

# Supporting Writing with Microsoft Word

## Quick Guide

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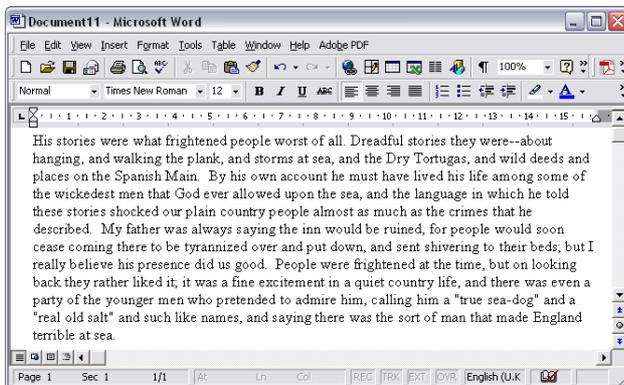
Microsoft Word has many facilities that can help writers with spelling and other writing difficulties. This sheet summarises the main tools.

### Word Help Guide

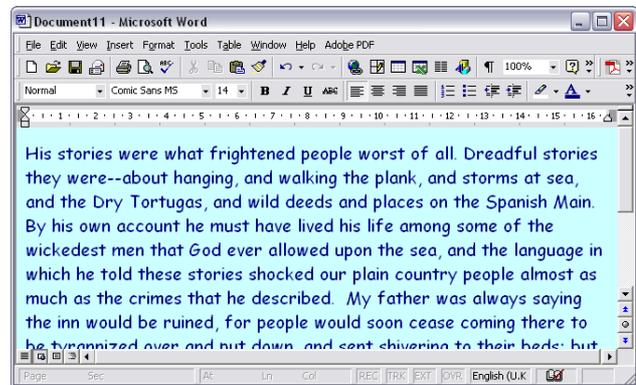
The Word Help system gives more information on how to set up Word. Go to the 'Help' menu, and open 'Microsoft Word Help'. Click on the Answer Wizard, type 'Accessibility' into the text box, and press return, you will be offered a description of the Word Accessibility features.

### Changing text size, font and colours

You can adjust the way Word displays text on screen to suit students with particular colour preferences or visual or perceptual difficulties. Sometimes these simple changes to the font, size and colour can make a huge difference to the readability of the text for students.



Times New Roman, 12 point, black on white



Comic Sans 14 point, dark blue on pale blue

To change the:

background colour:

text font colour:

font:

**Format > Background**, then choose a colour

**Edit > Select All (CTRL-A)**, then **Format > Font**, and choose a colour

Select the text to be changed, then **Format > Font**, and choose a font and size



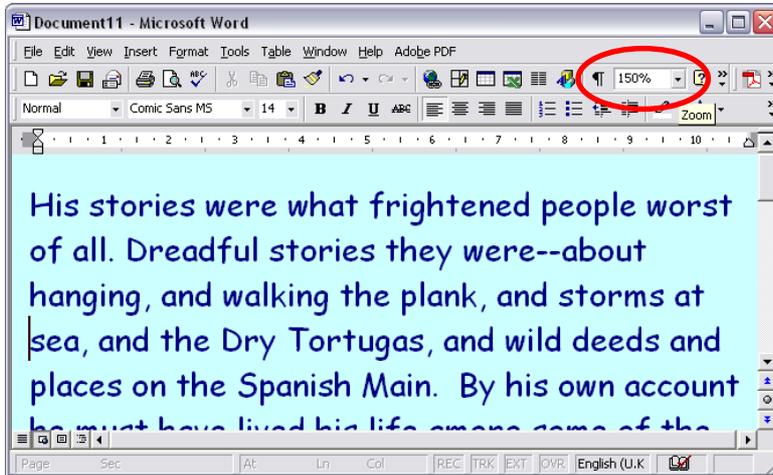
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spacing between letters: **Format > Font > Character Spacing**, then select **Spacing**, choose **Expanded** and set the distance between each letter

paragraph spacing: **Format > Paragraph**, then select **Line Spacing**, and set the distance

