

Audio-Reader Volunteer Handbook

Homer Cole Edition, Revised January 2016



Audio-Reader Mission Statement:

The University of Kansas Audio-Reader Network exists to provide print-disabled Kansans with access to the printed word and other information via electronic media and other technologies.

Audio-Reader's services are provided to enable print-disabled Kansans the opportunity to live their lives with the greatest possible personal independence.

Homer Cole Pittsburg Community Center Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Homer Cole Community Center is to provide facilities, and programs, to enhance the welfare of the population of Pittsburg, KS, to share information and offer varied social, educational, and cultural activities.



What is Audio-Reader?

Audio-Reader is an audio information service serving people who are blind or print-disabled. This includes people with vision impairments as well as other conditions that prevent them from reading normal printed materials. We broadcast across Kansas and parts of Missouri 24 hours a day, seven days a week via closed circuit radios. Our signal is carried on subcarriers through six Kansas Public Radio stations; four High Plains Public Radio stations; KCKS in Concordia, KS; KRPS in Pittsburg, KS; KXCV in Maryville, MO; KRNW in Chillicothe, MO; and KCUR in Kansas City, MO. We are also available on Smokey Hills Public Television, KOOD-TV in Bunker Hill, KMG-TV in Colby, KS and KMOS-TV in Sedalia, MO. Additionally, we stream live on the internet and our radio programs are available in a one-week archive (www.reader.ku.edu/archive.) Our listeners receive this signal free of charge via a special radio given to them when they become subscribers to the Audio-Reader service. You can access our Program Guide at www.reader.ku.edu or listen at www.reader.ku.edu/archive.

In addition to the radio, Audio-Reader has a dial-in newspaper service called Lions Telephone Reader. Telephone Reader allows listeners to hear recordings of the *Kansas City Star*, *Topeka Capital-Journal*, *University Daily Kansan*, *Joplin Globe* and other publications on-demand. Listeners receive a local phone number or toll-free number to access these recordings. Volunteers can also read remotely if they wish. For a six-minute demo, you can call 1-800-335-1221 and enter code 5887 when prompted.

Audio-Reader also provides special request recordings, live audio description of theatre performances in the Lawrence, Kansas City and Topeka areas and a sensory garden designed to appeal to the visually impaired. For more information about helping with these opportunities, contact Jen Nigro at (785) 864-4604 or jnigro@ku.edu.

The Pittsburg Partnership

You have volunteered to read newspapers for our Pittsburg, KS, location. This partnership was started in 1996 to provide southeast Kansas newspapers to listeners in the KRPS listening-area during our regional news broadcast from 2-4 p.m. weekdays. Prior to this relationship, southeast Kansas listeners, who receive Audio-Reader via satellite, were hearing newspapers from central and western Kansas. Volunteers read two hours from Pittsburg-area newspapers each weekday. The file is broadcast via the KRPS subcarrier live during the regional news time period. Our studios were originally located in a former dormitory on the Pittsburg State University Kansas, then in the KRPS studios. In 2015, the studio moved to the Homer Cole Community Center to take advantage of better visibility and a more accessible building.

Obtaining Service

People who want to subscribe to Audio-Reader fill out a short application form for the services they're interested in receiving. A medical professional or social worker certifies their disability. This form can be requested by calling 785-864-4600 or 1-800-772-8898, or sending an email to reader@ku.edu.

Radio service listeners receive a program guide in large print (every other month), Braille (monthly), email or audio format. This guide lists a daily schedule of programs and readers. Feel free to ask for an Audio-Reader Program Guide any time to familiarize yourself with the material we provide.

Audio-Reader's Volunteers



Approximately 400 volunteers provide the backbone for the Audio-Reader Network. Our youngest started reading at age 11, our oldest is more than 90 years old. They include teachers, doctors, lawyers, business owners, ministers, homemakers, retirees, students and more. We have volunteers who live in Lawrence, Kansas

City, Topeka, Paola, Ottawa, Tonganoxie, Tecumseh and Wamego—even the Springfield, MO, area! Some read from home, but most come to the Audio-Reader studios. We also have a contingent of volunteers who read from Alhaphointe in Kansas City, MO, and of course, you, our Pittsburg volunteers. Most Audio-Reader volunteers have no professional broadcasting experience, but each must pass a difficult audition to become a reader. Some volunteer their time once a week, others several times a week or even every day. Regardless of their time commitment, their dedication to helping Audio-Reader bring the printed word to life for the blind and print-disabled of Kansas and Missouri is unbeatable.

