WhatsApp with TalkBack
An Introduction to Chats

This tutorial has been designed to introduce you to Chats in WhatsApp, in conjunction with TalkBack on your Android Smartphone. 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 downloaded and installed onto your Android Smartphone. At the time of writing (23 September 2025), the latest version is 2.25.22.80.
- Your Smartphone is running Android 15 or later.
- Your Smartphone is running TalkBack 15 or later.
- Your Smartphone is connected to the internet.
- You are familiar with the common navigation gestures used with Talkback.
- You are familiar at entering text using the Virtual keyboard.
- The Google keyboard (GBoard), is the default keyboard.

Note 1: The instructions given in this tutorial have been created using a Samsung Galaxy S21 Smartphone, running Android version 15 and TalkBack 15. The default keyboard was set to Google's GBoard. If you are using a non-Samsung device and/or a later version of Android or TalkBack, you may find some minor differences. The same is true if you are using a different default keyboard.

TalkBack Terms and Gestures You Should Know

A number of TalkBack 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 TalkBack cursor. This is the item which TalkBack 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, TalkBack reads the item which is under your finger. This will become the Current Item.

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

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

Activate Gesture, One Finger Double Tap. This gesture activates the Current Item.

Mute Speech Gesture, Two Finger Triple Tap and Hold. Useful for listening to audio without TalkBack talking over it. To unmute the speech, perform the Two Finger Triple Tap and Hold gesture again.

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

Reading Controls Gesture, Three Finger Swipe Right or Three Finger Swipe Left. This is used to cycle through the available reading and navigation controls. This is similar to the VoiceOver Rotor on iOS devices.

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

Long Press Gesture, One Finger Double Tap and Hold. This gesture is used to display a menu, consisting of options relevant to the Current Item.

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 Gemini or the Google Assistant enabled, you can simply ask it to "open WhatsApp".

Description of the WhatsApp Main Screen

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: "Chats", "Updates", "Communities" and "Calls". By default, the Chats Tab will be selected. Strangely, the heading at the top of the screen is "WhatsApp", when the Chats tab is displayed, rather than "Chats".

At the top of the Chats screen, you will find a heading which reads "WhatsApp". To the right of the heading, situated at the top right corner of the screen, you will find two buttons, labelled "Camera" and "More options". 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. Taking photos and recording videos are beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further. The right-most button is the More options button. When this button is activated, a popup menu is displayed consisting of the following items: "New group", "New community", "New broadcast", "Linked devices", "Starred" and "Settings". The items found in the More options menu are beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

Beneath the WhatsApp heading, you will find an unlabelled button. When this is the Current Item, TalkBack will say "ask Meta AI or Search". When this button is activated, a Virtual keyboard is displayed at the bottom of the screen. You can use the keyboard to search your WhatsApp Chats or Contacts for specific names, phrases, photos or attachments. The use of the Meta AI feature is beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.
Beneath the unlabelled button, you will find a row of four buttons you can use to filter your Chats. These are preceded by a button labelled "Inbox", but this isn't actionable. From left to right, the filtering buttons 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.

Associated with each chat, is a "Picture" button, which when activated, displays a screen containing the profile picture of the person who sent you the message, along with other options for communicating with them.

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.

Beneath the encryption information, you will find two buttons, situated to the right side of the screen. The first of these is labelled "Message your assistant". This button won't be discussed further. The second button, which is situated beneath the first, is labelled "New Chat". This button will be discussed later in this tutorial.

Finally, running along the bottom of the WhatsApp main screen, you will find the row of Tabs, which were previously discussed.

This concludes the description of the WhatsApp main 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 Chats Screen

To navigate the Chats screen, first locate the "WhatsApp" heading at the top of the screen. Remember, this is the heading which is displayed when the "Chats" Tab is selected. Then, perform the Next Item gesture, a One Finger Swipe Right, to move to the next item. Upon doing this,

TalkBack 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, TalkBack 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 left corner 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, TalkBack will announce the name of the person who sent the message, the date it was sent and then the entire message last received or sent. Then, it will say "Double tap to open chat". Finally, TalkBack will say "Double Tap and hold to select item and show toolbar for bulk actions".

