

## **Audiobooks are not cheating!**

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Do you remember curling up next to mom or dad for a bedtime story? Or did you have a teacher who read to your class? I've never heard anyone describe those experiences any way but fondly. There is something special about hearing a story.

It turns out, that experience is positive for adults, as well. This year alone, sales of audiobooks are expected to increase by 25% according to a recent article on [bbc.com](http://bbc.com), to approximately \$3.5 billion. Furthermore, Fionnuala Barrett, editorial director of Audio at Harper Collins, said, "Nobody is running scared from it, in comparison to the similar moment for ebooks where there was that fear that they were cannibalizing other formats in the book world. With audiobooks, there's a feeling that it's an additive."

In fact, the experience is additive, as well. The right narrator can add to a book in ways too numerous to mention. Did you read J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series before the movies? Had you listened to Jim Dale's delightful narrations, you would have known just how to pronounce the vocabulary of the wizarding world.

I recently listened to an audiobook set in South Africa, *Recipes for Love and Murder* by Sally Andrew, read by Sandra Prinsloo. Through the narration, I heard the sounds of Afrikaans, an experience I would not have had simply reading the printed words.

And audiobooks are not cheating! It doesn't matter how the book gets into your brain. What matters is it does.

In an August 22, 2019, article on [DiscoverMagazine.com](http://DiscoverMagazine.com), Jennifer Walter reported on a Gallant Lab study, "which compared brains when they were listening *and* reading. It showed that words tend to activate the same brain regions with the same intensity, regardless of input."

In fact, the audiobooks add a dimension that goes beyond the printed word. Hearing Michelle Obama read her memoir, *Becoming*, is like having a friend tell you about her life. Other books have multiple narrators, and become amazing, multi-faceted productions.

And since many audiobooks are published simultaneously with their print versions, audiobook readers can be as up to date with their reading lists, as any other reader.

The Frank L. Weyenberg Library of Mequon-Thiensville offers 4,651 audiobooks on CD for adults, teens, and children; system-wide, 55,087 audiobooks are available. If you prefer downloadable audiobooks, we have literally tens of thousands of titles available via Libby (OverDrive), Hoopla, and RB Digital (all free apps). All you need is a library card.

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