

Built-in Assistive Technologies that are free and easy to use: Introductory videos

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There have been significant upgrades to the major IT platforms over the past five years that have transformed accessibility solutions that are built-in and free to use.

Here are some explanatory videos that illustrate the possibilities, from Google and Microsoft.

Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text

Microsoft Immersive Reader

Immersive Reader is a service that is built into many of the everyday Microsoft Office applications such as Word. It debuted in 2016... meaning earlier versions of Word and Microsoft Office will not exhibit its full functionality.

It comes in two versions:

- **Available in Word**, direct from your laptop or PC without an internet connection (but with limited functionality)
- **Available in Office 365** (online version of all Microsoft Office products). The full power of Immersive Reader is released. This is because the immense power of cloud-based processing can be accessed. This version of Immersive Reader has been embedded into a wider range of other applications.

Essentially, **Immersive Reader** is a reading support tool. Not only does it read text aloud, also called **Text-to-Speech**, it improves the readability of information making written information more accessible.

These options include:

- Increasing the text size.
- You can highlight parts of speech in your Word document such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
- Increasing the spacing between words which can make the information easier to read – improves readability.
- A line focus tool help to isolate individual sentences so you can focus on a sentence without the distraction of other sentences.
- A translate tool gives further comprehension supports especially for those where English is not a first language.
- You can select a word and a speaker icon will appear that will sound out that word.

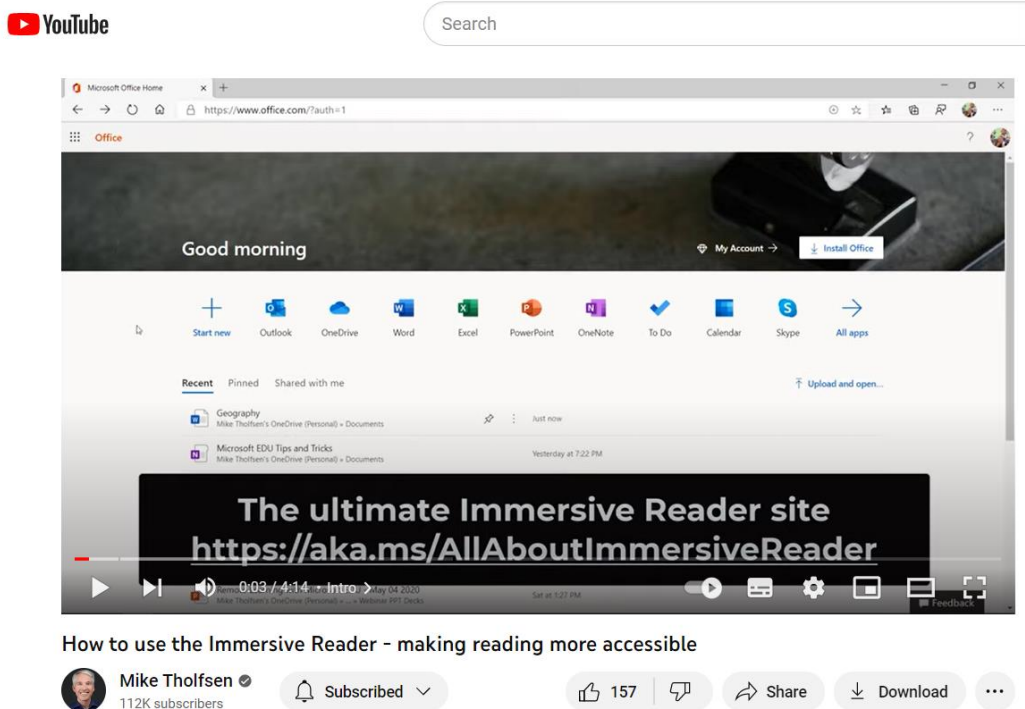
These short explanatory videos help to illustrate the power and potential of Immersive Reader, whether you are an Office 365 school, whether you deploy

Chromebooks, and how accessibility apps like Helperbird enable Immersive Reader to be accessible to schools that have invested in Google services for schools.

