

# Audio-Reader Volunteer Handbook

Revised January 2016



*Painting by Mary Ann Saunders, Audio-Reader Volunteer, in honor of Audio-Reader's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary*

## **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.



**KU** AUDIO-READER  
The University of Kansas

## **FOREWORD**

Welcome! We are pleased that you have chosen to volunteer your time and talents at the Kansas Audio-Reader Network. Audio-Reader's success depends on the hard work, dedication and talent of our volunteers.

Please read this guide carefully and completely, and use it as a reference tool throughout your time at Audio-Reader. This handbook will help you understand your role at Audio-Reader, guide you through the different volunteer assignments and help you with broadcasting techniques. We hope it will make you more confident as an Audio-Reader volunteer, and enhance your experience with us.



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## 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 and 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](http://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](http://www.reader.ku.edu) or listen at [www.reader.ku.edu/archive](http://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 (including grocery and discount store ads) on-demand. Listeners receive a local phone number or toll-free number to call in order to access these recordings.

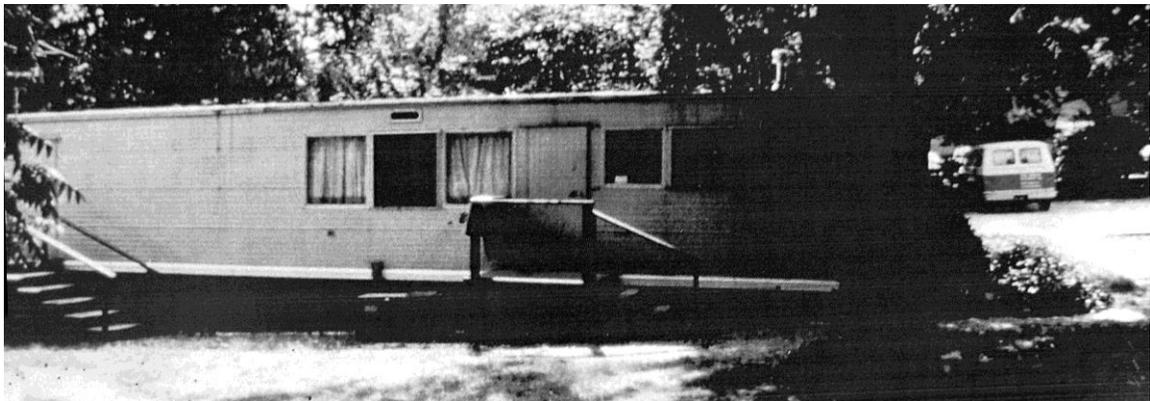
Audio-Reader also provides recordings of materials requested by individual listeners, live audio description of theatre performances in the Lawrence, Kansas City and Topeka areas, and a Sensory Garden designed to appeal to the visually impaired. You'll find job descriptions for the volunteers who give their time to each of these services later in this handbook.

## The History of Audio-Reader

Audio-Reader's rich history began four decades ago with Lawrence philanthropist Petey Cerf. With a goal of making printed materials available to the visually impaired in a more efficient and widespread way, Petey

decided to support a radio reading service in Lawrence, similar to one already in place in Minneapolis, MN (Minnesota Radio Talking Book Network). She approached the University of Kansas for funding and they agreed. On October 11, 1971, Audio-Reader became the second reading service of its kind to hit the airwaves.

We began with just 80 hours of programming each week and about 250 listeners. In 1985 we started broadcasting 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our broadcast area has expanded many times over the years, and we now cover almost the entire state of Kansas and northwest Missouri. Audio-Reader now serves about 6,000 listeners. In addition, we've expanded our services to offer a dial-in newspaper service, special request recordings, live audio description of theatre performances and a Sensory Garden.



Audio-Reader didn't always broadcast from our current location. We started in 450 square feet of space in the Sudler House (now the Max Kade Center), just south of our current location. In 1976 we moved into a mobile home and a larger space in Sudler. In 1987 renovations began on the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity house, which had been used for storage throughout the 1970's and 80's. In 1988 the renovation was complete and we vacated both of our old locations for our new and improved home. The Baehr Audio-Reader Center is named for Louis and Dolpha Baehr of Paola, KS, whose foundation funded the renovation. Dolpha was an Audio-Reader listener. Their portrait hangs in the Audio-Reader living room.

