



# Growing readers!

Brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado and LD OnLine

## Listen and Learn with Audio Books

Audio books are a wonderful way to expose your child to complex language, expressive reading, and fantastic stories. Listening to audio books also gives kids the valuable and enjoyable experience of using their own imaginations to visualize the people and places they're hearing about. Though popular with many families during long car trips, audio books are a great way to experience stories anytime, anywhere.

### What to look for

**Familiar stories.** For your child, listening to an audio book is a very different experience from hearing you read a book aloud. In introducing audio books to your child, look for audio books of stories your child has heard you read or tell before. Being familiar with the story will help your child enjoy hearing it from a different reader and become a willing listener.

**Easy-to-use format.** Consider what format will work best for you and your child. Audio books are available as CDs and you can often find them at your local public library packaged with a copy of the picture book or early reader. Some libraries also carry [Playaways](#), which are books pre-loaded onto MP3 player available for checkout. Your library may also provide audio books as digital files through a service like [OverDrive](#) that you can check out and download to your personal device. There are also many online digital services such as [Audible](#) and [Tales2Go](#) where you can subscribe to an extensive catalog of audio content.

**Quality titles.** When choosing audio book titles, seek suggestions from your librarian and consult recommendations from experts, such as [Notable Children's Recordings from the American Library Association](#) or [Reading Rockets' Favorite Audio Books](#). But also get kid opinions on selections to help get them invested before listening begins.

**Good production.** Whenever possible, listen to a sample of the audio book before you dive in. If the narrator's voice grates on your nerves or you find added background music and sound effects to be a distraction, you'll save all the listeners in your family some time and pain.

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## Listen and Learn with Audio Books (*continued*)

### What to do

- **Listen to audio books together.** Audio books are a wonderful shared reading experience and a shared story gives everyone in the family something to talk about. Plus, you can help boost your child's thinking skills by asking questions about what you've listened to or take turns with your child retelling favorite parts of the story.
- **Offer some background information** or a preview of the story to help your child focus his listening and more easily follow what's happening in the story. If you have a soon-to-be reader and or early reader, a copy of the book to follow along will help kids make the connection between the written and spoken words.
- **Feel free to stop listening.** If an audio book isn't engaging, try another!
- **Keep your young listeners in mind.** While kids can listen on a higher level than they can read, some stories may be too complex for young listeners to follow and enjoy. There is an abundance of audio picture books and poetry to enjoy and no need to rush straight into Harry Potter.
- **Don't let audio books take the place of you reading aloud to your child or telling them stories.** The time you spend together will help your child make a lasting discovery of what reading for pleasure is all about.

### More information from our partner, Understood:

- [Where to Find Free Audiobooks and Digital Text-to-Speech Books for Your Child](#)

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Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.

