


Using Microsoft Word Features to Improve Student Writing

Ideas

Can use bullets feature to make lists of ideas 

Organization

AutoSummarize – With this feature, MS Word will examine a text document for relevant info and summarize the main points.

This may be helpful when using e-text.

- Select Tools
- Click AutoSummarize

Voice & Word Choice

Synonyms/Thesaurus

- Place cursor on targeted word
- Right click
- Synonyms is the bottom choice
- Scroll right for a list of synonyms
- Thesaurus is the choice at the bottom of the synonyms list

Sentence Fluency

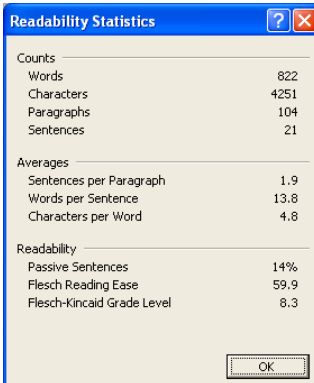
Word Count – This feature might be used to collect data over the course of the school year. To do so:

- Select Tools
- Click on Word Count

Readability Stats:


- Select Tools
- Click on Spelling and Grammar
- Click Options
- Select “Show readability statistics”


- Select “OK”
- Readability Stats will appear at the end of the spelling and grammar check.



Counts	
Words	822
Characters	4251
Paragraphs	104
Sentences	21
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	1.9
Words per Sentence	13.8
Characters per Word	4.8
Readability	
Passive Sentences	14%
Flesch Reading Ease	59.9
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.3

Convention

 Undo Icon is used to correct mistakes.

 Redo icon will bring back a previous action.

AutoCorrect Features

AutoCorrect is found in the Tools Section of the Main Menu bar. It is set to enable the following:

- Correct TWo INitial Capital letters
- Capitalize the first letter of each sentence
- Capitalize the names of days and months
- Correct accidental usage of the caps lock key
- Replace commonly misspelled words with correct spellings and use common suggestions from the spell checker

○ Capitalization
Automatic Capitalization – By default, AutoCorrect capitalizes the first letter of a word following a period or in a list.

To turn this off:

- Click on Tools
- Select: AutoCorrect
- Deselect: Capitalize first letter of sentences


To Undo:

- After typing a word whose first letter has been automatically capitalized, click

“Undo” 

Using this option, AutoCorrect will remain on.

Spelling

 Spell Check icon on main tool bar

Abbreviation Expansion – This allows you to assign a letter combination to stand for a longer word/phrase. For example, you could enter the abbreviation tr to stand for Tyrannosaurus Rex. This can be done using:

- AutoCorrect –
- Select Tools
- Click AutoCorrect
- Type abbreviation in the Replace box

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- Type expansion in the With box
- Each time your student enters the abbreviation followed by a space, the expansion will appear

AutoText –

These expansions appear automatically and you can either accept them by pressing return or continue typing to dismiss them.

Examples of AutoText entries:

- Sincerely,
- To Whom It May Concern:

To add new AutoText:

- Select Tools
- Click AutoCorrect
- Select AutoText tab
- Type in your word or phrase (must be at least 5 characters)


- Punctuation

Grammar

Presentation

Copy Character Formats:


Highlight the text that has the formatting you wish to copy. Click on the Format

Painter icon: . Move your cursor where you want that formatting to go and “paint” it over the text.

Copy Paragraph Formats:

Place your cursor at the beginning of the paragraph

containing the formats you wish to copy. Click on the

Format Painter icon: . Move to the paragraph you wish to change and “paint” over it.

Editing/Commenting on Student Work

Using the Comments feature of MS Word, teachers can add notes regarding student work without changing the text the student has written.

- Select the text you wish to comment on
- Select Insert
- Click Comments
- Type your comments
- Comments will appear when the cursor is placed over the highlighted text

Delete comments by right clicking on the brackets and selecting Delete Comment.

Voice comments can be inserted if your computer has a sound card and microphone.

This feature can also be used to insert “pre-reading” questions.

Suggestions for Struggling Students:

Students who struggle with the mechanics of writing may benefit from changing text color and/or

background. They may also helped by viewing text with increased spacing between words. To make these changes:

Color

Judith P. Sweeney of www.onionmountaintech.com reported the following discoveries over the past several years of working with struggling students on the computer:

- Students who have LD and/or ADD/ADHD overwhelmingly chose colors for computer use
- Students who have language based LD and a dyslexia diagnosis (without ADD/ADHD) chose blue (36%) or green (19%) filters most often
- Students who had ADD/ADHD often pick intense colors on the computer often choosing high contrast colors such as bright pink and lime green
- Students who have visual impairments tend to choose yellow text with dark navy or black backgrounds

Students could use their preferred background and text colors while composing/editing and then change back to black letters on a white

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background before printing to hand in.

Changing Font Color

- Select the text you wish to change
- Go to the Format Menu
- Click on Font
- By default, font color will be set to “automatic”
- Click the down arrow next to the font color box
- Click on the font color you wish to choose

Or:



Click on the font color shortcut icon to view and change color choices

Changing Background Color

- Go to the Format Menu
- Click on Background
- Select the new color

Increase Spacing Between Words and Between Lines

Increase Spacing Between Words:

- Highlight all text
- Go to the Edit Menu
- Select “Replace”
- In the “Find what” box, type one space (you will not see anything appear)
- In the “Replace with” box, type 2 or more spaces

Using Text Boxes so students can “drag” words around

Students who struggle with the mechanics of handwriting may benefit from word banks made with individual text boxes.