ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

ZenPen

The Insider's Guide

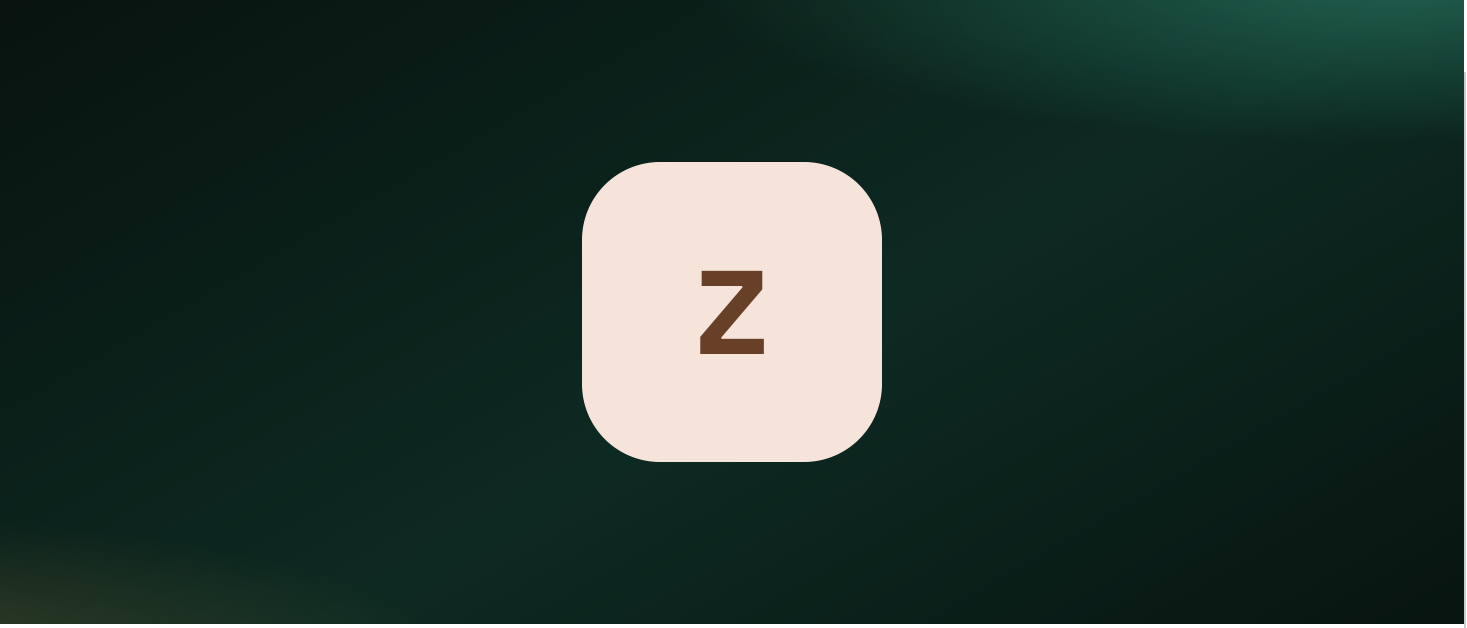
Minimal browser text editor that stays out of the way



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among writing tools, read from ZenPen's own pages.

Made by Tim Holman · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.8
GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from ZenPen's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on ZenPen's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.8

GPA, above 95 of the 136 other writing tools we grade

ZenPen is a free web app for plain, distraction-free writing. Its page holds a text area with a few formatting buttons, a target word count and a save option that copies text as Markdown, HTML or plain text. The text is kept locally in the browser using HTML5 local storage. The source code is MIT licensed.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about ZenPen**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> **Text lives only in the browser's local storage, there are no accounts, folders or sync, and saving means copying the text out.**
>
> From our report card of ZenPen

1 **Best for a plain page to type on**

ZenPen is a minimal browser page for typing, with a word-count target and styling, at no cost.

2 **It is free**

ZenPen has no paid plan at all. The whole app is free to use in the browser; the page only offers a tip-jar link to support the maker.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **Minimal writing page**

A plain page with a text area and a handful of buttons, described as a minimal editor made to stay out of the way.

