

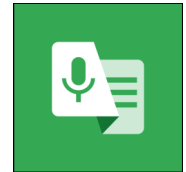
# Speech to text apps

Information on this page is adapted from the [HearingLikeMe.com](https://www.hearinglikeme.com) article published by Lisa A. Goldstein (June, 2020) and Audiologist Tina Childress's compiled list of apps for people with hearing loss.

*“There has never been a greater need for speech-to-text apps than right now. Everyone is wearing masks for the indefinite future as we wait for a COVID-19 vaccine. These transcription apps help people with hearing loss to communicate.”*  
- Lisa A. Goldstein

## Google Live Transcribe and Sound Notification app is a free app

Live Transcribe has a new name. It is Live Transcribe & Sound Notifications. It's an app that makes everyday conversations and surrounding sounds more accessible among people who are deaf and hard of hearing using your Android phone.



Using Google's state-of-the-art automatic speech recognition and sound detection technology, Live Transcribe & Sound Notifications provides you free, real-time transcriptions of your conversations and sends notifications based on your surrounding sounds at home. The notifications make you aware of important situations at home, such as a fire alarm or doorbell ringing, so that you can respond quickly.

On most Android phones, you can directly access Live Transcribe & Sound Notifications with these steps:

1. Open your device's Settings app.
2. Tap Accessibility, then tap Live Transcribe, or Sound Notifications, depending on which app you'd like to start.
3. Tap Use service, then accept the permissions.
4. Use the **Accessibility button or gesture** to start Live Transcribe or Sound Notifications.

This appears to be the most reputable free transcription app currently available for Android. There is a Live Transcribe for iPhones launched in May 2020. It has a similar name but is not a Google product. Unlike many transcription apps, Google Live Transcribe and Sound Notification will make corrections/adjustments based on conversation context. It also adds punctuation for easier comprehension. You need an external microphone found in wired headsets, Bluetooth headsets, and USB mics for better audio reception. You can save a transcript up to three days which stays secure on your device. (By default, transcriptions are not saved.) You can also touch and hold the transcript to copy & paste. It is only available on Android or Google smartphones at this time.

<https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/9350862?hl=en>  
Can be used on Android.

## Otter.ai is free for up to 600 minutes per month

Otter.ai can be used for one on one conversations but is popular for other uses like webinars and podcasts. It can also be used in a web browser.



One feature now available is shared notes for classes. One downfall is the inability to change the font inside the app. Modifications must be made in settings.

Up to 600 minutes/month is free for individuals. For a team, pricing can be up to \$12.50/month.  
Can be used on Android and iPhones

<http://otter.ai>

# Speech to text apps

*"When it comes to speech-to-text apps, she (Tina Childress) likes features from a variety of apps. As a result, she's learned how to strategically use them.*

*One I can use for captioning phone calls and another one will be used for back up captioning a meeting. Childress says that you can even use an app in a way that wasn't its original design purpose. An example of this is how we can ask people to use their phone with a speech-to-text app, hold it under their chin facing outward and viola! It's like they're wearing their own private captioning box – we can now better understand them, even if they're wearing a mask, six feet away, with a degraded speech signal and we can't lipread them."*

*- Linda Goldstein's interview with Tina Childress*

## Ava boasts best caption quality and customized vocabulary

Ava touts itself as "live transcription for any conversation. Perhaps the priciest of all transcription options. Ava has a tiered subscription plan. While it is free for the occasional user (five free hours/month), a premium subscription (\$14.99/month) has infinite captioning time and higher caption quality (90-95%) If Ava is being used for work or a board meeting, the Pro, Campus, Welcome or Event plan starts at \$99/month. This plan boasts the best caption quality and customized vocabulary. Live, professionally-revered 99% accurate captions can be requested with Ava Scribe for additional fees.



<https://www.ava.me/>

Can be used on Androids and iPhones.

## Microsoft Translator was designed to break down language barriers

The Microsoft Translator can be used as a translator between languages as well as voice-to-text. It can be used in group work as students can follow along in their Language with caption. A nice feature is that you can also do typed translations offline (but it's not voice-to-text) to/from other languages.



<http://www.microsoft.com/translator/default.aspx>

Can be used on Android and iPhones

## An external microphone should be utilized

While all these apps are great for providing an option for speech-to-text technology, the microphones in the phones are not capable of picking up everything at the six feet apart suggested during this pandemic. An external directional microphone greatly improves the ability of the phone to pick up the speech and thus give better quality of the captioning. There is a great price range in external microphones along with options. A \$25 external microphone should do the trick and be sure that it is for your particular phone (i.e. Android versus iPhone). Below are some samples of microphones.



Purple Panda Lavalier  
Lapel microphone kit

This microphone is limited in its distance and the student has to be tethered to the speaker. However, may be good for group work.



Saramonic Mini-Condenser microphone



Comica 3.5mm  
Universal microphone

These two microphones can be turned and aimed at the speaker. Sounds from the sides and behind the student should not be picked up.