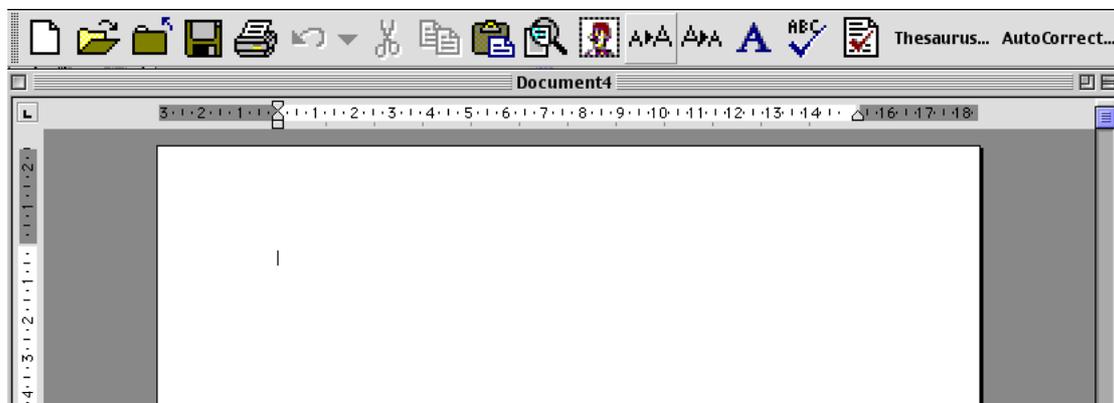


As well as adjusting the text itself you can increase the size of the window using the Zoom facility. If the Zoom is not in the toolbar, click on **View > Zoom** and choose the size you want.

## ToolBar

One of the confusing aspects of Word is the toolbars at the top of the screen. You can choose to have fewer or no toolbars displayed; to choose what buttons you want in the toolbar, and to display the toolbar buttons in a larger size.

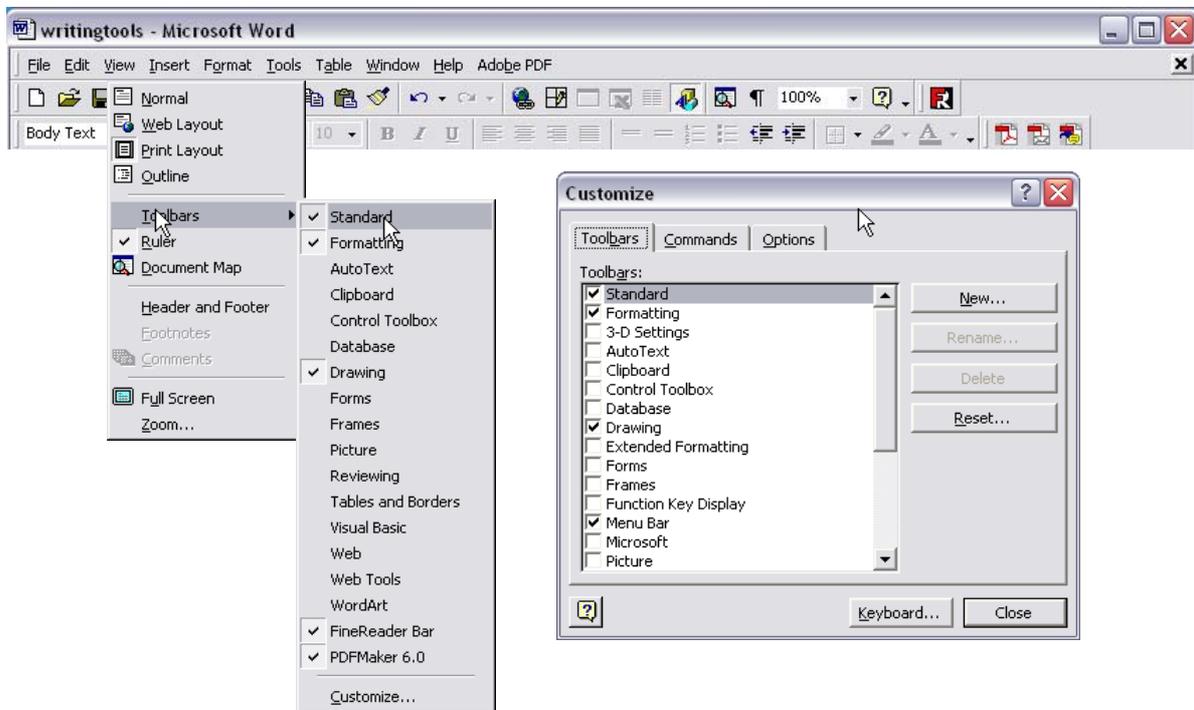
The ToolBar shown has large buttons, and has commands to open, save, print etc; cut, copy and paste; swap between a small and magnified view; add clip art; grow and shrink font sizes and choose font; and use spell and grammar checkers, thesaurus and AutoCorrect.



