Technology to Support Students with Learning Disabilities

Options for Finding Accessible Books

Purchase Them:

iTunes: The new iBooks 2 from Apple supports interactive textbooks and several publishing houses have jumped onboard the platform. There are still relatively few titles at the moment but the catalog is sure to grow over the coming years. In the meantime there are hundreds of thousands of books waiting to be purchased. The iPad's built-in Text-to-Speech can be used to read all of these titles.

Audible.com: is an online audiobook store which stocks many of the latest and most popular titles. The books are produced with professional talent which makes them much more pleasant to listen to than Learning Ally or Librivox books. Audible books generally costs about $15 each but there is also a subscription service available on a monthly basis which can lower costs.

Qualify for Them (IDEA 2003)

Bookshare.org: is an eligibility based program for student with significant print disabilities. This service provides tens of thousands of books including those produced by publishers as required by IDEA (NIMAS.) The books are in a special format called DAISY and can be read on an iPad using an app called Read2Go. Bookshare books can be searched and downloaded directly to the iPad using Read2Go, no sync'ing necessary!

- Eligibility requirements for Bookshare: http://www.bookshare.org/_/membership/qualifications
- Information on NIMAS: http://aim.cast.org/learn/policy/federal/what_is_nimas

Learning Ally: Formerly known as Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D), this service provides audio books for individuals with print disabilities. Like Bookshare.org, Learning Ally is an eligibility based service whose qualifications closely match those of Bookshare.org. Learning Ally books are also stored in DAISY format but they do not contain text. Learning Ally books must be sync'd manually using iTunes File Transfer (explained in a preceding section.)

- www.learningally.org
- Learning Ally Support Page: http://www.learningally.org/Training-Support/267/

Accessible Book Collection: The Accessible Book Collection is a non-profit corporation that provides high interest/low reading level digital text to qualified students with disabilities. This is an eligibility based service like those above. Government and non-profit schools and others can subscribe to the affordable Accessible Book Collection. The service has a very large catalog of titles which can be sorted by reading and interest levels.

- www.accessiblebookcollection.org

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Tip: If your school has an AT specialist then you are eligible for a free subscription. Look for the link for AT specialists on the front page of the website.

Get Them for Free

OverDrive Media Console (e.g. your public library): Overdrive is the service behind the majority of libraries that offer ebooks and audio books to their patrons. To access these books you will need to install the Overdrive software on your computer and have a valid library card for your library. You can find detailed instructions on your library's website. Overdrive titles that are compatible with an iOS device can be read using the Overdrive app.

iTunes: The iBooks store includes thousands of public domain titles which can be downloaded free of charge in many cases.

Options for College TextBooks

There are very few options for accessible textbooks on the iPad at this time other than iBooks. The following textbook providers are not compatible with Apple's Text-to-Speech capability.

- Kindle Textbooks (from Amazon.com)
- Textbooks provided by Kno Inc.
- Textbooks from CourseSmart (the web version is accessible but only on a desktop computer.)

Many publishers provide PDF companion CD's and/or websites with their textbooks. Many of these are accessible using either iBooks (for the PDF's) or Safari (for the web sites).

Many colleges also provide electronic versions of books for students who qualify for this service. Check with your school's Office of Disability Services. It is a good idea to do this well prior to the start of the academic term.

Tip: The AccessText Network has an online search tool which will search for books across Bookshare, Learning Ally and CourseSmart. Searching by ISBN# always provides the most accurate results although title search is available as well.

AccessText's Accessible Textbook Finder: http://www.accesstext.org/atf.php

Tools to Read Audio and E-Books

Source	Type	Mobile Device	Computer (Mac/PC)
Learning Ally* ($119/yr)	Classic Audio, Voice(text), Synthetic(text)	iOS Devices Only, Specialty Devices**	ReadHear Software

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Source	Type	Mobile Device	Computer (Mac/PC)
Audible.com	Audio Only (professional voice)	iOS,Android, Kindle, WP7/8, Blackberry + more…	Audible Software
Public Library (free)	Audio MP3 (professional voice), Text-based: ePub, PDF	Overdrive Media Console: iOS, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, MP3 Player	Overdrive Media Console Software, Any Web Browser (Coming Soon)
Bookshare* (free)	Text, Audio MP3, Braille	iOS (Read2Go), Android (GoRead, Darwin Reader)	Web Browser, Read:Outloud (BSE),Kurzweil 3000, WYNN, TextHelp
Accessible Book Collection* (free)	Text	Web Browser on the Mobile Device	Web Browser
iBooks (Apple)	Text	iOS	N/A
Amazon	Text	iOS, Android, Kindle, WP8	Web Browser
Barnes and Noble	Text	iOS, Android	Web Browser

