BILL'S HOME TECH
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BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Read Aloud: Having Devices Read to You

Phones, tablets, computers and speakers that read to you — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for tired eyes and busy families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For iPhone, iPad, Android, Windows, Mac, Kindle & Alexa · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to having your devices *read to you*: web pages, emails, text messages, documents, e-books and even the paper mail on your kitchen table. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Almost everything here is already built into the phone, tablet or computer you own, and costs nothing extra. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow, step-by-step directions anyone can follow.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What "read aloud" means, the words you'll hear, and which tool fits which job. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If your eyes get tired by the second paragraph of an article, if the print on a medicine leaflet seems to shrink every year, or if you'd simply rather *listen* while you fold the laundry, this guide is for **you**. And if you're helping a parent who has stopped reading the news or the emails from the grandkids, it's for you too.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it sitting at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything. When I use a word like "text-to-speech" or "screen reader," I'll stop and explain it right then.

What this guide will do for you

- Show you how to have your **iPhone or iPad** read a web page, an email, a text message or a book out loud, with a voice and speed you like.
- Do the same on an **Android phone**, including Samsung Galaxy phones.
- Show you the read-aloud buttons already hiding in **Windows, Mac, Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Word and Outlook**.
- Explain how to have a **Kindle**, the Kindle app or an **Alexa** speaker read your e-books, and how free library audiobooks fit in.
- Show you how to point your phone's camera at **paper**: a letter, a label or a menu, and hear it read.
- Help family members set it up for someone else, and fix it when it stops talking.

The big promise: you can't break anything

Read-aloud features are some of the safest settings on any device. Turning one on doesn't delete anything, doesn't send anything to anybody, and doesn't change your other settings. If you don't like a voice, pick another. If you don't like the feature, turn it back off the same way. So go slowly, try things, and change your mind as often as you like.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Reading is how we keep up with family, doctors, bills and the news. When reading gets tiring, people quietly stop doing it, and they miss things. Having your device read to you keeps you independent and in the loop, without straining your eyes or waiting for someone to read it to you.

And I'm only a phone call away

If anything here leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time online at billshometech.com/book. There's no such thing as a silly question.

Let's start with the words you'll see along the way.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What "Read Aloud" Means, and the Words You'll Hear

Every company names these features a little differently, which makes them harder to find than they should be. Here are the words you'll run into, in plain English.

Word	What it means
Text-to-speech (TTS)	The general name for a computer voice reading words on a screen. Every feature in this guide is a kind of text-to-speech.
Read aloud	A button or menu item that reads a page, an email or a document to you. Microsoft, Google and Amazon all use this phrase somewhere.
Speak Selection / Speak Screen	Apple's names on iPhone, iPad and Mac. *Selection* reads just the words you highlight; *Screen* reads everything on the screen.
Select to Speak	Android's version: tap a button, then tap the words you want read.
Reader, Reading mode, Immersive Reader	A tidy view of a web page or document with the ads and clutter removed, bigger text, and usually a **Play** button.
Screen reader	A full tool for people who are blind, such as **VoiceOver**, **TalkBack** or **Narrator**. It reads *everything*, including buttons, and changes how you tap. Powerful, but more than most people need.
Voice	The person-like sound doing the reading. Most devices let you choose among several.
Speaking rate	How fast the voice reads. You can almost always make it slower or faster.

Read-aloud tools versus screen readers

This is the one difference worth remembering. A **read-aloud** tool reads the words you ask for and then gets out of the way. Your phone still works exactly as it always has. A **screen reader** like VoiceOver takes over the whole device: one tap selects something, and a double tap opens it.

HEADS UP

Turned on VoiceOver or TalkBack by mistake?

If your phone suddenly talks about every button and won't open things with one tap, a screen reader got turned on. On an iPhone, ask Siri, "Turn off VoiceOver." On most Android phones, press and hold **both volume buttons** for about three seconds to turn TalkBack off (if that shortcut was set up). Nothing is broken. Chapter 25 has more.

Is any of this free?

Almost all of it. Every read-aloud tool built into iPhone, iPad, Android, Windows, Mac, Edge, Chrome and the Kindle app comes at no extra cost. The things that cost money are optional: paid audiobook services, some e-books, and third-party "AI reader" apps that charge a subscription. Chapter 26 has the honest rundown.

CHAPTER 3

Which Tool for Which Job

You don't need to learn every feature. Find the job you want done in the table below, then jump to that chapter.

I want to hear…	On an iPhone or iPad	On Android	On a computer
A few words I highlight	Speak Selection (Chapter 5)	Select to Speak (Chapter 10)	Mac: Option-Esc (Chapter 17). Windows: Edge or Word (Chapters 15, 18)
A whole web page or article	Safari Listen to Page or Speak Screen (Chapters 6, 8)	Chrome Listen to this page or Reading mode (Chapters 11, 12)	Edge Read aloud or Chrome Reading mode (Chapters 15, 16)
My email	Speak Screen (Chapter 22)	Reading mode in Gmail (Chapter 22)	Outlook Immersive Reader (Chapter 18)
My text messages	Siri or Announce Notifications (Chapter 9)	Select to Speak (Chapter 10)	—
An e-book	Kindle app Assistive Reader or Speak Screen (Chapter 19)	Kindle app Assistive Reader (Chapter 19)	Kindle app on Mac (Chapter 19)
A letter or label on paper	Magnifier (Chapter 23)	Select to Speak camera (Chapter 23)	—
A book, hands-free	Alexa or an audiobook (Chapters 20, 21)	Alexa or an audiobook (Chapters 20, 21)	—

TIP

Start with just one

Pick the single job that matters most to you, maybe the morning news or emails from family, and learn that one tool well. Once it feels natural, come back for the next. There's no prize for learning them all.

