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## TECHNOLOGY FOR WRITING

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Teachers using technology in the classroom have many options for speaking and listening. However, we may not often think about how students can use technology to enhance their academic writing skills.

In this week's Teacher's Corner, we will explore a variety of internet-based tools that students can use to support their English-language writing. From word choice to sentence structure, the tools below can assist students throughout the writing process.

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### LEVEL

Intermediate to Advanced

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### LANGUAGE FOCUS

Writing (primary focus); reading (secondary focus)

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### GOALS

Teachers will learn about the following tools to support student's writing practice:

- [Graphwords](#) to search for synonyms of commonly used English words
- [Hemingway](#) for guidance on sentence construction and clarity
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) (OWL) for support on academic writing styles and referencing

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### MATERIALS

- Teacher: computer, internet connection, projector (if using tools in the classroom)
- Students: computer, internet connection

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### PREPARATION

1. Read through all the materials carefully.
2. Explore each of the websites in this week's Teacher's Corner. Take time to use each of the tools to understand how they function.

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### TECHNOLOGY TOOL ONE: GRAPHWORDS

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[Graphwords](#) – In American academic writing, students are encouraged to avoid using certain words that are commonly used in spoken English. For example, instead of using the word *get* in their academic writing, students should use words such as *acquire*, *obtain*, or *receive*. Knowing which synonym to use can be difficult, which is what makes *Graphwords* a useful writing tool.



The app highlights lengthy, complex sentences and common errors; if you see a yellow sentence, shorten or split it. If you see a red highlight, your sentence is so dense and complicated that your readers will get lost trying to follow its meandering, splitting logic — try editing this sentence to remove the red.

You can utilize a shorter word in place of a purple one. Mouse over them for hints.

Adverbs and weakening phrases are helpfully shown in blue. Get rid of them and pick words with force, perhaps.

Phrases in green have been marked to show passive voice.

You can format your text with the toolbar.

Paste in something you're working on and edit away. Or, click the Write button and compose something new.

**Readability**

Grade 6

Good

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Words: 133  
Show More ▾

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2 adverbs, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.

1 use of passive voice, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.

1 phrase has a simpler alternative.

1 of 11 sentences is hard to read.

1 of 11 sentences is very hard to read.

Figure 2. The Hemingway software uses color coding to highlight suggestions for clarity.

Students can copy and paste their writing onto the *Hemingway* website, and the software will analyze their writing style to suggest improvements. What makes the *Hemingway* website useful for educational purposes is that it does not correct students' writing but only highlights writing that can be improved. The website color codes the students' writing depending on the improvement needed. For example, passive voice verbs are highlighted in green, and adverbs are highlighted in blue. The website also provides a readability score for the writing, and sentences that are too complex or hard to read are highlighted as well to encourage students to clarify or simplify the sentence.

### TECHNOLOGY TOOL THREE: PURDUE OWL

[Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) – The *Purdue Online Writing Lab* (OWL) features an extensive list of resources for students to improve their academic writing. The website contains writing guides for students at all levels as well as a series of resources specifically for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. The [ESL homepage](#) has a number of worksheets on English grammar, including on [adjectives or adverbs](#), how to use [relative pronouns](#), and using [verbs as gerunds or infinitives](#).

# The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

**Suggested Resources**

- Site Map
- Grades 7-12 Instructors and Students
- English as a Second Language
- Non-Purdue Instructors and Students
- Purdue Instructors and Students
- Professional Writers
- Parents
- Adult Basic Education (GED, ESL, Cover Letters, Résumés)

**Featured OWL Resources**

Read the Purdue OWL News. [RSS Feed](#)

Purdue OWL Podcasts on Boilercast!

**The Purdue Online Writing Lab**

Welcome to the **Purdue OWL**. We offer over 200 free resources including:

- Writing and Teaching Writing
- Research
- Grammar and Mechanics
- Style Guides
- ESL (English as a Second Language)
- Job Search and Professional Writing

**The Writing Lab at Purdue**

Purdue University students, faculty, and staff at our West Lafayette, IN campus may access this area for information on the award-winning **Purdue Writing Lab**. This area includes Writing Lab hours, services, and contact information.

**Most Popular Resources**

- Purdue OWL Vidcasts
- APA Formatting and Style Guide
- MLA 2016 Formatting and Style Guide
- Avoiding Plagiarism
- Writing the Basic Business Letter
- Developing a Résumé

**Contact the Purdue OWL**

Site-related and technical questions: **OWL Webmaster Tony Bushner**

Content and copyright-related questions: **OWL Coordinator Trinity Overmyer**

Figure 3. The Purdue OWL has resources for writers of all levels.

For more advanced students preparing for academic writing in the United States, the *OWL* website has an extensive series of resources on [avoiding plagiarism](#), writing within specific [style guides](#), and a series of [videos](#) covering academic writing for ESL learners.

The *OWL* website also offers a list of professional development resources for teachers of ESL, including web links to professional organizations, and academic journals.

For more on writing in the classroom check out:

[Writing for the World: Wikipedia as an Introduction to Academic Writing](#)

[Writing for the Reader: A Problem-Solution Approach](#)

[americanenglish.state.gov](http://americanenglish.state.gov)