

Audio Recording Guidelines and Steps

Here's what you need to record the audio narration:

- 1) You need **the text!** You can find your assigned text on www.readworks.org. Sign in to ReadWorks to view the passage, using the preset volunteer login:

Username: **becca+vbgb@readworks.org** | Password: **vbgb2023**

- 2) You need **a recording app** for your smartphone so that you can record directly on your phone.

If you have an iPhone, download the free app Voice Record Pro.

If you have an Android, download the free app Hi-Q MP3 Voice Recorder. (This is best for shorter recordings, as you'll need to delete files once you hit a 10-minute limit.)

Or if you have a nicer microphone/recording setup (like an in-home studio or a USB microphone that plugs into your computer), that'd work as well.

- 2) You need **a quiet space without an echo**.

We want to keep background noise, voice echo, and popping consonants to a minimum - so find a quiet spot with some fabric nearby to read the passages. For example, you can sit on a bed with lots of pillows by some curtained windows.

Before you begin your recording:

You may find it helpful to read the text first before you begin recording. That way, you can familiarize yourself with the flow of the text and see if there are any word pronunciations (especially proper nouns!) you need to look up. If you're not sure about the pronunciation of the name of an author, for example, ask a ReadWorks staff member!

Parts of the text to be read aloud:

1. The title

2. The author

- If you're on the ReadWorks site, look to the **right of the screen OR below the title** for the author credit

- If a specific author is credited, make sure to state the full name of the author: “*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak”
- If a specific author is not credited, make sure to credit ReadWorks: “‘Sunflowers’ by ReadWorks”

3. The body of the text (image captions **should not be read aloud**)

If you’ve got your text and you’re ready to start recording, please make sure to:

1. Record these as **.wav files**. Both phone apps can be set to record in this format.
 - a. **For those using the Voice Record Pro app**, make sure you also record as a Mono file (check the Channels field) with a Sample Rate of about 44,100. You can manage those settings by clicking the red REC button on the lower left when you open the app - it’ll take you to a screen where you can set all of those fields.
 - b. **For those using Hi-Q MP3 Voice Recorder**, you can record as a .wav file by opening the app and tapping on “MP3” in the top left corner. In the new screen that pops up, select “WAV”. Please also record it as a Mono file. To do this, tap the Settings icon (it looks like a gear), then tap “Recording”. Where it says “Stereo,” uncheck the box.
2. Keep the mic pretty close to your mouth... but not so close that every “P” turns into a POOF. Make sure your breath is not directly hitting the phone mic to avoid static or popping.
3. Give a 2-second lead-in of silence on every recording. This helps the mic adjust to background noise.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind *while* you read:

1. **Make sure to read relatively slowly.** These narrations should not be quite as fast as your natural speaking speed. Imagine a student following along with the text. That said, please don’t be TOO slow, we want to model fluency and not be condescending to the student working with lower-grade texts.
2. Read **expressively!** Keep the kids awake and engaged.
3. Make sure to **enunciate, read the words as they are on the page, and pronounce everything correctly.** The correct pronunciation is so important, especially when it comes to proper nouns. If you need help with the pronunciation of a name or a word, look it up or ask us! Some of these readers are still working out how to map sounds to written letters, so speaking clearly and accurately is extremely important.



Here's what you should do if you make a mistake while you read:

Firstly, we *all* make mistakes recording audio narrations, so don't sweat it! If you're reading a relatively short text, it's best to re-record the entire recording (if you don't mind). If you're recording a longer text and you make a mistake, no need to start over... just start at the beginning of the sentence/paragraph where you left off. Someone else will edit this later.

Then, save and name the file - it should be the text's title. For example: Why_Do_Cave_Fish_Lose_Their_Eyes

You're done with your recording. Now submit it!

Upload your fill to this [Drive Uploader](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please email becca@readworks.org.

Thank you for volunteering and supporting the millions of students using ReadWorks each year!