What you'll need

- Your phone, tablet or computer, charged, and connected to Wi-Fi the first time you set things up (some voices download).
- Your device's **volume turned up**, or headphones or hearing aids connected. A surprising number of "it won't talk" problems are just the volume.
- About fifteen quiet minutes for each feature.

CHAPTER 4

Picking a Voice and a Comfortable Speed

The first voice you hear is rarely the best one for you. A few minutes spent choosing a voice and a speed makes listening far more pleasant, and it's the step most people skip.

What to listen for

- **Clarity over charm.** Pick the voice whose s, f and th sounds are easiest for *you* to hear. Many people with some hearing loss find a lower-pitched voice clearer.
- **Speed.** Start slower than you think. You can always speed up once you're used to it.
- **Natural or Enhanced voices.** Many devices offer better-sounding voices as a free download, often labeled **Enhanced**, **Premium** or **Natural**. They take a few minutes to download over Wi-Fi.

Where each device keeps its voice settings

Device	Where to look
iPhone & iPad	**Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Read & Speak** (called **Spoken Content** on older versions) > **Voices** and **Speaking Rate**. Chapter 7.
Android	The voice and speed under **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Text-to-speech output** (the name varies by phone maker). Chapter 12.
Mac	**System Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Read & Speak** (older: **Spoken Content**). Chapter 17.
Windows Narrator	**Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Narrator**. Chapter 14.
Edge, Chrome, Word	Inside the read-aloud toolbar itself, usually a **Voice options** or gear button.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A voice that suits your ears means fewer "what did it say?" moments and less rewinding. Many people who gave up on read-aloud after hearing the default robot voice change their minds after trying an Enhanced or Natural one.

GOOD TO KNOW

The fastest speed depends on the voice

On an iPhone, Apple notes that how fast you can go depends on which voice you chose. If the slider doesn't go as fast or slow as you'd like, try another voice.

PART 2

iPhone & iPad

Speak Selection, Speak Screen, voices and speed, Safari's Listen to Page, Accessibility Reader, and hearing your text messages.

CHAPTER 5

Turning On Speak Selection and Speak Screen

Your iPhone and iPad have two read-aloud switches. Both are off until you turn them on, and both are free. **Speak Selection** reads the words you highlight. **Speak Screen** reads everything on the screen, from the top down.

Turn them on

1. Open **Settings** (the gray gear).
2. Tap **Accessibility**.
3. In the **Vision** section, tap **Read & Speak**. On older versions of iOS this is called **Spoken Content**; it's the same thing.
4. Turn on **Speak Selection**.
5. Turn on **Speak Screen**.

Try Speak Selection

1. Open an email, a note or a web page.
2. Touch and hold a word until it's highlighted, then drag the little handles to cover the words you want.
3. In the small menu that pops up, tap **Speak**. If you don't see it, tap the arrow at the end of the menu to see more choices.
4. To stop, tap **Pause** in the same menu, or just tap somewhere else.

Try Speak Screen

1. Open the page you want to hear.
2. With **two fingers** together, swipe down from the very top edge of the screen.
3. Your iPhone starts reading from the top. A small set of controls appears so you can pause, skip ahead or back, and change the speed.

TIP

Two fingers, from the very top

If a two-finger swipe opens Control Center or your notifications instead, start the swipe a bit lower, just below the top edge, and make sure both fingers touch at the same moment. Or just ask Siri to "Speak screen." Some people find that easier; if Siri doesn't do it on your phone, use the swipe.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Speak Selection is perfect for a phone number, an address or one paragraph you couldn't quite read. Speak Screen turns a long article or a church newsletter into something you can listen to with your eyes closed.

CHAPTER 6

Using Speak Screen Every Day

Once you've turned it on, Speak Screen works in most apps: Mail, Messages, Notes, Safari, news apps, and many e-book apps. Here's how to get the most out of it.

The Speak Screen controls

Button	What it does
Pause / Play	Stops and starts the reading.
Back / Forward	Jumps back or ahead, handy if you missed a sentence.
Turtle / Rabbit	Slower or faster speaking speed.
Minimize	Shrinks the controls to a small icon so they're not in your way. Tap the icon to bring them back.
Close (X)	Stops reading and hides the controls.

Long pages and page turns

On long web pages and in many book apps, Speak Screen scrolls or turns the page for you and keeps reading. In some apps it may stop at the end of a page. If that happens, swipe to the next page and swipe down with two fingers again.

Show the controls all the time

In **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Read & Speak**, the **Speech Controller** setting can keep a small read-aloud button on screen at all times. Tap it and choose **Speak Screen** or **Speak on Touch** (which reads whatever you point at).

TIP

Make a shortcut with three clicks

In **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Accessibility Shortcut** (near the bottom), you can choose a feature that turns on when you quickly press the side button (or Home button) three times. Choosing **Speak Screen** or **Accessibility Reader** here gives you a one-handed way to start reading.

HEADS UP

It reads exactly what's on the screen

Speak Screen reads menus, captions and sometimes the words on ads. If it reads a lot of clutter on a web page, open the page in Safari's Reader view first (Chapter 8). Then Speak Screen reads just the article.

Speak Screen on an iPad

Everything works the same on an iPad. The larger screen makes Speak Screen especially nice for e-books, recipes and news. Prop it up in the kitchen and let it read the recipe while your hands are busy.

