



Martel USB Mini Mask

It is generally accepted that on average we speak seven times faster than we can write. This means that by dictating, we can save approximately 80% of the time we would have spent writing, and often increase the quality of our writing as well.

At some point during their tenure at Landmark College, in their personal lives, or in their future careers, our students require the ability to dictate as quietly as possible, whether the content is sensitive information or simple notes from a community event.

Technology Learning Services chose the **Martel USB Mini-Mask** to test the viability of using a mask with Dragon NS software for silent dictation in places frequented by busy students: classrooms, libraries, lecture halls, airplanes, and other public venues.



Initial tests using the Mini-Mask have resulted in the following observations:

Pros

- The mask is relatively small and lightweight
- It is easily portable and comes with its own carrying case, large enough to hold a digital recorder.
- It is versatile. It can be used with a desktop, laptop, digital or tape recorder, or wireless language equipment
- It is made of high-quality plastic and includes a Soft Seal mouth piece for a more comfortable feel
- The Soft Seal mouth piece can be stitched or softened with a blow dryer or other heat source, to better fit the face

- The mask fits just around the mouth, so users can breathe through their nose

Cons

- The mask is too small to add more voice silencing foam without covering the microphone
- People with louder voices or a lot of bass in their voice can be heard through the mask
- If you accidentally cover the air vent holes with your hand, backpressure can form, making it difficult to dictate
- Holding the Soft Seal close enough to your mouth to maintain silence can prevent natural facial movement
- Testers had difficulty achieving accurate word recognition, even after completing multiple satisfactory microphone volume and quality checks and general training. (Current research is focused on modifications to computer/microphone configuration, jack adapters, mouthpiece, or dictation, to increase accuracy.)

Further testing and evaluation will provide the information necessary for accessing whether or not TLS can recommend this Mask to interested students. Meanwhile, the Mini-Mask will be made available to students and others for demo purposes for a loan period of one week after initial evaluation is complete.