15 Features in MS Word 2010

that will help students with learning disabilities

and

support students to become independent learners

(that you probably didn't know existed or didn't think to use)

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1.   Choose the best font

(supports readers with low vision and some people with Dyslexia)

- Always choose a plain font – *fancy fonts*/fancy fonts are very problematic for poor readers.
- Preferably use fonts that are Sans Serif (eg: <u>not</u> Times New Roman)
- Italics are extremely difficult for almost all people with learning disabilities and should be avoided.
- Preferably use fonts with a 'curly a'. (eg: Arial – a, rather than Century Gothic – a)
- Fonts preferred by people with low vision:
    - Arial
    - Tahoma (seems to currently be gaining popularity with VI students)
    - Calibri
    - Verdana

2.   Change the line spacing (properly called Leading – pr: ledding)

(supports poor readers, students with Dyslexia, students for whom English is a new language – particularly if they are not literate in their first language or their first language uses a different script than English)

Using the *Home* tab at the top of the screen (on the left of the screen between *File* and *Insert*), look across the menu bar to *Paragraph* and look for this symbol: Click on the tiny down button on the right and a range of spacing options drop down. 1.15 is the default setting in Word 2010, but as you hover over each option, the text will change to that option so you can check which spacing suits best.

3.   Change the font colour

(supports some poor readers. Especially helps to contrast text if the background is coloured)

- Using the *Home* tab, scan across the screen to the *Editing* menu at the far right of the screen

> Find ▾
> Replace
> Select ▾
> Editing

- Click on the arrow to the right of the word *Select*
- Click on *Select All*
    - *OR…*
- Use the keystroke *CTRL+A*

- In the *Font* menu click on the arrow to the right this symbol: Choose a colour and all the text will change to that colour.
- For students who have difficulty separating information, you can select sections of text and change the colour of the selected text. Students with limited education backgrounds and a number of learning difficulties benefit hugely from having lengthy essay questions broken up into their component parts by using different colours.

4.   Change the background colour

(supports some students with Irlen Syndrome – also known as Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome)

Features: for students with 'Irlens', the right colour background will 'calm' the text and help to stop it appearing to 'move'.   For many other students, they may find that a coloured background on the screen helps them focus.

- Click on the *Page Layout* tab at the top of the screen
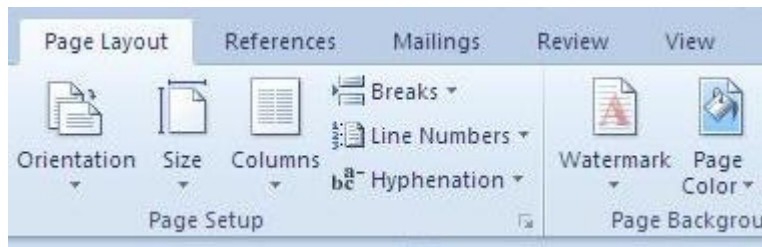
- In the *Page Background* part of the Menu ribbon, click on a button that looks like a page with a bucket of paint tipping and the name *Page Color* under the icon
- Go down to *More Colors* and click on the Custom tab, and you can choose the most appropriate colour for the student.

This background colour does not print

Most of these tips are very versatile. They will help teachers/lecturers as well as students with additional learning needs. And yes, they may even make cheating easier for the bright, but lazy student!

## 5.   Get rid of formatting in pasted documents

(supports students with a range of learning disabilities)

Many students will need to copy and paste information into their Word documents from other sources such as websites. This text will often be formatted in ways that does not suit its new purpose. To remove all formatting from text pasted into a Word document:

- CTRL+A (highlights all text) or highlight the text you want to change
- CTRL+Spacebar

6.   Removing hyperlinks in copied text

(supports students with a range of learning disabilities)

Many students will need to copy and paste information into their Word documents from other sources such as websites. This text will often contain unwanted hyperlinks – particularly in footnotes or bibliographies. To remove hyperlinks from text pasted into a Word document:

- CTRL+A (highlights all text) or highlight the text you want to change
- CTRL+Shift+F9

7.   Highlighting/Contrasting important information or separating it into categories

(supports poor readers, students with Dyslexia, students for whom English is a new language – particularly if they are not literate in their first language or their first language uses a different script than English)

- Highlight selected text
- Make sure the Main Menu is on the *Home* tab
- In the second row of the *Font* section of the menu ribbon you will see this icon: Click on this to highlight the selected text.
- Use the small arrow to the right of the icon to select a different colour

- Look at this example to see how you can use this tool to separate information into different categories:
  Bowden Brompton Community School (govt)
  Findon High School (govt)
  Henley High School (govt)
  Immanuel College (independent)
  Islamic College of South Australia (independent)
  LeFevre High School (govt)
  Mount Carmel College (Catholic)
  Nazareth Catholic College (Catholic)
  Ocean View P-12 College (govt)
  Portside Christian College (Independent)

Note: using watermarks like the one in this document *increases* the difficulty for readers with learning disabilities.

