

Fact Sheet



What is Learning Ally?

- Learning Ally is a national not-for-profit founded in 1948, originally called Recording for the Blind, established to help blinded soldiers returning from World War II go to school and re-enter society.
- Since then, the organization has expanded its mission to support people with a wide range of reading disabilities, including blindness, visual impairment, dyslexia, and other learning differences.
- Learning Ally provides an online library of more than 80,000 accessible human-narrated audio textbooks and literature titles — the largest of its kind in the world.
- The organization currently supports nearly 200,000 students and their parents, and 40,000 educators in nearly 10,000 schools.
- Teacher Ally is a student management tool and resource center that enables educators to assign books to a student’s bookshelf, track reading progress, and generate reports to share with parents online.
- Learning Ally’s youth service programs include peer-to-peer mentoring through YES! (Youth Examples of Self Advocacy), as well as extensive community-based events for families.
- The College Success Program provides support and mentoring to help students who are blind or visually impaired to navigate their way successfully through college.
- With national headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey, Learning Ally maintains several audiobook recording studios and community centers around the U.S., where support staff and volunteers work together.

Who uses Learning Ally?

- K-12, college and graduate students, as well as veterans and lifelong learners.
- A documented disability like dyslexia, visual impairment or physical disability is required for membership.

How does it work?

- Thousands of trained volunteers work with Learning Ally staff to record and produce accessible audiobooks.
- Students can browse the library, order and download audiobooks, and listen/study on PCs and Mac computers, Chromebooks, smartphones and tablets running Android or Apple iOS, as well as on specialized assistive technology devices.

For more information, contact Doug Sprei, National Director of Communications at media@LearningAlly.org, or call 609.243.5865.

*Research available upon request.

Who can volunteer?

- Just about anyone can volunteer and there are a variety of ways to contribute. Prospective volunteers are welcome to fill out an online application form at www.LearningAlly.org to apply for volunteer opportunities.
- Volunteer readers — particularly those with expertise in math, science and other subject areas are encouraged to apply. Individuals can also volunteer to help with various aspects of audiobook production, as well as fundraising, networking and cultivating public awareness.
- Volunteers can work “virtually” from home or almost anywhere, at any time — as well as in Learning Ally studios.

How do Learning Ally audiobooks differ from conventional audiobooks?

- Learning Ally audiobooks are produced to meet global standards of accessibility for students with disabilities. Students can efficiently navigate to find a specific chapter or page, set multiple bookmarks, take notes and study effectively like any other student.
- Of critical importance for many readers with print disabilities, Learning Ally audiobooks are read by human narrators, including teachers, doctors, mathematicians, scientists and specialists in every subject — people who can read with understanding and describe in correct detail every chart, diagram and illustration.
- More than 65 percent of Learning Ally’s library includes core curriculum textbooks for K-12 and college, with extensive collections in science, technology, engineering and math.
- Learning Ally VOICEText is a multisensory audiobook experience with on-screen highlighted text synced to the audio narration, improving comprehension.
- Research shows that when students use accessible audiobooks, they experience 76 percent improved reading comprehension and 52 percent improved reading accuracy.*

How is Learning Ally supported and maintained?

- The organization is funded by donations from individuals, foundations and corporations, as well as grants from state and local education programs.
- Learning Ally also provides individual household memberships for \$135 per year, as well as institutional memberships for thousands of K-12 schools, colleges, and universities at various pricing levels.