CHAPTER 7

Voices, Speed and Highlighting on iPhone

This is the chapter that turns read-aloud from "robotic" into "pleasant." All of these settings live in one place.

Change the speed

1. Open **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Read & Speak** (or **Spoken Content**).
2. Drag the **Speaking Rate** slider left for slower, right for faster.
3. Use Speak Selection on a paragraph to test it, and adjust until it feels comfortable.

Pick a better voice

1. On the same screen, tap **Voices**.
2. Tap your language, such as **English**.
3. Tap a voice name to hear a sample. Voices marked **Enhanced** or **Premium** sound more natural.
4. To use an Enhanced voice, tap the download button next to it and wait for it to finish. Then tap it to choose it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Big download, use Wi-Fi

Apple notes that enhanced-quality voices can be 100 MB or larger, so download them on Wi-Fi, not your cellular data. You can remove a voice later to free up space; at least one voice always stays.

Highlight the words as they're read

Turn on **Highlight Content** on the same screen, and your iPhone lights up each word, sentence, or both as it reads. You can also choose the highlight color and style.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Following along with the highlight helps many people keep their place, and helps with understanding what's being read. It's also helpful for anyone learning English or recovering reading skills after an illness.

Hear what you type

Typing Feedback, also on this screen, can speak each letter or each word as you type, and can read the word suggestions above the keyboard. It's helpful if small keys are hard to see.

CHAPTER 8

Listen to Web Pages: Safari and Accessibility Reader

Web pages are full of ads, menus and pop-ups. Safari has two tools that cut through the clutter, and newer iPhones add a third.

Listen to Page in Safari

1. Open the article in **Safari**.
2. Tap the **Page menu** button in the address bar (it looks like a small page or two lines).
3. Tap **Listen to Page**.
4. To pause, open the same menu and tap **Pause** or **Listen to Page** again.

Listen to Page works on most news and article pages, but not every web page offers it.

Reader view: just the article

1. In Safari, tap the **Page menu** button.
2. Tap **Show Reader**. If it's dimmed, that page doesn't support Reader.
3. Now the page is plain text with no ads. Use Listen to Page or Speak Screen to hear it.
4. To go back, tap the Page menu and choose **Hide Reader**.

Accessibility Reader (iOS 26 and later)

On iPhones and iPads running iOS 26 or iPadOS 26, Apple added **Accessibility Reader**. It opens almost any text in a plain, easy-to-read view, with your choice of text size and colors, and it can read the text aloud. You turn it on in **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Read & Speak**, and then open it from the **Accessibility Shortcut** (three clicks of the side button), from a Control Center button, or, on iPhones that have one, the Action button.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **A newer feature**
>
> Accessibility Reader is new, and the details may change with updates. If you don't see it, check **Settings** > **General** > **About** to see if your iPhone is on iOS 26 or later. Speak Screen and Safari's Listen to Page work on older versions too.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Instead of squinting past ads and tiny type to find the story, you get the words alone, big and clear, with a voice ready to read them. It's the closest thing to having someone read the paper to you.

CHAPTER 9

Hearing Your Text Messages and Notifications

Your iPhone can read your text messages to you, either when you ask or automatically as they arrive in your AirPods.

Ask Siri

Say **"Siri, read my messages"** or **"Siri, read my last message from Susan."** Siri reads the messages and asks if you'd like to reply. You can answer out loud, and Siri reads your reply back before sending it.

Have messages announced in your AirPods

1. Connect your AirPods (or supported Beats headphones) and put them in.
2. Open **Settings** > **Notifications** > **Announce Notifications**.
3. Turn on **Announce Notifications**.
4. Tap **Messages** and choose which messages to announce: for example, only time-sensitive messages and direct messages, or all of them.

Siri announces new messages only while your iPhone is locked and its screen is dark, so it doesn't interrupt you while you're using the phone. Not every older AirPods model supports this.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Out on a walk, in the garden, or driving with AirPods in, you hear "Message from Susan: dinner's at six" without fumbling for the phone or your reading glasses.

Reading a text with Speak Selection

For any single message, touch and hold the message bubble and choose **Speak** if it's offered, or use Speak Screen (two fingers down from the top) to hear the whole conversation.

HEADS UP

Messages read out loud can be overheard

If you share a room or a car, other people may hear your messages. Use headphones or hearing aids for private messages, and remember that a scammer's text sounds just as convincing when read aloud. Never act on a text demanding money or gift cards; call the person back on a number you already know.

PART 3

Android Phones & Tablets

Select to Speak, Google's Reading mode app, Chrome's Listen to this page, voices and speed, and notes for Samsung Galaxy owners.

CHAPTER 10

Select to Speak

Select to Speak is Android's main read-aloud tool. Once it's on, a small button sits at the edge of your screen. Tap it, then tap the words you want to hear. It's free and comes with Google's Android Accessibility Suite, which is already on most phones.

Turn it on

1. Open **Settings**.
2. Tap **Accessibility**. (On a Samsung, it may be under **Accessibility** > **Installed apps**.)
3. Tap **Select to Speak**.
4. Turn on the **Select to Speak shortcut**, and tap **Allow** when your phone asks for permission.
5. Choose how you'll start it: usually a small floating **Accessibility button** on screen.

Use it

1. Open the page, message or email you want to hear.
2. Tap the **Select to Speak** button (or the Accessibility button, then Select to Speak).
3. Tap a single word or paragraph, or drag your finger across several lines to choose them. Or tap **Play** to hear everything on the screen.
4. While it reads, use the controls at the bottom to pause, go back or forward, and change the speed.

