An Assessor's guide to Read&Write

This guide explains how Read&Write software can be helpful for students with additional learning needs who qualify for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

To get your Assessor copy, please visit **text.help/dsa-solutions**

texthelp®

Guidelines for recommending Read&Write for DSA students

The Read&Write toolbar provides a wide range of literacy supports to students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties who qualify for the Disabled Students' Allowance, giving them the tools they need to boost their confidence and enhance their learning experience when:

- writing essays and assignments
- reading or conducting research
- drafting emails to tutors and fellow students
- using the web and online forms

Where it works:

Read&Write is available for Windows, MacOS, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge and iOS. Students can use Read&Write on their Chromebook, laptop, MacBook or tablet.

Breakdown of needs covered

- **Reading & writing difficulties** - including dyslexia, dyspraxia and dysgraphia
- **Mental health problems** - including anxiety, OCD and stress
- **Visual impairment** - including blurred vision, visual stress, Irlen Syndrome, poor visual acuity and retinal migraines
- **Motion and dexterity** - including repetitive strain injury, fine motor control issues, and difficulty sitting at a desk
- **Cognition & sensory processing** - including ASD, ADHD/ADD, epilepsy, fatigue
- **Hearing impairment**

Read&Write

Learning needs

How Read&Write Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

(including dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia)

Text-to-speech with highlighting

Assists students with cognitive difficulties by providing auditory support. For example text-to-speech is a useful tool as students can hear what they've written and rectify any mistakes that they may have missed if they were reading themselves.

Students can hear what is being read aloud and track the words on screen with dual coloured highlighting, helping them to process the information more efficiently.

Improves auditory reading speed and productivity as listening to information supports more efficient auditory memory.

Hearing and seeing the words can increase word recognition.

Check It

Check It is a dyslexic phonetic spell checker that helps to solve complex spelling and grammar mistakes, to improve the quality and accuracy of a written piece of work.

When highlighting an error, Read&Write offers an example contextual sentence to allow the student to make an informed decision on what suggestion is appropriate for the error.

Promotes independent, autonomous working.

Recognises faculty specific words for medical, pharmaceutical, engineering and legal courses with the Read&Write for Professionals add-on.

< Take a tour

Learning needs

How Read&Write Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

(including dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia)

Prediction

Supports the construction of contextually correct sentences.

Expands students' vocabulary through the provision of language. This is particularly beneficial for students with dyslexia who self-limit their vocabulary.

Students can concentrate on the context of their work rather than struggle with spelling, helping them to produce error-free documents and assignments.

Recognises the student's style of writing for future recall.

Highlighters

A useful research tool allowing students to collect and collate information from the internet and documents, which then automatically creates a bibliography upon collection.

Students can colour code pieces of work for easier processing of information.

Screen Masking

Can be altered to specific prescription colours, providing a helpful screen tint.

Screen masking can be used with the reading ruler which aids tracking when reading large bodies of text. This supports students with cognitive load difficulties, by narrowing their focus to individual paragraphs.

Specifically helps students with Irlen Syndrome, a perceptual processing disorder which affects the brain's ability to process visual information. This can also be referred to as Meares-Irlen Syndrome, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, or Visual Stress.

Learning needs

How Read&Write Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

(including dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia)

Dictionaries

Dictionary definitions, which can be read aloud, help students to quickly look up the meaning of a word.

The advanced dictionary offers grammar assistance and thesaurus support, supporting the student in thinking around the subject.

For students with dyslexia, dictionaries support those with short term working memory who may forget the meaning of previously known words.

The picture dictionary provides the student with a visual representation of a word, to help with memory recall.

Talk&Type

Speech-to-text helps students who struggle using a keyboard to create error-free documents verbally.

Provides dictation support, helping those who have difficulty with constructing sentences and writing.

Scan

Allows students to convert inaccessible documents, for example electronic journals, to an accessible format. These can then be read with Read&Write, highlights can be collected and audio files can be created.

As many university level texts can be inaccessible, students can scan hard copy texts, for example textbooks, into accessible

PDF, Microsoft Word Documents, EPUB and HTML formats.

