Study Resources

Tools for Reading, Writing, Planning and Organising

UWS is an inclusive and accessible modern university. We recognise that we have a diverse range of learners and we endeavour to offer the latest technology and resources to meet all needs.

This leaflet contains information on some useful software that is installed on all open-access University PCs. These programmes can help with reading, writing, planning and organising.

We have also suggested some free software and apps that can be used on your own PC or portable device.

Guidance and video tutorials on using Balabolka, Inspiration, Read and Write and MyStudy Bar are available at uws.ac.uk/careersandskills in the section for Academic Skills.

You can also find useful video tutorials for much of the software and apps on Youtube.

Reading...

TOP TIPS:

Have text read aloud to help clarify context and assist with complex words or sentences.

Try changing the background colour on your screen or adjust text size, font, or colour.

Software & Apps

Read and Write Gold
- Literacy software makes websites, documents and files more accessible.
- Reads on-screen text aloud
- Pronunciation guide

Read & Write Gold is available on all campus PCs

Balabolka
- text-to-speech software
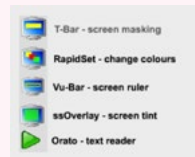
www.cross-plus-a.com/balabolka.htm

MS Word
- has an in-built text-to-speech function
  user guide:

https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/Using-the-Speak-text-to-speech-feature-459e7704-a76d-4fe2-ab48-189d6b83333c

MyStudyBar
My Study Bar is a collection of free downloadable applications. It includes the following apps which can help you read more easily from a computer screen.

http://eduapps.org/?page_id=7

T-Bar - screen masking	
RapidSet - change colours	
Vu-Bar - screen ruler	
ssOverlay - screen tint	
Orato - text reader	

My Web My Way
- website that shows you how to change the way your internet pages look

www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/guides

Writing...

TOP TIPS:

Have your text read aloud to help check flow, clarity and identify mistakes.

Use referencing tools to maintain consistent academic style.

Software & Apps

Read and Write Gold
- Advanced dictionary tools
- Verb checker

Read & Write Gold is available on all campus PCs

Cerevoice
- high quality computer voice that works with Balabolka (see Reading section)

www.thescottishvoice.org.uk/download

Grammarly
- Real-time proofreading and grammar checking
- Works with a number of programmes and websites, including MS Office packages

https://app.grammarly.com/apps

Neil's Toolbox
- easy to use Harvard reference generator

www.neilstoolbox.com/bibliography-creator

WorldCat
- large bibliographic database
- search by ISBN
- generates references in a variety of styles including Harvard and APA

www.worldcat.org/

If using referencing software, Please make sure that the style of Harvard referencing matches your University's style of Harvard.

> "I've got so much stuff I can't find what I need for revision"

> "I take notes but can't make sense of them afterwards"

> "I've got an empty page and don't know where to start"

Planning and Organisation

TOP TIPS:
Start by making a mind-map to get all your ideas down.

Plan a study or revision timetable to make sure you meet deadlines

Software & Apps

Inspiration
- easy to use mindmapping
- visually plan essays and structure revision
- export mindmaps to MS Word Inspiration is available on all campus PCs

FreeMind
- opensource mindmapping software
- plan written work and structure revision

http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

MyStudyBar
- collection of apps for reading, writing, planning and organisation

http://eduapps.org/?page_id=7

Calendars
- use built-in features of Outlook, Google or iCal
- set deadlines, reminders and plan a study or revision timetable

Mac Users
Your Mac has many inbuilt features, such as text-to-speech, that can be used to help you study. Information on the inbuilt accessibility options in Mac OS X can be found at:

www.apple.com/uk/education/special-education/osx/

Where to go for further support

Academic Skills Advisers

Academic Skills Advisers are committed to helping you achieve your full potential by providing advice, guidance and online resources to develop and enhance the academic skills you will need during your time at University and beyond. We can offer advice and assistance with academic skills including; Referencing and avoiding plagiarism; Critical Thinking; Studying and exam techniques; Presentation skills; Planning and writing essays, reports and dissertations; Study skills; Planning for studying; Personal Development Planning and Time management.

There are specific resources and further information and booking details here: uws.ac.uk/careersandskills
You can email the Academic Skills Advisers if you have a quick question on Skills@uws.ac.uk

Disability Service

The Disability Service at UWS provides information, advice and guidance to students with a disability or long-standing medical condition. We can help you to access appropriate study-related support, such as specialist software or equipment, support workers, alternative exam arrangements and we can assist you to apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) to fund your support.

If you have tried the on-campus resources and feel that you may need additional support, contact the Disability Service via disabilityservice@uws.ac.uk or through the Hub (Paisley) or Student Link (Ayr, Hamilton & Dumfries).

Student
Services

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