

User's Guide

TextAssist[®] 2.1

Mindmaker Ltd.

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Preface

Welcome to TextAssist®, the versatile text reader agent from Mindmaker Ltd. Using synthesized voices, TextAssist is able to read any online text out loud. This manual describes how TextAssist works and gives detailed instructions on how to use this powerful application.

What's in This Manual?

This manual is designed to provide a thorough explanation of all features and functions of TextAssist. For a quick introduction of only the basics, read "Chapter 3: Quick Tour".

This manual contains:

- "Chapter 1: Introducing TextAssist": An overview of the key features and primary uses of TextAssist.
- "Chapter 2: Getting Started with TextAssist": Installation instructions.
- "Chapter 3: Quick Tour": Step-by-step instructions for using the basic features and functions of TextAssist.
- "Chapter 4: Advanced Features": Explanation of the advanced capabilities of TextAssist.
- "Appendix B: Troubleshooting": Tips and suggestions for solving and answering some common issues and questions.
- "Appendix A: Quick Reference": Descriptions of the most often used features and parts of TextAssist.
- "Appendix C: Glossary": A collection of definitions and explanations of some of the terms used in this guide.

Document Conventions

The following typographical conventions are used in this document:

Bold text

Indicates the name of a dialog box, command button, input text, or file name.

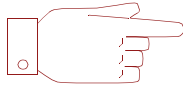
EXAMPLE: Click **Close** in the **Users** dialog box.

Italicized text

Indicates new terminology or a document title.

EXAMPLE: Add words that are not pronounced according to regular rules to the *exception dictionary*.

The pointing hand



Introduces important information.

EXAMPLE: It is recommended that you check the audio settings on your computer before you install TextAssist.

Related Documentation

Besides this *User's Guide*, you can find additional information about TextAssist in the following documents:

- Mini Manual
- Online Help

Register and Get Free Updates

The setup program will ask if you want to register your product online, or you may send in your registration card via postal mail. It is recommended that you register because it is free, and you will get access to free updates and qualify for special pricing on related products.

If you did not register upon setup, you can do so at any time by visiting our web site:

<http://www.mindmaker.hu>

Technical Support

Hopefully, this manual and the online Help system will provide you with the information you need to use and take full advantage of the TextAssist software program. If you have trouble using the software, please refer first to "Appendix B: Troubleshooting", which contains common questions regarding to the use of TextAssist, and their answers. If the information contained there does not help you with your specific problem, you may contact us for technical support. As a registered user, our technical support staff is available to you via the Internet at our web site:

<http://www.mindmaker.hu>

Chapter 1: Introducing TextAssist

This chapter provides a short, general introduction to the use and features of the software. It explains what TextAssist is and why it is useful, and lists the key features and optional features.

What Is TextAssist?

TextAssist is a text reader agent that enables your computer to read text aloud by means of synthesized human voices. TextAssist has many options that a user can set or adjust, including special text filters, custom word pronunciation, voice parameters, reading style options, and, if you've purchased foreign language modules, the reading language of the document.

While TextAssist can be used as a stand-alone reader agent, it can also be integrated by software developers into their applications. This manual describes the TextAssist Reader for end users. For information about the TextAssist Software Development Kit please contact Mindmaker Ltd. (See also the LIMITED WARRANTY).

Why Should I Use TextAssist?

TextAssist is the most versatile text-to-speech software on the market today. TextAssist helps you to:

- *Increase your mobility.* Because TextAssist can read aloud a document, web site, e-mail message, or any other online text, you don't need to be sitting at your computer to access that information, just within hearing range.
- *Perform multiple activities simultaneously.* For instance, while TextAssist reads you news from the Internet, you can be looking over a document or straightening up your desk.
- *Revise written text.* You can command TextAssist to read back text you have written. Besides helping you hear the flow of your prose, this technique helps you notice errors that you might have otherwise missed.
- *Spare your eyes.* Instead of reading large pieces of text from the monitor screen, have TextAssist read it to you, and avoid eyestrain.

What Are TextAssist's Key Features?

| | |
|---|--|
| Synthesized Speech Output | Enable your computer to read text aloud. |
| Predefined and User-Defined Voices | Choose from several natural-sounding male, female and child voices. You may use any of the predefined voices as they are, change the parameters of the voices, or create new voices. |
| Special Text Filters | Specify whether or not TextAssist should read certain signs and symbols, embedded or quoted texts, and header text of certain types of documents such as e-mail messages and HTML files. |
| Adjustable Voice Properties | Control the sound of the reading voices. Unlike speech synthesizers with fixed voices, TextAssist allows you to adjust the pitch, speed, echo, smoothness, richness, creakiness, and many other parameters of any of the predefined voices. |
| Adjustable Reading Styles | Define the reading style of the program, such as how long to pause between words and sentences; and whether to read punctuation marks and math symbols. |
| Exception Dictionaries | Define special pronunciation for exceptional words that do not follow regular rules of pronunciation, such as many abbreviations, acronyms, proper nouns, words borrowed from other languages, etc. |
| Application-Specific Settings | Set different voice and reading style parameters for different applications. For example, you can assign a female voice with the HTML filter to slowly read the news from your favorite Internet site; and a male voice with the e-mail filter to quickly read your e-mail messages. |

What Are TextAssist's Optional Features?

The optional components of TextAssist may be ordered separately when available from Mindmaker Ltd. Please visit our web site at www.mindmaker.hu for the latest release information.

Multiple-Language Support

Use TextAssist to correctly read text of languages other than English. Install optional modules to support French, Spanish and German.

Highlighted Reading

Highlight and magnify the text that is being read in a special window. Enable animation and sound effects to enhance the reading.

Play Music

Play *.wav files in the background while reading a document.

Chapter 2: Getting Started with TextAssist

This chapter guides you through the process of installing TextAssist on the Windows® platform. It contains information on the minimum hardware and software requirements, as well as instructions for checking your audio setup before you install. Finally, it gives instructions for starting the TextAssist application.

System Requirements

- Microsoft® Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows NT 4.0.
- PC with a 90 MHz Pentium®-class processor for Windows 95/98, or a PC with a 120 MHz Pentium-class processor for Windows NT 4.0.
- At least 16 MB of RAM for Windows 95/98 and 32 MB of RAM for Windows NT 4.0.
- 10 MB of free hard drive space.
- Windows 95/98/NT 4.0 compatible, multimedia audio hardware. (Creative audio hardware is recommended.)
- Speakers or headphones.

Before You Install

Determining What Software Package You Have

If you purchased TextAssist as part of one of the Assistant (Prody Parrot™ or Zymo the Alien™) software package, it will be automatically installed as one of its components. Please refer to the Prody Parrot or Zymo the Alien *User's Guide* for installation and uninstallation instructions.

If you purchased TextAssist as a stand-alone product, you may install it directly following the instructions in this chapter.

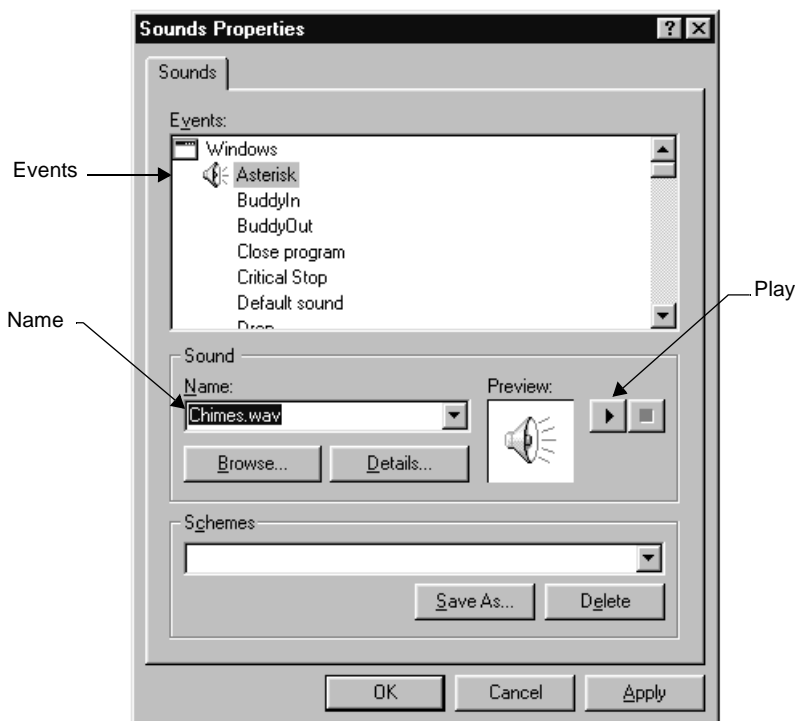
Checking Your Audio Setup


In order for TextAssist to work properly on your computer, you must have the correct audio setup. If you are not certain that your audio setup is correct, then take a couple of minutes to check. For example, with Windows 95, you would follow the steps below.

To check your audio setup:

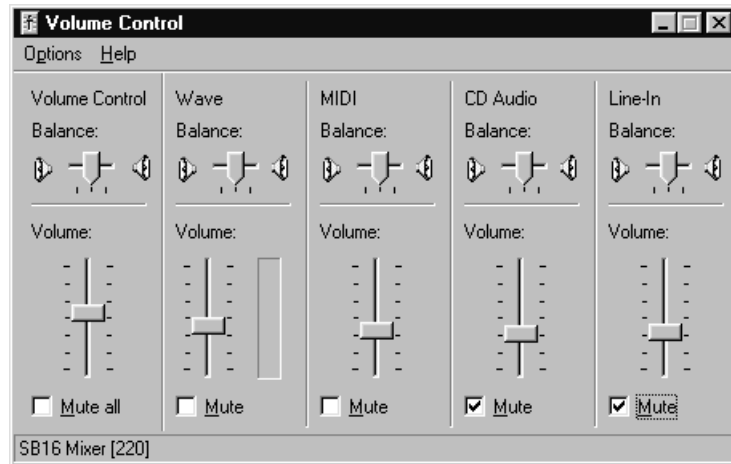
1. Make sure that you have an appropriate sound card installed on your computer, and that you've connected speakers or headphones to your computer. If you are using speakers, verify that they are turned on and that the volume is turned up. Refer to the speaker or headphone documentation for instructions.

2. To check your audio output, click **Start** on the Windows taskbar, then select **Settings** and click **Control Panel**. In the **Control Panel** dialog box, double-click **Sounds**. The **Sounds Properties** dialog box will appear:



3. In the **Events** list box, select any event, e.g., select **Asterisk**. In the **Name** drop-down combo box, select any sound file, e.g., select **Chimes.wav**.
4. Click the **Play** button . You should be able to hear the sound clearly through your headphones or speakers. If the sound is clear and loud enough, you are done; click **Cancel** and close the **Control Panel** dialog box. If the sound is not clear and loud enough, check the volume settings for your computer.

5. To check your volume settings, click **Start** on the Windows taskbar, then **Programs**, **Accessories**, **Multimedia**, and **Volume Control**. The **Volume Control** dialog box appears:



6. Adjust the **Volume Control** slider as necessary. If you cannot hear any sound at all, verify that the **Mute all** check box is clear, and that the **Mute** check box under **Wave** is clear. For more information on the **Volume Control**, consult the **Help** menu.

Installing and Uninstalling

First you need to determine what software package you have. See “Determining What Software Package You Have” on page 4. If you purchased TextAssist as a stand alone product, you can install it directly following the instructions below.

Installing TextAssist Stand-Alone

To start setup:

1. Have the product serial number ready, which is provided on the Registration Card.
2. Shutdown all other applications before proceeding with the installation.
3. Insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive. If the setup program does not launch within 30 seconds, click **Start** on the Windows taskbar, then **Run**, and enter “d:\install\setup.exe” (substitute d: with the drive letter of your CD-ROM drive). Click **OK**.
4. Follow the instructions of the setup program.