Reading at Homer Cole

Audio-Reader broadcasts live from the Homer Cole Community Center weekdays from 2-4 p.m. There are two readers for each broadcast who alternate through a series of papers, focusing their reading on local news and obituaries. It is important to remember the following points:

1. Arrive on time! You need to be at Homer Cole and ready for your broadcast no later than 1:45 p.m. If you are unable to read for any reason, please contact Sheila Marque at (620) 232-0633.
2. Your papers will be prepared by volunteer editors prior to your arrival. However, you will need to go through each of the

newspapers provided to you and familiarize yourself with the articles and layout.

3. Choose current newspapers whenever possible—no more than a week old.
4. Focus on local news—our listeners will hear state and national news at other times during the broadcast day.
5. The amount you read from each paper will depend on the number of newspapers available. Divide your two-hour reading time by the number of newspapers available.
6. It is helpful to place page continuations directly behind the first page of the article. Some volunteers also find it helpful to number their articles and continuations to make them easier to find.
7. Get your water or coffee before you start broadcasting and set it in a safe place. If your throat becomes dry during a broadcast, turn away from the microphone when you take a drink.
8. Arrange your newspaper on the table and position your microphone correctly. Wear headphones when available.
9. Never editorialize! You may make appropriate transitional remarks, but do not comment or use the tone of your voice to indicate your personal views.
10. Make your reading style appropriate to the material, but don't be overly dramatic.
11. When reading obituaries, give the name of the deceased, their age, city or town and the date of their death. If they passed away in another locale, you may list a local connection. It can be helpful to underline this information before you begin reading.
12. Be sure to identify editorials on the opinion page.

13. Avoid rustling the pages of the newspaper as much as possible.
14. If you have a sudden coughing fit or need to sneeze during your broadcast, turn away from the microphone. Your reading partner should be prepared to step in should the coughing fit continue or you lose your voice while reading.
15. Repeat the title and date of each newspaper when you introduce each paper and when you finish it.

How to Start and End Your Broadcast

When it comes time to begin your broadcast, put on your headphones to listen to the Audio-Reader broadcast signal. You will hear a male announcer give a sponsorship announcement, followed by a female announcer who says, "From the KU Campus in Lawrence, this is the Kansas Audio-Reader Network" followed by a music bed. Flip the "on" switch and start reading during the music bed.

When it is time to end your broadcast, read the closing statement, then flip the switch to "off". You need to finish between 3:58:00 and 3:59:00.

The Secret to Choosing Articles from Local Newspapers

1. **Keep it local.** By the time your small town newspaper gets on the air our listeners have had the chance to listen to national and international news from *The Kansas City Star*, *Topeka Capital-Journal*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and other TV and radio news sources. **Look for the news they can't get anywhere else.**
2. **Timeliness.** As you choose articles, avoid events that are past (unless it's an article about how the event turned out). This is especially

- important in print editions, because they are often a few days old by the time we get them.
3. **Uniqueness.** Again, look for the stuff they can't get anywhere else. Choose articles about the community. Look for GOOD news—while crime is important, so are card showers, cards of thanks, Locks of Love donations, etc. These items build the character of a community.
 4. **Obituaries.** These are a must. You won't hear that the little old lady next door died on the evening news unless there was something suspicious about it. Our listeners need this information, and we are often their only source.
 5. **Put yourself in their shoes.** If you lived in this community, what would you want to know? Don't compare their news to what you find in larger newspapers- the communities are completely different. Let each community stand alone.
 6. **Read what interests you.** While you need to cover the basics like obituaries, you should also let your own interests guide you. Some readers may not like sports; others might like to share the local wrestling team's trip to the state meet. Over the course of a week our listeners will benefit from the variety.
 7. **Avoid fillers.** Our small town paper listeners don't need Dear Abby, Heloise, or other "filler". Make sure what you're reading isn't intended by the newspaper to flesh out a page for the sake of filling space.
 8. **Don't overthink it.** It's really hard to do this wrong!

Weekends, Holidays and Inclement Weather

Audio-Reader volunteers will not report any time the Homer Cole Center is closed. This includes weekends, holidays and inclement weather days.

