What's the difference between admin managed and self-administered reader passwords?

Last modified on 11/07/2026 12:01 pm EST

You have two options for reader password management:

- **Self-administered Passwords:** Allow readers to administer their own passwords (default)
- **Managed Passwords:** Passwords can only be managed by KnowledgeOwl admins

Allowing readers to administer their own password also enables reader welcome emails, password reset emails, and reader signups. Emails are not sent for managed passwords.

To toggle between the password management options:

1. Go to **Security and access > Readers** (or **Account > Readers**).
2. Open the **Settings** tab.
3. The **Password Management** settings are the first option in the **Reader Password Security** section.

Self-administered passwords

To use this option, select **Allow readers to administer their own passwords**.



Valid emails only
You must have reader usernames that are valid email addresses for this option to work properly!

Self-administered passwords are set and reset by the reader themselves via email. When using self-administered passwords, readers are sent a welcome email containing a temporary password and will be asked to update their password when they first log in.

If a reader forgets or wants to reset their password, they can select **Reset Password** on the reader login page. This sends a temporary password to their email address to create a new password.

KnowledgeOwl admins can reset self-administered passwords either by sending a new temporary password or manually setting a temporary passwords; readers will be asked to update their password when they log in with the temporary one.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

You can also customize reader welcome and reader password reset emails in the Readers **Settings** tab. Reader emails are account-wide so the same email is sent for all knowledge bases in an account.



Automatic welcome emails
When creating readers with self-administered passwords, readers will automatically be sent a welcome email with their temporary password when you add a single reader or create readers from a spreadsheet.

If you don't want the welcome email sent when you first create a new reader, choose Managed Passwords, create the readers with an admin password, and switch back to Self-Administered Passwords. The admin password will then be used as a temporary password; readers will be asked to update them when they log in.

Managed passwords

To use this option, select **Passwords can only be managed by KnowledgeOwl admins**.

Managed passwords can only be set and reset by a KnowledgeOwl admin (an author with **Full Admin** or **Reader Admin** permissions). When using managed passwords, you'll need to give the reader their username and password through your own system. If the reader forgets their password, they'll need to contact you to retrieve or reset it. No welcome or password reset emails are sent for managed passwords; all reader communication occurs outside of KnowledgeOwl.

When creating readers with managed passwords, you will need to set the password in the **Admin Managed Password** field when adding a single reader or have a column with the passwords when creating readers in bulk.

Account-wide password management

Reader settings are account-wide so the password management option will apply to all knowledge bases on an account by default. Self-administered passwords are the default option for password management.

Different password management for different knowledge bases

If you have multiple knowledge bases and you want to have one or more that don't use the account-wide password management, change that knowledge base's password management:

1. Go to **Security and access > Access & SSO**.
2. In the **Login methods** card, select **Set up** or **Manage** in the **Direct login** row.
3. In the **Password management** card, change the selection from **Use the account setting**:
    a. Select **Admins manage passwords** to use admin-managed passwords for this knowledge base.
    b. Select **Readers manage their own passwords** to use self-administered passwords for this knowledge base.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.

4. Select **Save changes**.

This setting only affects passwords for reader logins. It doesn't affect readers who log in through SAML, OpenID Connect, or remote authentication.

Copyright © 2015 – 2025 Silly Moose, LLC. All rights reserved.
Powered by KnowledgeOwl knowledge base software.