Software to Support Reading

Scanning and Reading:

- Kurzweil 3000 (Mac / Windows) www.kurzweiledu.com
- WYNN Wizard www.freedomscientificlsg.com
- TextHelp Read & Write Gold (Mac / Windows) www.texthelp.com
- ClaroRead www.clarosoftware.com

- Adobe Acrobat Pro www.adobe.com
- Adobe ExportPDF (Online tool) https://www.acrobat.com/exportpdf/en/home.html

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- ABBYY Fine Reader www.abbyy.com

Reading:

- Read:Outloud (Mac/Windows) www.donjohnston.com
- Snap&Read (Mac/Windows) www.donjohnston.com
- Natural Reader Free Edition (Mac/Windows) www.naturalreaders.com
- Read&Write for Google Docs (for Chrome Web Browser) https://chrome.google.com/webstore

Software to Support the Writing Process

Pre-writing and Organization

(Define Purpose, Brainstorm and Organize)

- Inspiration / Kidspiration www.inspiration.com
- Kurzweil 3000 www.kurzweiledu.com
- WYNN www.freedomscientificlsg.com
- Draft Builder www.donjohnston.com
- MS Word (outline view)

Drafting

(Encoding, word choice, sentence fluency)

Speech Recognition

- Dragon Naturally Speaking (Mac/PC) www.nuance.com
- Windows 7/8 built-in
- Mac OSX 10.8 (Mountain Lion)
- SpeakQ www.wordq.com

Word Prediction

- Co:Writer www.donjohnston.com
- WordQ www.wordq.com

Revising and Editing

(Grammar and Spelling)

- Ginger Software www.gingersoftware.com
- Franklin Language Master / Spelling Ace / Homework Wiz
- Google Search

Technology to Support Note taking

- Livescribe SmartPens www.livescribe.com
  - Echo
  - Sky
- Portable keyboards:

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  - Alphsmart Neo www.alphasmart.com
  - Forte www.writerlearning.com/special-needs/forte.php

- Shared notes
  - From the Instructor
    - PPT's, screen captures from the SmartBoard, Handouts
  - From Peers
    - Carbon paper, photographed or scanned

Software to Support Typing Instruction

- Dance Mat Typing http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/flash/stage1.shtml
- Typing Web http://www.typingweb.com/typingtutor/

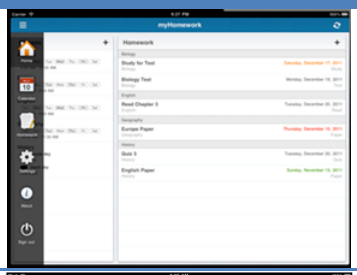
Some good resource:

- http://www.cwu.edu/~setc/ldtech/docs/Keyboarding_Techniques.pdf
- http://atclassroom.blogspot.com/2006/05/keyboarding-programs-available-on.html

Popular Apps for Students

I've broken the following apps into specific categories to make it easier to navigate the list. Each category contains the most talked about apps, most highly rated or those with which I have personal experience. The following lists are by no means exhaustive but might serve as a good place to start comparing features.

Apps for Organizing Schoolwork

myHomework	myHomework tracks your classes, homework and projects so you never forget an assignment again.	
iStudiez Pro $2.99	Sophisticated student's planner for your Mac, iPhone, iPad. Very highly rated on the Appstore and rated best college app of 2011.	

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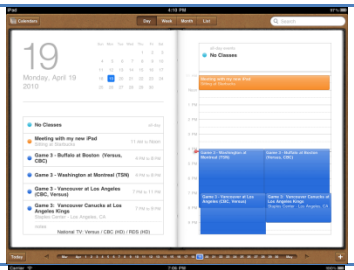
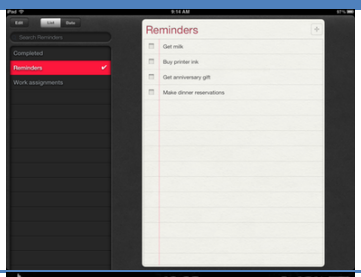
iCal	Apple's built-in calendar tool provides many excellent features that can help organize a student's schedule.	
Complete Class Organizer $4.99	Complete Class Organizer helps students manage their classes, take notes, record lectures, calculate grades, and easily access information from any class, past or present.	

Reminder Apps

Reminders	Apple's built-in reminder tool is a simple but effective way to get alerts for upcoming tasks and to-do's.	
Vocal $6.99	This app allows you to record voice notes and reminders which can then be set to playback at a specific time.	