GOOD TO KNOW

It can read text from the camera, too

On many phones with Android 11 or later, Select to Speak can also read the words in a photo or what your camera sees. Chapter 23 shows how to use it on letters and labels.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One tap and you hear your text messages, a web page, or the fine print in an app, without changing anything else about how your phone works.

HEADS UP

Allow means "let it see the screen"

Android asks for permission because Select to Speak has to see what's on your screen to read it. That's normal for Google's own tool. Be much more careful with unknown apps from the Play Store that ask for the same "accessibility" permission. Scam apps use it to watch everything you do.

CHAPTER 11

Google's Reading Mode App

Google makes a free app called **Reading mode**. It strips a page down to just the words, in big, clear type, and can read them to you like an audiobook. It works in Chrome and in many apps, and since 2024 it also works in Gmail.

Install and turn it on

1. Open the **Play Store** and search for **Reading mode**. Make sure the developer is **Google LLC**, then tap **Install**.
2. Open **Settings** > **Accessibility**, tap **Reading mode**, and turn on the **Reading mode shortcut**.
3. Tap **Allow** when asked.

Use it

1. Open an article, an email or a long message.
2. Tap the Reading mode shortcut button.
3. The text appears in a clean view. Tap **Play** to hear it read aloud.
4. Use the settings in Reading mode to make the text bigger, change the colors, or pick a voice and speed.

Reading mode needs Android 9 or later. It does best with pages that are mostly text. On pages with lots of pictures or short bits of text, Select to Speak (Chapter 10) may work better.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A long email from your doctor's office or a newspaper story becomes something you can listen to while you rest your eyes, with the text big enough to follow along if you want.

CHAPTER 12

Chrome's Listen to This Page, and Android Voices

If you browse the web on an Android phone, Google Chrome can read the page to you without any extra setup.

Listen to this page

1. Open the article in **Chrome**.
2. Tap the **three dots** in the top-right corner.
3. Tap **Listen to this page**. If you don't see it, that page doesn't support it.
4. A small player appears at the bottom with pause, skip and speed controls.

Google notes that Listen to this page needs the setting **Make searches and browsing better** to be turned on in Chrome.

Set your phone's voice and speed

Many apps use your phone's main speech settings. To change them:

1. Open **Settings** > **Accessibility**.
2. Look for **Text-to-speech output**. (On some phones it's under **System** > **Languages**, or you can type **text-to-speech** into the search box at the top of Settings.)
3. Choose the **preferred engine**: usually **Speech Services by Google**, or Samsung's own engine on a Galaxy.
4. Move the **Speech rate** and **Pitch** sliders, and tap **Play** to hear a sample.

> **TIP**
> **Search Settings instead of hunting**
> Every Android phone maker moves these menus around. The search box at the top of Settings is the fastest way to find a setting: type **speak**, **reading** or **text-to-speech**.

CHAPTER 13

Notes for Samsung Galaxy Owners

Samsung phones run Android, so Select to Speak, Reading mode and Chrome's Listen to this page all work. Samsung just arranges the menus a little differently.

Where things are on a Galaxy

- **Select to Speak** is usually in **Settings** > **Accessibility**, sometimes under **Installed apps** or **Vision enhancements**.
- **Text-to-speech** voice and speed settings are in **Settings** > **Accessibility**, where you can pick Samsung's engine or Google's.
- **Samsung Internet**, Samsung's own web browser, has its own reading options. Chrome is also on most Galaxy phones if you'd rather use Chapter 12's steps.

TIP

Use the search box

On a Galaxy, swipe down twice from the top, tap the gear for Settings, then tap the magnifying glass and type **select to speak**. It jumps right to the switch.

GOOD TO KNOW

Menus change with updates

Samsung's One UI updates sometimes move or rename these settings. If a step here doesn't match your phone exactly, the Settings search box will find the new spot.

HEADS UP

Two phone makers, two voices

If one app sounds different from another, it may be using Samsung's voice while another uses Google's. Pick the same engine in the text-to-speech settings to make them match.

PART 4

Computers

Windows Narrator and when to skip it, Microsoft Edge Read aloud, Chrome's Reading mode, the Mac's Speak selection, and Word and Outlook.

CHAPTER 14

Windows: Narrator, and Why You May Not Need It

Windows 11 has a built-in screen reader called **Narrator**. It's excellent for people who can't see the screen, but it reads *everything*, including every button and menu, which most sighted people find overwhelming. For reading articles and emails, the read-aloud buttons in Edge and Word (Chapters 15 and 18) are usually a better fit.

Turning Narrator on and off

To do this	Do this
Start or stop Narrator	Press **Windows key + Ctrl + Enter**.
Open Narrator settings	Press **Windows key + Ctrl + N**, or go to **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Narrator**.

HEADS UP

Narrator started talking by itself?

If your computer suddenly describes everything you click, someone probably pressed Windows key + Ctrl + Enter by accident. Press the same three keys again to turn Narrator off. Nothing is broken.

More natural voices for Narrator

Recent versions of Windows 11 offer free **natural voices** for Narrator that sound much more like a person. In **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Narrator**, look for **Add natural voices** (on some versions the button just says **Add voices**). Each voice downloads once over the internet; after that it works without a connection. The "Ways Read Aloud Can Make Life Easier" chapter has the steps.

GOOD TO KNOW

Who Narrator is really for

If you or a family member has very low vision, Narrator (or VoiceOver on a Mac) is worth learning properly, with patience and practice. Microsoft's free Narrator guide on support.microsoft.com walks through it chapter by chapter, and this is a good thing to learn with someone beside you.