Removal Instructions

To uninstall TextAssist from the Windows Start menu:

1. Click the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, **Assistant**, and then **TextAssist**.
2. Now click **TextAssist Uninstall**.



If you have Prody Parrot 2.0 or Zymo the Alien 2.0 installed, you will be able to uninstall TextAssist; however, the 2.0 Assistants will no longer work because they both require TextAssist 2.1

Registering

The setup application will prompt you to register. See “Register and Get Free Updates” on page x.

Starting and Quitting

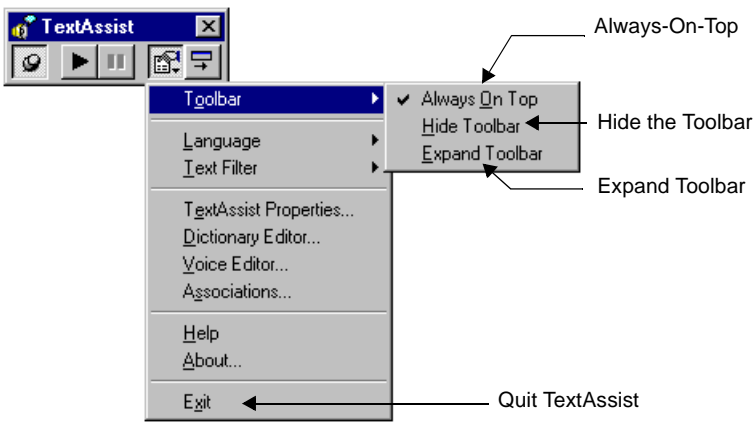
Starting TextAssist

Follow these steps to start TextAssist:

1. Click the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, **Assistant**, and then **TextAssist**.
2. Click **TextAssist**.

Displaying and Hiding the Toolbar

The TextAssist toolbar provides access to the main features and functions of TextAssist. You will learn more about how to use these features and functions in later chapters. For now, note the ways in which you can keep the toolbar on top of all other windows on your desktop, hide the toolbar, and quit the program.



If you disable the **Always-On-Top** option, the TextAssist toolbar may be covered by other windows on your desktop. If the toolbar is covered by


another window and you would like to bring it into view, you can do so by clicking the **TextAssist** button on the Windows taskbar. If you've hidden the toolbar and you wish to display it again, you may do so by double-clicking the **TextAssist** icon.



Quitting TextAssist

There are a number of ways to quit TextAssist. You can quit by using the TextAssist toolbar or the TextAssist taskbar icon.

To quit from the TextAssist toolbar:

- Click the **X** in the upper right corner of the toolbar.
- OR
- Click the **Main Menu** button  on the toolbar and then **Exit**.

To quit from the TextAssist taskbar icon:

- Right-click the **TextAssist** icon in the Windows taskbar and then left-click **Exit**.

Chapter 3: Quick Tour

This Quick Tour is designed to help you get started using TextAssist right away. The Quick Tour covers the basic features of TextAssist.

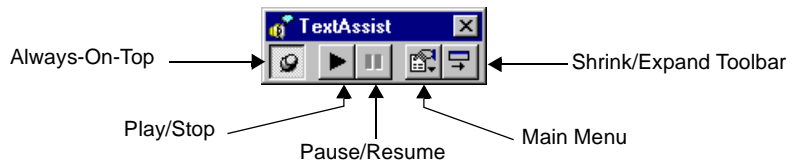
Starting TextAssist







To start TextAssist from the Windows taskbar:


1. Click the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, **Assistant**, and then **TextAssist**.
2. Click **TextAssist**.

Introduction to the Toolbar

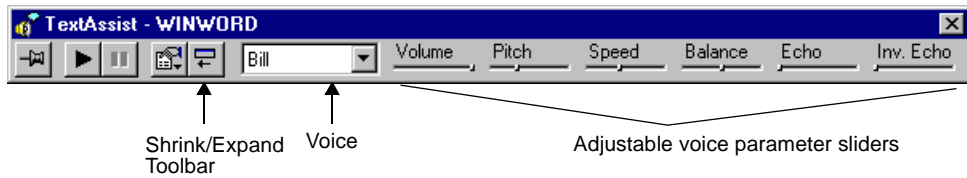
When you start TextAssist for the first time, the shorter TextAssist toolbar will be displayed. From this toolbar you can access all of the features and functions of TextAssist.




*Some of the TextAssist toolbar buttons have dual names because their functions change depending on the state of TextAssist and the toolbar. For example, when you click the **Play** button , TextAssist begins reading and the button changes to a **Stop** button  which may be used to stop the reading process. The **Pause/Resume** ( and ) and **Shrink/Expand Toolbar** ( and ) buttons work in a similar way.*



If you click the **Shrink/Expand** button  so that it is depressed, the toolbar will expand as shown in the following picture. The expanded toolbar allows you to select from a variety of voices and to adjust certain





parameters of the speech output. You will learn more about the voices and voice parameters later in this Quick Tour.









If the toolbar is expanded, and you click the **Shrink/Expand** button , the toolbar will return to its original size.

Reading a Text Document




You can use the toolbar buttons to prompt TextAssist to play, pause, resume, or stop reading text. The **Pause** button  means that TextAssist stops reading temporarily, but keeps its place in the text so that later it can resume reading from the same point. The **Stop** button  will cause TextAssist to stop reading and reset itself to the beginning of the text.

For example, if your phone rings while TextAssist is reading a document, you can click the **Pause** button  to stop the reading temporarily. When your phone conversation is over, you can click the **Resume** button  and the Reader will continue from the point where you paused it. If you click the **Stop** button  when your phone rings, then the **Play** button  when your conversation is over, TextAssist will stop reading, then start reading the document again from the beginning.

To use TextAssist to read a text document:

1. Open a text document. For example, click the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, **Assistant**, **TextAssist**, and then **Demo Text**. This will open a folder. Double-click the **DemoText.txt** file. The demo text file will open in your default text editor.
2. Click the **Play** button  on the TextAssist toolbar. TextAssist will start reading your document aloud, starting from the beginning.
Notice that the **Play** button  changes to a **Stop** button .
3. Let TextAssist read several lines, then press the **Pause** button .
Notice that the **Pause** button  changes to a **Resume** button .





The TextAssist **Pause** button  works like the pause button on a VCR or audiocassette player.

4. When you are ready to continue listening to the document, press the **Resume** button . TextAssist continues reading from where it left off.
5. Press the **Stop** button  when you want TextAssist to stop and reset itself. Or, wait until it has finished reading the entire document, and it will stop and reset itself automatically. If you press the **Play** button  again, TextAssist will start reading from the beginning of the document.

Reading a Selected Part of a Text

Suppose you want TextAssist to read only a particular paragraph in a large document. You can do this by selecting the section you want to be read.



To use TextAssist to read a selection of text:

1. Open the text document from which you would like TextAssist to read, and select the portion of the document you want TextAssist to read. This can be as little as one word or as much as the entire document.
2. Click the **Play** button  on the TextAssist toolbar. Notice that TextAssist only reads the words that you have selected. The **Pause**  and the **Resume**  buttons work exactly the same way for selected text as they do for reading an entire document.
3. If you do not stop TextAssist manually by clicking the **Stop** button , it will stop automatically when it reaches the end of the selected section.

Trying Different Voices

TextAssist has a variety of different voices for you to choose from. There are both male and female voices, as well as children's voices. In "Chapter 4: Advanced Features", you will learn how to create new voices to use with TextAssist. For now, you will learn how to switch between the default reading voices.

To change the reading voice:



1. Open a text document that is long enough to keep TextAssist reading for a couple of minutes.
2. If it is not already expanded, expand the TextAssist toolbar by clicking the **Shrink/Expand** button . Notice the **Voice** drop-down combo box, which contains several names.
3. Click the drop-down arrow just to the right of "Bill". You will see the list of available TextAssist voices: Bill, Frank, Harry, Johnny, etc. Select one of the voices.
4. Click the **Play** button  on the TextAssist toolbar.
5. While TextAssist is reading, select another voice from the **Voice** drop-down combo box. TextAssist promptly switches to the selected voice. After you have listened to that voice for a few sentences, try each of the other voices to hear what they sound like.

When you are finished listening to the different voices, click **Stop**. The last voice that you selected will continue to be used until you select another.

Experimenting with the Voice Parameter Sliders

With the toolbar expanded, you can directly control six realtime voice parameters by means of sliders. You can change the volume, pitch, speaking speed, speaker balance, echo, and inverse echo effects.

To adjust realtime voice parameters from the toolbar sliders:

1. Open a text document that is long enough to keep TextAssist reading for a couple of minutes.
2. If it is not already expanded, expand the TextAssist toolbar by clicking the **Shrink/Expand** button .
3. Select a voice from the **Voice** drop-down combo box. For example, select Bill.
4. Click the **Play** button  on the TextAssist toolbar.
5. While Bill is reading, use your mouse to drag the **Pitch** slider to the right. Notice that Bill's voice now has a higher pitch. Now drag the **Pitch** slider all the way to the left. Bill's voice becomes very deep. Use your mouse to drag the **Speed** slider to the right. Notice that the speed of speech increases. Now move the **Speed** slider to the extreme left position. Now Bill talks very slowly.

While TextAssist is reading, experiment with the other sliders to see how they affect the reading voice.

The same voice parameters can be controlled from **TextAssist Properties** dialog box. Open the **Main Menu**, select **TextAssist Properties...**, and then click the **Realtime Parameters** tab. You will see the same voice parameters with an adjacent text box that shows the numeric level of the parameter. The adjustments you make here will also appear on the toolbar sliders. To restore the default settings, click the **Reset** button in the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box.




*Note that adjusting the realtime voice parameters on the extended **TextAssist toolbar**, or through the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box is like adjusting the volume, equalizer, or reverberation sound effects on a stereo. When you adjust your stereo, you do not change the actual songs that are played, you just affect the way they sound at the time of playing. Likewise, when you adjust the real-time voice parameters for TextAssist, you do not change the voices, you simply affect the way that any voice you select sounds when TextAssist uses it to read text.*

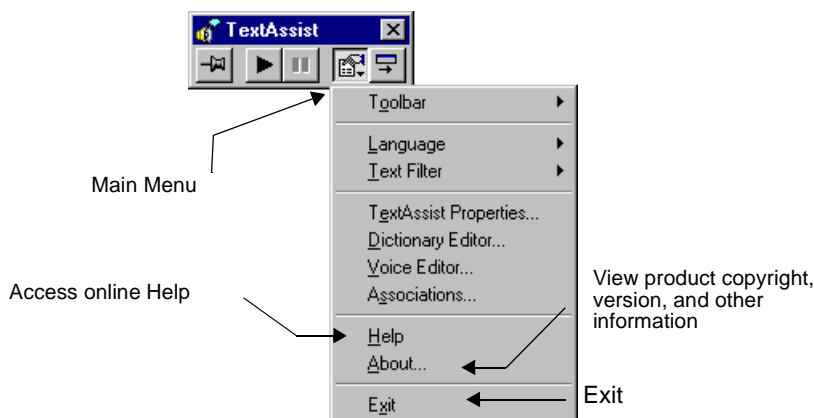
If you would like to change the “baseline” voice parameters for a particular voice, refer to the instructions in “Chapter 4: Advanced Features”.

Introduction to the Main Menu

In addition to the **Always-On-Top**, **Play/Stop**, **Pause/Resume**, and the **Shrink/Expand Toolbar** buttons, the **TextAssist** toolbar contains a

Main Menu button . Click this button to display all the menu items. The Main Menu provides access to all features and functions of


TextAssist. For now, note that you can access online Help, view product information, and exit the program through the **Main Menu**:



Hiding the TextAssist Toolbar

If you don't want the TextAssist toolbar to be displayed on your desktop, you can hide it and control TextAssist using the tasktray icon menu.

