

Filler Words → The 6 best free speech-to-text apps for creators

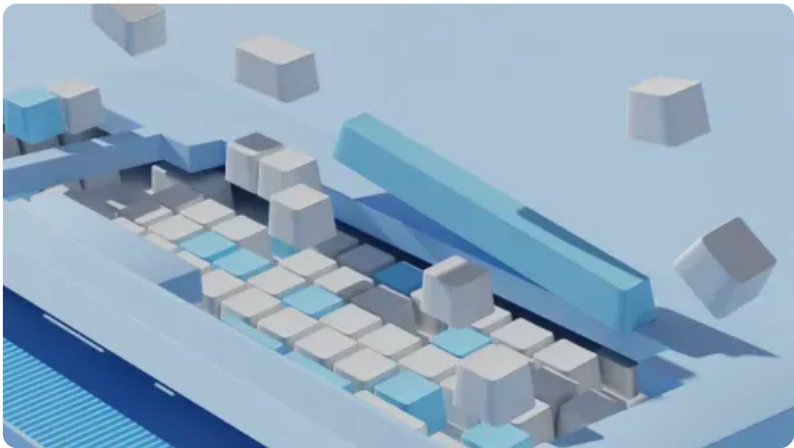
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The 6 best free speech-to-text apps for creators

Discover the best free speech-to-text apps for creators. Enhance productivity with accurate and efficient voice recognition.

 Alex Boswell

AI for Creators Gear & Setup



In this article

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1. Descript

2. oTranscribe

*Discover the best free speech-to-text apps for seamless transcription!
Enhance productivity with accurate and efficient voice recognition.*

If you're an online creator who works with video and audio (say, a podcaster or YouTuber), chances are you spend a lot of time or money writing scripts and transcribing your content. Or, you let YouTube automatically caption your videos and hope for the best, often with colorful results.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

You don't have to spend hours manually transcribing or a ton of money for per-minute transcription services. Instead, you can use free speech-to-text software, some of which include artificial intelligence (AI) tools designed for creators, to help you get your words onto the page in minutes.

6 best free speech-to-text apps for creators

3. Dictanote

4.  **descript**

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5. Google Docs Voice Typing

6. Otter.ai

Honorable mention: Just Press Record

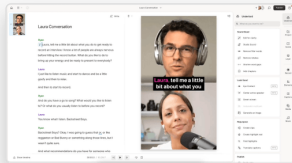
Quick tip for the best speech-to-text results

Best free speech-to-text app FAQs

Is there a free app for voice-to-text transcription?

What is the best AI speech-to-text tool?

What are the benefits of using a speech-to-text app?



Start editing audio & video

This makes the editing process so much faster. I wish I knew about Descript a year ago.

Matt D., Copywriter

 | ★★★★★ 4.6 rating

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6 Best Speech-to-Text Apps for Seamless Transcriptions

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What is a speech-to-text app?

A speech-to-text app, or dictation app, is software that lets you record your voice (or upload an audio/video file) and transcribes it into text within the app.

The technology basis of these apps is speech recognition software, which takes a recording and breaks it down into bits it can interpret, converting them into digital text. It's worth noting that speech recognition technology and voice recognition aren't the same; the latter only looks to identify a spoken voice (and often specific voice commands) rather than transcribe what's being said.

One of the most common use cases for speech-to-text is for [transcribing interviews](#) and meetings, which makes them more accessible for those with hearing difficulties and better for SEO purposes.

However, you can also use them for transcribing [voiceover videos](#), vlogs, audio-only podcasts, and more.

How to choose the best free speech-to-text software

In this section, we'll cover a few core features you should look out for when choosing free speech-to-text software for creating content. If the software

you're looking at doesn't have these, you'll most likely need to look

elsewhere.

Transcription minutes

Of course, you need your speech-to-text app to transcribe. However, not every app or tool will transcribe pre-recorded audio or video and offer 'live' transcription. For apps that do both (and if this feature is what you need), you'll want to pay attention to the amount of transcription you get for free.

