

HACK YOUR HOMEWORK!

Have your Texts Read Aloud To You

There are as many ways to have your texts read aloud as there are reasons you may want to have this done. Often one solution does not meet all of your needs. There are different solutions for mobile devices vs. laptops, and Apple iOS vs. Windows OS. Here are some good options for you to start listening to your documents right away.



SCANNING

If your document is on paper, you will first need to scan it.

Scanning with your phone:

 <p>Adobe Scan</p>	Adobe Scan is free and is your best option, especially while attending CCA, because you already have the Adobe Cloud Storage needed to run this app. Once you log in with your CCA credentials, you can use this app to scan a document, automatically making it "searchable text" and therefore readable. It works with both iOS and Android users.
 <p>Scannable</p>	For iOS users, Scannable is free and a really great app that's easy to use, takes the best scans of any app, and you can save your scans to your phone in a variety of locations. You will need to convert this scan to "searchable text" afterward.
 <p>CamScanner</p>	For Android users, CamScanner may be your best free option. It's a good scanner which allows you to save your documents to other apps. Using the free versions means you will need to convert this scan to "searchable text" afterward.

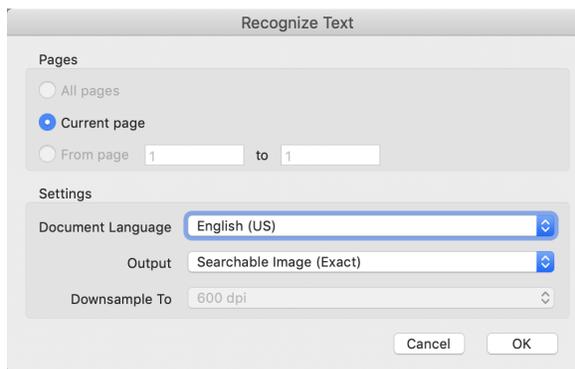
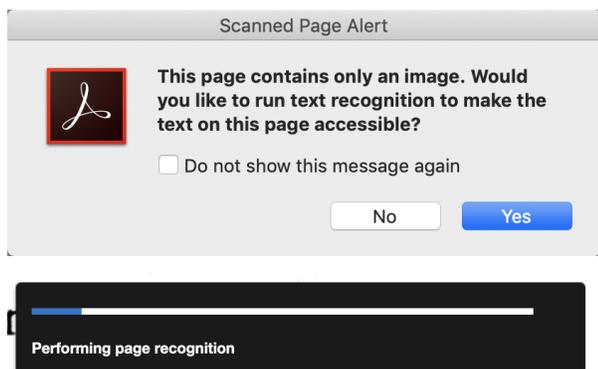
CONVERTING TO SEARCHABLE TEXT

For a digital image or PDF text, your next step is to convert it to “searchable text” or to run OCR (Optical Character Recognition) on it.

In order to have your document read to you, it needs to contain words. Many PDFs that your instructors give you or that you have scanned with your phone may actually be images and therefore not be in the required “searchable” format. Also, some documents have important images containing text that cannot be read until they are converted to “readable text.” Word docs, text docs, and RTF texts are ready to go. PowerPoints are ready to be read. But your PDF may need to be converted.

The easiest way to convert a PDF or image is by opening it in Adobe Scan on your phone or in Adobe Acrobat Pro DC on your computer. Opening your image in Adobe Scan on your phone will convert it. Your doc will need to be in your photos library to bring it into Adobe Scan. After you have added it to Adobe Scan, you can save a copy back out to another app. That new copy will be converted.

Your other option is to open your PDF or image on your computer in Acrobat Pro DC. Once it's open, **click on Edit and be sure you let it convert from image to text.** You will see any or all of the following messages. It's worth waiting until these processes have completed. After these processes are done, you can save your new doc out to another location and it is ready to be read aloud.



GETTING THE TEXT READ ALOUD

Decide which kind of functionality works best for you. Here are 3 basic options.

 Speech	Native text-to-speech on an Apple computer can be found in some of the application menus or you can navigate to your Settings, Accessibility, Speech to see your default shortcut. Usually, it's Option + Esc. This will start reading any text you have highlighted. The voice is not the best, you will notice. And it can be challenging that you have to highlight the text. You will see some other options below.
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	<p>Native text-to-speech on the iPhone can be enabled from within the Settings, General, Accessibility, Speech.</p> <p>Speak selection will provide you the option to have the text spoken when it is highlighted. Speak screen will read the page, but it's a little tricky to swipe in just the right way to make this work.</p>
	<p>There are native accessibility capabilities on Samsung phones, but they vary based upon the model. Android phones have the option to install the Android Accessibility Suite, which gives you similar functions as the iPhone like reading selected text. You can also point your camera at text and it will read it for you. Search the Google Play store: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.marvin.talkback</p>

Looking for better text-to-speech options? Try these.

	<p>There are many, many great text readers on the market. Most have a free version and a paid version which delivers more functionality. One of the best out there is NaturalReader. It has web, iOS, and Android app versions. https://www.naturalreaders.com/</p> <p>With NaturalReader you can upload files like PDFs, Word Docs, and PowerPoint presentations and it will read them aloud in a fairly realistic voice, highlighting the text it's reading as it goes, and enlarging the text on the screen a few words at a time. You can also have NaturalReader read web pages. The web reader can be found here: https://www.naturalreaders.com/webreader.html</p>
	<p>If you like to save articles you find on the web and would like to have them read to you later, Pocket is great for that! You need to install the app on your phone. Then install an extension on your favorite browser and you can use it to save web articles to your Pocket. On the phone, your articles will appear and are ready to be read aloud by Pocket. It has a pretty good voice and highlights the text as it reads. https://getpocket.com</p>

Do you use a different app for having text read aloud to you?

The HACK YOUR HOMEWORK team would love your recommendations! Email Instructional Designer Bobby White at the email below.