

Smooth Talker Resource Guide

The Smooth Talker is the most versatile simple communicator on the market. Its 6 different modes allow it to function as 6 different communication devices in 1. Each mode can be used in a variety of ways to achieve a variety of goals. Here, we have compiled a list of just some of the countless ways in which the Smooth Talker can be used in practice. However, this list is far from exhaustive – the only limit is your imagination!

We have sectioned this resource guide by each of the six modes of the Smooth Talker:

Single: Play a single message

Sequence: Play multiple messages in order

Random: Play multiple messages randomly

Choice: Connect a second switch and have each switch play a different message

Converse: Connect a second switch and have 2 students play a sequence of messages by alternate switch presses

Prompt: Connect a second switch and have the external switch step through the messages at half volume for the user to hear, with the primary switch selecting the message and playing it at full volume

Within those modes, ideas are further differentiated by goal:

Personal Goals: Give students a voice; Empower to communicate own wants, desires, thoughts, emotional states, etc.; Control surroundings; Make independent choices; Assume leadership roles; Develop fundamental life skills; and much more!

Social Goals: Give students equitable participation opportunities; Develop social skills; Engage in cooperative interactions; Learn appropriate turn-taking behavior; Initiate communicative interactions; Appropriately acknowledge and respond to interactions initiated by others; Facilitate inclusive classroom learning; and more

Academic Goals: Incorporate the Smooth Talker into academic lessons to reach cognitive learning goals. Goals are further divided into subcategories by subject: English, Math, and other cross-curricular content.

Single Message Mode

personal goals

- Ask a teacher or parent for help
- Say “look what I did” to share their work
- Call over mom, dad, the teacher, etc.
- Call the family pet
- Make exclamations such as “yeah!” or “oh wow!”
- Indicate understanding
- Indicate the need for a break
- Request to change activities
- Request to “do it again”
- Communicate “I’m finished”
- Prompt sharing by declaring “my turn”
- Make requests of others, like “tickle me” or “stick out your tongue”
- Use in public places to order food in a restaurant, a ticket at the movies, etc.
- Order a pizza over the phone
- Make an appointment
- Answer the phone
- Tell the lunch menu
- Answer “here” during role call
- Give the morning announcements
- Be a teacher’s helper and go to other classrooms to request to borrow items from other teachers
- Collect classroom materials from students to assist in the clean up process
- Lead classroom transitions by informing students that it is “time to clean up” or “move to the next station now”
- Work with another to do things they don’t have the physical ability to do themselves. For example, build a tower with a teacher by instructing to “add another block”.
- Pair with a device like Alexa to make commands and control one’s own environment
- Use as an exchange notebook for users to tell parents what they did at school that day, and then to tell teachers what they did at home
- Use as a speech therapy assessment tool. Allow the child to hear his or her own voice in an attempt to promote increased speaking
- Scaffold early scanning development while also indicating desires. A partner (teacher, parent, peer, other, etc) offers options one-by-one and the user activates a switch press to communicate “I want that one”

social goals

- Say hello
- Say goodbye
- Introduce oneself to others
- Give someone a compliment
- Ask a question, such as “how was your weekend?”
- Ask a peer to play
- Invite a friend to an event, like a birthday party or a playdate
- Wish people “happy holidays”
- Offer a snack to others
- Participate in a group song, like in a recital or singing happy birthday
- Participate in familiar classroom routines, such as the Pledge of Allegiance
- Tell a joke
- Be a doorway greeter at an event
- Comment on one’s own or a peer’s new haircut, toy, t-shirt, etc.
- Give directions for a group activity, such as “stir” or “press it now”
- Do show and tell
- Participate in answering morning questions, like today’s date or what the weather is like (teacher pre-records the answer)
- Cheer on teammates or classmates
- Be the linesman in a game by calling when the ball goes out of bounds
- Recite a line in the school play
- Participate in a campaign or fundraiser (ex. “vote for....” or “please buy our girl scout cookies”)
- Go “trick or treat”ing