On the other hand, if you only want to use speech-to-text for script planning (e.g., voicing your ideas out loud), you may only need a dictation tool that'll put your spoken words into a document. We'll be showing you tools that cater to these different needs in our comparison section below.

Format compatibility and export

If you need software or tools to help you use speech-to-text for transcribing videos and podcasts, you'll need to keep an eye out for import and export format compatibility.

If the software you're considering only accepts .wav audio files, you'll need to convert to that format if your recording is in another. On the other end of the workflow, if you need your transcription to be able to export as a Microsoft Word document, you'll need to make sure your software exports Word docs before you waste your time.

Storage and organization

Whether you're only using a dictation tool or full speech-to-text software, you'll want your words to be easily accessible. Some software (if not all) will have storage limits, so if you record a lot of content, look for one with a generous amount of storage.

You'll also want to consider the organization of your files — granted, this point is entirely subjective and depends on what kind of user interface you like to use. Since we're specifically looking at free options (or software with free plans), it won't hurt to try a few out to see which you like best.

Automatic speaker labels

If you record a podcast or other video content with guests, you'll need to be able to separate who's who in your transcription. You can manually separate

Usually, this means the software will ask you to identify the speakers first; then, it'll handle the rest of the transcription (typically with AI).

An easy-to-use editor

The final feature you want to consider is editing. No transcription software is 100% accurate, so you'll want to use one that has a smooth and easy editor to help you get the job done faster and more easily.

6 best speech-to-text apps for creators

With all of the above in mind, let's get into the details of some of the best speech-to-text software tools currently available that are most suitable for creators.

We make this distinction because some speech-to-text software tools are specifically designed for professional industry use (e.g., medical and legal) and are costly because of that specialization.

1. Descript

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Key features:



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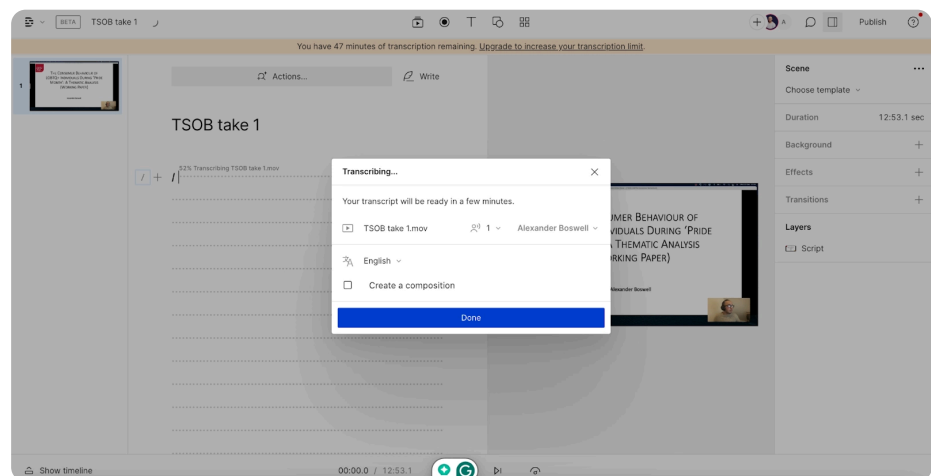
- Automatic high-quality transcription (up to an hour free) with up to 95% accuracy
- Automatically remove filler words and periods of silence with Descript AI tools
- Easy document-style editing, which adjusts both the script and media
- Highlights potential errors to help you proofread and review
- Easily add subtitles to your video with the transcription
- Descript supports 23+ different languages

Upgrade options: The Creator plan (from \$12/month) includes 10 transcription hours, and the Pro plan (from \$24/month) includes 30 transcription hours. Each comes with even more features besides more hours.

Platforms: Web app, Windows 10 (or newer), Mac OS High Sierra (or newer).

Descript's speech-to-text transcription tool is embedded within its editor software and is one of the best free options specifically for creators. You can create a project for either an existing video to upload or record a new one straight into the software, and the audio-text feature will add the words to your script.

