

# EA Literacy Service

## Texthelp's Read&Write Exam Mode information for pupils with literacy difficulties and JCQ query responses



*This document has been developed by the EA Literacy Service (Northern Ireland). It is intended for parents/carers/staff who may be supporting a child or young person with literacy difficulties. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the latest information and guidance from JCQ and Texthelp, in regard to JCQ approved access arrangements for external examinations, for pupils with literacy difficulties. We hope you find some of the content helpful and informative, however please be aware that ultimately the school is responsible for ensuring the integrity of exams.*

*The EA Literacy Service Team,*

*June 2022*

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

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SENCOs may wish to consider the use of technology to a much greater extent instead of readers and scribes. Computer readers, examination reading pens, speech recognition technology and word processors not only allow candidates to work independently but are also a better preparation for Further and Higher Education and the world of employment.

(JCQ, 2020, p.4) Available from: [Important supplementary information for SENCOs and assessors.](#)

In this document you will find key points from the November 2021 Texthelp Webinar: The Complete Exam Solution, links to useful Texthelp videos and documents and the JCQ's Head of Examination Services responses to specific Literacy Service queries.

## Key Points from Texthelp Webinar November 2021

### Webinar: The Complete Exam Solution

- The JCQ has relaxed their rule regarding access to the internet during exams meaning **Talk&Type within Read&Write's Exam Mode can now be used as a 'scribe'**. (Talk&Type needs internet access to run)
- **Word Pad** is a suitable application for examinations as it does not have spell check or dictionary functions

### Important Information from the JCQ:

#### What does the JCQ say?

"The candidate may use online services such as dictation or text-to-speech in place of a Scribe or as a Computer Reader provided the integrity of the examination is maintained. If the candidate is using an iPad, a laptop, or a computer provided by the school or college and during an examination the candidate could not access the 'Internet', could not access any email system or could not access any files or folders then the integrity and robustness of the examination would be maintained. That is the key principle. If the iPad, the laptop, or the computer services are 'shut down' and the candidate is purely using the device for examination purposes and could not access any programs or any other software package, online services pertaining to that sole purpose may be used".

## Links to Texthelp videos and additional documents

Texthelp step-by-step guide for [Using Exam Mode in Read & Write for Windows](#).

Texthelp webinar for [Exams and Access Arrangements Using Read&Write: Sept 2021](#).

[Texthelp Webinar Platform](#) showcasing Texthelp's range of support applications and associated features (teachers will need to register to watch Webinars).

[Making the Exam Room a Level Playing Field for Every Student](#) is a dedicated landing page for exam access arrangements. It contains a variety of resources including demos, links, frequently asked questions and useful documents including information on using [Read&Write as a Computer Reader](#) and [Read&Write as a Scribe](#) in examinations.

The [Using Read & Write for Windows in Exams Guide](#) provides extensive information for the Classroom Teacher, SENCo, Senior Leadership Team, IT Technician, Exam Officer and Exam Invigilators on their individual roles and responsibilities in facilitating the use of R&W in exams. Additional links, reference cards, training guides and videos, lesson plans (to help establish a pupil's 'normal way of working') and step-by-step guides for exam preparation are also provided within this guide. Please be aware that this is a generic document and not solely relating to the C2K networked computers in NI schools, some set-up aspects may not be applicable.

## The JCQ's Responses to Literacy Service Queries

Below are the JCQ's Head of Examination Services responses to **three** queries regarding access arrangements presented by the EA Literacy Service.

### Question dated Nov. 2021:

Can pupils use **laptops/desktop devices which are connected to the school network (e.g. R&W on a C2K networked computer)** for exams, or must the device be a standalone device (not connected to the Network)?

The pupils would be using Read & Write in Exam mode where the support tools are limited.

### Response to question dated Nov. 2021 (lifted directly from email response):

"...where a candidate is using computer reading software or speech recognition software then they must not be able to access the Internet, they cannot access e-mails, cannot access Drives, files/folders.

The candidate is using a computer, a laptop provided by their school which is nothing more than a typewriter. All other functionality has been disabled, cannot be enabled by the candidate and the only program running on the computer or laptop is the computer reading software package or the speech recognition software package".

### Question dated Nov. 2021:

Are students allowed to use the **highlighter tool in R&W exam mode**, as students are allowed to use highlighter pens on their physical exam papers?

The highlighter tool is one of the support tools available in the JCQ approved R&W software.

### Response to question dated Nov. 2021 (lifted directly from email response):

As the software package will be in exam mode then students may use the highlighter tool. This would be no different to a candidate using a highlighter on a hard copy question paper.

### Question dated May 2021:

Can a pupil use an **iPad & keyboard** to complete their GCSEs - or must it be a laptop?

If this is their normal way of working is this acceptable - or would you advise using a laptop instead? (E.g. is there an issue with access to internet or anything?)

### Response to question dated May 2021 (lifted directly from email response):

“A candidate may use an iPad with a keyboard attached during GCSE, GCE AS and/or A-level examinations. This would be perfectly permissible provided the iPad is provided by the school, it is not the candidate’s personal iPad, and the school ensures that the iPad is operated in line with the instructions as set out in the JCQ publication **Instructions for conducting examinations**”.