CHAPTER 15

Microsoft Edge: Read Aloud and Immersive Reader

Microsoft Edge, the web browser that comes with Windows (and is free for Mac too), has one of the best read-aloud tools around. It reads web pages and PDF files in a clear voice and highlights each word as it goes.

Read a whole page

1. Open the article in **Edge**.
2. Press **Ctrl + Shift + U** on a Windows PC. Or right-click on the page and choose **Read aloud**.
3. A toolbar appears at the top with **Play/Pause**, **Previous** and **Next** buttons.
4. Click **Voice options** to pick a voice and drag the speed slider.
5. Click the **X** on the toolbar to stop.

Read just part of a page

Highlight the words with your mouse, right-click them, and choose **Read aloud selection**.

Immersive Reader: the tidy view

On many article pages, Edge shows a small **book icon** at the right end of the address bar, or you can press **F9**. That opens **Immersive Reader**, which shows just the article in large text with no ads, and has its own **Read aloud** button. Not every page offers it.

PDF files

When you open a PDF in Edge, look for **Read aloud** on the PDF toolbar. It works on PDFs that contain real text. A PDF that is just a scanned picture of a page has no text for Edge to read.

GOOD TO KNOW

"Natural" voices need the internet

The voices labeled **(Natural)** sound the most lifelike, but they work over the internet. If you're offline, or the voice stutters on a slow connection, pick one without "Natural" in its name.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Bills, benefit letters and instructions often arrive as PDFs in small type. Edge reads them to you, highlighting each word, so you can follow along at your own pace.

CHAPTER 16

Google Chrome on a Computer: Reading Mode

Chrome on a Windows PC, Mac or Chromebook has **Reading mode**, which opens a side panel showing just the article in easy-to-read text, with a **Play** button to hear it.

Open Reading mode and listen

1. Open the article in **Chrome**.
2. Click the **three dots** in the top-right corner, then **More tools** > **Reading mode**.
3. A panel opens on the side with the article text.
4. Click **Play**. While it reads you can pause, skip back or forward a sentence, change the speed, and choose a voice.
5. Use the panel's text settings to change the font, size and colors.

TIP

Keep it one click away

Chrome lets you pin Reading mode to the toolbar so you don't have to dig through the menu each time. The "Ways Read Aloud Can Make Life Easier" chapter shows how.

GOOD TO KNOW

If the voice sounds plain

Chrome downloads its better voices the first time you use them. If a download fails, Chrome uses your computer's built-in voice instead. Try again later on a good Wi-Fi connection.

CHAPTER 17

Mac: Speak Selection and Accessibility Reader

Every Mac can read selected text aloud with one keyboard shortcut. You just turn it on once.

Turn on Speak selection

1. Click the **Apple menu** in the top-left corner and choose **System Settings**.
2. Click **Accessibility** in the sidebar (scroll down if needed).
3. Click **Read & Speak** (on older versions of macOS it's called **Spoken Content**).
4. Turn on **Speak selection**.

Use it

1. Highlight some text in any app: an email, a web page, a document.
2. Press **Option + Esc**. Your Mac reads it aloud.
3. Press **Option + Esc** again to stop.

Click the **Info** button (a small "i") next to Speak selection to change the keyboard shortcut, show a small on-screen controller, or have the Mac highlight words or sentences as it reads. The **System voice** and **Speaking rate** settings on the same screen set the voice and speed.

TIP

The right-click way

In many apps, you can also highlight text, right-click (or Control-click) it, and choose **Speech** > **Start Speaking**. There's no pause button that way, so Option + Esc is usually nicer.

Accessibility Reader on macOS Tahoe

Macs running macOS Tahoe 26 also have **Accessibility Reader**, the same easy-reading view described for iPhone in Chapter 8. Once it's turned on in **Read & Speak**, it opens with **Command + Esc** in an app that shows text.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One shortcut, in every app. Highlight a paragraph of the church bulletin, a medical portal message, or a long email, press two keys, and sit back.

CHAPTER 18

Word and Outlook: Read Aloud and Immersive Reader

If you use Microsoft Word or Outlook, read-aloud is built right in. It's handy for long letters, and for checking your own writing: hearing it read back catches missing words your eyes skip over.

Word

1. Open the document.
2. Click the **Review** tab at the top, then **Read Aloud**. (On Windows, **Ctrl + Alt + Space** also starts it.)
3. Word starts reading from where your cursor is. Use the small toolbar to pause, go to the previous or next paragraph, or stop.
4. Click the **settings** (gear) button on that toolbar to change the voice and reading speed.

For a calmer view, click the **View** tab, then **Immersive Reader**. The page fills the screen with larger, spaced-out text. Click **Play** at the bottom to hear it.

Outlook

- **New Outlook for Windows and Outlook on the web:** open the message, then choose **View** > **Immersive Reader** and press **Play**.
- **Classic Outlook for Windows:** open the message, then click **Read Aloud** on the ribbon at the top of the message window.

GOOD TO KNOW

On a Mac or phone

Outlook works a little differently on a Mac, iPhone or Android phone. If you don't see these buttons, use your device's own read-aloud tool: Option + Esc on a Mac (Chapter 17), Speak Screen on iPhone (Chapter 6) or Select to Speak on Android (Chapter 10).

HEADS UP

A fake invoice sounds real out loud, too

Read-aloud makes it easy to listen to email, but it doesn't make an email trustworthy. If an email says your account will be closed, or asks you to call a number about a charge you don't recognize, stop. Look up the company's number yourself, or call someone you trust first.

PART 5

Books & Email

Kindle's Assistive Reader, Alexa reading your Kindle books, narrated audiobooks from the library, and hearing your email.