academic goals

english

- Read a section of a story
- Recite a short poem
- Indicate to turn the page in a book
- Read a line in a repetitive story, such as “and it was just right” in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*
- Say a characters name when mentioned in a story (even better: personalize a story written about them using their own name!)
- Add sound effects to a story (ex. “munch munch munch” whenever The Very Hungry Caterpillar eats something)
- Give a short summary of a story
- Practice word families by activating the switch whenever the user hears a word starting with a certain letter, or a rhyming word, or a word ending in -ing, etc.
- Give stage directions in a play

math

- State properties of numbers, shapes, etc.
- Recite mnemonic devices
- Recite formulas used for solving problems

cross-curricular content

- State fact
- State a vocabulary word and its definition
- Give a short presentation
- Identify instances using early scanning skills. (ex. video is played and the user activates a switch press to indicate instances of pollution in a science lesson, capitalism in a social studies lesson, etc.)
- Declare “I see one” on a scavenger hunt around the school (ex. Looking for examples of triangles, good citizenship, liquids, etc.

Sequence Mode

personal goals

- Use communication scripts to order food in a restaurant, a ticket at the movies, pizza over the phone, etc. (Ex. Hi I'm ready to order...I'll have a coke to drink please...I'll have the steak for my entree... medium rare please...That's everything, thank you)
- Pre-program user's daily schedule into the Smooth Talker. As user progresses throughout the day, they can press the Smooth Talker to prompt their next activity
- Use similar pre-programming and prompting to follow directions or complete a to-do list
- Be a teacher's helper by doing a lunch count
- Be a teacher's helper by instructing the class in multi-part directions
- Assist the teacher in giving a test, reciting one by one the list of spelling words or short math equations
- Give multiple morning announcements

social goals

- Use communication scripts to practice conversations. Example templates are available online or get creative with your own!
- Retell a story
- Tell about future plans, past events, or general interests
- Tell an interactive or multi-part joke
- Tell a top ten list about an interest (ex. 10 highest scoring basketball players)
- Describe each picture in a photo album
- Announce players as they enter the court
- Play a prank
- Conduct a guessing game, giving clues one at a time
- Tell what's on one's Christmas/Hanukah/Birthday wish list
- Share one's thoughts about a book or movie
- Sing a song or recite a poem, verse by verse
- Give directions (ex. How to get somewhere, how to do laundry, how to take medicine, etc.)
- Lead others in an activity (ex. Tell each step in a recipe, tell which activity is next in a class lesson, tell which Christmas Carol to sing next, etc.)
- Host a talent show, announcing each act
- Give an overview of the rules of a game
- Recite multiple lines in the school play
- Interview people for the school newspaper (record answers on a voice recorder)
- Give a tour. User has a route that they follow and then presses the switch at specific landmarks/items. Switch press activates a message describing that landmark/item.
- Give clues in a scavenger hunt
- Participate in a scavenger hunt. Preprogram clues into the device, then the user presses the switch to receive the next clue.
- Be a starter at a race ("on your mark", "get set", "go")
- Take attendance in a small class

academic goals

math

- Use to count: Count forwards, count backwards, skip count, count by fractions
- Count in measurements, such as inches, grams, liters, etc.
- Count by monetary value
- Count by time increments (ex. minutes and hours)
- Count different items: amount of people, items, sides on a shape, objects on a graph, survey responses, tally marks, etc.
- Recite addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division tables
- Recite the days of the week or months of the year

english

- Read a book, page by page
- Recite the alphabet, letter by letter
- Recite a poem, line by line
- Spell words. For example, "D'...'O'...'G'..."That spells Dog"
- Sequence a story, organized into beginning, middle, and end

cross-curricular content

- Recite lists that occur in a specific sequential order, such as the water cycle, the order of planets, the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights, etc.
- Describe different characteristics of an item, person, place, event, etc.
- Give a timeline of events
- Direct peers in following the steps of an experiment or task
- Report a current event, describing the who, what, where, when, and why

Random Mode

personal goals

- Use in a similar way to the single mode function, but with greater variety. For example, instead of constantly saying “I like this”, say “I’m having fun”, “yay”, “woo”, “this is great”, etc.
- Make various announcements
- Tell a list
- Pre-program into the Smooth Talker a list of tasks for the user to complete in any order. The user presses the Smooth Talker to be prompted with their next activity.