5 **Target word count**

Set a word-count goal in the top bar to track progress as you write.

6 **Text styling**

Buttons apply bold, italic and quote formatting to the text you select.

7 **A 2.8 GPA, above 95 of 136**

That is against the other writing tools we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

ZenPen is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

ZenPen at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY Tim Holman	CATEGORY Writing Tools
OUR GRADE 2.8 GPA, good	

The report card

Best for a plain page to type on

ZenPen is a minimal browser page for typing, with a word-count target and styling, at no cost. Text lives only in the browser's local storage, there are no accounts, folders or sync, and saving means copying the text out.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	ZenPen	Graded Nov 13, 2026
SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	A	$0, with only a tip-jar link. Nothing to buy.
Free plan and trial	A	The whole app is free, no account and no paid plans.
Features	D	A text area, a word target, bold, italic and quote styling and Markdown, HTML or plain-text copy. It has no saving, folders or sync, and needs another product for anything longer.
Ease of use	B	No rating on record, but open the page and type. Nothing to set up.
Platforms and integrations	C	Web only, with no accounts, sync between devices or integrations.
Grade point average		Good, out of 4.0 **2.8**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who ZenPen is for

- ✓ Fits if you want a blank page for a quick draft
- ✓ Works for a short piece you'll paste somewhere else

Who it is not for

- ✗ Skip it if you want your work saved safely, since clearing browser data can remove it
- ✗ Not for you if you need folders or sync, as it has no accounts
- ✗ Too light for long projects, because there's no outline or file handling
- ✗ Watch out: saving means copying text to the clipboard, with no download button described

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Quick drafting sessions in a browser tab
- ✓ Writers who want a blank page and a word-count target
- ✓ Anyone who needs Markdown or HTML out of a simple editor

Worth knowing

- ⓘ It is a single-page web app with no accounts, folders or sync between devices.
- ⓘ Text lives in this browser's local storage, so clearing browser data can remove it.
- ⓘ Saving means copying the text to the clipboard; there is no file download or export button described.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

ZenPen is free to use.

> **The whole app is free, no account and no paid plans.**
>
> From our grade for free plan and trial

ZENPEN

$0

Free browser app with no account and no paid plans listed.

The free plan

The whole app is free to use in the browser; the page only offers a tip-jar link to support the maker.

Read from zenpen.io on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

Minimal browser text editor that stays out of the way. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, local-first, Markdown, documents.

> **A text area, a word target, bold, italic and quote styling and Markdown, HTML or plain-text copy.**
>
> From our grade for features

Minimal writing page

A plain page with a text area and a handful of buttons, described as a minimal editor made to stay out of the way.

Target word count

Set a word-count goal in the top bar to track progress as you write.

Text styling

Buttons apply bold, italic and quote formatting to the text you select.

Save as Markdown, HTML or plain text

Pick a format and copy the text with ctrl+c or cmd+c to paste it elsewhere.

Local storage

The project's README says everything is kept on your device through HTML5 local storage, not on a server.

Open-source code

The code is public on GitHub under the MIT license.

Where it runs

Web

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

ZenPen is made by Tim Holman.

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

95/136

Other writing tools it is graded above

ZenPen's GPA of 2.8 is higher than 95 of the 136 other writing tools we grade, and level with 23.

