



A TEACHERS GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES ON iPad

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Explore the Accessibility features on iPad and examine
the impact they can make in the classroom.

A Teachers Guide to Accessibility Features

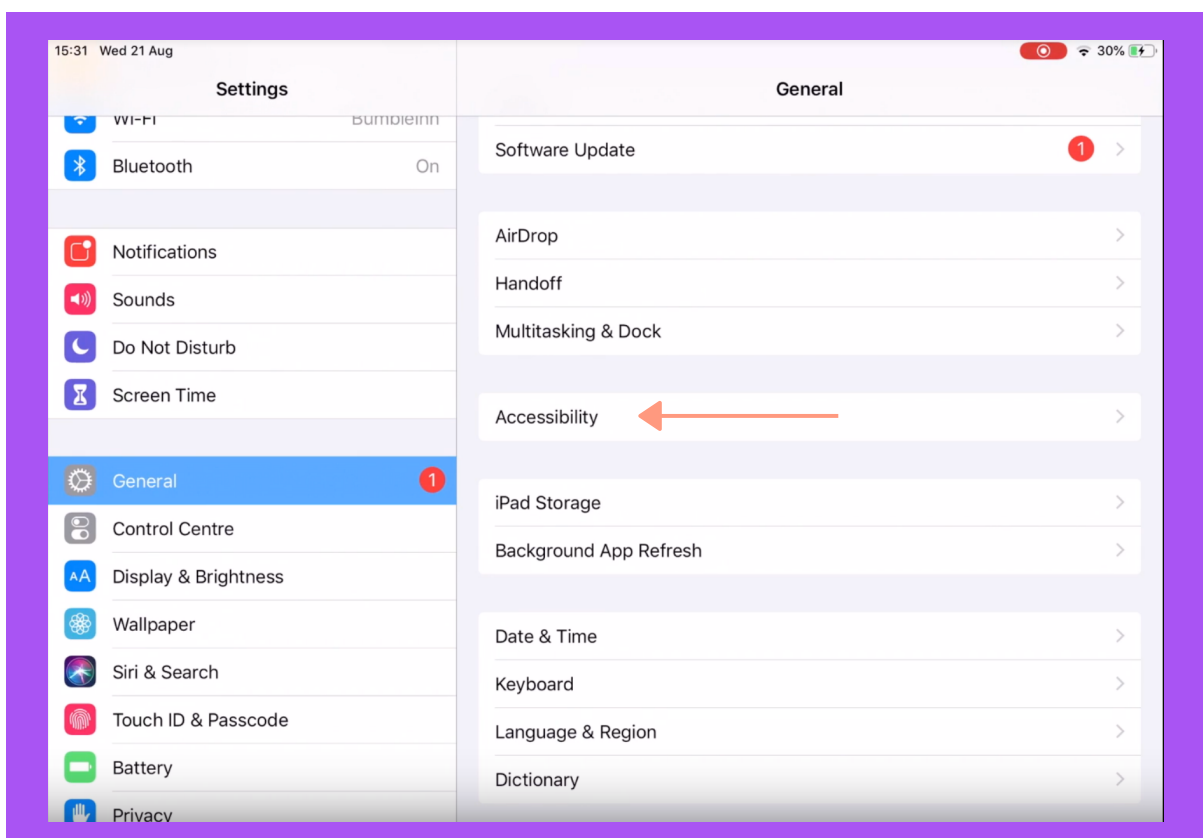
Apple devices have continuously proved themselves to be essential educational aids in a big way. It has never been easier to seamlessly weave iPads in to lessons for effective teaching and learning. Crucially, the learning experience is enhanced for all. Not just for the tech savvy children. Not just for the gadget obsessed. For all.

Accessibility Features, built in to the iPad's iOS, mean that small changes can be made to make a huge impact on any child's interaction with the device. These features, found within the general settings can be a game changer...

Every teacher is faced with the same challenge. In a class of thirty or more children, each child has completely different educational needs. Some may be visual or auditory learners. Other may be more comfortable approaching a task kinaesthetically. Of course, some needs are far more complex. It is a teacher's job to cater for all of the needs in their class. Thankfully, an iPad is, just about the most flexible piece of technology out there. It can bend and flex like a contortionist to meet the needs of any learner.

This Teacher Guide focusses on five general needs (Visual Impairments, Attention Deficit, Poor Fine Motor Skills, Hearing Impairments and Dyslexia). In doing so, it explores the Accessibility Features and examine the impact they can make in the classroom.