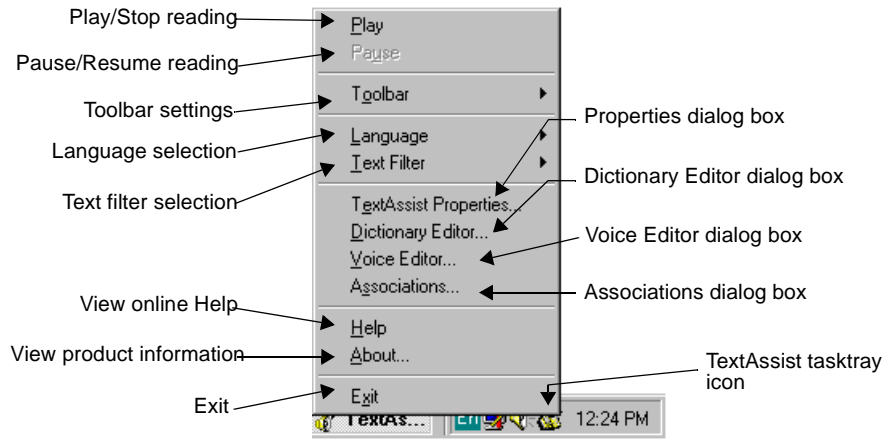
To hide the toolbar:

1. Click the **Main Menu** button  on the TextAssist toolbar and select the **Toolbar** item.
2. Select **Hide Toolbar**. The toolbar will disappear, and only the tasktray icon will be displayed on the screen.

To display the toolbar:



1. Right-click the **TextAssist** tasktray icon.
2. The tasktray icon menu will be displayed. Many of the menu items correspond to toolbar button functions that you are already familiar with. Others provide access to the functions that you will learn more about in the following chapters. For now, notice that you can control the reading session; shrink, expand, show, or hide the toolbar;

access online help; view product information; and exit the program from the tasktray icon menu:



Closing TextAssist

To quit TextAssist from the toolbar:

- Click the  in the upper right corner of the toolbar. Or, click the **Main Menu** button  and then **Exit**.

To quit TextAssist from the taskbar:

- Right-click the **TextAssist** tasktray icon and then left-click **Exit**.

Chapter 4: Advanced Features


This chapter explains the advanced features of TextAssist. These include its support for multiple languages, its text filters, and the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box, the **Dictionary Editor** and the **Voice Editor**. These features enable you to redefine shortcut key combinations, define the pronunciation of exceptional words and adjust the sound of the reading voices.

For added power and flexibility, TextAssist supports application-specific settings, so you can associate different advanced feature options with different applications. This chapter provides instructions for using each of the advanced, yet easy-to-use, features of TextAssist, and for associating them with particular applications.

Language Selection

TextAssist can support languages other than English using language modules, which will be available to be purchased separately from Mindmaker Ltd. Of course, TextAssist will always attempt to read any text you provide, but it will read the text based on the pronunciation rules of the language you have selected. If you have installed a new language module, you may select the appropriate reading language through the **Language** item on the **Main Menu**.

To select the reading language:


1. On the **TextAssist** toolbar, click the **Main Menu** button .
2. On the **Main Menu** select the **Language**, then the language in which you would like TextAssist to read. In the example below, English, Spanish, German, and French are available.

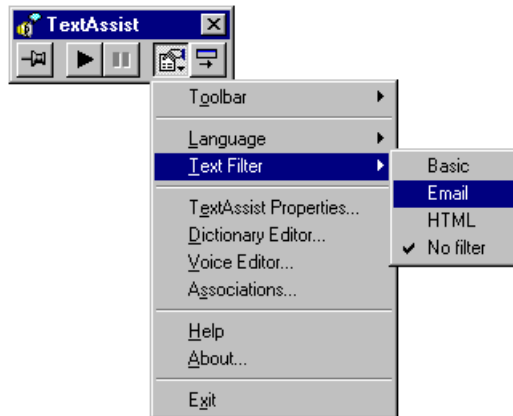


Text Filters

TextAssist comes with *text filters* that enable it to read special kinds of documents correctly. As the name suggests, text filters filter out text that should not be pronounced. For example, the **Email** text filter tells TextAssist to disregard certain signs and symbols that are extraneous to the content of an e-mail message, and the **HTML** text filter tells TextAssist to ignore embedded tags in the text of an HTML document.

To select a text filter:

1. On the **TextAssist** toolbar, click the **Main Menu** button .
2. On the main menu, select **Text Filter**, then select the filter you would like TextAssist to use. For example, select **Email** filter.



To hear how the **Email** filter affects the TextAssist reads, open the demo e-mail text provided with the program by clicking **Start** on the Windows taskbar, then **Programs**, **Assistant**, **TextAssist**, and **Demo Text**. In the **Demo Text** folder, double-click the **email.txt** file. First, use TextAssist to read the demo e-mail message with the **Email** filter selected, and then again with **No filter** selected. You will hear a remarkable difference.



*You can select or change the current text filter at any time as described above. You can also create an application-specific setting so that TextAssist always uses a particular filter when it reads text from a particular application, e.g., always uses the **Email** filter when it reads from your e-mail application. And, finally, you can adjust some of the filter properties to suit your specific needs. For more information, see the “Default and Application-Specific Settings” section later in this chapter.*

TextAssist Properties

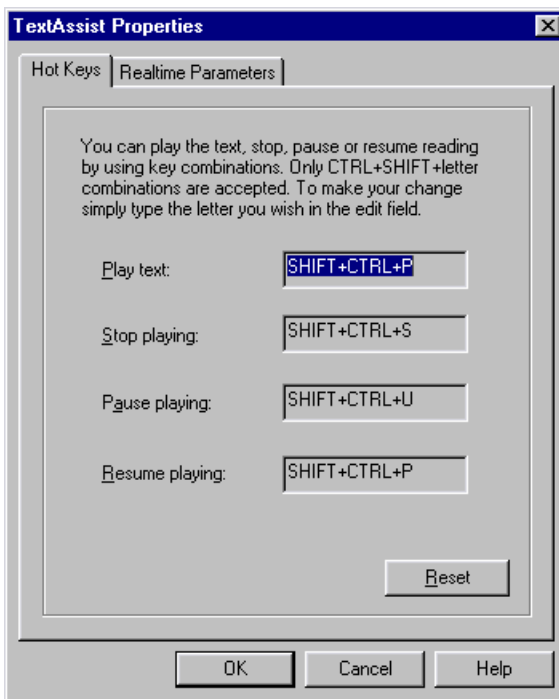
There are some basic properties of TextAssist that you can modify in the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box. To make these changes, click the

Main Menu button  and select **TextAssist Properties....**

The **TextAssist Properties** dialog box contains the **Hot Keys**, and **Realtime Parameters** tab pages.

Hot Keys

TextAssist has predefined hot key combinations that you can press to quickly perform TextAssist functions. If you are already using these combinations for tasks in other applications, the **Hot Keys** tab page of the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box lets you redefine the hot keys used in TextAssist. Click on the edit field of the function you want to change, then press the new shortcut key combination. When you are done with your changes click **OK**. Click **Reset** to reset the default hot key combinations.



Realtime Parameters

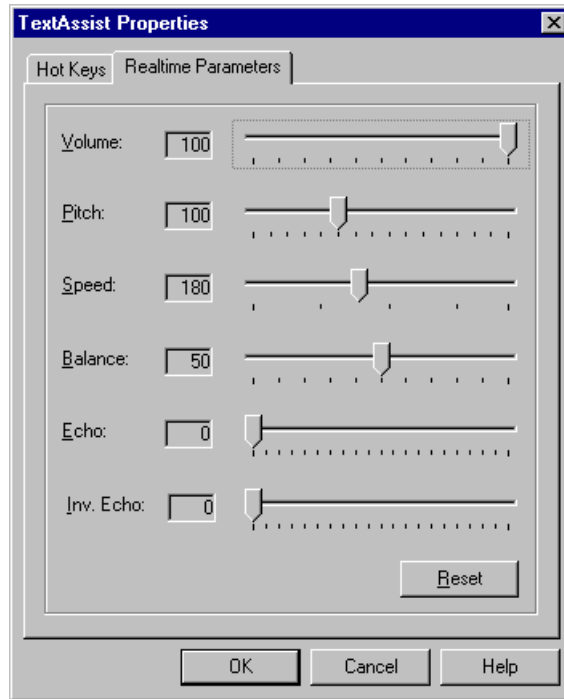
You can adjust six reading parameters, which apply to all voices when TextAssist is reading from any application. You may customize these parameters in the following ways:

- By adjusting the slider controls on the extended **TextAssist** toolbar.

OR

- By adjusting the slider controls on the **Realtime Parameters** tab page of the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box.

Using either method you can change the volume, pitch, reading speed, speaker balance, echo, and inverse echo effect parameters. Next to each slider control, a text box displays the current setting of the corresponding parameter as a numerical value.



Dictionary Editor

The **Dictionary Editor** dialog box provides access to TextAssist's *exception dictionaries*. An exception dictionary is a file containing words that are not pronounced according to the regular pronunciation rules of the language, as well as descriptions of how each exception word should be pronounced. TextAssist uses a special set of symbols to represent the sounds of a language; these symbols are called *phoneme codes*. Unlike the letters of the alphabet, which may represent different sounds in different words, e.g., the "c" in "century", "cake", and "chime", a phoneme code always represents the same sound. A complete list of the TextAssist phoneme codes can be found in "'Appendix A: Quick Reference'". You don't need to learn all of the TextAssist phoneme codes, because you can take advantage of TextAssist's Dictionary Editor feature without typing a single phoneme code.


TextAssist comes with its own exception dictionaries, which contain pronunciation information for many commonly used foreign terms, brand

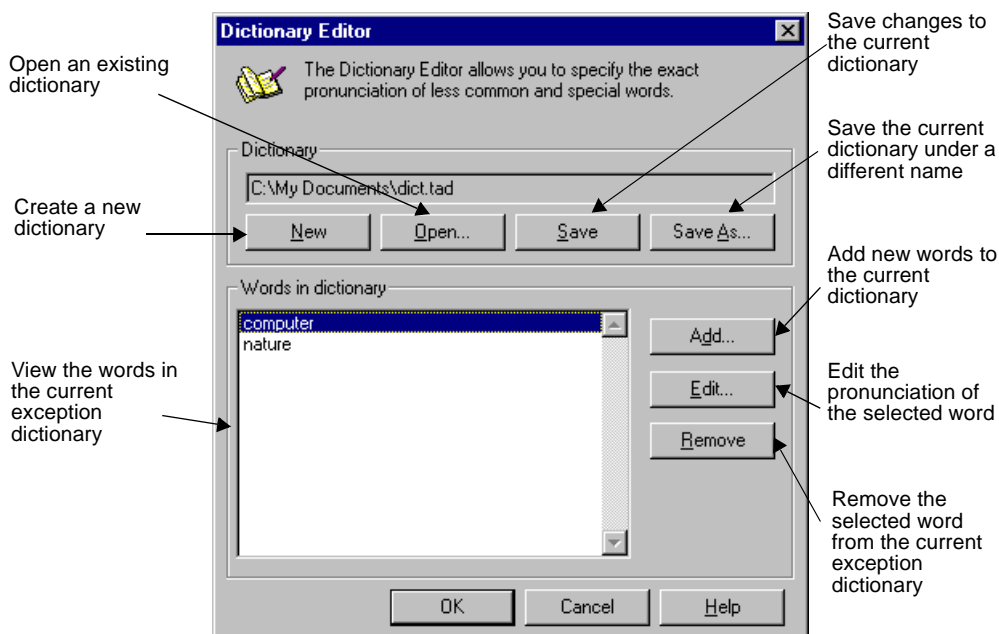
names, acronyms, abbreviations, etc., that are not properly pronounced according to the regular pronunciation patterns of the language. You may add to, edit, or delete from any of the exception dictionaries included with TextAssist. You can also create new exception dictionaries of your own. Finally, you can specify in what context(s) TextAssist should use each of the dictionaries. All available exception dictionaries for the current language appear in the **Exception Dictionaries** window of the **Language** tab page of the **Settings** dialog box.

