

AT Quick Guide

Read:Outloud SOLO Edition*

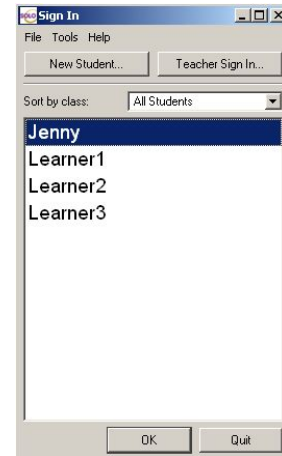
Read:OutLoud SE is a reading study tool which provides students with a variety of ways to increase their use of good reading strategies. Read:OutLoud is a part of the SOLO Suite which also includes Draft:Builder, Co:Writer, and Write:OutLoud.

In MCPS Read:OutLoud SE is found in the Programs-->AT folder at Tech Mod 06 schools. Other schools may have made individual purchases of parts of the program, or of the suite.

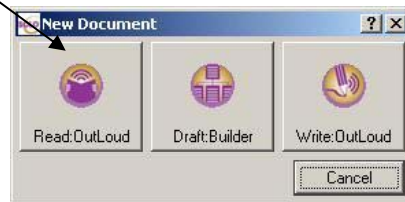
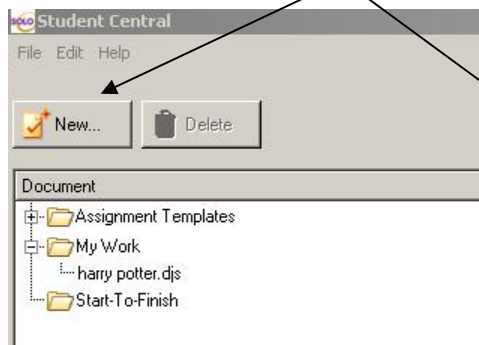
1. Use the SOLO icon to start the program.



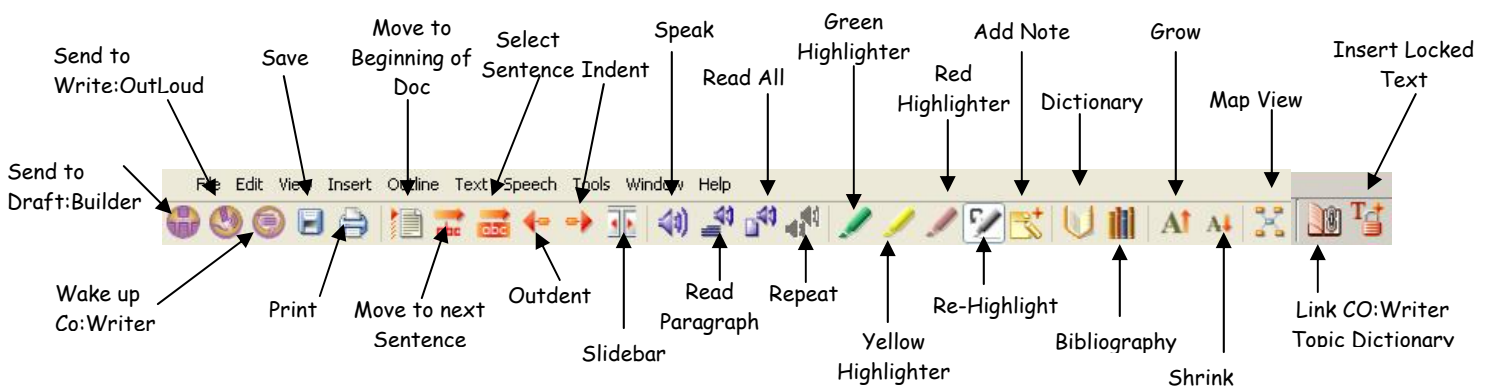
2. Log in as a student. Choose a name on the list or click “New Student” to enter a new student name. Click OK.



