



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is ReadSpeaker, and why do we have it?

A: ReadSpeaker is a company that uses text-to-speech technology to speech-enable websites well as online documents and forms. Our license specifically integrates with Blackboard, for student and faculty use within the Learning Management System.

Q: Why do we have ReadSpeaker?

A: 2 reasons. The features of this program help enhance a student's learning with a multi-sensory experience. It also supports people that experience reading difficulties, dyslexia, visual impairment, processing disorders, English language learners, and readers who experience difficulty reading on screens.

Q: Why would students use this?

A: Besides from helping alleviate challenges noted above, it's an excellent example of Universal Design, wherein multifaceted teaching is proactively built into a system and provides an enhanced learning experience for any user.

Q: What can't ReadSpeaker do?

A: As much as we wish it could read everything, our current license is with the English language pack only; foreign language pronunciation is questionable. It also does not read math and science equations very well. ReadSpeaker is installed in *Blackboard only*, so if you link or embed material that is hosted on another website, ReadSpeaker will not read that material.

Q: What do I need to know about having this in my courses?

A: Almost nothing! ReadSpeaker is a background utility, which will have little to no impact on your course design. It's there for users who want to use it, but will not impact the learning experience of those who don't. However, the more time you are willing to have your materials in blackboard in a ReadSpeaker accessible format, the more time it may help enhance learning experiences and reduce the impact of any challenges previously noted. For example, if a student needs a test in audio format, it can now be readily taken by a student by turning on ReadSpeaker (if your content is in accessible format).

[Quick Guide for Students](#)

[Quick Guide for Faculty](#)

Notable Features

- **Embedded Highlighting:** Enables website visitors to see synchronized highlighting of the text that is currently being read, on a word by word and/or sentence basis depending on the setting that has been chosen by the user.
- **User text selection:** Text on a web page can be selected using a mouse or trackpad and only the selected text will then be spoken.
- **PDF and Word document reading:** Online PDF and Word documents are read by ReadSpeaker products.

ReadSpeaker

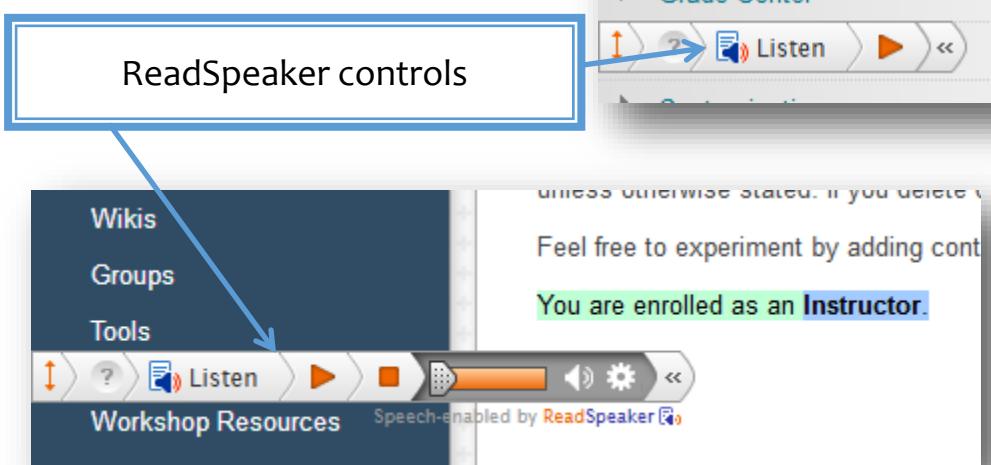


THE POWER OF SPEECH

The ReadSpeaker utility can be accessed via the speaker icon, which will be visible at the bottom of the course page.

It will also appear beside any *selected* text in the Blackboard course architecture, allowing users to specify what they would like read.

This works for text in items, assignment directions, discussion board posts, tests and quizzes....generally any text that has been entered in the course creation process.



