



Saturday, October 8, 2016

Chrome Extensions for Struggling Students and Special Needs

Technology can be a powerful tool to assist students with special needs or any sort of learning challenge. In particular the Chrome web browser allows users to install a wide variety of web extensions that provide tools that can help all learners, regardless of ability level.



In this blog post we will take a look at over 30 Chrome web extensions that can assist students in five main categories:

- Text to Speech
- Readability
- Reading Comprehension
- Focus
- Navigation

Some of the tools fit into more than one topic, but each is only listed once. Certainly this list does not cover all of the useful web extensions available for struggling learners, but it is a great place to begin. In addition to the list of extension, I have also linked in the video from a webinar I did a while back on "Google Tools for Special Needs".

Text to Speech extensions

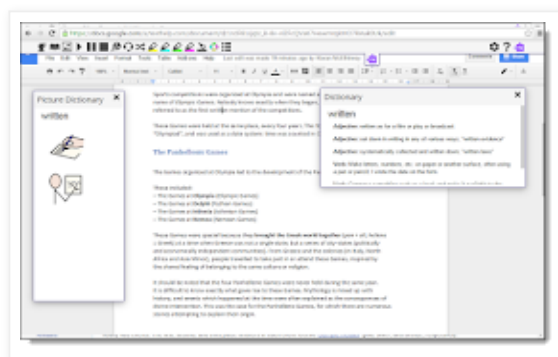
1) Read&Write for Google Chrome

Chrome web extension link

The "Swiss Army Knife" of extensions with tools including word prediction, dictionary, picture dictionary, text to speech, screenshot reader, speech maker, screen mask, translator, highlighters, voice note, and more. Works on webpages, PDFs, Google Docs, and Google Slides.

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: <https://www.texthelp.com/en->

[us/products/read-write/free-for-teachers/](https://www.controlaltachieve.com/products/read-write/free-for-teachers/)



2) Read Aloud

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This text-to-speech extension will read either the entire page or just the text that you have selected. In addition to the normal options to adjust the speed, pitch, and volume of the voice, the best feature is the wide collection of high-quality voices to choose from.



3) Voice Instead

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This is another good text-to-speech extension with high-quality voices. The only drawbacks are that you have to select the text you want read (rather than the entire page), and sometimes there can be odd pauses in the middle of a sentence.



4) Announcify

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This is another text to speech tool that not only reads a webpage, but also removes distracting elements from the site. The only drawback is the inability to select specific text to read, as the entire

page is read aloud.

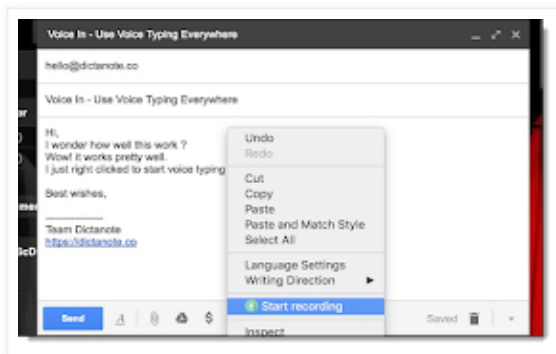


Speech to Text extensions

5) Voiceln Voice Typing

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This speech-to-text extension allows the user to dictate text for any text box or text entry portion of a web page. You can either click the extension or right-click and choose "Start recording" to use it. Be sure to click the extension again to turn off the speech-to-text function when done.



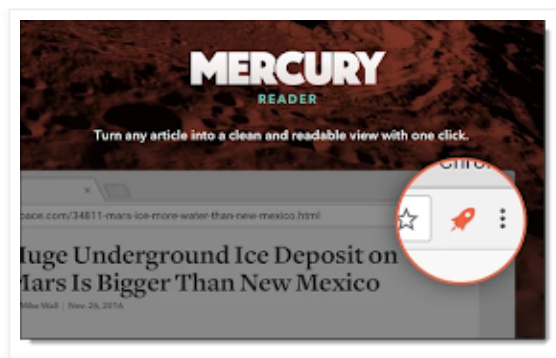
Readability extensions

6) Mercury Reader

[Chrome web extension link](#)

Make any website easier to read by removing ads, comments, and all other distractions, so just the core content remains. Users can also adjust the font size and color scheme of the new text. (For a list of 10 more extensions that clean up webpages, see

