Project Spec Sheets Guide

What is a Project Spec Sheet?

Each project has a pattern of common and unique elements throughout the book. The Project Spec Sheets are posted instructions for individual Textbook Classic Audio Books. The Project Spec Sheet's primary purpose is to provide guidance and instruction on how to handle these various elements of a book for volunteers at all stages of the preproduction and active production process and to provide continuity and consistency for volunteers all across the country that may be working on the same project.

Each project has its own set of Project Spec Sheets, which are posted within the book's project site under the "Guidelines" tab.

This "Project Spec Sheet Guide" contains helpful information and terminology which will help you navigate through the various resources while working on a project.

How to Use the Project Spec Sheet

What are the Mark-Up Instructions?: The Project Spec Sheets "Mark-Up Instructions" will provide guidance on how to handle major sections of the book, identify special exceptions to conventions, and provide instructions on how to handle unique elements within the bulk of the book, such as what should be treated as "text," "embedded examples," "non-text material," "ignore," or "other."

The Mark-Up Instructions are the guidelines for this project and are added in the order that they occur within the book. Not every element on a page is addressed in the Project Spec Sheets – only enough examples so that Narrators, Proof Listeners, and Final Editors **understand the pattern of the book** or **any special exceptions or items which require additional explanation.**

The following is a description of the various columns in the Mark-Up Instructions
1. **Column A:** the page reference
2. **Column B:** the Unique Element. This can include any one of the following designations:
   a. Book Set-Up
   b. Prefatory Material
   c. Unit, Chapter, and Section (Other) Beginnings
   d. Treat as Text
   e. Embedded Examples
   f. Non-Text Material
   g. Ignore
   h. Other
   i. Unit, Chapter, and Section (Other) Endings
   j. Appendix
   k. Glossary

i. Order on Page
3. **Column C:** Bookmarking Note: this helps Narrators and Proof Listeners understand the bookmarking notes that have been added to the PDF.
4. **Column D:** Special Instructions: this is where instructions on how to handle a specific element are contained.
5. **Column E:** Screenshot Link: Narrators, Proof Listeners, and Final Editors should click on the link to view a screenshot of the specific element.

What is a portal card and project site?

A portal card is a quick-glance view of a project; clicking on the portal card will direct you to the project site. A project site is an online platform created to track the production of a book project. Project sites include the following tab links:

- **Project Summary:** includes links to the bookmarked PDF and Reading Conventions, plus general information about the book, including the book cover, type of project (single reader/checker, small group, or open project), book due date, and other relevant book data.

- **Guidelines:** the Spec Sheets linked from this tab are posted instructions for individual books that help maintain continuity. These documents provide details that help volunteers remain consistent throughout the project since a project may be recorded by many volunteers at one time all over the country.

- **Upload Files (Assignment Sheet):** this sheet tracks who is reading and checking each file/chapter, and also general notes.

- **Discussion Group:** Join the Twist channel for the project through the Discussion Group tab on the project site. Twist is a communication and messaging platform which allows for communication between volunteers, and with staff regarding that particular project. Each project has its own associated project Twist channel.

- **Log Hours:** It is important to log your volunteer hours frequently.

Terminology

[What Does That Word Mean?](#) (Knowledge Base Article containing a Glossary of Acronyms and Jargon for Learning Ally Tools and Processes)

Bookmarking in the PDF
The bookmarked copy of the PDF is visual guidance added by volunteers and staff to provide direction on items such as material to be treated as text, to be ignored, embedded examples, non-text material, etc. The bookmarking will appear in red

within the PDF. Usually only the first few files of the PDF assigned to each Narrator/Proof Listener team is marked.

- **[   ]** items in brackets provide instructions to the readers and checkers, and should not be read out loud.
- **"   "** items in quotes should be read aloud.
- **1** Numbers in a box are used to indicate the order in which material on the page should be read. These are not meant to be read out loud.
- **→** Red Arrows are used to show the direction the reader should go next on the page. These items are not meant to be read out loud.
- If an item has a red **X** through it, it should be ignored (do not read).

Brackets

Anything within brackets [ ] in the scripting and in the bookmarking is to provide direction to readers and checkers; the information within the brackets should not be read aloud.

Continued/Next Page

Do not read **"Next Page"** or **"Continued"** notations on the bottom/top of the page, or on tables, etc. that will be read all on one page. Exceptions may be made and will be noted in the project's guidelines.

EXCEPTION: when we are reading text prep exams such as the ACT or SAT practice test. We want these to mimic the real test.

EXCEPTION: in the rare case that a multi-page table is read <u>across multiple pages</u>, re-announce the column headings on each subsequent page.

Conventions

Conventions Wiki and Other Resource Documents

Also called "reading conventions", conventions are the established Learning Ally rules that guide volunteers in book production to ensure consistency throughout the volunteer community and book project catalog to help our clients navigate the books. There are times when we have to break conventions within a particular book depending on the formatting of the content, and this will be communicated within the Project Spec Sheets; the Project Spec Sheets will always trump the conventions.

Our Conventions undergo review periodically; new or updated conventions will be marked with either **NEW (date)** or **UPDATED (date)**.

Credits/Sources in Non-text material

Do NOT read credits or sources presented as footnotes for any non-text material.

EasyBooks or webEB

webEB Link
EasyBooks Edit Notes: What do they mean?

EasyBooks/webEB is Learning Ally's proprietary recording tool. Designed for Learning Ally books, EasyBooks records audio, displays book content, and creates synchronization files; webEB is an online version of the application, designed to run through the Google Chrome browser, like an interactive website.

Embedded Examples

Embedded Examples add emphasis to the primary text. These can be any number of elements such as tables, charts, boxed text, etc. Read them in the place where they occur. **DO Announce them as "chart, graph, quotes, etc.,"** and DO follow the rules in the Figure Description Crib Sheets when setting them up.

