

Skip's Quick Tips

Text-to-Speech in Microsoft Office

Text-to-speech is not automatically available as an icon in Office, but can be easily added to the Quick Access Toolbar or the Ribbon.

Once the icon is available, select text onscreen, click the icon, and listen.

Pros

- Provides text-to-speech from within the Office product
- Aids users in editing their work with the additional use of audio
- Can assist users who are experiencing eye fatigue or reading past errors
- Can serve as a read aloud support for text that a user has difficulty decoding

Cons

- This feature is not part of the Office Ribbon or Quick Access toolbar, but is a “hidden” feature that needs to be manually added as an icon
- The feature has to be added separately for each Office application the user wishes to use it; fortunately, the steps to do so are identical in each program
- Word-by-word highlighting is not an option when the computer’s voice is reading aloud
- Voices are limited to those installed in the operating system and controlled outside of the Office application (click **Start | Settings | Time & language | Speech**)

How Does It Work?

Adding the Speak feature to the Quick Access Toolbar

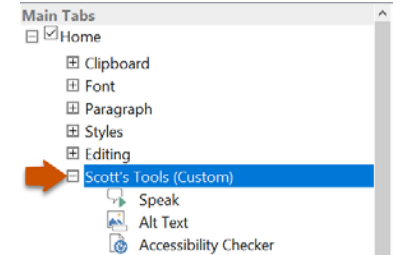
1. Launch an Office product (must be done separately for Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.)
2. Click on **File | Options | Quick Access Toolbar**
3. Change *Choose commands from:* drop-down from **Popular Commands** to **All Commands** in the panel on the left



4. Scroll down and select **Speak** from the available features
5. Click **Add >>** at the center of the screen (**Speak** will appear in the panel on the right)
6. Click **OK** - the icon will be available at the upper-left corner of the application window

Adding the Speak feature to the Office Ribbon

1. Launch an Office product (must be done separately for Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.)
2. Click on **File | Options | Customize Ribbon**
3. Change *Choose commands from:* drop-down from **Popular Commands** to **All Commands** in the panel on the left
4. Scroll down and select **Speak** from the available features
5. In the panel on the right, select a location where the new tool should be added by clicking on a *Tab or Group* name (click the **+/- box** to expand or collapse options)
 - a. Tabs are the main sections of the *Ribbon* (e.g., *Home, Insert, Design, Page Layout, References*, etc.)
 - b. *Groups* are the subsections within a *Ribbon Tab* (e.g., the *Home* tab includes groups for *Clipboard, Font, Paragraph, Styles*, and *Editing*) that contain tools and controls
 - c. Use **New Tab** and/or **New Group** to create a custom tool set
6. With **Speak** selected in the first panel, click **Add >>** at the center of the screen (**Speak** will appear in the panel on the right)
7. Click **OK** - the icon will be available at the upper-left corner of the application window



Adjusting the Speech Settings

Speech is controlled in the operating system in one of two possible places, depending on the setup of the computer. If the first option does not change the text-to-speech in Office, try the second option.

Legacy User Interface (UI)

Click **Start Menu | Windows System | Control Panel | Ease of Access | Recognition** | click the link for **Text to Speech** along the left side of the window to display the *Speech Properties* panel and adjust options

Metro User Interface (UI)

Click **Start Menu | Windows System | Time & language | Speech | Text-to-speech** and adjust options