

## Options for Free Text-to-Speech Programs

### What is text to speech?

Text-to-speech technology allows students to have books in digital text format read aloud by a synthetic voice that is installed on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Digital textbooks are typically designed to open on computers (Mac or PC laptops or desktops). Some are marketed for tablets and smartphones. When searching for textbooks, students who want to use text to speech should pay attention to these options.

### How do students access text to speech on their chosen devices?

Examples of built-in and free text to speech programs for Mac, Windows, iOS, and Android devices:

*Mac users:* Your Mac has a built-in text to speech feature that will read aloud any digital text that you select with your mouse. The following resources provide steps to activate it:

- [Text instructions: Mac OS X 10.9](#) (if your laptop is fully updated)
- [Text instructions: Mac OS X 10.8](#) (if you're an update behind)
- [Video tutorial for 10.9](#)

*Windows users:* Although Windows has a built-in speech feature known as Narrator, it is specifically designed for users who are blind. If you have a learning disability, the following third party programs have received positive reviews by users. They are free and available for download to your laptop.

- [NaturalReader 12](#)
- [Balabolka](#)

*iOS users:* If you have an iPad or an iPhone, and your textbook is in PDF, EPUB, or iBook formats\*, consider trying the Speak Selection feature. Here are some resources for learning how to activate and use it:

- [Text instructions for iOS Speak Selection](#)
- [Video tutorial for iOS Speak Selection](#)

\*If your book is not in one of these formats, it may be possible to convert it. Please contact Disability Services for technical assistance.

*Android users:* Google Text-to-speech can be activated by going to Settings > Language & Input > Text-to-speech output. More information is available at [Google Play](#)

For assistance or to schedule an appointment, please contact Disability Services:

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