

## BARD and other online resources for NLS patrons

Reading is a great way to relax or learn, to visit other lands or travel in time. And especially now, when most of us are cooped up at home, it's a welcome distraction from the news.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, some of our cooperating libraries around the country are temporarily closed or providing only limited service. **If you are used to receiving books in the mail from one of our libraries, you can keep on reading using BARD, our easy-to-use Braille and Audio Reading Download service.** In this guide we'll show you how to sign up for BARD. We'll also tell you how to find other useful NLS resources online.

### How to sign up for BARD

To use BARD, you must be a registered NLS patron. And remember: if you sign up for BARD, you can still receive audio and braille books in the mail from your NLS network library when it reopens—it's your choice!

Instructions for signing up for BARD are below. First make contact with your local talking book library via telephone or email. If you don't know the phone number or email address to reach your library, use [the Find Your Library tool](#).

If you cannot reach a staff member at your library, you can complete the online application yourself or you can have a family member or close friend do it for you. After you submit the application, you will receive a welcome message from BARD in your email inbox. If you do not receive the welcome message within five business days (one week) of submitting the application, call the NLS Reference Section via the main NLS phone number: 1-800-424-8567, follow the prompts and press 4.

Here's how to complete the application online:

1. Open a web browser on your computer.
2. [Navigate to BARD](#).
3. Click the link "BARD application instructions" under the heading "Potential users."
4. Review the BARD application instructions, then click "Link to BARD application for individuals."
5. Select your state talking-book library from the drop-down list. (This is the library where you registered for service and from which you regularly receive braille and talking books.)
6. Select the Submit button.
7. Complete the information on the form.
8. Enter and confirm your email address. Note that your email address will be your BARD login user name.
9. Unless you are using a commercial talking book player, there is no need to change the selection in the drop down box labeled "Please select the type of player you will be using."
10. Select the Submit button.

Once your application has been reviewed and approved, you will receive an email with a welcome message and a temporary password. You must log in to BARD with that temporary password, using a web browser, and set a permanent password. If you do not receive the welcome message within five business days (one week), call the NLS Reference Section via the main NLS phone number: 1-800-424-8567, follow the prompts and press 4.

## Getting started with BARD

You can access BARD two ways: (1) using a computer and your NLS digital talking-book machine or authorized commercial player, or (2) on your personal smart device using the BARD Mobile app. We'll tell you about using the BARD Mobile app first, since many patrons find that the easiest way.

Also, keep in mind that BARD users can share their username and password with a "trusted assistant," such as a family member or close friend, to help them sign on and get books.

## Using the BARD Mobile app

If you don't have an NLS digital talking-book machine or an authorized commercial player, you can download books from BARD and read them on your personal iOS or Android device with the easy-to-use BARD Mobile app.

The **BARD Mobile app for iOS devices** is available at no cost from the online App Store. The **BARD Mobile app for Android devices** is available at no cost from the Google Play Store and Amazon Appstore (for Kindle Fire devices).

You can download and read audio books and magazines with the BARD Mobile iOS app. You can download and read braille books if your device is paired with a refreshable braille display. You can download audio books and magazines, but no braille materials, with the BARD Mobile Android app.

Learn more about how to download the BARD Mobile app on the [NLS BARD: Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on the NLS website.

There also is a series of BARD Mobile for [iOS and Android how-to videos](#) on YouTube.

After you download the BARD Mobile app, you will have to sign in using your BARD user name and permanent password. Because the app remembers your user name and password, you only have to enter them once, unless you sign out.

## Using BARD with your computer

1. Open a web browser on your computer.
2. [Navigate to BARD.](#)
3. Enter your email address in the field labeled "Email Address."
4. Enter your temporary password (from the welcome email) in the field labeled "Password."
5. Click the Login button.
6. You will be prompted to set a permanent password.
7. Enter and confirm your permanent password. Your password must be at least eight characters, with at least one letter and one number. Your password cannot contain any special

characters, immediately repeated characters, your first or last name, or a common word.

8. Select the Submit button. You will be presented with the BARD Main page.
9. Access books and magazines from the search and browse options on the main page.
10. Tips for using the search box:
  - Enter the search term/s in the box labeled Search the collection.
  - Putting your term/s in quotes (“ ”) will limit the search to an exact term or phrase.
  - Author’s names are listed last name, comma, first name (and must be searched on in that format).
  - Narrator’s names are listed first name, comma, last name (and must be searched on in that format).
  - To search by author or narrator, type the last name or full name in the search box.
  - To search by title, type the entire or partial title into the search box.
  - To search by subject, type the subject into the search box.
  - To search by annotation, type one or more keywords into the search box.
  - To search by item number, or book number, type the five-digit NLS item number into the search box. (Note that some materials have the same item number but a different prefix, as they are available in multiple formats from different producers. Adding the prefix will limit the results.)
  - Select the Go button.

## Downloading books/magazines from BARD

1. After you have found the item you wish to download, use the download link to initiate transfer of the item to your computer. During the download process you will be given the opportunity to save the file to a specified location. Where to save the file is your decision. To help with finding the files later, each audio file starts with the letters DB and each braille file starts with the letters BR. All file names contains as much of the author’s name and title as is possible. All audio files end in .zip; all braille files end in either .zip or .brf.

## Reading books/magazines with your player

1. The file you download from the website is a single DB zip file. Once the download is complete, use the software of your choice to unzip the contents of the zip file. It is recommended that users unzip each item to a folder on their hard drive.
2. Copy the contents of the folder onto a blank cartridge (or USB drive). If you are using a USB drive, insert the drive into the port on the right side of the player (see photo below).
3. Insert the cartridge into your player.



If you are experiencing difficulty in finding materials on BARD and/or transferring materials from BARD to a cartridge, consider downloading and using the BARD Express Windows application. [Learn more about that here](#).

For help or assistance, contact [nlsdownload@loc.gov](mailto:nlsdownload@loc.gov). You can also get help on the [NLS BARD: Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on the NLS website.

### **Other online resources from NLS**

- If you're a musician or learning to play an instrument, you can get braille music scores, recorded instructional materials, and recorded materials about music and musicians from BARD too! Learn more about the world-renowned NLS Music Section, and the services it provides, on the [Music Materials page](#) on our website. (You can also contact the Music Section by email at [nlsm@loc.gov](mailto:nlsm@loc.gov) or by calling 1-800-424-8567, follow the prompts and press 2—but be aware that, because of service disruptions related to the coronavirus pandemic, it might take a little longer than usual to get a response).
- NLS has many resources to help you find assistive technology; learn about education opportunities; get information on recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining employees with disabilities; and more. Start on [the Resources page](#) on our website.
- And be sure to “Like” our [NLS Facebook page](#), where you'll find news relating to blindness and disabilities, book suggestions, and timely posts.