Figures

Generic term for graphical elements in a text. They may be photographs, images, charts, graphs, maps, etc. They are non-text material and sometimes have a numbered tag.

Header

A header is an unnecessary repetition of a title or heading, usually on alternating pages throughout the section.

Heading

Generic term for a prominent line of text that has been given a Mark in EasyBooks at the beginning of a new division of a book. A heading can be a unit or chapter title, a section title, or the letters of the alphabet in a Glossary. It can even be the title and main sections of a table in an appendix. The first time a title appears, at the start of a section, is usually the only time it is read.

NOTE: not all items that look like headings in the PDF will actually become headings in EasyBooks (e.g., titles of boxes, tables within the primary text, small third- or fourth-level headings, headers, etc.). Anything that will be considered a non-text element will NOT have a Mark in EasyBooks; the main exceptions are tables in an appendix, as they are primary text at that point.

Highlighted Text

This is text that is either italicized, highlighted in color, or called out in some special way within the primary text. These are usually distinguished by adding vocal emphasis when reading.

- **[inflection]** = slight pause, raised pitch
- **[normal]** = slight pause, return to normal voice
- **[undertone]** = slight pause, lower tone, and volume compared to normal voice

Iconized Text

Text that is portrayed as an icon (often accompanied by a small image) should be read; the text is the main focus. The image is not mentioned.

Icons

An icon is a representative symbol. These are not read or announced since they don't usually have text.

Margin Note

Non-text material in the margin of the page. However, in grammar and writing books, notes in the margin often function as additional instruction. Therefore, where they are read is dependent on the context of the note. The Project Spec Sheets and bookmarking will provide instructions on how to handle these types of notes. Ask staff if you are unsure.

Marks

These are points of navigation markings in EasyBooks files. A Mark synchronizes a point of text with the accompanying audio recording. They denote pages, headings, chapters, subheadings, and other significant divisions within the book project.

The first Mark in every EasyBooks file is automatic since it is the beginning of a file.

Marks are designated in the guidelines as **[mark]** in the scripting.

Multi-page spreads

Non-text material such as boxes, tables, maps, timelines will often cross multiple pages. How these are handled depends on whether the page also contains primary text. Please refer to the **Figure Description Crib Sheet** for details on how to handle these.

Non-Source Footnotes

DO read non-source footnotes within non-text material. See specific types of non-text element examples in the **[Figure Description Crib Sheet](#)**

Non-Text Materials/Elements

Any element of a book that falls outside the narrative flow of straight text. For example images, graphs, charts, footnotes, sidebars, and so on. See Figure Description Crib Sheet for examples and instructions.

- Elements with numbered tags are almost always considered non-text material.

- The standard convention regarding non-text materials is that they are ***read at the end of the page after the primary text.*** The reason is to improve comprehension by not interrupting primary text with items that are supplemental.

- Non-text elements are introduced with the name of the element. Examples: "Box", "Image", "Margin Note", "Timeline", "Cartoon", "Figure", etc. If there is a numbered tag in the title, DO include the number.

- The guidelines and bookmarking help volunteers understand what is primary text, what is supplemental, and how to handle specific variations between books.

- Non-text material is considered ***supplemental and is read after the primary text on the page from top to bottom (and left to right only if they are parallel).*** This is why designating between primary text and non-text material is important. It will determine where on the page an item is read.

Numbered tag

We use "numbered tag" to mean numbered non-text material, e.g., "Figure 10.3".

Primary Text vs. Non-Text Material

Primary text is the main discussion by the author. It can be straight text or include embedded exercises, examples, or figures within a project that allow for narrative flow.

Non-text materials are items that are supplementary to the discussion; the discussion could possibly be considered complete without these items. See [Order on the Page](#) for examples of primary text and non-text material.

Pop Filter

A pop filter, pop shield, or pop screen is a noise protection filter for microphones, typically used in a recording studio. It serves to reduce or eliminate popping sounds caused by the mechanical impact of fast-moving air on the microphone from plosives (like the letter 'p') during recorded speech.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used in Spec Sheets and bookmarking to designate anything that should be read aloud. Quotation marks, and other punctuation marks, within the primary text, are not read except in a grammar book teaching their use.

Scripting

We use scripting in the Spec Sheets to provide very specific directions for any items that may seem unclear. We often add a bookmarked screenshot of the PDF to assist with clear direction. We will script out major sections such as unit/part/chapter/lesson beginnings within the book, and also more difficult non-text material.

Section

A generic term for a division of a book project. Used to avoid confusion among terms like chapter, unit, file, etc.

Shelf Number

The Learning Ally library code for projects is used to refer to a book project and displayed with the book title. Two letters followed by 3 numbers, for example, KB123.

TOC

A .toc file is a file created in the TOC Tool program using the primary and secondary headings in a book. This becomes the outline of the marks in EasyBooks/webEB. Eventually, when the book enters our library, the headings used in creating the .toc file become the Table of Contents the listener uses to navigate throughout the book.

Treat as Text

If project guidelines or bookmarking indicate that an item is to be treated as text, it will follow regular conventions for primary text and will be read in line where it occurs. Exceptions include the setting up of Embedded Examples.

Many times items that may seem like non-text material are actually just fancy or bulleted lists, italicized text, or material with a highlighted background. The way

that you can differentiate these is by reviewing the content of what the material is trying to get across. You can always ask yourself, "if this information was not included in the primary text, would the student be missing information that is vital to the context of what they are reading?" Exceptions include the setting up of embedded tables, charts, graphs, etc. If you have questions, please ask the Final Editor associated with this project in the Twist channel. Be sure to @mention them in the appropriate thread.