

Install Zotero before class

Week 3 is a hands-on laboratory. Bring a laptop with Zotero working. If you arrive without it you will spend the session watching, and there is no time to install it in the room.

Do this the day before, not on the way in. Campus wifi on a Thursday morning is not a good place to download an installer for the first time.

1. Install the desktop application

Go to zotero.org/download and take the version offered for your machine. It is free, and no account is needed to install it.

macOS	One universal download; it covers both Intel and Apple Silicon. Needs macOS 10.15 or later.
Windows	Take the 64-bit installer unless you know you need ARM or 32-bit. Needs Windows 10 or later.
Linux	64-bit, ARM64 and 32-bit builds are all on the page.

2. Install the browser connector — this is a separate download

The connector is what saves a paper into Zotero from a journal page. It does **not** come with the desktop app. Get it from zotero.org/download/connectors.

- Chrome, Edge, Firefox: install the extension from that page. **Update your browser first** — only current versions are supported, and an out-of-date Chrome is the most common reason the icon never appears.
- Safari: nothing to download. The connector ships inside the desktop app — launch Zotero once, then switch it on in Safari → Settings → Extensions.

3. Make a free account and turn on syncing

Register at zotero.org/user/register, then in Zotero: Settings → Sync → enter your login.

Your library	Records, notes, tags and links sync free, with no limit.
Your PDFs	Files are separate: 300 MB free, paid plans above that. If you sync every PDF you will reach the free limit. Keeping PDFs local is a perfectly good choice.

4. Check it works — three minutes

1	Open Zotero. You should see an empty library.
2	Open any journal article page in your browser. A Zotero icon should appear in the toolbar.
3	Click it. The paper should appear in Zotero.
4	Open Microsoft Word. A Zotero tab should be in the ribbon — the plugin installs itself, there is nothing to download. LibreOffice users also need Java installed.

If all four worked, you are ready. Bring the laptop and its charger.

If something goes wrong

These four cover almost everything students hit. None of them means your machine is broken.

What you see	What to do
macOS: "Zotero is damaged and can't be opened."	Two causes. Either your macOS is older than 10.15 — check first. Or the app bundle was altered, which usually happens after moving to a new Mac with Migration Assistant. Fix: drag Zotero from Applications to the Bin and install it again from zotero.org/download . Your library is stored separately and is not affected.
No connector icon in the browser toolbar	Update the browser, then reinstall the connector. Only current browser versions are supported. In Chrome check the extension is enabled and pinned to the toolbar.
Nothing saves while you are on campus wifi	A stored proxy entry. Open the connector preferences → Proxies and delete the entry. Note that Safari has no Proxies pane, so on campus use Chrome or Firefox.
No Zotero tab in LibreOffice	LibreOffice integration needs a Java runtime. Install a JRE, restart both programs.

Still stuck?

- Come to class anyway. You will work with a neighbour and we will sort it out in the break.
- Everything demonstrated in class is repeatable at home afterwards — nothing is lost permanently.

Two things you do not need

- A paid plan. *Nothing in this course requires one.*
- Plugins. *Zotero does not maintain a plugin list, and its own documentation warns that a plugin has full access to your Zotero and your computer. Zotero also now releases a new major version every six to ten weeks, and third-party plugins break on those releases. Nothing in this course needs one.*

Bring to Week 3: laptop · charger · Zotero installed and signed in · the connector working · one published paper from your own area, printed.

Zotero details on this sheet were checked against [zotero.org](https://www.zotero.org) on 16 August 2026. Zotero releases often; if the download page looks different from this description, trust the page.