



Advice Guide 18: Tools & Resources to Support Academic Writing

Whether you have a diagnosed specific learning difficulty, are awaiting an assessment or are just generally looking for tools to support you while you study, there are free resources and assistive technology aids available to help you.

Teesside University: The Learning Hub

[The Learning Hub](#) is a learning support service provided by Student and Library Services in partnership with the University's Schools. It provides a range of approaches for learning including online support guides, tutorials, and workshops.

Guidance is available for academic skills including the principles of academic writing, presentation skills, literature searching and referencing.

Enquiries can be made by emailing libraryhelp@tees.ac.uk and you can book 1:1 tutorials [here](#).

Assistive technology can help in the following areas:

Reading and researching

If you struggle to read or process written information, read aloud software can help you access information in a more accessible way for you. It can be used to help you read and research but also to help proofread your work and identify errors.

Planning assignments

Difficulties organising your thoughts or planning your work effectively can be overcome through use of mind mapping software. This will help improve your ability to capture and structure your ideas which will help with the layout and flow of your work.

Writing

Speech to text or dictation software may work well for you if you find it easier to express yourself verbally or are not quick at typing.

Software to help with spelling, grammar and alternative sentence suggestions will also make writing easier if this is something you struggle with.





iPad Accessibility Features

Your iPad has a lot of features you may not be aware of that will help improve your learning experience. By clicking the following link you can watch a series of very short instructional videos showing how to use the read aloud function, how to apply colour filters and how to use the iPad for dictation - <https://connect.tees.ac.uk/itservices/digital-life/ffl-toolkit-apps>

Microsoft Accessibility Features

Microsoft have similar features to the iPad and these can be explored here - [Accessibility Features & Design - Microsoft Accessibility](#). Microsoft Word has built in grammar and spell check which can be really useful when composing written work. You can also use Word to dictate your assignment and to read aloud for proofreading and sense-checking. For more information and to access these features follow this link - [Listen to your Word documents - Office Support \(microsoft.com\)](#).

Apple Mac Accessibility Features

Macs have the equivalent features - read aloud, speech to text, voice command, the ability to adjust the screen to zoom and reduce motion to help with processing. To explore and access these features please use the following link - [Use accessibility features on Mac - Apple Support](#)

Assistive Technology Resources

The following are a list of some helpful resources and tools you can access online:

[My Studybar](#) is a floating toolbar which is similar to some of the popular commercial products that are recommended to support literacy. MyStudybar also offers a similar range of tools such as screen masking, a talking dictionary, a mind mapping tool, text-to-speech, save text to MP3 etc.

[TextHelp](#) is one of the most popular products and often recommended for students with specific learning difficulties to help with a whole range of writing tasks and literacy difficulties. The full version is usually funded by Disabled Students' Allowances for eligible students. Other students, or students who are awaiting support can access a 30 day free trial of this software.

[Grammarly](#) is for help with grammar, spelling and structuring sentences, the free version of Grammarly is a great tool. You can choose to buy the premium version or you may have this





funded for you if you are eligible for specialist support through Disabled Students' Allowances for example, however the free version still gives you lots of support.

Ginger Proofreader is integrated with most of your favourite desktop applications and with all major browsers. Ginger Proofreader offers both ESL (English as a Second Language) and native English speakers the ability to correct spelling and grammar mistakes with a single-click.

For more information

W: <https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/stud/disability>

E: studentlife@tees.ac.uk

T: 01642 342277

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