8.   Need a Bibliography? No problem

(supports all learners, especially people with learning disabilities, poor educational attainment, people who are poorly organised)
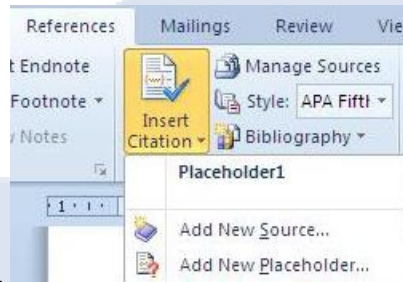

- Use the top menu bar and click on *References*.
- Click on the *Insert Citation* tool and a new window will pop up.
- Fill out the fields and it will insert citations and create a bibliography at the end of the document.

## 9.   Searching for key information in a text

(supports poor readers to search for key facts in a text)

Students can be trained to identify key parts of questions in assignments and with any text copied and pasted into a Word document, can find key phrases that will help them sort information or find a small key piece of information ina large text.

- Open a Word document containing reference material. This can be information copied and pasted from Internet documents for example.
- On the *Home* menu, go to the far right of the screen and click on *Find* (in the *Editing* section of the menu ribbon)
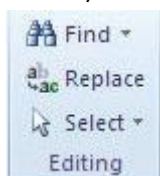
- A side bar will open at the left of the screen with the label *Navigation* at the top:
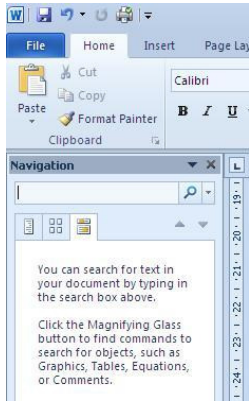
- Type the word or phrase you are searching for information on and it will be highlighted in the text wherever it appears. It will also show a listing in the Navigation side bar on the left of the screen. Students can use these navigation points, or highlighted sections, to help identify information that is more likely to be related or relevant to the assignment/essay question they are required to answer.

10. Train AutoCorrect!

(essential support for students with Dyslexia, ESL learners and students with other learning challenges – or for anyone who needs to type long words or common phrases many times in the course of their work. Especially good for students trying to master long or technical terminology as part of their course.) *Note – students with literacy challenges must be supervised/supported as they train AutoCorrect or they will most likely save incorrect spellings.*

