modern world.

⁶⁸ Aviezer and Schroeder are religiously observant scientists with interest perspectives and a strong 'kiruv' focus. They often disagree about the science as well as the Jewish conclusions!

The Science of G-d	Gerald Schroeder
The Science in Torah	R' Yehuda Levi
Torah and Science	R' Yehuda Levi
The Science of Torah	R' Natan Slifkin ⁶⁹
The Challenge of Creation	R' Natan Slifkin
Torah Chazal Science	R' Moshe Meiselman ⁷⁰
Challenge	Cyril Domb /R' Aryeh Carmell ⁷¹
Encounter	H. Schimmel/Aryeh Carmell

24. GEMARA AND TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY

Journeys in Talmud	R' Immanuel Bernstein
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25. BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND ACADEMIC APPROACHES TO TEXTS⁷²

The Documentary Hypothesis	R' Umberto Cassuto ⁷³
A Journey Through Torah	Ben Zion Katz ⁷⁴
BeEinei Elohim VeAdam (Heb)	ed Yehudah Brandes
Ad HaYom HaZeh (Heb)	R' Amnon Bazak

⁶⁹ Rabbi Slifkin stirred up a major controversy around 8 years ago with these sefarim. Some major Torah leaders sought to put the books in cherem. Others rallied around R' Slifkin. Yet others felt that the controversy made it harder to bring a much needed and reasoned critique against R' Slifkin's positions.

⁷⁰ R' Meiselman has written a response (although not in name) to R' Slifkin's sefarim. Both approaches should be read and considered. As in all such works, a good science background (or someone to advise you who knows their science) is always recommended to check that the science data is up-to-date and correctly represented.

⁷¹ This, and its sequel, Encounter, are old classics. The science discussed has often been superseded BUT read them for the methodology as to how a thinking modern observant Jews tackles apparent and real conflicts between science and religion.

⁷² This topic has had something of a revival recently. Clearly it is not new and there are classic responses to the 19C schools of Wissenschaft Des Judentums. There is some good online discussion of this (and some bad!!). Look for the material coming from Har Etzion, in particular R' Menachem Leibtag and R' Amnon Bazak.

⁷³ A classic (1930s) refutation of the Documentary Hypothesis.

⁷⁴ A modern analysis of flaws and circular argumentation in the recent incarnations of the Documentary Hypothesis.

26. CALENDAR

Understanding the Jewish Calendar

Nathan Bushwick

27. SEXUALITYJudaism and Homosexuality
Talking about Intimacy and Sexuality⁷⁶R' Chaim Rappaport⁷⁵
Dr Yocheved Debow**28. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ETHICS**

Defending the Human Spirit

R' Warren Goldstein⁷⁷**29. CHASIDUT**Shem MiShmuel
The Quest for Authenticitytrans. R' Zvi Belovski
R' Michael Rosen**30. CHINUCH AND CHILDREN**

Planting & Building

R' Shlomo Wolbe

⁷⁵ By far the best book out there on Jewish perspectives on these issues. R' Rappaport is a major talmid chacham and the book is fantastically sourced and researched. It is also written with a quest for authenticity at the same time as sensitivity.

⁷⁶ A very good book, aimed at adolescents and those counselling them. There is very little written on these issues from an authentic Jewish perspective.

⁷⁷ Very impressive Chief Rabbi of S. Africa. This is his PhD thesis. Hear and read his other material where you can.