

› Creating digital documents

One of the great promises of the **IT revolution** is that it will dramatically reduce the need for paper, which, of course, consumes a precious natural resource – trees.

The '**paperless**' office, or *coming soon* the '**paperless classroom**', are interesting not just from an ecological point of view, but also represent a new way to record, manage, communicate and share content, knowledge and information in a more rapid and efficient manner.



› What are digital documents?

Let's look at the 'digital documents' we use today.

READING Read the following text and choose the correct option.

A very broad ¹ *agreement / definition* will say that these are digital documents that are **paperless** in their ² *original / natural* form, and the 'document' may be text-based but also be (or include) images, videos and sound.

The digital documents you use and produce at school can have different purposes and addressees (readers/viewers), different ³ *formats / aspects* and consequently use different **software applications**.

Are you creating a document for your own use, to take legible notes on ⁴ *an argument / a topic* you are studying, for example? You might choose a specific application for notes. This can be '**screen based**': as you do not intend to print it out, your workspace can be continuous both vertically and horizontally without the ⁵ *contours / margins* of an A4 sheet of paper.

If, on the other hand, your task is to produce a piece of prose writing (an essay, a letter, a review...), you will choose a **word-processing application** like Word, Pages™ or Google Docs™. Here you should consider that the document may be printed out on paper. This means choosing a suitable font (type of character) and dimension (between 10 and 12 points for normal text). You will also want to use line and paragraph ⁶ *spacing / distance* and try to 'fill' the page rather than have 12 lines of dense text at the top and then a vast expanse of empty paper below!

Presentation software PowerPoint or Keynote™ are best for presenting on a big screen and less ⁷ *perfect / suitable* for sharing and viewing on individual devices.

In short, choose the application that best ⁸ *responds / matches* the objective of your work.

DISCUSS What different software applications do you use, at school and in your private life? How do you choose them and what preferences do you have? Discuss your answers with a classmate.

› How to use digital/electronic documents

READING Read the following text and put the four paragraphs (a-d) into a logical order, starting with paragraph A.

- 1 a In a work or school environment one of the most useful features of digital or electronic documents is the ease with which we can share our material with others (classmates and teachers). By **sharing** rather than simply sending these documents a group of classmates or colleagues can contribute to building and perfecting a project with each member having the possibility of modifying, correcting or suggesting changes to the file as a work in progress.

- _____ b Finally, and this is not the least important advantage of digital/electronic documents, our work does not get lost or 'left at home' and will **always be available** whenever and wherever we have access to an Internet connection.
- _____ c Online work removes problems of untidiness and difficult or illegible handwriting. We should also exploit the help offered by the **spell-check** and even **grammar-check functions** offered by many software applications – these will help us to remove or avoid the mistakes we can make with pen-and-paper work!
- _____ d Platforms like Microsoft OneNote™, OneDrive™ and Google Docs provide a space where this type of **collaboration is dynamic** and where every user can see, participate in and follow the development of the project. We should choose the type of application carefully, deciding on the balance of text, image, audio and video it will contain and considering how it will appear on a screen (computer, tablet or smartphone) or if we intend the finished product to be printed out on paper.

➤ Artificial Intelligence (AI) and text documents

AI is a **groundbreaking technology** for writers (copywriters for publicity and online posts, Hollywood film scripts, etc.). Today anyone can use an (often free) online tool and ask it to generate a text on any topic. The AI tool takes just minutes to produce a text, which is clear, correct and well written. The 'author' only needs to key in the key words of the topic they want to write about and the AI tool does all the work!

The benefits are clear – we can quickly 'produce' a good text and are sure that it is free from errors. What are the downsides of this artificial assistance? Discuss with your classmates and share your ideas.

READING Read the following text and answer the questions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has been making its way into schools across the nation, offering both advantages and drawbacks for students. For starters, AI can help streamline the learning process, providing personalised instruction and assessment. This can help students learn more effectively and efficiently, as they can focus on the topics and activities best suited to their individual needs. Additionally, AI can help reduce the administrative burden on teachers, freeing them up to focus on creative teaching and engaging students.

On the other hand, some parents and educators worry that AI may not be able to adequately address the needs of all students. AI may not be able to recognise and respond to subtle differences in learning styles and needs, potentially leaving some students behind. Additionally, AI technology is still developing, and it may be difficult to ensure that the technology is secure and reliable, which could lead to data breaches or other security issues.

Overall, AI can provide many benefits to school students, including personalised instruction and assessment, improved efficiency, and a reduced administrative burden on teachers. However, there are also potential drawbacks, such as the inability to recognise subtle learning styles and data security risks. As AI technology continues to evolve, it is important for educators and parents to carefully weigh the pros and cons of using AI in the classroom.



- 1 How can AI help students learn more effectively and efficiently?
- 2 What greater freedom does it offer to teachers?
- 3 Which two groups of people express concerns about AI?
- 4 What risks does the technology pose?
- 5 The text itself was not written by a human author, but generated using an AI tool based on the input 'AI and school students – pros and cons'. Could you identify a text generated by AI?