



## **Using Technology to Support Reading Skills**

This advice sheet is designed to help schools use technology to support reading development for pupils with additional needs,

### **Why Use Technology?**

Technology can offer a range of tools and software to improve reading accessibility, comprehension and fluency. Benefits can include:

- Accessibility: Can adapt to individual learning profiles.
- Confidence Building: Can encourage independence and help reduce reading anxiety.
- Multisensory Learning: Can combine visual, auditory, and tactile input.
- Progress Monitoring: Can track small steps and celebrate success.

### **Points to consider when using technology:**

- Provide access to alternative fonts if pupils find these helpful (e.g. OpenDyslexic, Lexie Readable, Dyslexie for example).
- Present text with high contrast backgrounds and reduced clutter.
- Offer audio versions of texts and allow pupils to follow along visually.
- See the built in assistive technology software on devices including laptops and tablets.
- Consider use of speech-to-text tools for written responses.
- Model the use of any programme, demonstrate tools and provide scaffolded practice.
- Empower pupils to select tools that suit their preferences by providing choices.
- Use built-in rewards and share successes and achievements.

### **Safeguarding & Digital Literacy**

- Use school-approved platforms with appropriate privacy settings.
- Teach pupils safe and respectful use of technology.
- Monitor usage and provide adult support where needed.

### **Tools and platforms:**

**The tools, programmes and apps highlighted are examples that can be accessed, and many others are available online.**

- A range of resources, tools and apps to support pupils with reading difficulties can be found on the attached link from Call Scotland including low tech apps, use of technology, posters, reading and scanning pens etc. see [www.callscotland.org.uk/information/dyslexia/reading/](http://www.callscotland.org.uk/information/dyslexia/reading/)
- See Call Scotland's reading and literacy support wheels for links to appropriate apps at [www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk)
- **MyStudyBar** [www.callscotland.org.uk/mystudybar/](http://www.callscotland.org.uk/mystudybar/) - designed to support students from planning and structuring their thoughts and ideas to support with reading and writing.



- Also see these short guides to using the iPad's built-in tools support literacy difficulties. [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLm66eliPiNXOwdTtnxnJV7fK-yA1X7GZ](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLm66eliPiNXOwdTtnxnJV7fK-yA1X7GZ)
- **Widgit Online** – [www.widgetonline.com](http://www.widgetonline.com) Symbol-supported texts for pupils with communication needs.

### **Text to speech technology to support reading- examples include:**

- **Claro ScanPen (Android)** – Reads printed text aloud using OCR.
- **C-Pen** – [www.cpen.com](http://www.cpen.com) – text to speech reading support and exam reader available.
- **Read&Write by Texthelp** – Literacy toolbar with text-to-speech, word prediction, and more.
- **Bolabolka** [www.cross-plus-a.com](http://www.cross-plus-a.com) free text to speech app
- **Natural Reader** [www.naturalreaders.com](http://www.naturalreaders.com) free to download for Windows
- **My Study Bar** <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/mystudybar/> free Windows toolkit from Call Scotland with memory aids, overlays, and text-to-speech. Can run from a usb pendrive or from desktop. Supports learners with literacy related difficulties and can help learners to:
  - organise and plan their thoughts and ideas,
  - use colour overlays to aid concentration and provide support with visual stress
  - listen to digital content read aloud using text-to-speech,
  - improve typing skills.
- **Everway ClaroRead** – [www.texthelp.com](http://www.texthelp.com) formerly Text Help - Read and Write for Education
- **Read Aloud** -A Text to Speech Voice Reader freely available on on Chrome [www.chromewebstore.google.com](http://www.chromewebstore.google.com)
- **TTS Reader online** [www.ttsreader.com](http://www.ttsreader.com)
- **Speechify** – [www.speechify.com](http://www.speechify.com) Converts any text to natural-sounding audio
- **Voice Dream Reader** – [www.voicedreamreader.com](http://www.voicedreamreader.com) Customisable TTS for books

### **Reading apps- examples include:**

- **Teach Your Monster to Read** – [www.teachyourmonster.org](http://www.teachyourmonster.org) Free phonics and reading games.
- **Phonics Play** – [www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk) – interactive phonics games and resources.
- **Mr T's Phonics Apps** – Interactive phonics and grammar apps featuring Geraldine the Giraffe.
- **Reading Eggs** – Structured phonics and comprehension program for ages 2–13.
- **Nessy Reading & Spelling** – Orton-Gillingham-based literacy program.



- [KOBI](#) – Fluency app with dyslexia-friendly overlays.
- **Readability Tutor** – [www.readabilitytutor.com](http://www.readabilitytutor.com) AI tutor listens to oral reading and provides feedback
- [Reading Fluency Builder](#) – Game-like fluency training
- [Speakaboos](#) – Interactive stories for ages 2–6
- [ReadingIQ](#) – Personalized reading library with level assessments

#### **Structured Reading Programmes- examples include:**

- **Lexia Core5 / PowerUp** – [www.lexiacore5.com](http://www.lexiacore5.com) Adaptive reading programme with built-in scaffolding and reporting.
- **Reading Eggs-** [www.readingeggs.co.uk](http://www.readingeggs.co.uk) structured individualised reading programmes which target phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension and include visual and auditory support.
- **Nessy Learning Programme** – [www.nessy.com](http://www.nessy.com) Literacy intervention includes practise with phonics, reading fluency, and vocabulary.
- **Dyslexia Gold** – [www.dyslexiagold.co.uk](http://www.dyslexiagold.co.uk) Targets visual tracking, phonics, reading fluency and comprehension.

#### **Audiobooks- examples include:**

- **Learning Ally** – [www.learningally.org](http://www.learningally.org) Human-narrated audiobooks synced with text
- **Calibre and Young Calibre audio libraries** – [www.calibreaudio.org.uk](http://www.calibreaudio.org.uk)
- **Listening booj**s – [www.listeningbooks.org.uk](http://www.listeningbooks.org.uk) – audiobook lending service
- **Bookshare** – [www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org) Free digital library for qualifying students
- **Epic!** – [www.getepic.com](http://www.getepic.com) Large digital library with read-to-me books and visual supports.
- **Sora** [www.overdrive.com](http://www.overdrive.com) eBooks and audiobooks for schools. Students can access the app if the school uses the programme
- **Audio stories on BBC Bitesize** – [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)
- **Storynory** – [www.storynory.com](http://www.storynory.com) Free audio stories for children
- **Oxford Owl** – [www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk) Free e-book library for children aged 3