[How to use the Immersive Reader - making reading more accessible](#)

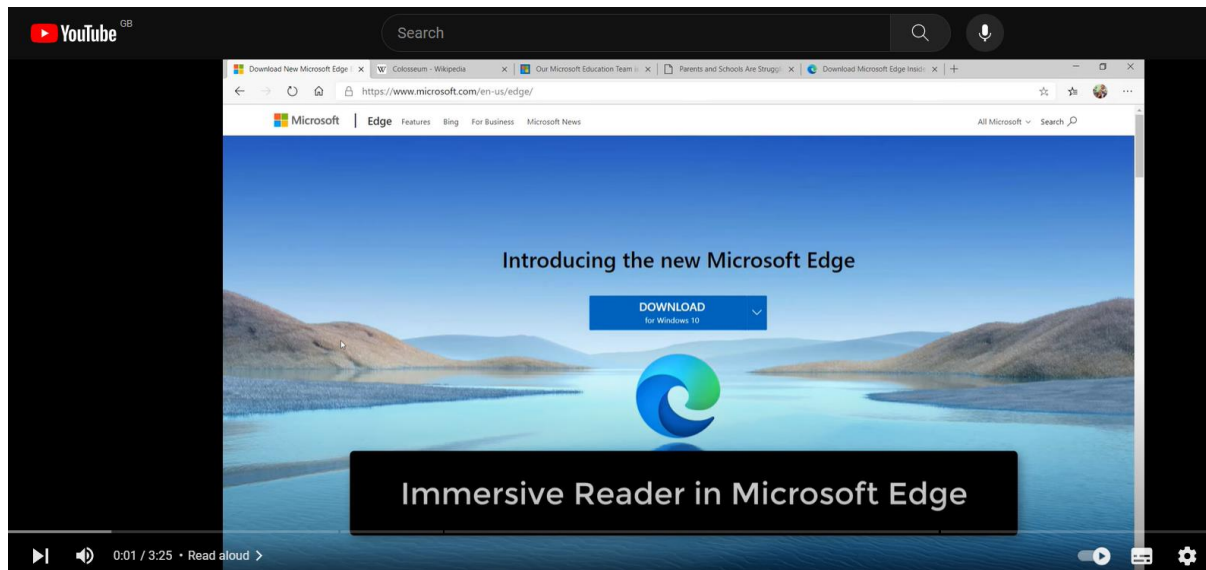
Mike Tholfsen's YouTube channel is an excellent source of guides and explanations relating to Microsoft features and applications.

This particular video explains succinctly the key features of Immersive Reader in Office 365.



LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVIXk3BsLVE&ab_channel=MikeTholfsen