Adding to an Exception Dictionary

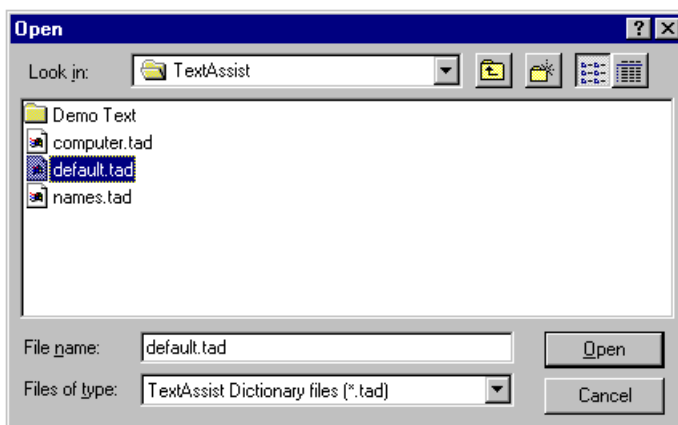
While using TextAssist, if you find that it does not pronounce a particular word correctly, you can add that word to an exception dictionary and specify the correct pronunciation. For example, if you use TextAssist to read news aloud, you may want to add a dictionary entry for the name of the news service, “Reuters” because otherwise it is incorrectly pronounced like “rooters”.

To add words to an exception dictionary:

1. Click the **Main Menu** button  on the **TextAssist** toolbar, then select **Dictionary Editor....**

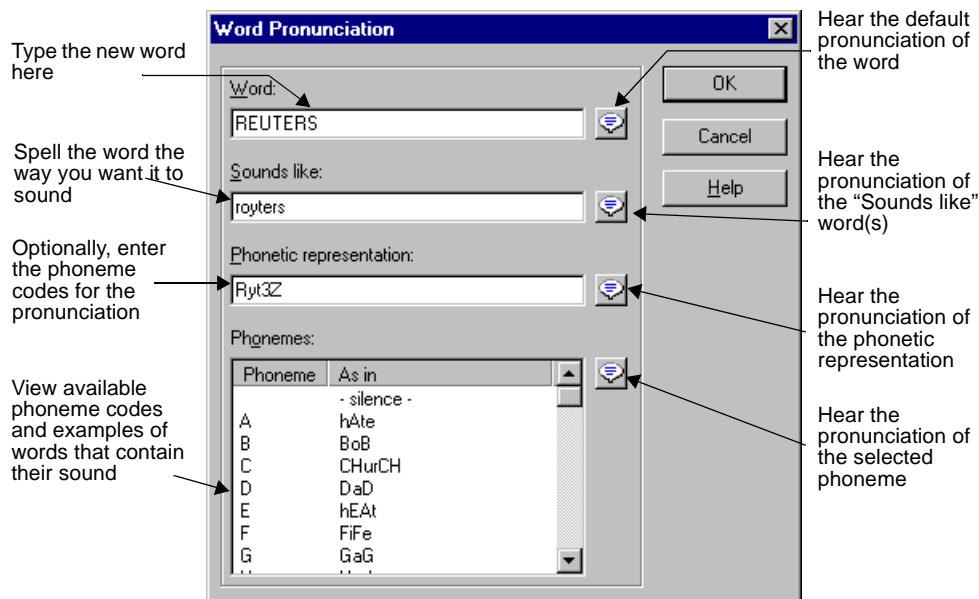


- Click **Open...** and select the exception dictionary file (*.tad) to which you would like to add a word (or words). Click **Open**. In general, you



will probably want to select the default exception dictionary file (**default.tad**). Once you've made your selection, you will return to the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box.

- Click the **Add...** button. The **Word Pronunciation** dialog box will appear.




- Using all capital letters, type the word you would like to add to the exception dictionary in the **Word** text box. For example, type "REUTERS". Then, define its pronunciation either by spelling it like it sounds in the **Sounds like** text box or by entering the appropriate

phoneme codes in the **Phonetic representation** text box. In the case of “Reuters”, you would type “royters” in the **Sounds like** text box or “Ryt3Z” in the **Phonetic representation** text box. If you want an acronym spelt out, then type it in the **Sounds like** text box using all capital letters.



*You can use either the **Sounds like** text box or the **Phonetic representation** text box to define how the word in the **Word** text box is pronounced—you do not have to use both. Most users find it easier to use the **Sounds like** text box.*

5. Click the output buttons  to the right of the text boxes to hear the pronunciation of the word as you've redefined it. Make adjustments as necessary.
6. When you are satisfied, click **OK**, and you will return to the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box.
7. To add more words, repeat steps 3 through 6 above. When you are finished, click **Save** to save the changes, then click **OK** to exit the **Dictionary Editor**.

You can also edit exception dictionaries by clicking the **Edit...** button on the **Language** tab of the **Settings** dialog box.




*An exception dictionary must be activated for your additions and edits to be used by TextAssist. Only the default exception dictionary (**default.tad**) is active at all times by default. To learn how to activate other exception dictionaries, see the section “Activating and Deactivating Exception Dictionaries” later in this chapter.*

Editing an Exception Dictionary

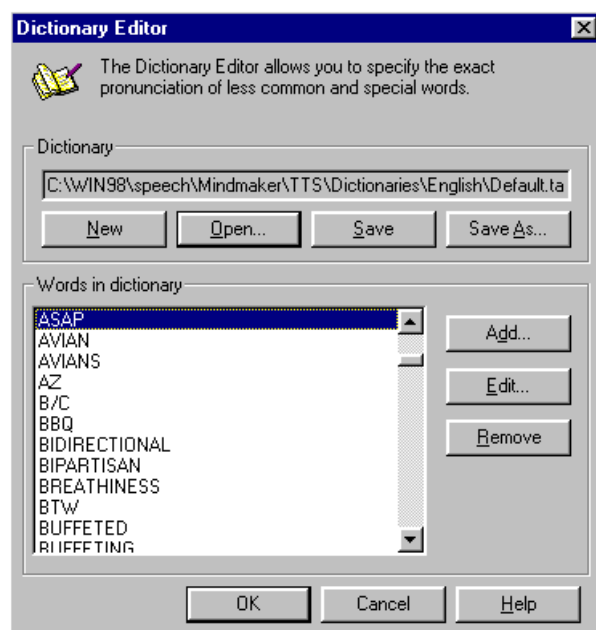
Entries in any of the TextAssist exception dictionaries may be changed. For example, if TextAssist currently reads the acronym “ASAP” as: “as soon as possible”, but you would like it to be pronounced “aye sap”, you can make this change through the **Dictionary Editor**.

To edit words in an exception dictionary:

1. Click the **Main Menu** button  on the **TextAssist** toolbar, then select **Dictionary Editor....**
2. On the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box click **Open....** The **Open** dialog box appears. Select the exception dictionary you would like to edit


by double-clicking it or by selecting it and then clicking on the **Open** button. In the case of the acronym “ASAP”, you would select the default exception dictionary (**default.tad**). Once you’ve made your selection, you will return to the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box.

3. Select the word you would like to edit from the **Words in dictionary** box by clicking it. The selected word will be highlighted.



4. Click the **Edit...** button. The **Word Pronunciation** dialog box is displayed.

| Phoneme | As in |
|---------|-------------|
| | - silence - |
| A | hAte |
| B | BoB |
| C | CHurCH |
| D | DaD |
| E | hEAt |
| F | FIFe |
| G | GaG |
| .. | .. |



5. Using all capital letters, edit the previously defined pronunciation of the word by redefining it in either the **Sounds like** or the **Phonetic representation** text box. In the case of the acronym “ASAP”, you could replace “as soon as possible” with “ASAP” in the **Sounds like** text box to spell out the acronym. Notice that when you change the text in the **Sounds like** text box, the code in the **Phonetic representation** text box automatically changes.
6. Click the output buttons  to the right of the text boxes to hear the pronunciation of the word as you've redefined it. Make adjustments as necessary.
7. When you are satisfied, click **OK**, and you will return to the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box.
8. To edit additional words, repeat steps 3 through 6. When you are done, click **Save** to save the changes, then click **OK** to exit the **Dictionary Editor**.

Creating a New Exception Dictionary

You may want to create a new exception dictionary if you have a set of words or abbreviations that do not follow the regular rules of pronunciation and all apply to a particular domain or context. By placing the words in a separate exception dictionary rather than adding them to the default exception dictionary, you have more control over when the entries are activated. For example, a medical transcriptionist who uses

TextAssist may want to create a separate exception dictionary containing medical terms and abbreviations that can be activated when reading patient files and deactivated when reading general documents.

To create a new exception dictionary:

1. Click the **Main Menu** button  on the **TextAssist** toolbar, then select **Dictionary Editor....**
2. Click **New**. An empty, untitled exception dictionary file will be created.
3. Click the **Add...** button. The **Word Pronunciation** dialog box is displayed.
4. Type the word you would like to enter in the new exception dictionary in the **Word** text box. Then, define its pronunciation either by spelling it like it sounds in the **Sounds like** text box or by entering the appropriate phoneme codes in the **Phonetic representation** text box.
5. Click the output buttons  to the right of the text boxes to hear the pronunciation of the word as you've defined it. Make adjustments as necessary.
6. When you are satisfied, click **OK**, and you will return to the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box.
7. To add more words, repeat steps 3 through 6 above. When you are finished, click **Save** to keep the changes.
8. Enter a file name (*.tad), and then click **Save**. You will return to the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box. Click **OK** to exit the **Dictionary Editor**.

You can also access the **Dictionary Editor** in order to create new exception dictionaries, by clicking the **New...** button on the **Language** tab of the **Settings** dialog box.




In order for the entries in a new exception dictionary to be used by TextAssist when reading, the exception dictionary must be activated. Dictionaries may be activated for use at all times, or for use only with a particular application or applications. See the following section “Activating and Deactivating Exception Dictionaries” for instructions.

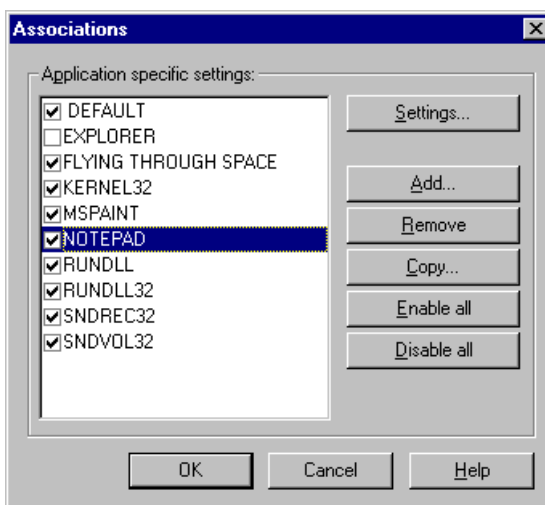
Activating and Deactivating Exception Dictionaries

As mentioned earlier, TextAssist comes with some exception dictionaries, which contain information about the correct pronunciation of words that do not follow the regular pronunciation rules of the language, and may be activated and deactivated according to your needs. If an exception dictionary is active, and TextAssist encounters a word that is in the dictionary, it pronounces the word according to the pronunciation defined in the dictionary. If no exception dictionaries are active, then TextAssist pronounces all words according to the regular pronunciation rules of the language.