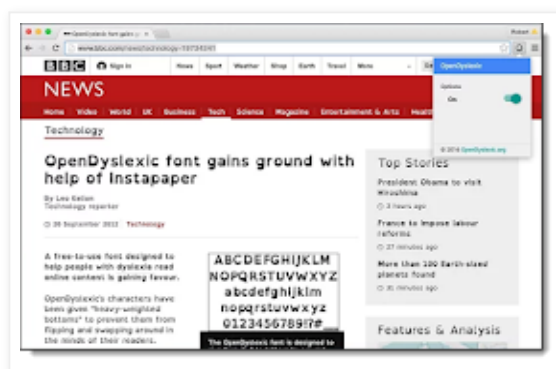
here: <http://www.controlaltachieve.com/2016/11/10-readability-alternatives.html>)



7) OpenDyslexic

[Chrome web extension link](#)

Override all fonts on a webpage with the OpenDyslexic font, making the text more easily readable.



8) Dyslexia Friendly

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This extension replaces the fonts on a web page with either OpenDyslexic or Comic Sans, and provides a horizontal shaded bar to help the user stay on the correct line when reading. The only drawback is there is no easy way to toggle it on and off, so you will want to use an [extension management tool](#) to let you turn it off when not in use.



9) BeeLine Reader

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This tool creates a more readable version of a web page by removing all the ads, comments, and other extra distracting items, and then applies a color gradient to the page text guide your eye from one line to the next. (Limit of 5 articles per day for free version.)

Make reading easier and faster with BeeLine Reader! BeeLine uses a color gradient to guide your eyes from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. This seemingly simple tweak makes reading substantially easier and faster because it allows you to transition between lines quickly and effortlessly. Thousands of people have taken our online diagnostic test, and over 90% of them saw a benefit from BeeLine. Many people are able to read 20% or 30% faster with BeeLine, even on their first try. Our Chrome extension works great on news articles, wikipedia pages, and other text-heavy websites. You can choose between several different color schemes, and more features will be coming soon!

10) ATbar

[Chrome web extension link](#)

Toolbar with features including color overlays for webpages, dictionary, text to speech, word prediction, and more.



11) MagicScroll Web Reader

[Chrome web extension link](#)

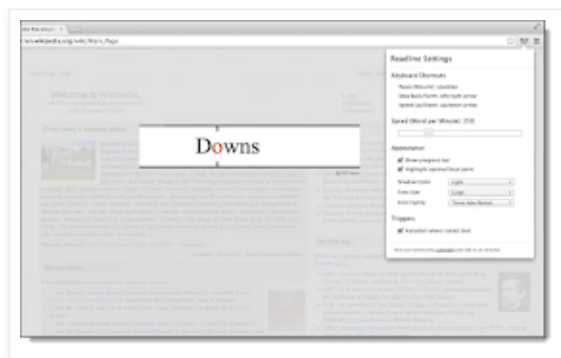
Turn web pages into a flippable e-book with easy clickable or keyboard control, as well as control over font size and page color as well.



12) Readline

[Chrome web extension link](#)

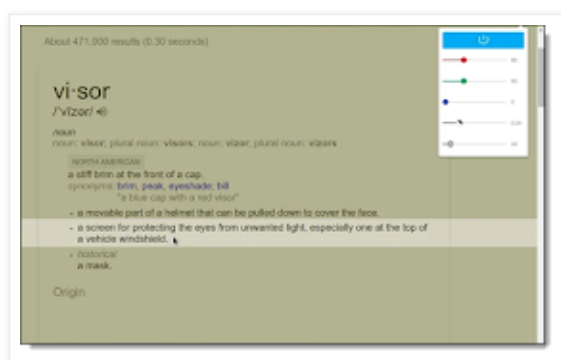
Although originally designed as a speed reading tool, you can slow the WPM rate down so students can use this to focus on one word at a time when reading to not lose their place.



13) Visor

[Chrome web extension link](#)

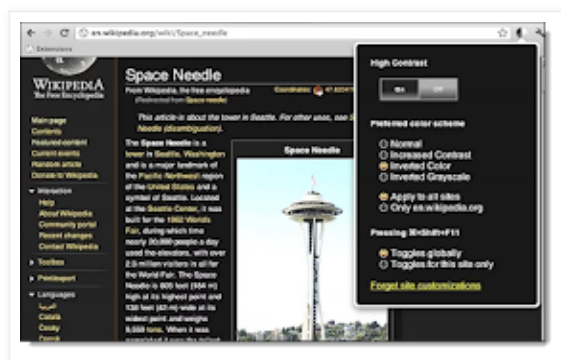
This screen overlay tool darkens out the page except for a horizontal band you can move up and down as you read, helping the student focus.