3. Open Read:OutLoud. Click the New button. Then choose Read:OutLoud.

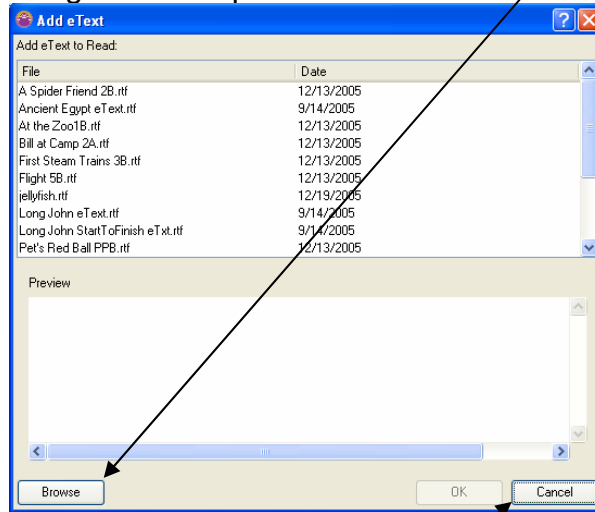


The Read:OutLoud Tool Bar



4. Add etext. There are three ways you can add text to read.

- a. Choose eText from the Add eText window. SOLO ships with a few sample files for reading. You may choose one of those and click OK.
- b. Open a saved file. Once you click the Read:OutLoud button, the “add etext” window will display a short list of available texts that come included with the SOLO software. You can choose one of these, but more often you will want to choose something saved on your computer or your school network. Click on “Browse” and navigate to a file to read. SOLO can read files in RTF, TXT, and HTML formats. See the note at the end of this quick guide for explanations of the formats supported.







- c. Browse the web. You can browse the web directly from Read:OutLoud. Click “Cancel” to remove the “add etext” window. If the computer is connected to the Internet, the left half of the screen will be a browser window. Browse the web just as you would do from Internet Explorer. When you have navigated to a page with text to read, you can use the features described in #6 as a support to reading.

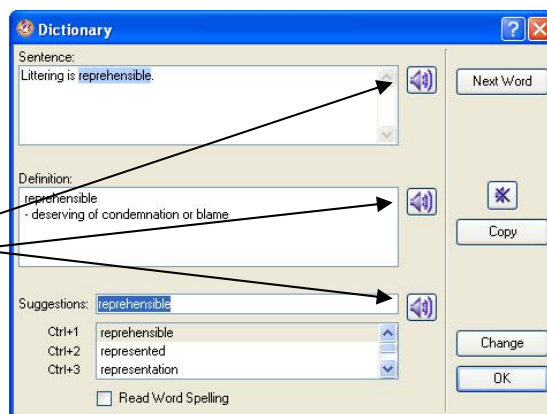
5. Move the slide bar so that you can see the width of the etext. Once you are ready to read, you may need to move the slide bar to the right so that the full width of the text is visible on the screen. Place the mouse cursor over the gray dividing bar until it looks like two bars with two arrows. Then click and drag to the right.




6. Read. Read:OutLoud includes several features that can help students read using active comprehension strategies.

- a. Control reading. Students can have the computer speak the text out loud. Click at the beginning of the sentence, then click the “speak” button  to read the sentence. Click the “read paragraph” button  to read the entire paragraph. Click the “repeat” button  to re-read the last thing spoken. Because students control what is read, this strategy promotes active comprehension much more than having text read aloud to them by another person.

- b. Dictionary. Highlight a difficult word and  in the tool bar. A window with the word in context, the definition, and alternative suggestions (in case the word is spelled incorrectly) will appear. Speaker buttons allow any of the parts of the window to be read aloud.



The dictionary window:

- c. Voice settings. Change the voice (male or female), speed, pitch, or volume from the Speech-->Voice settings menu option. If the computer mispronounces a word, it can be trained to say the word correctly by using the Speech-->Pronunciations menu option. Some students benefit from having the voice speed set to slow (50-60 range).
- d. Change font size. The student can use the grow and shrink  buttons on the tool bar to change the font size. These buttons are not available when reading from the web.

7. Use the highlighting features to take notes. Students can highlight text while they read, just as they would with real highlighters. Using Read:OutLoud, the highlighted text becomes an outline. Green highlighted text becomes major topic headings in the outline window. Yellow highlighted text becomes a subheading under a green topic, and pink highlighted text will be a subtopic under a yellow subtopic. This is the same color scheme that is used in Draft:Builder.


- a. Select information from the text to be highlighted. Click and drag to select text. There are two buttons on the tool bar that also enable students to move through the document and select text. They are “move to next sentence” and “select sentence”

