

# Welcome to ALT FORMAT 101!

## What's alt format?

Alternate format, or **alt format** is an accommodation that provides accessible digital texts to students with a print disabilities. Using **adaptive technology (AT)**, students can have the computer read alt format material out loud, highlight text, and use note-taking features for studying. As a student, you are responsible for learning how to use your alt format textbooks and other materials (see *Know Your Resources* for options). The Office of Access & Equity Services (AES) in the Baker Center for Learning (BCL) is here to help you with initial training and troubleshooting so that you can use your alt format texts effectively.

## How do I get my texts in alt format?

**It is your responsibility to request your texts in alt format.** Before the semester begins, a BCL staff member will contact you via your **TC3 email** seeking alt format requests. Generally, you will be contacted 3-4 weeks before the start of fall/spring semesters and 1-2 weeks before the start of the summer term. This only applies to students who are registered for the upcoming session.

When you make your request, please note **which classes** you would like to use alt format texts in and if you **prefer your text(s) on a CD or on your personal jump drive.**

**CD:** Each alt format text will be burned on a separate CD for you.

**Jump Drive:** Keep all of your alt format texts in one place! You must bring in your own jump drive and we will copy all alt format texts to it for you.

Although the BCL staff solicits requests for alt format, you can request this accommodation in person during your intake meeting, when signing your accommodation paperwork, or at any time before or during the semester. **The earlier the BCL staff receives a request, the more promptly we can provide your alt format materials.** Depending on the book's availability in electronic format, the nature of the material, and your alt format needs, the book may not be ready for you at the beginning of the semester. If your class schedule changes at any time during the requesting process, you should notify a BCL staff member in order to receive your texts as promptly as possible.

## Picking Up Your Alt Format Texts

You will be notified via your TC3 email when your alt format texts are available for pick-up.\* When you pick up your texts, you must provide **proof of ownership** - either receipt(s) or a physical copy of each text. Additionally, you will need to **sign an Alternate Format Agreement** detailing the legal use of your texts. If you have questions about TC3's adaptive technology (AT), a BCL staff member can help you when you pick up your texts. Or, you can set up an AT training appointment at a different time.

**\*Not all texts are available in alt format from the publisher.** In this case, we will have a conversation with you about how to proceed.

## So I requested my texts in alt format. Now what?

Turn page over...

**In addition to your books, you also need all other print materials from your instructors in alt format.**

### **1. Have a conversation about alt format with each of your instructors.**

Does your instructor know what alternate format texts are? Explain what this accommodation means to you and how you might use it. Have this conversation as early as possible—a good time is when you give instructors your accommodation memos. Potential topics for discussion include:

- ◆ **Getting digital copies of materials before class starts** (including PowerPoints, handouts, worksheets, presentation materials). It is important to have materials before class starts so that you can review them, print them out, or format them appropriately. Ask your instructors to provide digital copies\* (PDF, MS Word document, etc.) via email prior to the class when they will be handed out. If the instructor is not able to provide you with digital copies, talk to the folks in the AES office who will help the instructor create the appropriate digital format materials for you.

\*This should be listed as one of your accommodations.

- ◆ **Reading aloud in class.** If you are required to read aloud in class and this is difficult for you, discuss with your instructor how you might prepare. Perhaps he or she could assign a specific passage to you so that you can practice by listening to the passage using **AT**. You are your best advocate! Tell your instructor about your concerns and work together to create a solution. If you are not able to work out an acceptable plan with your instructor, always remember to talk to the folks in the AES office who may be able to provide additional assistance.

### **2. Create a study schedule.**

Alt format materials combined with **AT** provide many unique study options. However, it will take you longer to read and listen to alt format materials. On average, a three credit course will have six to nine hours of work outside of class for students who do not have disabilities. Schedule additional time for you to use your alt format materials. Remember, repetition (listening or reading multiple times) is a great study habit!

### **3. Know your resources.**

Looking for more alt format materials or for information about AT? The Office of Access & Equity Services can help you explore some options, including:

#### **◆Premier AT**

Premier is TC3's main **AT software** available everywhere on-campus (and off campus via free download). For more information, see our *Premier Download Guide* handout or visit our website:

[http://www.tc3.edu/bcl/d\\_adaptive.asp](http://www.tc3.edu/bcl/d_adaptive.asp). The Baker Center for Learning offers introductory training for Premier. To schedule an appointment or ask questions, visit the Office of Access & Equity Services.

#### **◆ZoomText**

ZoomText, an advanced screen magnification program, helps people with low vision use all computer applications. This is available on all public computers on campus.

#### **◆Window-Eyes**

GW Micro's Window-Eyes provides blind people access to Windows based computers by speaking and providing Braille of the computer's screen. All applications, including word processors, the internet, and email are available to the blind student. This software is provided as needed on campus.

#### **◆NVDA**

NonVisual Desktop Access (NVDA) is a free, open source screen reader for the Windows operating system. Providing feedback via synthetic speech and Braille, it enables blind or vision impaired people to access (Windows) computers. This is provided as needed on campus and available free for home use as well.

#### **◆Bookshare.org and LearningAlly.org**

Bookshare and Learning Ally are accessible libraries for students with documented print disabilities. Students can create an account using their TC3 email address and then look for accessible texts on their own! A representative from the AES office must sign and fax a form stating that you are a student with a print disability at TC3. Bookshare is free and Learning Ally is fee based.