A new addition for Kansas Public Radio, which carries Audio-Reader on its sub-carrier, was completed in September 2003.

## **Who Are Audio-Reader's Listeners?**

Anyone who is unable to read normal printed materials qualifies to become an Audio-Reader listener. This includes people with vision loss of any kind (blindness, Macular Degeneration, glaucoma, etc.) as well as any other learning disability or physical or cognitive condition that prevents them from reading normal printed materials (Dyslexia, Multiple Sclerosis, brain injury, stroke, etc.).

Our radio listeners are the largest group. Most range in age from 60 to 90. Many suffer from Macular Degeneration, an age-related eye disorder. They are new to the blind community, do not read Braille and may be uncomfortable with the technology advances that benefit younger members of the community. These listeners like the simplicity of the Audio-Reader radio, which has one knob on the front to turn it on and off and two dials to adjust volume and tone.

Lions Telephone Reader listeners tend to be younger, more comfortable with using technology and prefer access to a wide range of unabridged information at their fingertips. Telephone Reader listeners often use Braille and have other "enabling technology" in the home. They also have very specific ideas of what material they want to hear.

## **How Do People Acquire Service?**

Subscribers fill out a short application form for the services they want to receive. A medical professional, librarian, social worker or Lions Club member certifies their disability. Once we receive their application, we send them a radio or access codes, depending on the service(s) they sign up for. Ask a staff member for an application if you know someone who could benefit from our services. It is also available on our website.

Every other month, radio service listeners receive a program guide in large print, Braille, cassette or via our website, [www.reader.ku.edu](http://www.reader.ku.edu). 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. Telephone Reader listeners are equipped with a menu telling them where to find each publication and its various sections.

In addition, any listener is encouraged to send in special request materials. These can include anything from newspapers and magazines to books, instruction manuals, newsletters or even textbooks. Many of our listeners send in requests regularly.

## **How is Audio-Reader Funded?**

Audio-Reader is a non-profit organization and a part of the University of Kansas. Our organization raises a large portion of its operating budget each year through direct mail campaigns, a benefit sale of vinyl records and audio goods (For Your EARS Only, Sept. 9-10, 2016) and a golf tournament (June 6, 2016) and grants. We also help you include Audio-Reader in your estate planning. Donations to Audio-Reader provide funding for the technology, reading materials and outreach to new listeners.

To learn more about development at Audio-Reader, contact Development Assistant Meredith Johanning at (785) 864-5336 or [mjohanning@ku.edu](mailto:mjohanning@ku.edu).

## **Audio-Reader's Volunteers**



Nearly 400 volunteers provide the backbone for the Kansas Audio-Reader Network ranging in age from their late teens to mid-90s. They include teachers, doctors, lawyers, business owners, ministers, homemakers, retirees, students and more. While many live in Lawrence, we have a large number of readers who drive in

from surrounding communities. We even have a few who moved out of the area, but continue to record remotely from home studios. In addition to our Lawrence volunteer pool, we have a contingent of volunteers in Pittsburg, Kansas who read regional newspapers from studios at KRPS. Another group records Kansas City-area newspapers from Alhambra in Kansas City, MO. Newspapers from both of these regions are broadcast weekday afternoons from 2-4 p.m.

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. A few have monthly or quarterly assignments, or volunteer to fill in for others during certain times of year.

## Our Facilities

We want you to feel at home as an Audio-Reader volunteer. Once the audition is passed, each volunteer goes through a mandatory orientation session which includes a tour of Audio-Reader and Kansas Public Radio facilities. Here are some of the things you need to know as an Audio-Reader volunteer.

### Parking:



Each Audio-Reader volunteer will need to register their vehicle with KU Parking and Transit. Those with a KU permit can only park in the lot dictated by that permit. Once registered, you may park anywhere in **Lot 51. If you fail to register your vehicle you may be subject to a ticket.** If you come to volunteer in a different vehicle you will need to register it within an hour of arriving to read. You will also need to alert us if you purchase a new vehicle or get a new license plate. Please avoid parking in the fire lane (anywhere

along the driveway leading to Audio-Reader) as this will result in a ticket. You may not back into parking spaces. **If you arrive and there is no place to park, please alert a staff member so we can move our own vehicles to another lot.**

## **Building Hours:**

Monday-Friday: 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Weekends: 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

State Holidays: 7 a.m. to Noon (these will be announced in advance).

