

22nd April 2020

It is hard to believe that it was only last Wednesday that we commenced remote learning in support of the Government initiative to keep the Victorian and Australian community safe through social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Damascus community has been extraordinary in your ability to adapt to this new and changed environment. I thank and congratulate each member of the community for your willingness to go on this unexpected journey with us.

Recognising the good things to arise from challenging times can be difficult. In this Sunday's gospel, the disciples failed to recognise the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus. It took Jesus to explain to them the stories from Moses and the prophets that referred to His death and resurrection. Jesus, the teacher, revealed himself on the road to Emmaus and the disciples received him gratefully in the breaking of the bread.

In the spirit of gratefulness and Christian leadership, our House Leadership team have created a beautiful reflection on things that they are grateful for and this was shared with students in TA this morning. I share it with our community, as a reflection of the appreciation for the positive contributions coming from Damascus and society throughout this time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4YvsA0ZWE0&feature=youtu.be>

As a parent supporting students in remote learning, I am gaining some first-hand insights this week. Some of the things that I am observing is how genuine students' efforts are to engage with their work. Just as in the conventional classroom, I encourage students to reach out to their teacher when they are finding aspects of the work challenging.

Some younger students were feeling overwhelmed by the volume of emails that came into inboxes last week, and there is a possibility that as the first fortnight draws to a close at the end of this week that students may be worried if they have not completed all their work. Again, encourage them to reach out to their teacher, typically through email – to communicate their concerns. None of us have been in this space before, and we are all learning together. One modification we have made for the next fortnight is that students will receive their "package" of work directly from their subject teacher to reduce the confusion about where work is coming from. This next package may start to arrive from Friday afternoon and on Monday morning. This is not so students will work on it over the weekend, but so that it is in inboxes at the start of next week. Parents will also be emailed the work. The [Remote Learning Manual](#) on the College website has been updated to reflect these changes.

One of the real learnings of this period is the volume of new engagement with technology. In many cases, it is not new technology, but using existing technologies more comprehensively. Maths and PE teacher, Laura Kimm, put the following document together to support students who are having to labour through large volumes of written text. Using the text-reading function in MS Word can help students who are finding reading large quantities of text challenging. Laura's guide is attached.

Over the next fortnight, we will start to seek some feedback through different survey tools, to try and improve everyone's experience. If you receive a survey, we would appreciate your feedback.

This Saturday, April 25th is ANZAC day. On Friday morning, we will be using a shared resource prepared by our Humanities, Faith and Development teams to commemorate

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ANZAC Day, and we want all students to engage with this commemoration during TA time. The celebration of the ANZAC spirit and the desire for peace will have a special significance in 2020.

The safety of the Damascus community is the key priority of this period of time. It sits alongside our commitment to continuing our provision of quality education and maintaining a connected and supported community. In ensuring we are able to provide the support families need, please contact fees@damascus.vic.edu.au if your family is experiencing financial duress. Young people's education must not be a victim of this global pandemic, and we are here to help. If there are other forms of assistance that families may require, please contact info@damascus.vic.edu.au or for technology support contact helpdesk@damascus.vic.edu.au. The regular channels of TA, House Leaders, Counsellors or the Leadership Team can be contacted through the office or email.

We keep in our prayers Mercy Sister, Liz Dowling, who has lost her loved Mum this week. May she find eternal rest in the arms of our loving God.