To move to the next chat, perform the Next Item gesture again, until TalkBack announces who the message was from, the date it was sent and the last message received or sent in that Chat. 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 distinguishing the Chat from the associated Picture button. You will open and reply to a message 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 navigate to 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, TalkBack will announce the current location in the new screen. This will be the "Compose" edit box. For

reference, TalkBack will say " WhatsApp Message, compose message, message edit box out of list swipe down to reveal additional actions, double tap and hold to long press, actions available, use tap with 3 fingers to view ". This is a very long announcement. The only thing you really need to know is that you are on the Compose message edit box.

Description of the Chat History Screen

At the top left corner of the Chat history screen, you will find the "Back" button. Sometimes, TalkBack will also announce a number when this button is the Current Item. This number pertains to the number of unread messages in the Chats screen. Activating the "Back" button returns you to the Chats screen. To the right of the Back button, you will find a heading, which contains the name of the person you are chatting with. This includes the date and time they were last active in WhatsApp. TalkBack will also say "Tap to open contact info". If you do this, a new screen, containing information about the contact will be displayed. You will need to activate the "Back" button, situated at the top left corner of the resulting screen, to close the contact information and return to the open chat message.

Note 3: If you have opened a Chat sent from a Group, the group name will be displayed instead of the name of an individual person within the group. Additionally, the number of group members who are currently online (using WhatsApp at the time) will be displayed and TalkBack will announce this. If no group members are currently online, the first few names/telephone numbers of those belonging to the group will be displayed instead.

At the Top right corner of the screen, you will find two buttons, labelled "Video call" and "More options". The left-most of these buttons is the "Video call" button. The More options button comes next, in that order. Depending on the message type, you may also find the "Voice" call button, situated to the right of the Video call button. The use of these two/three buttons are beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

Beneath the heading, you will find another heading which displays a date. Beneath this heading, you will find all of the messages sent and received on the date associated with the heading. All messages are grouped into dates, with a date heading preceding the messages for 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 4: 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 Two 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 an edit box between the first and second button. From left to right these buttons are "Emoji", "Attach", "Camera" and "Voice message". The edit box is labelled "Compose message" and is where you type your message.

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 are automatically placed on the "Compose message" edit box. TalkBack will say "Compose message, edit box, tap and hold to long press, actions available". From here, you can use the Previous Item gesture to move through the history of messages sent between you and the other person or group members, in date order. When you come to the "More options" button, you will know that you have reached the first message in the history. You can now navigate the history of messages in the

opposite direction (reverse date order) by performing the Next Item gesture. When you come to the "Emoji" button, you will know that you have reached the last message in the history.

Tip: When swiping around the screen, 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 history screen, is to navigate by heading - days of the week. To do this, first locate any message in the Chat history, then perform the Reading Controls gesture, a Three Finger Swipe Right or Three Finger Swipe Left, until TalkBack says "Headings". You can now perform the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Down, to move to the next heading or a One Finger Swipe Up, 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 "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. Alternatively, you can close the Chat History screen by activating the Android "Back" button, typically situated to the left or right of the Home Button.

Replying to Chat Messages

There are two 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 as follows.

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 and open 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, TalkBack will say "Message, is editing". This means you are in text input mode.

Note 5: 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 TalkBack 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 TalkBack 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, TalkBack 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 "Enter" key, at the bottom right corner of the keyboard.

Note 6: between the numbers 3, 4 and 5 and the Compose message edit box, you will find three buttons labelled Sticker keyboard, Gif keyboard and Clipboard. These are part of the "Suggestions Strip", which is situated above the number row on the Virtual keyboard. It runs from the left edge of the screen, all the way across to the right edge, and consists of the following buttons: Open features menu, Stickers keyboard, GIF keyboard, Clipboard, Settings, Theme Settings and Use Voice typing. The Use Voice Typing button will be discussed later, but the other buttons won't be discussed further. Just be aware that they appear above the numbers when the Compose edit box is activated for editing.

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 "Use voice typing" button, which is just above the number "0" (zero) on the keyboard. To the left of the Send button, you will find the "Attach" button and to the left of this, 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, TalkBack 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 7: 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 next.

