

ARC-BC (FAQs)

- **What is ARC-BC?**

ARC-BC (Accessible Resource Centre – British Columbia) is a Ministry of Education funded provincial response to the increasing demand for digital or alternate format alternatives to print in BC classrooms. Educators in all school districts who have joined the ARC-BC Community will be able to search this online repository or “digital library” to find and download alternate format resources for their students with perceptual disabilities. As production and distribution of the alternate format materials will be centrally coordinated, duplication of effort in resource creation will be greatly reduced or eliminated. The goal of ARC-BC is to provide BC educators with access to high-quality digital and alternate format materials for their students in a timely manner.

- **What types of alternate format materials are available through ARC-BC?**

There are a variety of alternate formats available based on the print materials used in the BC K-12 curriculum. Electronic versions of textbooks and novels in simple e-text (e.g..txt, .rtf), scanned formats (e.g..kes), as well as Braille and large print are available. In some cases, image or accessible .pdf files, are available.

- **How are the alternate formats available through ARC-BC obtained?**

ARC-BC is both a service and a community. While ARC-BC production assistants are involved in producing new titles and formats based on popular demand, many materials are also submitted from school and district teams. As teams around the province create new alternate format materials, they are encouraged to submit them to the repository.

- **Can anyone access these materials?**

Due to copyright restrictions on most materials that will be available, access to the repository is limited to those BC educators, approved by their districts, who are directly supporting students with perceptual disabilities. Perceptual disabilities include physical restrictions, visual impairments and comprehension disabilities.

- **How will these educators gain access to the repository?**

BC school districts can join the ARC-BC community through an application process. Once a district is part of the community, educators in that district can submit registration requests. Access is granted by the individual school district’s ARC-BC District Contact with each user requiring a unique username and password to log into the repository.

- **Can students and/or parents register for ARC-BC?**

In joining the ARC-BC community, districts sign an Agreement on Alternate Format Use the terms of which outline the district's responsibility in overseeing implementation of ARC-BC in the district and adherence to the Canadian Copyright limitations on the use of the alternate format materials. This agreement extends to the employees of the school district and, as such, does not include parents. Therefore, parents are not able to register for ARC-BC.

Student access is being considered by a number of school districts at this time. Each school district, in consultation with the ARC-BC provincial team, will be required to set up a specific process for allowing student registration and access. Those teams that have compelling reasons for specific student access should contact their ARC-BC District Contact to determine if the district has a student access process in place.

- **Is ARC-BC now available for all school districts?**

Yes – as of January 2009, ARC-BC began adding BC school districts to the ARC-BC Community. Any school district not currently part of the community is invited to submit an application available on the home page of www.arc-bc.org.

- **What will districts require to be able to access ARC-BC?**

ARC-BC is a web based database that does not require any special installations. Districts will require the necessary network infrastructure to allow high speed internet access and the downloading and saving of files by individual users in their district.

- **What training on ARC-BC is available?**

There are a variety of training materials available through the ARC-BC website including print instructions, video demonstrations, and workshop packages. In addition, there will be face-to-face and online training available as budget and schedules permit. A schedule of online training sessions is available by viewing the SET-BC Upcoming Events Calendar (www.setbc.org/go/calendar).

- **What are the important issues for BC school districts interested in joining the ARC-BC community?**

- Network infrastructure – Will school teams be able to access the repository and download materials?
- Staff training – How will your district provide or support the training needed to utilize the ARC-BC materials and understand the copyright restrictions?
- Access – Who will be granted access to the repository and how will districts ensure that copyright restrictions are observed?

- **How will ARC-BC work with existing school district alternate format collections?**

Many school districts around the province already have small collections of alternate format materials that are available to students with perceptual disabilities. The goal of ARC-BC is to support these districts by becoming a larger, more centralized repository that will eliminate the need for districts to gather, manage and store their own collections. Registered ARC-BC users, as part of the ARC-BC community, will be encouraged to submit newly created alternate formats so they can be catalogued and searched by all users.

- **Will publisher electronic files be available through ARC-BC?**

ARC-BC is working with publishers of BC curricular materials to provide accessible electronic versions of textbooks and novels. Individual publishers are encouraged to join the ARC-BC community as a way of providing accessible formats to those students who require them. Depending on the publisher, these files may be available through ARC-BC.

- **Will alternate formats of public domain works be available through ARC-BC?**

Some public domain materials may be available if they are used in the BC K-12 curriculum. However, through the search process, users will be directed to the public domain sites that contain these non-copyrighted alternate formats.

- **How will ARC-BC work with other Canadian alternate format producers?**

There are a number of alternate format producers in Canada, some working on K-12 materials, some working on post-secondary materials, and some specializing in materials for the visually impaired. These producers will be invited to join the ARC-BC community to allow sharing of materials between the different organizations.

- **Where can I find more information about ARC-BC?**

The ARC-BC website at www.arc-bc.org has more information as does the ARC-BC Support Resources page (www.setbc.org/setbc/curriculum/arc_main.html).

If you have specific questions about ARC-BC, please contact the ARC-BC team at arc@setbc.org.