## **Restrooms:**

There are unisex restrooms on the first floor to the west of the stairs, and on the second floor near the bannister.

## **Beverages:**

There is a water cooler on the first floor outside the on-air studio and a drinking fountain upstairs across from the Roundtable Room. You will also find coffee in the living room downstairs. There is a pop machine located in the kitchen as well as a snack machine.

## **Other Supplies:**

You will find cough drops in the Roundtables and in the volunteer area upstairs. There will be Kleenex, hand sanitizer and Lysol spray in each studio as well. Cups for coffee and water are located near the coffee pot or drinking fountain. If you discover anything in short supply, please let a staff member know.

In addition, there are Dictionaries in each recording studio as well as the downstairs Roundtable and outside the coordinator of volunteer's office. You'll also find Associated Press and regional pronunciation guides there and in the Roundtables. Links to online pronunciation guides are available on the 11x17 monitors in each studio.

## **Smoking:**

Audio-Reader is a smoke-free facility.

## **Housekeeping:**

When you leave your studio, please be courteous and remove any food, papers, wrappers, cups or other trash. There are trash cans in each studio and recycling bins in the Roundtables and volunteer area for your use.

## **Signing in and Scheduling Studio Time**

When you arrive at Audio-Reader you need to sign in on the sign-in notebook by the front door. Please sign out when you leave as well. This helps us keep track of volunteer hours as well as who is in the building should there be an emergency.

When you begin your volunteer assignment you will schedule a day and time for recording. Audio-Reader has seven recording studios available, plus a Telephone Reader headset available in the upstairs Roundtable room and air studio most mornings. If you need to add, change or delete time from the recording schedule you can call the coordinator of volunteers at 864-4604 to make changes. Volunteers with flexible assignments can request a username and password for the online scheduling system, which will allow them to book their own time.

If you are unable to schedule a consistent recording time we ask that you schedule your time on a weekly basis, either through the website or through a staff member. Priority will be given to readers with scheduled time. **Please note: While scheduling in advance gives you priority for studio space, it does NOT mean you will always be in the studio you scheduled.** Staff reserves the right to move you to a different studio in order to minimize delays.

If you come without scheduling please check with the coordinator of volunteers or another staff member to be sure open studios have not been reserved by another volunteer.

## Audio-Reader Absence Policy

Your attendance is necessary to keep our operation running smoothly and ensure all materials are read in a timely fashion. Please make every effort to keep your appointed recording time. **If you are unable to read for any reason it is imperative to let an Audio-Reader staff member know as far in advance as possible.** In addition, we encourage you to make up missed time by filling in as a substitute prior to your departure or upon your return.

To report an absence:

- **Radio Program Readers:** Contact Coordinator of Volunteers Jen Nigro at (785) 864-4604 or [jnigro@ku.edu](mailto:jnigro@ku.edu). If her voicemail recording or email response indicates she is out of the office, contact another staff member at the main number, (785) 864-4600.
- **Weekday Telephone Reader Volunteers:** Text or call Telephone Reader Supervisor George McCoy at (785) 431 3847 or email him at [gmccoy@ku.edu](mailto:gmccoy@ku.edu).
- **Weekend Telephone Reader Volunteers:** Text or call Weekend Reading Coordinator Billie Archer at (785) 979 4087 or email her at [bdaa@ku.edu](mailto:bdaa@ku.edu).
- **Special Request Readers:** Contact Special Request Coordinator Lisa Werner at (785) 864-2685 or email [llwerner@ku.edu](mailto:llwerner@ku.edu).

The sooner you let us know you will be away the better chance we have of finding someone to substitute for you. This keeps both us and our listeners happy!

