

WhatsApp with VoiceOver

An Introduction to Chats



This tutorial has been designed to introduce you to Chats in WhatsApp, in conjunction with VoiceOver on your Apple iPhone. It covers the most common aspects of chatting, such as reading, replying to, forwarding and deleting messages. Additionally, sharing and describing photos using Be My Eyes, Seeing AI or Envision AI is covered.

The purpose of this tutorial is to make you comfortable at using those common Chat features in WhatsApp, which all of your friends and family are likely to be using!

Throughout this tutorial, the layout of new and important screens have been described in detail. This is in an attempt to give you the best chance of understanding the options available.

Assumptions

Certain assumptions have been made in the creation of this tutorial. They are as follows:

- The latest version of WhatsApp has been installed onto your Apple iPhone and you have linked your mobile number to WhatsApp. At the time of writing (22 September 2025), the latest version of WhatsApp is 2.25.22.83.
- Your iPhone is running iOS 18.5 or later.
- Your iPhone is connected to the internet.
- You are familiar with the common navigation gestures used with VoiceOver.
- VoiceOver hints are turned on.
- You are familiar at entering text using the Virtual keyboard.

Note 1: The instructions given in this tutorial have been created using an iPhone 15 Pro, running iOS version 18.5. If you are using an earlier version of iOS, you may find some minor differences. However, it isn't anticipated that you will!

VoiceOver Terms and Gestures You Should Know

A number of VoiceOver terms and gestures are mentioned in this tutorial. They are as follows:

Current Item. This is not a gesture! It is the name given to the item which contains the VoiceOver cursor. This will be the item which VoiceOver last announced.

Explore Gesture, One Finger Drag or Slide. This gesture allows you to find out what is on the screen. As you drag or slide your finger around, VoiceOver reads the item which is under your finger and it becomes the Current Item.

Next Item Gesture, One Finger Swipe Right. This gesture moves the VoiceOver cursor to the next item on the screen and makes it the Current Item. VoiceOver reads the associated information with this item.

Previous Item Gesture, One Finger Swipe Left. This gesture moves the VoiceOver cursor to the previous item on the screen and makes it the Current Item. VoiceOver reads the associated information with this item.

Activate Gesture, One Finger Double Tap. This gesture activates the Current Item. This is the equivalent of a sighted person tapping an item.

Mute Speech Gesture, Three Finger Double Tap. Temporarily turns off VoiceOver speech. Useful for listening to audio without VoiceOver talking over it. To Unmute speech, perform a Three Finger Double Tap again.

Next Screen Gesture, Three Finger Swipe Up. This is used to scroll the contents of a screen, in order to bring the next page of information into view.

Previous Screen Gesture, Three Finger Swipe Down. This is used to scroll the contents of a screen, in order to bring the previous page of information into view.

Dial Rotor Gesture, Two Finger Twist. This gesture cycles through the various settings in the Rotor. To make this gesture successfully, place your thumb and your first finger on the screen, slightly apart, and then make a twist motion, a little like unscrewing the lid on a bottle of lemonade!

Set Mode Gesture, One Finger Swipe Up or Down. This gesture is used to cycle through the various options associated with the current Rotor setting.

Start/Stop Action gesture, Two Finger Double Tap. This gesture is used in specific situations to: answer and hang up a telephone call, start and stop playback of music or videos, Start and stop the stopwatch, start and stop video recording, start and stop voice memo recordings and start and stop dictation mode. Apple refers to the Start/Stop Action gesture as the Magic Tap.

Launching WhatsApp

To launch WhatsApp, first locate its icon on the Home Screen of your device and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture, a One Finger Double Tap. Upon doing this, the WhatsApp application will open a second or two later. Alternatively, if you have Siri enabled, you can simply ask it to "open WhatsApp".

Description of the WhatsApp Application Layout

WhatsApp uses tabs, to divide the application into several screens that are equal in hierarchy, in much the same way that tabs divide a notebook into sections. A tab is a button-like control, which when activated, changes the screen to display the options applicable to the tab name.

In WhatsApp, the tabs are situated at the bottom of the application. From left to right, the tabs are: "Updates", "Calls", "Communities", "Chats" and "Settings". By default, the Chats Tab will be selected and the heading at the top of the screen will be "Chats".

At the top left corner of the Chats screen, you will find the "More" button and just beneath this button, you will find a heading, which denotes the name of the tab in use. This should be "Chats".