Immersive Reader is also available within the Microlink browser Edge



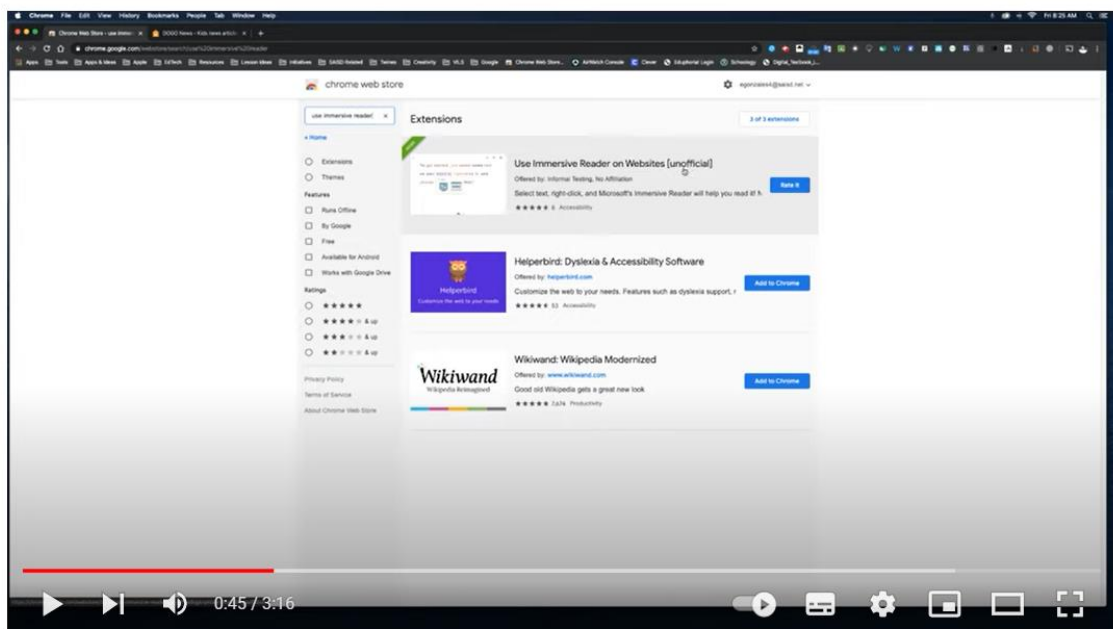
LINK: <https://youtu.be/qZA2kD95ldk>

Use Immersive Reader Chrome Extension

A method to get Immersive Reader as an extension to the ubiquitous Google Chrome browser.

A useful technique to get access to Immersive Reader without the fully functional Office 365 suite of apps.





Use Immersive Reader Chrome Extension



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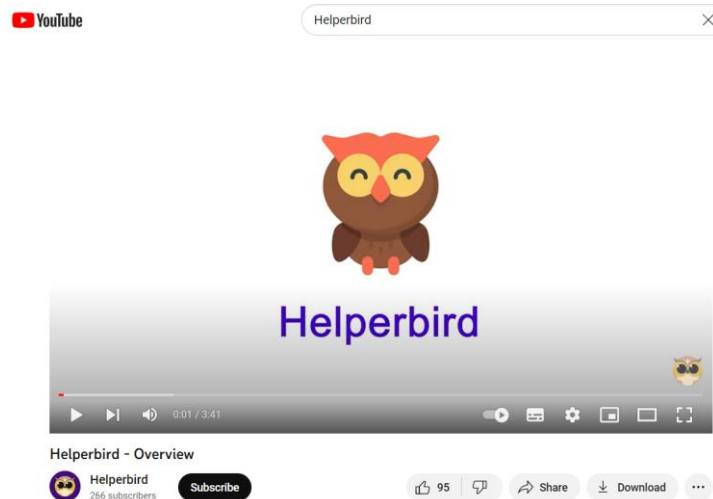
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What is the Immersive Reader? How do I use it in Helperbird?

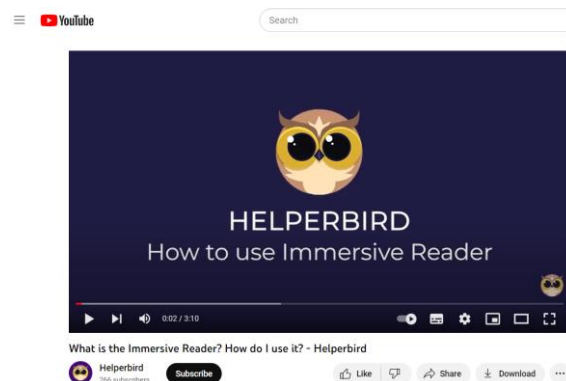
Helperbird is an excellent app for schools and for personal use.



Not only does it have a host of features that make reading and comprehension accessible to children and adults with communication difficulties: full access to Immersive Reader is available through the app.

It is worth exploring the paid-for version of Helperbird, and for a school to evaluate the cost of a whole-school deployment, especially if the education setting has not got (or does not use) Microsoft Office 365.

