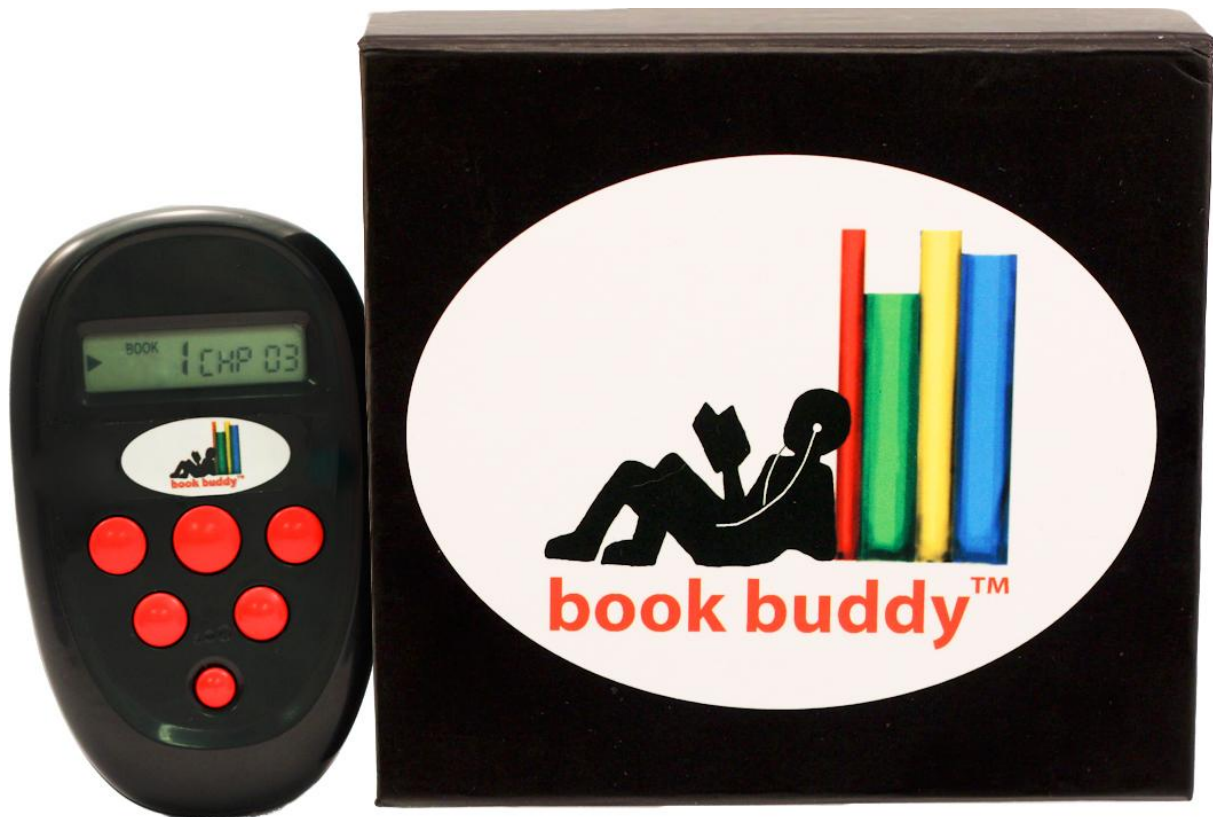


book buddyTM

SCOBRE PRESS

presents the **BOOK BUDDY!**



An innovation in reading technology



What is the Book Buddy?

The **Book Buddy** is a portable reading-aid innovation from Scobre Press—an MP3 audiobook that connects reading and listening in an exciting way, while scaffolding striving readers. **Book Buddy's** cutting-edge audio technology is simple, dynamic and ready to use the moment it arrives at your school.

- **Book Buddy** audio books are professionally recorded by a **human voice**—and come packed with **imbedded sound effects** that enhance the experience while aiding in comprehension.
- Each **Book Buddy** audio book comes **pre-loaded with two complete books** from the Scobre Press library—one at the Home Run reading level (3-4) and one at the Touchdown reading level (5-7)—so that both striving and proficient readers can benefit from the same device.
- **Book Buddy** audio books are intended to be used along with the corresponding Scobre Press high-interest book. The photos and captions in the books are referenced repeatedly by the narrator on the audio, to compel students to **follow along with the book as they listen**.
- The **Book Buddy** allows students to **navigate with ease through the audiobook at their own pace**: they can pause, fast-forward, rewind or skip directly to any chapter.
- Each **Book Buddy** audiobook is paced appropriately—the Home Run Edition (lower-level) version is **read at a slower pace** than the Touchdown Edition (higher-level.)
- Batteries and headphones are **included** with each **Book Buddy**.