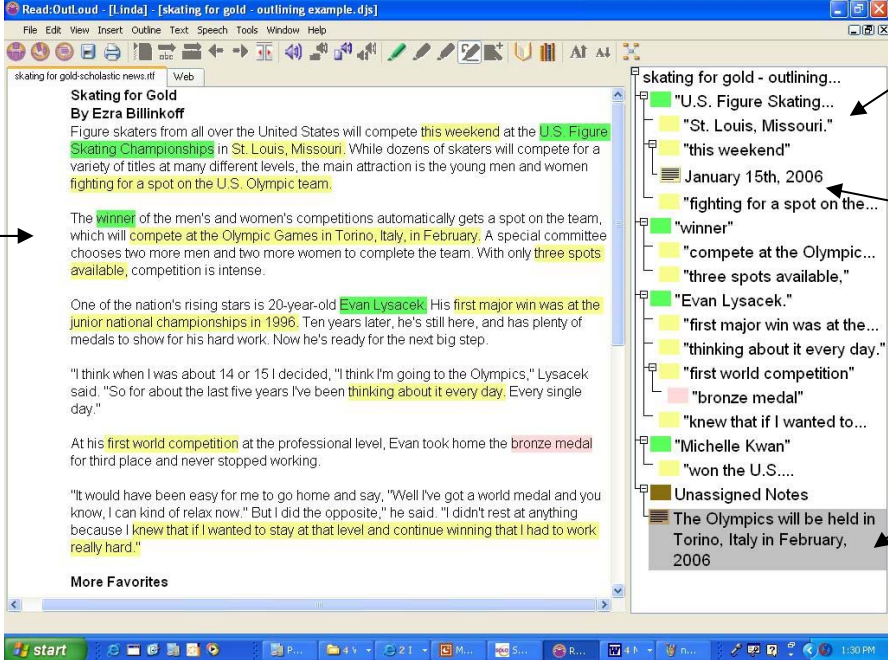


- b. Select a highlighter. Once text is selected, choose a highlighter color from the tool bar. Initially, only green will be available. Once a green topic is chosen, click on the green topic in the outline window and then select more text from the reading window. Either the green or yellow highlighters will now be available. Choosing green will create another main topic. Choosing yellow will create a subtopic under the green topic.

- c. Reorganize the outline. Even after the topics are created by highlighting text, students can reorganize the outline. To reorder the topics, click and drag the colored box to another location in the outline. To change the colors (or levels) of the topics, click on the topic in the outline and then use the “outdent” and “indent” buttons on the



- d. Add notes to the outline. Students can add notes in their own words by selecting a topic in the outline and clicking the “add note” button on the toolbar.  Type in the window and click OK. That note will be attached to the topic in the outline that was selected when the “add note” button was clicked. To add a note that is not associated with any of the topics in the outline, click on “unassigned notes” in the outline window and then click the “add note” button on the tool bar.



Reading window with text highlighted by student

Outline resulting from the highlighted text

Note attached to an outline topic.

Unassigned note.

8. Move the outline into Draft:Builder for further writing. At any time, the student can move the outline to Draft:Builder by clicking on the “send to Draft:Builder” button on the tool bar. From Draft:Builder, the student has full access to the outlining, note-taking, and drafting functions in that program. See the Draft:Builder quick guide for more information on the features of Draft:Builder.

A note on etext formats

Read:OutLoud can recognize three types of files:

1. RTF format. Any Word document can be saved in RTF format. Copy text from the Internet into Word, or simply open a Word document. Choose “Save As” from the file menu and then, in the “save as type” box, choose “Rich Text Format” from the drop down menu.
 - a. Advantages – this format provides the most control over how the document looks. Bold and underlined text as well as paragraph alignment will be preserved. The teacher has the opportunity to edit the text before saving.
 - b. Disadvantages – copying the text into Word and saving as an RTF is an extra step.
2. TXT format. This refers to “plain text” format, which means that all the words are there, but the formatting is not preserved.
 - c. Advantages – you can save files in TXT format directly from Internet Explorer. Choose Save As from the file menu and then, in the “save as type” box, choose “Text File” from the drop down menu. Smaller file sizes mean quicker downloads.
 - d. Disadvantages – text files that are created from HTML or other documents usually require a lot of cleaning up before they are readable. Pictures are not retained.

3. HTML format. You can save a file from Internet Explorer to your My Documents folder or elsewhere on your computer or network. When you save that file, Windows will automatically create a folder where it will save supporting graphics. You will need to keep the HTML file and the folder together for the page to view correctly.
 - e. Advantages – Pictures are retained. It allows a student to read a web page without needing access to the Internet. If you have a subscription to accessiblebookcollection.org, the files available will be in HTML format and usable with Read:OutLoud.
 - f. Disadvantages – You do not have control over how the page displays in the reading window in Read:OutLoud. There may be extraneous text and graphics which will confuse the speaker button. In order to read a particular sentence, the student needs to click and drag to highlight the text. The toolbar buttons to navigate through the text will not work and the student will not be able to click at the beginning of a sentence.

**Read:OutLoud is from the Don Johnston, Inc. and additional support is available from their web site: www.donjohnston.com. SOLO and the individual components, including Read:OutLoud are on the MCPS AT bidlist.*

Although the other components of the SOLO package were available in earlier versions, the Read:OutLoud component is new to the SOLO version of the software. See the quick guide titled "Write:OutLoud to Support Reading" on the HIAT webpage (www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/hiat) for some tips on how to use Write:OutLoud, version 3 to gain access to some of the features of Read:OutLoud, SOLO Edition described in this quick guide.