Vocabulary list

Students can create their own word lists to help with memory recall, which is particularly useful during revision.

Allows students to create vocabulary lists with both visual and auditory support.

< Take a tour

Learning needs	How Read&Write Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

(including dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia)

Audio maker

Supports auditory learners as this feature allows students to convert large volumes of text to an audible format, reducing the stress of reading large volumes of text.

Many students on the dyslexia and neurodiversity spectrum prefer, or need, to hear information rather than traditionally read.

Audio files are portable and can be transferred to any device to study on the go.

Improves speed, productivity and effectiveness for those who struggle with reading.

Similar word checker

Students can easily identify homophone errors and ensure words are used in the correct context, which is very helpful for students with dyslexia.

Homophones are an area of difficulty due to sounding the same from an auditory learning perspective.

Research folder

Provides one central repository where students can categorise and store work for those with poor organisational skills.

< Take a tour

Learning needs	How Read&Write Helps

Mental health problems

Prediction

For students who experience anxiety or stress when typing complex course terminology, the prediction feature learns the student's writing style and recognises the words used most often and suggests those first. Word banks with faculty specific words are available for students studying medical, pharmaceutical, engineering and legal courses, with the Read&Write for Professionals add-on.

Scan, screenshot reader, PDF aloud

For students who find accessing university level text stressful, Read&Write's clever scanning feature, screenshot reader and PDF tools can help students convert inaccessible documents to an accessible format. These can then be read with Read&Write, highlights can be collected and audio files can be created.

Screen masking

Screen masking improves working memory and helps students to concentrate by focussing on smaller amounts of text. Poor level of concentration is a prevalent symptom in many mental health conditions.

Screen masking can be used with the reading ruler which aids tracking when reading large bodies of text. This supports students with cognitive load difficulties by narrowing the focus to individual paragraphs.

Audio maker

For some students, reading and concentrating on large amounts of text can be overwhelming and cause stress. With audio maker, students can convert large volumes of text to an audible format, to listen to content, rather than read.

Audio files are portable and can be transferred to any device, should a student prefer to work from home due to their mental health problem.

Learning needs

How Read&Write Helps

Mental health problems

Prediction

Highlighters in Read&Write help students easily collate and reference their research, helping them to feel less stressed and overwhelmed when undertaking a large piece of work.

Categorising with highlighter colours aids organisational skills and helps the student to feel less stressed as they won't feel disorganised.

Toolbar

The Read&Write toolbar is fully customisable to the individual student's needs. It can show only the required features and can be presented in an order that best suits the individual.

Tailoring the toolbar to contain what is actually required is easier for the student to process, as there are fewer features to learn, making it less stressful.

Check It

With Check It, students can use an accurate grammar, spelling and homophone checker to polish assignments, enabling them to feel confident when submitting work and reducing stress.

Vocabulary list

The vocabulary list allows key course phrases and terms to be collected and displayed in one place, which is a great point of reference for students with poor working memory. Poor working memory and poor concentration can greatly hamper the ability to learn.

Research folder

For students who feel stressed or anxious when processing large amounts of information, research folder helps by providing one central repository where students can organise, save and reference content. This prevents students feeling disorganised or overwhelmed.

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Learning needs

How Read&Write Helps

Visual impairment and visual stress

Screen masking

Screen masking helps students with visual stress as they can use customisable coloured overlays on screen. An RGB prescription colour can be identified via an ophthalmic test for those with visual stress, this prescription can then be applied via screen masking.

Using screen masking with the reading ruler helps students with visual impairments as it narrows their focus to individual paragraphs.

Audio maker

The audio maker tool allows all hard copy and inaccessible content to be converted into an audio file. This is beneficial for those students who find viewing text problematic or impossible.

Highlighters

A useful research tool allowing students to collect and collate information from the internet and documents which then automatically creates a bibliography upon collection. Once research is collected, the colour coding in the end document creates the correct level of contrast for those with visual impairments or visual stress.

Vocabulary table

This tool helps students create tables displaying key course phrases in an easily digestible format. By using the vocabulary list with text only, content can be read aloud, helping students who struggle with reading text on screen.