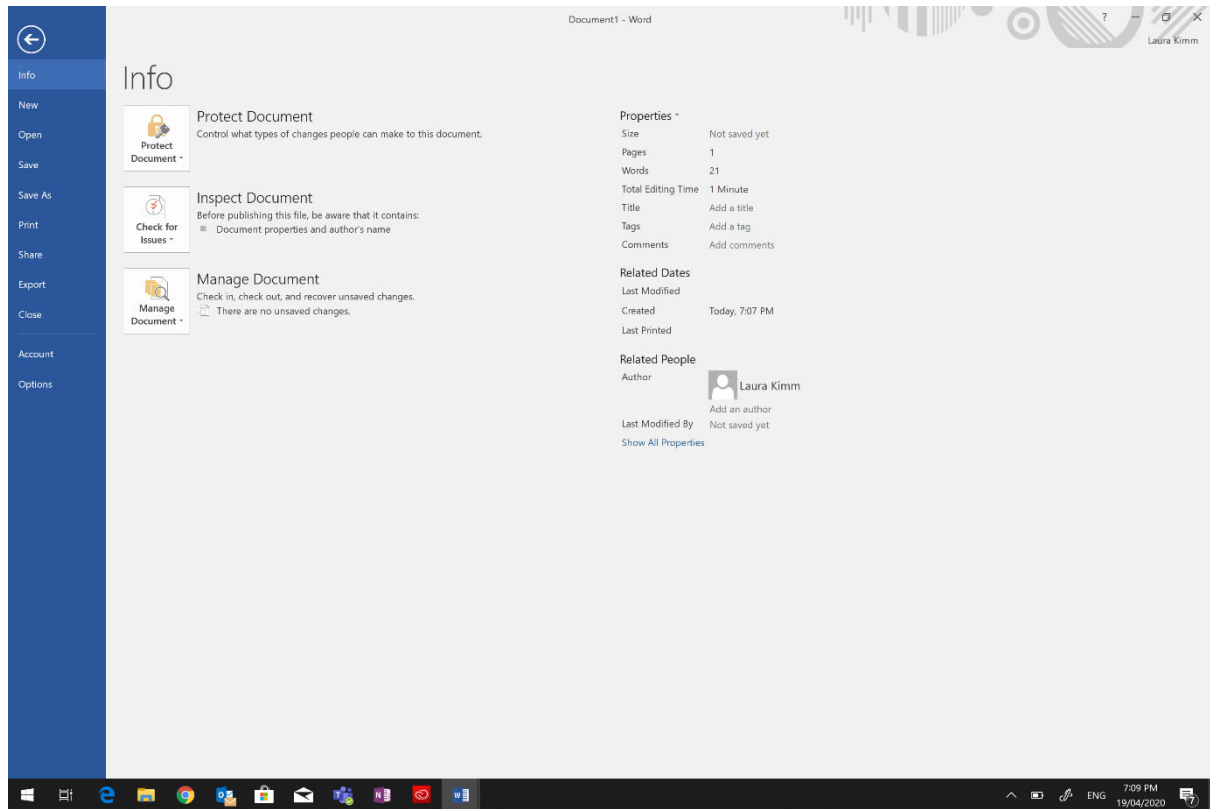
Continue to stay safe, until next week ...