No strings attached. Most listening devices require the use of a computer and corresponding software to load content onto the player. These devices are plugged into a computer, and files stored there must be manually placed onto the player via a required program, or any number of third-party programs.

The **Book Buddy**, however, never requires a computer. This is because the **Book Buddy's** content is **pre-loaded**. Students and teachers never need to use a computer to input or replace content on the player. No time or effort is wasted learning a new computer program, or adding or removing content. Simply choose the book and its corresponding **Book Buddy**, and the student is ready to listen and read.

The Book Buddy is tailored for every student. One concern that educators have about audiobooks is that the text will be read too fast or too slowly for the student who is listening. Either the students cannot keep up with the speaker, or they become bored because they cannot advance at the pace they want to.

Book Buddy's makes this concern obsolete. Not only is every printed title released at two reading levels, but each level's audiobook is read at an appropriate rate (slower for the Home Run editions, and faster for the Touchdown editions), allowing the students to read and listen at the speed that is most beneficial to them. Furthermore, students can **pause and rewind at any point while listening!**



Improve Students' Reading Skills

Students become better readers by listening. With the **Book Buddy**, students are able to easily enjoy reading and become better readers at the same time. Dr. Denise Marchionda, in her essay *A Bridge to Literacy: Creating Lifelong Readers Through Audiobooks*, makes two very important points about how listening to audiobooks while following along with the text not only motivates students, but helps to improve their reading skills.

First, Dr. Marchionda says that “reading a text along with listening to an audiobook is one way to provide a good model of reading for a developmental reader. Audiobooks offer suitable models for proper enunciation and inflection.” Not only does the **Book Buddy** provide a model for oral skills, but it allows the reader to **recognize a word by its sound, which they may struggle to recognize on paper.**

Second, Marchionda states that for all levels of readers, not only those who are struggling, “audiobooks can help support vocabulary acquisition.” **Listening vocabulary, she says, may be at a higher level than someone's reading or speaking vocabulary;** meaning, the student might recognize a word if they heard it, but they would neither recognize it if they read it, nor would they think to use it in speaking.

Children who listen to a book being read while following along with the printed text can both see and hear new words, and the **new words are more likely to be remembered.** If a book is a bit above a reader's current level of reading, an audiobook presents the correct pronunciation, the book shows the correct spelling, and the context reveals the meaning. Therefore, a solid bridge is created for learning new vocabulary.¹

When students read along with the **Book Buddy**, they become better readers, while expanding their vocabulary and enhancing their confidence. With books from the Scobre Press library, the level of vocabulary is customized for each reading level, so whether the student requires an easier text, or is ready for a more challenging level of vocabulary, the **Book Buddy** is there to help students learn at a level most beneficial to them.

Audiobooks help readers recognize words.

Fluent reading requires readers to **decode words as they decipher the text.** This means that readers recognize words as wholes and parts, easily recognizing prefixes, syllables, and letter combinations which fit together into a word they know, or a word which they are able to ‘translate’.

It may be helpful to think of word building as working with Lego pieces. Words can be disassembled and reassembled in many configurations. [Struggling readers] need



to learn to ‘chunk common word parts’ and recognize the regularities in words in order to pronounce them and spell them. ²

Instead of decoding with Legos, struggling readers look at each individual letter to piece together the word they are trying to discern. By reading along with the **Book Buddy**, readers hear the word while seeing it on the page, which allows them to learn the word in its whole, recognizable parts, rather than as a confusing combination of letters.

Dr. Frank Serafini, author of *Audiobooks & Literacy* from Random House, Inc., states that hearing the sounds of spoken language while pairing those sounds with the printed word helps struggling readers to better focus on the words and their meaning, rather than trying to recognize words in the first place.

As developing readers listen to audiobooks and follow along with a printed version of the story, they learn to match the sounds of oral language to their written counterparts. **This matching of sounds to symbols is the basis for reading instruction...** [and supports] struggling readers by helping them **focus on meaning rather than the decoding of text.** ³

The importance of this connection between reading and listening is further shown by a National Research Council report which describes **“three potential stumbling blocks” of developing readers.**

The first obstacle, which arises at the outset of reading acquisition, is difficulty understanding and using the alphabetic principle—the idea that written spellings systematically represent spoken words. It is hard to comprehend connected text if word recognition is inaccurate or laborious.

