



LOW HANGING FRUIT

Alternate Formats Benefit All Readers

By Donna Eggers & LeAnn Gelskey

We know large print books are a benefit for people who are visually impaired and older readers whose eyes aren't what they used to be. But books with large text has benefits for all readers, especially students.

Project Tomorrow's national study* looked at the impact reading large print books had on 1,700 students in grades 3 through 12. "A majority of teachers said students who were reading below grade level showed better comprehension and retention when using books with bigger text." Further, students who read books with larger text felt less anxiety, were better able to stay focused, and experienced greater confidence with large print books.

Additionally, the study concludes that large print texts are a valuable intervention resource for all learners, striving readers and accomplished readers alike. Having access to large print books not only improves reading comprehension, but the experience also changes students' mindsets about their own reading capabilities and notably increases the confidence levels of striving readers.

Key findings from the study include:

- 56% of students said they enjoyed reading more when they could read the large print version of a book
- 61% of elementary school students said they remembered characters and plots better when reading large print books
- 48% of high school students said they read more outside of school after experiencing large print books
- 43% of middle school students reported a reduction in feelings of anxiety about reading when using the large print format

Large print is more than just a bigger font size. Along with building confidence, it's been shown to improve letter and word recognition and comprehension.

And it is not just for students. According to the latest Nielsen** stats, the average American adult spends 11 hours per day with electronic media. Eye strain starts after just two hours on a digital device. So, give your eyes a rest with easy-reading large print. Large print and audio books are a great option for entertainment on the treadmill, too.

Explore a variety of alternate formats at your local public library or wherever you get your books. In addition to large print, audiobooks, dyslexic-friendly fonts, and read/listen pairings are helpful options, too.

Know someone for whom large print isn't large enough? Learn about the free, convenient Idaho Talking Book Service (TBS), which provides audio books and magazines for those who are unable to read standard print. For more on TBS, visit: <https://libraries.idaho.gov/tbs/>.

*<https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=study-shows-large-print-books-may-benefit-all-students>

** <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/>

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



IDEA (Idaho Digital E-book Alliance)



A collection of e-books and e-audiobooks with the majority of titles for the K-12 set.

Devices can be set to various fonts to accommodate a variety of reading needs and preferences

<https://libraries.idaho.gov/idea/>

Benefits of audiobooks to students

An article from Reading Rockets that lists some benefits that all readers will experience through audiobooks. While this article mentions cassettes and CD's rather than digital resources, the benefits are valid.

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/benefits-audiobooks-all-readers>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Sync: Audiobooks for Teens

A summer reading program through Audiofile that provides two free audiobooks per week through the summer (May—July) to anyone with the Sora app from Overdrive.

Anyone, whether they are affiliated with a school or not, can download the Sora app and have access to the SYNC titles for each week during the season. There are clear instructions on downloading and accessing in the FAQ section of the SYNC page on the Audiofile website at <https://www.audiobooksync.com/faqs-2020/>.

DIGITAL TOOLS



BARD Database

The BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) database is a free library service of downloadable braille and audio reading material for U.S. citizens who are unable to read or use standard printed material because of visual or physical disabilities. Find it [here!](#) Use is limited to registered users of the Talking Book Service. Contact talk-ingbooks@libraries.idaho.gov for eligibility information.



