

Entertain and Engage Seniors with Books on Tape



Reading engages senior minds

Audio books make reading accessible to everyone, including seniors with low vision or limited physical ability.

It's a fun way to spend time and doesn't require much energy. And an imaginative story, historical tale, or exciting mystery can transport them to another world.

Reading also benefits older adults in other ways. It can improve memory, sharpen decision-making skills, reduce stress, improve sleep, and delay cognitive decline.

Listening to books on tape, CD, or MP3 mean that it's no longer necessary to pick up a physical book to enjoy reading.

We explain how audio books work and where to find them, including two free sources.

Books on tape allow everyone to enjoy a good story

Because eyesight naturally declines with age, seniors may find it tiring to read on their own. Some people could have impaired vision or be unable to hold a physical book.

Plus, many people simply enjoy being read to.

A great solution is to use books on tape, also called audio books. These are books that are read out loud, typically by a professional “reader.”

Aside from the books themselves, all that’s needed is a CD player or a simple MP3 player to play the audio files.

3 ways to get books on tape (2 are free!)

1. Free books on tape from the public library

Local public libraries now lend books on tape or CD, just like other library materials.

Talk with a librarian to find out how to borrow books on tape from the library. Many libraries also participate in online services that make it easy to download audio books in MP3 format.

If your older adult is vision impaired, they may also be eligible for the National Library Service’s free braille and talking book library service.

2. Free books online on LibriVox

LibriVox is a free service that makes public domain books (books with expired copyright) available in an audio format. The recordings are made by non-professional speakers and the service is run by volunteers.

You may need to search a bit, but there are plenty of classics and hidden gems available.

3. Buy audio books through Audible or Audiobooks

For the latest bestsellers or books you can’t find at the library or LibriVox, buying audio books is the way to go.

Two big companies that sell audio books are Audible (an Amazon company) and Audiobooks.com. The books are downloaded to and played from apps on computers, smartphones, and tablets.

Each service offers a free 30-day trial that lets you download 2 books for free. That gives you a chance to test out the services before you commit.

After the free trial period, both Audible and Audiobooks charge a monthly subscription fee that includes one book per month. Additional books cost extra.