At the top right corner of the Chats screen, you will find two buttons, labelled "Camera" and "New chat". The left-most button is the Camera button. When it is activated, the Camera application is opened and you can take a photo or record a video. The right-most button is the New chat button. When this button is activated, a new Chat window is displayed. Taking photos and recording videos is beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further. The New Chat button will be discussed in more detail later.

Beneath the Chats heading, you will find a "Search" Text Field. You can use this field to search for specific names, phrases, photos or attachments.

Beneath the Search Text Field, you will find a row of four buttons, which can be used to filter your Chats. From left to right, these are: "All", "Unread", "Favourites" and "Groups". At the end of the row, situated at the right edge of the screen, you will find another button labelled "New list". By default, The selected filtering option should be "All", which means all Chats you have sent and received will be displayed.

A little further down the screen, you may find the "Locked Chats" button. This only appears when you have locked a Chat. When this button is activated, you will be prompted to create a secret code, or use Touch ID, Face ID or your Passcode to gain access to the Locked Chats list. Locked Chats are those which you want to keep private, away from prying eyes! These Chats don't appear in the main Chat list! Locked Chats are beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

Beneath the Locked Chats button (if it is present), you will find a list of Chats, displayed as buttons, arranged in date order (newest to oldest). These may be ones you have received, or ones you have sent. In WhatsApp, a Chat is essentially a conversation held between two or more people. You can think of a Chat as an email message, with the message itself containing a series of previously sent and replied to messages.

At the end of the list of Chats, you will find a text label which reads "Your personal messages are end to end encrypted", and beneath this label, you will find an associated link, which when activated, opens a screen which displays information about encryption and how it works with WhatsApp.

Finally, running down the right-hand side of the screen, you will find a Vertical Scroll Bar. When you make this the Current Item, VoiceOver says "X pages, Y percent", where X is the number of pages of information in the screen and Y is the percentage you are through those pages. You can perform a One Finger Swipe Down to move forward through the items on the screen 10% at a time, or a One Finger Swipe Up to move through the items in the opposite direction. However, as you move through the pages, VoiceOver doesn't announce anything, other than the percentage. So, you will have to use the Explore gesture, to find out what is onscreen.

This concludes the description of the Chats screen.

A Note About WhatsApp Chat Types

In WhatsApp, there are many types of Chat that can be sent and received, some of which are beyond the scope of this tutorial. The three most common types of Chat you will come across are as follows:

- **Individual Chats.** These are one-to-one conversations with friends, family, work colleagues etc.
- **Group Chats.** These are discussions with multiple participants.
- **Broadcast Lists.** These are sent to multiple contacts who have your number saved, appearing as individual chats to each recipient.

Navigating the Chat Screen

To navigate the Chat screen, first locate the "Chats" heading at the top of the Chats screen. Then, perform the Next Item gesture, a One Finger Swipe Right, to navigate to the next item. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will announce the Current Item. For reference, to navigate backwards through the screen, perform the Previous Item gesture, a One Finger Swipe Left. Again, when performing this gesture, VoiceOver will announce the Current Item.

Note 2: If you find that the current screen isn't Chats, locate the "Chats" tab item at the bottom of the screen and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture, a One Finger Double Tap. Then, start exploring the screen again from the top.

When you come to the first Chat, VoiceOver will announce the name of the last person who sent a message in the conversation, their message, the date and time it was sent and then VoiceOver will announce whether or not the message has been received or read. Finally, VoiceOver will say "Button, actions available" (more on this later).

To move to the next Chat, perform the Next Item gesture. Again, VoiceOver will announce who the message was from, the content of the message, date and time it was sent and whether or not the message has been received or read.

Continue using the Next Item gesture to explore the remainder of the Chats. Remember, to go back the other way, perform the Previous Item gesture.

Spend some time navigating the screen, until you are comfortable at identifying the Chats. You will open and reply to one soon!

Opening a Chat

When a Chat is opened, all messages sent between you and that person, or group members, is displayed in what's known as the "Chat history". Each message in the history is displayed in a vertical list, with the oldest one at the top and the newest one at the bottom.

To open a Chat, first locate the Chat you wish to open and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture, a One Finger Double Tap. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will announce the Current Item in the Chat history screen. This should be the "Compose Message" Text Field. For reference, VoiceOver will say "compose message, text field, double tap to edit, use the rotor to access misspelled words".

