

Using the “immersive reader” tools in Microsoft

It is estimated that there are 6.4 million people living in the UK with dyslexia. A key principle for Microsoft is to make their applications accessible for all. For this reason, they have developed a range of tools which are free and in Office online applications to support those who have either dyslexia or some traits of dyslexia.

Through immersive reader, the user is able to the following at the click of a button:

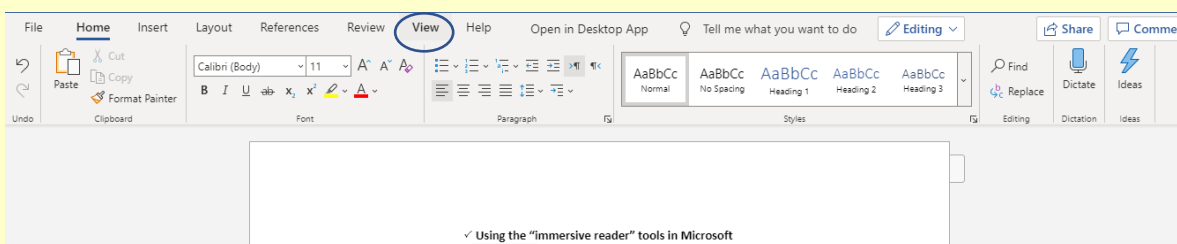
- Break words down into word class
- Have the text read aloud to them using text to speech highlighting, enabling the reader to trace the text.
- Hover the mouse over some keywords and have an image displayed to support meaning through the in-built picture dictionary
- Change the background on the page to minimise visual stress
- Categorise words into different word class
- ...

NOTE – many of these features will only work through ONLINE versions of the office applications. These can all be accessed through the school Office 365 (Go to <https://www.bewdley.worcs.sch.uk/connect-to-bewdley/> and select “Office 365”). Some features are available in the desktop version, but they are less developed (see p.6 for details).

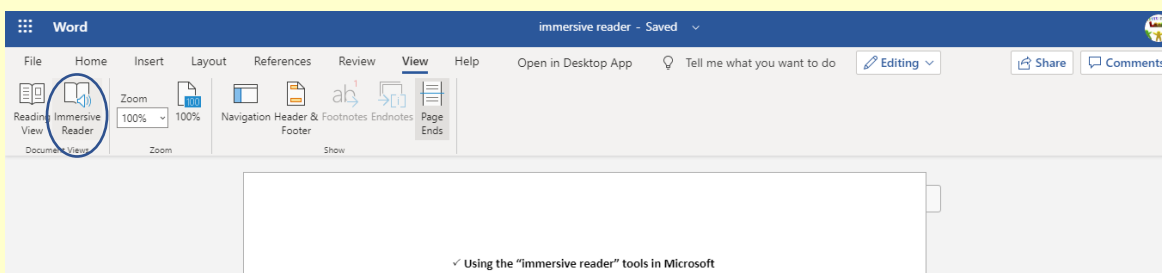
Immersive Reader through Office 365

How does it work?