When you first start TextAssist, the Default exception dictionary is, as its name suggests, active by default. Unless you deactivate it, TextAssist will use it for any application you open and read from. However, TextAssist will not use either of the other two dictionaries, unless you specifically activate them. Nor will any of the new dictionaries that you create be active unless you activate them. The activation and deactivation of exception dictionaries is done through the **Associations** dialog box. Instructions follow, but you may also want to see the section “Default and Application-Specific Settings” later in this chapter for related information.

To activate an exception dictionary:

1. Click the **Main Menu** button  on the **TextAssist** toolbar, then select **Associations....** The **Associations** dialog box will be displayed.



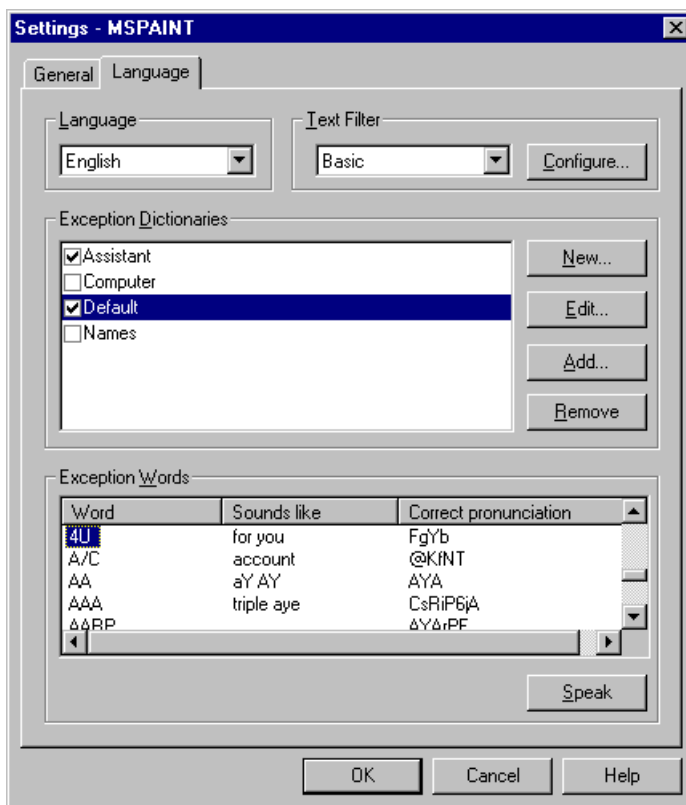
2. To make an exception dictionary active by default, select **Default** by clicking it. To make an exception dictionary active only for a specific application, select that application by clicking it. If the application you want to select does not appear in the window, click the **Add...** button to add it. Your selection will be highlighted



Note

The function of the check boxes to the left of each application name in the **Associations** dialog box will be covered in a later section. For now, simply verify that the check box corresponding to your selection is checked.


3. Click the **Settings...** button. The **Settings** dialog box will be displayed.
4. Select the **Language** tab page.

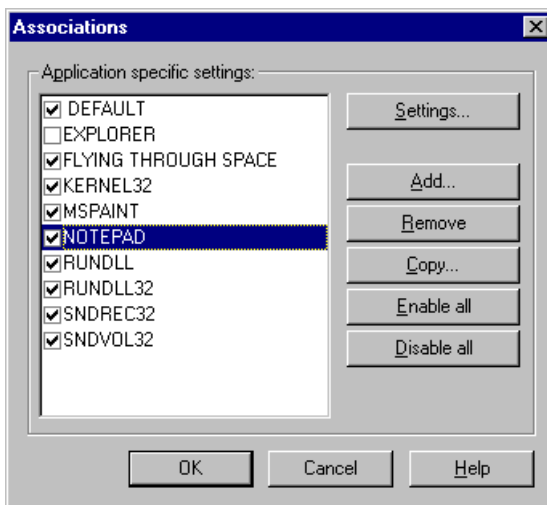


5. In the **Exception Dictionaries** group box, the available exception dictionaries are displayed. To activate one, click the check box next to the dictionary's name to select it. If the exception dictionary that you want to activate is not in the list, click **Add...**, then select the exception dictionary file (*.tad), and then click **Open**. Once you've made your selection, you will return to the **Language** tab page, and the file you selected will appear in the list of exception dictionaries.

6. If you would like to activate more dictionaries for the *same* context, repeat step 5. Otherwise, click **OK** to return to the **Settings** dialog box.
7. If you would like to activate a dictionary for a different context, select another application and repeat steps 3 through 6. Otherwise, click **OK** to save your changes.

To deactivate an exception dictionary:

1. Click the **Main Menu** button  on the **TextAssist** toolbar, then select **Associations...** The **Associations** dialog box will be displayed.



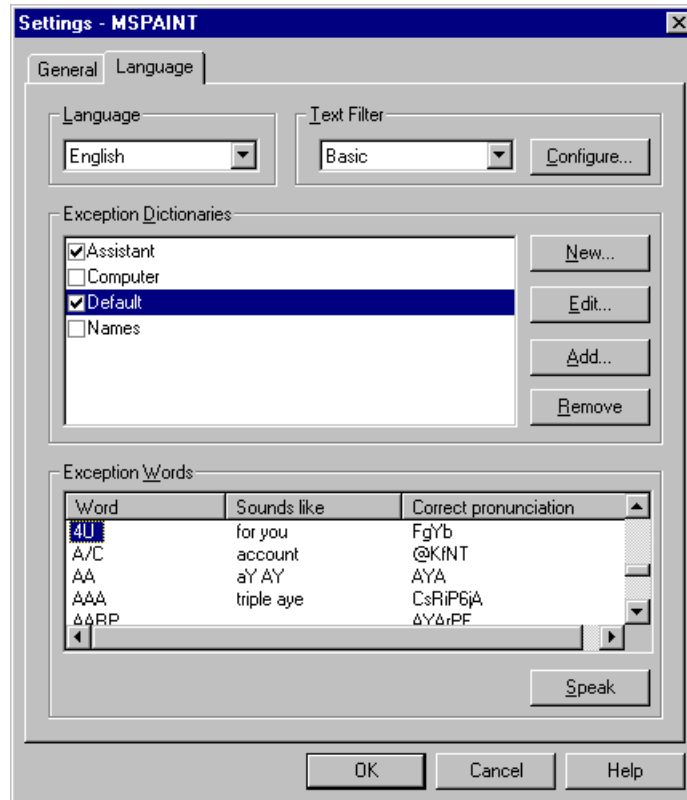
2. To deactivate an exception dictionary that is currently active by default, select **Default** by clicking it. To deactivate an exception dictionary that is currently active only for a specific application, select that application by clicking it. Your selection will be highlighted.



*The function of the check boxes to the left of each application name in the **Associations** dialog box will be covered in a later section. For now, simply verify that the check box corresponding to your selection is checked.*

3. Click the **Settings...** button, and the **Settings** dialog box will appear.

4. Select the **Language** tab page.



5. In the **Exception Dictionaries** group box, select the exception dictionaries that you would like to deactivate, and then click **Remove**. The file will no longer appear in the list of available dictionaries. You may also deactivate it by clearing the check box next to the dictionary's name.
6. If you would like to deactivate more dictionaries from the same context, repeat step 5. Otherwise, click **OK** to return to the **Associations** dialog box.
7. If you would like to deactivate a dictionary that is currently active for a different context, select another application and repeat steps 3 through 6. Otherwise, click **OK** to save your changes.


For more information about specifying settings, see the section “Default and Application-Specific Settings” later in this chapter.

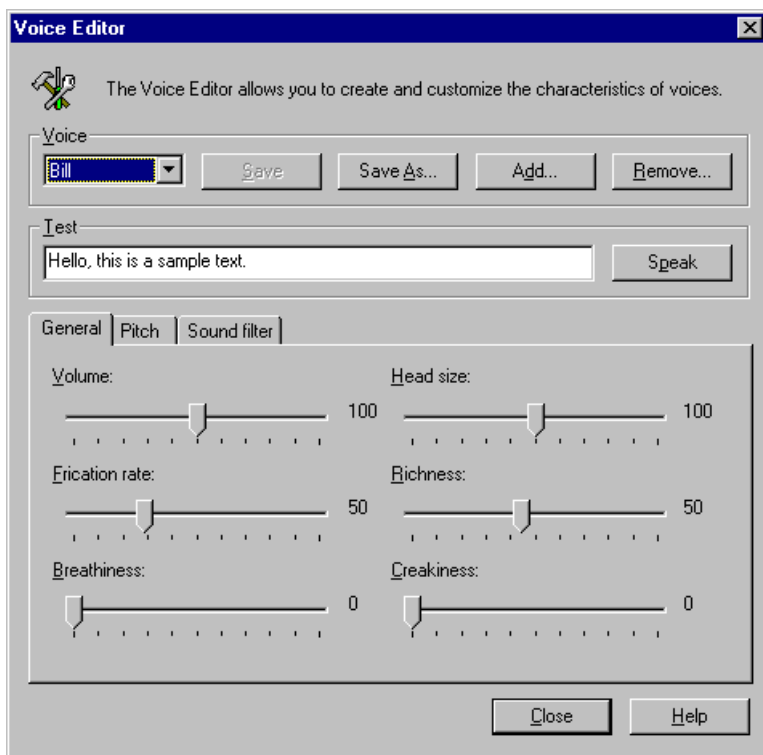
Voice Editor

The **Voice Editor** allows you to do the following:

- Select a voice for TextAssist to use for reading.
- Change the way an existing voice sounds.
- Create new voices.
- Add and remove voices in the **Voice** drop-down list box.

To open the Voice Editor dialog box:

Click the **Main Menu** button  on the **TextAssist** toolbar, then select **Voice Editor....** The **Voice Editor** dialog box will be displayed.



To select a voice for reading:

1. Open the **Voice Editor** dialog box.
2. Select the voice you want from the **Voice** drop-down combo box.
3. Click **Close** when done.

To change the way a voice sounds:

1. Open the **Voice Editor** dialog box.
2. Select the voice you want to change from the **Voice** drop-down combo box.
3. Adjust the voice parameters on the **General**, **Pitch**, and **Sound Filter** tab pages according to your own preferences. See the “Voice Parameters” section later in this chapter for details. Click **Speak** to hear the effect of the changes you made.
4. Click **Save** to save your changes, and then **Close**.



*You may modify and save the voices you created, but the default voices shipped with TextAssist cannot be changed. You can, however, modify a default voice, then save it with another name by clicking on the **Save As...** button.*

To create a new voice:

1. Open the **Voice Editor** dialog box.
2. From the **Voice** drop-down combo box, select the voice that sounds like the new voice you want to create.
3. Adjust the voice parameters on the **General**, **Pitch**, and **Sound Filter** tab pages according to your own preferences. See the “Voice Parameters” section later in this chapter for details. Click **Speak** to hear the effect of the changes you made.
4. Enter a file name (*.tav), and then click **Save**. You will return to the **Voice Editor** dialog box, and the new voice name will appear in the **Voice** drop-down combo box.
5. Click **Close** when done.

To add a voice to the Voice list box:

1. Open the **Voice Editor** dialog box.
2. Click **Add...** and the **Open** dialog box appears.
3. Enter the name (*.tav) of the voice file and click **Open**. The voice name will appear in the **Voice** drop-down combo box.
4. Click **Close** when done.

To remove a voice from the Voice list box:

1. Open the **Voice Editor** dialog box.
2. From the **Voice** drop-down combo box, select the voice you want to remove.
3. Click **Remove...**, and then **Yes** on the **Confirmation** dialog box.
4. Click **Close** when done.