Learning needs	How Read&Write Helps	Learning needs	How Read&Write Helps
Visual impairment and visual stress	**Voice notes** For visually impaired students who may struggle to use a keyboard or view a computer screen, voice notes can be used to record a short audio file of the student's voice. This can then be inserted directly into Word documents as a comment. Students can use this tool to review their work, adding voice amendments rather than written. Verbal/auditory notes can enable more effective communication between students and lecturers, in comparison to written feedback which a student may struggle to read.	**Hearing impairment**	**Text-to-speech** Due to the visual element created with dual coloured highlighting, students who are hearing impaired can track and follow content easily. **Prediction** The prediction tool helps students to visually recognise the words they need if they can't hear them read aloud. Students can also open the picture dictionary to enhance the visual support.

Learning needs	How Read&Write Helps

Motion and dexterity

Voice Note

Voice notes are a great way for students to leave notes and feedback in a document without having to type, or print.

Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, Voice Note supports the student in responding and completing work without external support from a support/learning mentor. It also enhances the ability to communicate with a tutor/lecturer.

Students can use voice note as a self-reviewing tool, whilst working on assignments, adding voice amendments rather than written.

Text-to-speech and Audio Maker

Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, students may not be able to sit or work in one position at a screen. By using text-to-speech, students can listen to course content being read aloud, rather than reading from a screen.

With audio maker, students can create audio files of text to facilitate greater mobility when studying.

Scan

The scanning feature means students can convert hard copies of text and documents into digital versions, which cuts down on the volume of paper and books they have to carry.

Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, any additional weight can often impact on general ease of movement and transport.

Guidelines for recommending OrbitNote for DSA students

Read&Write users automatically get access to the premium version of OrbitNote, our PDF reader and editor.

OrbitNote uses OCR scanning technology to convert inaccessible print or PDF documents into editable, shareable, and accessible documents. This enables students to use all of Read&Write's features - from text-to-speech to the highlighting tool - on previously inaccessible documents, as well as annotate them with text and voice notes.

OrbitNote supplements the literacy supports offered by Read&Write to provide DSA students with a well-rounded accessibility solution.

OrbitNote supports students with the following learning needs:

- **Reading & writing difficulties - including dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other literacy difficulties**
- **Cognition & sensory processing - including ADHD/ADD**
- **Visual impairment and visual stress**
- **Hearing impairment**
- **Motion and dexterity problems**

OrbitNote

Learning needs

How OrbitNote Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

Students can hear what is being read aloud and track the words on screen with dual coloured highlighting, helping them to process the information more efficiently. Improves auditory reading speed and productivity as listening to information supports more efficient auditory memory. Hearing and seeing the words can increase word recognition.

Screen masking

This feature can be altered to specific prescription colours, providing a helpful screen tint.

Screen-masking can be used with the reading ruler which aids tracking when reading large bodies of text. This supports students with cognitive load difficulties by narrowing their focus to individual paragraphs. Students with Irlen Syndrome, a perceptual processing disorder which affects the brain's ability to process visual information, will find this particularly useful. This can also be referred to as Meares-Irlen Syndrome, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, or visual stress.

Dictionary definitions

The advanced dictionary offers grammar assistance and thesaurus support, supporting the student in thinking around the subject.

There is the option for definitions to be read aloud, helping students to quickly look up the meaning of a word.

The picture dictionary provides the student with a visual representation of a word, helping with memory recall.

Highlighters

A useful research tool that allows students to collect and collate information from the internet and documents. This automatically creates a bibliography upon collection.

Students can colour code pieces of work for easier processing of information.

< Take a tour

Learning needs

How OrbitNote Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

Talk&Type

Speech-to-text helps students who struggle using a keyboard to create error-free documents verbally.

Dictation is available to support those who have difficulty with constructing sentences and writing.

Talk&Type can be used with the Add Text and Push Pin features to provide fully accessible note-taking.

Vocabulary list

Students can create their own word lists to help with memory recall, which is particularly useful during revision.

Allows students to create vocabulary lists with both visual and auditory support.

Text Tool

Students can now use PDF content in the same way they would use other document types. The text tool allows the student to type on any area within a PDF, using keyboard entry or voice typing. Font can be resized, and text entry is supported with predictive text to support students with dyslexia. All added text can be read aloud with text-to-speech.