A simple writing ToolBar

To show or hide toolbars, select **ToolBars** from the **View** menu, and tick only those toolbars you want. For example, for a writing task, you might show only the Standard and Formatting toolbars.

To make the buttons larger, go to **View -> ToolBars -> Customize -> Options** and select the Large icons.



To customise or create a new ToolBar with only those buttons and commands you want, go to **Tools -> Customize -> ToolBars**, and add a new toolbar, or click on one of the existing ones. Then click 'Commands' to see the list of possible buttons that can be added to a Toolbar. To remove a button from the Toolbar, drag it from the Toolbar at the top of the screen and drop it off the end of the Toolbar. To add a new button to the toolbar, drag it from the 'Commands' list to the position in the Toolbar you want it to appear.

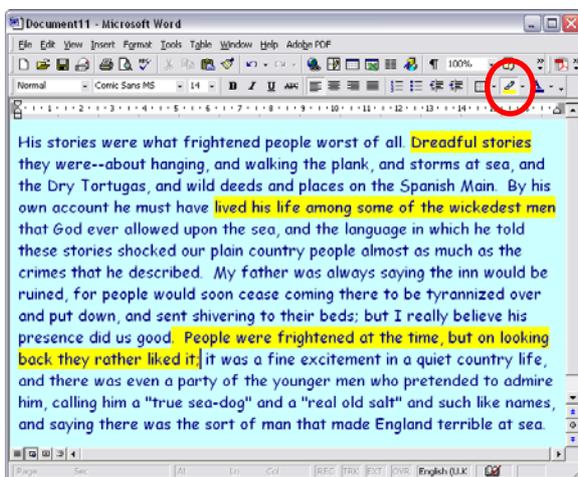
## Creating Templates

Templates let you create documents or writing frames with the correct font, headings and subject already set up. To create a document template:

1. Open a new document
2. Select the preferred font, set a preferred size and style e.g. Helvetica, 14 point, bold.
3. Add in any text in the Header and/or Footer. For example, the Header might include 'Essay/Project/Report by .....'. The footer might include Page Number, Date, Subject area.
4. Save the document as a template by going to **File -> Save as**.

- ❑ Give the document a name such as 'Writing template'.
- ❑ Choose the folder to store it in, or create a new folder, give it a name. (The pupil might wish to have a folder of his own templates - one for English literature, one for worksheets etc.)
- ❑ Click on **Save File as...** then **Save as type**
- ❑ Drag down to *Stationery* or *Document Template*
- ❑ Click **Save**.
- ❑ If required, create a short cut on the desktop to open the template from the desktop. (Right-click on the document, choose **Create Shortcut**, then drag it to the desktop.)

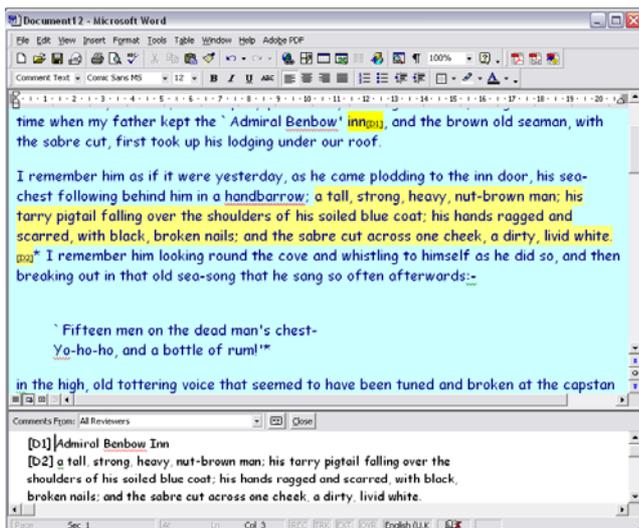
## Highlighter



The teacher can use the Word highlighting facility to pick out key sections for students who struggle with reading.