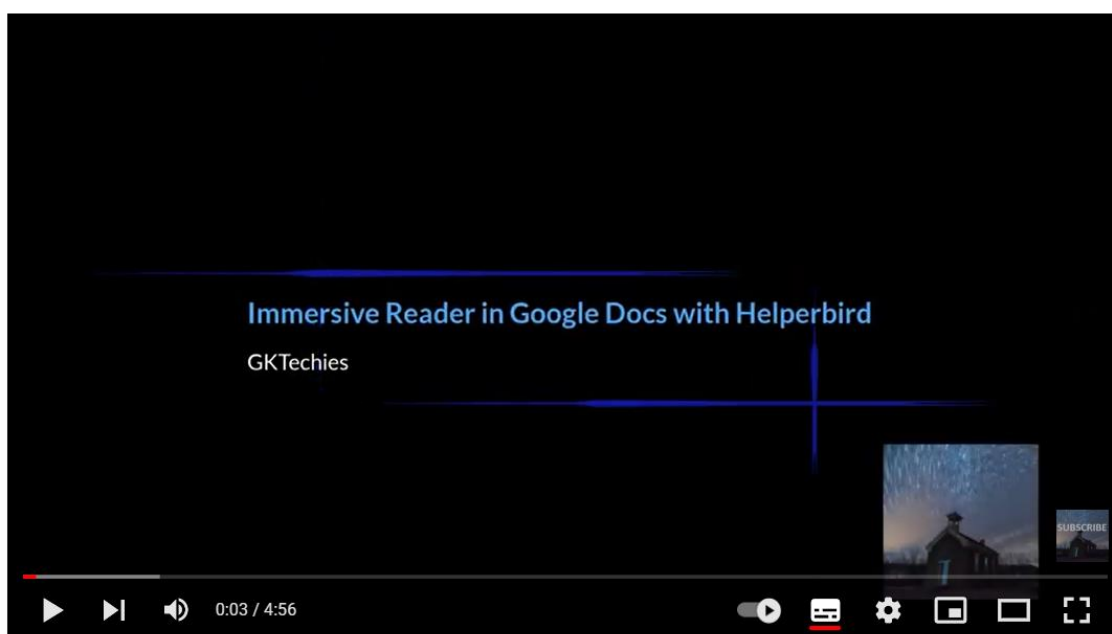
The free version of Helperbird has very limited functionality.



Immersive Reader in Google Docs with Helperbird

Google schools can also access all the functionality of Office 365 Immersive Reader through Helperbird.





Immersive Reader in Google Docs with Helperbird



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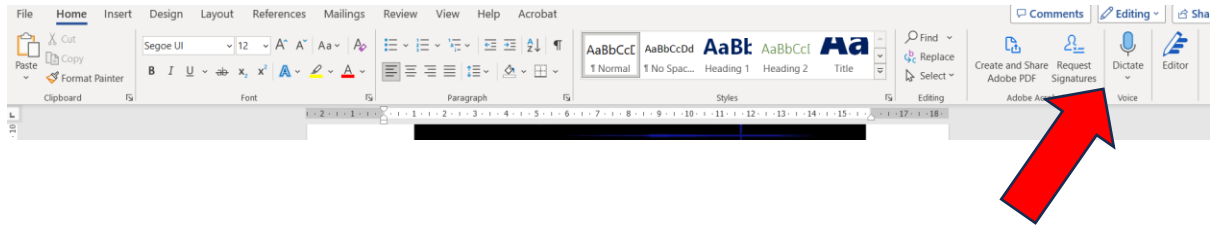
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Speech-to-Text in Word

The Dictate function in Word gets better and better. With a good headset mic and a reasonably quiet environment, this functionality can be of great help to some learners!



Here is a good guide to [speech-to-text and transcription in Word](#).

Google Accessibility Features

Google has adopted a different approach to accessibility. It ensures that its platforms and products are fully compatible with all third party suppliers of accessibility solutions.

For example, there is no “built-in” text-to-speech functionality in Google Docs. However, it enables Screen Readers (such as [ChromeVox](#) which is built into Chromebooks, [NVDA](#), [JAWS](#), or [VoiceOver](#) which is built into Apple iPads) to work smoothly when linked to and activated within Google Docs.

There are, however, some very powerful features built into Google Chrome, such as **Google Lens**, that will work on iPads, as well as Apple and Android mobile phones

Google Lens: Accessibility Features

Google for Education

Why Google Google Workspace for Education Chromebooks Get started For educators

Home > Accessibility

Help every student learn how they learn best

With built-in accessibility features, Google for Education helps students and educators customize their learning tools and create inclusive learning environments so they can learn, teach, and collaborate with confidence.

