

Ten Golden Rules for Dictation

It is very important to get into a good 'rhythm' of dictation as quickly as possible. When you first start dictating, the routine is:

1. Sit up straight and make sure you can breathe properly, so you can speak clearly.
2. Make sure the mic is switched off.
3. Compose and practise a sentence.
4. Switch the mic on.
5. Don't mutter, breathe deeply, sigh, sniff, say 'ummm', 'er' etc before you start the sentence - the computer will pick these up.
6. Speak the phrase or sentence clearly, with a comma or full stop. Use a "dictating voice", speaking slightly more slowly and carefully than you would for conversation. Try to speak like a newscaster - you can speak with an accent, but you must be clear and distinct. Avoid running words together, or letting your voice tail off at the ends of words and sentences.
7. Speak slowly and watch the words as they appear in the small on screen, to try and spot errors. This will help you learn a good rhythm and will also help improve your word recognition and spelling skills.
8. Wait silently until the words appear on screen - don't say 'Ooh look it's great/rubbish/what's it doing now etc' - it will pick this up.
9. Switch the mic off.
10. Play back and correct the errors for the sentence.

Once accuracy improves, you can dictate a paragraph or two before stopping to correct mistakes, but at first you should correct each sentence as soon as it is dictated.