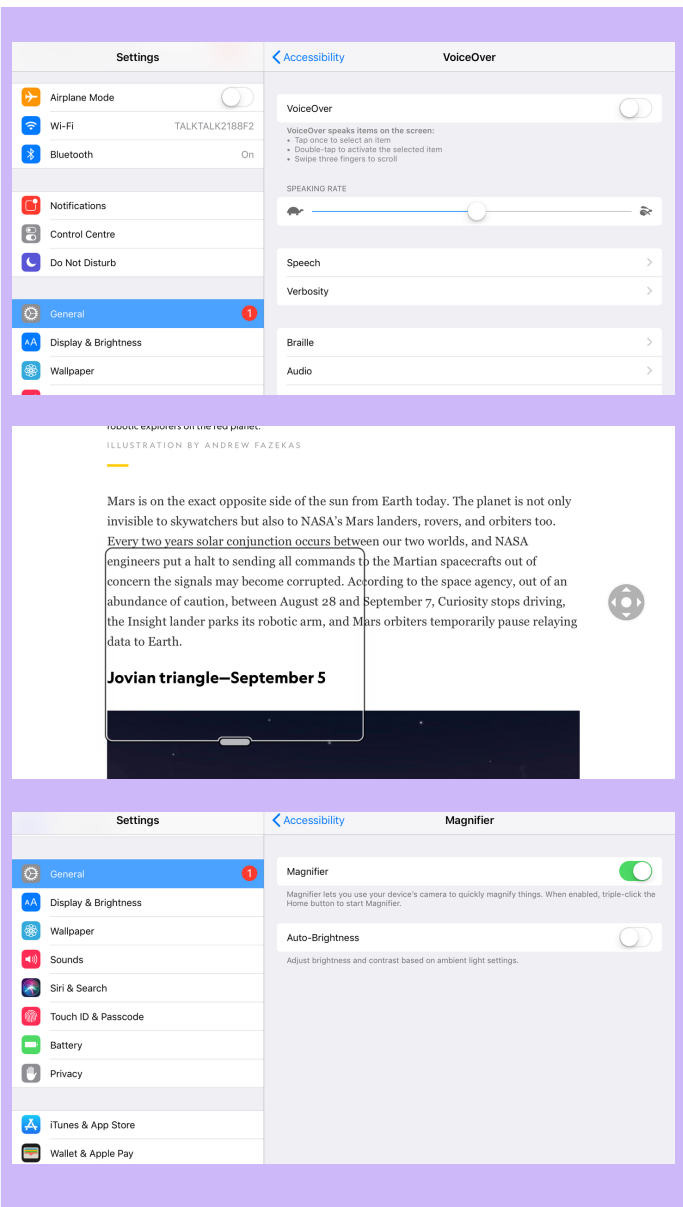
WHERE TO FIND THE ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES





1. VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

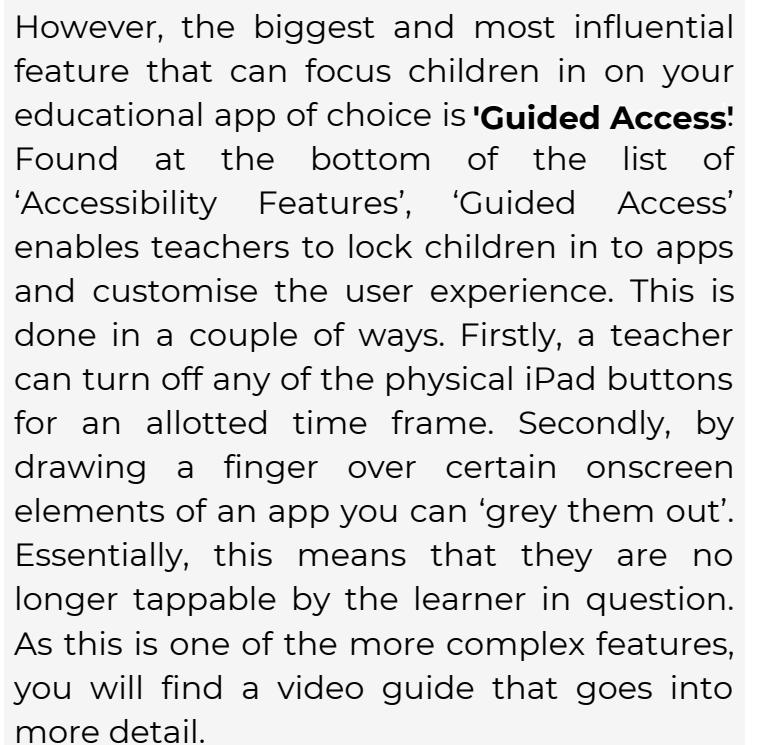
The first list of accessibility features revolves around vision. The visual needs of each child is obviously vastly important. Thankfully, the iPad can adapt to a range of visual needs. For example, for very poor eyesight, a **'VoiceOver'** can be turned on. This engages Siri who talks through what can be seen on the screen and will name individual buttons or apps when you tap on them. Therefore, children with very little visual clarity can navigate through an iPad and reach appropriate apps. This small change can bring on a huge amount of independence to a learner that may need to rely on Teaching Assistant from day to day. Likewise, features such as **'Zoom'** enable a moveable window that zooms in on the screen, allowing certain children to access all of the same onscreen resources that their non-visually impaired classmates can. All in all, these elements give the teacher peace of mind. With some accessibility features engaged, every child in the class should be able to comfortably access the onscreen learning.