If you are a newspaper or magazine reader and 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 as a substitute reader if you wish. Book readers will be checked for progress every three months; you must complete a minimum

of one book reading per month to remain active. If no progress has been made the coordinator of volunteers will contact you about scheduling time or giving up the book you are working on. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Holidays

Audio-Reader is open on all state holidays from 7:00 a.m. to Noon. If you record a program that cannot be recorded ahead of time, you will need to come in during those hours or arrange with the coordinator of volunteers for a substitute. **TELEPHONE READERS, BREAKFAST TABLE TIMES READERS AND OTHERS WHO RECORD SAME-DAY BROADCASTS ARE EXPECTED TO READ UNLESS THEY HAVE MADE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS.** Because there is less time available for volunteers to complete their assignments we ask book readers and anyone else who can record ahead to make up their time on another day. This ensures readers who have broadcasts airing on the holiday can get a studio when they need it. If you are willing to read as a substitute on holidays please let the coordinator of volunteers know.

## Inclement Weather Procedures

**Winter:** Audio-Reader operates daily regardless of weather conditions, even if the University of Kansas cancels classes and closes campus. If you feel you cannot get here safely due to snow or ice please call us to let us know you cannot fulfill your assignment that day. If you feel you can get here safely or you read from home, please complete your assignment as usual. We welcome help from readers not regularly scheduled as well. In some cases we will decide to close early; please watch your email for such announcements.

**Spring/Summer:** During tornado season please rest assured our staff will make every effort to monitor the weather and get you to shelter in the event of severe thunderstorms or tornadoes. In the event of a tornado warning, please save your recording and proceed to the designated room in

the Kansas Public Radio basement. A staff member on duty will help you get there. Live readers will be asked to leave their stations and our listeners will receive a pre-recorded message.

## **Leaves of Absence**

From time to time, a volunteer may need to miss several weeks in a row. Reasons can include 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 the coordinator of volunteers 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.

## **When to Retire or Make a Change**

There is no magic age at which readers should retire. Our listeners expect and deserve easily-understood readings. If age or illness prevents the vocal production of a clear and pleasant tone, we suggest you cut back or take a break from reading. If you feel you are developing vocal quality issues that will not resolve with rest, it may be time to consider giving up your reading assignment. If you think it's time to retire, please talk with the coordinator of volunteers.

If you become unable to commit to a weekly volunteer assignment due to other activities, you may want to consider moving to our substitute reader list. This is a good option if you find you have to cancel frequently.

## **What Will I Read?**

Reading assignments are made based on the needs of the program along with the reader's schedule and interests. There are times when weekly reading assignments are not available. In this case, volunteers are placed on a substitute reader list. Those readers will be offered weekly reading

assignments as they become available. Book reading slots are not available to new readers and will only be opened to seasoned readers as need dictates. If at any time you would like to be considered for a different assignment (this can be due to a change in schedule or your interests), please alert the coordinator of volunteers. Reassignment will be made as soon as a suitable spot opens up.

There are three main areas you could be assigned to. They are:

**Radio Reading:** Most radio reading assignments are once per week and require about a two-hour time commitment. Most involve reading from newspapers or magazines, though we have occasional openings for book readers. They must be done at Audio-Reader unless you have an approved home recording studio. Book and magazine programs must be completed by a specific date and time as dictated by the program schedule. A few of our radio broadcasts are done live. Readers assigned to these broadcasts need to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the program.

**Telephone Reader:** Most Telephone Reader assignments are once per week and require an hour to an hour-and-a-half to complete. These recordings can be completed in the studio or from home. Most of these assignments need to be completed by 10 a.m. All involve reading newspapers, newsletters or grocery and discount store ads.

**Special Request Reading:** Special request materials are read by request for listeners who are unable to access their publications via our radio signal or unable to utilize Telephone Reader. Most assignments are once per week and take an hour to an hour-and-a-half. Timing is flexible, but our goal is to complete these materials as quickly as possible so they can get to our listeners. These recordings must be done in the Audio-Reader studios unless you have an approved home recording studio. Most of these requests involve reading newspapers or magazines, but we do receive book requests from time to time.

