



By Dr. Telly Kamelia

## If you only need the buying answer

The cheapest short-term route for **Principles of Foundation Engineering** is the digital edition, not the hardcover. If your goal is only to get through one course at the lowest immediate cost, digital wins. The reason the current hardcover still deserves attention is that it sits far below the broader new-print market. For students who expect to keep a geotechnical reference for later soil, foundation, or civil-engineering work, the current hardcover is still a strong ownership route.

Format	Source	Price	
Hardcover	Merybook	\$90.39	<a href="#">Check price</a>
Digital	Cengage / VitalSource market	\$54.99	<a href="#">Check price</a>
New hardcover market	University / retail market	\$253.95 to \$282.95	<a href="#">Check price</a>

This is therefore a split case rather than a pure print win. Digital is clearly better for temporary access. But if you want the book as a retained engineering reference, the current hardcover is dramatically better than the surrounding ownership market.

## What this book actually teaches

Foundation engineering matters because it trains students to think below the visible structure. A strong text in this area explains how loads move into soils, how bearing and settlement are evaluated, how shallow and deep foundations differ, and how subsurface conditions affect design choices in the real world. It is one of those books that becomes more useful when students stop treating it as exam material and start seeing it as design reasoning.

That is why ownership can still make sense. Students in civil, geotechnical, structural, and construction pathways often come back to these concepts later. A hardcover reference that survives beyond one term can be more useful than a cheaper digital

rental that disappears as soon as the class ends.

## **Who should choose digital and who should buy hardcover**

Choose digital if this is a one-course requirement and you want the lowest short-term cost. Choose the hardcover if you expect to revisit foundation and geotechnical concepts later or want a durable reference on your shelf. In the current market, digital wins short-term, but the hardcover still wins on ownership value.

## **Sources checked**

- [Merybook hardcover listing search](#)
- [Cengage search for ISBN 9780357684658](#)
- [General market search for ISBN 9780357684658](#)