Description of the Chat History Screen

At the top left corner of the Chat history screen, you will find the "Chats, Back" button. Activating this button returns you to the Chats screen. Sometimes, VoiceOver will announce a number instead, when this button is the Current Item. This number pertains to the number of unread messages in the Chat screen.

To the right of the "Chats, Back" button, you will find a heading, which contains the name of the person associated with the Chat message. This includes the date and time they were last active in WhatsApp.

Note 3: If you have opened a Chat sent from a Group, the heading at the top of the screen will show the group name instead. Additionally, the number of group members who are currently online (using WhatsApp at the time) will be displayed and VoiceOver will announce this. If no group members are currently online, the first few names/telephone numbers of the group members will be displayed instead.

At the Top right corner of the screen, you will find two buttons, labelled "Start video call with X", where X is the name of the person associated with the Chat message and "Start voice call with X", again where X is the name of the person associated with the Chat message. The left-most of these buttons is the "Start video call" button. Making Video and voice calls is beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

Note 4: If you have opened a Chat sent from a Group, the Start video call and Start voice call buttons are replaced by a single button labelled "Open call dropdown menu". This button also contains the name of the group. When this button is activated, a popup menu is displayed consisting of the following items: "Voice call", "Video call", "Select people", "Send call link" and "Schedule call". You will also find additional buttons, which are actually part of the Call history. These will be discussed soon. Finally, at the end of the menu, you will find a button labelled "Dismiss context menu, which is used to close the menu".

Beneath the heading and Start video and Start voice call buttons, you should find a heading which displays a date. Beneath this heading you will find all messages sent and received on that date. The list of messages make up the "Chat History". The messages are arranged in reverse date order, with the oldest message at the top of the list and the newest message at the bottom.

Note 5: If you don't find a heading indicating the date, it probably means that the list of messages is quite long. In this situation, the heading often scrolls off the top of the screen. Therefore, you will need to use the Scroll Up gesture, a Three Finger Swipe Down, to scroll the messages until the heading is in view.

At the end of the Chat history, you may find a button labelled "Go to most recent message". This button doesn't always appear, so won't be discussed further.

At the bottom of the screen, beneath the list of messages, you will find a row of four buttons, with a Text Field situated between the first and second button. From left to right these buttons are "Share media", "GIFS and Stickers", "Camera" and "Voice message". The Text Field is labelled "Compose Message" and is where you type your message.

Tip: When navigating the row of buttons and the Text Field, it is recommended to use the Explore gesture to do so, as using the Next Item and Previous Item gestures, moves through the items in a somewhat random order.

Finally, running down the right-edge of the screen, you will find a Vertical Scroll Bar. You can use this to quickly move through the Chat history, in the same way as you move through the information in the Chats screen.

This concludes the description of the Chat history screen.

As discussed earlier, the messages sent between two people, or group members, is referred to as the Chat history. When you open a Chat, you should automatically be placed on the "Compose Message" Text Field. VoiceOver will say "compose message, text field, double tap to edit, use the Rotor to access misspelled words". From here, you can use the Previous Item gesture, to move through the messages in date order (newest to oldest). When you come to the "Start voice call" button, or "Open call dropdown menu" button if in a group message, you will know that you have reached the first message in the history. You can now navigate the messages in the opposite direction (reverse date order) by performing the Next Item gesture. When you come to the "Share media" button, you will know that you have reached the last message in the history.

Tip: When swiping around the screen, try to perform the swipes in the centre of the screen. This will give you more room to perform them correctly!

Another method of navigating the messages in the Chat screen, is to navigate by heading - days of the week. To do this, first locate any message in the Chat History, then perform the Dial Rotor gesture, a Two Finger Twist, until VoiceOver says "Headings". You can now perform a One Finger Swipe Down gesture, to move to the next heading or the One Finger Swipe Up gesture, to move to the previous heading. When you reach a heading, use the Next Item gesture to read the messages associated with that date.

Closing the Chat history screen

To close the Chat history screen, locate the " Chats, Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be back in the Chats screen.

Replying to a Chat Message

There are two common ways of replying to chat messages. One way is to reply to the last received message. The other way is to reply to a specific message in the Chat history. For completeness, both methods are described.

Replying to the Last Received Message

To reply to the last received message in a Chat, follow these steps.

1. In the Chats screen, locate the Chat you want to respond to and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture, a One Finger Double Tap. Upon doing this, the Chat history screen will be displayed.