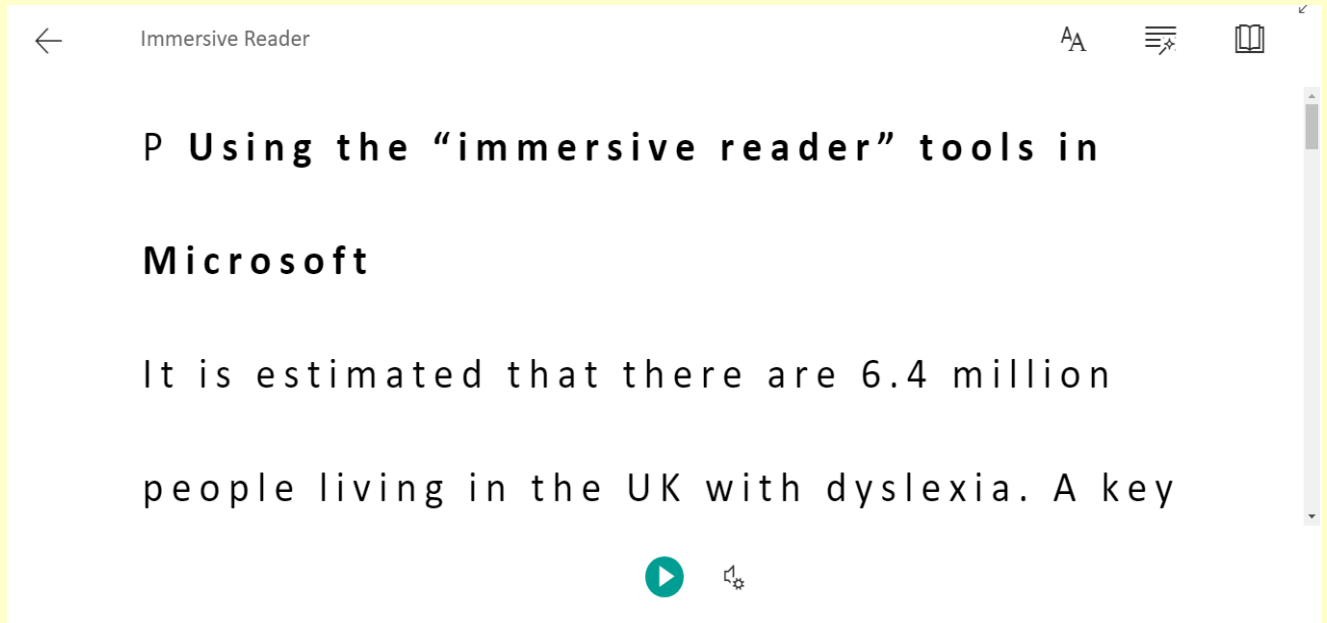
- Open a Word document either through Onedrive or through Word Online
- Click on “view”




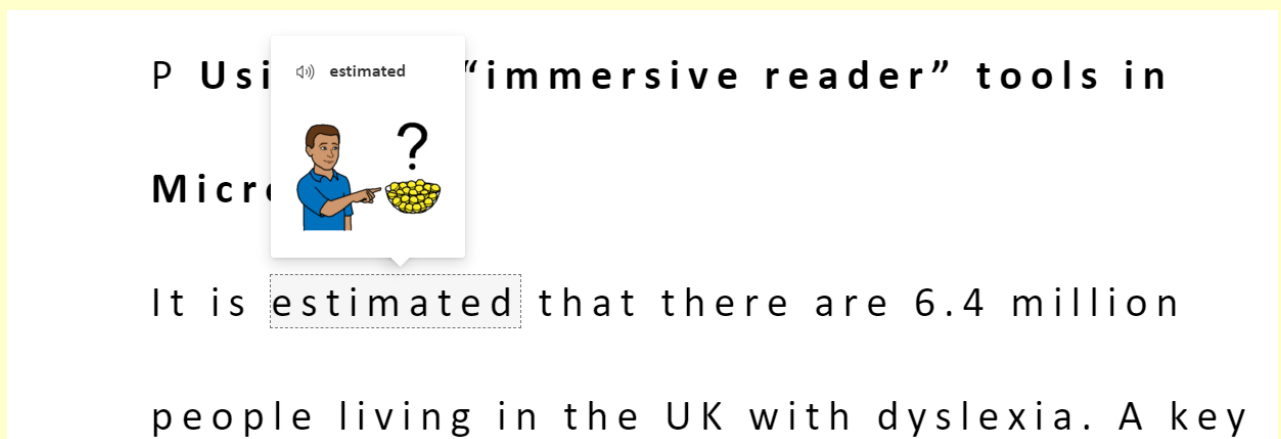
- Click on “immersive reader”





- Your screen will then look like this:



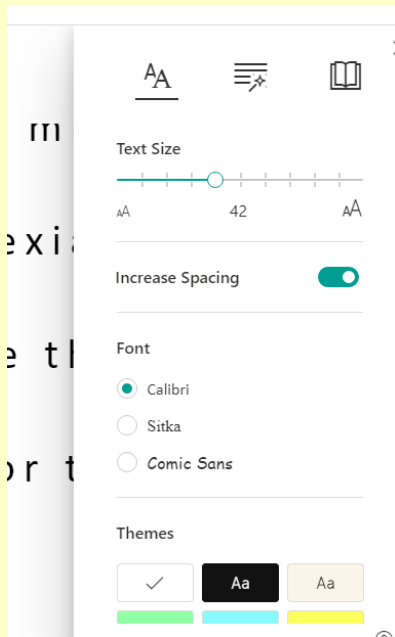
- If you press the play icon  You will then be able to listen to the passage being read aloud.
- Hovering your mouse over an identified word will automatically activate the picture dictionary to support the reader (see below). There are not pictures for every single word, but high frequency words which can be defined through an image are supported! It is not possible to change the image associated to the word.




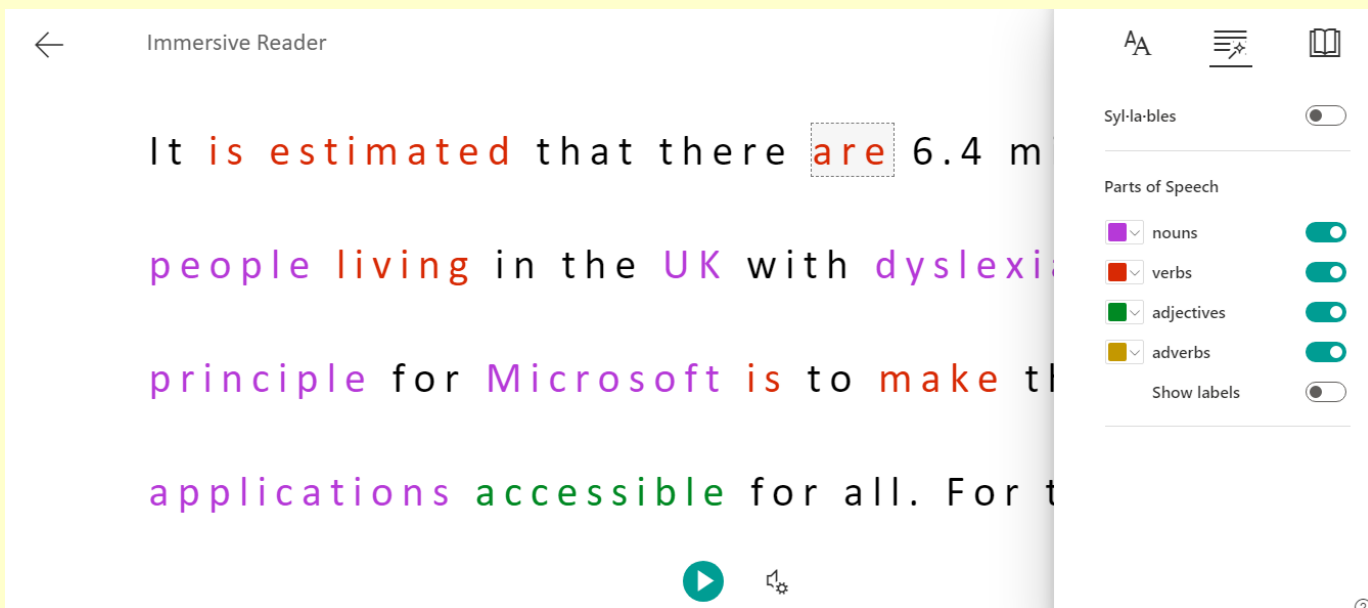
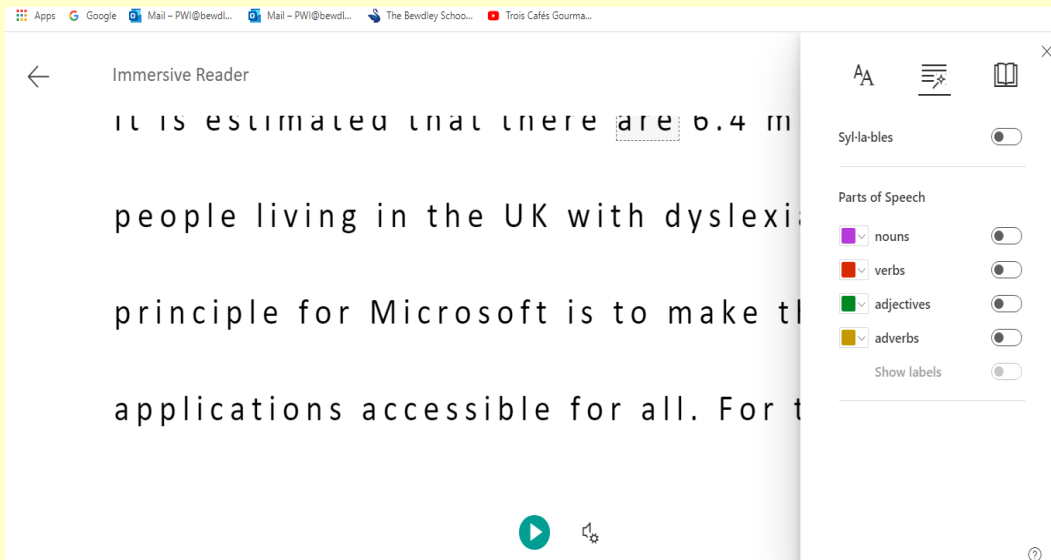
Clicking the listen icon  on the image means that the reader can listen to that word in isolation.