Download the quick guide

Vision Mobility Cognitive Hearing

Google Lens: What it is and how to use it

Google Lens is a set of vision-based computing capabilities that can understand what your mobile phone’s camera is looking at and use that information to copy or translate text, identify objects, explore locales or menus, discover products, find visually similar images, and take other useful actions.

Originally designed for visually impaired users, educators around the world are beginning to appreciate its use and application in a much broader learning context.



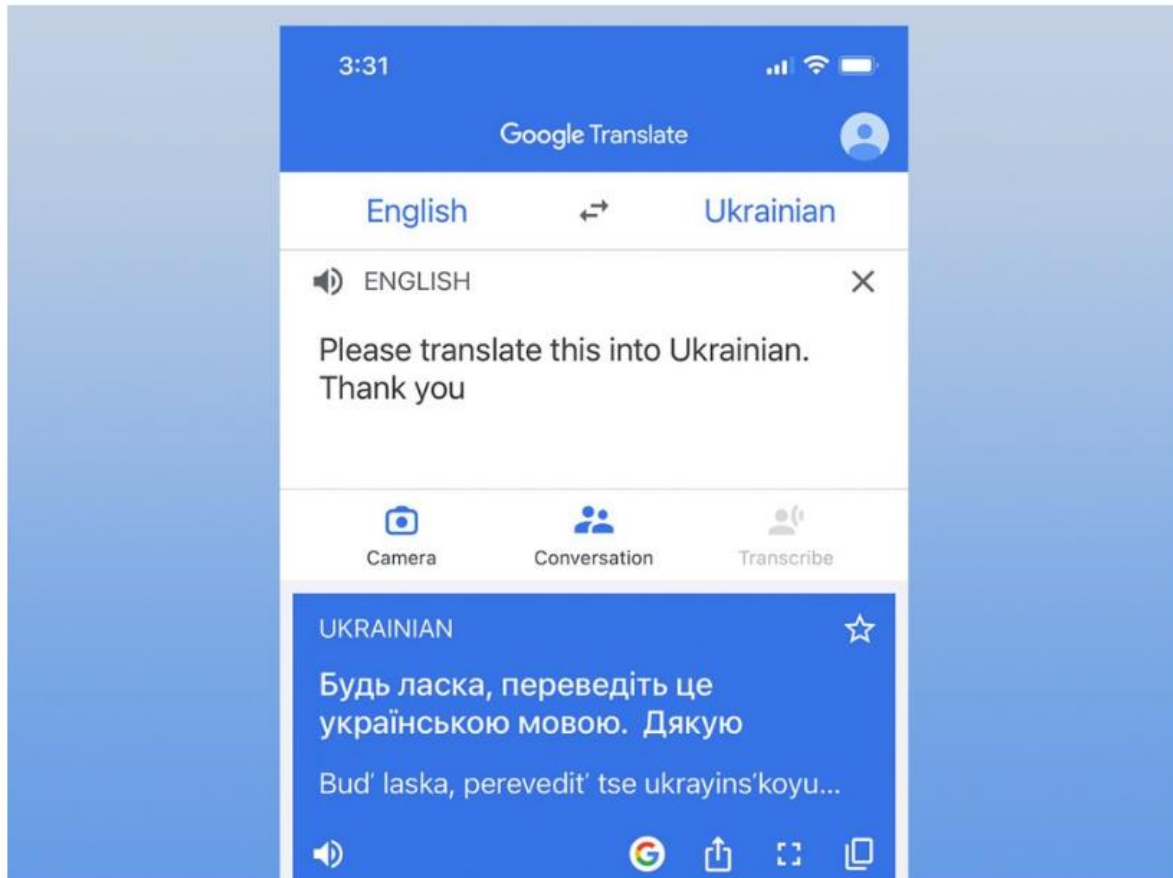
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How to use Google Lens: The Coolest App You Aren't Using

Google Translate

[Google Translate](#) is an extremely powerful free tool, available on laptops, Apple and Android mobile devices, online, and offline.



AARP

Start by choosing the languages you want to translate from and to.