Everyone knows that Word automatically corrects some words that are commonly misspelled. It even helps us make sure there's a capital letter at the beginning of a new sentence – sometimes when we don't want it to! But how many users of Word take the time to train the AutoCorrect function to help us out? For example, an Aboriginal Cultures student in South Australia may need to type Pitjanjatjara or Adnyamathanha several times a day, but by programming AutoCorrect, the student may need to only type pitj or adny for the whole word to appear. The same process can be used for commonly typed phrases. For example, typing pwd to produce people with disabilities.
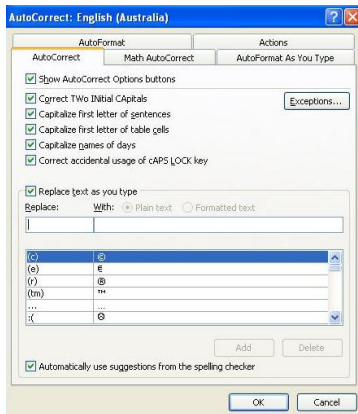
- Go to the *File* Menu tab and click on *Help*.
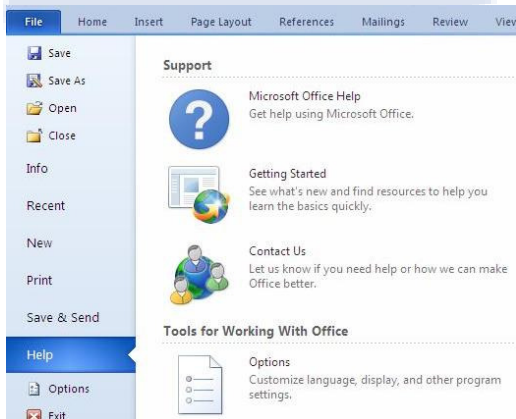
- Select *Options* and then *Proofing*.
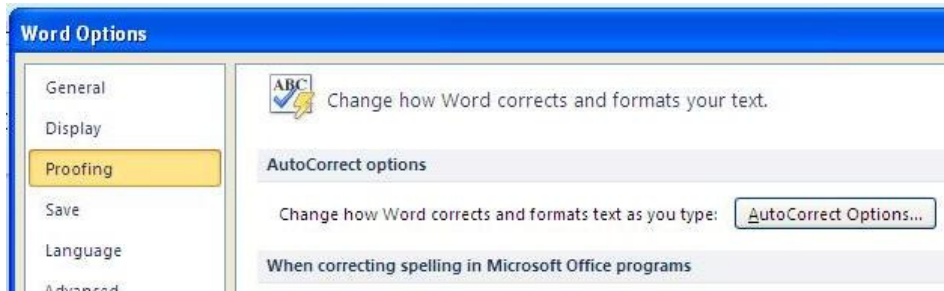
- Choose *AutoCorrect Options* and make sure the *Replace text as you type* box is checked.


- In the *Replace* box, type the phrase or abbreviation you want to use or the commonly misspelled word.
- In the *With* box type the full word, phrase or correct spelling
- Click on *Add*
- Click on *OK*
- When you use any of the abbreviations etc programmed into AutoCorrect you just type in the short version and as soon as you then hit the spacebar or full stop key, the whole or correctly spelled word or phrase will appear in the text instead. Eg: pwd+spacebar = people with disabilities

11. Set up AutoText

(supports students who need to enter a certain block of information multiple times [such as an address block for example], students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ESL learners and students with poor organisational skills)

- Click on the *Insert* tab at the top of the screen.
- Towards the right of the screen on the *Text* part of the Menu ribbon, click on *Quick Parts*.
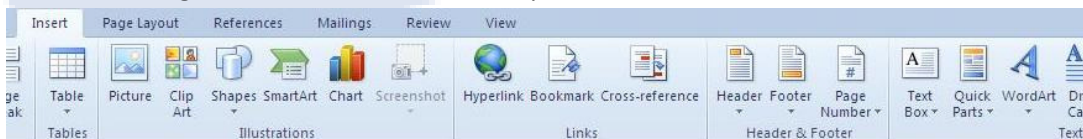

- On the drop down menu that appears, choose the entry you want use.

To create new AutoText Blocks:
- Type the text you want add as an AutoText block into a Word document. Make sure it is all spelled correctly and formatted the way you will want it (eg: correct layout for an address). Highlight/select the text you want to add to the Gallery of AutoText blocks.
- Click on the *Insert* tab at the top of the screen.
- Towards the right of the screen on the *Text* part of the Menu ribbon, click on *Quick Parts.*
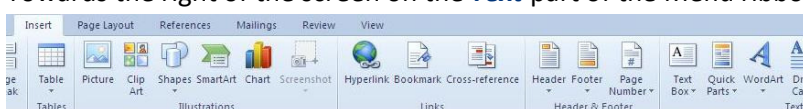
- On the drop down menu that appears, scroll down to *AutoText* and a drop down menu will appear to the left.
- Scroll down to *Save Selection to AutoText Gallery* and click.
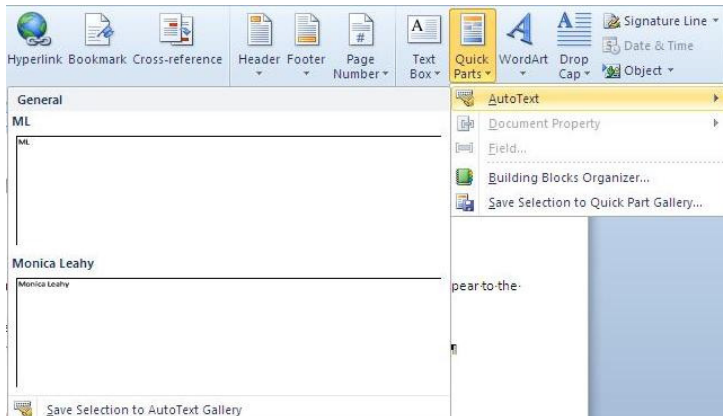
- Fill out the information required in the box that pops up entitled *Create New Building Block*.
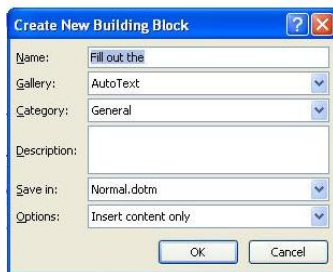
12. Use the Synonyms function

