How to Set Up, Configure, and Use Narrator in Windows 11

Below is a detailed guide to help you get started with Narrator, the built-in screen reader in Windows 11. This documentation covers setup, configuration, and practical usage tips.

What is Narrator?

Narrator is a screen-reading application built into Windows 11. It reads text on your screen aloud and provides spoken feedback to help you navigate apps, websites, documents, and the operating system itself. No additional downloads or installations are required.

How to Turn On Narrator

Quick Keyboard Shortcut:

◉ Press *Windows logo key + Ctrl + Enter* to toggle Narrator on or off instantly.

Via Settings:

◉ Open the **Start menu** and select **Settings**.
◉ Go to **Accessibility** > **Narrator**.
◉ Switch the **Narrator** toggle to **On**.

At the Login Screen:

◉ Click the **Accessibility** icon and select **Narrator** before logging in.

First Launch and Narrator Home

◉ When Narrator starts, you'll hear a welcome message and see the Narrator Home window.
◉ Narrator Home provides quick actions (read current item, read from here, stop reading) and a help screen.
◉ Use Tab to move focus between options and Enter to activate them.
◉ You can choose not to show Narrator Home at startup by unchecking the relevant box[3].

Customizing Narrator Settings

To access Narrator settings:

◉ Go to **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Narrator**.

Key settings you can adjust:

◉ **Voice:** Choose your preferred voice and adjust speaking speed, pitch, and volume.
◉ **Natural Voices:** Windows 11 may prompt you to download more natural-sounding voices.
◉ **Punctuation and Verbosity:** Set how much punctuation and other details Narrator reads aloud.
◉ **Keyboard Layout:** Choose between Standard and Legacy layouts for Narrator commands.
◉ **Start-up Options:** Decide if Narrator starts automatically or with every login.

Basic Narrator Controls and Navigation

- **Start/Stop Narrator:** *Windows logo key + Ctrl + Enter*
- **Pause/Resume Reading:** *Ctrl*
- **Read Next/Previous Item:** *Caps Lock + Right/Left Arrow*
- **Read Current Item:** *Caps Lock + D*
- **Read from Here:** *Caps Lock + F*
- **Open Narrator Settings:** *Caps Lock + N*
- **Exit Narrator:** *Caps Lock + Esc*

Scan Mode:

- **Toggle Scan Mode:** *Caps Lock + Space*
  - In Scan Mode, use Up/Down Arrow to move through items, Enter to activate links or buttons.

Using Narrator to Read Text

- Open any webpage, email, or document. Narrator will start reading content as it appears.
- A blue rectangle highlights each word as it is read aloud.
- To read a specific section, highlight the text and Narrator will read the selection.

Additional Features

- Touch Support: Narrator supports basic touch gestures for navigation on touch-enabled devices.
- Braille Support: Narrator can work with supported refreshable braille displays.
- Custom Commands: You can customize Narrator commands in the settings.

Learning and Troubleshooting

- Narrator Home offers links to the complete guide and help resources.
- For a full list of keyboard commands and advanced features, visit the official Microsoft support page:
  Complete Guide to Narrator - Microsoft Support1.

Tips for New Users

- Practice in a quiet environment with headphones for best results.
- Start with basic navigation and gradually explore advanced features like Scan Mode and custom voices.
- Use the help screen in Narrator Home for quick reference.