Annotations

Students can add notes to a PDF using their own handwriting. They can add shapes or freehand drawing to help them focus on key parts of a document. This supports students with dyspraxia by providing a range of input methods for note-taking, including use of touchscreen devices and stylus tools.

< Take a tour

Learning needs

How OrbitNote Helps

Reading and writing difficulties

Multimodal comments

Students can now go beyond text note-taking and add voice notes and URLs to provide support for a wide range of study techniques.

Images can be added to comments to provide visual cues for note-taking. Students now have the widest range of accessible note-taking tools to support a wide range of challenges.

Take a tour

Learning needs	How OrbitNote Helps

Cognition and sensory processing

OCR, screenshot reader, Add Text, Push Pins

OrbitNote removes the stress of accessing PDFs. Its inbuilt, one-click OCR allows students to convert inaccessible PDFs to an accessible format. This reduces reliance on student support and ensures all content is fully accessible when opened.

Push pins remove distractions for a wide range of students including those with ADHD/ADD. Because they can be minimised, these notes don’t increase the complexity of a document. This ensures that students aren’t overwhelmed by side notes or additional visual stress.

Pin features to provide fully accessible note-taking.

Screen masking

Screen masking improves working memory and helps students to concentrate by focussing on smaller amounts of text.

Screen masking can be used with the reading ruler which aids tracking when reading large bodies of text. This supports students with cognitive load difficulties by narrowing the focus to individual paragraphs.

Vocabulary list

The vocabulary list allows key course phrases and terms to be collected and displayed in one place, which is a great point of reference for students with poor working memory.

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Learning needs

How OrbitNote Helps

Visual impairment and visual stress

Screen masking

Screen masking helps students with visual stress as they can use customisable coloured overlays on screen. An RGB prescription colour can be identified via an ophthalmic test for those with visual stress. This prescription can then be applied via screen-masking for its corresponding HEX colour, or can be customised by the student.

Using screen masking with the adjustable reading ruler helps students with visual impairments as it narrows their focus to individual paragraphs.

Zoom

Whole-page or section-based zoom tools are provided to ensure students have access to pixel perfect view of text and images when needed.

Comment fonts

Note-taking fonts are fully adjustable to enable students with visual impairments to type at the most suitable font size and colour.

Highlighters

A useful research tool that allows students to collect and collate information from the internet and documents. This automatically creates a bibliography upon collection.

Once research is collected, the colour-coding in the end document creates the correct level of contrast for those with visual impairments or visual stress.

< Take a tour

Learning needs	How OrbitNote Helps
Hearing impairment	**Text-to-speech** Due to the visual element created with dual coloured highlighting, students who are hearing impaired can track and follow content easily. **Talk & Type** Students can use dictation to complete text boxes, notes and comments - all of which can be read aloud ensuring wider access to input methods.
Motion and dexterity problems	**Text-to-speech** Some students with a physical disability or manual dexterity issue may not be able to sit or work in one position at a screen. With text-to-speech, students can listen to course content being read aloud, rather than reading from a screen. **Text tool** Students can now use PDF content in the same way they would use other document types. The text tool allows the student to type on any area within a PDF, using keyboard entry or voice typing. Font can be resized, and text entry is supported with predictive text. All text entered can be read aloud with Text to speech.

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Learning needs

How OrbitNote Helps

Motion and dexterity problems

Voice note comments

Voice notes are a great way for students to leave notes and feedback in a document without having to type, or print.

Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, voice notes support the student in responding and completing work without external support from a support/learning mentor. It also enhances the ability to communicate with a tutor/lecturer.

Students can use voice notes as a self-reviewing tool, whilst working on assignments, adding voice amendments rather than written.

Multiple means of input

Students are provided with a range of ways to input text and notes including typing, drawing, handwriting and dictation. Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, students can now use a range of input devices and types to match their needs.

Download a quick reference card

Windows

Chrome

Mac

Read&Write with OrbitNote

For more information on Texthelp tools for DSA students

visit **text.help/dsa-solutions** or
email us at **dsagroup@texthelp.com**.

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