If your chosen language is supported, download the file onto your phone. That way you can use the translation features even when you're offline.

You have three main ways to use Google Translate:

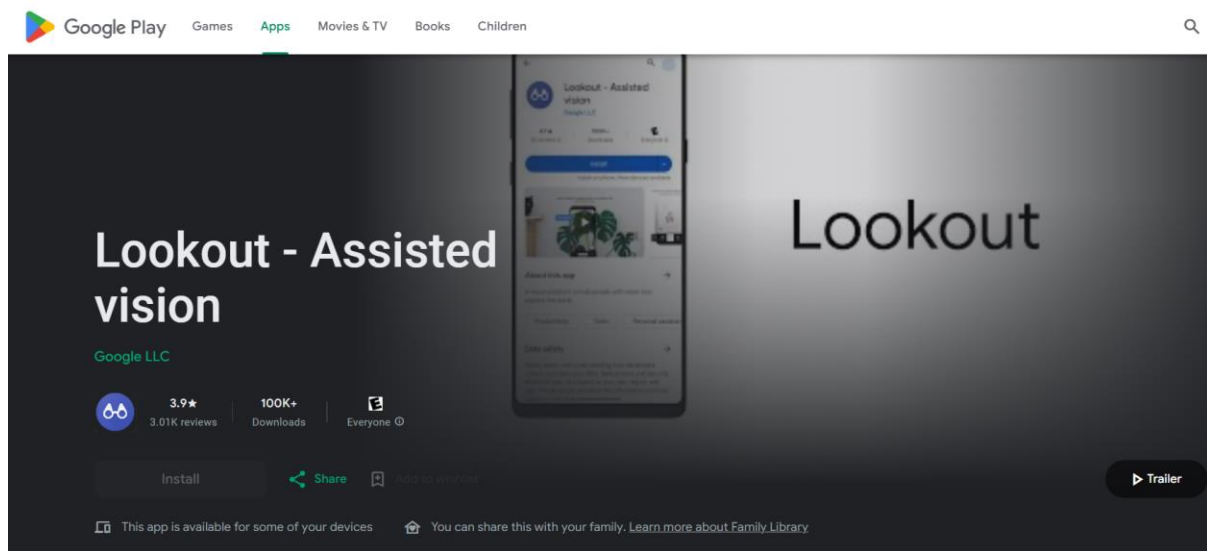
- Select **Camera** to translate the text it sees.
- Go with **Conversation** mode to have a bilingual chat with a foreign speaker.
- Choose **Transcribe** to translate words and phrases you either utter aloud or type.

[How to use Google Translate on Android Phone.](#)

Assisted Vision App for mobile devices

G4 and G5 connectivity has opened the world of cloud-based services to handheld devices and smart phones. And they are free!

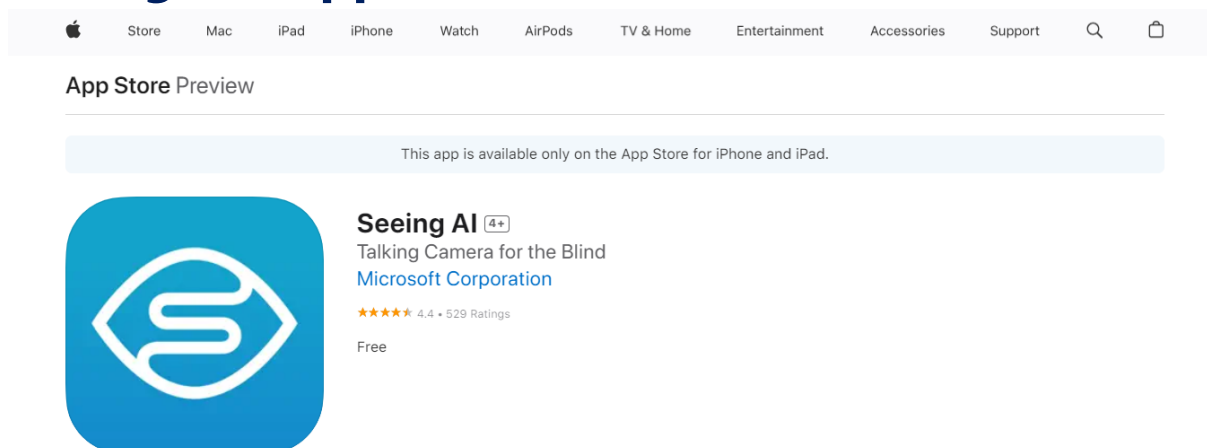
Lookout -Android phones



https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.accessibility.reveal&hl=en_GB&gl=US