CHAPTER 19

Kindle Books Read Aloud: Assistive Reader

Amazon's **Assistive Reader** reads Kindle books out loud in a computer voice and highlights the words as it goes. It's different from an audiobook, which is recorded by a real narrator. Assistive Reader costs nothing extra; it reads books you already own or borrow.

In the free Kindle app

Amazon says Assistive Reader works in the free Kindle app on iPhone, iPad, Android phones and tablets, Mac, and Fire tablets. It uses your device's own voice.

1. Open the **Kindle** app and open a book.
2. Tap the middle of the page to show the menus, then tap **Aa**.
3. Tap **More**.
4. Turn on **Assistive Reader**.
5. Back on the page, tap the **Play** button that appears to start reading.

On a Kindle e-reader

Newer Kindle e-readers (11th generation and later, plus Kindle Scribe and Kindle Colorsoft) also have Assistive Reader in the **Aa** > **More** menu. A Kindle e-reader has no speaker, so you'll need Bluetooth headphones or a Bluetooth speaker paired to it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every book works

Assistive Reader needs books with **Enhanced Typesetting**, which most Kindle Store books have. Each title's page in the Kindle Store lists it under the product details. Comics, some textbooks and some older books don't support it.

TIP

If a book won't read

On iPhone, use Speak Screen (Chapter 6): swipe down with two fingers on the page. On Android, use Select to Speak (Chapter 10) and tap Play.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your whole Kindle library becomes listenable, including library books and the bargain e-books that will never get an audiobook, and you can switch between reading and listening whenever your eyes get tired.

CHAPTER 20

Having Alexa Read Your Kindle Books

An Echo speaker can read many of your Kindle books aloud using **Kindle Assistive Reader on Alexa**. It's a lovely way to "read" in a favorite chair with no device in your hands.

Turn it on in the Alexa app

1. Open the **Alexa** app on your phone.
2. Tap **More**, then **Settings**, then **Accessibility**.
3. Turn on **Kindle Assistive Reader**.
4. To see which of your books Alexa can read, say **"Alexa, show my Kindle books"** on an Echo Show, or check the list in the Alexa app.

Which books Alexa can read

- Books you bought from the Kindle Store.
- Books borrowed through Kindle Unlimited, Prime Reading or other official Kindle programs.
- Books shared with you through a Family Library.
- The title has to support Enhanced Typesetting and be in a language Alexa speaks.

Using it

- **"Alexa, read my Kindle book."** Picks up where you left off.
- **"Alexa, read** *[book title]***."**
- **"Alexa, pause," "Alexa, resume," "Alexa, next chapter."**

HEADS UP

Not available with Alexa+

Amazon's help pages say Kindle Assistive Reader is **not available on Alexa+**, Amazon's newer assistant. If your Echo has been switched to Alexa+ and won't read your Kindle book, that may be the reason. A narrated audiobook (Chapter 21) is the other way to listen on an Echo.

TIP

If Alexa says it can't read a title

First ask, "Alexa, show my Kindle books" (or check the Alexa app) to make sure that title is on the supported list. If it is, unplug the Echo's power cord, wait a few seconds, and plug it back in.

CHAPTER 21

Narrated Audiobooks: Library and Audible

A computer voice reading an e-book is useful. A real narrator, a trained actor reading every word, is a treat. Audiobooks are the other half of "having devices read to you," and you may be able to get them at no cost.

Free from the library: Libby

With a library card, the free **Libby** app lets you borrow audiobooks on your phone or tablet. Here in the county, Portage County District Library and Kent Free Library both offer Libby (Kent Free Library through the Ohio Digital Library). Popular titles may have a waiting list, just like paper books.

TIP

Slow the narrator down

Libby, Audible and most audiobook apps let you change the playback speed, usually with a **1.0x** button on the player. Try **0.9x** if a narrator talks too quickly for you.

Audible

Audible is Amazon's paid audiobook service. You can buy books one at a time or pay a monthly membership. Audible lets you set the narration speed for each book; it starts at 1.0x. Check audible.com for current prices before you sign up, and remember a membership renews every month until you cancel.

GOOD TO KNOW

There's a whole guide on this

Bill's guides on Libby and Hoopla, and on Audible and audiobooks, go much deeper: borrowing, holds, returning books and listening on Alexa.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An audiobook turns a long drive, a sleepless night or a quiet afternoon into time with a good story, and for many people with failing eyesight, it's how they keep reading the books they love.

CHAPTER 22

Hearing Your Email

There's no single "read my email" button that works everywhere, but every device has a way. Use the one that matches the email app you already use.

Where you read email	How to hear it
iPhone or iPad (Mail, Gmail, Outlook or Yahoo apps)	Open the message and swipe down from the top with two fingers (Speak Screen, Chapter 6).
Android, Gmail app	Tap the Reading mode shortcut, then Play (Chapter 11). Or use Select to Speak (Chapter 10).
Outlook on a Windows PC	View > Immersive Reader > Play, or Read Aloud in classic Outlook (Chapter 18).
Gmail, Yahoo or AOL in a web browser on a PC	In Edge, highlight the message, right-click, and choose Read aloud selection (Chapter 15).
Any email on a Mac	Highlight the message and press Option + Esc (Chapter 17).

TIP

Open the message first

Read-aloud tools read what's on the screen. Open the single email you want to hear first, so you don't get a reading of your whole inbox list.

