

The 10* Best Free Assistive Technology Tools

(* + 3 Extra Picks)

Reading/Learning Resources

Tarheel Reader

<http://tarheelreader.org/>

Tarheel Reader is a collection of free, easy-to-read, and accessible books on a wide range of topics. The books may be downloaded as slide shows in *PowerPoint*, *Impress*, or *Flash* format. Each book can be speech enabled and accessed using multiple interfaces, including touch screens, the IntelliKeys with custom overlays, and 1 to 3 switches. Write your own books using your own pictures and text.

WatchKnow

<http://www.watchknow.org/default.aspx>

WatchKnow has indexed over 15,000 online educational videos for children, putting them into a directory of over 3,000 categories. The videos are available without any registration or fees to teachers in the classroom and to students at home 24/7. You can dive into our innovative directory or search by subject and age level. Video titles, descriptions, age level information, and ratings are all edited for usefulness.

LibriVox

<http://librivox.org/>

LibriVox provides free audiobooks from the [public domain](#). There are several options for listening. The first step is to get the mp3 or ogg files into your own computer. LibriVox volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain and release the audio files back onto the net. Our goal is to make all public domain books available as free audio books

Writing/Presentation Resources

Make Beliefs Comix

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Create up to a six-panel comic strip by choosing characters and their emotions, add thought or talk balloons, and add objects and prompts. When finished you can print or email. Site has Teacher Ideas and Family Fun writing prompts and activities.

Wordle

<http://www.wordle.net/>

Wordle is an online tool for generating "word clouds" from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes. The images you create with Wordle are yours to use however you like. You can print them out, or save them to the Wordle gallery to share.

Tagxedo *

<http://www.tagxedo.com/>

...turns words -- famous speeches, news articles, slogans and themes into a visually stunning tag cloud, words individually sized appropriately to highlight the frequencies of occurrence within the body of text. Much like Wordle, Tagxedo also features stylized cloud shapes and

Blabberize

<http://blabberize.com/>

Free website to upload a picture, record your voice and have the mouth move in sync with your speech. Can be used to have students record information about a topic or biography and present it in an entertaining way.

GoAnimate *

<http://goanimate.com/>

This website provides free tools for creating and sharing real animated cartoons. Everything, including characters, backgrounds, props, voices, motions and actions that are needed is available at the site. Students learn how to apply special effects, such as zoom and pan, and are able to create original characters. Finished products can be posted to other sites and emailed. What a great way to tell a story or to submit a report!

Study Skills Resources

Merriam-Webster Visual Dictionary Online

<http://visual.merriam-webster.com/index.php>

An online dictionary with 20,000 terms with contextual definitions and 6,000 full-color images of a wide variety of objects from all aspects of life. Illustrations are labeled with accurate terminology in up to six languages.

Snappy Words Visual English Dictionary and Thesaurus

<http://www.snappywords.com/>

Snappy Words is an online interactive English dictionary and thesaurus that helps you find the meanings of words and draw connections to associated words. You can easily see the meaning of each by simply placing the mouse cursor over it.

VocabAhead

<http://vocabahead.com/Default.aspx>

VocabAhead offers videos that give an active demonstration of vocabulary words with audio of the pronunciation, definition, various uses, and synonyms. Students can also go through flash cards, which give a written definition and visual representation of the word.

Bonus Pick!

XMind * (free software to download)

<http://www.xmind.net/>

The world's coolest brainstorming and mind mapping software and the best way to share ideas. Try this one at home.

GFC LearnFree.org

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/>

This site, hosted by the Goodwill Community Foundation, offers a collection of free online interactive tutorials on a variety of topics including computers, math, reading, and daily living.

HelpKidzLearn

<http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/index.html>

Free online games and learning activities (many are switch-accessible) in categories such as: early years; games; stories; creative; and “find out”. There is also a section just for parents containing resources and technology tips relating to computer switch access.

Luminosity

<http://www.lumosity.com/>

“Improve brain health and performance. Brain training produces real world benefits. Enhance memory, attention, and creativity. Easy, web-based brain training program. Luminosity partners with researchers at Stanford, UCSF, Harvard, and Columbia, among other prestigious universities. Lumosity also works with numerous health care organizations to provide cognitive training services.