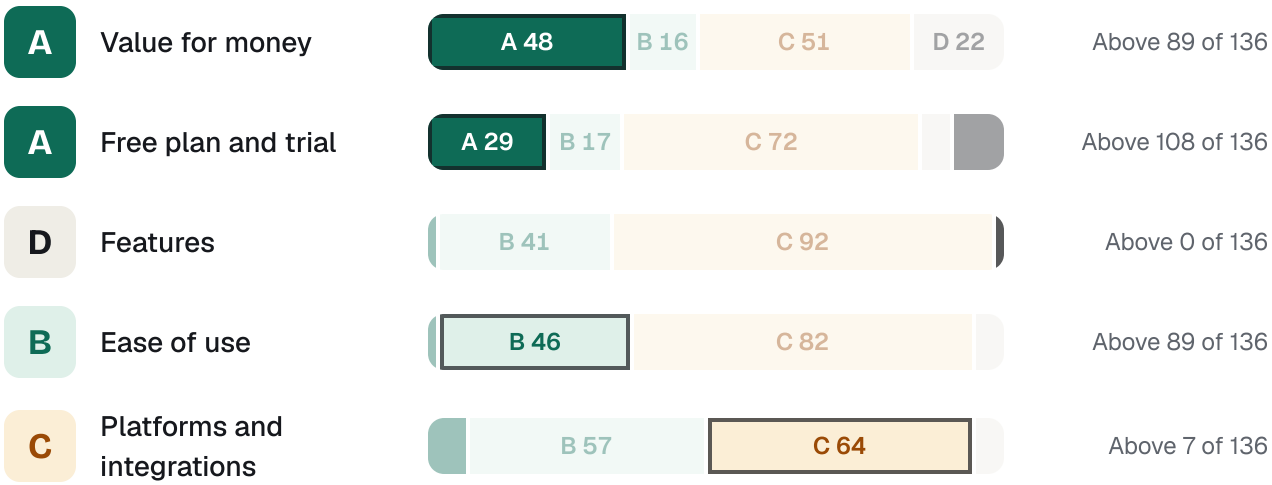
It stands best on free plan and trial (A, above 108 of 136) and worst on features (D, above 0).

ZenPen has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.0 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

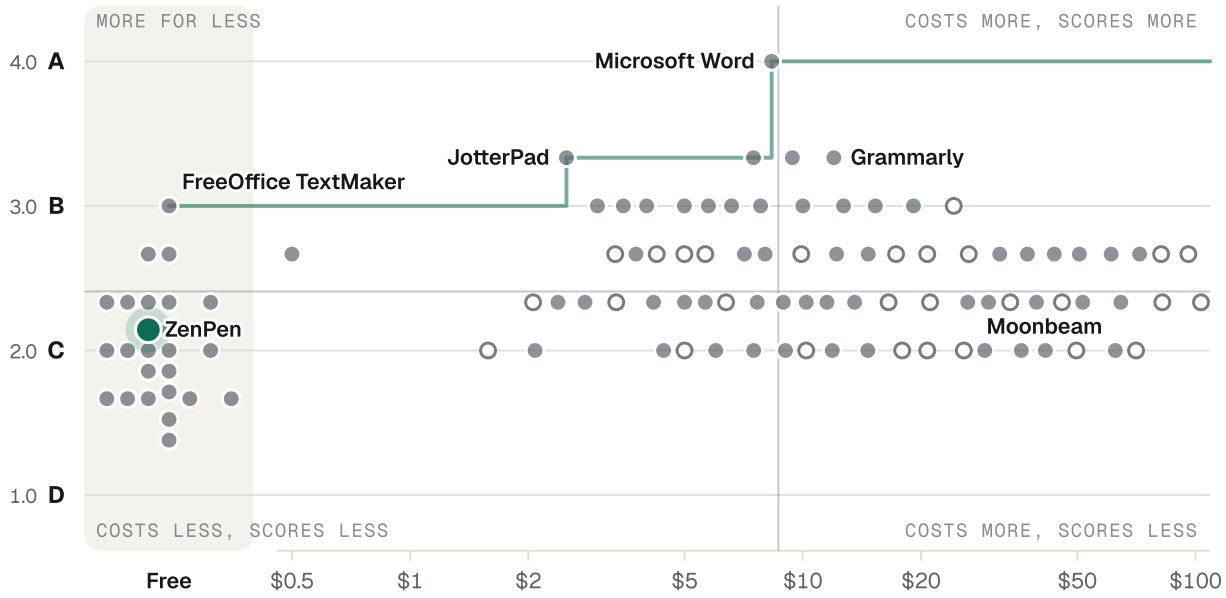
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 137 writing tools we grade, cut by the letter each got. ZenPen's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 107 writing tools. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. ZenPen is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double) ⍰

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

ZenPen is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

It is one of the better ones too: its GPA of 2.8 is higher than 95 of the 136 other writing tools we grade.

