

Welcome to Co:Writer 6

What is Co:Writer®?

Co:Writer is a writing assistant with linguistic word prediction, designed to help you write complete and correct sentences with rich vocabulary, correctly spelled words, and very few keystrokes. It is usually used in combination with another application, such as a word processor or an e-mail program.

Co:Writer can be used as part of the SOLO suite of programs, and/or it can be used on its own with any text application.

Who Uses Co:Writer?

Co:Writer is a valuable tool for anyone who struggles with writing — it can make the writing process easier, faster and more productive. When Co:Writer's options are set to the user's needs and preferences, the end result can be a dramatic increase in the quality, quantity and ease of writing, along with increased satisfaction and self-esteem for the writer.

Click the green text for information in the area that interests you:

- [support for struggling writers](#)

Co:Writer can provide support in:

- **spelling and choosing words** — Co:Writer lets you see and hear word choices that begin with the first letters typed. With FlexSpell, Co:Writer can also let you see and hear words that have similar letters or phonetic sounds to the letters you have typed.
- **recognizing the word you want** — writers who are auditory learners or who have difficulty recognizing written words can use Co:Writer's built-in speech to hear the word choices before selecting a word.
- **sentence construction** — Co:Writer provides logical word choices, words that fit into the sentence. Co:Writer understands many language components, such as subject-verb agreement, word relationships, proper nouns and user preferences. This can help you put words in the proper order with correct spelling.
- **sentence completion and revision**— Co:Writer can read aloud your words and sentences as you type. This auditory support can assure you that the sentence you just constructed sounds just right or allows you the opportunity to correct or revise your work.
- **writing with meaningful vocabulary** — age- and topic-appropriate vocabulary is available with Co:Writer's Total Vocabulary System. TVS supports writing in any curriculum area because it includes a graded range of Main Dictionaries, a wide range of topic-specific dictionaries, and an efficient system for creating and organizing Topic Dictionaries. TVS also includes a Personal Dictionary, where you can add unique names or words you use all the time.
- **access to writing** — learners with physical disabilities have limited opportunities to develop writing skills. Skilled writers with physical disabilities can be limited by the time and energy involved in writing. Co:Writer provides whole words, saving keystrokes, frustration, and energy.

- [assistance for beginning to advanced writers with special needs](#)

In addition to support with the writing process, Co:Writer can help by:

- providing starter templates for writers with different special needs
- reducing the number of keystrokes needed to type words and sentences
- offering a range of **selection methods** for choosing the word you want
- offering **automatic scanning** of word choices for switch users

- providing compatibility with access products for those who can't use the standard keyboard and mouse
 - letting you store and quickly retrieve frequently-used phrases by means of abbreviation-expansions.
 - allowing automatic collection of your new, personal words and deliberate capturing of word combinations if you want to be sure they're stored for future use
 - providing the Talk Window — writers who need speech output can use Co:Writer both for writing and for conversing with people around them, with little or no disruption to their written work.
- [scaffolds for teachers to increase or decrease the writing supports for different learners](#)

For learners who are moving from more to less support, Co:Writer can be customized to:

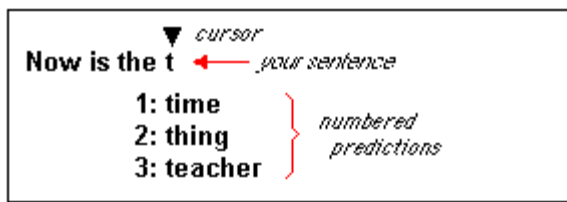
- provide different types of Co:Writer Windows for focus on a sentence, a paragraph, or on typing within a text application
- provide guesses all the time or only as needed
- provide guesses based on a flexible interpretation of letters typed or on only the exact letters typed
- provide guesses before or after typing the first letter of a word
- provide guesses based on the grammar of the sentence so far or based only on statistical frequency of words
- provide or not provide auditory support for descriptions, word choices, and words written

What Co:Writer Does

As you type, Co:Writer supports and assists your writing by providing word choices. These "guesses" are based on linguistic word prediction and multiple vocabulary sources, including personal and topic-specific words. Where you type, how you see or hear the guesses, and how you select a guess can be set to provide the type of support you prefer.