Replying to a specific Message in a Chat

It is possible to reply to a specific message in a Chat. 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 Chat, follow these steps:

1.   From the Chats screen, locate the Chat you would like to reply to 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 reply to and make it the Current Item.

3.   Perform the Reading Controls gesture, a Three Finger Swipe Right or Three Finger Swipe Left, until TalkBack says "Actions".

4.   Next, perform the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Up or Down, until TalkBack says "Reply privately". Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a new reply will be created and TalkBack will say "Compose message, editing, edit box". This means you are in edit mode and ready to compose your reply.

Note 8: The "Reply Privately" 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 locate and activate the "Reply" item instead.

5.   Use the Virtual keyboard to compose your reply. When done, locate the Send button and make it the Current Item.

6.   Explore the screen to the left until you have located the Compose message Text Field. Upon doing this, TalkBack will read the text you have typed.

7.   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.

8.   Finally, perform the Activate gesture to send your reply. Upon doing this, the person who sent the original message will receive your reply.

Upon sending your message, TalkBack will announce "Camera button, double tap to send a photo or video". For some unknown reason, this seems to be the Current Item after sending a message.

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 edit mode. Upon doing this, the Virtual keyboard will be displayed at the bottom of the screen.

2.   Now, explore the keyboard until you've located the number "0" (zero) on the virtual keyboard. Then, Explore upwards to find the "Use Voice typing" button.

3.   Now perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a high pitched bell tone will play and the microphone will be activated. You can now dictate your message. The "Use Voice typing" button changes to become the "Stop Voice typing" button and it will be the Current Item.

Note 9: 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, perform the Activate gesture, to stop voice typing and deactivate the microphone. Upon doing this, TalkBack will announce "Voice input stopped".

5.   To check what you've just dictated, locate the "Send" button. For reference, this is situated just above the "Use voice typing" button, which is just above the number "0" (zero) on the keyboard. To the left of the Send button, you will find the "Attach" button and to the left of this, the "Compose Message" Text Field, which now contains the text you dictated. Explore the screen to the left until you've located the Compose message Text Field. Upon doing this, TalkBack will say "compose message", and will then read out the message you just dictated.

6.   If you want to add more text to your message, locate the "Use Voice typing" button again and then perform the Activate gesture. Dictate your next phrase and then perform the Activate gesture again to disengage the microphone and stop the dictation. The new text will be added directly after the previous phrase you dictated.

7.   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 10: If you are not happy with what you have dictated, you can use the Reading Controls gesture, a Three Finger Swipe Right or Three Finger Swipe Left, until TalkBack says "Actions", then perform the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Up or Down, until TalkBack 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 specific 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 the Long Press gesture, a One Finger Double Tap and hold. Upon doing this, you should hear a sound and a popup window will be displayed. TalkBack will say "Back button, out of list, tap to activate". This means that the Current Item in the new window is the "Back" button and you need to perform a One Finger Double Tap to activate it.

The popup window contains a number of buttons for replying, deleting and forwarding the message, as well as a list of the most popular reactions.

4.   Use the Explore gesture, or a combination of the Next Item and Previous Item gestures, to explore the list of Emoji's.

5.	When you find a reaction 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. TalkBack will then read the message you reacted to.

6.	When you have finished reacting to messages, locate the "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 send a 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. For reference, this button is situated towards the bottom right corner of the screen, just above the Calls Tab item. Upon doing this, the "New chat" screen will be displayed.

Description of the New Chat Screen

Situated at the top left corner of the New chat screen, you will find the "Back" button. Activating this button returns you to the Chats screen. To the right of the Back button, you will find a heading labelled "Select contact" and associated with this, a label which indicates how many contacts you have which are using WhatsApp.

At the top right corner of the screen, you will find two buttons. The first of these is the "Search" button, which when activated, displays an edit box into which you can type the name or number of a contact to find. The second button is labelled "More". When this button is activated, a popup window is displayed consisting of the following options: Contact

settings, Invite a friend, Contacts, Refresh and Help. Searching for people will be covered later. Use of the More options button is beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

A little further down the screen, you will find the "New group" button, and beneath this, three more buttons labelled "New contact", "Add new contact via QR code" and "New community". The use of these buttons is beyond the scope of this tutorial and won't be discussed further.