However, one feature goes even further than that. Turning the **'Magnifier'** feature on enables a child to turn their iPad camera into digital magnifying glass. With this button engaged, a learner can quickly tap three times on the home button to open up this hyper zoomed camera. For children with visual impairments, this can have an effect on almost everything they do in class. Watching the teacher model something on the whiteboard can be zoomed in on. Physical Education techniques can be studied through the camera. Simply reading a text book in class can be massively aided by this feature. There are a lot of other options that are worth exploring under the banner of 'Vision' within Accessibility Features. Using just one of them could change a child's learning experience forever.



**WATCH OUR GUIDED
ACCESS GUIDE**



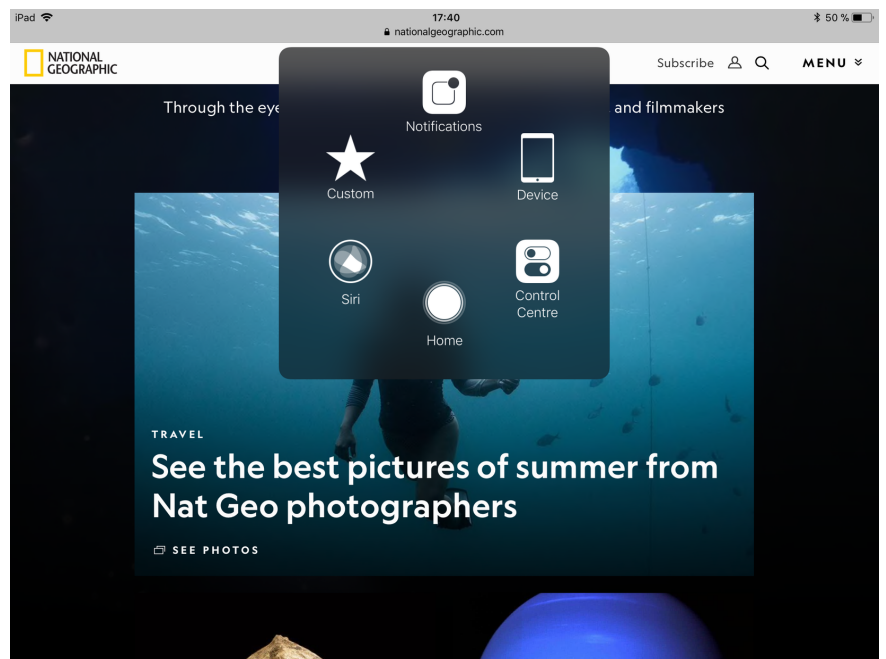
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3. POOR FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Perhaps the biggest accessibility challenge for an iPad user is that it relies almost entirely on tapping away at the touch screen. For children with poor fine motor skills, this can be a real struggle. Firstly, it is worth highlighting that there are a huge number of external accessories available that can turn the digital touch screen elements in to physical ones. How the accessories interact with the iPad can then be customised to the tenth degree through the '**Switch Control**' feature within Accessibility Features. Again, from a teaching standpoint, these accessories canteen that lessons that are accessible for all.

For some children however, the physical buttons may well be the problem. 'Assistive Touch' can help in this regard. Turning this feature on, enables the iPad to display a digital Home Button, Sleep Button and Volume Switches. Essentially, this takes the only physical buttons on the iPad and makes them digital. Quite often in educational establishments, the chosen protective iPad case can make accessing these buttons tricky.