Kind regards

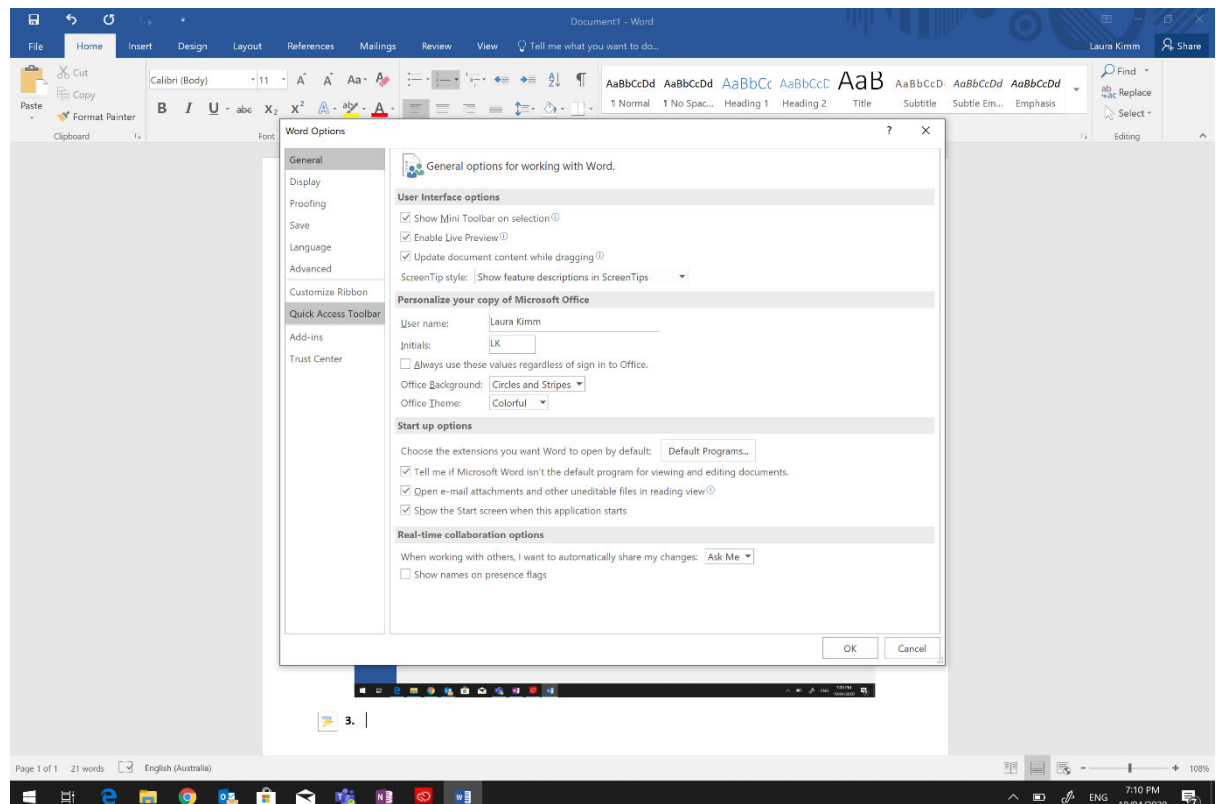
Matthew Byrne

Using TEXT to SPEECH on word documents.

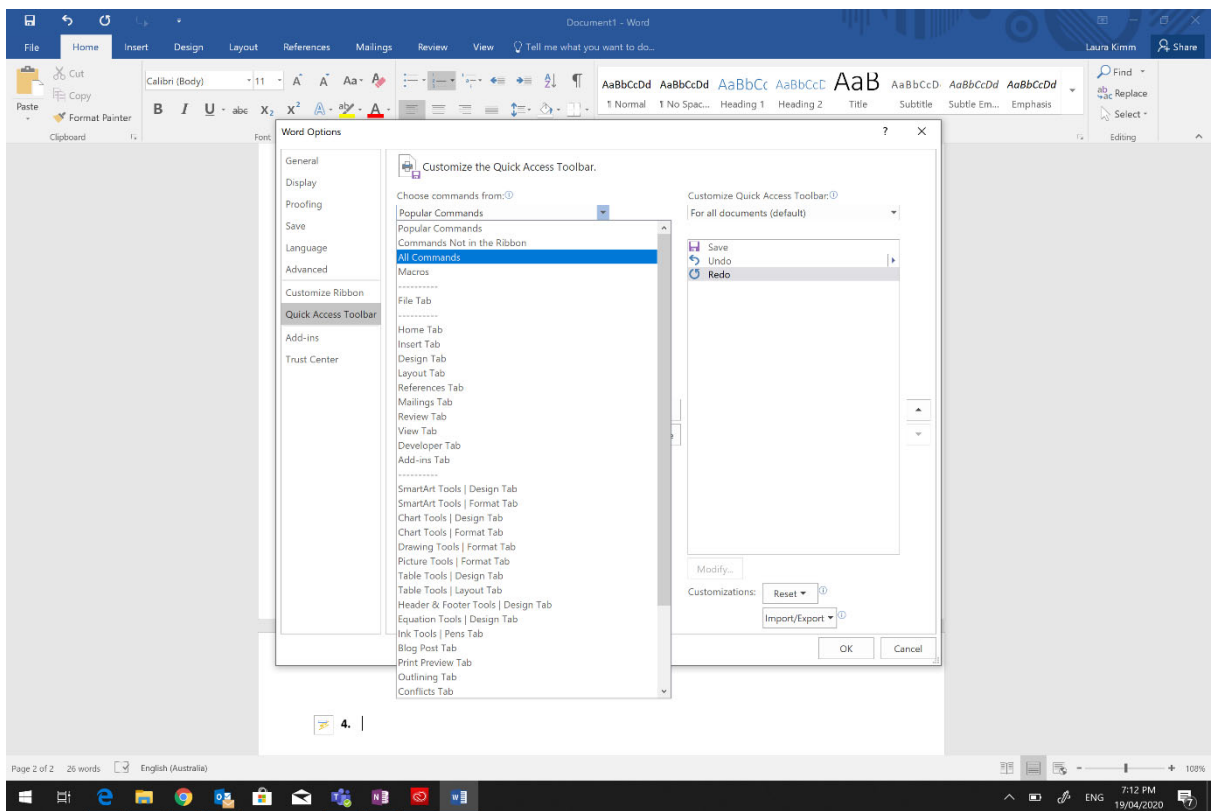
1. Open up the word document
2. Click **File** and scroll down to **options**