2. Locate the "Compose message" Text Field, situated at the bottom of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be in "edit" mode and a Virtual keyboard will be displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Note 6: When you activate a Text Field, a Virtual keyboard will be displayed at the bottom of the screen and the Text Field and the buttons to either side of it, will be repositioned to be directly above the keyboard.

3. Use the Explore gesture, until you have located the keyboard. Then, locate the first character you wish to type and then activate it. Upon doing this, the character will be entered into the Text Field. Notice that VoiceOver says "Capital", to indicate that the character you entered is a capital letter. This is standard behaviour when you type the first character of a sentence! You should also notice that VoiceOver announces the phonetic word associated with the characters you touch on the keyboard. This can help with distinguishing characters that sound the same such as C and T or M and N. For example, if you touch the letter N, VoiceOver will say "N, November".
4. Continue locating the desired characters and activating them until you have finished composing your message. If you make a mistake, you can delete the characters you typed, one at a time, by locating and activating the Delete key, which is situated just above the "Return" key, at the bottom right corner of the keyboard.

Note 7: Typing characters with the keyboard can be achieved in different ways with VoiceOver, depending on which Typing Mode you are using. In Standard Typing mode, you first locate the character you want to enter and then perform a One Finger Double Tap to enter it. In Touch Typing mode, you locate the character you want to enter and then lift your finger to enter it. When a character has been entered, VoiceOver announces the character you just typed.

Entering text can be a little slow using the keyboard. Don't worry, you can use dictation in the future to make things easier!

5. To check what you've just typed, locate the "Send" button. For reference, this is situated just above the letter P on the keyboard. To the left of the Send button, you will find the "Compose Message" Text Field, which now contains the text you typed. Explore the screen to the left until you've located the Compose message Text Field. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will say "compose message", and will then read out the message you just typed.
6. If you need to enter more text, do so using the Virtual keyboard. Otherwise, locate the Send button again and make it the Current Item.
7. Perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, all being well, your reply message will be sent!

Note 8: If you are replying to a message sent within a group, all group members will receive your message. It is possible to reply to an individual within a group privately. This will be discussed shortly.

Upon sending your message, you will be inside the Chat History screen, associated with the message you just sent. VoiceOver will announce "Voice message". For some unknown reason, this seems to be the Current Item after sending a message! To close the Chat history screen, locate the "Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the screen and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be back in the Chats screen.

Replying to a specific Message in a Group Chat

It is possible to reply to a specific message. This is most useful if the message you are responding to has been sent in a group chat. The reply will only go to the sender of the message and not all members of the group.

To reply to a specific message in a group chat, follow these steps:

1. From the Chats screen, locate the Chat message that contains the specific message you would like to reply to and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture.
2. In the Chat history screen, locate the specific message you want to reply to and make it the Current Item.

Note 9: When you make a message in the Chat history the Current Item, VoiceOver anticipates what you might want to do and automatically dials the Rotor to the Actions menu. This is handy, as the Actions menu contains the most common actions you can take with a specific message. You can explore the options available, by performing the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Up or Down.

3. Perform the Set Mode gesture, until VoiceOver says "Reply privately". Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a new reply will be created and VoiceOver will say "Compose message, is editing, insertion point at start". This means you are in text input mode and ready to compose your reply.

Note 10: The "Reply Privately" Rotor option is only available when you are replying to a specific message in a group. If you are replying to a specific message sent between you and an individual, you will need to activate the "Reply" item instead.

4. Use the Virtual keyboard to compose your reply. When done, locate the Send button and make it the Current Item.
5. Explore the screen to the left until you have located the Compose message Text Field. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will read the text you have typed.
6. If you need to enter more text, do so using the Virtual keyboard. Otherwise, locate the Send button again and make it the Current Item.

7. Finally, perform the Activate gesture to send your reply. Upon doing this, the person who sent the original message will receive your reply and will be alerted to the fact you have replied to an earlier message and not the last message sent in the Chat!

Using Dictation to Enter Text

Another method of entering text is to use dictation. This offers a quicker option than using the Virtual keyboard to enter text manually. However, dictation can be a little unreliable if you dictate long passages at a time. Therefore, it is recommended to only dictate short passages of text at a time, for example a sentence. This will greatly improve the accuracy of the dictation.

For practice, you are going to use dictation to send another message to the same person you just replied to.