[The Process](#)

1. You write directly in your text application OR in a separate Co:Writer window.
2. As you begin to write a word, Co:Writer will offer guesses as to what that word is.



3. If the word you want is in the list of guesses, you may select the word in any of a number of ways, such as typing a number key, clicking the word, using arrow keys, or having Co:Writer scan the guesses with a selection box.

If the word you want is not in the list of guesses, you simply keep typing until it is, or until you finish the word.

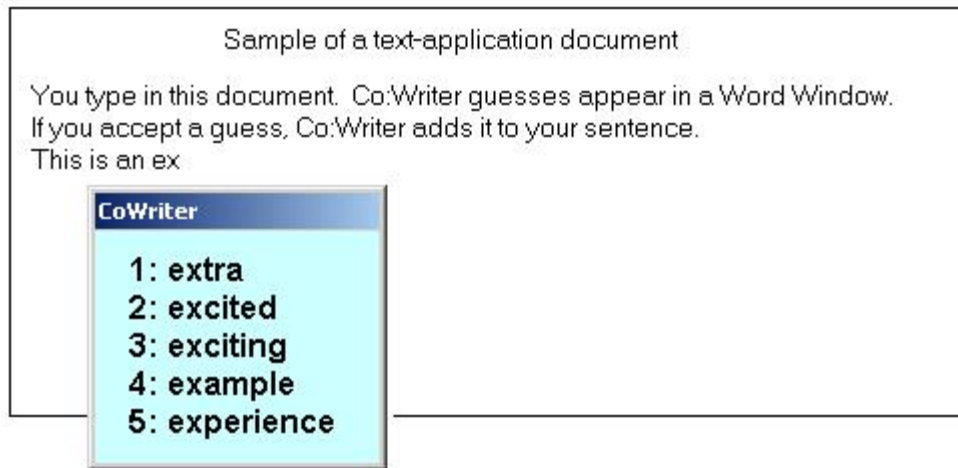
4. When you accept a guess, the accepted word appears in the sentence you are writing, and you start the next word.

At certain points in your writing, Co:Writer sends your text to your text application, such as a word processing document or an e-mail memo. When or how often this happens varies with the type of Co:Writer Window you use.

To show (or hide) a preview of guess window options, click the underlined text below:

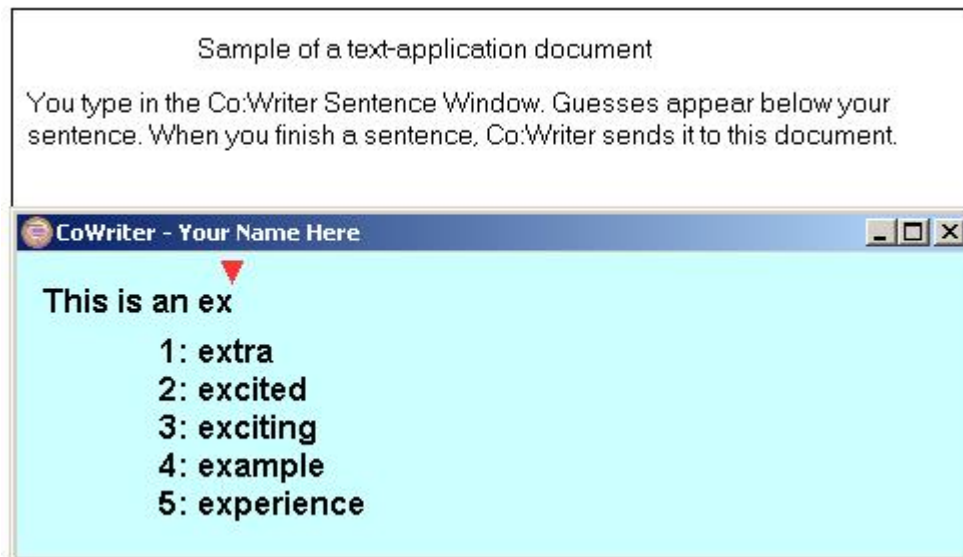
Sample Word Window:

With **Word Window**, you write directly in your text document, and each word you accept goes immediately to your document.



