# No DSA software? No problem…

## Introduction

If you don’t get DSA (Disabled Students’ Allowance), there is lots of useful free technology the you can use instead. Scroll down…

## Reading

### Immersive Reader in Word (Office 365)

Part of Word in Office 365 (online), Immersive Reader can read text out loud and change the appearance to make it easier to read. It works better in the online version of Word.

* Go to the [Microsoft Office website](http://www.office.com/) and log in with your university email and password
* Open Word
* Click the **View** tab then **Immersive Reader**
* You can hear text read out loud (bottom arrow)
* You can change the font and background (**Text Preferences**)
* You can see one or a few lines at a time (**Reading Preferences**)

[Watch a video about Immersive Reader](https://youtu.be/3YZGnaR_rxY).

### Natural Reader Online

An online text reader with good voices and some formatting options.

* Go to [Natural Reader Online](https://www.naturalreaders.com/online/)
* Paste text into the box or click **+** to upload a Word or PDF file
* Click the play arrow to hear text read out loud
* Daniel is a good free UK voice – premium voices cost more
* Switch on a dyslexic font and change the reading speed if you want

[Watch a video about Natural Reader Online](https://youtu.be/9ftSPKkCn_g).

### Rewordify

An online tool which simplifies texts by defining difficult words.

* Go to [Rewordify](https://rewordify.com/)
* Paste text into the box and click **Rewordify**
* Go to **Settings** to change the way difficult words are shown and defined
* Add words to a list to learn later

[Watch a video about Rewordify](https://youtu.be/VNY5-LoDRYQ).

## Writing

### Dictation in Word (Office 365)

In Word in Office 365 (online), you can dictate your ideas straight into your document, provided your device has a microphone. If you download Word to your smartphone or tablet, you can dictate directly into that.

* Go to [Microsoft Office website](http://www.office.com/) and log in with your university email and password
* Open Word (or a Word file in your OneDrive)
* In the **Home** tab, click the **Dictate** icon
* Dictate into your Word document - you'll need a microphone
* You might need to edit it afterwards
* You can also download Word to a smartphone or tablet and dictate into that

[Watch a video about Dictation in Office 365 Word](https://youtu.be/CdUBuLlu5D0).

### Grammarly

Grammarly is an online tool which helps you proof read your writing. The free version will help you find most, but not all, mistakes and allows you to type, paste or upload documents for checking. There is also a Chrome extension for online writing.

* Go to [Grammarly](https://app.grammarly.com/) and register for a free account
* You can type or paste text into a new document…
* … or upload a document from your computer
* Grammarly will suggest changes…
* Click suggestions to keep or discard with the dustbin
* There is also a Chrome extension for writing online

[Watch a video about Grammarly](https://youtu.be/rnDpO9fAiu4)

## Planning and organising

### Heading styles

In Word, use Heading styles and the Navigation Pane to plan, structure and navigate around your writing. Heading styles also make it easy to create a table of contents at the end.

* Open Word in your desktop
* In the **Home tab**, click the heading style you want, then start typing
* Or, highlight text and click a heading style to add it later
* Go to the **View tab** and tick **Navigation Pane** to see headings
* Click a heading in the pane to jump to that section
* Create a **Table of Contents** in the **Reference tab**

[Watch a video about using Heading Styles](https://youtu.be/ECosKxslhko)

### Coggle

Coggle is a free and easy-to-learn mind mapping program.

* Go to [Coggle](http://www.coggle.it/) and create a free account
* Click **Create Diagram**
* Type in your central idea then click **+** to add branches
* Branches can contain text, images, links or icons
* Right click branches to edit colour and shape or add sub branches
* Drag branches around to reorder
* Collaborate, share or download your Coggle

[Watch a video about Coggle](https://youtu.be/LRUVFoakv4w).

## Note taking

### Otter

Otter will record audio and transcribe the words at the same time. Record from your computer, smartphone or tablet and edit or copy the transcript later.

* Go to [Otter](https://otter.ai/) and create a free account
* Download to your smartphone or tablet to record from there
* Record audio and Otter will transcribe what it hears
* Use in lectures, tutorials, seminars etc.
* Edit transcriptions to remove errors

[Watch a video about Otter](https://youtu.be/zn_2nOMGU9I).

### Google Keep

[Google Keep](https://www.google.com/keep/) is a simple note-taking app that you can use on your phone or in your browser to make notes, lists, reminders, audio notes or doodles. Add the extension to Chrome to easily save webpages.

* Download to your phone or tablet and consider adding the [extension](https://studyhub.fxplus.ac.uk/chrome-extensions-productivity) to your browser
* Create or sign in with your Google account
* Save links using the extension
* Add notes, lists, pictures and reminders
* Use your phone to add a photo or create a sketch or audio note
* Use colour coding, tags and pinning to organise your notes

[Watch a video about Google Keep](https://youtu.be/h7O4FDUavW4).