To reply to a message using dictation, follow these steps:

1. In the Chat history screen, locate the "Compose Message" Text Field and perform the Activate gesture to go into text input mode. Upon doing this, the Virtual keyboard will be displayed at the bottom of the screen.
2. Now, explore the keyboard until you've found the "Dictate" button. For reference, this is situated at the bottom right corner of the Virtual keyboard, just beneath the "Return" key.

Note 11: If you are using an iPhone SE model, the Dictate key is situated to the left of the Spacebar, rather than below the Return key.

3. Now perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a low pitched bell tone will play and the microphone will be activated. You can now dictate your message.

Note 12: You may receive a message asking permission for WhatsApp to use the microphone. If this is the case, locate the "Allow" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be able to dictate your text.

4. When you have finished dictating, activate the Dictate button again. Upon doing this, another bell tone, higher in pitch than the first, will play to indicate that dictation has been stopped.
5. To check what you've just dictated, locate the Send button. Remember, this is situated just above the letter P on the keyboard. To the left of this button, you will find the "Compose Message" Text Field, which now contains the text you dictated.
6. Explore the screen to the left until you've located the Compose message Text Field. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will read out the message you just dictated. When you have read the message, explore the screen to the right until you've located the Send button again.
7. If you want to add more text to your message, locate the Dictate button again and activate it. Dictate your next passage of text and when done, activate the dictate button again to stop the dictation and disengage the microphone. The new text will be added directly after the previous passage of text you dictated.

You can also start dictation by performing the Start/Stop Action gesture, a Two Finger Double Tap. Use the same gesture to stop dictation. The benefit of the Start/Stop Action gesture, is that you can perform it anywhere on the screen, once the Compose Message Text Field has been activated.

8. When you have finished dictating your message, check that what you have entered is correct. If it is OK, locate the Send button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the message will be sent straight-away.

Note 13: If you are not happy with what you have dictated, you can dial the Rotor until VoiceOver says "Edit" and then perform the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Up or Down, until VoiceOver says "Select All". Next, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, all of the text will be selected. You can now activate the "Delete" key on the keyboard to remove the text.

Using Reactions

Reactions are small graphics, called Emoji's, which can be sent to indicate you like, appreciate or disapprove of a message. Typical reactions include thumbs up, red heart, face with tears of joy, crying face and clapping hands.

To react to a message within the Chat history, follow these steps:

1. Open the Chat which contains the specific message you want to react to.
2. Locate the specific message you wish to react to and make it the Current Item.
3. Perform a One Finger Swipe Up or Down until VoiceOver says "React". Now perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a popup window will be displayed consisting of a number of commonly used Emoji's. Also in this popup window, you will find a number of options, including Reply, Forward and Copy.
4. Use a combination of the Next Item and Previous Item gestures, to explore the list of Emoji's. When you find one which you think is appropriate, make it the Current Item and perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the reaction will be immediately sent and the recipient will receive the Emoji you selected. VoiceOver will then read the message you reacted to.

5. When you have finished reacting to messages, locate the "Chats, Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture, to close the Chat history screen and return to the Chats screen.

Sending a New Chat

If you want to Chat to someone you haven't chatted with before, you will need to create a new chat.

To create and send a new chat, follow these steps:

1. In the Chats screen, locate the "New Chat" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Remember, this button is situated at the top right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, the "New chat" screen will be displayed.

Description of the New Chat Screen

At the top of the New chat screen, you will find a heading which reads "New chat". To the right of this heading, situated at the top right corner, you will find the "Close" button. Activating this button closes the New chat screen and returns you to the Chats screen.

Beneath the heading, you will find the "Search" Text Field. When this is the Current Item, VoiceOver says "search name or number". Here, you can type the first few characters of the person you want to chat to. Upon doing this, a filtered list of names will be displayed just beneath the Text Field. Remember, before you can type into a Text Field, you must first perform the Activate gesture, a One Finger Double Tap.

Beneath the Search Text Field, you will find the "New Group" button and beneath this, three more buttons labelled "New Contact", "New Community" and "New Broadcast". The use of these buttons is beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

Beneath the "New Broadcast" button, you will find a heading which reads "Frequently Contacted". Beneath this heading you will find a list of those people you have contacted, or have contacted you, most often. This list is designed to provide quick access to the people you communicate with regularly.

Further down the screen, you will find another heading which reads "Contacts on WhatsApp". Beneath this heading, is a list of all contacts you have on your iPhone, who are using WhatsApp. Associated with each name in the list is a phrase such as "Hey there, I'm using WhatsApp". This is an optional label, which people can use to identify how they feel, what they are doing, their availability etc. At the beginning of the list of contacts, is a button labelled with your name. This can be used to send messages to yourself. This can be handy for practice or test purposes.