Voice Parameters

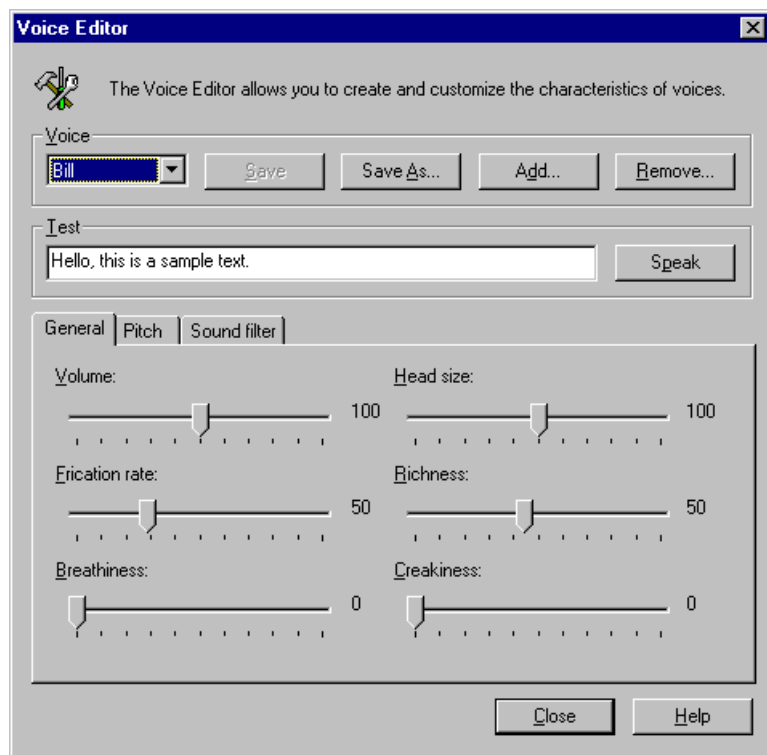
To hear the effect of the changes you make, click the **Speak** button, and then experiment with adjusting the sliders to various positions. If you don't like the effect of the changes you make, you can always click **Close**, and then **No** on the **Confirmation** dialog box to close the **Voice Editor** dialog box without saving your changes.



*Adjusting some of the voice parameters may adversely affect the quality of the voice. Therefore, it is recommended that you click the **Speak** button to check the effect of any adjustments you make to a TextAssist voice before you save it.*

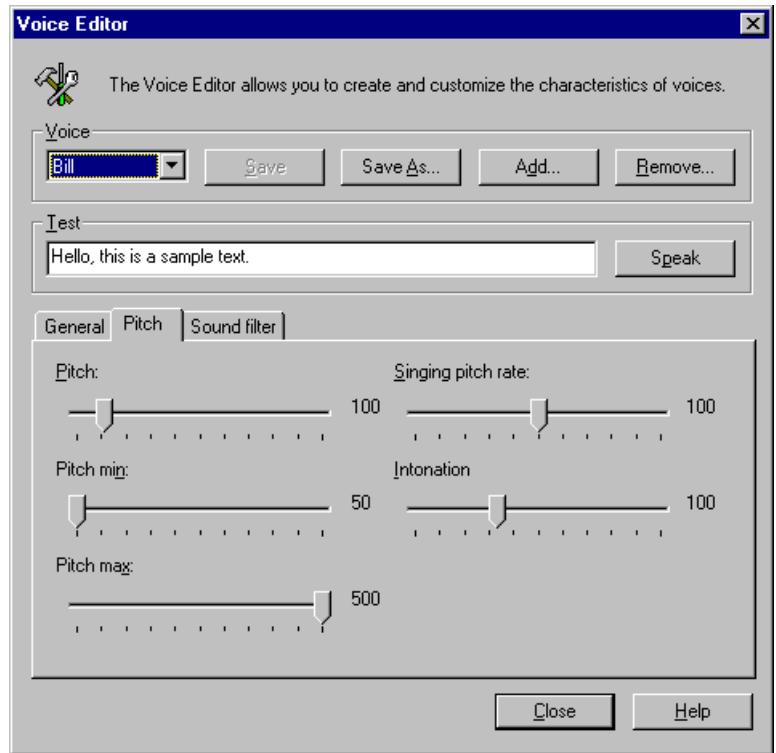
General parameters

The **General** tab page allows you to change the general parameters of the voices, such as **Volume**, **Head Size**, **Frication Rate**, **Richness**, **Breathiness**, and **Creakiness** as displayed below.



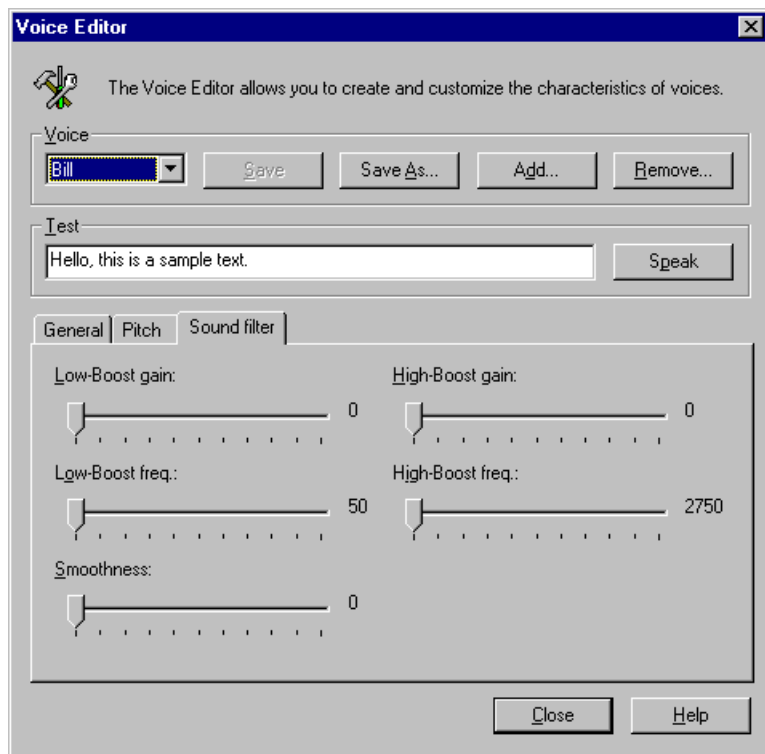
Pitch parameters

The **Pitch** tab page allows you to change pitch parameters such as **Pitch**, **Pitch Min**, **Pitch Max**, **Singing Pitch Rate**, and **Intonation Level** as displayed below.



Sound filter parameters

The **Sound Filter** tab page allows you to change the sound filter parameters such as **Low-Boost Gain**, **Low-Boost Frequency**, **High-Boost Gain**, **High-Boost Frequency**, and **Smoothness** as displayed below.



Default and Application-Specific Settings

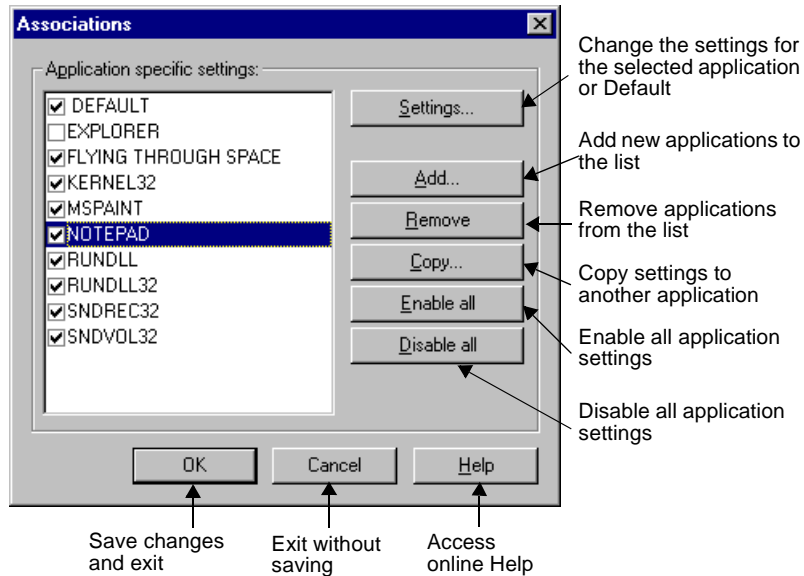
When you first start using TextAssist, certain language, text filter, voice, exception dictionary, reading style, and other settings are applied by default. These include reading in English; using Bill's voice; implementing the basic text filter and the default exception dictionary; and pausing 160 ms after a comma and 540 ms after a period. Each time you open an application while TextAssist is running, TextAssist creates an application-specific settings file for that application, and stores the described default settings. If you like these settings, you can simply leave them as they are. If, on the other hand, you would like to adjust the settings, it is possible to do so. For example, if you would like TextAssist to use the e-mail text filter when it reads your e-mail messages, you can adjust the application-specific settings for your e-mail application. You can also change TextAssist's default settings so that subsequent applications that you open will have different default settings applied to them. And, finally, you can temporarily disable select default and application-specific settings. This is all done through the **Associations...** item on the **Main Menu**.

Accessing Adjustable Settings

The **Associations** dialog box, accessible by clicking **Associations...** on the **Main Menu**, allows you to select the application for which you would like to adjust settings, or select the default. It also allows you to add or remove applications from the list, and copy settings from one application to another. Lastly, you can enable or disable settings.

As mentioned earlier, every time you open an application while TextAssist is running, TextAssist automatically creates an application-specific settings file for the application, and applies the current default settings. Therefore, the first time that you open the **Associations** dialog box, any other applications that you've opened since starting TextAssist will appear in the list of application-specific settings files. This list grows each time you open another application that TextAssist has not seen before. You can also add to the list manually by clicking the **Add...** button. Just like the application-specific settings files that are created

automatically, the ones you create by clicking **Add** will initially inherit the current default settings.



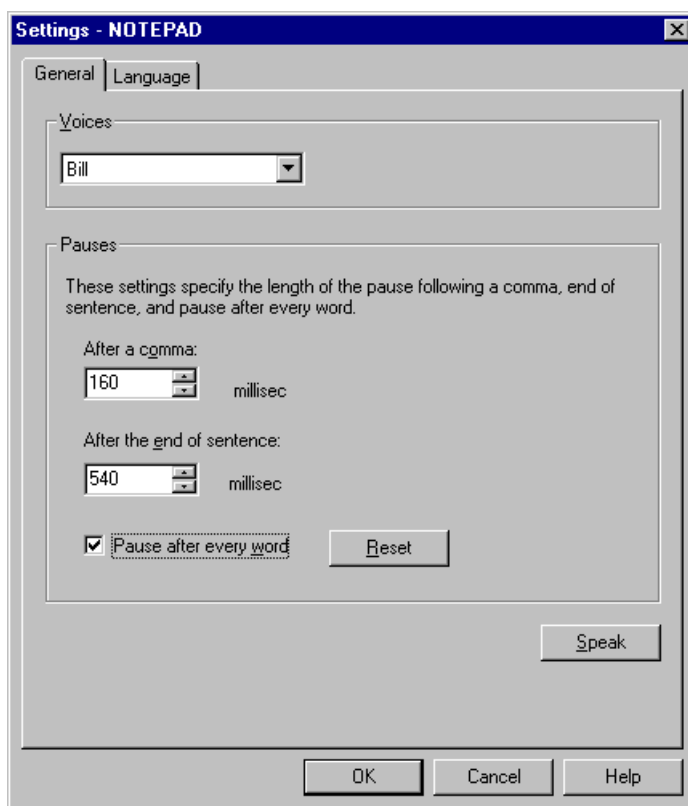
To adjust settings, select an application or “Default” from the list and click the **Settings...** button; the **Settings** dialog box appears.

The **Settings** dialog box consists of two tab pages: **General**, and **Language**. When you make changes to any of the settings on these tab pages, they apply only to the application that you selected in the **Associations** dialog box. Or, if you selected **Default**, the settings will apply to any new program that you open after you make the changes, i.e., any program for which an application-specific settings file has not already been created. Changes you make to the default settings do not apply retroactively to existing application-specific settings files.