When I added a video of one of my virtual academic conference presentations (originally 12:53 in duration), it transcribed my words in about a minute and a half with suprising accuracy, given that I was using some highbrow academic language.



After editing, using filler words and word gap removal, I cut my video down to 11:29 in just a few seconds and made the video a lot more presentable (unfortunately for me, I didn't have Descript when I initially presented at that conference).



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1 seconds or more

0/1



shorten to 1 seconds

Shorten

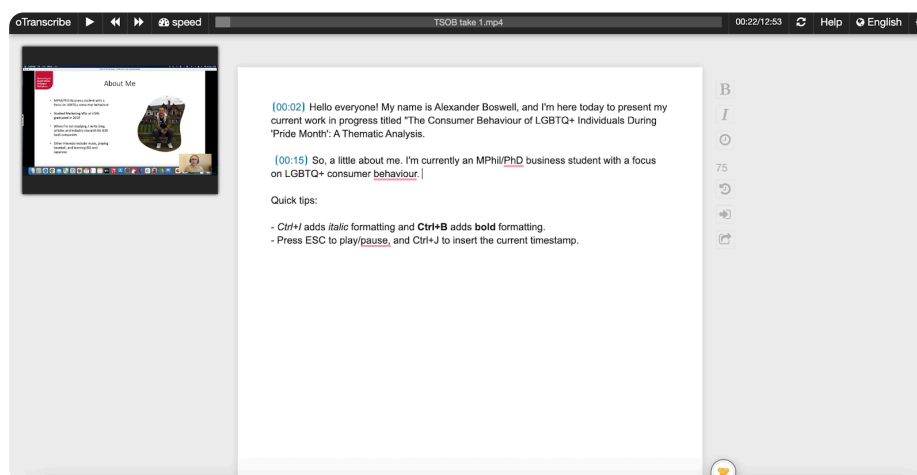
Shorten all

present my current work in progress

titled The Consumer Behaviour of LGBTQ

Descript also lets you use [Studio Sound](#) to improve the overall sound quality—it's free for files up to 10 minutes on the free plan, and unlimited on paid plans.

2. oTranscribe



Key features:

- A simple HTML web app means good cross-platform accessibility
- Keyboard shortcuts for easy playback, rewind, and fast-forward
- Integrated video player to stop tab/software switching
- Interactive timestamps
- Automatic saving to your browser's storage every second
- Export to Markdown, Plain Text, and Google Docs

Upgrade options: Completely free, no plans or upgrade options.

Platforms: Web app (worked in Chrome and Safari at the time of writing).

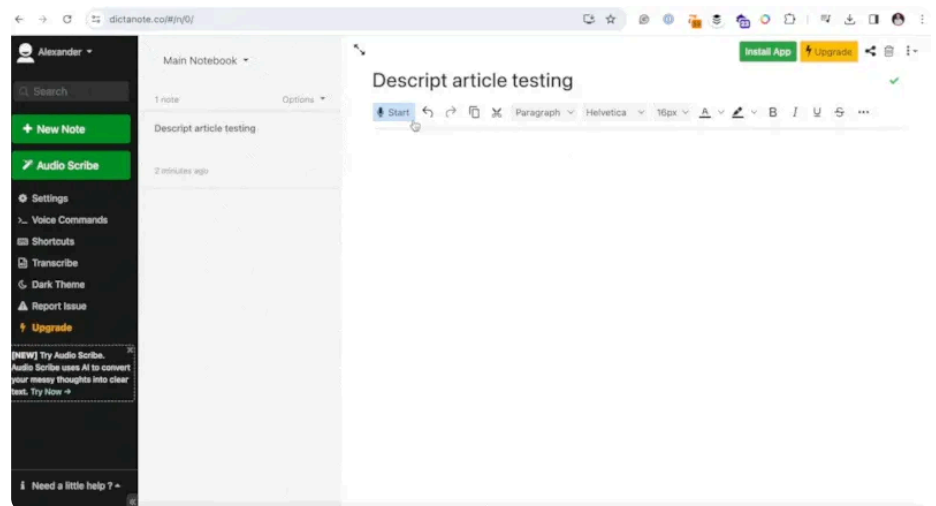
This one, admittedly, is cheating a little. [oTranscribe](#) is technically a transcription-specific tool, so there's no speech-recognition tech involved.