Running down the right edge of the screen, you will find a Section Index bar. When this is the Current Item, you can perform a One Finger Swipe Down to move through the contacts list one heading at a time. A One Finger Swipe Down will take you from contacts starting with "A" to those that start with "B", from "B" to "C" and so on. Performing a One Finger Swipe Up will move you backwards one letter at a time. The swipes don't have to be directly on the Section Index bar, they can be performed anywhere on the screen! Just remember to make the Section Index bar the Current Item first.

This concludes the description of the New chat screen.

2. Locate the contact you want to chat with, and make their name the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a new Chat message will be created. VoiceOver will announce "Compose message, text field, is editing", to indicate you are in the Compose message Text Field and in edit mode. The Virtual keyboard will be available at the bottom of the screen.

3. You can now type your message, or activate the Dictate button, situated at the bottom right corner of the keyboard, to start dictation. If you have chosen to use dictation, remember to activate the Dictate button again to stop dictation when you have finished. Alternatively, you can perform the Start/Stop Action gesture, a Two Finger Double Tap, instead to start and stop dictation.
4. When you have composed your message, check it out by locating the Send button and exploring the screen to the left. When you have located the Compose message Text Field, VoiceOver will read what you have entered. If you are happy with this, locate the Send button again and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture.

Upon sending your message, you will be inside the Chat History screen, associated with the Chat message you just sent. VoiceOver will announce "Voice message". As discussed earlier, this seems to be the Current Item after sending a message.

5. To close the Chat history screen, locate the "Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the screen and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be back in the Chats screen.

Sending Voice Messages

Most people either type or dictate their messages. However, there is another type of message you can send in WhatsApp. This is a "Voice message"! A Voice message is a recording of your voice. These can be enjoyable for a recipient to receive, especially if it is a family member, partner or good friend.

For practice, you are going to send a Voice Message. To do this, follow these steps:

1. In the Chats screen, locate and activate the "New chat" button, situated at the top right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, the New chat window will be displayed.
2. Use the Next Item gesture, until you come to the "Contacts on WhatsApp" heading.
3. Now, use the Next Item gesture, until you have located the name of the person you would like to send a voice message to and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be back in the New chat screen, with the name of the person you specified present at the top of the screen.

Note 14: You can also create a new message by opening a chat message from the person you wish to communicate with in the Chats screen. This is providing you have chatted with them in the past of course!

4. The Current Item should be the "Compose message" Text Field. This field should be in text input mode, ready for you to speak your message. However, to be sure, locate the Compose message Text Field and perform the Activate gesture. If the Text Field was already in text input mode, VoiceOver should say "Insertion point at end".

You are now ready to record your voice message.

5. Locate the "Voice Message" button. For reference, this is situated to the right of the Compose Message Text Field, just above the letter "P" on the keyboard. A One Finger Swipe Right should get you there!
6. Perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the microphone will be engaged and the Current Item will be the "Send voice recording" button.

7. When you have finished recording your message, perform the Activate gesture, to send the message.

Sending Longer Voice Messages

If you intend to record a longer message, VoiceOver will most likely speak over the beginning and end of the message, as well as other parts of the message. To avoid this, after making the Voice Message button the Current Item, you can perform the Mute Speech gesture, a Three Finger Double Tap. Upon doing this, the "Voice Message" button will still be the Current Item. VoiceOver won't speak until you unmute the speech!

When the speech is muted, a higher degree of concentration is required to record the message accurately. Practice will be required to master this process, so be patient and expect to make some mistakes before mastering it.

Now try sending a longer message.

1. Locate the "Voice message" button and make it the Current Item.
2. Perform the Mute Speech gesture, a Three Finger Double Tap. Upon doing this, the Voice message button will still be the Current Item.
3. Perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the microphone will be engaged and the Current Item will be the "Send voice recording" button.
4. Record your first part of the message. Then, perform the Previous Item gesture, to make the Pause voice recording button the Current Item. You will need to trust yourself to do this, as VoiceOver won't be talking at this stage!
5. Perform the Activate gesture. This should result in the recording being paused and the Pause button changing to become the "Resume voice recording" button. Take a little time here, to think about what you want to say next.

