

TECH TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

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If you or someone you know has missed any newsletters, [click here](#) to find them on Kathleen's blog.

Through this newsletter we aim to cater for teachers of all levels and experiences. If you have any ideas on how we can do this better or if you have ideas for a future newsletter, please email us at techtoolsforteachers@gmail.com (or hit the reply button).

This week we review the site [PrimaryPad](http://primarypad.com/)
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PrimaryPad is a web-based word processor designed for schools that allows pupils and teachers to work together in real-time.



[PrimaryPad](#) is a tool that allows students and teachers to collaborate on a word-processor style document. Despite the name, PrimaryPad could be used with both *primary and secondary* students.

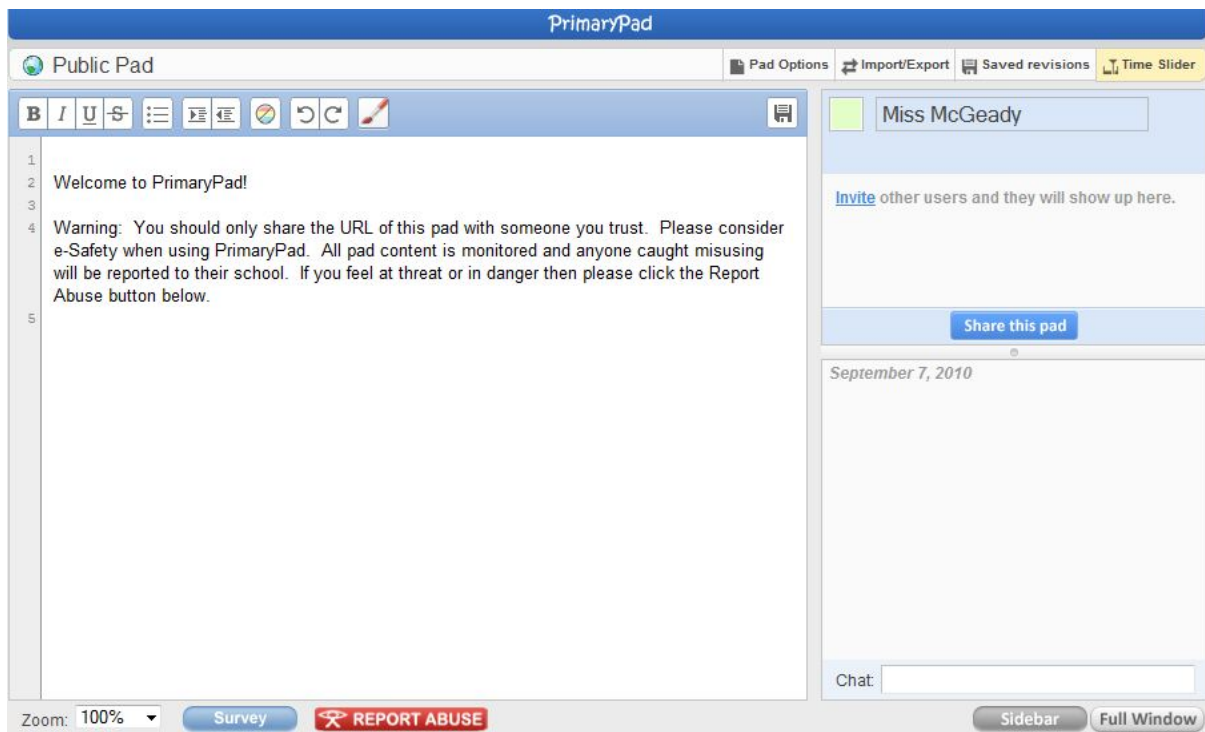
We like PrimaryPad because it:

- is free.
- doesn't require users to sign up or log-in.
- is very easy to use. You can create a page in seconds.
- has a wide range of uses for all ages and curriculum areas.
- allows for collaboration across the class or globe.
- is secure - only people with the unique URL can enter a room.
- is ad-free.
- provides an authentic opportunities to discuss netiquette and cyber safety issues.

