Factsheet 11: Using speech to text in Microsoft Word – Dictate your writing.

Writing is the process of recording ideas and information onto a page. The most common interface for writing is the keyboard. However, using Microsoft Word 365 we can also dictate directly into a Microsoft Word document.

Speech to text has come a long way in recent years. However, there are some important factors to consider if you wish to use this strategy:

The positives:
- Speech to text software can be very good if you experience spelling difficulties. It might recognise a word incorrectly, but it won't make spelling mistakes.
- Speech to text software can be very good if you find it easier to express ideas and understanding verbally as compared to doing so using a keyboard.
- Speech to text software can help reduce interruptions to the writing flow.

However:
- Speech to text may make recognition errors.
- Speech to text software will attempt to recognise everything that you say (absolutely everything). You must learn to dictate to get the best from this strategy.
- The better your microphone, the better your speech to text software performance is likely to be. A poor-quality microphone may result in an increased error rate.
- Speech to text software works best in a quiet environment.
- If you are going to use speech to text to prepare academic writing, you must speak with an academic writing style.
- You will need to say punctuation.

Despite these considerations, it is definitely a good idea to try speech to text as a strategy to see if it works for you.
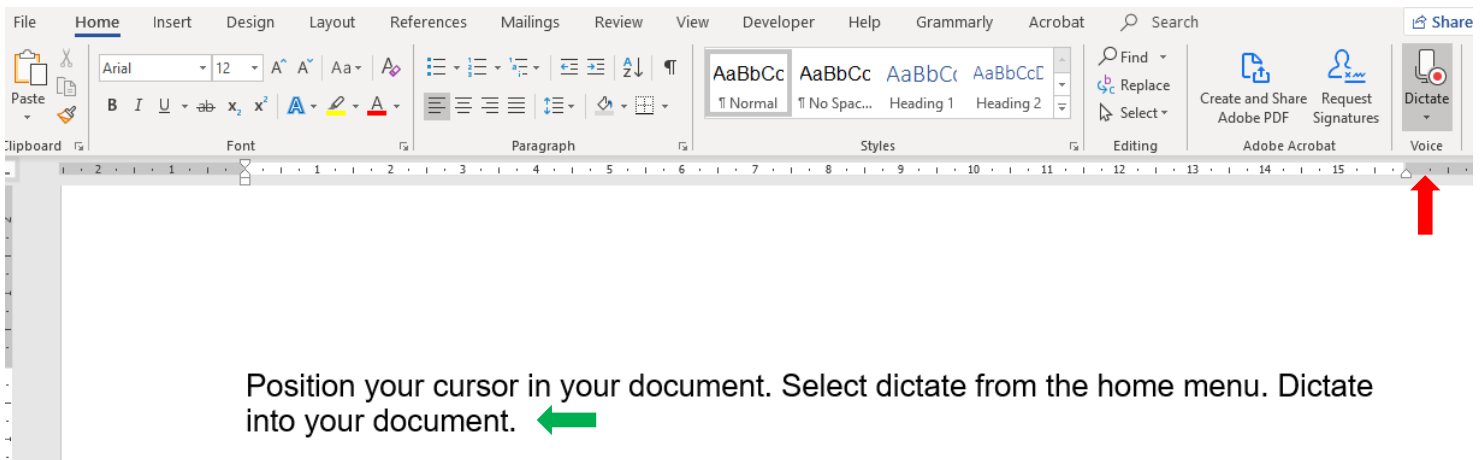
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Use the 'Dictate' function of Microsoft Word

Note: You must have a computer with a built-in microphone / external microphone to use the 'Dictate' function.

- Position your cursor in your document.
- Select 'Dictate' from the 'Home' menu (red arrow).
- Dictate into your document. The words you say will appear on the screen (green arrow).

Position your cursor in your document. Select dictate from the home menu. Dictate into your document.

Note: Although Microsoft Word 'Dictate' is very good, it is a basic tool. For greater functionality and accuracy, a 'paid for' tool such as Dragon Naturally Speaking should be considered. Please see the website below for more information and pricing details.

https://www.nuance.com/en-gb/dragon.html