But it's a great tool if you want to work on your video or audio manually. For example, suppose you're using a lot of niche vocabulary (for example, industry-specific terms, etc.). In that case, you can sometimes save more time editing a generated transcript than writing it with better accuracy.

It has a simple HTML interface with a familiar-looking document editor and immediately tells you the most important keyboard shortcuts to use. Using it on the same conference video test made manual transcription much easier than I remember compared to previous projects.

While this is fine for creating a standalone transcript, it doesn't help you add captions or do anything else (e.g., text summaries, repurposing your script, etc.).

3. Dictanote



Key features:

- Familiar notebook-style file organization of your notes
- Basic text editing, which is easy to pick up
- You can install its dedicated app instead of using the web
- Decent speech-to-text accuracy
- Dictation is completely free

Upgrade options: You can pay 10 cents per minute for AI transcription of existing audio files.

Platforms: Web app, Chrome app (when it asked me to install, it installed on my MacBook as a Chrome app).



If you want to use a tool to help you type as you speak, [Dictanote](#) is a great option. It's packaged as a note-taking app, where you can take notes and organize notes you've made. You can type notes as usual, and the main feature is its speech-to-text function and voice commands.

If you've never dictated before, it takes some getting used to, i.e., voicing punctuation and new lines. However, once you get the hang of it, speaking your thoughts can be much faster than typing them by hand.

This option is mainly for creators who want their creative ideas out of their heads and onto the page and provide a dedicated space for their ideas.

For the downsides, while testing the app, it didn't seem to like my AirPods when dictating (it didn't register my voice at all, even after granting permissions), and I had to switch to my Macbook Air microphone. That might be down to me not having the correct settings, but it's worth mentioning. Also, not having any free transcription options for existing media can be a deal-breaker for creators who primarily record content on the fly.

4. Apple Dictation

Apple Dictation Test

To test Apple dictation, I've decided to use it to write this section of the article using the Apple Notes app, then copy and paste what I've written into my draft (with a little editing).

It's a great tool to help you write as you speak; what's more, it is completely free because it comes embedded within Apple products, including iPhones and iPads, as well as MacBooks.

Another great benefit of using Apple dictation is that you can easily swap between using your voice and typing, which makes editing as you go for simple mistakes (such as capitalizing brand names) quite easy. However, when you set it up with voice commands, you can also use dictation to edit instead. Apple dictation also switches off if it doesn't detect your voice after about 15 seconds or so.

Of course, if you're not an Apple user, Apple dictation is not the tool for you, however, Microsoft dictation has an equivalent with an equally reasonable accuracy rate. So, if you're the type of creator who likes to think out loud, and can reasonably get used to voicing punctuation and new lines easily, then Apple dictation might be for you.

I

Key features:

- No internet connection required (with Apple Silicon devices)
- Setting up Voice Control can add even more functionality to dictation
- User-friendly; use it anywhere you'd usually type
- Up to 96% accuracy

Upgrade options: Comes free with Apple devices.

Platforms: Apple Mac and iOS devices only.

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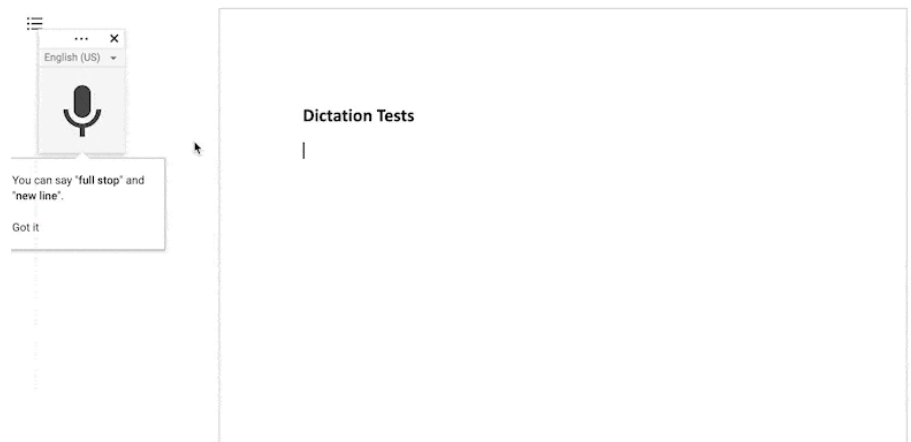
It's a great tool to help you write as you speak; what's more, it's entirely free because it comes embedded within Apple products, including iPhones, iPads, and MacBooks.