14) High Contrast

[Chrome web extension link](#)

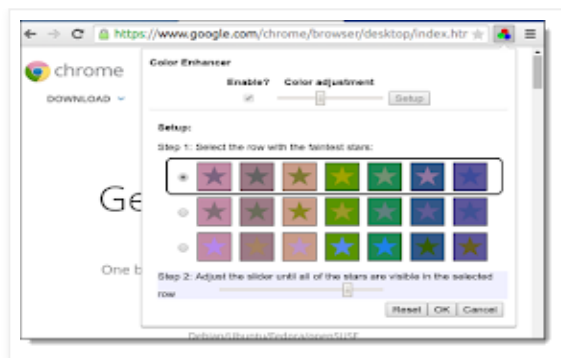
This tool can make webpages easier to read by changing the colors to increase contrast, invert the colors, or switch to gray-scale.



15) Color Enhancer

[Chrome web extension link](#)

For people who are partially color-blind, this tool can help adjust and improve webpage colors.



16) CraftyZoom

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This extension give you a floating magnifying glass that you can move around the screen to make portions of the page larger. You can adjust the size of the circle and the level of the zoom.

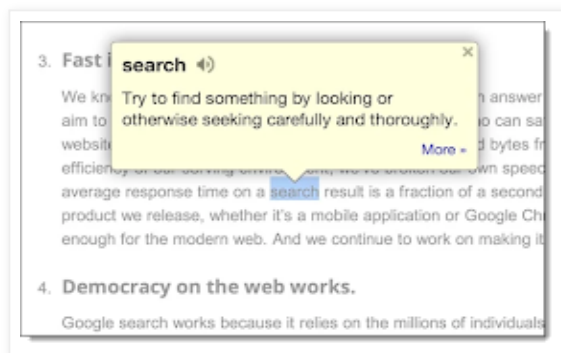


Reading Comprehension extensions

17) Google Dictionary

[Chrome web extension link](#)

Don't get stuck on an unknown word. Double-click on any word to get a pop-up definition, as well as spoken pronunciation for many words.



18) SMMRY

[Chrome bookmark link](#)

While not technically an extension, this tool functions very much like one and is launched from your Chrome bookmarks bar. Summarize any online article with a simple click of the SMMRY bookmark

link. This will generate a simplified version with fewer sentences (7 by default) and just the most important information. Settings can be adjusted for longer or shorter summaries, as well as emphasis on certain desired words..

19) TLDR: Summarize Anything

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This extension will generate a summary of any web page you are on. There are three levels of summarization - short, medium, and long, in addition to the original full version of the page.



20) Resoomer

[Chrome web extension link](#)

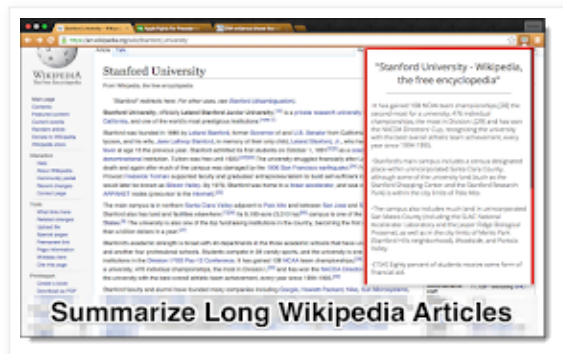
This is another summarization tool for web pages. It opens up a new tab with a cleaned up version of the page, as well as three levels of summary.



21) Internet Abridged

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This article summary tool gives you a pop-up window with a short bullet list of the main sentences from the page.



22) Auto Highlight

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This extension takes a different approach to summarizing. Instead of removing the non-essential portions of the text, it highlights what is most important. This allows the reader to still look at the rest of the article if needed. Three levels of highlighting can be chosen.