Students can also use the highlighter to mark important points as they read through, so they can find the key points again easily. The highlighter is in the Formatting toolbar. Click at the right hand side to choose the highlight colour, then highlight the text. Use different colours to highlight different types of information.

## Inserting Comments



Word 'Comments' can be used to collect notes and key points as you go through the text.

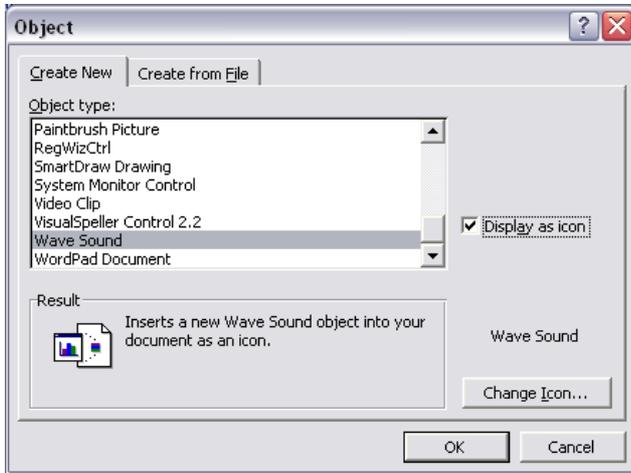
Select the text that you want to remember, (copy it to the clipboard if you want), then click **Insert > Comment**, and a Comments window will open below the file. Type your comment in, or paste the text you have just copied.

The Comments are saved with the text itself, or can be cut and pasted into a separate document to form the outline of some work. Click on **View > Comments** to show or hide the comments at the bottom.

To print the comments, click on **File > Print**, then choose **Comments** from the **Print What** box.

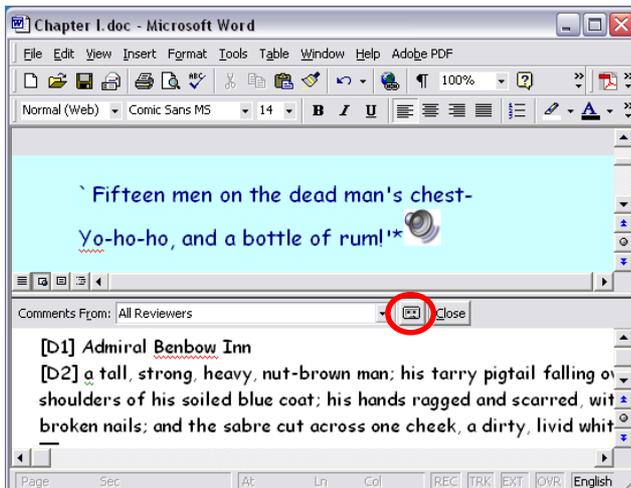
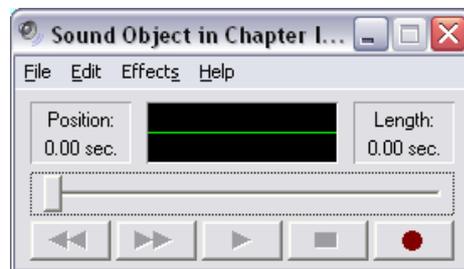
The teacher could also add comments with questions or prompts to the text before giving it to the students, to help them focus on the key points.

## Inserting voice notes



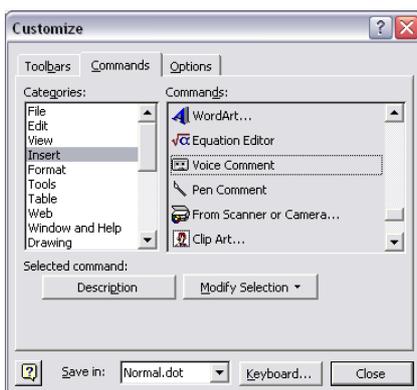
Students can also add spoken comments to the document as they read through it. (You will need a microphone and speakers to record and play back the recordings.)

