

# Google Tools for Special Needs

by - Eric Curts

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## Introduction

There are many tools and features for the Google suite of products that provide accessibility or other accommodations for users with special needs. Some of these tools and features are created by Google and built right into their products. Others are created by third-parties and available as web apps, extensions, and such.

The following information will provide a list of many useful Google-related tools and features for users with special needs. This is a rapidly evolving area, so this list will be updated periodically to reflect the most current, most valuable resources. If you know of a tool or feature that should be added to this list please send the information to [ericcurts@gmail.com](mailto:ericcurts@gmail.com)

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## General websites

Before listing individual tools and resources, below is a list of several general websites that provide lots of information about Google-related accessibility, accommodation, tools, and resources.

- Google Accessibility site - Google's official site with information on all the accessibility features built into all of their products - <http://www.google.com/accessibility/>

- Chrome Toolbox AT site - Website with Chrome web apps and extensions broken down by specific special needs  
<http://www.chrometoolbox.com/>
- Chrome AT Community - Google+ Community focused on sharing useful Google web apps, extensions, and other resources for assistive technology  
<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/104237884077096555634>



## Chrome features

The Chrome web browser has many accessibility feature built in by default. Below is a list of some of the most common.

**Zoom** - User can adjust the zoom level of the browser by pressing:

- Ctrl and + to zoom in
- Ctrl and - to zoom out
- Ctrl and 0 (zero) to return to the original zoom level

**Font face and size** - Users can set the default font face and default font size for all websites.

1. Click the **settings button** in the top right corner of Chrome.
2. Choose **Settings** from the drop down menu.
3. Scroll down and click **Show advanced settings**.
4. Now scroll down to the **Web content** section and click the **Customize fonts** button.
5. A window will now open where you can adjust your default font settings.



**Keyboard shortcuts** - Many common tasks in Chrome can be accomplished with keyboard. Some common keyboard shortcuts are listed below.

- Shift+Alt+T = Main Toolbar (contains Back, Forward, Reload, etc)
- Shift+Alt+B = Bookmarks Toolbar
- Ctrl+1 through Ctrl+8 = switches to the tab at the specified position number on the tab strip.
- Ctrl+9 = switches to the last tab.
- Ctrl+Shift+Tab or Ctrl+PgUp = switches to the previous tab.
- Ctrl+Tab or Ctrl+PgDown = switches to the next tab.
- Ctrl+W or Ctrl+F4 = closes the current tab.

A full list of Chrome keyboard shortcuts can be found at:

- <http://www.google.com/support/chrome/bin/answer.py?answer=95743>

## Gmail features

Keyboard shortcuts - Many common tasks in Gmail can be accomplished with keyboard. First though you have to turn on the feature.

1. In Gmail click the gear icon.
2. Next then Settings.
3. Scroll down to Keyboard Shortcuts
4. Click button turn them on or off.

Some common keyboard shortcuts are listed below.

c = Compose	k = Move to newer conversation	# = Delete
n = Next message	j = Move to older conversation	I = Label
p = Previous message	e = Archive	. = Show more actions
u = Return to conversation list	s = Star a message or conversation	? = Show keyboard shortcuts help
! = Report spam	v = Move to	o or Enter = Open conversation
r = Reply	( = Archive and previous	Ctrl+s = Save draft
a = Reply all	) = Archive and next	Shift+i = Mark as read
f = Forward	z = Undo	Shift+u = Mark as unread
/ = Search		

A full list of Gmail keyboard shortcuts can be found at:

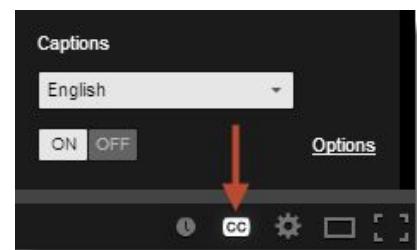
- <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/6594?hl=en&ctx=mail>

## YouTube features

Many YouTube videos include an option for closed captions. Videos with captions available will have a “CC” icon in the video summary in search results. You can also search specifically for videos with captions as follows:

1. Enter your keywords in the **YouTube search bar**.
2. Click the **Filters** button.
3. Click **CC (closed caption)**.

When playing a video that has captions, you can turn on captioning by clicking the “CC” icon in the bottom right corner of the video window.