## Best Practices for Reading

1. Complete your assignment by its deadline. Newspaper and magazine readers should finish at least 15 minutes before their program airs. Live readers should arrive at least 10-minutes prior to the start of the broadcast. Call 864-4600 if you are running late. Telephone Reader assignments should be completed by 10 a.m. unless otherwise specified or specific arrangements have been made with staff.
2. Read all materials as they are written, **without commenting, censoring or editorializing**. It is equally important to keep your tone neutral. If in the course of your reading you run across any offensive material, DO NOT CENSOR IT. Instead, write DISCLAIMER at the top of your recording sheet so we can add a disclaimer before it airs. Offensive material can include excessive profanity or explicit sexual scenes or graphic violence. If in doubt, ask.
3. **Always make time for the obituaries!** 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. **Save your obituaries so listeners can call for more information.** There is a bin in the reception area for obituaries, or you can leave them with a staff member.
4. Follow instructions. Radio readers should select reading materials with the listener in mind; do not gravitate toward your own opinions and viewpoints. Live readers should limit the amount of time they spend on an article to five minutes. Telephone readers should read their sections in their entirety. Special request listeners should adhere to the listener preferences provided.
5. Keep up with names and topics in the news. If you are unsure of a pronunciation, look it up or ask a staff member.

6. Be courteous of others. Some newspaper readers will have a reading partner. Refrain from eating, rattling newspapers, etc. while they are reading. Leave your studio neat for the next person!
7. Schedule studio time in advance. This can be done through a staff member or through our online system. If you would like a username and password for self-scheduling please ask the coordinator of volunteers.
8. Book readers may be pulled from their book on any given day to read a more urgent assignment due to the illness or unexpected absence of another volunteer. You may schedule another time to work on your book that week or return to it the following week.
9. Make your reading style appropriate to the material, but don't be overly dramatic. Book readers should never use character voices.
10. Press the pause button or leave the room if you need to cough or sneeze. If it makes it onto your recording, please go back and take it out.

## **Helpful Hints**

When you read, you want to read smoothly, clearly and with expression. Here are some tips to help you along the way.

1. 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.
2. Always have a glass of some kind of liquid available. Room temperature water is best. Avoid carbonated beverages before and during a broadcast. Tea may also be helpful. Avoid milk or cheese products for several hours before you read.

3. 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.
4. Sit up straight! Keep your neck and shoulder muscles loose and your head level as you read.
5. Be sure your microphone is at a comfortable level and close enough for you to be heard. You want it off to the side a bit to avoid popping p’s.
6. Breathe deeply and from the diaphragm.
7. Take a short break during your broadcast if possible to take a drink, stretch or get a breath of fresh air if your voice is feeling fatigued.

## **Reading Techniques**

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

### **Emphasis**

Emphasize the new idea or the contrast; subdue the old idea. Any word you can leave out without changing the meaning you need not and should not stress.

### **Parenthesis**

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.

### **Phrasing**

A phrase is a group of related words that conveys a thought. A phrase serves three purposes. Its first and most obvious function is to give the reader an opportunity to breathe. The second function of the phrase is to give the reader an opportunity to look ahead to see what he is to read next. Thirdly, a well-placed pause sometimes heightens the effect of a reading as nothing else could.

### **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. Do not say “quote” and “end quote” to indicate someone else is speaking.

### **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.

## **Special Questions of Format**

**Footnotes:** Footnotes may be read if they appear on the same page with their referent. If they do not appear on the same page, or if their content is more distracting than helpful, they should be omitted.

**Picture Description:** We describe photos to enhance the listener’s experience. Describe the pictures like you read the articles. Be neutral, but have interest in your voice.

1. Tell the listener whether the photo is black and white or color.
2. Credit the photographer if mentioned.
3. Read the caption and scan the article before you start talking for context.

4. Choose what is important. Start there.
5. Let the caption and article do the work for you- often much of the description is contained there.
6. Use imaginative, colorful, specific language. Look for color, texture, size, movement and approximation to other items in the picture.
7. Plan what you're going to say. Write it down if you need to.
8. If you don't know what something is, say you don't know. Then try to describe it as best you can.

**Dedications, Forewords, Prefaces, and Prologues:** When you record a book or other material which contains introductory information such as a dedication, foreword, etc., we suggest that you read this material unless it is “dry” and unhelpful, such as an extensive list of acknowledgements. When in doubt, consult a staff member.