Click where you want the recording to go, then on **Insert > Object**, then scroll down to **Wave Sound**. Click on **Record** and speak into the microphone.



Close the window and a picture of a speaker will appear in the text to show there is a recording at that point.

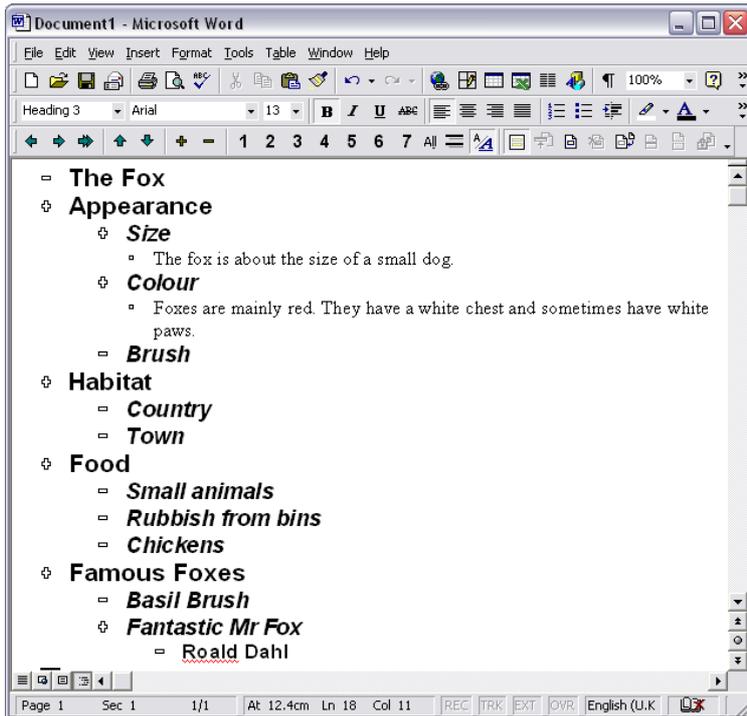
You can also add a voice note by clicking on **View > Comments**, then click on the small **Insert Sound Object** button.



Or, you can add the **Insert Sound** button to the Toolbar by clicking on **Tools > Customise**, then **Commands**. Click on **Insert**, scroll down to find the **Voice Comment** button, then drag it up to the toolbar.

Voice comments are saved with the document, and can be played back by double-clicking on the icon. They can be very useful for quickly recording ideas, quotes and comments. Teachers could use them to add questions, comments or instructions to a document, while students with writing difficulties could use them to record answers. Note that the recordings are just that, i.e. it is not speech recognition - the computer does not convert them into text.

## Outline View



The Word 'outline' view can be very helpful when planning a piece of work. To use it, select **View > Outline**. Type the title for the document, then press Enter.



Click the green right arrow and add a sub-heading.

Add text under each sub-heading by clicking the double green arrow.

Whole sections can be dragged around to re-order the document, levels can be 'promoted' or

'demoted', and 'collapsed' or 'expanded' to show or hide underlying information. Click on **View > Print Layout** to convert back to the usual view of the document and add more text at any point.

## Writing Frames

Many students find it helpful to be given a 'writing frame' with a ready-made structure for tackling a piece of writing. The Writing Frame can be created using the Outline view, and/or as a table and then saved as a template. A few examples of writing frames are given below. WordBar (see later) is a useful program which comes with sets of writing frames and sentence starters for many different types of writing.

