



Olympus ME31 Review

Introduction:

The [Olympus ME31](#) is a gun style directional microphone that was originally designed for use with digital recorders. Most directional microphones don't work well with speech recognition because they capture too much sound but the ME31 is the exception to the rule and very well suited to speech recognition.

Pros:

- Excellent price.
- Best quality desktop microphone we have tested.
- Longest range of any desktop microphone we have tested.
- Excellent horizontal noise rejection.
- Well constructed.
- 99% accuracy between 5 & 24 inches.
- 98% accuracy at 36 inches.
- 97% accuracy at 48 inches.
- 95% accuracy at 60 inches.
- Very small footprint with the base measuring approximately 2 x 3 inches and which can be optionally mounted on a stand or partially slid under a keyboard.

Cons:

- Excellent noise rejection but not very noise canceling so this microphone should only be used in a moderately quiet environment.

Bottom Line:

The ME31 is the first directional microphone we have found to be suitable for speech recognition but the big surprise was 99% accuracy when dictating from 3 feet away and 97% accuracy when dictating from 4 feet. We do not recommend going beyond 4 feet but this will allow the end-user to sit up straight or optionally lean back in a chair while dictating, which from a comfort perspective is hard to beat.

If you don't need a wireless microphone but are looking for a light weight, low profile (small footprint), high accuracy microphone with a range of up to 4 feet in a relatively quiet office, this would be our #1 desktop microphone recommendation. Note that the Achilles heel of any directional microphone is noise. Even though this microphone is designed to ignore off to the side sounds, noise cancellation is still its weakness and that is why we only recommend using this microphone in a moderately quiet environment.

Note that you will achieve the best results when dictating directly down the barrel of this microphone. Do not attempt to dictate from the side as you may be accustomed to with a headset or handheld microphone unless you are within 12 inches of the microphone element. The included heavy-duty windscreen should only be necessary in windy conditions such as a fan or blower.