SCAM ALERT

Listen for the warning signs

Scam emails often sound urgent when read aloud: "your account is suspended," "a payment failed," "call this number immediately." A real company won't ask for gift cards, remote access to your computer, or your password by email. If you're unsure, don't click anything. Ask a family member, or call Bill.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Emails from grandchildren, the church, your doctor's office: you hear every word, instead of putting them off until someone has time to read them to you.

PART 6

Paper, Labels & the World Around You

Pointing your phone's camera at a letter, a pill bottle or a menu, and hearing the words.

CHAPTER 23

Reading Paper Mail, Labels and Menus with Your Camera

Your phone's camera can read printed words out loud: a letter from Social Security, a restaurant menu, the instructions on a box, the label on a can. These tools are free and already on your phone.

iPhone and iPad: the Magnifier app

1. Open the **Magnifier** app. (Swipe down on the Home Screen and type **Magnifier** if you can't find it.)
2. Point the camera at the printed page and hold steady.
3. Look for the **Reader** or text-detection button and tap it. Magnifier finds the text, shows it in large print, and reads it aloud.

On iPhone and iPad Pro models with a **LiDAR** scanner, Magnifier's **Detection Mode** adds **Point and Speak**: point your finger at a button or label, such as on a microwave or thermostat, and your iPhone reads the words under your fingertip.

iPhone: Live Text in the Camera

In the regular **Camera** app, point at printed text and tap the small **text** button that appears in the corner. The words become highlightable, so you can select them and choose **Speak** (with Speak Selection turned on, Chapter 5).

Android: Select to Speak's camera

1. Turn on Select to Speak (Chapter 10).
2. Tap the Select to Speak button, then look for the **camera** option in its controls (on Android 11 and later).
3. Point the camera at the paper. Select to Speak reads the words it sees.

Android: Google Lens

In the Google app or the Camera app, tap the **Lens** icon, point at the text and tap the shutter. Then tap **Text**, select the words, and look for **Listen**. Lens can also translate a foreign-language label and read the translation.

TIP

Good light, flat paper

Camera reading works best in bright, even light with the paper flat on the table. Hold the phone about a foot above the page and keep it still for a second or two.

STAY SAFE

Medicine labels: double-check

Camera reading is very good, but it can misread a number or a word, especially on a curved bottle. For medicine, use it as a helper, not the final word. Confirm doses with your pharmacist; many pharmacies can also print large-print labels or offer talking labels if you ask.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Reading the mail is one of the first things people need help with when their eyesight changes. With your phone's camera, you can open the letter and hear it yourself, privately, right at the mailbox.

PART 7

Helping Someone, Fixing Problems & Staying Safe

Setting it up for a parent, what to do when it won't talk, privacy, costs, and the apps and scams to steer clear of.

CHAPTER 24

Setting It Up for a Parent or Loved One

If you're a son, daughter or friend setting this up for someone else, a little planning makes the difference between a feature they love and one they never touch again.

Before you start

- **Ask what they miss reading.** The newspaper? Letters? Their Bible or a daily devotional? Text messages? Start with that one thing.
- **Check their hearing setup.** If they wear hearing aids that connect to the phone, read-aloud can play straight into them.
- **Sit beside them, not across.** Let them hold the device and do the taps themselves while you guide.

A good first setup

1. Turn on the one tool that fits their main job (use the table in Chapter 3).
2. Pick a clear voice together, and set the speed a little slower than you'd like (Chapter 4).
3. Practice the gesture or button three or four times, on something they care about.
4. Write the steps on a card in large print, in their words: "Two fingers, slide down from the top."
5. Come back in a week and ask how it's going.

TIP

One shortcut, not five

Resist the urge to turn everything on. A single, reliable shortcut, like the iPhone's triple-click Accessibility Shortcut or Android's floating Select to Speak button, is easier to remember than several.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for them

Hearing their own mail and messages lets a parent stay private and independent, instead of waiting for someone to read things to them, and keeps them connected with family on their own terms.

GOOD TO KNOW

When it's more than tired eyes

If reading has become hard suddenly, or a parent is struggling to understand what they read, mention it to their doctor or eye doctor. Read-aloud tools help, but they don't replace a checkup.

CHAPTER 25

When It Won't Read, or Won't Stop

Most read-aloud problems have simple causes. Work down this list in order.

It's not making any sound

1. Turn the **volume** up with the side buttons while it's trying to read.
2. On an iPhone, check that the phone isn't connected to **Bluetooth** headphones, hearing aids or a car somewhere else. The sound may be going there.
3. Make sure the feature is actually **turned on** in Settings (Chapters 5, 10, 17).
4. Try a **different voice**. A voice that didn't finish downloading can stay silent.
5. **Restart** the device: turn it all the way off, wait a moment, and turn it back on.

It reads, but not the right thing

- **It reads menus and ads.** Open the page in Reader view (Chapter 8), Edge Immersive Reader (Chapter 15) or Chrome Reading mode (Chapter 16) first.
- **It skips a PDF or a picture of a letter.** Scanned pages are pictures, not text. Use the camera tools in Chapter 23.
- **It stops at the end of a page.** Swipe to the next page and start again. Some book apps don't continue automatically.

It talks about everything and taps don't work

A **screen reader** got turned on: VoiceOver on Apple, TalkBack on Android, Narrator on Windows. It isn't broken.

Device	Turn the screen reader off
iPhone / iPad	Ask Siri, "Turn off VoiceOver." Or triple-click the side (or Home) button if VoiceOver is set as your Accessibility Shortcut.
Android	Press and hold both volume buttons for about three seconds, if the TalkBack shortcut is set up. Or ask Google Assistant or Gemini to turn off TalkBack.
Windows	Press Windows key + Ctrl + Enter.
Mac	Press Command + F5 to turn VoiceOver off.