Audio-Reader Absence Policy

Our listeners rely heavily on you to bring them the news and information from their communities. For many, your recording will be the one bright spot in their day.

Audio-Reader is also a unique volunteer experience, in that you are solely responsible for getting your assignment read. At least one of our listeners is waiting for you specifically to complete that assignment.

If you find it necessary to miss your appointed reading, please call Sheila Marque at (620) 232-0633 as soon as possible.

If you miss your scheduled recording without notifying us, a staff member will attempt to contact you via phone and email. If we receive no response and you no call/no show a second time, we will send a letter notifying you that you have been removed from your regular reading assignment. You will be given the option to return on a trial basis as a substitute reader if you wish.

Vacations and Leaves of Absence

From time to time, a volunteer may need to miss several weeks in a row. This can be for a variety of reasons, including a medical condition, family emergency, changes in job or school-related activities or travel. If you determine you need to take a leave of absence, please notify Sheila Marque as soon as possible. If you can, please let us know approximately how long you will be away. This will determine whether we use a substitute reader for your broadcast or assign a new reader to it.

Reading Techniques

(excerpted from How to Speak the Written Word by Nedra Newkirk Lamar; published by Fleming H. Revell Co., copyright 1934, 1939, 1945.)

The ability to read intelligently and intelligibly is both a science and an art. Good oral readers are always applying certain principles, whether consciously or unconsciously.

A reader, to be successful and pleasing, should first of all have a thorough understanding of the selection he is to read. If he loves it and enjoys it, this is still better. But above all, he must understand it. Surely no one will deny that this is the first essential. But the second requirement is equally important: the knowledge of how to express the meaning that he may see ever so clearly. And that involves a knowledge of where to pause and where not to pause, what to emphasize and what to subdue, and other points which will be discussed in this book.

Good, plain, honest mistakes are easier to listen to and forgive than artificial, mannered reading.

The greatest fault and the most prevalent among oral readers is unnaturalness, in the form of stilted, dramatic, oratorical or old fashioned elocutionary affectations.

What to Emphasize

Meaningful emphasis and natural phrasing are the two qualities employed by radio speakers who read from a prepared script but sound as if they are ad libbing or speaking the words just as they come to thought. Either consciously or unconsciously they employ certain principles of emphasis and phrasing.

Simple Contrast

The whole secret of meaningful, and therefore natural, emphasis lies in stressing the word that carries the through, the meaning word. To put it more fully: emphasize the new idea or the contrast; subdue the old idea.

As Lewis Carroll said, “My rule for knowing which word to lean on is the word that tells you something new, something that is different from what you expected.”

Any word you can leave out without changing the meaning you need not and should not stress.

Examples of Proper Word Emphasis

Read these sentences aloud: “Florence is my sister. I love Florence.” You probably stressed the first Florence and sister. But surely you didn’t stress the second Florence, because it is now an old idea. Instead, if you read it naturally, you subdued the second Florence and stressed love, which is the new idea. The second Florence is so obvious that the more natural thing to say would be “Florence is my sister. I love her.”

Frequently the ‘new idea’ is more than just a new idea: it is a definite contrast. “Honesty is the best policy: dishonesty, therefore, should be avoided.” Here, dishonest would naturally receive the greatest stress of any word in the sentence, because it is not only a new idea but a pointed contrast to honesty.

Readers are more likely to emphasize too many words than too few.... Stressing all the words in a sentence is like underscoring all the words in a letter: when you have done so you might as well not have stressed or underscored any of them. You are back on a level of no emphasis at all.

First time Ness

There is one outstanding characteristic of the actor who reads lines naturally or the announcer who reads a radio script as if he were just talking. This is what has been called ‘first time ness.’ This means the quality of sounding as if you were saying the words for the first time, as if neither you nor anyone else had even thought them before.

Parenthetical Expressions

Most people understand that a parenthetical expression should be read in a much lower tone of voice than the rest of the sentence. This is true whether the parenthetical expression is set off by parenthesis, by dashes or by commas.

For example:

- “He was, I should say, about sixteen years old.”
- “You have come to be-- if I may say so-- no longer necessary to our group.”
- “We have found her to be (and I’m now quoting your favorite author) unlearned in the world’s false subtleties.”

The words set off by commas in the first sentence, by dashes in the second and by parenthesis in the third, are all parenthetical expressions and should be read in a lower tone of voice or ‘thrown away’ as actors say.