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Of course, if you're not an Apple user, Apple dictation is not the tool for you. However, Microsoft has an equivalent dictation tool with an equally reasonable accuracy rate. If you're the type of creator who likes to think out loud and can get used to voicing punctuation and new lines quickly, then Apple dictation is the right tool to help you get thoughts on the page.

As a downside, I found that Apple dictation works best with other Apple software products, such as the Notes app. The dictation keyboard shortcut doesn't work at all in Google Docs, which is likely because Google Docs has its own dictation tool, which we'll be looking at next.

5. Google Docs Voice Typing



Key features:

- Google Docs is an extremely widely used, cross-platform tool for professionals and creators, making collaboration easy.

- Activate voice typing with a keyboard shortcut no matter where you are
- Clear, large icon indicates you've started voice typing

Upgrade options: It comes as a free feature of Google Docs; there's no upgraded version.

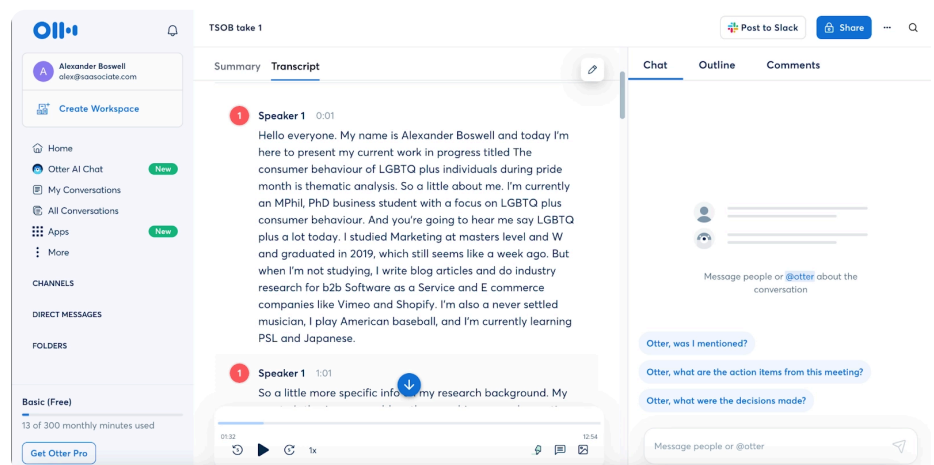
Platforms: Web (I'd recommend Chrome specifically for Google Docs, but other browsers may work just as well). It may also work on the Docs app using the Gboard keyboard, but it doesn't work with the default iOS keyboard.

I've used Google Docs as the main deliverable format in my career for years, and I'd never thought to use the native Google speech-to-text feature. However, as a speech-to-text option, it works in the same way as Apple Dictation and Dictanote.

The main difference between these dictation options is the software platform and UI. If you're a creator who uses Google Docs for your ideas, transcripts, collaboration opportunities, and Google Drive for storage, then voice typing directly into Google Docs could be a great option.

However, as with the other dictation tools we've covered, they don't help you with existing media; they're only for live speech. This lack of transcription can add to your work rather than make your workflow smoother.

6. Otter.ai



Key features:

- AI meeting assistant that keeps audio recordings, transcribes, captures slides, and generates summaries in real time.



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- Automatically integrates with Zoom, Google Meet, and MS Team to write and share notes
- 300 transcription minutes and up to 30 minutes per conversation on the free plan
- You can import up to 3 audio or video files for transcription (period). You get a monthly limit if you upgrade.