Reading Apps

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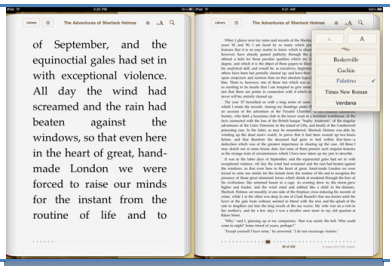
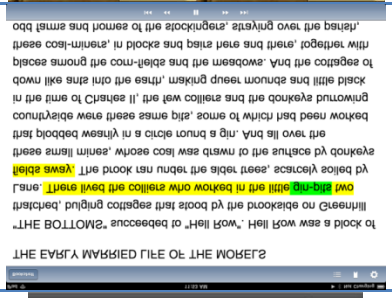
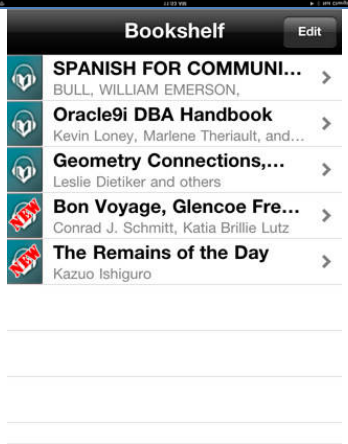
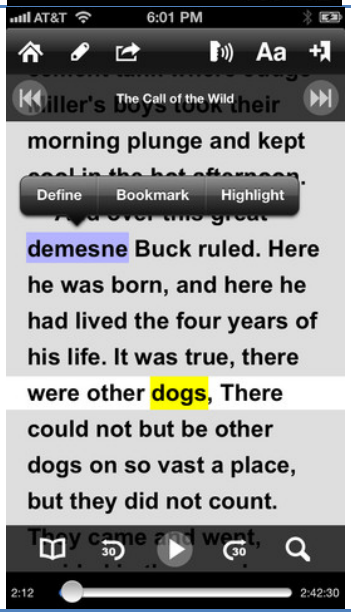
iBooks	Apple's built-in book reader has access to thousands of books and can read most PDF files.	
Read2Go $19.99	This app is provided by Bookshare to read their accessible, DAISY formatted books. It offers direct download of books to the iPad, built-in text-to-speech, highlighting, and font adjustments. *Eligibility required	
Learning Ally $19.99	This app is provided by Learning Ally to play their audio books on an iPad. Audio books must be sync'd to the iPad using a cable and iTunes file transfer. *Eligibility required	
Voice Dream Reader $4.99	Listen to PDF and Word documents, eBooks, articles, and Web pages anywhere with offline text-to-speech.	

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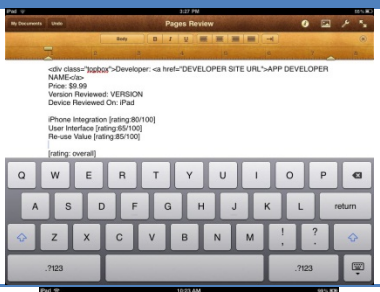
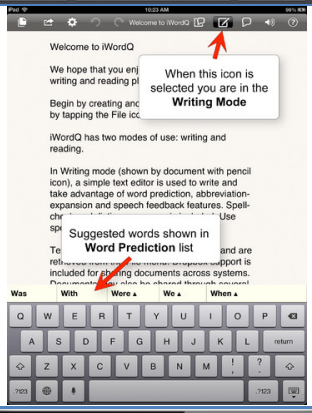
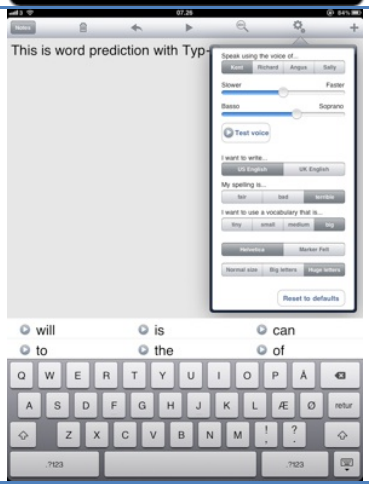
Apps for Writing

Pages $9.99	Apple's word processor for the iPad is able to read and write in MS Word formats. It is also compatible with Apple's iCloud service and text-to-speech capability.	
iWordQ $24.99	iWordQ US is an easy-to-use writing and reading application to assist struggling writers and readers through word prediction and text to speech.	
Abilipad $19.99	An excellent note taking tool with high quality word prediction capabilities. The app includes text-to-speech and can read the word choices out loud for the student.	
Typ-O $4.99	Word Prediction software for spelling support. • Three levels of spelling error compensation • Four vocabulary sizes • Text-to-speech • Spell checker • Email your text, or paste it to other apps	