The second obstacle is a failure to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading and to acquire new strategies that may be specifically needed for reading.

The third obstacle to reading will magnify the first two: the absence or loss of an initial motivation to read or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading. ⁴

As this report demonstrates, hearing the spoken word in relation to printed text is integral to students who are struggling with reading. Not only do these students have trouble connecting symbols to sounds, but they must also transfer comprehension skills of spoken language to the written text.

By allowing students to use the **Book Buddy** while reading along with the text, they get the opportunity to read literature that is exciting and relevant to them, while being given the benefit of hearing and seeing the words at the same time. This not only allows them to recognize



words which would otherwise be stumbling blocks, but also to utilize their listening skills in conjunction with the text, teaching them how to transfer those skills to the printed word.

Motivate & Encourage Struggling Readers

Nurture positive attitudes. When used properly, audio books should enhance the experience of reading—not replace the experience. In this way, **Book Buddy** audio devices can motivate students by allowing them to have a positive reading experience.

Kylene Beers, lecturer in the Department of Library Science at Sam Houston State University, has experienced first-hand that “audiobooks help create positive attitudes toward reading.” She offers a story of the way audiobooks helped to change one of her students’ outlooks on reading.

Orion, an eighth grader who read at a third-grade level and had a very negative attitude toward reading (“It is my most hated thing in the universe”), became very involved in an audiobook program....During that time, his attitude toward reading changed. He met weekly with me to discuss what he was reading/listening to, what he thought about the books, and what he thought about listening to the books on tape. At the end of the four months, he said “Reading can be okay. If the stories are good.”

“Early in the year you said ‘It is my most hated thing in the universe.’” I reminded him. “What’s different?”

“I like being able to hear them. They make more sense.”

“Why?”

“Cause now I can see the words and hear them and know what they are.”

“Is that helping you when you don’t have a tape?”

“Yeah, ‘cause now I know what [the words] look like so I know what they are.”

...Time and time again, the students I’ve observed and teachers I’ve interviewed have shown me that **listening while you read has proved an effective way of changing attitudes toward reading and improving reading ability.**⁵

In reading, as in life, a positive attitude goes a long way. Young people who struggle with reading and do not enjoy it, still have to be able to read for the rest of their lives. Listening along with a **Book Buddy** can help lighten the emotional burden “struggling readers” experience while trudging through a book. In fact, the positive experience of reading a book while listening to the **Book Buddy** can have a tremendous impact on future reading experiences because a struggling reader might feel less intimidated, and might even recognize (for the first time in some cases) the inherent value of reading.



The **Book Buddy** isn't just any other audiobook. It's an innovative new technology product, featuring the 30 titles in the *Future Stars Series*, Scobre's line of high-interest "reality literature." These nonfiction books feature teenage role models and are highly relevant for middle and high school students. The **Book Buddy**, paired with a high-interest book about a peer role model, offers a unique reading and listening experience that is unmatched anywhere.

Students are driven by technology. One in five Americans over the age of 12 owns an mp3 player.⁶ The success of companies like Apple and Microsoft in selling so many digital media devices to young people today is owed at least in part to the fact that kids are interested in new technology. So why not give them what they want—with an educational twist—and enhance their love of reading in the process?

The **Book Buddy** represents an exciting new innovation because it combines the printed word with digital voice technology, in a simple, no-nonsense format. The **Book Buddy** will get young people excited about reading because it takes relevant, high-interest books about multicultural teenagers, pairs them with cutting-edge technology—all while scaffolding striving readers with exciting audio.

Allow students to read beyond their limits. Nearly every account of teachers who have raved about the benefits of audiobooks, have one thing in common: audiobooks allow students to read beyond their limits. What this means is that by reading while listening to audio, striving readers are not limited to a book with content, which, while it may be at their reading level, is boring or even condescending. Conversely, they do not need to continue struggling with books they find interesting and relevant, but are simply too difficult to read.

Audiobooks can motivate students to read. They allow [students] to **enjoy a book at their interest level that might be above their reading level....** In addition, children who read slowly can still participate in class activities.⁷

Dr. Janet Allen, who received her Doctorate of Education from the University of Maine, now works with schools and teachers to reform their literacy programs. She shared her experience with audiobooks in her book *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12*. Her experience shows that audiobooks are able to "give the support of shared reading during times of independent reading".