Beneath the "New community" button, you will find a heading which reads "Contacts on WhatsApp". Beneath this heading, is a list of all contacts you have on your device, who are using WhatsApp. Each contact in the list has an associated button, labelled the same as the contact. When the associated button is activated, a screen is displayed which contains the photograph of the contact (if one has been added), as well as the mobile number of the contact. You will also find a button for messaging the contact and an Info button, which opens the contact card for that person. This screen doesn't have a "Back" button, so you will have to use the Android "Back" button, typically situated to the left or right of the Android "Home" button, to close this screen. TalkBack differentiates between the two buttons by saying "Tap to view profile" when the associated button is the Current Item.

Beneath the list of names under the Contacts on WhatsApp heading, you will find another heading which reads "Invite to WhatsApp". Beneath this heading, you will find a list of contacts on your device, who don't currently use WhatsApp. Associated with each name, is an "Invite" button.

Finally, at the bottom of the screen, you will find the "Share invite" link button and beneath this, the "Contacts help" button. These buttons won't be discussed further.

This concludes the description of the New chat screen.

2. From the list of names beneath the "contacts on WhatsApp" heading, 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. TalkBack will announce "Compose message, editing, message, edit box", to indicate you are in the message edit box 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 "Use Voice typing" button, situated just above the number "0" on the Virtual keyboard, to start dictation. If you choose to use dictation, remember to activate the "Stop Voice typing" button to stop dictation when you have finished.

4. When you have composed your message, check it out by locating any of the numbers 3, 4 or 5 on the Virtual keyboard and sliding your finger up the screen until you have located the "Compose message" edit box. When you have located it, TalkBack will read what you have entered. If you are happy with this, locate the "Send" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture.

Upon sending your message, TalkBack will announce "Camera button, double tap to send a photo or video". For some unknown reason, this seems to be the Current Item after sending a message.

5. To close the Chat message 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 towards the bottom right corner of the screen, just above the Calls Tab item. 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 11: You can also create a new message by opening a chat message from the person you wish to chat 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" edit box. It should be activated, 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 "edit mode", TalkBack should say "showing items 13 to 17 of 17". This is a spurious message, and makes no sense, as no additional items appear on the screen!

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 edit box, just above the number "0" on the Virtual keyboard.

Note 12: When the Voice Message button is the Current Item, TalkBack might say "double tap and hold to record, slide left to cancel recording, slide up to lock recording, release to send". This announcement pertains to earlier versions of WhatsApp, where you had to double tap and hold to record a message. This is no longer necessary in the latest version of WhatsApp.

6.   Perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the microphone will be engaged and the Current Item will be the "Stop recording" button. You can now record your message!

7.   When you have finished recording your message, perform the Activate gesture to stop the recording and disengage the microphone.

8.   Perform the Next Item gesture, to make the Send button the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture, to send the message.

Sending Longer Voice Messages

If you intend to record a longer message, TalkBack 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 Two Finger Triple Tap and Hold. Upon doing this, the "Voice Message" button will still be the Current Item. TalkBack 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 getting to grips with 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 Two Finger Triple Tap and Hold. Upon doing this, TalkBack will say "Spoken feedback is off" and 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 "Stop Voice recording" button.

4. Record your first part of the message. Then, perform the Activate gesture to activate the "Stop Voice recording" button. Upon doing this, the button will change to become the "Resume Voice recording" button and it will be the Current Item.

Take a little time here, to think about what you want to say next.

5. When you are ready to record the next part of the message, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the "Resume Voice recording" button will become the "Stop Voice recording" button once more and it will be the Current Item.

6. Now record the next part of your message. When done, perform the Activate gesture to stop the recording.

Now might be a good time to unmute TalkBack and explore the Voice Recording controls. To do this, perform a Two Finger Triple Tap and Hold. Upon doing this, TalkBack will say "Spoken feedback is on".

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 TalkBack 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 make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture to discard the message.

Recording voice messages does take some practice, especially if you decide to mute TalkBack. 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 TalkBack proves to be too difficult, just send the recording with TalkBack 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 TalkBack when you navigate the list of messages. When you make the voice message the Current Item, TalkBack 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 "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 the Set Mode gesture, 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 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 13: 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 perform the Activate gesture.