**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.

# Feedback and Evaluations

It is our job as Audio-Reader volunteers and staff to put forth the very best product for our listeners every day. *Remember: Every time you go on the air, it may be the first time someone is listening. We want them to keep listening!* To that end, all volunteers will receive feedback on their readings. This happens in a variety of ways:

**First reading feedback:** A staff member will listen to one of your first recordings and advise you to correct any format, technical or vocal issues that aren't quite right. This contact also serves to help reassure new volunteers they are on the right track!

**Informal feedback:** Staff is constantly monitoring the air signal. If we hear something concerning or outstanding, or if a listener calls in with feedback, we will share this with you.

**Formal feedback:** All volunteers will be offered the opportunity to complete a self-review periodically. This is done in tandem with the coordinator of volunteers listening to a broadcast and providing detailed feedback. You can choose to do a self-review in addition to the COV's feedback, receive feedback from the COV without doing a self-review, or have a fellow volunteer review your reading anonymously. These are the evaluation guidelines used in these evaluations. 1 is least desirable while 5 is most desirable.

**Emphasis** is the stressing of certain words or ideas and subduing of others to make the meaning of the work more clear. New or contrasted ideas are generally emphasized. Ideas that have already been introduced in the piece or those that are less important are generally subdued.

1= Reader places either no emphasis on any words, causing a monotone reading style, or emphasizes each word, sounding closer to shouting.

2= Reader reads in sing-song voice, not stressing anything in particular, but not monotone.

3= Reader clearly attempts to emphasize certain words, but sounds forced or emphasizes words that should be subdued or subdues words that should be emphasized.

4= Reader seems to grasp the concept of emphasis and generally emphasizes the correct words or ideas, though not always.

5= Reader's emphasis makes the meaning of the work more clear. New ideas and contrasts are stressed, old ideas are subdued all of the time.

**Phrasing** is the use of pauses between words and ideas to make the meaning of the work more clear.

1= Reader runs all of their words together, never stopping, or puts a significant pause between each word or idea.

2= Reader reads for the amount of available breath, only stopping to breathe, not concentrating on the meaning.

3= Reader attempts to leave pauses in places, but they seem mostly misplaced.

4= Reader seems to grasp the concept of phrasing, and generally pauses between the correct words, but may be reading strictly for punctuation rather than meaning.

5= Reader's phrasing brings out the meaning of the passage. Words and phrases that are grouped together make sense and flow properly.

**Voice Quality** is made up of the elements that make a reader understandable and pleasant and easy to listen to.

1= Voice has many distracting qualities (raspiness, crackling, lisp or other speech impediment, overly thick accent, high pitch, etc.) that do not enhance the work. Voice tires quickly or is generally unpleasant to listen to.

2= Voice exhibits one distracting quality or tires quickly.

3= Voice generally exhibits no distracting qualities, but tires during the middle portion of the reading. Voice also may begin to display distracting qualities as reading progresses when reader is not concentrating or suppressing them.

4= Voice exhibits no distracting qualities and only shows signs of fatigue at the end of the reading.

5= Voice shows consistent tone and quality throughout the work, and is clear and easy to understand. No distracting elements are shown throughout the entire work, and voice does not show signs of tiring, even at the end of the work.

**Enunciation** is the proper articulation of the words on the printed page and ensuring the words flow together in a coherent and clear manner.

1= Reader slurs all of the words together or mumbles, making it difficult to distinguish the ideas being presented.

2= Reader reads each word in a staccato or halting manner, causing distraction to the listeners.

3= Reader drops letters off words. For instance, going becomes goin', etc. or drops into colloquial phrasing, like going to becomes gonna.

4= Reader generally reads with good flow, occasionally dropping letters when not paying attention.

5= Reader is precise with words, not spending too much time on each word, but ensuring each is said properly.

**Pronunciation** is the way that words are usually spoken.

1= Reader mispronounces many words often stumbling further, making it difficult to understand the piece without distraction.

2= Reader mispronounces some words, stumbling quite a bit over them, taking time to regain flow.