### Writing Frame - Argument

I think that

because

The reasons for my thinking this are, firstly

so

Another reason is

Moreover

because

These (facts / arguments / ideas) show that

### Writing Frame - Explanation

I want to explain why

There are several reasons for this.  
The chief reason is

Another reason is

A further reason is

So now you can see why

### Writing Frame - Book Report

1. Introduction
  - a. The author's main themes were
  - b. I thought the book was
2. Synopsis
  - a. The book was set in
  - b. The main characters were
  - c. The main points in the book were
3. Analysis
  - a. The writer wrote the book because

## Spellchecker



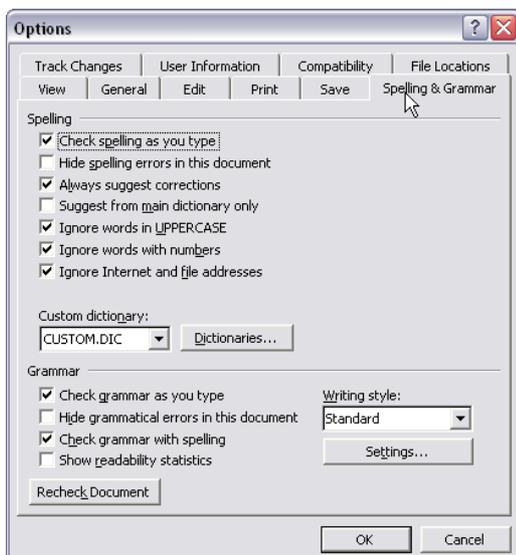
The standard Word spell-checker is quite good at recognising spelling mistakes and offering correct spellings.

To spell-check a particular word or section of text, highlight the text and then press F7 (Command-L on a Mac). When Word comes across a word it does not know in the document, it offers a list of likely alternatives. To use the spellchecker to check

the complete document, press F7 (Command-L on a Mac), or choose **Spelling** from the **Tools** menu.

A quick way of spell checking a particular word is to point or click on it, and then click the right hand mouse button. (On a Mac, hold down the Ctrl key when you click.)

Wich wurd are rong



The Word spell-checker can automatically check words as you type and underline suspect words with a red wavy line to draw your attention to them. Possible grammatical errors are marked with a green line. If you want to switch this feature off, go to **Tools -> Options (Preferences on a Mac)**, click on the **Spelling and Grammar** tab, and then turn off **Check Spelling as you type**.

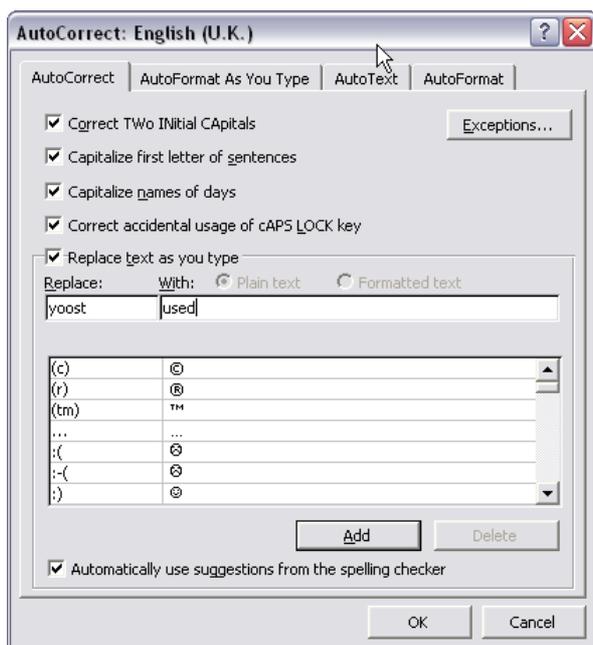
Two common difficulties with the Word spell-checker are:

- You may not be able to recognise the correct word from the spellchecker's list of offerings.
- You have to type the word reasonably accurately for the spellchecker to offer anything at all, and with longer, more complicated words this may be a problem.

If you cannot recognise the word in the list, consider **WordTalk** (which adds speech to the Word spellchecker), **Talking First Word**, **TextHELP Read and Write**, **KeySpell** or **Write:Outloud 3**, which all have talking spell-checkers (addresses at the end of this sheet).

If your spelling is too bizarre for the spell-checker to cope with, investigate some of the options described below.

## AutoCorrect and AutoText



The Word **AutoCorrect** facility automatically replaces a mis-spelling with a correctly spelled word. It is designed to fix typing errors - say replace 'tch' with 'the' - but you can also use it to pick up more difficult words, and so that you just have to type a short abbreviation instead of the whole word.