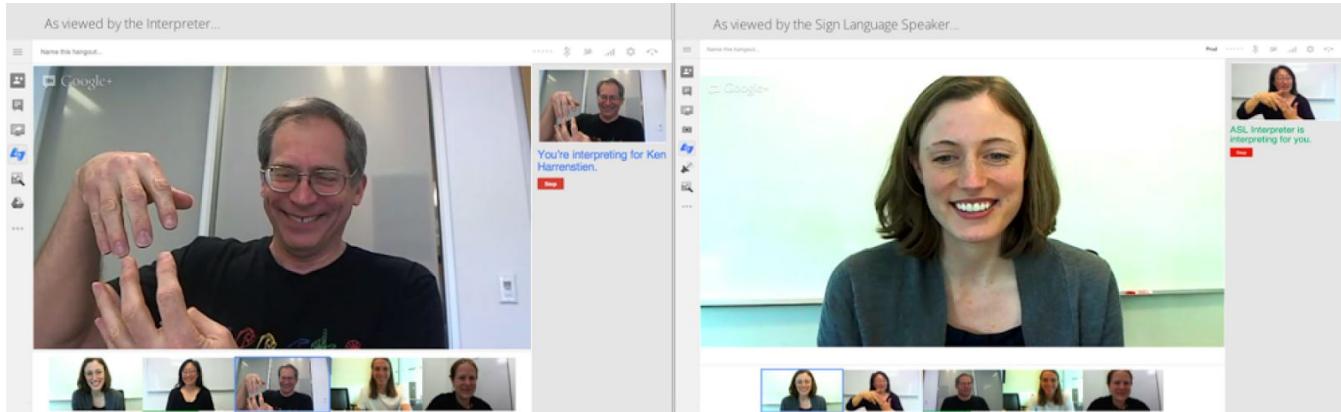
## Google Hangouts features

Google Hangouts is Google's free video conferencing tool that lets up to 15 people connect, chat, share their desktops, and more.

For deaf or hearing impaired participants, Hangouts provides the Sign Language Interpreter App. This allows one person to act as an interpreter and to speak for another member of the Hangout.

The link to enable this tool is:

- [https://plus.google.com/hangouts/\\_?gid=532733437531](https://plus.google.com/hangouts/_?gid=532733437531)



## Android features

There are many accessibility features built into Android for your Google tablet or phone. Below are a few quick features that can be of particular use.

**Dictation** - Android has a very powerful voice to text translation feature. If you open a Google Document on your Android device, you can use the dictation feature to speak your content and let Google turn it into text in your Document.

**Text to Speech** - With the [Google Play Books app](#) for Android, you can use the Read Aloud feature to have books and PDF's spoken. This includes books from the Play store as well as PDF's you upload yourself.



## Chrome Web Apps and Extensions

In addition to the features Google has built into their products, many developers have created Chrome web apps and Chrome extensions that bring extra functionality to Chrome for accessibility and accommodations.

To learn how to install and manage Chrome web apps, see this video:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw06Pdyt3sU>

To learn how to install and manage Chrome extensions, see this video:

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ\\_eerdCYh4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ_eerdCYh4)

Below is a list of many useful Chrome web apps and extensions for special needs grouped by topic. Some tools fit into more than one topic, but each is only listed once.

## Text to speech

- **Read&Write for Google** - [link](#)

Provides a drop down menu bar in Google Docs with features including text to speech, translation, and highlighting. A paid version is also available that adds a picture dictionary, word prediction, vocabulary list builder, and more.

Note: There is a paid version with all the tools and a free version with a subset of the tools. Educators can get the paid version for a year at no cost by filling out the form at:

<http://rw.texthelp.com/drive/home/RegisterTeacher>

- **SpeakIt!** - [link](#)

Text to speech tool that reads any selected text on web pages or PDF's that are opened in Chrome. Options that can be adjusted include speaking rate and choice of voice.

- **Chrome Speak** - [link](#)

Text to speech tool that reads any selected text on a web page by right clicking on the selection. Options that can be adjusted include speaking rate and choice of voice.

