For centuries, pharmacopoeias were not only used as reference volumes but also as teaching aids. In the 18th century, specific textbooks primarily intended for pharmaceutical education were edited. In Germany, Karl Gottfried Hagen’s “Lehrbuch der Apothekerkunst” (1778) clearly marked a turning point as did Jacques Francois Demachy’s “Manuel de Pharmaciens” (1788) in France. During the following decades, many textbooks were edited by outstanding pharmacists. The history of textbooks reflects the development of pharmaceutical education, which has initially been focussed on drug compounding but started to diversify into several academic disciplines. Outstanding textbooks became vehicles of knowledge transfer, in particular the “Lehrbuch der Pharmazeutischen Technik” by Karl-Friedrich Mohr (1847), which has been translated into English by Theophilus Redwood and further adapted for the US market by William Procter (both 1849). Some French textbooks were soon translated into German, in particular that of Edme-Jean B. Bouillon-Langrange which appeared in four volumes in the years 1796/1797. The development of Japanese pharmaceutical textbook literature was significantly influenced by works written by Johann B. Trommsdorf. In the near future, web-based educational services like the Austrian “Aspirantenhandbuch” may partly substitute traditional textbooks.