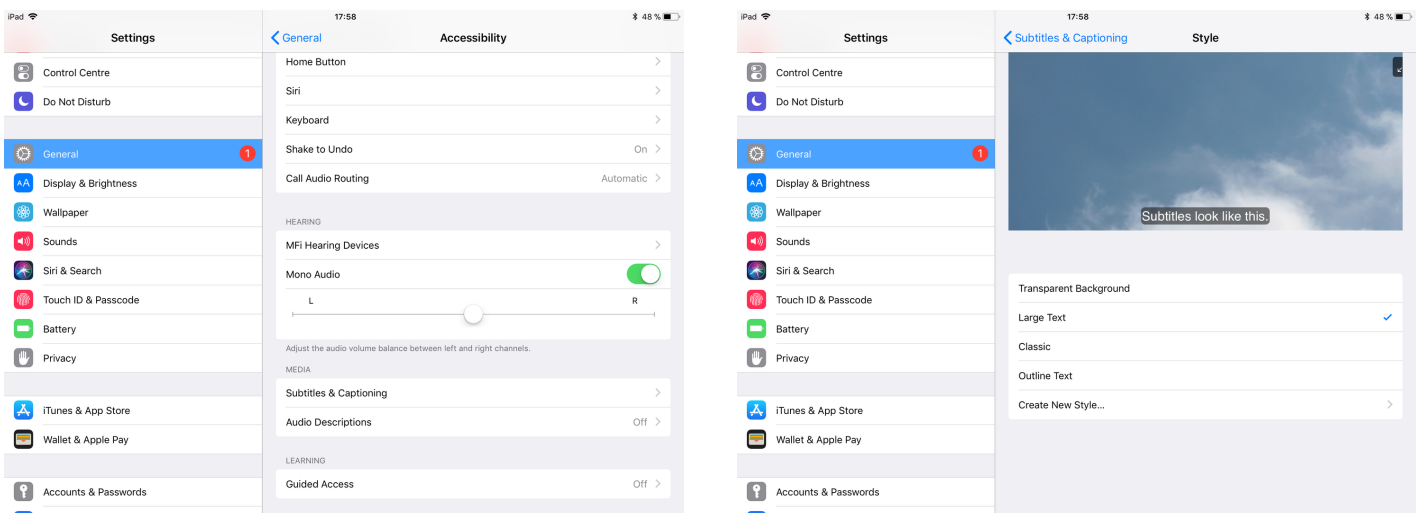
Making them appear on the touch screen can help a child swiftly navigate an iPad so that they can seamlessly keep up with the demands of the lesson. Further more, custom finger gestures can be created through '**Assistive Touch**'. Using a pinch gesture to zoom in on an image may not be possible for every child. This is where a custom gesture can come in handy.

Similarly, '**Touch Accommodations**' is another feature that can help children navigate around an iPad screen. For example, within Touch Accommodations you can dictate a 'Hold Duration'. This means that a learner would have to hold down on an app icon for a time interval of your choice before it reacts. This ultimately eliminates accidental tapping through unsteady hands. Likewise, you can tell the iPad to 'Ignore Repeat' tapping. On top of all that, there is always Siri. The voice recognition can help children open any app and even perform simple tasks on some of them. Overall, these elements not only gift a sense of ownership and independence to a child with poor fine motor skills, but it also enables them to keep up with the rapid nature of any lesson. Following creative ideas and collecting multi-media content can be a fast paced affair in the classroom. Being held back by the nature of the device itself could be very frustrating for a young learner. These little changes can combat that frustration massively.



4. HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

Like the aforementioned accessories concerning poor fine motor skills, external wizardry can be a big aid in the case of Hearing Impairment. Through the '**Hearing**' options within Accessibility, children can connect to MFI Hearing Devices. These are hearing aids and sound processors specifically made for iPhone or iPad users. Other hearing aids can be connected through the bluetooth settings. Using soundscapes to inspire creative writing can be a very powerful tool. Most good soundscapes will stereo the sound so that, for example, noises of the jungle play in the left or right ear of headphones. Not all children can hear in both ears and so there is an option to engage what's called '**Mono Audio**'. Effectively, that means that the left and right headphone speakers become uniform. Likewise, you can customise the audio volume being distributed to both left and right headphone speakers. For children with one more sensitive ear than the other, this can make a huge difference. For children who are Auditory Learners, utilising sound as much as possible is paramount. However, unfortunately, some Auditory Learners have hearing impairments. The last thing any teacher wants to do is make a learning experience uncomfortable for a child and so playing around with these features might be a good idea.