General Settings

The **General** tab page of the **Settings** dialog box allows you to change the reading voice and hear it by clicking on the **Speak** button. Remember that the changes you make here are only associated with

the application you selected in the **Associations** dialog box, or with “Default”.



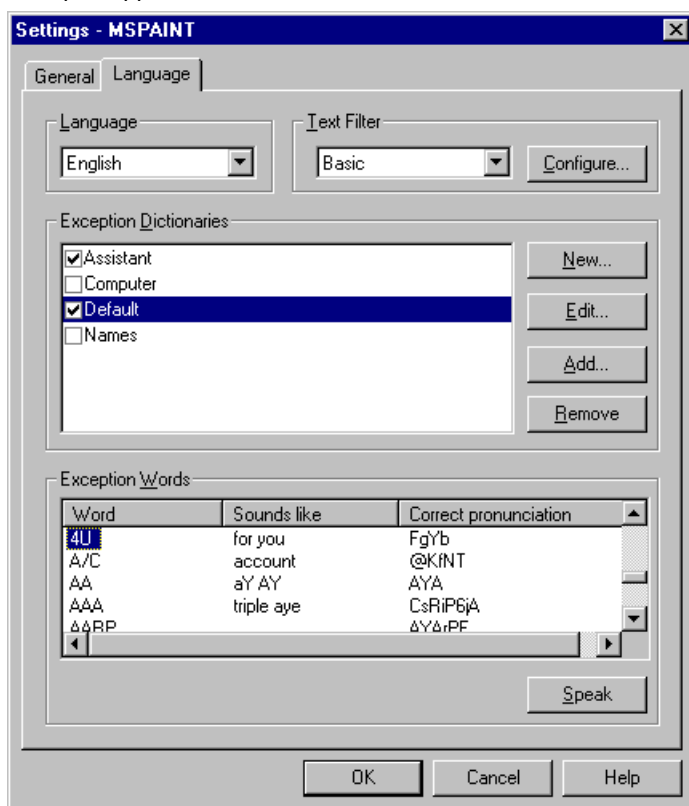
In the **Pauses** group box you can modify the length of the pause after a comma or at the end of a sentence, and specify if there should be a pause after each word.

Language Settings

The **Language** tab page of the **Settings** dialog box allows you to select the language, text filter properties, and assign exception dictionaries. As described earlier in this chapter, Exception Dictionaries, which may be created and edited using the **Dictionary Editor**, contain words that are pronounced in an exceptional manner, and descriptions of their correct pronunciation. When you assign an exception dictionary to the “Default” setting, the dictionary will be used by those applications for which application-specific settings will be created in the future. When you assign an exception dictionary to an application, TextAssist uses it whenever it reads from that application. Use the **Language**, and **Text Filter** drop down boxes to select the reading language and the text filter.

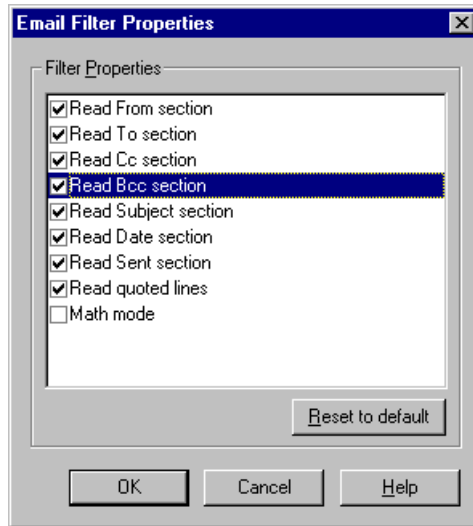
For example, the settings in the following figure specify that TextAssist is to read in English, using the **Basic** filter, and to use the **dict.tad** and

default.tad exception dictionaries whenever it reads a document from the Notepad application.



If you have selected a text filter, you can also select certain properties for the filter by clicking the **Configure...** button. Each text filter offers a different set of properties. For detailed explanations of these properties see "Text Filter Properties" in "Appendix A: Quick Reference".

For example, the **Email Filter Properties** dialog box contains the following options:



Select the check boxes corresponding to the property item you do not want TextAssist to read, or clear it if you want TextAssist to read it. To be activated they must appear and be checked. See “Text Filter Properties” for more detailed information about each property. Click **OK** to save your adjustments, and return to the **Language** tab page.

To change the exception dictionary settings:

The **Exception Dictionaries** group contains a list of the dictionaries that can be assigned to the selected application. Activate or deactivate them by selecting or clearing the check box next to the names, or click **Add...** or **Remove** to add or remove dictionaries to or from the list. Dictionary files always have the extension *.tad.



*The **Remove** function does not delete the file of the dictionary from disk, but merely causes TextAssist to no longer use it for the current application.*

Use the **Add...** or **Edit...** buttons if you want to create a new exception dictionary or to edit an existing one. In both cases the **Dictionary Editor** dialog box will appear.

The **Exception Words** group shows the contents of the dictionary selected in the **Exception Dictionaries** group box. To hear how a word sounds according to the entry in the dictionary, select the word, then click **Speak**. To change the way a word is pronounced, click the **Edit...** button to open the **Dictionary Editor**. Then follow the instructions for editing an exception dictionary earlier in this chapter.

Embedded Commands

You can control many voice and reading parameters with *embedded commands*, or codes that are inserted directly into a text. For example, the string below commands TextAssist to read the sentence “My name is Bill” in Bill’s voice, regardless of what voice is selected on the toolbar.

```
\Vce=Speaker="Bill"\My Name is Bill.
```

You can also make TextAssist sing using embedded commands along with phoneme codes. For example, the following string of embedded commands and phoneme codes instructs TextAssist to sing “Do you know the way to San Jose?” to the melody of the popular song.

```
\Eng:{3281A080-d0E4-11CE-83FB-0000B4B4E5F9}:\
\Eng[:phone arpa TruVoice][
D<80,17> u<400,17> Y<80,15> u<400,15>
N<80,17> O<400,17> x<80,20> v<400,20>
W<80,22> A<400,22> T<40,15> u<200,15>
S<40,15> a<400,15> N<40,15> O<240,13>
Z<80,15> A<400,15>
l\
```

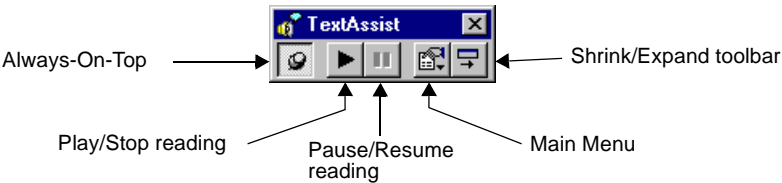
The first two lines tell TextAssist to sing in English. The next five lines consist of phoneme codes followed by a left angle bracket (<), a number which represents the amount of time to hold the sound, a comma, a number with represents the musical note, and a right angle bracket (>). If you would like to hear how this sounds, copy the text exactly into a word processor and have TextAssist read it.

Lists of phoneme codes, musical note codes, and embedded commands supported by TextAssist can be found in "Appendix A: Quick Reference". For more information on using these and many other embedded commands, see the Mindmaker Ltd. web site at <http://www.mindmaker.hu>. Software developers may be interested in the powerful and versatile TextAssist SDK.

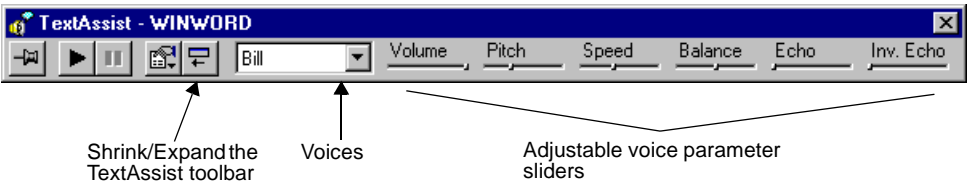
Appendix A: Quick Reference

This appendix describes the TextAssist toolbar buttons, **Main Menu** commands, hot keys, text filters, phoneme codes, embedded commands, musical note codes, and how to use the online Help system.

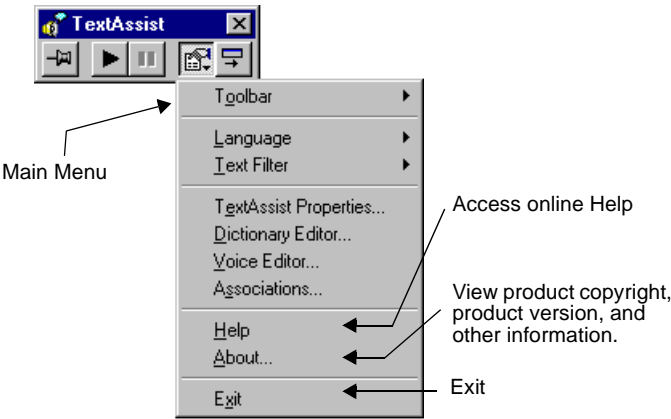
Toolbar Buttons



Expanded Toolbar Buttons & Sliders



Main Menu Commands



Hot Keys

You can an control the TextAssist reading sessions using hot keys.

| This key combination | Allows you to |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <CTRL+SHIFT+P> | Start a reading session. |
| <CTRL+SHIFT+S> | Stop a reading session. |
| <CTRL+SHIFT+U> | Pause a reading session. |
| <CTRL+SHIFT+P> | Resume the reading session. |

Hot key combinations can be modified on the **Hot Keys** tab page of the **TextAssist Properties** dialog box, accessible by clicking **TextAssist Properties...** on the **Main Menu**.

Text Filter Properties

The **Basic**, **Email**, and **HTML** filters enable TextAssist to read special kinds of documents correctly. Each filter has fixed properties that are always enabled when the filter is selected, as well as optional properties that you may adjust according to your needs. For example, the **Email** filter always helps TextAssist read e-mail addresses correctly. For example you can adjust the filters so TextAssist does not read the “To” line of your e-mails.

The following sections describe the properties of each filter.

Basic Filter Properties

| Property | Effect when selected | Effect when not selected |
|------------|--|--|
| Keep signs | TextAssist reads the symbols as follows: grave, tilde, number, dollar, percent, vertical line and slash. | TextAssist ignores the eight symbols. It skips over them and does not read them. |
| Math mode | TextAssist read the “/” as “divided by”, and the “-” as “minus”. | TextAssist reads the “-” as a hyphen. |

E-mail Filter Properties

Your ability to take advantage of all of the optional E-mail filter properties depends on the e-mail software that you use. The filter only applies to

text that appears in the body text window of the e-mail application. Some e-mail programs extract the “header” of the e-mail message and display it separately from the body. If your e-mail program does this, the first seven optional Email filter properties listed below will not apply.

| Property | Effect when selected | Effect when not selected |
|----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Read From section | TextAssist ignores the “From:” line. | TextAssist reads the “From:” line. |
| Read To section | TextAssist ignores the “To:” line. | TextAssist reads the “To:” line. |
| Read Cc section | TextAssist ignores the “Cc:” line. | TextAssist reads the “Cc:” line. |
| Read Bcc section | TextAssist ignores the “Bcc:” line. | TextAssist reads the “Bcc:” line. |
| Read Subject section | TextAssist ignores the “Subject:” line. | TextAssist reads the “Subject:” line. |
| Read Date section | TextAssist ignores the “Date:” line. | TextAssist reads the “Date:” line. |
| Read Sent section | TextAssist ignores the “Sent:” line. | TextAssist reads the “Sent:” line. |
| Read quoted lines | TextAssist ignores the “Quoted” lines. | TextAssist reads the “Quoted” lines. |
| Math mode | TextAssist read the “/” as “divided by”, and the “-” as “minus”. | TextAssist reads the “-” as a hyphen. |