3= Reader mispronounces foreign names or other unfamiliar words, but regains composure without continuing to stumble.

4= Reader mispronounces only extremely difficult words, but spells words out and maintains consistent pronunciation throughout.

5= Reader does not mispronounce any words and provides spelling of words with multiple pronunciations.

**Speed** is how fast or slow the words come out of a reader's mouth.

1= Reader is too slow as if he is having trouble getting the words out at all or reads too fast, stumbling over many words.

2= Reader reads slightly too fast or too slow, making it slightly difficult to keep up with the text.

3= Reader reads at a pace that is good for his or her voice on the radio. The listener can easily keep up with the piece, but is not impeded by the rate of speed.

**Professionalism** is the poise and control that the reader has over the work. The reader should transition well from article to article without offering commentary on it. The broadcast should be free of any extra noise aside from the reader's voice.

1= Reader interjects many personal comments into the work and often clears his or her throat, coughs or makes other distracting noises on air. Reader clearly does not understand the subject matter.

2= Reader often rambles between articles or during the introduction or closing of the show, many distracting noises can be heard throughout the program or reader comes across as patronizing.

3= Reader interjects some remarks or laughs at articles, but is attempting to show friendliness. Some distracting noises may be heard. Some passages may sound as though the reader does not understand the subject matter.

4= Reader keeps personal comments to a minimum, but paper rustling or other noise is heard in small amounts.

5= Reader uses good and varied transitions, sounding friendly without interjecting personal comments about the work being read. Reader clearly understands the material. There are no noises aside from the reader's voice reading.

## Other Volunteer Opportunities



### Audio Description

Audio Describers use colorful, succinct language to describe theatre to the visually impaired. This is done live. Description covers everything from sets and costumes to setting the scene and action on stage. However, it is the describer's job to avoid speaking when the actors are speaking or singing.

#### *Requirements:*

1. Pass an Audio Description audition. These can be scheduled through the coordinator of volunteers at your convenience.
2. Once at least three volunteers are ready for training we will host an eight-hour training session. You must complete this training before you can start describing.
3. Describers will attend two performances in most cases. The first is to preview the show. Although you may take notes, the pace is so fast during an actual description you won't have much time to refer to them. When you preview, you are looking for details pertinent to the viewer. Time is often limited, so you have to choose the most important things to describe.
4. Description is usually done in pairs, but not always. One describer reads the program notes and layout of the theatre before the show and intermission. The other does the description during the show. Both partners should be prepared in case the other has to cancel at the last minute or loses their voice!
5. Once a description is complete describers are responsible for gathering up all of the audio description headsets and other equipment and returning them to Audio-Reader.

## Sensory Garden



The Sensory Garden is designed to appeal to all of the human senses so the visually impaired can experience the imagination and spirit of plant life through textures, fragrances and sounds. Some items may not be in an optimum location for a visual experience, but they afford touch and sound experiences for many people.

The garden is cared for by a small group of dedicated volunteer gardeners. The type and amount of work varies depending on the season. If you are interested in volunteering in the Sensory Garden, please contact Audio-Reader's Development Director at 864-4634.

## For Your Ears Only



*For Your Ears Only* is Audio-Reader's annual special event fundraiser held in September. Every summer we collect gently used audio products from people in the community. The donations range from CD's and LP's to speakers, turntables and mp3 players. We need volunteers to sort these donations, help with pricing and pitch in with set-up, cashiering and baking during the sale. Any extra time you can give before and during the sale is very much appreciated. Please contact Audio-Reader's Development Assistant at 864-5336 or [mjohanning@ku.edu](mailto:mjohanning@ku.edu).

## **Outreach**

We need YOUR help to spread the word about Audio-Reader! Anyone is a potential audience. Need to give a program presentation to your civic group? Outreach Coordinator Lori Kesinger can set you up with the materials you need. She is also available to speak to groups about Audio-Reader's services, including our radios, Telephone Reader, Special Request and Audio Description. Your group does not need to be visually-impaired to learn about Audio-Reader! We could also use your help exhibiting at area events. To find out how you can help contact Lori Kesinger at (785) 864-4625 or [lrk@ku.edu](mailto:lrk@ku.edu).

## **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 40 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.