ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

THE WHY

Assistive technology are tools that will make any student's learning more **effective** and **efficient**. There are millions of tools out there. To decide what you need and which to use starts with answering two questions.

- What roadblocks do you have?
- What are the tools that can open the way?

Assistive technology also enables students to access learning opportunities and perform tasks that might be challenging if they have a learning disability or a learning barrier.

It's important to know what is available, how these tools can help you and where/how you can access them. The process to follow is:

- find the tool,
- learn the tool,
- try it,
- reflect if it is working for you,
- and decide to continue or to find a better tool.

You need to decide if it works for you rather than blindly accept what it does and how it does it. And you need to give it a good trial before deciding if it is working.

THE WHAT

Technology that might assist

- Text to speech – converts the typed words to speech
- Organisational tools – a tool to organise your thoughts and convert to either visual or text-based documents
- Screen reading software
- Voice recognition software – allows you to write your spoken words
- Magnifying technology – enlarge screen texts or images

TELL ME THE DETAILS….

Firstly, the best place to start is the accessibility settings of the software. Another place to consider is the browser accessibility extensions.

Google	Accessibility Extensions **LINK**
Microsoft	Accessibility Extensions **LINK**
Firefox	Accessibility Extensions **LINK**

There are many tools or apps that you might know and use. If they work for you, keep using them. Here is a list of free tools that you might consider adding to your learning technology toolkit.

Speech to text	Voice typing in Google **LINK**
	Voice typing in Microsoft **LINK**
Text to Speech	Microsoft **LINK**
	Read&write Chrome extension **LINK**
Screen reading software	Microsoft 365 app **LINK**
	Google ext Screen Reader **LINK**
Organisational tools – mindmaps	Coggle **LINK**
	MindMap Chrome extension **LINK**
	Wakelet **LINK**
	Microsoft To Do **LINK**
Group Work	Padlet **LINK**
	Coggle **LINK**
	Microsoft Planner **LINK**
Note taking	AudioNote 2 Mac App **LINK**
	Sticky Notes Chrome extension **LINK**
	Noteledge **LINK**
Web bookmarking	Trello **LINK**
	Pocket **LINK**
	Google Keep Chrome extension **LINK**
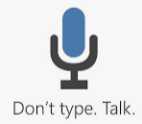
Let's turn this   into this

Images created by AI: Dream Studio (first attempt)

Now let's look in detail at some really cool free tools.

	Use	Hint	Issues	How to access and use	Ideal for
Microsoft Dictation Don't type. Talk.	Great for note-taking when you are doing your reading	Turn on Autopunctuation in the settings.	May have errors with different accents, background noises and complex words. You will need to proofread your work.	LINK	dyslexia tipaopao
Helperbird Website: LINK	Mainly for dyslexic students. Helps with reading, writing and accessibility on the web	Try the free version. You won't need the paid version.	There are lots of tools within the app/extension. Take it slowly to learn them all.	LINK	dyslexia tipaopao
Goblin Tools Website LINK	One tool in this group of tools is the Compiler, Estimator and Magic ToDo. You literally brain-dump your project into the Compiler and it will break it down into a checklist of tasks. Export it to the Magic ToDo and adjust the tasks, estimate the time and download it.	Use the chilli scale to adjust how much breaking down you need. Play with the other tools as well.	It's a resource to support you but you know yourself better than it knows you. Adjust things so they fit your way of working.	LINK	ADHD aroreretini autism takiwatanga
Microsoft Immersive Reader Immersive Reader	Not only does this read the text for you but there are many more features to support your reading. One feature is to change the background and font colour or use a colour overlay on the words. Another great feature is the translation tool, which translates words or sections. It also remembers which words you look up and builds a vocab list for you.	Use the browser version rather than the app if you want to use the translation tool. Play around with all the settings to see how immersed you can get.	Works only for Word documents, so convert those PDFs, or use the PDF Read Aloud feature. It can be an extension of the Microsoft Edge web browser.	LINK Edge web browser ext LINK	dyslexia tipaopao
Halfbold Website: LINK	A tool to help people with ADHD improve their reading focus and comprehension. Turns words in the text into half bold type and half not bold. **A to**ol **to he**lp **peo**ple **wi**th **AD**HD **impr**ove **the**ir **read**ing **foc**us **an**d **compreh**ension. **Tur**ns **in wor**ds **the te**xt **in**to **ha**lf **bo**ld **ty**pe **and ha**lf **no**t **bol**d.	Add it as an extension to your Chrome browser.	I don't see any.	See it in use LINK	ADHD aroreretini
Gingko Website: LINK gingko	A writing tool that puts your ideas, paragraphs, and outlines onto cards. You build a card and then the next card, and then the next card. Before you know it, you have a fullpage document ready. No more staring at a blank screen wondering where to start.	Sign up for the free version – you will get 100 pages and 10 documents. Plenty for any assessment!	It will take a while to learn to use it fully. Stick with it.	See it in use. LINK	ADHD aroreretini

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