

Choosing the Best Alternate Format for Your students

The purpose behind asking for a specific format is so that the student can be given the format that is best suited to his/her needs. For many resources, there are several online and offline formats available (i.e. digital audio (MP3), PDF, WORD or KURZWEIL). Providing all of the online and offline formats would likely be overwhelming to the student as most resources, especially at the intermediate and high school levels, are broken down into chapters and the student would have to sort through a long list of resources broken down by formats and chapters.

Please order only those resources that the student will use. It breaks copyright law to order resources when the student does not have a physical copy of the novel/play/textbook. For example, do not order all the English Language Arts titles for a particular grade if the student will only be doing 3 or 4 of all novels/plays listed for that grade.

Factors to Guide Your Decision about the Best Formats:

1). Definition of Formats:

- On-line Digital audio (MP3): A format where the text is automatically read to the student but the actual words are not visible on the screen. It is accessed through the DOE website. Students are provided a username and password to access the resource.
 - On-line E-text files (Kurzweil, Pdf or WORD): A format which requires text to voice software and results in the student hearing a computer generated voice read the text while the text being read is highlighted on the computer screen. . It is accessed through the DOE website. Students are provided a username and password to access the resource.
 - If the student has access to Kurzweil software and this format is available on the DOE website, the school would likely want to request Kurzweil format.
 - Pdf format provides an online version of the text (including pictures and diagrams). Pdf is the most commonly requested e-text format.
 - WORD format provides a copy of just the text (without pictures and diagrams). It allows for easier text editing. In some cases, word format may also read better than pdf since the text is not wrapped around pictures or diagrams.

- Offline Digital Audio (MP3): A CD which contains an MP3 file where the text is automatically read to the student but the actual words are not visible on the screen. The CD is loaned to the school.
- Offline E-Text Files (Kurzweil, Pdf or WORD): A CD which contains Kurzweil, Pdf or WORD files. Text to voice software is required and results in the student hearing a computer generated voice read the text while the text being read is highlighted on the computer screens. The CD is loaned to the school.

2). Student's Access to a computer at home and Internet access:

The teacher also needs to consider whether the child has a computer at home.

Do they have the appropriate software (Read & Write Gold, Kurzweil or Adobe Acrobat) loaded on their home computer?

Does the student have access to the Internet and how good is the Internet access in that community?

Other Sources of Information:

1). Listing of titles and their available formats: when filling out the applications, teachers should use the Browse Content option on the alternate format materials website (<https://cmaf.gov.ni.ca/Home.aspx/Browse>) to get information on available resources such as ISBN# ,and formats currently available etc. This would mean that you will not need to access the actual textbooks for information and you can readily see which formats are available.

2). We encourage you and the other teachers involved with alternate format accommodations to visit the Alternate Format materials Learning Centre at http://www.ed.gov.ni.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/resource_center/index.html for further information on alternate format materials and the application process.

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