ReadSpeaker controls

Wikis
Groups
Tools

Workshop Resources

Speech-enabled by ReadSpeaker

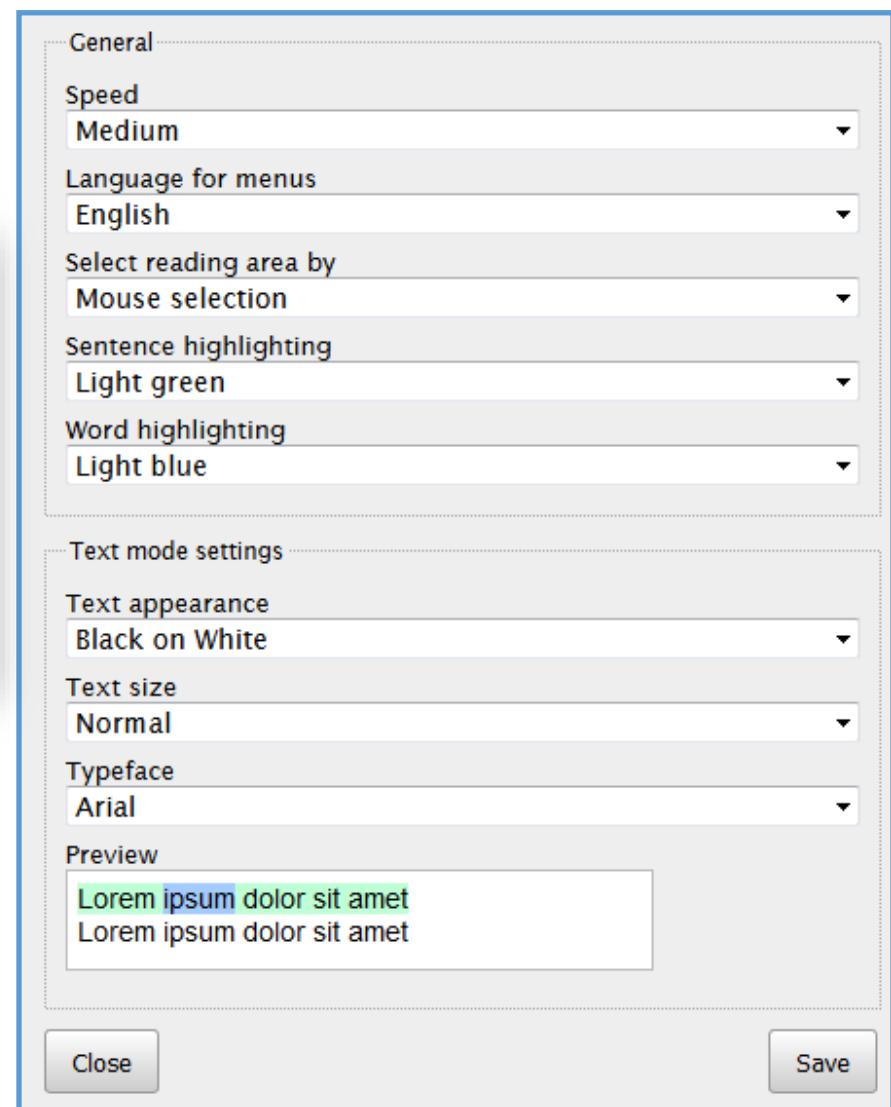
unless otherwise stated, if you delete

Feel free to experiment by adding cont

You are enrolled as an Instructor.

The screenshot shows a Blackboard course page with a sidebar on the left containing 'Wikis', 'Groups', and 'Tools'. At the bottom of the page is a 'Workshop Resources' section. A blue box labeled 'ReadSpeaker controls' encloses a set of icons: a double arrow, a question mark, a speaker icon with 'Listen', a play button, a stop button, a volume icon, and a double arrow. An arrow points from this box to the 'Listen' icon in the 'Workshop Resources' section. Another arrow points from the 'Wikis' link in the sidebar to the 'Listen' icon in the 'Workshop Resources' section.