SHORT INTRODUCTORY FILM: <https://youtu.be/mjJjGqAj0Kc>

Seeing AI -Apple Handsets



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/seeing-ai/id999062298>


Apple Accessibility Features

Apple has a wide range of accessibility features built into their product range.

This particular one-page PDF gives a wonderful overview of Apple features, with hyperlinks to further guides and explanations, such as live captioning, speech-to-text, voice control, voice over, gesture control and so much more!

[Reaching all learners with iPad](#)

Reaching all learners with iPad



iPad is designed with accessibility features built in, enabling all people to learn and create in the ways that work best for them. Because technology is most powerful when it empowers everyone.

[Discover the benefits of iPad for teaching and learning >](#)

Explore built-in iPad accessibility features that support all learners.

Live Captions (beta). Real-time, on-device-generated transcriptions of conversations help students follow along with auditory and visual media, such as FaceTime calls and web content.¹ [Learn more about Live Captions >](#)

Spoken Content. iPad can read the entire screen or a selection of text. It can also highlight words, sentences — or both — as they're spoken. [Learn more about Spoken Content >](#)

Zoom. Enlarge what's onscreen. Choose full-screen view or picture-in-picture view, which shows the magnified area in a separate window while the rest of the screen stays the same. [Learn more about Zoom >](#)

Display & Text Size. Increase text legibility and visibility or enhance the display's colors and contrast on an app-by-app basis. [Learn more about Display & Text Size >](#)

Background Sounds. Play calming sounds, such as the ocean or rain, to improve student focus and mask unwanted noise and minimize distractions. [Learn more about Background Sounds >](#)

Focus. Help students concentrate on a task. The Focus feature can silence all notifications on iPad to keep distractions to a minimum. [Learn more about Focus >](#)

Voice Control. This feature lets students navigate and interact with iPad by using their voice to tap, swipe, type, and more.² [Learn more about Voice Control >](#)

Magnifier. Increase the size of any physical object you point iPad at, such as a lunch menu or notes on a whiteboard, to make text easier to read. [Learn more about Magnifier >](#)

VoiceOver. This industry-leading screen reader gives audible descriptions of what's onscreen to help students navigate using a Bluetooth® keyboard or simple gestures on a touchscreen. [Learn more about VoiceOver >](#)

Live Text. Students can select text to copy or translate, and perform tasks like opening a website right from a photo or paused video. [Learn more about Live Text >](#)

Visual Look Up. Camera recognizes items in images, like art or landmarks, so students get more information quickly.³ [Learn more about Visual Look Up >](#)


AssistiveTouch. If certain gestures, like pinch or two-finger tap, don't work, use AssistiveTouch to swap them with a gesture that does. [Learn more about AssistiveTouch >](#)

Switch Control. Students can control iPad using a single switch or multiple switches. [Learn more about Switch Control >](#)

Guided Access. Restrict a device to a single app and control which features are available. Turn off hardware buttons or areas of the screen, and limit how long students can use the app. [Learn more about Guided Access >](#)

Apple Books. Explore new customization options such as bolding text, adjusting line, character, and word spacing, and more. [Learn more about Apple Books >](#)

[Learn more about built-in accessibility features on iPad.](#) And [explore](#) some videos to discover how the accessibility features built into Apple devices can help you do more.



1. Live Captions in FaceTime is in beta. Live Captions are available on iPhone 11 and later, iPad models with A12 Bionic and later, and Mac computers with Apple silicon. Live Captions are available for calls and media when users have their system language set to English (Canada, U.S.). Accuracy of Live Captions may vary and should not be relied on in high-risk or emergency situations. 2. Voice

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