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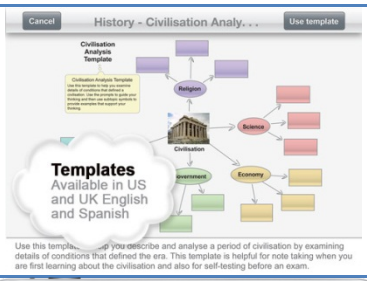
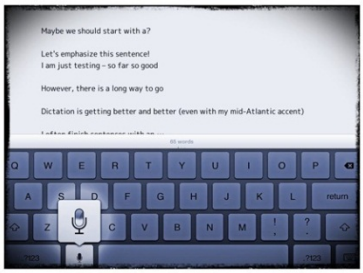
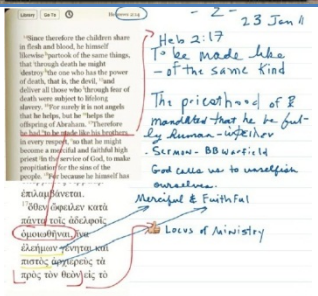
Inspiration Maps $9.99	Engage students in active learning with Inspiration Maps. Students build their knowledge by creating diagrams, maps and organisers that help them brainstorm, plan, organise and build thinking skills.	
iThoughts HD $9.99	iThoughtsHD brings mind mapping to the iPad.	
iOS Voice Dictation Free (iOS 5+, iPad 3+, iPhone 4s+)	Dictation feature built into iOS.	

Apps for Note Taking

Notability $9.99	Perhaps the best note taking app available for the iPad. Notability offers excellent inking, multimedia insertion, audio recording and syncing among other features.	
Noteshelf $5.99	Excellent note taking app with very good inking capabilities. Can insert pictures and syncs with Dropbox and Evernote.	

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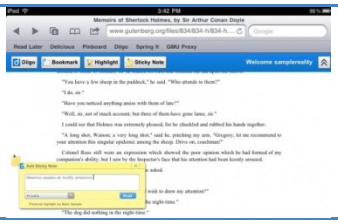
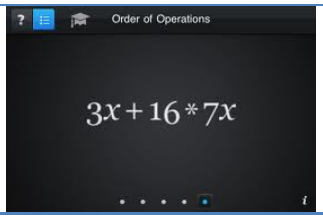
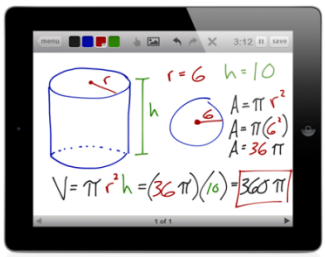
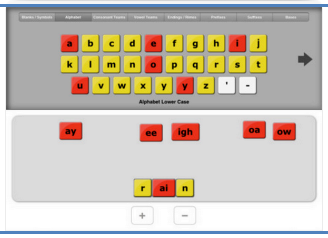
Diigo Boorkmarlet and App	A simple bookmark which adds highlighting and sticky notes to web pages. Highlights and notes can be read in the free Diigo iPad app.	

Other Notable Apps

iTunes U	Apple's education resource contains thousands of video tutorials, full class lectures and other education resources	
Time Timer $1.99	An excellent visual countdown timer to assist students with time management for tasks.	
Algebra Touch $2.99	An interactive and hands-on algebra app.	
Educreations	A wonderful and free whiteboarding application that has more educational uses than I can count.	
SoundLiteracy $24.99	If you use an Orton-Gillingham influenced program, this app will make perfect sense! If you are a parent that wants to reinforce the phonics principles that your child is being taught in school this app will help.	

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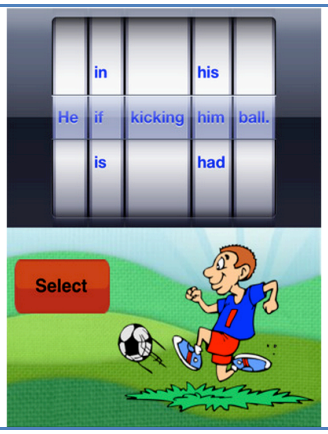
SentenceBuilder $5.99	Sentence Builder is designed to help elementary aged children learn how to build grammatically correct sentences. Explicit attention is paid to the connector words that make up over 80% of the english language. Sentence Builder offers a rich and fun environment for improving the grammar of all children.	

Must Have Accessories

ZAGGKeys Pro/Pro+ **ZaggKeys ProFolio / ProFolio+** $99-$129	By far the best keyboard and folio case available for the iPad 3/4.	
Wacom Bamboo Stylus **$15**		
Otterbox Case for iPad 2 $79	Highly durable protective case for the iPad 3/4.	

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