

Windows 11

An Introduction to Narrator



This document introduces you to Narrator, the screen reader built-in to Windows 11. It isn't designed to be a tutorial, simply an introduction on how to start Narrator, read text and how to adjust certain aspects of the speech.

Starting Narrator

To start Narrator, hold down both the **CTRL** and **WINDOWS LOGO** keys, and press the **ENTER** key. Upon doing this, Narrator will start.

By default, upon starting Narrator, you will be focused in a window titled Narrator Home. This is designed to provide you with tips and information on how to use Narrator. At the bottom of this screen, you'll find a check box labelled "Show Narrator Home when Narrator starts". This will be ticked. It's recommended to untick this option to avoid this window from being displayed each time you use Narrator. To untick this option, press **TAB** until Narrator says "Show Narrator home when Narrator starts" and then press the **SPACEBAR**. Once you've done this, minimise the Narrator Home window. For reference, a quick method of minimising a window is to hold down the **WINDOWS LOGO** key and press the letter **M**.

Reading Text with Narrator

Now that you have Narrator running, open a document or email message. You are now ready to experiment with the reading commands.

Note 1: By default, Narrator uses either the **CAPS LOCK**, or the **INSERT** key, in conjunction with other keys for certain Narrator commands. These keys are referred to as the '**NARRATOR**' key.

Note 2: Narrator has two modes for reading information. The first is for documents, email messages, spreadsheets etc. and general Windows screens such as the Desktop and Start Menu. The other mode is for navigating and reading web pages.

To set Narrator to use the mode for navigating and reading documents, email messages etc, hold down the **Narrator** key and press the **SPACEBAR** until Narrator says "Scan Off". To set Narrator to the method for navigating and reading web pages, hold down the **Narrator** key and press the **SPACEBAR** until Narrator says "Scan".

Note 3: If you open a web browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge, Narrator will automatically switch to the mode for navigating and reading web pages!

The following keyboard commands can be used to read text using Narrator:

RIGHT ARROW: Read next character

LEFT ARROW: Read previous character

CTRL and RIGHT ARROW: Read next word

CTRL and LEFT ARROW: Read previous word

DOWN ARROW: Read next line

UP ARROW: Read previous line

CTRL and DOWN ARROW: Read next paragraph

CTRL and UP ARROW: Read previous paragraph

NARRATOR and DOWN ARROW: Read all text from the cursor position

CTRL: Silence NARRATOR

Adjusting the Speech Rate and Voice Volume

You can increase and decrease the speed at which Narrator reads. You can also increase and decrease the volume of the voice.

Use the following keyboard commands to make adjustments to the reading speed and volume:

Decrease reading speed: NARRATOR and - (minus)

Increase reading speed: NARRATOR and = (Equals)

Decrease volume: NARRATOR and CTRL and - (Minus)

Increase volume: NARRATOR and CTRL and = (Equals)

Note 4: You must use the - (Minus) and = (Equals) keys on the top line of the QWERTY part of the keyboard for the above commands to work.

Browsing a List of All Narrator Commands

Narrator contains a long list of keyboard commands. These include commands for both Desktop and Laptop keyboard layouts. To open and browse the list of keyboard commands, hold down **CAPS LOCK** and press **F1**. Upon doing this, a dialog box will be displayed and Narrator will say "search all commands window". This means that focus is in a Search field. Press **DOWN ARROW** at this point to move into the list of available commands.

Press **DOWN ARROW** to move to the next command and read it.

Continue pressing **DOWN ARROW** to read the next command in the list.

For reference, to read the previous command in the list, press **UP ARROW**.

Spend some time reading the list of keyboard commands using a combination of **DOWN ARROW** and **UP ARROW**. You may find some of them really useful to try to remember!

When you have finished exploring the available keyboard commands, press the **ESCAPE** key. Upon doing this, you will be returned to where you were before opening the list of commands.

Changing the Narrator Voice

There are many voices which Narrator can use. You can even choose to download and install higher quality voices, in a range of languages.

To change the voice which Narrator uses, follow these steps:

1. Hold down both the **CTRL** and **WINDOWS LOGO** keys and press the letter **N**. Upon doing this, the **Narrator Settings** screen will be displayed.
2. In the Narrator Settings screen, press the **TAB** key until the Use a Voice combo box is selected. Here, you will find a list of available voices.
3. Press **DOWN ARROW** to select the next available voice in the list. Upon doing this, the voice you selected will be enabled and you will be able to listen to how it sounds.
4. When you have selected a voice that sounds good, press **ENTER**.
5. Finally, hold down the **ALT** key and press **F4** to exit the Narrator Settings screen.

Note 5: ALT and F4 is the standard Windows keyboard command for exiting an application. It's the equivalent of clicking on the X at the upper right corner of an application window with the mouse pointer.

Reading Text using the Mouse

You can read text under the mouse pointer with Narrator. However, before you can do this, you first need to enable a setting in the Narrator Settings screen. To do this, follow these suggested steps:

1. Hold down both the **CTRL** and **WINDOWS LOGO** keys and press the letter **N**. Upon doing this, the **Narrator Settings** screen will be displayed.

2. In the Narrator Settings screen, you'll find a check box labelled "Read and interact with the screen using the mouse". Press the TAB key until this check box is selected and then press the SPACEBAR to tick this option.
3. Hold down the **ALT** key and press **F4** to exit the Narrator Settings screen.

That's it, you can now move the mouse pointer around the screen. Each time it passes over a piece of text, Narrator will read it aloud! This is ideal for reading the names of icons on the Desktop, items inside menus and dialog boxes etc.

Note 6: You can also enable the reading of text using the mouse by pressing a Narrator keyboard shortcut. To do this, hold down the **CAPS LOCK** and **ALT** keys and then press the letter **M**. Upon doing this, Narrator will announce the current mouse reading setting.

Exiting Narrator

To exit Narrator, hold down the **NARRATOR** key and press **ESCAPE**. Alternatively, you can also exit Narrator by holding down both the **CTRL** and **WINDOWS LOGO** keys and pressing **ENTER**.

This is the end of the introduction to Narrator. If you require further information regarding Narrator, contact the author, Gary Eady, using the following email address:

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