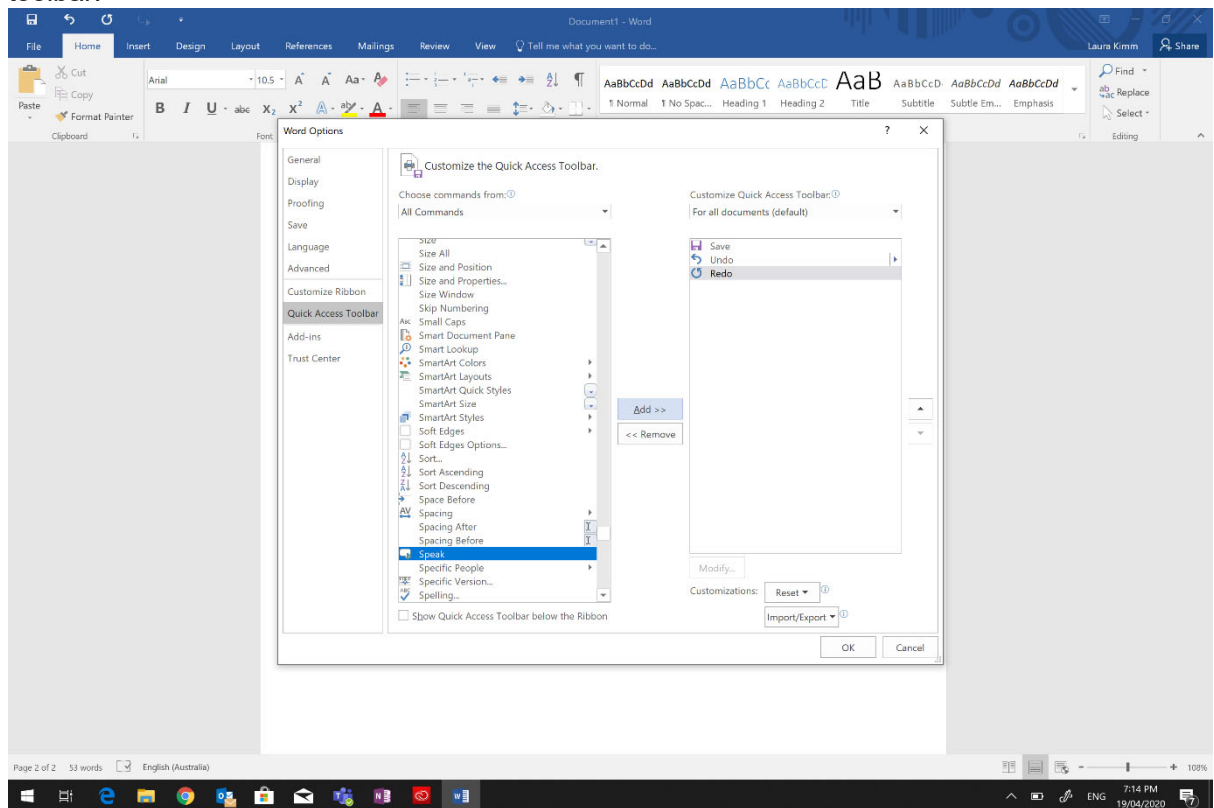
3. Click **Quick access toolbar**



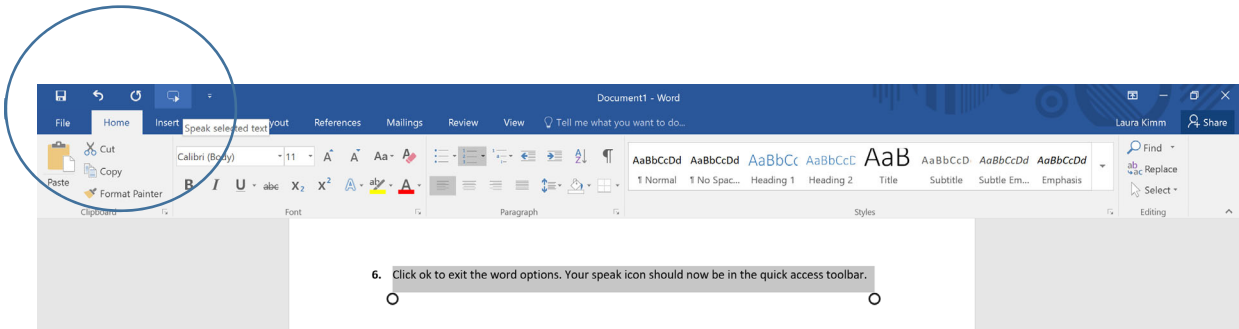
4. Click 'all commands' from the drop down menu



5. Select the "Speak" command and click the "Add" button to add it to the Quick Access toolbar.



6. Click ok to exit the word options. Your speak icon should now be in the quick access toolbar.



7. Highlight the text you want to speak and click this icon. Make sure your volume is turned up.