6.	When you have finished listening to the voice message, locate the "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.

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 Reading Controls gesture, a Three Finger Swipe Right or Three Finger Swipe Left, until TalkBack says "Actions".

4.   Next, perform the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Up or Down, until TalkBack says "Forward". Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a new screen, titled "Forward to", will be displayed.

The Forward to screen is similar to the New chat screen. At the top right corner, you will find the "Search" button. When this button is activated, an edit box is made available into which you can type the first few characters of a contacts name. This will then display a filtered list of those contacts whose name includes the characters you typed, in the order you typed them.

A little further down the screen, you will find a heading which reads "Recent chats" and beneath this, a list of those contacts you have chatted with over the past few days.

5.	Locate the "Search" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, TalkBack will say "Search name or number, edit box" and the Virtual keyboard will be available at the bottom of the screen. You are now ready to type the first few characters of the person you wish to forward the message to.

6.	Type the first two or three characters of the contact's name. Upon doing this, a list of suggested contacts will be displayed just beneath the edit box. All being well, the person you want will be one of these!

7.	Use a combination of the Next Item, Previous Item and Explore gestures, until you have located the contact you want to forward the message to.

8.	Ensure that the contact you want is the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the name will be added to a list of potential recipients.

Note 14: 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, TalkBack doesn't announce whether or not the person has been added. However, if you navigate away from the person's name and then navigate back to it, TalkBack will say "Selected" if you have added it!

9.	When you have added all of the names of the contacts you would like to receive the forwarded message, activate the "Send" button, situated at the right edge of the screen, just above the "Use voice typing" button on the keyboard. Upon doing this, the message 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 Chats will reduce the overall number of messages in the list, thus making it a little easier to find messages.

Deleting Chats is achieved by using the TalkBack Reading Controls function. By default, when you make a Chat in the main screen the Current Item, TalkBack should provide you with a menu of options, applicable to the type of item you are on. You can explore the available options by performing the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Down or One Finger Swipe Up. To activate an option, perform the Activate gesture, a One Finger Double Tap.

To delete a Chat, follow these steps:

Note 15: 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 the Reading Controls gesture, a Three Finger Swipe Right or Three Finger Swipe Left, until TalkBack says "Actions".

3.   Now perform the Set Mode gesture, a One Finger Swipe Down, until TalkBack says "Delete this chat" and then perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, a message will be displayed asking if you want to delete the chat. There are two options available. These are "Delete chat" and "Cancel".

4.   Locate the "Delete chat" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, TalkBack 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 TalkBack users, pictures can be very frustrating, as TalkBack can't identify what these photos represent. However, if you have Be My Eyes, Seeing AI or Envision AI installed on your Smartphone, 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!

To have a photo described by 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 a message which contains a photo and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, the photo will be enlarged and a number of options will be made available.

3.   Locate the "More options" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, another popup window will be displayed.

4.   In the popup window, locate the "Share" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, another popup window will be displayed, which contains a number of apps which WhatsApp can share the photo with.

5.   Locate the "Describe with Be My Eyes" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, TalkBack will say "Please wait, Be My AI is writing a message". You may find that TalkBack repeats this announcement if the image is taking a long time to be analysed.

Note 16: If you can't find the "Describe with Be My Eyes" button, locate the "More" button and make it the Current Item. Then, perform the Activate gesture. This will result in more applications being made available. Locate the "Be My Eyes" button and make it the Current Item, then perform the Activate gesture.

6.   Once the image has been analysed, a description of the image will be displayed and TalkBack 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 TalkBack will read it aloud.

9.   When you have finished with the description, locate the "Back" 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 taken to the Home Screen of your device.

To return to WhatsApp, activate the "Recents" button, typically situated to the left or right of the Android Home Button at the bottom of the screen. Upon doing this, a list of running apps, which you have recently used, will be displayed. Use a combination of the Next Item and

Previous Item gestures, until TalkBack says "WhatsApp" and then perform the Activate gesture. Upon doing this, you will be back in WhatsApp, with the open photo on screen.

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 using Chat messages in WhatsApp, in conjunction with TalkBack. If necessary, go through this tutorial again, to help reinforce your learning.

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

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