6. When you are ready to record the next part of the message, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the Send Voice Recording button becomes the Current Item again. Now record the next part of your message. When done, perform the Previous Item gesture, to make the Pause Voice Recording button the Current Item once more. Then, perform the Activate gesture.

Now might be a good time to unmute VoiceOver and explore the Voice Recording controls. To do this, perform a Three Finger Double Tap.

7. Perform the Previous Item gesture, until the "Play voice message" button is the Current Item.

8. Perform the Activate gesture to play the message. All being well, you should hear your recording, free from VoiceOver announcements!

9. If you are happy with the voice message, perform the Next Item gesture, until the "Send voice message" button is the Current Item and then perform the Activate gesture to send it.

10. If you are not happy with your recording, locate the "Cancel" button and perform the Activate gesture to discard the message.

Recording voice messages does take some practice, especially if you decide to mute VoiceOver. So why not try sending a few to yourself, or a close friend, until you've gained a degree of confidence in doing so! If you find that muting and unmuting VoiceOver proves to be too difficult, just send the recording with VoiceOver announcements included, as after all, the message is the important thing!

Playing a Voice Message you have Received

to play a voice message you have received, follow these steps:

1. In the Chats screen, locate the Chat which contains the voice message and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the Chat History screen will be displayed.

2. Locate the Voice Message you have received and make it the Current Item. Be aware that voice messages you have sent are also announced by VoiceOver when you navigate the list of messages. When you make the voice message the Current Item, VoiceOver will say "Voice message, duration", followed by the length in minutes and seconds and the date and time it was received.
3. Perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the voice message will start playing and a toolbar will become available. This contains the "Voice message position" slider bar, which can be used to fast-forward or rewind the message, a "Pause voice message" button and a "Speed" button, which contains the current play speed. This will almost certainly be set to "Normal". The Current Item should be the "Pause voice message" button.
4. Perform the Activate gesture. All being well, the playback should stop. The "Pause voice message" button will now become the "Play voice message" button.
5. You can now use a combination of the Next Item and Previous Item gestures, to explore the options available. To adjust the playback position, make the "Voice message position" slider the Current Item and perform a One Finger Swipe Up to fast-forward 10% at a time, or a One Finger Swipe Down to rewind by 10% at a time. To resume the playback, locate the Play voice message button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the button will change to become the Pause voice message button again. To increase the playback speed, make the "Speed" button the Current Item and perform the Activate gesture to toggle between Normal, 1.5 and 2 times the normal speed.

Note 15: When rewinding the playback using the "Voice message position" slider bar, the playback will stop when you reach 0 seconds. To play the voice message, you will need to locate the Play voice message button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture.

6. When you have finished listening to the voice message, locate the "Chats, Back" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be back in the Chats screen.

Forwarding Messages

Sometimes, you will receive a message that you think might prove useful to someone else. In this situation, you could forward it on, so they can take advantage of the information. Forwarding is a great way of sending a message, exactly as it was received.

To forward a message, follow these steps:

1. In the Chats screen, locate the Chat which contains the message you would like to forward and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the Chat History screen will be displayed.
2. In the Chat history screen, locate the specific message you want to forward and make it the Current Item.
3. Perform the Set Mode gesture, until VoiceOver says "Forward". Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a toolbar will be displayed at the bottom of the screen consisting of two buttons and a label which displayed how many parts of the chat history you are forwarding.

4. If you wanted to forward another part of the chat history at the same time, locate the specific message and make it the Current Item. Then perform the Activate gesture. You can continue doing this until all of the parts of the chat history you want to forward are selected.
5. Locate the "Forward" button, situated at the bottom left corner of the screen and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a screen titled "Send to" will be displayed.

The "Send to" screen allows you to specify who you want the message/s to be forwarded to. This screen is almost the same as the New chat screen. At the top, you will find the Search Text Field, which can be used to quickly filter a list of those contacts you have on your iPhone. When this Text Field is activated, you can use the Virtual keyboard to type the first few characters of a contact's name. Upon doing this, a list of names that contain the characters you typed, in the order you typed them, will be displayed just beneath the text field.

A little further down the screen, you will find a heading which reads "Frequently contacted" and beneath this a list of those people you have contacted, or have contacted you, most often.

Beneath The Frequently contacted list, you will find another heading which reads "Recent chats" and beneath this, a list of those contacts you have messaged or called recently, regardless of how often you have communicated with them overall. This list can be helpful for quickly finding someone you've interacted with in the last few days.

