

Five Fast Facts about Audio Textbooks

Audio Books

Audio textbooks are textbooks that are read aloud to the student. Formerly known as "Books-on-tape" or "Books for the Blind" these books are seldom a recording of a human reading the book aloud. Typically an audio textbook is a computer file formatted for use with text-to-speech software that reads the book aloud in a computer "voice".

"Readers"

Many students other than students who are blind can benefit from the use of audio textbooks. Students with language based learning disabilities often reach a higher level of comprehension when using audio textbooks. Students with attention deficits or problems focusing also find audio textbooks helpful. Students who have problems physically manipulating a book may be more comfortable with audio textbooks.

Software

There are several commercial software applications that read aloud such as Read & Write Gold and JAWS. There are also free programs such as NVDA and CARS. The key to successfully using text-to-speech applications is to choose the application that sounds the best to you and has the features that are most helpful to you. Features such as highlighting text while reading and built in dictionaries are popular.

