Texthelp guide

What is Texthelp Read & Write Gold?

Texthelp Read & Write Gold is a literacy support programme which can give you extra help and assistance with tasks that involve reading and writing. This programme, often just called ‘Texthelp’, is available on computers in the Assistive Technology Room (ATR) which is on the third floor of the Learning Resource Centre, and in the Disability & Dyslexia Support (DDS) Perry Library study booths on 3 East.

Amongst other features ‘Texthelp’ can read text aloud to you, help you with writing tasks, carry out advanced spell checking and help with online searching. ‘Texthelp’, has a ‘Speak As I Type’ option which will read text back to you as you type it up and a ‘Speech Maker’ option with which you can turn text into audio files such as MP3s. Let’s have a look at how some of these features can be used.

The Texthelp Toolbar

1. To open the programme double-click on the Read&Write icon on the desktop.

2. The Read&Write Gold toolbar will open as below. When you open the programme the toolbar will appear in the middle of the screen in ‘floating mode’. You can click and drag with the mouse to move it to a more convenient spot or ‘dock’ it to the top of the screen if you prefer.

3. The toolbar will open in this mode showing some of the programme’s features such as Spell Check, Dictionary and Word Wizard which are represented by different icons on the toolbar. Hold the mouse cursor over any of the icons to see an onscreen hint telling you what the feature does.
4. Click on any of the little downward pointing arrows next to the icons to open a drop-down menu of options for these features.

Spell Checking

1. You can use the spell check tool in Texthelp to check a document for spelling errors. You can check a completed work for errors or you can check for errors as you work by selecting the ‘Spell As I Type’ option from the dropdown menu.

2. To use the Spell Check click on the Spell Check icon. This will open the spelling helper panel.

3. The **Spelling Helper panel** opens. This will list spelling mistakes and possible solutions. Spelling errors are shown in the box at the top. In the example below the word ‘designed’ is misspelt.

   To the left you will see a list of possible alternatives to the word you have misspelt. Dictionary definitions and examples of their use are listed on the right.

4. You can click on **Change** to accept one of the suggested alternatives. You can also pick ‘**Change All**’ if it is a mistake that appears a few times in the document.
5. You can also click ‘Add Custom’ to add things to a custom dictionary (for example place names or people’s names that the programme does not recognise) or set Auto Correct options. If you would like to hear any of these alternatives or their definitions and examples read aloud, select them with the mouse and click on the play button on the toolbar.

6. For further help with the Spell Check and to watch a demonstration click on ‘Watch Spelling Video Tour’ from the spelling menu.

Dictionaries and Word Prediction

1. You can use the dictionary feature in Texthelp to look up the meanings of selected words and find other words with similar meanings. To look up a word in the dictionary highlight the word on-screen and click on the dictionary icon on the toolbar. Alternatively you can open the dictionary feature and type the word directly into the search box.

2. In the example below definitions of the word ‘synthetic’ are listed. Nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs can be displayed if you choose. Click on Advanced to see words linked to the one you have looked up, such as opposites.
3. A list of **definitions** and **sample sentences** appears in the left-hand side of the panel. Click on one of these to see alternative words for this meaning listed in the right-hand side of the panel. You can also choose to replace the word you have chosen with a suggested alternative (such as man-made in the example below) by selecting that alternative and clicking the **replace** button on the toolbar.

![Dictionary - Advanced Definitions](image)

4. Remember you can **listen** to any of these definitions or examples being spoken aloud by clicking on them and pressing the play button on the toolbar. You can also select **Basic**, **Advanced** or **Web definitions** from the dropdown menu. For further information about the dictionary feature select the dictionary video tour from the dropdown menu.

![Word prediction](image)

**Word prediction**

1. Word prediction works a little bit like the predictive text feature on a mobile phone. As you type, Texthelp guesses the word you are looking for and suggestions appear in a blue box called the Prediction Panel. This may be useful if you need help with remembering or spelling words.

2. To use word prediction click on the ‘crystal ball’ prediction icon on the taskbar.
3. The **word prediction panel** appears with suggested words listed. To accept a suggestion you can either click on the word in the panel or press the function key listed next to it. For instance in the example below, to accept the first suggested word ‘analysis’, either click on it in the panel or press the **F1** key on the keyboard. The text you had begun to type will then be replaced by ‘analysis’.

![The results of the data ana](image)

4. Word prediction can be useful with spelling as it can predict words even if you begin to type the word incorrectly. This feature can also get to know your style of writing which helps it to guess the word you would like to use. For more information about prediction select the Prediction video tour from the dropdown menu.

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**Speech Options and Speech Maker**

1. Texthelp has a number of useful **screen reading** and **speech** options. You can use these to have text on screen including documents and web pages, read aloud to you. You can also select the ‘**speak as I type**’ option to have text read back to you as you type it up. This can be useful if you prefer to hear how something sounds rather than having to read it back on screen. You will need headphones in order to use these options.