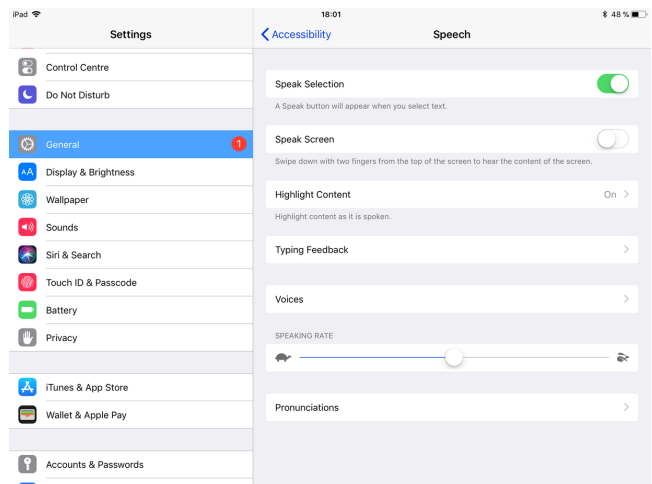
Perhaps the most useful however is the '**Subtitle and Captioning**' feature that can be turned on via Accessibility. Whenever Closed Captions or SDH are embedded in any app or video the subtitles will kick in. This has an obvious effect on deaf children in the classroom but it may be worth turning on on all of the school devices. Subtitles have been proven to help children learn to read as they can essentially associate the written word with the spoken audio. There are amazing devices and technology available for children with hearing impairments. It's nice to know that an iPad is part of that list as well.



5. DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is a complex need that can have a massive effect on a child's educational experience. The main effect it seems to have is frustration. A child may know that they have the intelligence to tackle anything a teacher can throw at them, but not necessarily have the tools to express that intellect. Thankfully, the iPad can lend a hand in this case as well. First and foremost, within the **'Vision'** settings children have the ability to invert the colours on the iPad screen or select specific colour filters. These create a coloured hue over everything that is displayed on the iPad. It's well known that colour filters can help a child with dyslexia to make more sense of written words and so on. Combine the colour filter with the camera on the iPad and suddenly, a child can make the classroom what ever colour they like. Reading things off the board or on a text book can become much more accessible.

In terms of reading, **'Speak Selection'** can have a positive impact on dyslexic children. Turning this accessibility feature switched on means that a child can highlight any word on any website, iBook, PDF etc and have the iPad read it out to them. Again, as this is one of the more tricky features to utilise, you can watch the video guide that demonstrates how it all works.



**WATCH OUR SPEAK
SELECTION GUIDE**

For many dyslexic children, or any child that struggles with reading for that matter, school can be an arduous experience. Many class members will be so wrapped up in the anxiety of being asked to read aloud to the class, that much of the text doesn't go in. Being able to pick up on certain words or have the iPad read out entire sentences can help children to recognise words in the future. Turning on the 'Highlight content' option means that the iPad highlights the words as they are spoken. For a child who struggles to track the words whilst reading, this can make a big difference. Overall, a small element such as 'Speak Selection' can do wonders for a child's reading confidence. Knowing that they have this trick up their sleeves, might mean that they are less worried about reading the class text in an iBook form.



Some children are in the unfortunate position of harbouring a number of the needs mentioned above. Of course, none of the accessibility features need to run in isolation. You could have every single feature on at all times if you so wish. That means that the iPad can cater for a wide range of complex needs. Classes with a high number of SEN, may well have a number of customised iPads. Others may just need to engage Accessibility Features on one or two of the Children's devices.

No matter what your classroom situation looks like, engaging with the features can help to instil a large number of holistic and academic goals for your class. Independence and ownership over their devices is a huge plus. Adapting a few things here and there can mean that certain children can interact with their devices with no assistance. Technological confidence can progress nicely. Children who struggle on an iPad may well find better ways to get on with the technology and therefore, hopefully, improve their digital literacy in general. Using the technology efficiently can also be aided by Accessibility Features. If a child is able to complete a task much faster than they could before a few of the features were switched on, then that is good for everyone. Overall however, accessibility features give a teacher the confidence to plan and build lessons for their class, knowing that every child can access the learning.

Interested in Accessibility features on iPad or Apple Technology?

Get in touch and our Education specialists will discuss your project with you!



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