Using an iPad to support dyslexic learners

Top Tips

Getting set up

1. From Settings choose 'Accessibility' / 'Display and text size' to adjust display settings to suit your learner.

2. Adding a colour filter can reduce visual stress. Try different filters to see what works best.   From Settings, go to 'Accessibility' / Display and text size / Colour filters.

3. Turn on Text-to-Speech. From Settings, choose 'Accessibility / VoiceOver. Adjust the speaking speed to suit your learner's preference.

4. Set up Siri. From Settings, choose 'Siri and Search'. Turn on 'listen for "Hey Siri", 'Press Home for Siri'.

5. Try organising your Home Screen to reduce visual clutter / have key Apps readily to hand. Hold a finger on the home screen until the Apps start to wobble. Drag Apps to your preferred position / drag favourite Apps down to the 'home bar' for easy access. Press the Home Button when finished.

Using the iPAD

6. If working between different Apps, try using a split screen. Open your first App, then swipe your finger up from the bottom of the screen to open the 2nd App. Hold your finger on the 2nd App, drag & release in your preferred location.

7. Say 'Hey Siri search…..' to search a topic on the internet.

Word processing

Touch typing

8. For some people, being able to touch type can be helpful as it frees the brain to focus on the content of what is being written rather than the process of writing. Learning to touch type can take a while, but there are many advantages for children and adults with dyslexia. Touch typing resources online include www.kaz-type.com; Nessy Fingers Touch Typing www.nessy.com; and www.readandspell.com

9. A separate wireless keyboard linked to an iPAD can support touch typing.

10. For some learners dictation may be a better option than typing, though using dictation does take practice. If you get lots of errors, try slowing the speaking speed and rehearse each sentence first before dictating.

11. Reduce background / classroom noise with a 'noise cancelling' headset.

12. Try asking your learner a series of questions to give structure to work. Gradually take the structure / questions away as confidence grows.

13. Don't worry about punctuation / word errors at first. Build confidence and enjoyment before introducing the 'speak' function to self-check work. (See below)

14. Use the voice-to-text / 'speak' function to read-back the dictated text. (See Tip 3 above on how to set this up on your iPAD). Hold a finger over the dictated text to select, then press 'speak'.

15. For information on using a 'scaffolded approach' to dictation see 'Speech Recognition as AT for Writing' (Daniel Cochran and Kelly Key, Updated January 2020) www.bit.ly/srguide

Text to speech

16. Live Text is available on newer iPADs using iOS 15. It works for photos and screenshots you've already taken. In the Photos app, look for the Live Text icon. Tap the icon to recognize all available text in an image. You can also swipe or tap to 'select' then 'speak' or 'copy' text.

    For older iPADs, you can access live text via the MS Office App. From the MS office home screen, select the 3rd icon down on the left hand side of the screen and follow the instructions.

Reading

17. There are a range of free audiobook libraries available for dyslexic learners, including Calibre audiobooks and RNIB bookshare. Edinburgh Council's Empowered Learning team are currently exploring future access to these via the addition of a new App to Empowered Learning iPADs. For more information on free audiobook libraries, see https://www.calibreaudio.org.uk/join and Information for Parents | UK education collection (rnibbookshare.org)

Sharing Work

18. Take a screen-shot to share a screen with your teacher / learner. Press the Home Button and 'Off' Button simultaneously. Click on your picture and press ⬆️ to share.

19. To share a document tap ⚫⚫⚫ then press ⬆️ to share.

20. Say 'Hey Siri send an email' to mail your teacher / learner.

APPs

21. See CALL Scotland's Ipad Apps for Learners with Dyslexia (callscotland.org.uk)

22. Seeing AI is a free App that 'speaks' the world around you. This offers a an alternative for anyone using a iPAD with older operating systems where access to 'Live Text' is not available (see tip 16 above).

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