Chrome Extensions that are Helpful for Students

Technology can be a powerful tool to assist students with any sort of learning challenge. In particular the Chrome web browser allows users to install a wide variety of web extensions that provide tools that can help all learners, regardless of ability level.

This reference sheet provides information about several Chrome extensions that can assist students in the following areas:

- Text to Speech
- Speech to Text
- Readability
- Reading Comprehension
- Focus

Some of the tools listed may fit into more than one topic, but each is only listed once. Certainly this list does not cover all of the useful web extensions available, but it is a great place to begin.
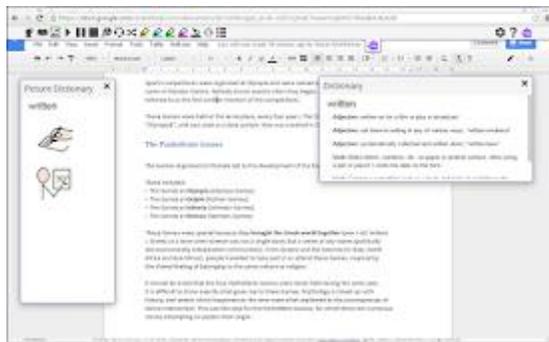
Information obtained from: *https://www.controlaltachieve.com/2016/10/special-needs-extensions.html*

"Text to Speech" Extensions

1) Read&Write for Google Chrome

The "Swiss Army Knife" of extensions with tools including word prediction, dictionary, picture dictionary, text to speech, screenshot reader, speech maker, screen mask, translator, highlighters, voice note, and more. Works on webpages, PDFs, Google Docs, and Google Slides.
Note: There is a paid version with all the tools and a free version with a subset of the tools.

2) Read Aloud

This text-to-speech extension will read either the entire page or just the text that you have selected. In addition to the normal options to adjust the speed, pitch, and volume of the voice, the best feature is the wide collection of high-quality voices to choose from.
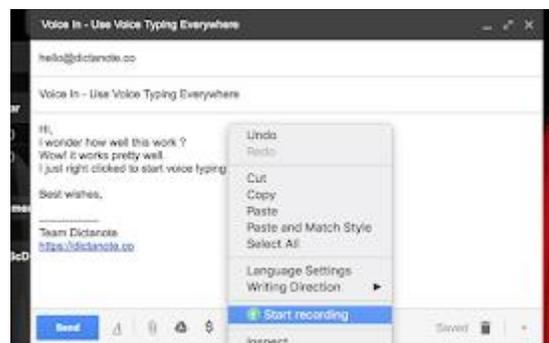
3) [Announcify](#)

This is another text to speech tool that not only reads a webpage, but also removes distracting elements from the site. The only drawback is the inability to select specific text to read, as the entire page is read aloud.

"Speech to Text" Extensions

1) [VoiceIn Voice Typing](#)

This speech-to-text extension allows the user to dictate text for any text box or text entry portion of a web page. You can either click the extension or right-click and choose "Start recording" to use it. Be sure to click the extension again to turn off the speech-to-text function when done.

"Readability" Extensions

1) [Mercury Reader](#)

Make any website easier to read by removing ads, comments, and all other distractions, so just the core content remains. Users can also adjust the font size and color scheme of the new text.

2) [OpenDyslexic Font for Chrome](#)

Override all fonts on a webpage with the OpenDyslexic font, making the text more easily readable.
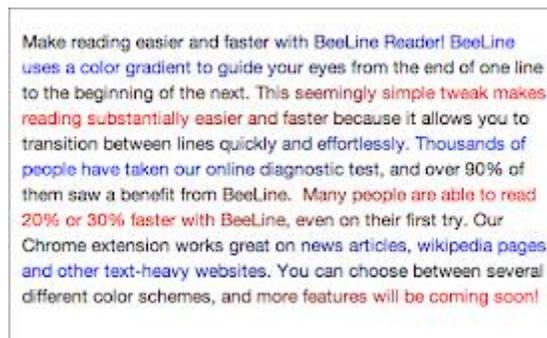

3) [Dyslexia Friendly](#)

This extension replaces the fonts on a web page with either OpenDyslexic or Comic Sans, and provides a horizontal shaded bar to help the user stay on the correct line when reading. The only drawback is there is no easy way to toggle it on and off, so you will want to use an extension management tool to let you turn it off when not in use.

