



Have You Tried Assistive Technology?

By Mark Taylor, College/University and Christian School Representative

Assistive technology (AT) is the term referring to “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability” (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). I really like the simplified definition from understood.org: “Any device, software, or equipment that helps people work around their challenges.” *

I intend to give you a better understanding of assistive technology and its use. My goal is to help you learn about this topic and develop your expertise with assistive technology. In addition, I will share with you a tutorial on assistive technology.

As stated on its website, Understood is a nonprofit dedicated to serving the millions of families of kids who learn and think differently. It provides outstanding free resources for educators and families. As you complete this tutorial, you will be directed to helpful resources as well. To visit this website, click the [link](#).

To get the full benefit from this assistive technology tutorial, you need to read the information presented, visit links, and watch videos accessed from the link above. Upon conclusion, you should be able to respond to the following topics.

Assistive Technology (AT) Basics

- What are the five myths about assistive technology?
- List and explain the eight simple adaptive tools.
- What are the three main platforms where kids can use AT?
- What is text-to-speech (TTS) technology?
- What are some types of dictation (speech-to-text) technology kids can use and how do they work?

Assistive Technology for Reading

- What are seven of the most helpful AT tools for reading?
- Where can you find free audio books and digital text-to-speech books?
- Visit these resources of free audiobooks and digital TTS books: Bookshare; Voice Dream Reader; Read2Go; Go Read; Storynory; Lit2Go; Project Gutenberg; Prizmo; National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (<http://aem.cast.org>)
- What is dyslexia? Watch the video “Assistive Technology for Dyslexia: One Mother’s Story” and the video “What is Dyslexia? Dyslexia Explained”

Assistive Technology for Writing

- What are eight types of AT tools for writing and how are they helpful?
- Watch the video “The Different Types of Pencil Grips for Kids”
- What are the three types of dictation technology that can be used? What are their functions?
- What are seven Chrome tools for kids with writing issues and their functions?
- Check out the following and what they do.
Co:Writer Universal; TalkTyper; EasyBib; Grammarly; Scribe; MindMeister; Mindomo; Premier Chrome Toolbar; Read&Write; VoiceNotell; WordQ; Inspiration/Kidspiration (<http://inspiration-at.com>)

Assistive Technology for Math

- What are 10 types of AT tools for math, and how are they helpful?
- Check out the following software programs for kids who struggle with math. Explain how they help students. FX Draw Tools; MathTalk; MathType; Geogebra; WebMath; National Library of Virtual Manipulatives.
- What are six Chrome tools for kids who struggle to learn math? Explain the function of those tools.

Assistive Technology for Listening Comprehension

- What is auditory processing disorder (AUD)?
- Share six types of assistive technology tools for AUD and their functions.

How to Use Text-to-Speech on a Mobile Device

- Watch the video tutorial on how to turn on text-to-speech on your phone. Set that up on your phone.

If you have taken the time to access the assistive technology resources from Understood.org and completed the activities and questions, you will benefit greatly from the knowledge gained.

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