social goals

- Use in a similar way to the single mode function, but with greater variety. For example, instead of constantly saying “hello”, say “hello”, “hi”, “how’s it going?” “what’s up”, etc.
- Assign each message to numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and use the Smooth Talker like a dice, allowing the user to participate in any activity which requires rolling a dice. Particularly useful for individuals with limited dexterity or visual impairments
- Participate in games that require some sort of choice by players, like Duck Duck Goose or Rock Paper Scissors
- Assign each message to a potential color and body part combination in the game Twister (ex. right hand yellow). The user can participate in the game by being the caller.
- Lead games that require some sort of choice by the leader, such as Simon Says
- Lead songs where verses randomize, such as If You’re Happy And You Know It, The Wheels on The Bus, or Old McDonald, etc.
- Play mad libs! Assign each message to either different adjectives, nouns, or verbs. Each switch press then selects a word to fill in.

academic goals

english

- Recite examples within a word family. For example, words that start with the letter “b”, words that end in “-tion”, words that rhyme with “door”, etc.
- When writing a story as a class, the user can contribute by randomly generating words to use as transitions, sentence starters, character names, etc.

math

- Assign each message to numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and use the communicator as a dice. Use to play probability games.
- Recite various properties of a certain item. For example, “a square has four sides”, “a square has 4 corners”

cross-curricular content

- List various causes and effects of something. For example, “families move because.....”, “pollution is caused by...”, etc.
- Name various properties of items. For example, characteristics of a good citizen, characteristics of reptiles, etc.
- List various items in a set. For example, different US presidents, types of mammals, types of parallelograms, etc.
- List various facts. For example, “Christians believe in Jesus” and “Buddhists believe in Buddha”
- Call items in a class bingo game related to academic content

Choice Mode

personal goals

- Advance communication skills by using in a similar manner to single switch functions, yet more elaborately. For example, instead of simply calling the family pet, call the pet and then follow up with a rewarding comment such as “good boy”. Another example is as well as just instructing others to “look what I did”, follow up by explaining a little about the thing being shown.
- Make requests politely and show appreciation, such as “Please give me the” then say “thank you”.
- Select which parent to call over, either “mom” or “dad”
- Make a choice between two options. For example, choose either juice or water to drink, either pasta or mashed potatoes for lunch, red shoes or blue shoes to wear, etc.
- When an activity ends, the user can select whether to do it again or be finished
- User can request for more of a snack and eventually indicate when finished
- Indicate yes or no
- Choose to stop or go
- Indicate degree of understanding by saying “ok I get it” or “please explain again”
- Be a teacher’s helper and instruct the class in two-part directions, such as “time to line up for lunch” and “ok let’s go”
- Scaffold students who are learning two switch step scanning. The teacher presents options to the user one at a time. The user presses one switch to instruct the teacher to move onto the next item. The user continues this process until the teacher is offering the desired item. The student presses the other switch to indicate desire and select this item

social goals

- Say hello and goodbye
- Welcome visitors to an event, then thank them for coming. For example, “Welcome to Parent Night, please take a seat anywhere” then “Thank you for coming, we hope you had a nice time”
- Wish people the appropriate holiday greeting, such as “Merry Christmas” or “Happy Hanukah”
- Tell a two-part joke. The first switch speaks the questions, the second speaks the punchline
- Give feedback to peers, telling them things like “good job” when they succeed or “keep trying” when they don’t
- Cheer on a favorite sports team and boo the officials
- Participate in games like duck duck duck goose, or be the seeker in Hide and Seek in which one switch counts to ten and the other announces “ready or not, here I come”
- Announce when each team scores a point in a game
- Be the leader in a game. Announce in Red Light Green Light, give hints in a searching game by declaring if peers are getting “warmer” or “colder”, or be the question master in 20 questions by answering a variety of yes/no questions
- Work with a partner by helping make decisions for a piece of work. For example, the partner draws the picture / writes the story / plays the game / etc. and throughout the activity asks the user yes/no questions about what to do, such as whether to use red or green, whether to live in a castle or a palace, whether to accept a challenge or not, etc.
- Work with another to do things one doesn’t have the physical capability of doing themselves. For example, build a tower with a teacher by instructing to “add a red block” or “add a blue block”

