

Leap into Reading! They're Playing My Book: Leaping for Audiobooks!

Article

I'm about to go on a run, but before I do I need to lace up my sneakers, grab my sunglasses and bandana, and, finally, click on the Overdrive app on my phone. Later, I will go grocery shopping. I will grab my purse, the stash of reusable bags hanging from my door, and my phone turned onto the Overdrive app. This evening I will prepare dinner. Before I even preheat the oven and boil the water, I will plug in my phone to the speakers and blast out my book through the Overdrive app.

Please note: This is no advertisement for Overdrive but merely my top ten reasons to listen to audiobooks often and promote them with your students and parents.

10. You can "read" anywhere: in the car, on the bus, or in your house while doing your chores. Yes, you probably already knew this but remind your students. Listening to a book includes comprehension. It counts! You have to sit in the car while you drive your sister to dance class? Listen to a book. Is it late coming home from swim practice? Have the book on. (Just make sure your auxiliary cord is in the car and working unless, of course, you have a blue tooth in which case you are all good.)

9. Students LOVE audiobooks. When I asked a first grade teacher for her thoughts about "books on tape" she shared that "very few children opt out when it is a choice" in the classroom. Get out those headphones and get the words flowing.

8. Audiobooks may also be the only time some children hear fluent expressive reading outside of school. Want to hear talented expressive reading? How about Jim Dale and the Harry Potter series? I heard (all puns intended) that he had to personify over 100 different voices throughout that series.

7. For students who might think they don't like reading, listening serves as an opportunity to read without the pain of "decoding" written words. For our youngest learners, it actually lets them experience the power of reading as they find their own way into the world of literacy.

6. Audiobooks model our speaking and listening standards. Where else can students hear drama so well? Think of how fun it would be for your students to record their own audiobooks to share with others. Tap into their drama desires and now you've covered theater skills AND literacy.

5. Audiobooks are a great way to build vocabulary and fluency "especially for those kiddos who struggle with decoding or who are not being read to at home," shared a speech therapist in my building.

4. It's a social thing. A few years ago I didn't have enough copies of *Doll Bones* for a Mock Newbery book group so my group of boys and I sat around my computer and SmartBoard and read—and listened—as we projected the book from the ELMO while listening to the audio. I'm sure it was creepier to read it that way than any other.

3. Everybody's doing it. Yeah, some people may be listening to podcasts while they run but not everyone. Take a poll—lots of people listen to books while they run, commute, and clean.

2. Voices are unforgettable. I remember distinctly listening to Cynthia Lord's *Rules* while sweeping the kitchen floor. That floor shined like the top of the Chrysler Building. And even though it was as recent as this summer, I know I will never forget the voices of Lily and Dunkin (book by Donna Gephart) and the pink flamingoes I passed as I listened on vacation by the beach.

1. Multitasking rocks! How else can you do those loathed but necessary chores like folding laundry, mowing the lawn, and shoveling snow? Back to #2, it has been way over five years ago but I still remember listening to John Green's *An Abundance of Katherines* while shoveling nearly two feet of snow in my driveway.

Any way you look at it, audiobooks are in. Use any library catalog and you will notice that audiobook after audiobook is checked out. This is great! I'm optimistic! With the increasing interest in audiobooks, I'm hopeful that not only will we have more expressive and fluent readers, but a more fit cohort as well. Happy Listening!

MLA CITATION

Rattner, Stacey. "Leap into Reading! They're Playing My Book: Leaping for Audiobooks!" *School Library Connection*, March 2017, schoollibraryconnection.com/Content/Article/2064077.

<https://schoollibraryconnection.com/Content/Article/2064077>

Entry ID: 2064077