Phrasing

A phrase is a group of related words that conveys a thought. Almost every sentence contains one phrase or more, and after some of these the reader should pause.

A PHRASE IS A GROUP OF RELATED WORDS THAT CONVEYS A THOUGHT.

A PAUSE IS A SHORT PERIOD OF SILENCE THAT FOLLOWS A SPOKEN WORD OR PHRASE.

A phrase serves three purposes. Its first and most obvious function is to give the reader an opportunity to breathe. In conversation we breathe comfortably and frequently without even thinking about it, because we breathe at the natural phrasing places, that is, at the ends of ideas. But sometimes an unpracticed reader fails to breathe at the natural place and then finds himself having to stop for breath at a most inappropriate point.

The second function of the phrase is to give the reader an opportunity to look ahead to see what he is to read next. During the pause following the first phrase he is not only taking a new breath, if he needs to, but also quickly scanning the sentence to the end of the next small thought. Then he reads that thought aloud, then pauses to look ahead through the next phrase, and then reads it in turn.... In a way, pauses are almost as important as the words...

The first two functions of the phrase or the pause are for the benefit of the reader; the third is for the audience's benefit: the audience hears the reader, or grasps his meaning, during his 'flashes of silence' instead of while he is speaking... Not only does the pause help to bring out the meaning; a well placed pause sometimes heightens the effect of a reading as nothing else could.

Don't phrase (just) because of punctuation. You don't look to the punctuation for your phrasing; you look to the punctuation for meaning; then you look to the meaning for the phrasing.

Quotations

Don't let anyone persuade you that you are supposed to stop and wait before and after a quotation. You don't have to signal to your hearers that a quotation is coming or has just ended. When reading you should be thinking about the sense, not about the punctuation, as you do not think in terms of punctuation marks when you are just talking.

(Slight pauses and changes in your intonation are sometimes helpful and effective when reading quotations.

Italics

As a general rule, italicizing a word indicates that the idea it carries is important; therefore, the word should be emphasized appropriately in your reading.

(In regard to good oral reading:) Always let common sense and good taste be your final test.

Studio Techniques

Before you begin recording or go on the air for a live broadcast, please remove any jewelry, such as loose bracelets or beeping watches, which could produce distracting noises during your broadcast. Turn off cell phones.

Be sure to arrange your book, magazine or newspaper so that it is accessible and easy to handle. If possible, hold your reading material slightly raised in front of you. (If you are recording, you may wish to use the “book butler” provided in each studio.) At this angle, your head will be tilted enough to allow your throat muscles to relax. This position will also open your airway so that your voice will carry better.

Special Questions of Format

In addition to good reading and pronunciation techniques, there are miscellaneous aspects of form that must be considered as well.

QUOTATIONS: Quotations should generally be indicated by the inflection of the voice, or by phrases such as “Mr. Weinberger said” or “she said” in the text of the book or article.

EDITORIALIZING: It is unacceptable to offer personal comments regarding the material you are reading. As a volunteer broadcaster, your task is to read the written word as the author has presented it. Please refrain from editorializing so that our listeners remain free to form their own opinions about the material.

CENSORSHIP: Another type of editorializing is censorship. Just because the author’s choice of words may seem offensive to you, under no circumstances should you change or omit words because of your personal values. Again, your task is to read the words as they have been written. If

a book or article contains language that you find offensive, you may choose not to read this material.

PICTURES: Pictures and the accompanying captions may enhance a newspaper or book broadcast. Thus, photos and diagrams may be described when it seems appropriate. It may be helpful to write or plan the description so that your commentary sounds smooth and professional.

BYLINES: Our listeners have commented that they appreciate hearing bylines given in newspaper and magazine articles. Thus, we recommend that you read the name of the writer whenever it is given.

DATELINES: An AP or other news service story is often prefaced by the “dateline,” which simply states the name of the city and/or country from which the article is being reported. While reading the dateline is not mandatory, it is probably a good idea to read it in most cases. Sometimes the text of the article will make vague references to the dateline, like “the shooting occurred here today,” so it is often helpful to have mentioned the location.

Final Note

We hope you will enjoy your time as an Audio-Reader volunteer. Many of our volunteers have been reading for 5, 10—even 35 years. Your commitment and dedication truly make a difference in the lives of others. The time and talent you give open a window to the outside world. Thanks for taking the time to give.