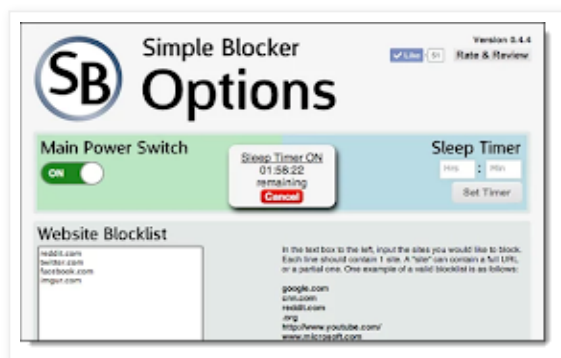


Focus extensions

23) Simple Blocker

Chrome web extension link

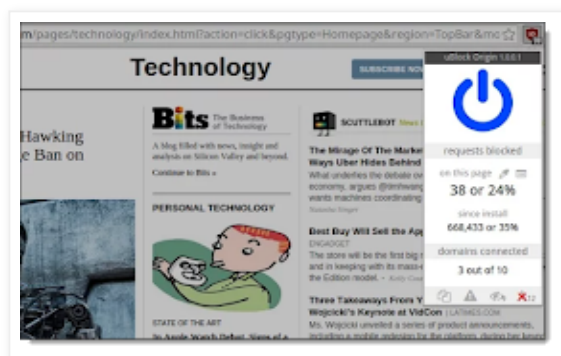
This tool helps students to stay focused on their work by blocking distracting websites. The user can choose the sites to block, how long to block them, and optional password protection.



24) uBlock Origin

Chrome web extension link

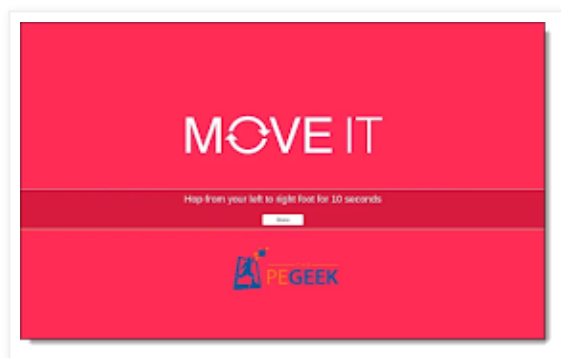
A simple but powerful ad-blocking extension to help remove distracting ads from websites, making pages less cluttered and easier to read.



25) Move It

Chrome web extension link

For students who need a break, this extension can be set to periodically have them stop working and do something physical for a moment.

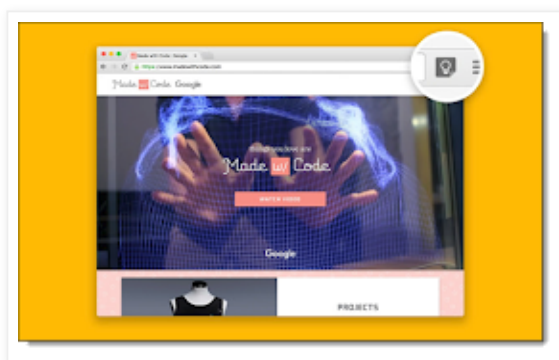


26) Google Keep

Chrome web extension link

Keep allows users to save and retrieve any information they come across including text, links, pictures, speech, handwriting, doodles, and more. The tool works as an extension, web site, Android app, and

iOS app, and integrates into Google Docs, Slides, and Drawings.

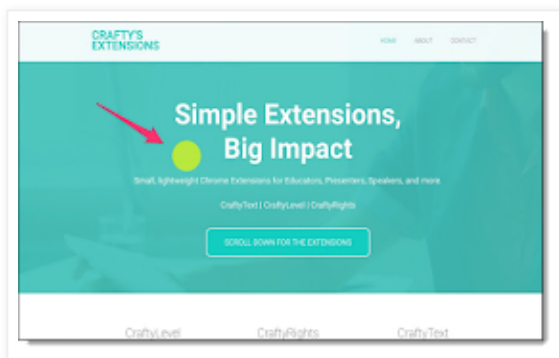


Navigation extensions

27) CrafyCursor

[Chrome web extension link](#)

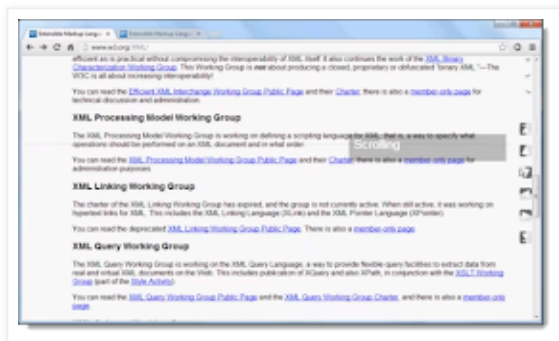
This extension makes it easier for the user to find and track the mouse cursor by putting a highlighted circle around it. The user can choose between several colors for the cursor spotlight.