6. Locate the name of the person you wish to forward the specific part of the message history to and make it the Current Item. If the name isn't in either the Frequently contacted or recently contacted lists, use the Search Text Field instead to find the contact you want.

Note 16: You can forward the message to as many contacts as you like. To add additional contacts, type the first few characters of each person's name in turn, into the Search Text Field. Then, locate their name in the list and make it the Current Item. Then perform the Activate gesture. When you do this, VoiceOver doesn't announce whether or not the contact has been added. However, if you navigate away from the contact's name and then navigate back to it, VoiceOver will say "Selected" if you have added it!

7. When you have added all of the contacts you would like to receive the forwarded message, activate the "Forward" button, situated at the bottom right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, the parts of the Chat history you selected will be sent to all those contacts you specified!

Deleting Chats

As you chat with more and more people, the list of Chats becomes longer and longer. Whilst this isn't a problem, it can make finding a particular Chat a little frustrating and time consuming.

It may be that you no longer want to keep a Chat from a specific person. If this is the case, you can remove it from the list by deleting it. Deleting unwanted Chat messages will reduce the overall number of messages in the list, thus making it a little easier to find messages.

Deleting Chats is done by using the VoiceOver Rotor. By default, when you make a Chat message in the list the Current Item, the Rotor automatically dials itself to the Actions item. This is handy, as it makes finding the Delete option relatively easy.

To delete a Chat, follow these steps:

Note 17: The following steps are designed to delete an individual Chat. Group Chats are deleted in a different way. This process is beyond the scope of this tutorial and therefore won't be discussed further.

1. In the Chats screen, locate the Chat you want to delete and make it the Current Item.
2. Perform a One Finger Swipe Up or Down, until VoiceOver says "more" and then perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a screen will be displayed consisting of a number of options.
3. Locate the "delete chat" button" and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a message will be displayed asking if you want to delete the chat. There will be three options available. These are "Delete chat", "Archive instead" and "Cancel".
4. Locate the "Delete Chat" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will confirm that the chat was successfully deleted and you will be returned to the Chats screen.

Describing Photos with Be My Eyes

One of the most common things people do with WhatsApp is to send each other photos of family members, scenes from a recent holiday etc. For VoiceOver users, pictures can be very frustrating, as VoiceOver can't identify what these photos represent. However, if you have Be My Eyes, Seeing AI or Envision AI installed on your iPhone, it is possible to get a description of these photos by sharing them with your chosen app. Probably the best app for describing photos is Be My Eyes! However, the end result in Seeing AI and Envision AI, is pretty much the same!

To have a photo described with Be My Eyes, follow these steps:

1. In the Chats screen, Locate a Chat message which contains a photo and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the Chat History screen will be displayed.

2. In the Chat history screen, locate the specific message which contains a photo and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a screen will be displayed which contains a number of options.
3. Locate the "Share" button, situated at the bottom left corner of the screen and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a popup window will be displayed, consisting of yet more options.
4. Locate the "Share" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a screen will be displayed which contains a list of names who you have communicated with recently, and below these names, a list of commonly used apps for sharing images.
5. Locate the "Describe with Be My Eyes" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will say "Please wait, Be My AI is writing a message". You may find that VoiceOver repeats this announcement if the image is taking a long time to be analysed.

Note 18: If you don't have Be My Eyes on your iPhone, locate the button associated with the app you want to use instead.

6. Once the image has been analysed, a description of the image will be displayed and VoiceOver will read it aloud. Hopefully, the description will provide you with enough information to know what the photo pertains to.
7. If you would like to ask a question about the image, Locate the "Reply edit box", situated at the bottom centre of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture to go into edit mode.

8. Type your question using the Virtual keyboard. When done, locate the "Send message" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. A few seconds later, the answer to your question will be displayed and VoiceOver will read it aloud.
9. When you have finished with the description, locate the "Cancel" button, situated at the upper left corner of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the open photo in WhatsApp.
10. To close the open photo, locate the "Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the Message history screen.
11. To close the Message history screen, locate the "Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the screen, and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the Chats screen

Having photos described using Be My Eyes, Seeing AI or Envision AI, does take a little practice, so be patient as you try to master the process. The end result will be worth it!

This is the end of the introduction to chatting in WhatsApp, in conjunction with VoiceOver. If necessary, go through this tutorial again, to help reinforce your learning.

If you require further information on the subject of using WhatsApp in conjunction with VoiceOver, contact the author, Gary Eady, using the following email address.

technology@sightforsurrey.org.uk