Users can set up ReadSpeaker to their own visual and audio preferences



General

Speed
Medium

Language for menus
English

Select reading area by
Mouse selection

Sentence highlighting
Light green

Word highlighting
Light blue

Text mode settings

Text appearance
Black on White

Text size
Normal

Typeface
Arial

Preview

Lore ipsum dolor sit amet
Lore ipsum dolor sit amet

Close

Save

The screenshot shows the 'General' settings tab of the ReadSpeaker configuration dialog. It includes dropdown menus for 'Speed' (set to 'Medium'), 'Language for menus' (set to 'English'), 'Select reading area by' (set to 'Mouse selection'), 'Sentence highlighting' (set to 'Light green'), and 'Word highlighting' (set to 'Light blue'). Below this is a 'Text mode settings' section with 'Text appearance' (set to 'Black on White'), 'Text size' (set to 'Normal'), and 'Typeface' (set to 'Arial'). A preview window shows sample text with highlighted words and sentences. At the bottom are 'Close' and 'Save' buttons.

ReadSpeaker docReader

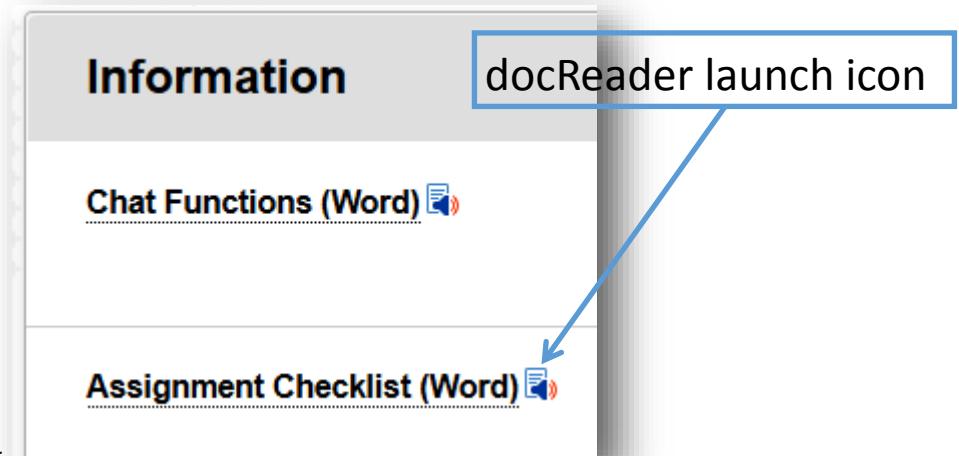
Reads the following file types:

MS Office (.xlsx, .docx, .pptx)

Rich Text (.rtf), PDF, ePubs

When a compatible document is uploaded, the Readspeaker icon will appear next to it. If the icon is clicked, the docReader will launch in a new window.

Users can read the whole document at once, or listen to selected sections. They may configure reading speed, text color and highlighting color, highlight by sentence or by word, change the typeface, zoom, or use a page mask or reading ruler (pictured below) to follow along.



The screenshot shows the ReadSpeaker software interface. On the left, there's a toolbar with various icons. Below the toolbar, a "Chat Functions" panel is open, showing a table with two rows: "If you want to" and "Then". The "If you want to" row contains the text "Select a username in the Participants list and click Private Message. The Compose Private". The "Then" row contains the text "Type a message for the class to read". To the right of this panel, a dashed blue box encloses the text "Text Highlighting as document is read".

Chat Functions

Use the following table to become familiar with Chat functions:

▼ If you want to	▼ Then
Type a message for the class to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Type the message in the Compose text box and click Send. The message will appear in the chat display panel.Alternatively, the Compose icon can be clicked to open a new window, allowing you a bigger area for typing.

Online reading tools