2. Select ‘**Speak As I Type**’ from the dropdown menu to use this option.

3. As you type you will hear your text read back to you.

4. The programme can read your text back to you by letter, word or sentence. Select **Speech Options** from the dropdown menu to customise these.
5. There are four tabs in the Speech Options; **Speech, Say Like, AutoRead** and **Highlight**. Click on the AutoRead tab to set the options for ‘Speak As I Type’.

6. Under the Speak As I type settings on the **AutoRead** tab you can select your Speaking options. You may find that by default ‘Speak on each word’ and ‘Speak on each sentence’ are both selected. With these both selected Texthelp will read each word back to you as you type it.

7. If you prefer to just have your sentences read back rather than every word you can untick the box next to “Speak on each word”.

8. On the **Speech Tab** under **Speech Options** you can choose the voice you prefer. In the example below **ScanSoft UK English Daniel** is selected. You can select from others and see how they sound by clicking on the **Test Voice** button.

9. You can adjust your selected voice by **Speed**, **Pitch**, **Volume** and **Word Pause** (how long the voice pauses between words). To adjust these just click and drag on the sliders next to each of them.

10. Click on **Test Voice** to see how the voice would sound with your changes.
11. On the main Texthelp toolbar there are five text control buttons - play, pause, forward, rewind and stop. Use these to control how speech is read back to you. To begin press play, to skip forward press forward and so on.

12. To have web pages read back to you, select Web Highlighting from the Speech menu. If you then hold the mouse cursor over any content on a webpage, Texthelp will read that content back to you. The text being read back is highlighted as in the example on the right.

13. If you would like Texthelp to read out the full contents of the webpage select ‘Automatically read next block of text’ from the menu. Texthelp will then continue reading after it has reached the end of selected paragraphs or text.

14. The text which is being read back to you can be highlighted and displayed in different ways according to your preferences. Select the highlight tab from Speech Options to customise these.

15. Select the kind of highlighting you prefer under Speech highlighting methods. In the webpage displayed, ‘Speak with highlighting in document’ is being used.

16. You can also choose to have text displayed in a separate Text Reader window, using one word display or with no visual display.

17. Different highlighting colours are available. In the example above Yellow background with blue block highlighting is selected.
18. The **Screen Reading** option will read back menu items and buttons to you. To use this option select ‘Screen Reading’ from the dropdown menu next to the Play icon.

19. The Speech maker option allows you to save typed text in an **audio format** such as an **MP3 file**. To use this feature first of all select the text you wish to convert to an audio format.

20. Select **Speech Maker** on the drop-down menu and then select Speech Maker again from the popout menu.

21. A text window with your selected text will open. Click on **Next** to continue. Please note that if you select a large amount of text (more than six pages) you will see a warning that this could slow the system down quite a lot. Speech Maker is best suited to smaller amounts of text.

22. You will be given the option to select the voice you wish to have reading your text and to adjust the pitch, speed and volume.

23. A file settings window will open. This gives you the option to save the file as an **MP3** or **WAV** file. Pick the format you prefer.

24. Click on **Save As** to give your file a name and to save the file to your preferred location. Then click on **Finish**.

25. The conversion will take place (you will see a brief message about Encoding Speech) and your file will be saved.
26. You can then transfer the file if you wish, to an MP3 player for example.

27. For more information about Speech and Speech options you can see a Speech Video tour from the speech menu.

Customising the Texthelp toolbar and Help options

1. Not all the features of the toolbar are visible especially when the toolbar is in ‘floating’ mode. Click on the >> icon next to the textHELP logo in order to see non viewable toolbar buttons and use their features.

2. Read&Write Gold includes several sets of features which can be shown on the toolbar, for example Reading Features, Writing Features, Research Features. You can adjust the toolbar depending on which features you want to use. To change the toolbar click on the downward pointing arrow next to the textHELP logo, go to Current Toolbar and select the set of features you want to use from the popout menu.

3. The toolbar changes to the features you have chosen. You can customise the toolbar further by selecting General Options from the dropdown menu. Here you can assign different commands to each set of features.
4. Under General Options you can also change the appearance of the Texthelp toolbar. The default setting is **small icons without text**.

5. You may prefer to use **large icons with text**

6. There are many other features which we cannot cover in this help sheet. For example there are features that help you to find and store information on the Internet such as the **fact finder** and **fact folder**. There are features for **reading screenshots**, for scanning, and **screen masking** (covering part of the screen to make it more readable) as well as **study skills** features.

7. There is lots of help available within the programme to help you to get the most out of using Texthelp Read&Write Gold. Click on the help icon to open the online help facility. This links you to help pages about the different facilities within the programme. There are also useful video tours to accompany many of the features. These will open in a separate popout window.

8. The Read&Write programme can help you in a variety of ways. However like other software programmes it takes a little time and practise to get to know the programme and its benefits for you as a student. If you have any difficulties or queries with the programme, please ask at the helpdesk.

For further information and support contact:
Tel: 020 7815 6678
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Visit: Student IT Support, 1 West, Perry Library

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