- Clicking on the "voice settings" icon at the bottom of the page  enables the reader to select the gender of the reader as well as the speed of the reading.
- Selecting the "text preferences" icon in the top right of the page  enables the reader to adapt the size of the text, the font style as well as the colour of the

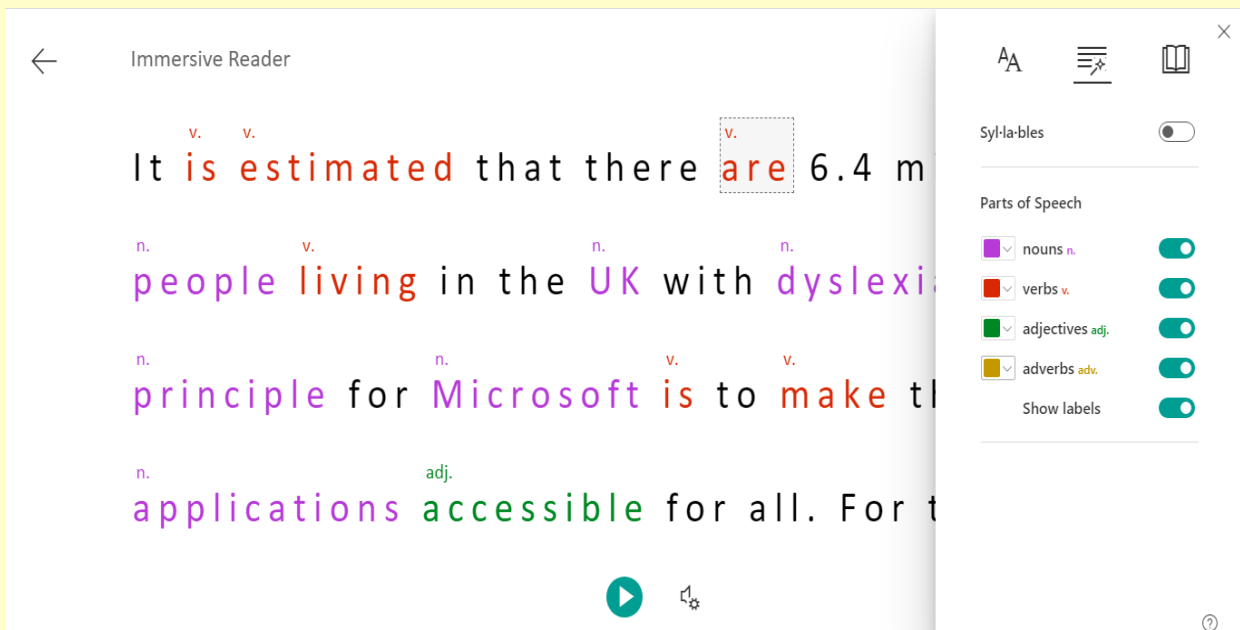
background page and the spacing of the text. Microsoft identify that the best font for those with dyslexia is Century Gothic (the font being used in this document). As a cursive font, the formation of letters is easier for dyslexic students to read. This font is not, however, available through immersive reader!