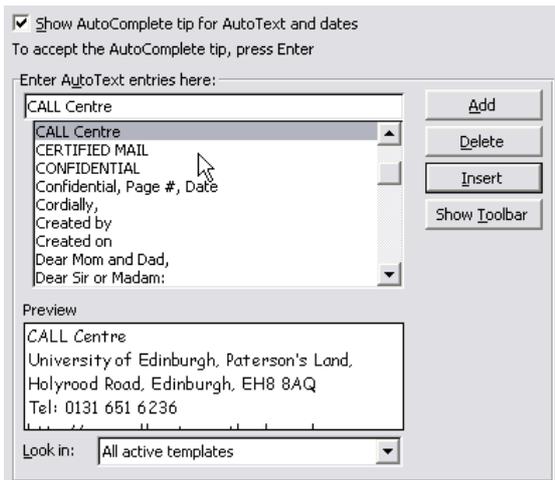
Suppose you always spell 'used' as 'yoost'. Open AutoCorrect by clicking on **Tools** -> **AutoCorrect**. Type 'yoost' into the 'Replace' box, and the 'used' into the 'With' box. Click on **Add** and then **OK** to close AutoCorrect. Now, when you type 'yoost' it will

automatically be replaced by 'used'. yoost

An easy way to put lots of alternative spellings into the Auto-correct dictionary is to add them when you spell-check. If the correct spelling is offered, just click on 'Auto-correct' and the word pair will be automatically added to the Auto-correct dictionary.

You can add several mis-spellings, each with the correct spelling, to the AutoCorrect dictionary. Suppose you always have problems spelling 'anyone', spelling it as 'enyon', 'enywon' or 'enywone'. You could add all three mis-spellings to AutoCorrect, so that no matter which spelling you typed, the correct word would always be typed into the text.

You can also use AutoCorrect to store short abbreviations for longer, difficult words, for example 'establishment' or 'bourgeoisie'. Add them with a short abbreviation that you will be able to remember and spell - say 'est' for 'establishment' and 'brg' for 'bourgeoisie'. Then every time you type 'est' followed by a space, Auto-correct will replace it with 'establishment'. When you type 'brg' followed by a space, 'bourgeoisie' will be inserted. Remember it's important to choose an abbreviation which is not a whole word - you wouldn't use 'an' as an abbreviation for 'anthropology' for example.

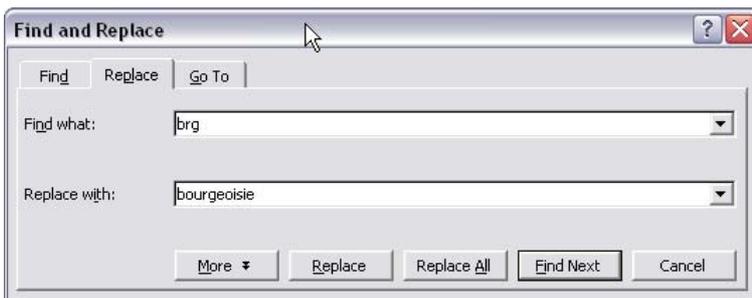


**AutoText** is designed for storing and retrieving words, phrases or graphics. For example, you might want to add an AutoText item to type your address quickly. Type it out, and then copy it to the clipboard. Click on **Tools** -> **AutoCorrect** -> **AutoText** and you will see the first line of the text as the entry, and the entire text shown in the Preview box.

Click on **Add** to add the entry to the list.

Then, when you start to type the abbreviation - for example *CALL*, the phrase will be offered in a small box. If you want it inserted into the text, press Enter, otherwise press Esc.

## Find and Replace



Another technique is to use **Find and Replace** as a 'manual' version of the Auto-correct feature.

First, build a word list of all the words with which you have difficulty, correctly spelt. If you

create the word list in a Word table, you can easily sort it alphabetically. Save the list in a file.