Sample Sentence or Paragraph Window:

With **Sentence Window** or **Paragraph Window**, you write sentences in a separate Co:Writer Window, and the text goes to your document when you finish your sentence or paragraph, respectively.



Options for Special Needs

As Co:Writer was being designed and developed, computer users with physical disabilities were a prime consideration, not an afterthought. All of its features and functions were built to accommodate a special need.



For example, Co:Writer's grammar-based word prediction plus features such as automatic spacing, auto-caps, and Predict Ahead can greatly reduce the number of keystrokes needed to type a passage. Using single-stroke characters to correct mistakes or to modify words can also reduce the physical effort involved in writing. Speech options can provide greater independence in selecting word choices.

In addition, the following options may be of particular interest for writers with special needs:

- Using Co:Writer's scanning selection method: a rectangular outline highlights each guess, one at a time, at a rate you set. When the box is on the word you want, just press the Spacebar.
- Using abbreviations and expansions: enter a short combination of letters to call up your own frequently-used expressions or phrases.
- Using options for the size and location, color, and font for the Co:Writer Window: you can adjust any of these, including the color of background and text, for maximum readability and comfort.
- Instead of clicking menu commands or Preference Window buttons, use Windows keyboard shortcuts or Macintosh keyboard shortcuts.
- Using the Talk Window as augmentative or alternative communication: opening the Talk Window brings up a full-screen Co:Writer Window with separate color, font, and other preferences. Text you write in the Talk Window does not get sent to your application. You can use Co:Writer for conversation at any time without losing work in your regular Co:Writer Window or causing any changes in your text document.

What's New in this Version

Click the underlined text to go the Help topic for details and procedures.

- The Preferences Window –  allows all users to quickly adjust basic settings for speech, display, vocabulary, or Word Bank options, add Personal Words, select or de-select Topic Dictionaries, create and use multiple writer setups as needed. The Preferences Window replaces the Home page.
- A pop-up Commands menu –  gives quick access to all the commands that make the writing process easier, faster and more productive. The Commands menu replaces the Palette and Sentence Window menu bar.
- Enhanced Word Bank
 - View words in the traditional list or in a new display -- the Word Cloud
 - Click a word to enter it in your sentence

- Use the Word Bank in the Preference Window to save screen space, or in its own window for quick access.
- Customization easier than ever!
 - Use the Setup Wizard whenever you want to adjust basic writer preferences.
 - Create Personalized Shortcuts to launch different Co:Writer setups from your desktop.
- No need to Sign In when you Launch Co:Writer – you can get started writing right away!
- When Co:Writer is open but not active on your screen, bring it back by clicking the Co:Writer icon in the Windows taskbar or Macintosh Dock. This replaces using the Wakeup button. If you prefer using the keyboard, you can also bring Co:Writer back by using the wakeup key.
- Co:Writer's Guess Window stays open for writing or editing until you hide it. Bring it back from the taskbar or Dock or by using the wakeup key.
- Enhanced Linguistic Revision -- click in a word in your text document (Word Window) or in your current sentence (Sentence or Paragraph Window) for Co:Writer to offer FlexSpell suggestions based on the word as written and its grammatical environment.
- Hear higher-quality speech with every spoken word – the guesses, sentences, descriptions – every time Co:Writer speaks!
- With Word Window, you can use a new Speak command to speak text in a cooperating application document.
- Quicker access to vocabulary supports --
 - Quickly select or deselect Topics you use frequently from a list of Recent Topics
 - Add words to your Personal Dictionary -- it's just a click away!
- Speech exceptions tool now available.
- More options to Export Words – send all the words in a dictionary, or a selected subset, to a text file to print or display in another application.
- The Talk Window -- for writers who use their computer for augmentative or alternative communication – can now be used from Word Window or Sentence/Paragraph Window and is now available for both Windows and Macintosh.