academic goals

english

- Recite 2 different repetitive lines in a story. For example, “No, I am not your mother” and “Yes, you are my mother” in *Are You My Mother*
- Develop a conceptual understanding of opposites. For example, same/different, big/little, fast/slow
- Give stage directions in a play

math

- Develop a conceptual understanding of relativity. For example, classify if numbers are greater than or less than others

cross-curricular content

- Classify and sort items. For example, classify numbers as odd or even, texts as fictional or non-fictional, etc.
- Answer yes/no questions.

Converse Mode

personal goals

- Work with another to make announcements to a group
- Work with another to lead transitions or activities
- Take control of a social interaction by actively participating in a conversation

social goals

- Follow a conversation script with each other to partake in social interactions (So many are available online, or create your own!)
- Practice turn-taking
- Practice working together with another to take it in turns to announce each part of a sequence of directions, parts of an announcement, steps in a recipe, parts in retelling a story, etc.
- Work with another to call out attendance
- Work with a peer as an interviewing team by alternating asking the questions
- Work as part of an announcing team to alternate announcing players as they enter the court
- Tell a joke together
- Sing a song together
- Make announcements together
- Take it in turns to give directions in a game
- Play with the family pet together. One user can give a direction (ex. “sit”) and the other can give a verbal reward (ex. “good boy”)
- Present a partner project or partner show and tell

academic goals

math

- Alternate counting: Count forwards, count backwards, skip count, count by fractions, count in measurements (ex. Inches, grams, liters, etc), count by monetary value (ex. By quarter (25c), count by time increments (ex. minutes and hours)
- Alternate counting different items: amount of people, items, sides on a shape, objects on a graph, survey responses or tally marks
- Alternate reciting addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division tables
- Alternate reciting the days of the week or months of the year
- Alternate counting items identified around the school
- Alternate telling the steps in a formula

english

- Understand the two-way dynamics of a conversation: speaking then listening to the other person
- Alternate reading passages of a story, lines of a poem, etc.
- Alternate reciting the alphabet
- Work with a partner, with one user listing the spelling word and the other spelling it out
- The first student reads a portion of a story, and the second makes the appropriate sound noise at the appropriate time
- Alternate telling parts in summarizing a story

cross-curricular content

- Present a project with a partner
- Follow a conversation script to talk about a topic: ask each other questions, tell each other facts, etc.
- Work with a partner, with one user listing causes and the other listing their corresponding effects
- Work with a partner, with one user stating vocabulary words and the other the corresponding definitions

Prompt Mode

personal goals

- Use like an auditory choice board to choose food, clothes, which movie to watch, etc.
- Empower students to verbally order their own food at a restaurant, ticket at the movies, etc.
- Appropriately communicate one's current emotional state
- Scan through and select from a variety of appropriate exclamations, directions, questions, commonly used phrases, comments, requests, reinforcers, etc.
- Scan through to select from various commands to give the pet
- Scan through to select the appropriate answer to a question. Pre-load with potential answer choices appropriate to the question. For example, program in various weather conditions (ex. sunny, cloudy, raining, storming, snowing, etc.), then ask the student what the weather is like that day.
- Scaffold auditory scanning development. The teacher uses the external switch to scan through options, pausing on each one. The

social goals

- Use like an auditory choice board to choose which classmate to partner with, which game to play, which song the class should sing, which directions to give in a game such as Simon Says or a scavenger hunt, etc.
- Scan through and select from a variety of appropriate greetings, farewells, cheers, directions for a game, questions, requests, comments about one's own or a peer's new haircut/toy/shirt/etc.
- Participate in show and tell. For example, show a family picture album and name/briefly describe different family members or photos.
- Give a tour, describing certain items or locations when appropriate
- Interview multiple people, selecting appropriate questions depending on the audience or timing
- Be a helper during a trip to the grocery store by reading out the shopping list. Select the appropriate item based on the current location in the store.
- Work with a partner to complete a project. For example, choose which color the partner should use to paint a picture or how many blocks to add to the lego tower.
- Work together with another to make a shared decision. One student scans through the choices with the external switch, while the other presses the main switch to make the selection.