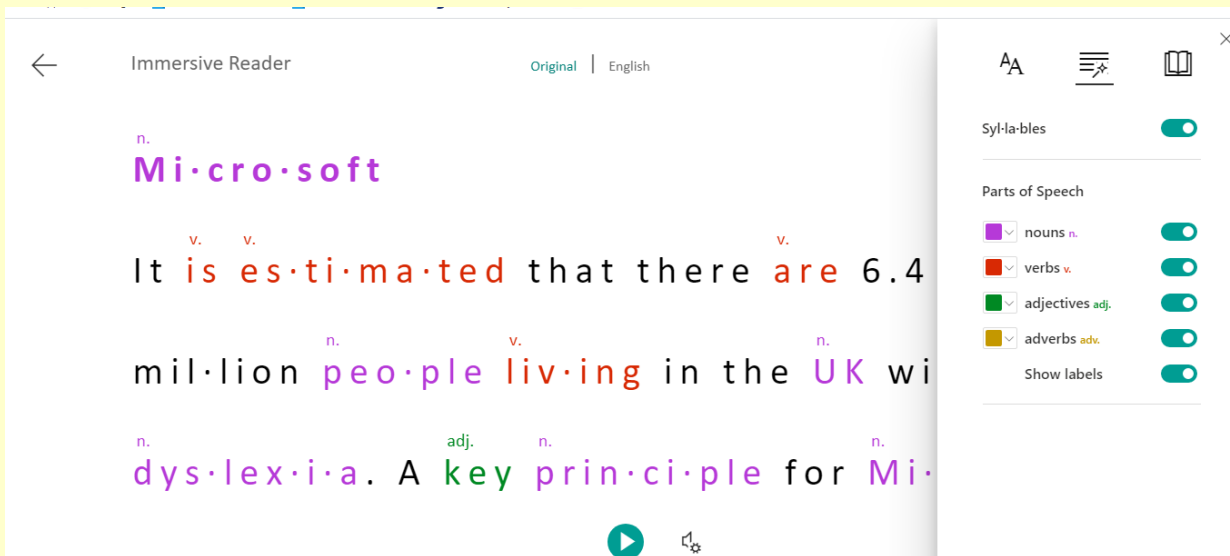
- By clicking the "Grammar Options" icon which can be found top right , the reader or user can identify the word class of words.