28) Click-free Browsing

[Chrome web extension link](#)

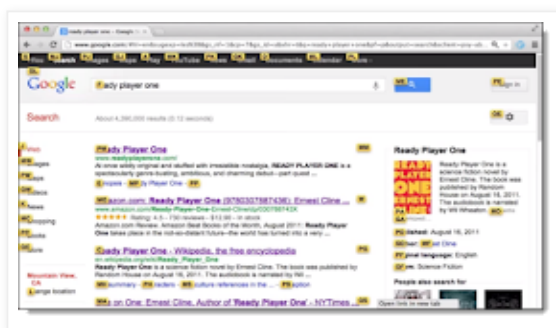
For users who have a difficulty clicking a mouse, this extension adds on-screen navigation buttons the user can simply hover over to use.



29) Vimium

[Chrome web extension link](#)

Provides keyboard shortcuts for navigation and control for someone with difficulty using a mouse.



30) CrxMouse

[Chrome web extension link](#)

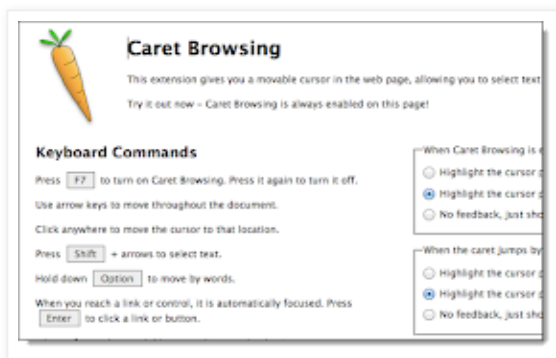
Use mouse gestures to navigate including forward, backward, scrolling, refreshing, switching tabs, and more. The user can even program their own custom mouse gestures to open programs and perform other tasks.



31) Caret Browsing

[Chrome web extension link](#)

This extension gives you a movable cursor in any web page, allowing you to move through the text with your arrows keys and select text with the keyboard.



Additional Resources

Video training webinar (1 hour)

Google Tools for Special Needs



What other Chrome web extensions have you found that can assist students with special needs and struggling learners? Share your suggestions in the comments below.

*Post by Eric Curts. Bring me to your school, organization, or conference with **over 50 PD sessions to choose from**. Connect with me on Twitter at twitter.com/ericcurts and on Google+ at plus.google.com/+EricCurts1*

Eric at [7:44 PM](#)

Share

25 comments:



Unknown October 10, 2016 at 5:27 AM

Unfortunately, Readability closed last month. I miss it every time I hit the backtick (`) key.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)



Eric October 11, 2016 at 5:00 AM

Ryan, Readability only shut down their bookmarking service, not the page clean up feature, which I am featuring in the post. Here's their statement "First, the Readability Reader API, which saves bookmark information for reading later, and which almost no one uses, will be shut down at the end of September. Second, the vastly more popular Readability Parser API, which extracts article content from web pages, will continue to run and will improve."



Mr. RCollins October 11, 2016 at 8:10 AM

Awesome! I uninstalled the extension when I read the announcement. Reading comprehension failure for me...

[Reply](#)



Unknown October 11, 2016 at 6:53 PM

Fabulous list. Thank you for sharing!

[Reply](#)



Unknown October 11, 2016 at 6:53 PM

Fabulous list. Thank you for sharing!

[Reply](#)



Unknown October 11, 2016 at 7:18 PM

Thanks for sharing such unique information

[Reply](#)

Anonymous October 13, 2016 at 9:42 AM

I'm going to share with our Tech.Teacher and our Special Ed.Teachers!!

[Reply](#)



Christie Jones October 14, 2016 at 6:21 PM

Great list. Can't wait to implement some of these extensions. Thank you so much for compiling and sharing.

[Reply](#)



RT October 18, 2016 at 6:30 PM

I signed up for the teacher's free year, but how do I get it for my students? Last year we used the 30 day sampler, and the kids loved it!

