

## ELIGIBILITY GUIDE



# The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution

## Who is Eligible?

The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is a proven multi-sensory reading accommodation for students who fall into one of the following three categories:

### 1. READING DEFICIT

A reading deficit is determined by a student's need for a reading accommodation due to an impairment in decoding, fluency and/or comprehension that does not allow a student to keep up with content at the same level as students without an impairment. An IEP or 504 is not required.

### 2. BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Persons who are blind whose visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or whose wide diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees. A person with a visual impairment has a visual deficit with correction that prevents or inhibits him/her from reading standard printed material.

### 3. OTHER PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Students who have a physical impairment that prevents them from reading standard print, such as those who are unable to hold a book, turn the pages of a book, etc. Students with Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, or Muscular Dystrophy are examples of individuals who may qualify under this category.

At least  
**20%**  
of your  
students  
may be  
eligible.

## WHAT IS A READING DEFICIT?

A reading deficit is determined by a student's inability to keep up with content due to an impairment in at least one of the following areas:

### **DECODING**

- Phonological awareness
- Phonemic awareness
- Orthographic awareness
- Oral language

### **FLUENCY**

- Automaticity
- Fluency
- Processing speed

### **COMPREHENSION**

- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Pragmatics
- Verbal reasoning
- Verbal working memory
- Visual working memory
- Long term memory
- Attention
- Vocabulary

Students with dyslexia are eligible for the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution.

Students with the following disorders and conditions should be considered, as they may also have co-occurring reading deficits listed to the left:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- Auditory processing disorder
- Developmental coordination disorder
- Exhibit deficits in executive function, metacognition and social reasoning
- Traumatic or moderate brain injury/concussions
- Migraines
- Chronic fatigue syndrome



# DETERMINING AND PROVIDING ELIGIBILITY

## WHO IS ABLE TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY?

Eligibility for the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution can be provided by an educator or other professional who has experience determining whether a student has a reading deficit, blindness, a visual impairment, or a physical disability.

**In addition to educators, there are other professionals who are able to provide eligibility to use the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution.** Some examples include reading specialists, doctors, and therapists. *\*This is not an exhaustive list*

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## HOW TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

Any educator (or other professional) who has experience observing students with a reading deficit, blindness or visual impairment, or physical disability can make the determination of eligibility.

**In order to make this determination, educators (or other professionals) can use any combination of the following:**

- Classroom Observation
- Student Work
- Informal and Formal Assessments

As part of your determination, consider students who demonstrate a lack of motivation or engagement in reading activities. **Educators can ask themselves any of the following questions to help when determining eligibility.**

- Does the student exhibit a deficit in decoding, fluency, or comprehension?
- Have I noticed a deficit in the student's work in comparison to their classroom peers?
- Do your informal and/or formal assessments indicate this student has a reading deficit?

**View our [Eligibility FAQ's](#) for additional information.**

## Why Do We Have Eligibility Guidelines?

Learning Ally is able to offer our human-read audio textbooks and literature titles under a special provision of the U.S. Copyright law (17 U.S.C. § 121, et seq., Marrakesh exemption). To be eligible to receive our solution under this special provision, a person's reading or perceptual deficit or disability needs to be determined by a Qualified Educator or Qualified Evaluator with experience making such determinations.

# DEFINITIONS OF READING SKILLS AND PROCESSES

**ATTENTION** refers to the ability for skilled and fluent readers to execute on automatic processes that do not require much, if any, attentional resources. Once lower level subskills are automatized, attention mechanisms are freed up and can be allocated for higher level functions of text processing.

**AUTOMATICITY** involves the ability to identify letters, letter patterns, and isolated words accurately and quickly.

**FLUENCY** refers to the ability of readers to read words in text automatically and accurately with the correct rate and with the application of expression (prosody).

**LONG TERM MEMORY** is the mental system for permanently storing, managing and retrieving information for later use. Items of information stored as long-term memory may be available for a lifetime.

**MORPHOLOGY** is the recognition, understanding, and use of word parts that carry significance. For example, root words, prefixes, suffixes and grammatical inflections (e.g., -s or -es for plurals) are all morphemes which can be added or taken away from a word to alter its meaning.

**ORAL LANGUAGE** is the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings.

**ORTHOGRAPHIC AWARENESS** refer to the ability to identify patterns of specific letters as words, eventually leading to word recognition.

**PHONEMIC AWARENESS** refers to the specific ability to focus on and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

**PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS** is a broad skill that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language—parts such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.

**PRAGMATICS** is the understanding of language that is not directly spoken, but implied by a speaker and inferred by a listener.

**PROCESSING SPEED** is the time it takes a person to do a mental task. It is related to the speed in which a person can understand and react to the information they receive, whether it be visual (letters and numbers), auditory (language), or movement.

**SEMANTICS** refers to the meaning and interpretation of words, signs, and sentence structure.

**SYNTAX** refers to the rules used to join words into meaningful sentences, sentences into coherent paragraphs, and paragraphs into longer passages.

**VERBAL REASONING** is the understanding of concepts framed in words within the use of reasoning.

**VERBAL WORKING MEMORY** is the active maintenance of verbal information that translates into language production.

**VISUAL WORKING MEMORY** is the active maintenance of visual information to serve the needs of ongoing tasks.

**VOCABULARY** is a set of familiar words within a person's language that usually develops with age, and serves as a fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge.

**LEARNING ALLY** is a leading education solutions organization dedicated to transforming the lives of struggling learners. The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is a proven multi-sensory reading accommodation for students with a reading deficit composed of high quality, human-read audiobooks, student-centric features and a suite of teacher resources to monitor and support student success. Used in more than 17,000 schools, this essential solution bridges the gap between a student's reading ability and their cognitive capability, empowering them to become engaged learners and reach their academic potential.