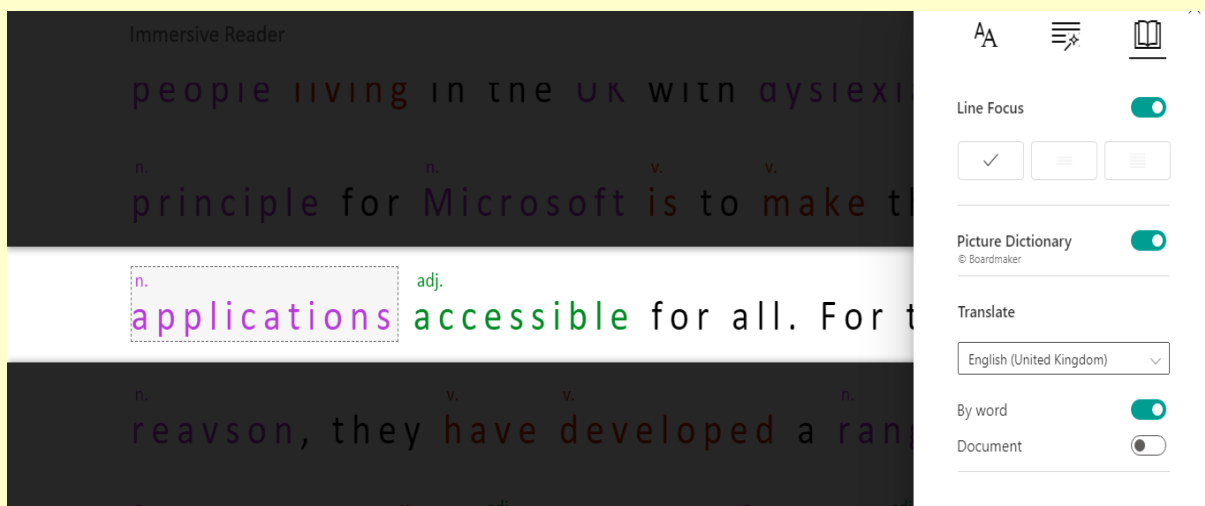
- There is also the “show labels” option which means that a symbol appears for those who might struggle with the colour coding alone.



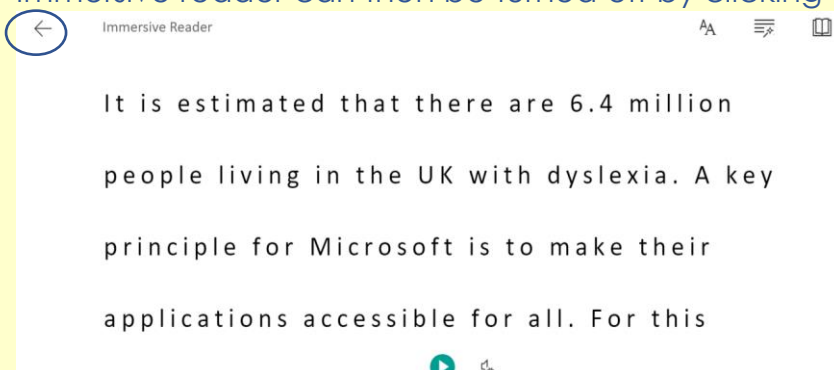
- The drop down tabs next to each of the word class labels enable the user to change the colours should they have particular difficulties seeing some colours.
- The same “grammar options” tab enables the reader to break words into syllables.



- The “reading preferences” option, also enables the reader to focus on either a single line, 3 lines or 5 lines.



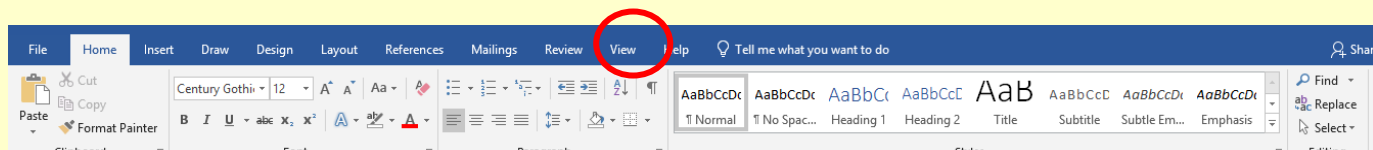
- Immersive reader can then be turned off by clicking the arrow in the top left.