## Speech to text

- **Voice Recognition** - [link](#)

Voice recognition app that allows the user to dictate the text of a document, then save the text to Google Drive or send as an email.

- **SpeechPad** - [link](#)

Voice recognition app that allows the user to dictate the text of a document, then copy and paste the text to another application as needed

- **VoiceNote** - [link](#)

Voice recognition app that allows the user to dictate the text of a document, then copy and paste the text to another application as needed

## Readability

- **Clearly** - [link](#)

Creates a more readable version of a web page by removing all the ads, comments, and other extra distracting items. The user can also adjust the font size and color scheme of the new text.

- **Readability Redux** - [link](#)

Creates a more readable version of a web page by removing all the ads, comments, and other extra distracting items. The user can also adjust the font size and color scheme of the new text.

- **OpenDyslexic** - [link](#)

This extension overrides all fonts on webpages with the OpenDyslexic font, and formats pages to be more easily readable.

- **BeeLine Reader** - [link](#)

Creates a more readable version of a web page by removing all the ads, comments, and other extra distracting items. Then applies a color gradient to the page text guide your eye from one line to the next.

- **Change Colors** - [link](#)

Quickly change the background color, text colors, font face, and font size for a specific webpage or all webpages.

- **ATbar** - [link](#)

Change the colors and font size for a webpage, have text read aloud, use colored overlays, remove distracting elements from the page, and more

- **MagicScroll Web Reader** - [link](#)

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.

- **Readline** - [link](#)

Although designed as a speed reading tool, you can adjust the speed to the lowest setting and use this extension to easily read text one word at a time.

## Reading comprehension

- **SummarizeThis** - [link](#)

Copy and paste any text into the app to get a summarized version of the most important information.

- **Summarizer** - [link](#)

Highlight text and then use this extension to get a summarized version of the content.

- **TextTeaser** - [link](#)

Summarize the content from a webpage as a list of sentences or in paragraph format, with an adjustable slider for detail level.

- **sentiSum** - [link](#)

Get a summarized version of any webpage.

- **Google Dictionary** - [link](#)

Double-click any word on a web page to get a pop-up with the definition and audible pronunciation.

- **Newsela** - [link](#)

Current event articles covering many subjects, each written at five different Lexile levels so all students can read the same material at an appropriate level.

## Navigation

- **Click-free Browsing** - [link](#)  
Adds navigation icons to a webpage that can be activated by simply hovering over them, rather than needing to click. Commands include scrolling, backward and forward in page history, opening a link, and more.
- **Vimium** - [link](#) - [YouTube video](#)  
Provides keyboard shortcuts for navigation and control for someone with difficulty using a mouse.
- **CrxMouse** - [link](#)  
Use mouse gestures to navigate including forward, backward, scrolling, refreshing, switching tabs, and more. The user can even program their own custom mouse gestures to open programs and perform other tasks.

## Classroom management

- **ClassDojo** - [link](#)  
Behavior management tool to build positive learning habits and behaviors.
- **Class Charts** - [link](#)  
Seating chart tool with behavior and data tracking.

## Communication

- **Picto4Me** - [link](#)  
Allows you to create, edit, download, and play pictographic communication boards

## More apps and extensions

For more educational apps and extensions (not necessarily specifically for special needs) see the following resources:

- Web App Reviews: <http://www.webappreviews.org/>
- Chrome web apps: <http://google.apps.sparcc.org/resources/web-apps>
- Chrome extensions: <http://google.apps.sparcc.org/resources/extensions>

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## Add-ons for Google Documents

Add-ons are third-party tools that can be installed to extend the features of Google Documents. Add-ons provide a wide range of new functions including tools for special needs.

To learn more about installing add-ons see [this help guide](#) or [this video tutorial](#).

- **Pupil Pref** - [link](#)  
An add-on that makes it easy to change the background color of a Google Doc to reduce visual stress
- **Speech Recognition** - [link](#)  
Speech to text tool to use speech recognition to write your Google Docs documents.

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## Other resources

- Bring me to your organization: My training and consulting services - on-site or online - [link](#)
- All of my free training materials, help guides, presentations, videos, and more - [link](#)

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