Upgrade options: Pro from \$10/month, Business from \$20/month (gets you 1,200 and 6,000 transcription minutes, respectively).

Platforms: Web, iOS app, Android app

My personal experience with [Otter.ai](#) started when a client of mine would send me interview transcripts she'd made with it. While they helped create content based on the interviews, the transcripts were never super accurate (I'd say roughly 75%).

However, using my conference presentation video, the accuracy is more within the 90% range. I imagine this huge difference comes from the fact that with more than one person speaking, it can be difficult for the AI to keep speakers separated — and on top of that, neither my client nor the interviewees ever seemed to use dedicated microphones.

For creators who post a lot of videos or audio content online, Otter.ai can be a time saver for transcribing podcast interviews you've recorded on Zoom, Google Meets, or MS Teams.

On the other hand, while you can edit the transcript within the Otter.ai software, you can't edit the media the transcript came from. So, if you need a tool to do both, Otter.ai can't help you. Otter.ai also only works in English, so if you need to use another language, you'll need to look elsewhere.

Honorable mention: Just Press Record

If you're a creator with an iPhone or Apple Watch who finds yourself coming up with content ideas in the most random places, and you typically make voice notes with the Voice Memo mobile app to record your ideas, [Just Press Record](#) is a great on-the-go speech-to-text service. It's an honorable mention here because it has a one-time purchase fee from the app store (\$/£4.99).

With the iPhone app, you can record pro-level audio (if you've got a plug-in microphone), transcribe every word with high accuracy (no limits), edit the transcript in-app, sync across iCloud, and organize your notes by folder.

However, you can also cut/trim the audio to better match an edited transcript, though you have to do this manually.



Another software often cited as a great choice is Nuance Dragon

Professional and Dragon Anywhere mobile app. However, I discovered that the app has a lot of poor reviews (it's sitting on the app store at the time of writing). So, I decided not to include it in this list.

Quick tip for the best speech-to-text results

No matter which type of speech-to-text tool you use, to get the best results, you'll want to use a good-quality microphone so that the audio is as clear as possible.

If you still have trouble with inaccurate dictation or transcription, try speaking more clearly and making sure you don't have too much background noise.

Best free speech-to-text app FAQs

Is there a free app for voice-to-text transcription?

Yes. There are several free voice-to-text transcription apps available. Descript is one of the best options for creators. However, many people can use their device's onboard dictation solution with a note-taking app.

What is the best AI speech-to-text tool?

Descript is the best transcription option for creators who want to use speech-to-text alongside media editing — editing the transcript also edits the media.

On the other hand, if you don't need to edit media, Otter.ai is another great option for transcribing personal meetings and internal interviews.

What are the benefits of using a speech-to-text app?

- **Saves time.** People often speak much faster than they can type, so a speech-to-text tool can help you get words onto a page more quickly.
- **Saves money.** Many speech-to-text apps are reasonably accurate and free, which saves you from needing to pay for professional transcriptions (unless you really need human transcription services).

Greater accessibility. People with specific disabilities find it difficult, if not impossible, to type by hand, and so speech-to-text is a critical tool for those who need it.



Alex Boswell

Alexander Boswell is a freelance MarTech and eCommerce writer, as well as a business PhD candidate. While not writing, he's playing baseball and D&D.

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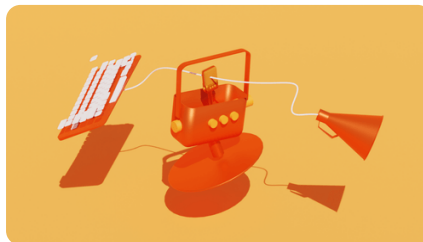


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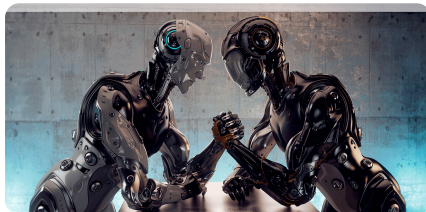
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