academic goals

english

- Choose which story to read
- Scan through to select the appropriate answer to questions about a story. For example, the teacher programs in character names in advance. Then asks questions such as "which character ate the cake?" or "who has blonde hair"
- Scan through to sequence a story. The teacher programs in summarized sections of the story in advance. Then asks students questions about sequencing, such as "what happened before..." or "what happened after..."
- Work with a partner to write a story together. One student can choose content for the other to write about, such as character, setting, problem, etc.
- Student selects appropriate sentence starters or transition phrases
- Students selects appropriate stage directions to give
- Student scans through to select the appropriate answer to questions. For example, "what is the first letter in CAT"
- Scan through spelling words to spell out loud

math

- Scan through to select the appropriate answer to questions. For example, simple math equations, identifying coins, identifying shapes, selecting the appropriate formula to use, etc.
- Work with a partner to answer questions together. For example, one student uses the external switch to count while the second student uses the main switch to select the correct answer
- Identify shapes of items located around the school

cross-curricular content

- Scan through to select the appropriate answer to questions. For example, program in the names of planets in advance, then the teacher asks questions such as "which planet has rings around it?" and "which planet is closest to the Sun?"
- Scan through to appropriately classify items. For example, program in different categories in advance, such as "herbivores" "omnivores" and "carnivores", then the teacher names various animals for the student to classify.
- Direct peers by giving instructions for a research project or experiment
- Make a hypothesis
- Program in the weeks vocabulary words, then the teacher gives definitions and the student selects the corresponding word

Other Ideas

Connect a toy or appliance

Any message can also have a toy or appliance output attached to it. Enhance the user's engagement by providing more engaging experiences and more stimulating rewards

- **Use it as a reward.** For example, in sequential mode record four separate messages: "D"... "O"... "G"... and "Dog". Attach a dog toy to the "dog" message to provide a fun and entertaining reward to the user for correctly spelling the word "dog". Could also be used with appliances, such as by turning on a "L"... "A"... "M"... "P"... "Lamp".
- **Practice following instructions.** For example, in sequence mode, the first message says "turn on the lamp" and the second click is paired with a silent message but turns on the lamp. Or pair it with a toy, in which the first message says "Listen to teddy sing" and the second message activates teddy. Tip: use a singing teddy and pair with a silent message OR pair with a non-singing teddy and record your own song as the Smooth Talker message!
- **Play.** For example, connect a walking toy to knock over a pile of blocks. Add a message such as "Argh, must smash!"
- **Play together.** For example, have two students operate their own toys using their own Smooth Talkers.
- **Be a participating member of a team.** For example, when telling the steps of a recipe in sequence mode, attach a blender and have one step activate it, so the user can also be part of the physical cooking process
- **Work with a partner to complete a task together.** For example, attach a water gun to water the plants. One student points the water gun at the plants while the other student uses the Smooth Talker to turn the water gun on and off.
- **Work with a partner to complete a lesson activity together.** For example, attach a spin art machine. One student pours in the paint, while the other uses the Smooth Talker to operate the spin art machine
- **Use to enhance academic lessons.** For example, when reading a repetitive line in a story, attach a toy or appliance associated with that statement, character, etc. For example, attach a lamb toy to animate during the line if the character saying the line is a lamb. Or in *The Three Little Pigs*, instead of simply playing the message "And he huffed and he puffed and he blew the house down" attach a fan to simulate the wolf's huffing and puffing.

Go wireless

Smooth Talker is part of the SimplyWorks range! This means you can connect it wirelessly to any other SimplyWorks product!

Simply Works Control

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Wireless Toy Control

iClick or Energize

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Wireless Mains Appliance Control

Use as an iPad app

Like the features of Smooth Talker but your user prefers an iPad? No problem! Download the Smooth Talker AAC app to essentially turn your iPad into a Smooth Talker! Access all of the same features, but using your iPad interface rather than the Smooth Talker hardware.