HTML Filter Properties

| Property | Effect when selected | Effect when not selected |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Read pictures as “Picture” | TextAssist reads “Picture” when it encounters an embedded image in the HTML document. | TextAssist ignores the embedded image in the HTML document. |

| Property | Effect when selected | Effect when not selected |
|------------|--|--|
| Keep signs | TextAssist reads the symbols as follows: grave, tilde, number, dollar, percent, vertical line and slash. | TextAssist ignores the eight symbols. It skips over them and does not read them. |

Phoneme Codes

Phoneme codes are used when you want to override the default, rules-based pronunciation of a word in the **Dictionary Editor** or when you want to provide TextAssist with detailed input necessary for certain advanced output, such as singing a song.

| TextAssist Code | As In | TextAssist Code | As In |
|-----------------|--------|-----------------|----------|
| A | hAte | a | hAt |
| B | BoB | b | hOOp |
| Cs | CHurCH | c | lURe |
| D | DaD | d | beHind |
| E | hEAte | e | hEAd |
| F | FiFe | f | hOW |
| G | GaG | g | lORd |
| H | Had | h | not used |
| I | hIde | i | hIt |
| Jz | JuDGe | j | paL |
| K | CaKe | k | hAIR |
| L | Lake | l | littLE |
| M | MoM | m | not used |
| N | NuN | n | cottON |
| O | hOpe | o | hOt |
| P | PiPe | p | not used |

| TextAssist Code | As In | TextAssist Code | As In |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Q | not used | q | buTTon |
| R | RoAR | r | hARd |
| S | SauCe | s | SHuSH |
| T | Top | t | buTTer |
| U | hUge | u | hOOK |
| V | ValVe | v | hUt |
| W | Wet | w | IAW |
| X | THin | x | THen |
| Y | Yet | y | ahOY |
| Z | Zoo | z | meaSure |
| 1 | primary stress | 5 | fIRE |
| 2 | secondary stress | 6 | origInal |
| 3 | hURt | 7 | piNG |
| 4 | hEAR | @ | Upon |

IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) equivalents of the TextAssist phoneme codes are listed on our web site at www.mindmaker.hu.

Musical Note Codes

You can use musical note codes to make TextAssist sing (see above). The following TextAssist codes (1–37) correspond to standard musical notes.

| TextAssist Code | Musical Note | TextAssist Code | Musical Note | TextAssist Code | Musical Note |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 | C3 | 13 | C4 | 25 | C5 |
| 2 | C#3 | 14 | C#4 | 26 | C#5 |
| 3 | D3 | 15 | D4 | 27 | D5 |
| 4 | D#3 | 16 | D#4 | 28 | D#5 |
| 5 | E3 | 17 | E4 | 29 | E5 |
| 6 | F3 | 18 | F4 | 30 | F5 |
| 7 | F#3 | 19 | F#4 | 31 | F#5 |
| 8 | G3 | 20 | G4 | 32 | G5 |
| 9 | G#3 | 21 | G#4 | 33 | G#5 |
| 10 | A3 | 22 | A4 | 34 | A5 |
| 11 | A#3 | 23 | A#4 | 35 | A#5 |
| 12 | B3 | 24 | B4 | 36 | B5 |
| 13 | C4 | 25 | C5 (middle C) | 37 | C5 |

You can use the musical note codes listed in the table above to tell TextAssist how to sing a song, or, if you know the exact pitch of the sound you would like, you can describe it in Hz.


Embedded Commands

You can control many voice and reading parameters with embedded commands, or codes that are inserted directly into a text.

| Command | Effect and Use |
|--|---|
| <code>\Vce=Speaker="X"\</code> | Specifies the reading voice for the text that follows. Replace X with the name of any TextAssist reading voice (Bill, Frank, Rita, Timmy, etc.). |
| <code>\Pau=Y\</code> | Instructs TextAssist to pause for a specified period of time. Replace the Y with the number of milliseconds you would like TextAssist to pause. |
| <code>\Eng;{3281A080-d0E4-11CE-83FB-0000B4B4E5F9}: \Eng[:phone arpa TruVoice][Z]\</code> | Instructs TextAssist to sing. Replace the Z with the phonemes, durations, and musical notes that make up the song you would like TextAssist to sing. Use the format phoneme code <number of milliseconds, musical note code>. For example, to make TextAssist sing "la" in C for one second then in D for two seconds, replace Z with <code>L<100, 13> o<900, 13> L<100, 15> o<1900, 15></code> . See below for phoneme and musical note codes. |

Accessing Online Help

TextAssist offers you access to online Help in several ways:

- Click the **Main Menu** button  on the TextAssist toolbar, and select **Help**.
- Click on the **Help** button, or press **<F1>** to access the context sensitive Help system.

Appendix B: Troubleshooting

This appendix contains answers to commonly asked questions regarding the use of TextAssist.

The TextAssist toolbar covers the windows of other programs that I am trying to use, and sometimes gets in the way.

For your convenience, by default, the TextAssist toolbar is always displayed on top of other windows on your computer screen. If you would like other windows to cover the TextAssist toolbar, you may click the **Always-On-Top** button to change this.



TextAssist pronounces certain words incorrectly.

You can change the way TextAssist pronounces a particular word by creating an entry in an exception dictionary. For example, you may want TextAssist to pronounce the acronym *NAFTA* like “naff-tah” rather than saying each letter, “N-A-F-T-A.” Or, you may prefer that TextAssist pronounce the word *potato* like “poe-tah-toe” rather than “poe-tay-toe”. “Chapter 4: Advanced Features” contains detailed information on how to create and edit exception dictionaries.

I added a word to an exception dictionary, but TextAssist still pronounces it wrong.

TextAssist only pays attention to exception dictionaries that are currently enabled. This way you can enable and disable them according to your needs. You can verify whether or not the exception dictionary to which you added is currently enabled through the **Associations** dialog box. For detailed instructions see the section “Activating and Deactivating Exception Dictionaries” on page 27 in “Chapter 4: Advanced Features”.

I changed the default settings, but TextAssist still reads with the old default settings.

When you change the default settings for TextAssist, the new settings you create will apply only to applications for which an application-specific settings file has not already been created. Because TextAssist automatically creates an application-specific settings file with default settings every time you open an application, any programs you used

before you made changes to the default settings will not be affected by your changes.

If you would like to copy the new default settings you've created to a previously existing application-specific settings file, select **Default** in the **Associations** dialog box and click **Copy**. Then, select the file to which you would like to copy the new settings and click **OK**.

I don't hear any speech when I click the Play button on the toolbar.

Make sure your computer's sound system is working normally. To check this, go to the Windows **Control Panel**, select the **Sounds** icon, and try previewing some of the standard sounds on your computer.

TextAssist talks a little too fast for me to understand all the words.


The reading rate can be adjusted on the expanded TextAssist toolbar. You can also permanently change the pitch and other parameters of the standard voices, or create a new voice that is more to your liking. You can also change the length of the pauses following words, and punctuation marks. See "General Settings" on page 38.

The TextAssist voice sounds strange.

If you do not like TextAssist's voice, you can temporarily modify it using the sliders on the expanded TextAssist toolbar. Or, you can create your own voices using the **Voice Editor**.

When TextAssist reads a mathematical formula, the minus sign is not pronounced. How can I change this?

By default, a minus sign is interpreted as a hyphen, which is not spoken.

To change this setting click the **Main Menu** button , select **Associations...**, **Settings...** and under the **Language** tab select a text filter then click on the **Configure...** button. Select the **Math mode** check box to read math symbols correctly. Alternatively, if you would like certain symbols pronounced in a special way in an application, you can create entries in an exception dictionary to translate "-" into "minus", "/" into "divided by", etc.

Appendix C: Glossary

breathiness

One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. In human speech, "breathy" sounds are produced by allowing a great deal of air to pass through the slightly open vocal cords. TextAssist can simulate breathiness in its synthesized speech. When this parameter is set to the maximum level, the voice sounds like a whisper.

See also Voice Editor dialog box

creakiness

One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. In human speech, creakiness, also called laryngealization, is produced when the rate of vibration of a speaker's vocal cords is slowed down considerably, sometimes so far that you can hear the individual vibrations as the person speaks. TextAssist can simulate the creakiness effect in its synthesized speech.

See also Voice Editor dialog box

echo

One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Creates an echo effect to the voice.

See also TextAssist Properties dialog box and Voice Editor dialog box

embedded commands

Codes that are inserted directly into a text in order to set certain voice and reading parameters.

exception dictionary

A file containing words that do not follow the regular pronunciation rules of the language and a description of their exceptional pronunciation. Exception dictionaries are useful for defining the correct pronunciation of many proper names, acronyms, abbreviations, and words borrowed from other languages. The file names of TextAssist exception dictionaries always end in ***.tad**.

frication rate

One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. It sets the proportion of the consonant pronunciation. If you increase this parameter, you can hear some consonants louder (for example 's', 'f', 'k', etc.).


See also Voice Editor dialog box

head size

One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Increased head size has the effect of giving the voice a deeper resonance.


See also Voice Editor dialog box

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| high-boost frequency | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. It specifies the limit frequency for the high boost filter.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| high-boost gain | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the amplification of the High-Boost filter after the limit frequency. You may want to increase the level of high boost filtering for female voices or lower it for male voices.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| hot keys | <p>Configurable key combinations, such as CTRL+SHIFT+P, that are alternative ways of selecting menu items or toolbar functions.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| intonation level | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Increased intonation level approaches the TextAssist's voice to the natural intonation level of a human voice.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| inverse echo | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters that result in an inverse echo effect on the voice.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| laryngealization | <p><i>See</i> creakiness.</p> |
| low-boost frequency | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. It specifies the limit frequency for the low boost filter.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| low-boost gain | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the amplification of the low-boost frequency before the limit frequency.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| phoneme | <p>The minimal unit in the sound system of a language. TextAssist uses a set of codes to represent the phonemes of the selected language. Unlike the letters of the alphabet that can represent different sounds in different words, e.g., the “g” in get, huge, and laugh, the phoneme codes always represent the same sound. Users can use these codes to precisely define how they would like TextAssist to pronounce a particular word.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| pitch | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. It sets the base frequency of the voice. You can set a minimum and maximum level for pitch, using the Pitch Min and Pitch Max sliders on the Pitch tab page of the Voice Editor dialog box.</p> <p><i>See also</i> TextAssist Properties dialog box and Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| pitch maximum | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the maximum level for the pitch parameter.</p> <p><i>See also</i> TextAssist Properties dialog box and Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| pitch minimum | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the minimum level for the pitch parameter.</p> <p><i>See also</i> TextAssist Properties dialog box and Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| richness | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the rate of the voicing source's active period. You can hear the effect of this parameter as a kind of richness of the voice.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| Singing pitch rate | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the pitch of the voice when singing. This effect applies when TextAssist is singing.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| smoothness | <p>One of TextAssist's adjustable voice parameters. Sets the force of a simple high-pass filter effect. Applying this effect you can hear a kind of smoothing.</p> <p><i>See also</i> Voice Editor dialog box</p> |
| sound card | <p>A piece of hardware that enables a computer to generate and record sound.</p> |
| speech synthesis | <p>The ability of a program to generate speech.</p> |
| TextAssist Properties dialog box | <p>A dialog box, accessible by clicking the Main Menu button  then selecting TextAssist Properties..., that allows you to change the hot key combinations and the realtime parameters.</p> |
| text filter | <p>A filter that enables TextAssist to ignore irrelevant text, like headers, embedded quotes, and formatting tags, when reading a particular type of document, such as an e-mail message or an HTML file. TextAssist includes three text filters: basic, e-mail, and HTML filters. You can</p> |

select any of these three filters or the **No filter** option, depending on your needs.

Voice Editor dialog box

A dialog box, accessible by clicking the **Main Menu** button  then selecting **Voice Editor...**, that allows you to adjust TextAssist's voice parameters.

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