TIP

After an update

Big updates sometimes rename or move these settings. Apple, for example, renamed **Spoken Content** to **Read & Speak**. If a step here doesn't match, use the search box at the top of Settings.

HEADS UP

Deleted the voice or turned it all off by accident?

No harm done. Go back to the voice settings (Chapter 4), download a voice again over Wi-Fi, and turn the feature back on. Nothing else on your device was changed.

CHAPTER 26

Privacy, Costs and Read-Aloud Scams

The read-aloud tools built into your devices are free and trustworthy. The App Store and Play Store are also full of "AI reader" and "text-to-speech" apps, some good, some expensive, and a few that aren't what they seem.

What costs money, honestly

Free	Speak Screen, Speak Selection, Accessibility Reader, Select to Speak, Google's Reading mode, Chrome Reading mode and Listen to this page, Edge Read aloud, Narrator, Word and Outlook read-aloud, Kindle Assistive Reader, Libby with a library card.
Costs money	Buying e-books and audiobooks, an Audible membership, Kindle Unlimited, and paid third-party reader apps (often a weekly or yearly subscription).

SCAM ALERT

Watch out for "free trial" reader apps

Some reader apps start a free trial that quietly turns into a weekly charge. Before you tap **Start free trial**, read the price on the screen. To cancel on an iPhone, go to **Settings** > your name > **Subscriptions**. On Android, open the **Play Store**, tap your profile picture, then **Payments & subscriptions**. Try the free built-in tools first; most people never need anything more.

SCAM ALERT

"Accessibility permission" is a big deal

An app that asks to **use accessibility** on Android can see and tap everything on your screen. That's fine for Google's Select to Speak. It is **not** fine for an app a stranger told you to install, or one that showed up in a pop-up ad. Scammers use this permission to read your bank screens.

Privacy

- The built-in tools on your phone and computer generally read the text on your device. Some "natural" voices, like Edge's, work over the internet.
- Anyone in the room can hear what's being read. Use headphones or hearing aids for private things like medical results and bank letters.

- Be cautious about pasting private documents into a website or app that offers to read them for you.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody needs remote access to turn on a voice

If a pop-up, email or caller says your read-aloud or accessibility features need "repair" and asks you to install a program or let them control your computer, hang up or close the page. Every feature in this guide is turned on from your own Settings.

PART 8

Help & Quick Reference

When a hand is worth it, and the whole guide on one cheat-sheet.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

Most of this guide you can do on your own, at your own pace. But some situations go faster and feel better with someone beside you. Here's my honest list.

When a hand is worth it

- You'd like read-aloud set up on **several devices** at once (a phone, a tablet and a computer) so it works the same way on each.
- A parent is losing vision and you want the **right tools chosen and practiced** with them, slowly, in their own home.
- A screen reader keeps turning itself on, or the phone is **stuck talking** and you can't get it back to normal.
- You want an Echo set up to **read Kindle books** or play library audiobooks.
- You'd like large-print **instruction cards** made for the specific steps on their device.
- You've been charged by a **reader app** you don't remember signing up for, or an app asked for permissions that worry you.

What working with me is like

I'm Bill, and I serve Portage County with more than 30 years of professional experience. I work at your pace, explain as I go, and leave written notes so you can do it yourself afterward. I'm not here to sell you anything, and I'll tell you when the free built-in tool is all you need.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is yours to keep for free; if you'd like a hand, I'm only a phone call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. The actual help always comes from me.

Thank you for taking the time to make reading easier on yourself. Take it one step at a time, and enjoy letting your devices do the reading for a change.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Read-Aloud Cheat-Sheet

Keep a copy by your chair or desk. The whole guide, boiled down.

Starting read-aloud

Where	How
iPhone / iPad: turn on	**Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Read & Speak** (older: **Spoken Content**) > **Speak Selection** and **Speak Screen**.
iPhone: read the screen	Two fingers, swipe down from the top.
iPhone: read some words	Select the words > **Speak**.
Safari	**Page menu** > **Listen to Page**, or **Show Reader**.
Android	**Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Select to Speak**; then tap the button and tap the words.
Chrome on Android	Three dots > **Listen to this page**.
Chrome on a computer	Three dots > **More tools** > **Reading mode** > **Play**.
Microsoft Edge	**Ctrl + Shift + U**, or right-click > **Read aloud**.
Mac	Turn on **Speak selection**, then highlight text and press **Option + Esc**.
Word	**Review** > **Read Aloud**, or **View** > **Immersive Reader**.
Kindle app	**Aa** > **More** > **Assistive Reader**.
Alexa	Alexa app > **More** > **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Kindle Assistive Reader**; then "Alexa, read my Kindle book."
Paper (iPhone)	**Magnifier** app, point at the page.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
My favorite voice	_____
My speed setting	_____
My shortcut (gesture or button)	_____
My library card number	_____
Family helper & phone	_____

When it won't talk, in order

1. Turn the **volume** up.
2. Check that sound isn't going to **Bluetooth** headphones or hearing aids elsewhere.
3. Make sure the feature is **on** in Settings.
4. Try a **different voice**.
5. **Restart** the device.
6. Still stuck: call Bill at **(330) 200-8042**.

The golden rules

- The built-in tools are free. Try them before paying for any reader app.
- Read the price before you tap **Start free trial**.
- Don't give "accessibility" permission to apps you don't trust.
- For medicine, confirm with your pharmacist.
- A scam email sounds just as convincing out loud. When in doubt, call someone you trust.