4) [BeeLine Reader](#)

This tool creates a more readable version of a web page by removing all the ads, comments, and other extra distracting items, and then applies a color gradient to the page text guide your eye from one line to the next. (Limit of 5 articles per day for free version.)

5) MagicScroll Web Reader

Turn web pages into a flippable e-book with easy clickable or keyboard control, as well as control over font size and page color as well.

6) Visor

This screen overlay tool darkens out the page except for a horizontal band you can move up and down as you read, helping the student focus.

7) High Contrast

This tool can make webpages easier to read by changing the colors to increase contrast, invert the colors, or switch to gray-scale.

8) [CraftyZoom](#)

This extension give you a floating magnifying glass that you can move around the screen to make portions of the page larger. You can adjust the size of the circle and the level of the zoom.

"Reading Comprehension" Extensions

1) [Google Dictionary](#)

Don't get stuck on an unknown word. Double-click on any word to get a pop-up definition, as well as spoken pronunciation for many words.

2) [SMMRY](#)

While not technically an extension, this tool functions very much like one and is launched from your Chrome bookmarks bar. Summarize any online article with a simple click of the SMMRY bookmark link. This will generate a simplified version with fewer sentences (7 by default) and just the most important information. Settings can be adjusted for longer or shorter summaries, as well as emphasis on certain desired words..
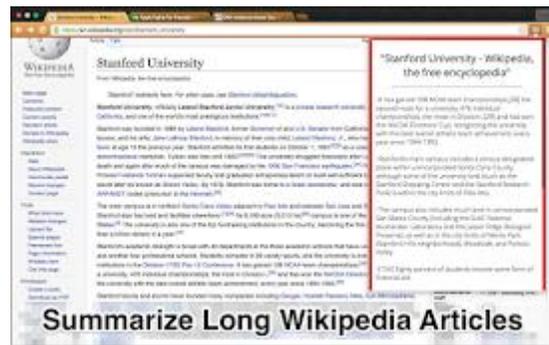
3) [Resoomer](#)

This is another summarization tool for web pages. It opens up a new tab with a cleaned up version of the page, as well as three levels of summary.

4) [Internet Abridged](#)

This article summary tool gives you a pop-up window with a short bullet list of the main sentences from the page.

5) [Auto Highlight](#)

This extension takes a different approach to summarizing. Instead of removing the non-essential portions of the text, it highlights what is most important. This allows the reader to still look at the rest of the article if needed. Three levels of highlighting can be chosen.
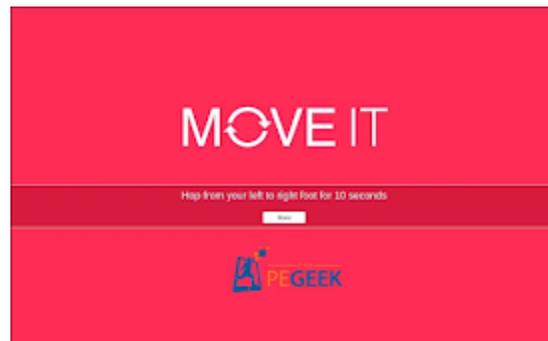
"Focus" Extensions

1) [uBlock Origin](#)

A simple but powerful ad-blocking extension to help remove distracting ads from websites, making pages less cluttered and easier to read.

2) [Move It](#)

For students who need a break, this extension can be set to periodically have them stop working and do something physical for a moment.

3) [Google Keep](#)

Keep allows users to save and retrieve any information they come across including text, links, pictures, speech, handwriting, doodles, and more. The tool works as an extension, web site, Android app, and iOS app, and integrates into Google Docs, Slides, and Drawings.