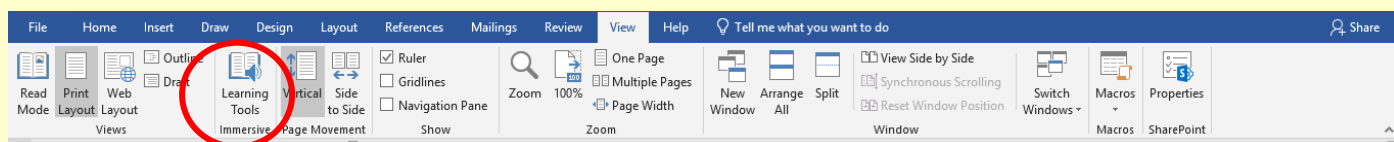
- Immersive reader is also available in Outlook, meaning that anybody struggling to read an email can have this read aloud for them. Select the email you want read aloud and click on “read aloud”.
- These tool are also available through Microsoft Edge, which students may have at home, although they are currently unavailable through the school desktop.

Microsoft Word desktop version

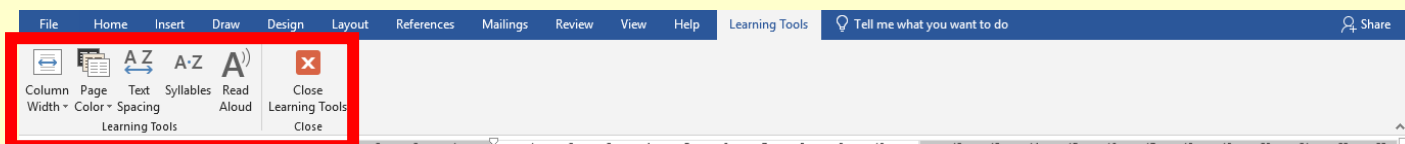
Some of the features described above are also available in the desktop version of Word. These can be found on the “view” part of the toolbar.



You should then select “Learning tools”:

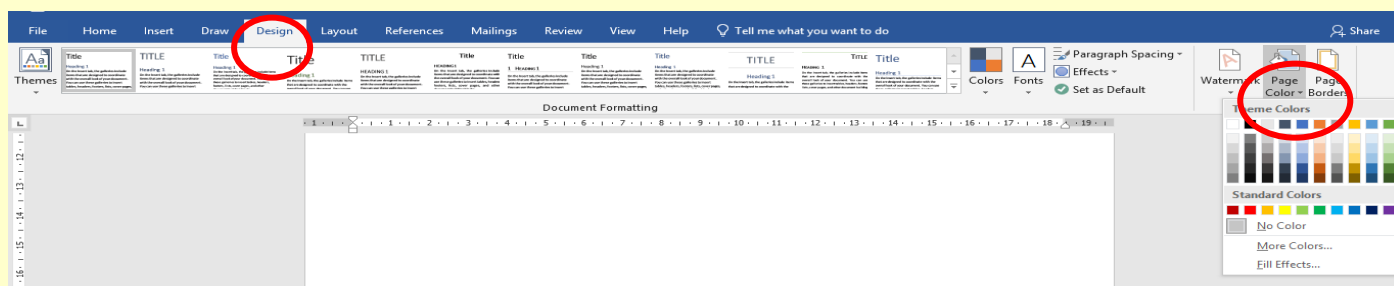


You will then be able to select from the options available:



The quality of the “Read aloud” option is inferior to the quality available through the online version. It is important to turn off “close learning tools” when you have finished.

There are limited colours available under “Page colour” option of learning tools. There is a wider range of colours available under the “design” and then “page colour” options (see below). Please note that in the desktop version, the page colour defaults to white or one of the other options when “learning tools” is enabled.



If you would like further guidance on this, guidance on this, please contact Mr Willis – pwi@bewdley.worcs.sch.uk.