Many students, she says, lose their engagement with books when they read independently. One reason for this is that they cannot find books that interest them which are also at their reading level. Most



times, they begin the process of choosing a book based on interest, “but after a couple of days, they abandoned those books in favor of some less difficult, but also less interesting to them.” This leads to negative experiences with reading.

She continues, “**audiobooks together with the accompanying texts, afforded all readers the opportunity to read books at their interest level in spite of their reading difficulties.**”⁸

Kylene Beers also speaks to the fact that audiobooks help students read beyond their limits.

The use of audiobooks with struggling, reluctant [readers] is powerful since **they act as a scaffold that allows students to read above their actual reading level.** This is critical with older students who may still read at a beginner level. While these students must have time to practice reading at their level, they must also have the opportunity to experience the plot structures, themes, and vocabulary of more difficult books. As Eric, a ninth grader who began the year reading at a fourth grade level, said to me:

“I hate those baby books. That’s why I like listening to books and following along. Then I can be in the same discussion as everyone else in my class. Just ‘cause I got problems with my skills doesn’t mean I don’t have opinions about stuff.”⁹

In the words of a struggling reader himself, reading while listening to audiobooks certainly does help students learn to be motivated, interested readers.

The Book Buddy takes what we already know about audio to another level, because not only are students motivated by being able to read and comprehend more interesting books, but they are motivated by the device itself, and the new experience of reading while listening to an MP3 player.

With the **Book Buddy**, students are given the opportunity to read books about peer role models participating in the same activities they do, such as video games, sports, robotics, technology, music, entertainment, the environment, dance, etc.

Because each Scobre book is available on multiple reading levels, striving and proficient readers with similar interests can read and listen to the same book at a personally appropriate reading level, read by a human voice and paced to match their reading abilities. In this way, students can experience a literacy program that is customized to fit their needs, while motivating and challenging them at any level.



Classroom Implementation

The **Book Buddy** is intended for use during silent reading, acting as a ‘buddy’ to the books it accompanies. Students can listen in the classroom, or be allowed to take a **Book Buddy** home with them to use as they would in class—reading and listening at the same time.

Dr. Janet Allen says that once students and teachers are used to the routine of audio players in the classroom, “and after students get accustomed to how they (and you) are keeping track of progress, students will quickly beg for extra independent reading time. Contrary to what you might expect, classrooms where books on tape are available for students who need them tend to be quiet places.”¹⁰

At the end of the day, it all comes down to the students and their journeys to becoming skillful, motivated readers. In her article “Audiobooks: Ear-resistible!,” Denise Johnson, an assistant professor of reading education at the College of William and Mary, says that “understanding the message, thinking critically about the content, using imagination, and making connections are at the heart of what it means to be a reader and why kids learn to love books.”¹¹

The **Book Buddy** can aid students in doing exactly that.



Bibliography

¹ "A Bridge to Literacy: Creating Lifelong Readers Through Audiobooks", by Denise Marchionda. *AudioFile Magazine*, August/September 2001. © AudioFile Publication, Portland, Maine.

² "Help for High School Students Who Still Can't Read", by Dauna Howerton and Cathy Thomas. *The English Journal*, Vol. 93 No. 5, May 2004, pages 77-81. © National Council of Teachers of English

³ "Audiobooks & Literacy", by Dr. Frank Serafini. *RHI: Reaching Reluctant Readers*. © Random House, Inc.

⁴ "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children", by Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin (editors.). National Research Council. © 1998 National Academic Press.

⁵ "Listen While You Read" by Kylene Beers. *School Library Journal*, April 1998, pages 30-35. © Cahners Business Information, A Division of Reed Elsevier, Inc.

⁶ "MP3 Player Ownership Driven By Teens, Youth", by Geoff Duncan. *Digital Trends*. June 30, 2006. <<http://www.digitaltrends.com/gadgets/mp3-player-ownership-driven-by-teens-youth/>>

⁷ Eduscapes.com < <http://eduscapes.com/seeds/collections/audiobooks.html> > © 2006-2010 Annette Lamb and Larry Johnson

⁸ *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-1*, pages 62-63, by Janet Allen. © 2000 Stenhouse Publishers

⁹ "Listen While You Read" by Kylene Beers. *School Library Journal*, April 1998, pages 30-35. © Cahners Business Information, A Division of Reed Elsevier Inc.

¹⁰ *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-1*, pages 108-109, by Janet Allen. © 2000 Stenhouse Publishers

¹¹ "Audiobooks: Ear-resistible!" by Denise Johnson. *Reading Online*. April 2003. <http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec_index.asp?HREF=webwatch/audiobooks/index.html>