(supports all learners, especially learners with Dyslexia, people with low literacy levels and ESL learners).

Students can also use this function if they copy and paste source material (such as from a website) into a Word document to help them better understand what they are reading.

- Right click on the word that a synonym is required for.
- Scroll down the pop up menu to *Synonyms* and click. A list of synonyms for the word will appear.
- At the bottom of the pop up list of synonyms will be a button saying *Thesaurus*. Clicking on this button will reveal a fully functioning thesaurus in a side bar on the right of the screen.

13. Use the Dictionary that's built in

(supports all learners, especially learners with Dyslexia, people with low literacy levels and ESL learners).

Students can also use this function if they copy and paste source material (such as from a website) into a Word document to help them better understand what they are reading.

- Highlight/select a word that for which a definition is needed and then right click on the highlighted word.
- Scroll down almost to the bottom and click on *Look Up* and choose an option from the menu that will pop up on the right. Usually you would click on *Encarta Dictionary: English [UK]* or English Assistance: English [UK]
- A side bar will appear on the right side of the screen with a full dictionary definition of the word.

14. Insert sound files into the document

(supports students with Dyslexia, students who have trouble organising information when they write and teachers wanting to provide instructions to poor readers.)

Word 2010 allows writers of documents to insert sound files into the document that can be played

by clicking on a picture of a speaker that will appear in the text. Like here:

To create a sound file:

- Click on the *Start* button at the bottom left of the screen.
- Click on *All Programs* (just above the Start button and has a green arrow to the right of the title).
- Scroll to the very top of the pop up menu to *Accessories*.
- Another menu will pop up to the right. Click on *Entertainment*.
- Another menu will pop up to the right. Click on *Sound Recorder*.
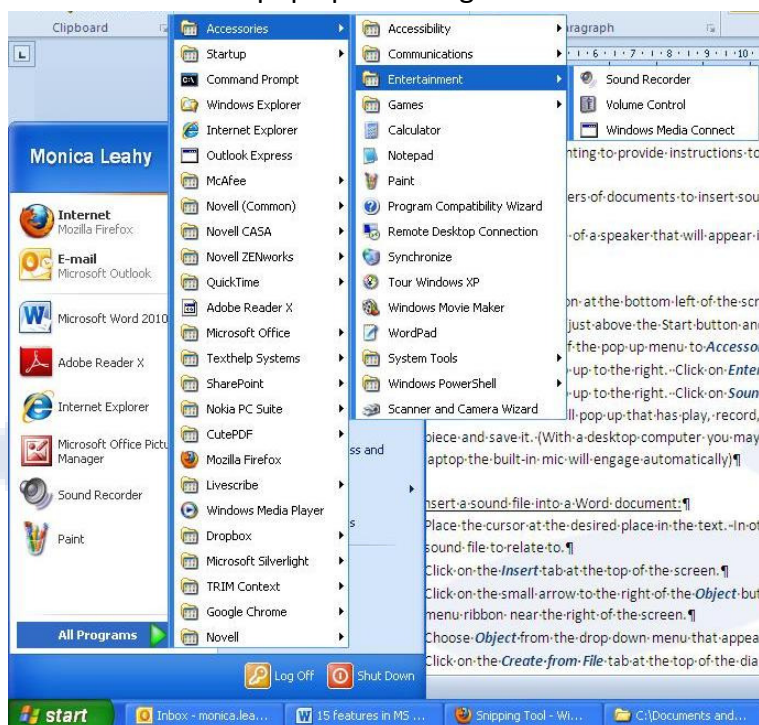
- A new mini-window will pop up that has play, record, pause etc functions. Use this to record your piece and save it. (With a desktop computer you may need to plug in a microphone, but with a laptop the built-in mic will engage automatically)

To insert a sound file into a Word document:

- Place the cursor at the desired place in the text. In other words, next to the text you want the sound file to relate to.
- Click on the *Insert* tab at the top of the screen.
- Click on the small arrow to the right of the *Object* button. This is located in the *Text* part of the menu ribbon near the right of the screen.

