# Text Reader or Books on Tape

## Comparing Text Readers and Audio Technologies

| Need | Books on Tape | Text Reading |
|---|---|---|
| **Read back** | Offers a "real person" voice | Uses speech synthesis with varying degrees of intelligibility |
| **Speed of read back** | Conversational (recorded rates) of 160 – 190 wpm<br><br>Some variability with specialized tape players, but generally not easily listened to below 140 wpm or above 225 wpm | Most programs variable from 65 – 350+ wpm. Upper end variability dependent on speed of computer processor and voice chosen |
| **Modulation of voice** | Non-adjustable | Adjustable in many programs.<br><br>Ability to change modulation to 0 for very fast readback is necessary for clarity. |
| **Volume** | Available on most recorders | Available on most computers |
| **Pitch** | Not available | Available on many computers – this feature helps students with range hearing impairments. |
| **Processing time "stops"** | Not available unless the actual recorder is stopped and then restarted. | Available at the word, chunk, sentence, and paragraph level. This feature is particularly important for students who need additional processing time between "reading" each segment. |
| **Ability to repeat text** | Can be done inexactly with stop and rewind features. | Can be done with single click for segment just read or segment before that. |
| **Reading in "chanting" voices** | Not available | Available only on Macintosh with system voices (Pipe Organ and Cellos) |
| **Ability to change text font and size** | Not available, at best student is trying to follow along in text book. | Full availability to fonts installed in computer. |
| **Ability to change text, background and highlighting colors** | Not generally available. Use of color filters in print text can be used for background colors. | Full availability to colors for background and text. In Macintosh, highlight colors can also be changed within the program. Most Windows programs require changing highlight color at control panel level. |
| **Visual tracking** | Very difficult, student must follow along in text as it is read out loud. | Programs use word by word highlighting to help visual tracking and attention. |