What you could make

- Markdown and documents: an app builder makes these well.

What this rests on. ZenPen's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives



Calmly Writer, FocusWriter, WriteMonkey, OmmWriter and Cold Turkey Writer

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side

The 5 tools ZenPen is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

2.8 GPA

Calmly Writer

Free plan · from $16.99 one-time

Distraction-free Markdown writing app sold as a one-time purchase.

- Only Calmly Writer lists macOS, Windows, Linux and Android apps.
- ZenPen is open source, according to its own site.
- Calmly Writer can be bought with a one-time purchase.

ZenPen and Calmly Writer compared in full

3.0 GPA

FocusWriter

Free

Free distraction-free word processor for Windows and Linux.

- Only ZenPen lists a web app.
- Only FocusWriter lists Windows and Linux apps.
- ZenPen also covers Markdown.

ZenPen and FocusWriter compared in full

WriteMonkey

2.8 GPA

Free

Minimal plain-text Markdown editor for writers, free to use.

- Only ZenPen lists a web app.
- Only WriteMonkey lists Windows, macOS and Linux apps.
- ZenPen is open source, according to its own site.

ZenPen and WriteMonkey compared in full

OmmWriter

2.2 GPA

From $9.99 one-time

Full-screen writing app with backgrounds, music and typing sounds.

- ZenPen has a free plan. OmmWriter does not.
- Only ZenPen lists a web app.
- Only OmmWriter lists macOS and Windows apps.

ZenPen and OmmWriter compared in full

Cold Turkey Writer

3.0 GPA

Free plan · from $14.99 one-time

Text editor that locks your computer until a writing goal is met.

- Only ZenPen lists a web app.
- Only Cold Turkey Writer lists macOS and Windows apps.
- ZenPen is open source, according to its own site.

ZenPen and Cold Turkey Writer compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

11

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is ZenPen free?

Yes. ZenPen is free to use.

How much does ZenPen cost?

ZenPen lists one plan. ZenPen: $0.

What platforms does ZenPen work on?

ZenPen is available on Web.

Does ZenPen have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. ZenPen is listed for Web.

Does ZenPen have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. ZenPen is listed for Web.

Is ZenPen open source?

Yes. ZenPen is open source, according to its own site.

Who makes ZenPen?

ZenPen is made by Tim Holman.

What are the alternatives to ZenPen?

The closest alternatives to ZenPen in our directory are Calmly Writer, FocusWriter, WriteMonkey, OmmWriter and Cold Turkey Writer.

How does ZenPen compare with other writing tools?

ZenPen's GPA of 2.8 is higher than 95 of the 136 other writing tools we grade, and level with 23.

Is ZenPen good value for money?

ToolGPA grades ZenPen A for value for money. ZenPen has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of ZenPen?

ZenPen is free, so making your own would save you nothing. It is one of the better ones too: its GPA of 2.8 is higher than 95 of the 136 other writing tools we grade.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from ZenPen's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from ZenPen's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Tim Holman. Prices change, so check zenpen.io before you buy.

zenpen.io

github.com/tholman/zenpen

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

ZenPen, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/zenpen

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "ZenPen: The Insider's Guide",
checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/zenpen
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Know someone choosing between writing tools?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/zenpen/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded writing tools after ZenPen, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Writing Tools Insider's Guide

Every one of the 137 writing tools we grade, compared

FreeOffice TextMaker Insider's Guide

Free word processor that opens and saves Microsoft Word files

3.4 GPA

Microsoft Word Insider's Guide

Word processor sold with Microsoft 365, free in the browser

3.4 GPA

Apache OpenOffice Insider's Guide

Free open-source office suite with the Writer word processor

3.2 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what ZenPen's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. ZenPen is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Tim Holman. Prices and plans change: check zenpen.io before you buy.