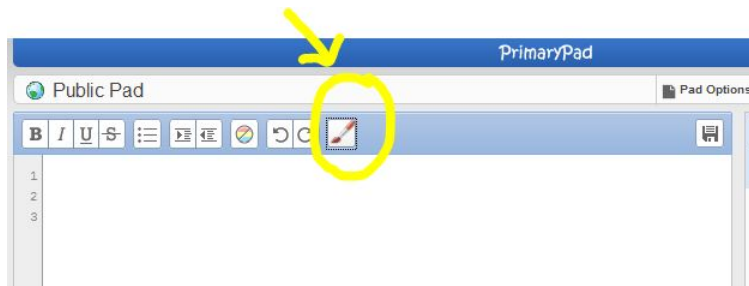
How to Use PrimaryPad

1. To get started, simply visit <http://primarypad.com> and choose "Create Public Pad". You will then be given a unique Primary Pad URL (web address). You share this URL with your students to have them join the room.

2. If you want a customised URL (easier for sharing with students), simply go to www.primarypad.com/myownurl (change myownurl for any word/s you would like) If the pad doesn't exist, then you will be asked if you wish to create one.
3. You will notice your room has two main areas, a *collaborative space* on the left and a *chat function* on the right. You can use the chat to talk about the document you're collaborating on.



4. Above the chat function is where you can see the participants and enter your name. Each participant has their own text highlighting color to help keep track of changes to your document.
5. Your document can be shared via email (click on "share this pad") or you can share your unique URL online (eg. you could post your URL on your blog or on Twitter, Facebook etc).
6. You can also click on the "import/export" button to import your own text to the document or to export your work as Word, PDF, HTML etc.
7. If you click on the paintbrush, it will take you to [PrimaryPaint](#) where students can collaborate on an artwork/drawing together. PrimaryPaint also has an audio chat tool so students can discuss their artwork verbally.



8. Primary Pad also offers some additional services for educators, which you have to pay for after a three month free trial.

An example of how PrimaryPad was used in a Primary Classroom

This week, Kathleen used PrimaryPad with a small group of students in her [Grade Two class](#) each day.

She wanted to use this tool, not only for the powerful collaboration opportunities it offers but to create an authentic opportunity to introduce her students to chat rooms and netiquette in a controlled environment.

For the task, there were six members of the room (including Kathleen) each on their own computers and they first started by having a general online chat to get them familiar with the tool. Kathleen had her students focus on reading others' messages, responding and remaining on-topic and polite.

With the first group, the chat led to a discussion of the school Festa that was held on the weekend and the group decided to use the collaborative space to create a top 10 list of the best aspects of the Festa. The chat feature of the tool was used to decide on what to put on the list. The students got so much out of this session. Afterwards, the group were able to reflect on how they did with reading and responding to messages and they had a rich discussion about netiquette (ie. CAPTIALS means shouting, the importance of taking turns etc).

Other examples of how PrimaryPad could be used (note some ideas from <http://www.ideastoinspire.co.uk/primarypad.htm>)

- Import a document and students edit it collaboratively.
- Students write a story, movie/book review, essay or other text in small groups.
- Brainstorming in groups what students know about a new topic.
- Import an opinion piece and have students use the chat function to debate the topic.
- Make a chain story. One class starts a story, another class continues it and so on.
- At the end of a unit of work, students collaborate to document what they've learnt.
- Students help their peers to make their sentences more interesting.
- One child types a word and other children try to list as many synonyms of it as possible.
- One child takes on the role of a person (e.g. Roman soldier, environmentalist, land developer etc.) who must answer questions posed by other children.

Good luck using PrimaryPad. If you're a Victorian teacher enjoy your upcoming two week break and look out for the next edition of Tech Tools for Teachers next term.

Simon and Kathleen

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