When you are writing, use a short abbreviation for the longer word - say 'brg' for 'bourgeoisie' again. After you are finished the text, open up your word list file, find 'bourgeoisie', copy it into the clipboard, then paste it into the 'Find and Replace' facility in Word, and replace 'brg' with 'bourgeoisie' throughout the text.

## Thesaurus

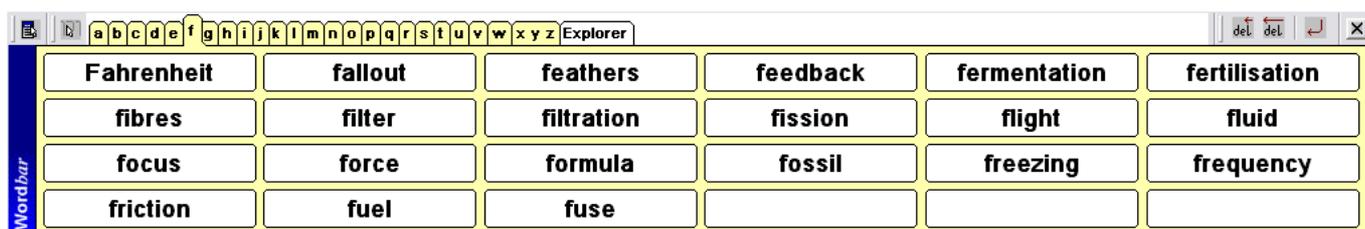


Sometimes the Word thesaurus can be used to help you spell difficult words. Type 'nice' then press SHIFT+F7 (Shift Command R for a Mac) to ask for an alternative. Click 'pleasant' and then **Lookup** to get a bigger selection of words.

This only works when you can think of short words that mean the same as the longer one you want, so it's not a universal solution.

## Word Lists

Many dyslexic writers know which words are going to be a problem in advance, so one technique is to get someone to help you create your own 'dictionary' of these words and store it on the hard disc. You could have lists for different subjects, or organise them alphabetically - use a MS Word table to create lists in alphabetic order. When you start to write, open the word list and copy and paste the difficult words from the list into the document. **Talking First Word** has word lists built-in which you can customise for your own subjects and interests. **WordBar** is a popular program that can be used to create word lists, organised alphabetically or by topic.



WordBar

## Text to speech output

Students with reading difficulties can use text to speech to read textbooks and worksheets. Some writers also find it helpful to have the computer read out the text using synthetic speech. This can be helpful to review and proof read text, or to echo back each word or sentence as it is typed, to check for accuracy and sense. Word on PC does not have text to speech output built in, but you can add it with other programs. (Word 98 on the Mac does have a basic text to speech facility.)

Program	Description	Cost	Supplier
KeyStone ScreenSpeaker	Text to speech utility that can read any text on screen, and echo back as you type or dictate with Dragon speech recognition into Word	£250 single £500 5 user £750 10 user	Words Worldwide
Max's Sandbox	Simplifies and adds speech to Word, Excel, and Powerpoint. Picture banks.	£4.75 per user online subscription	LTS
Penfriend	Good word predictor, with basic speech output: select text and copy to the clipboard to have it read out.	£60 single. £20 extra licence Primary site £400 Secondary site £540	Penfriend, Inclusive Technology
Reader	Text to speech program which can read from any application	Free	Sensory Software
ReadPlease	Text to speech program that can read from any application: select text and copy to the clipboard to have it read out	Free	ReadPlease
SpeakOut!	New text to speech program which can anything on screen, and also read out Dragon NaturallySpeaking training files	£75 single	iansyst

Talking First Word	Simplifies Word (four different levels from basic to more complex) and adds speech and word/picture banks.	£49 single; £150 5 user; £199 10 user; £299 20 user	RM
TextHelp Read and Write Standard	Good text to speech program that can read from any application; mediocre prediction and spellchecker. Select text and click to have to read out	£140 single £795 secondary site	iansyst
TextHelp ScreenReader 4	Simple screen reader that can read from any application - select text and click to have it read out.	Free downloadable demo copy £30 for full version with better voices	TextHelp LTS
WordTalk	Adds speech output and talking spellchecker to Word	Free (but not yet freely distributed - watch this space and CALL web site)	Rod Macauley, TASSCC

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