- Choose *Object* from the drop down menu that appears.
- Click on the *Create from File* tab at the top of the dialog box that pops up.
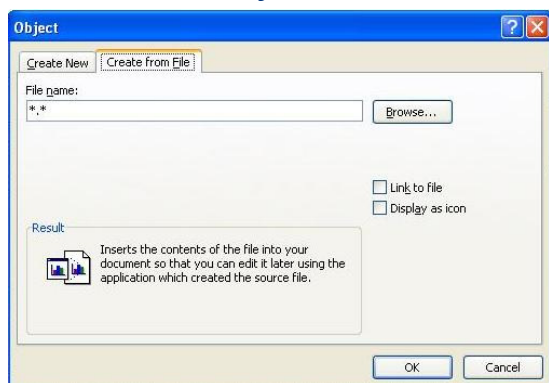
- Click on *Browse* and find and select the sound file you want. The file's icon will look like this:
- Click *OK*. The sound file will appear in the text where the cursor is located.
- Double click on the picture of a speaker to play back the file.

15. Text to Tables and Tables to Text

(supports students who have difficulty accessing information in particular formats or categorising information.)

Many students with Dyslexia can use information more successfully if the way it is organised is changed to best suit their learning style. Also, some ESL learners will come from a culture where information is organised differently. Allowing them to change the format of information can support them to transition to required formats and to access information that is presented to them in course materials.

a) Text to Tables

- Take a piece of text and insert a tab or comma at each place you want to start a new column.
- Type a paragragh mark (the Enter key) each time you wand to start a new row.
- Select/highlight the text.
- Click on the *Insert* tab at the top of the screen.
- Click on the *Table* button (close to the left side of the main menu ribbon). On the drop down menu, click on *Convert Text to Table*.
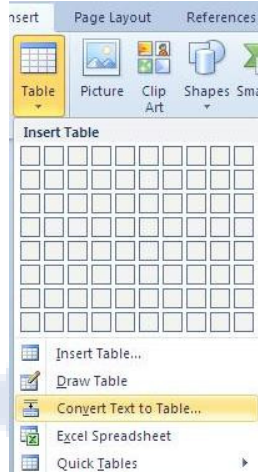
- In the dialog box that pops up, under *Separate Text At*, click on *Tab* or *Comma* (whichever you have chosen to use to separate the text). You can also use this function to place each paragraph of a text into its own discrete table cell if you choose that option – this is an excellent way of separating a lengthy text into different ideas for students.
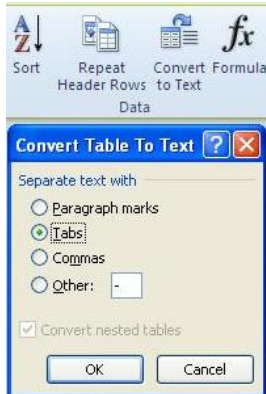
- Click on any cell of a table in a Word document.

Apples	Pears	Oranges
Bananas	Rockmelons	Strawberries

- Click on the *Layout* tab in the top menu selection (this will be highlighted in a coloured extra menu title saying Table Tools).
- Click on *Convert to Text* (second from right in the menu ribbon).

- A dialog box will pop up entitled *Convert Table to Text*. Select how you want the text in the table to be separated. Choosing *Paragraph Marks* will create a vertical list. *Tabs* will create a document that looks like a table, but without borders – rows will be maintained. **Commas** will produce rows of lists that are separated by commas. Examples below:

Paragraph Marks:

Pears

Apples

Oranges

Bananas

Rockmelons

Strawberries

Tabs:

Pears   Apples   Oranges

Bananas   Rockmelons   Strawberries

Commas:

Pears, Apples, Oranges

Bananas, Rockmelons, Strawberries

If you want to introduce some 'sidebar' information in a text, it is always a good idea to colour the background of the box – with the colour at between 75% and 85% transparency (this document uses 75%). It helps poor/new readers distinguish what's important. Changing the transparency? Well, that lesson's in the advanced class ☺