

## Communication apps

Just a few from an overwhelming number of options. Everything has a free version (with “in-app purchases” for features like more voice options)

### Text to Speech apps

There might be different reasons to use a text to speech app:

- **To save your voice** - type what you want to say as an alternative to speaking yourself
- **To reduce your exposure to screens** and have what's on the screen read aloud to you (webpage, email, report)

**The accessibility features on your phone, tablet, or laptop** are a good place to start - you can change a lot of screen features, use voice commands or screen reading etc.

Here are some additional options:

**To save your voice**, you want something with some free voices, and the option of saving favourite phrases (“Could someone please get my coffee out of the microwave?”)

#### Android:

“Tell Me” (this has good reviews and lots of downloads; also recommended by a group member

<http://simplycomplexapps.com/TellMe/>

“Spoken” (basics are free and you can try predictive features for three months)

[https://play.google.com/store/search?q=spoken&c=apps&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/search?q=spoken&c=apps&hl=en_US)

#### Apple

“Text to Speech!”

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/text-to-speech/id712104788>

“Speak4Me”

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/speak4me-text-to-speech/id894460403>

“ClaroCom” (not many reviews but recommended by one of the Assistive Technology clinics)

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/clarocom/id903818521>

**For screen-reading**, this is an article from PC Magazine (updated April 2023), which I cannot endorse but recognize as a very longstanding publication in the tech world (and I'm old, so I would know). It gives instructions for using the **built-in text to speech software** that comes with laptops and smart phones, and suggests that the built-in software may be all you need. Here is the review article: <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/best-text-to-speech-tools>

Newspapers often offer an audio option for most articles – look for the little “play” symbol. It’s usually a digital voice rather than a human reader but worth a try if it’s available

“**Natural Reader**” is a stand-alone screen-reading app that was recommended in a number of places. It works with iOS, PC, Android. You can paste web links into the reader on your phone to get the article read to you. There is also an app for your desktop and a Chrome extension – it can read whatever you have pen. <https://www.naturalreaders.com/>

## Voice to Text apps:

### You might want to reduce your need to write

- To reduce screen exposure, or
- Because you find writing more difficult than speaking

You can dictate everything from texts to notes to yourself on both iPhone and Android smartphones, and there are extensions and **accessibility settings** on most laptops and desktops as well. The apps would often also transcribe a meeting or conversation

The same PC magazine reviewed speech to text apps, and again indicated that the built-in apps are generally ok <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/best-speech-to-text-apps-and-tools>

You can also look at:

### Android versions

“SpeechNotes”

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=co.speechnotes.speechnotes&hl=en&gl=US>

“Speech to Text+”

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.maruar.voicememo&cjevent=6102d26be9db11ed8225009c0a82b824>

### Apple versions:

“Speech to Text+ “

<https://apps.apple.com/lv/app/speech-to-text/id1513639790>

“Dictation - Speech to text”

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/dictation-speech-to-text/id1124772331>

## Voice Amplifiers

The Voice Clinic at St. Michael's Hospital says they have had luck with [Winbridge](#) models (many of these are available on Amazon):

WinBridge S278 portable loudspeaker voice amplifier with wireless mic (15 Watts power)

Winbridge M800 | With UHF Wireless Mic Waterproof (18 Watts power)

Winbridge S92 Pro Portable PA System, Bluetooth Speaker with 2 Microphones (headset and handheld), Wireless Voice Amplifier (25 Watts power)

From previous conversations with the Voice Clinic, if you're a teacher or someone who needs to be heard in a larger space, you should get something that in the 18 W range.

They have also recommended the [SHIDU](#) brand in the past (which might even be the same company) – Shidu IPX5 18W, with a portable speaker you wear at your waist or on a lanyard and charge via USB, and a wired microphone. Again, you might not need one that strong if you're only going to be in smaller rooms with polite adults rather than kids!

Some amps come with a wireless microphone (but the mikes don't stay charged as long as the amplifier so for a day of teaching it could be an issue)