

Five Fast Facts



Five Fast Facts about Audio Textbooks

Fact 1

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".

Fact 2

"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.

Fact 3

Software

There are several commercial software applications that read aloud such as Read & Write Gold and JAWS. There 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.

Fact 4

Copyright

Most textbooks are copyrighted by the publisher and or author and should be used only as allowed by the copyright holder. For example, some publishers provide eBooks or computer files on request, and some publishers will grant a right to copy allowing the book to be scanned and saved as a computer file. Students must purchase or rent a copy of the book to legitimately use an electronic copy of the book.

Fact 5

The 4 R's

To get the most out of audio textbooks consider following these 4 R's.

Read

If possible, listen to audio textbooks in a quiet environment with few distractions.

Repeat

"Rewind" and Listen to important sections several times to make sure you "got it". Listen to each "reading assignment" at least twice.

Reflect

Spend a few minutes thinking about the chapter or section after you listen to it. How does this new information fit in with the rest of the book and the rest of the class?

Review

You may want to write a formal book review to post on line. Amazon.com has a huge selection of book reviews. You may want to just jot down a few notes. However you choose to review your reading, be sure to answer the question: "What did I learn from this?"