

Word Prediction Programs



Context

Writing is not an easy-acquired skill. Learners with dyslexia or dysgraphia often struggle with difficulties with spelling, forming letters incorrectly, expressive writing, legibility and general speed and accuracy of text production.

Switching to online learning provides an array of assistive technology that can help students with these issues, one of them being **Word Prediction** programs.



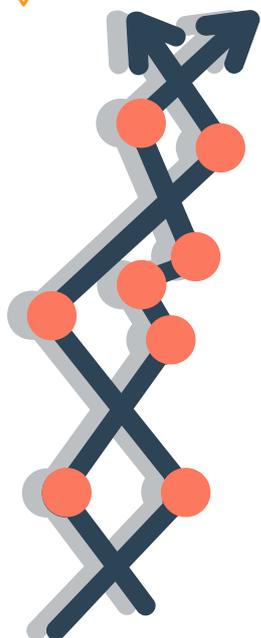
What is Word Prediction technology?

If you have ever sent a text message on your phone, the chances are that you have used a word prediction software without paying attention.

Word prediction or predictive text is an assistive technology tool for writing that suggests words and phrases which closely match the first few letters that have been typed. It can help to reduce the number of required keystrokes, by predicting the word you are typing, and the next word based on word frequency and context of what is being typed.



How does Word Prediction help learners?



Word prediction can prove beneficial for many learners :

- It can help learners with a physical disability to **type** – some word prediction programs allow the user to type using a mouse by hovering over a letter or word using an on-screen keyboard.
- It can help learners who experience difficulties with **spelling and grammar**.
- It can help learners to focus on the writing task **rather than worry** about making spelling mistakes.
- It can help learners to be more **creative and expand their ideas**, rather than avoiding words they can't spell.
- It can help to increase **text production** (and accuracy).
- It can help to boost **confidence** and it can prevent **fatigue**.
- It can help learners with **limited motor skills** as it requires less effort to type, requiring only one or two keys to complete longer words and sentences.



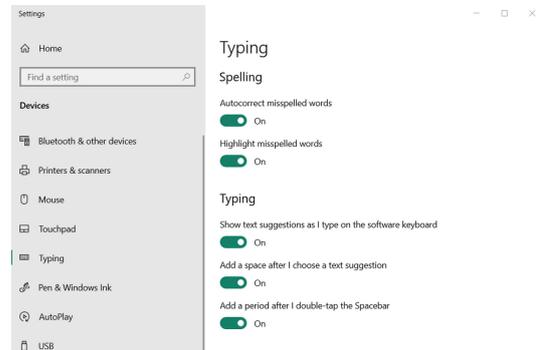
Types of Word Prediction

Built-in word prediction: Basic, free word prediction are built into almost every device. This includes iOS and Android mobile devices, Tablets or Ipads and more.

Example: Windows 10

Windows Start Menu > Settings (cog icon) > Typing (or type 'Typing' in the Windows Search box).

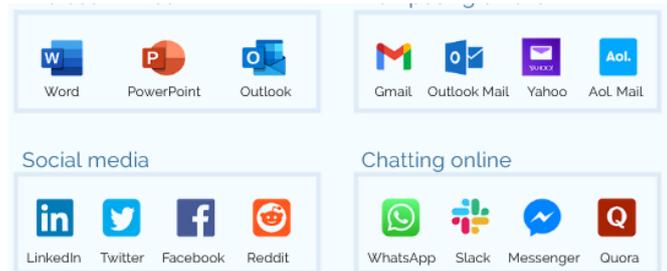
When the Hardware keyboard is turned on 'text suggestions' appears above the cursor in a vertical row with a maximum of 3 words to choose from.



Word prediction software programs: There exists many word prediction apps out there. Some are free, others aren't. Examples include iWordQ and Spell Better, Co:Writer Universal, Read&Write, Dyslexia Keyboard pr LightKey.

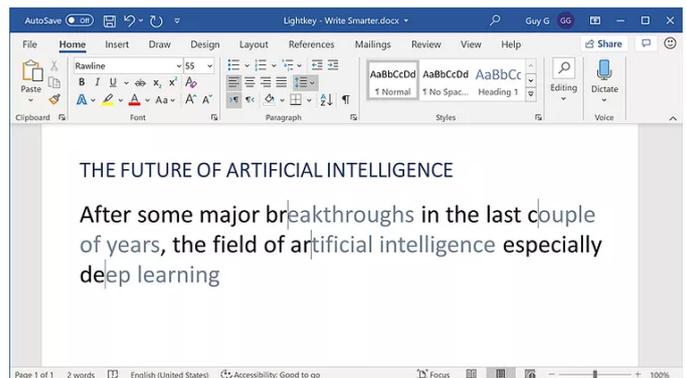
Example: LightKey

LightKey is a free software (with paid versions) that you can download directly onto your computer. It interacts with most known apps (see right).



The prediction program is based on your usage, tone, field and voice which allows for more accurate an intuitive suggestion.

The program will suggest words based on your writing and can be selected with the TAB button.



<https://www.lightkey.io/>



Resources

- A complete guide to word prediction: <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/common-assets/cm-files/books/a-guide-to-word-prediction.pdf>
- Understanding how word prediction works: <https://www.understood.org/articles/en/word-prediction-technology-what-it-is-and-how-it-works>