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

Unknown November 10, 2016 at 6:10 AM



According to my research, special-education teacher premium license to read and write chrome extension remaind free by just filling out their form
<https://rwchrome.texthelp.com/drive/Home/RegisterTeacher>

Reply

best research paper writing services October 24, 2016 at 6:08 AM

A perfect tool for those people who have some disabilities that they can still do some tasks that normal human being can also do. From this, they will still be productive into their work or into their studies.

Reply



Unknown October 25, 2016 at 5:56 AM

I am desperately looking for an app for math. I want something where the student can use the Chromebook as math paper but do NOT want the app to do the computation. This would be for students with writing and motor impairments. I have seen older programs that I can no longer get or apps for apple products but can't seem to find one for Chrome! Help please! Thanks.

Reply

Replies



Julie J November 10, 2016 at 3:24 AM

(g) Math <https://www.texthelp.com/en-us/company/education-blog.aspx>

Reply



Unknown December 5, 2016 at 11:42 PM

Has anyone found a summariser as good as TLDR. My students constantly used it but since shutting down the best I've found is Summarizer. Hoping the recommended SentiSum is as good.

Reply

Replies



Unknown October 18, 2017 at 6:47 PM

Hi Janelle, TLDR just started working again. I just checked it today and it looks like it received an update.

Reply

Unknown December 17, 2016 at 8:35 AM



Mr. Curtis,

Your technology is spot on; your language needs an upgrade. "Google tools for Accessibility." "21 Chrome Extensions so Every Student Can Master Their Trade." That's ok, Google, WGL&L will work with you on this.

Reply



Lorri January 2, 2017 at 5:20 PM

Thank you for sharing! I'm willing to try anything to help my students!

Reply



aliyaa March 15, 2017 at 4:20 AM

I admired your effort you've put on this article. Keep posting such a remarkable posts. [content rewriting service](#)

Reply

online degrees based on prior learning assessment March 18, 2017 at 2:38 PM

Your post really grabbed my attention and interest for the reason that the content is not just informative but also simple yet meaningful. One of the new alternatives is the capacity to hand-grade augmented reaction questions. This is exceptionally useful as it permits teachers to construct appraisals with larger amount addresses that move past multiple choice questions. Also add Grammarly extension in this list.

Reply



Ebony Lorenz March 20, 2017 at 1:42 AM

Great list shared!

I loved color enhancer which I had not tried earlier.

Have you ever tried Zenmate [google chrome extension](#) that helps to access those websites which are blocked in country or your system. I usually use it to secure my internet browsing.

Reply

Anonymous April 13, 2017 at 6:24 AM

Thank you for sharing. This is a great list. I am looking for a program (preferably free) that will automatically caption a screen cast video. I teach online and make Jings all the time to go over a textbook page or to explain some other visual element. Hearing my voice, I feel, helps to further engage my online students. To be ADA compliant, however, I need a transcript or closed caption option on that

screen cast. Creating these captions for every screen cast I have seems overwhelming, though I am happy to comply. Does anyone know of such a tool to help me out?

Reply



Phoebe May 8, 2017 at 11:27 AM

Has anyone seen an extension that breaks down phone numbers to make them more readable?

Reply



Unknown May 9, 2017 at 9:12 AM

Really technology play a vital role in every person life. Thanks google for all this. 👍👍👍

Reply

Cora Johnson May 20, 2017 at 3:21 AM

Wow, great list! I feel ashamed because I've only heard about three of these extensions and some of these could definitely save my life (okay, too dramatic, my time?) many times. I also have a friend who will definitely benefit from OpenDyslexic.

Thank you for sharing your experience and knowledge and have a nice day!

Cora | [website](#)

Reply



Unknown May 21, 2017 at 4:47 AM

It is wonderful that Google Chrome is addressing critical issues for students with disabilities. There are two issues:

1-Special Needs

Please stop using the term, "Special Needs" which is offensive. (See: Language Matters: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/janice-s-lintz/it-is-time-to-eliminate-o_1_b_9151624.html)

2-Why is a wheelchair used?

A wheelchair is not the symbol for access for all people with disabilities such as dyslexia. It is the symbol for access for people who use wheelchairs. If Google's goal is to be inclusive which it appears, then why is its symbol not inclusive?

Again, it is wonderful that Google is being inclusive but it is critical that antiquated language and inclusive symbols are also used.

Janice S. Lintz, CEO/Founder, Hearing Access & Innovations

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