
Clicker 4 for Language & Communication

Quick Guide

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Clicker 4 is a valuable tool for stimulating, developing and supporting language development in general, at all stages, with a wide range of different types of pupils. It is also ideal for supporting all sorts of curriculum-based work on language and communication. Its obvious key qualities in this respect are:

- picture support for written text, for pre-readers, emerging readers and non-readers.
- voice output support for written text for pre-readers, emerging readers and non-readers.
- direct access to the meaning of words and sentences without the user having to get tangled up with spelling or the mechanics of typing.
- switch and scan access for severely physically involved pupils.

Other qualities are:

- Because it is 'framework' program, it can 'grow with' the child just by adding new and different vocabulary and tasks. This is ideal, as they (and you!) are not then chopping and changing about between a whole lot of different programs that all work differently and have a different 'interface' to get used to. You are using the same program that has become familiar and easy to use.
- Apart from/as well as picture support, it can provide other visual clues for children with specific language disorders – eg. spatial location and colour coding.
- Using **Print Grids (>File Menu)**: Clicker 4 can be used to develop and print out paper-based 'low tech' picture and symbol based materials. For example; name tags, labels for objects around the room/school, games (lotto, pairs etc.), topic charts (eg. weather), worksheets (eg. draw a circle round all the ones that....), pictorial timetables, behaviour management schedules ('I'm working for.....'; 'I'm waiting for.....'), TEACCH materials (colour-coded work schedules).
- Using **Instant Pictures as you Type (>User Preferences>Options Menu)** - especially with PCS symbols installed – Clicker 4 can be used to quickly produce inclusive, accessible written materials that have picture and symbol support for text, (eg. story about class outing, shopping list, 'Things I must remember to bring to school tomorrow' etc.)
- It can act as an introduction and training programme in the development of switch and scan skills (while also working on relevant language material).
- It can act as a 'trainer' for use of a full-scale augmentative communication system for children with little or no functional speech.



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- As it can be used on computer, it may motivate and engage the child in a way that 'silent' paper-based communication materials may not.
- As school staff become familiar with the wide and varied uses of Clicker with all sorts of pupils, everyone benefits. Speech, language and communication impaired pupils are likely to use it more intensively and have more positive learning experiences with it than they might with 'black box' technology' that relies on the (possibly infrequent) visits of a speech and language therapist to introduce, teach and support.

Clicker 4 with symbols

Clicker comes with its own set of graphics (*CPL graphics* folder inside the Clicker 4 folder) which are quite nice and can be supplemented with any other pictures you want (save these into the *My Pictures* folder, inside the Clicker 4 folder).

However, this is not a wide enough range of pictures to provide comprehensive communication vocabulary for a child with little or no functional speech. It is recommended that for this kind of child use, additionally, Mayer Johnson Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) be installed.

Installing PCS

Even if you already have BoardMaker software, with the PCS symbols, you cannot get the PCS symbols out of BoardMaker to use with Clicker¹. You have to install an additional set of PCS symbols on to your computer. These come on a CD and need to be installed inside the Clicker 4 folder, registered and 'managed' as a Clicker library, so that the program can 'find' the symbols when it is in 'Instant Pictures' (in cells, or as you type) mode. (see CALL Centre Quick Guide "Managing Pictures and Libraries in Clicker")

On the CD the PCS symbols are organised in two ways - by topic category ('Cat' folder), and in alphabetical order ('Alpha' folder). The instructions say you should install the 'Cat' folder for some reason, but in practice it tends to be much more useful to install the 'Alpha' folder.

Clicker 4 as a communication aid?

Clicker 4 is perhaps not the perfect voice output communication aid, so may not be the system that is finally recommended as a specific child's personal communication aid. But it is an incredibly valuable system for getting started with, and for introducing, practising and building up all the skills needed.

If it can be demonstrated (on the classroom computer) that a child is competent in all the basic skills involved with operating a voice output system, and has achieved success with this, then it is much more likely that agreement will be reached quickly to provide funding to buy a more complex and powerful aid (and expensive!) personal voice output communication aid. It is also more likely that the child will succeed with an expensive and complex communication aid when it arrives!

¹ **Technical Note:**

The symbols in BoardMaker are in a special Bitmap format, while Clicker 4 can only work with graphic in Windows metafile (.wmf) or .jpg format.

Setting Clicker 4 up for communication

Right click – speech preview.

Unless you have deliberately changed this, all cells in a grid will automatically be set to the 'default' setting, whereby if the user right clicks on the cell it will highlight and speak out its contents, without sending anything to the document above. This allows the child to check what a cell says before choosing it.

This is useful especially on text-only grids, for children who are reading a bit but just want to check the odd word. It is not so useful to younger children or those with complex difficulties. (For them, we will tend to be using picture/symbol support in the cell along with the written word anyway.)

Unfortunately, switch and scan users cannot access this feature directly but can have cell contents read as they scan if the *right button sound* is selected to *software speech* (with the text to be spoken in the box) and the *Scan sound* in *Access* is *Play right mouse button sound*.

Speech on Selection

For speech and language impaired users, we generally want Clicker set so that the word/picture speaks out loud immediately the child clicks on it with an ordinary left mouse click, or selects it with their switch.

This is different from the default setting, so you have to make a few changes.

There are two separate areas to think about –

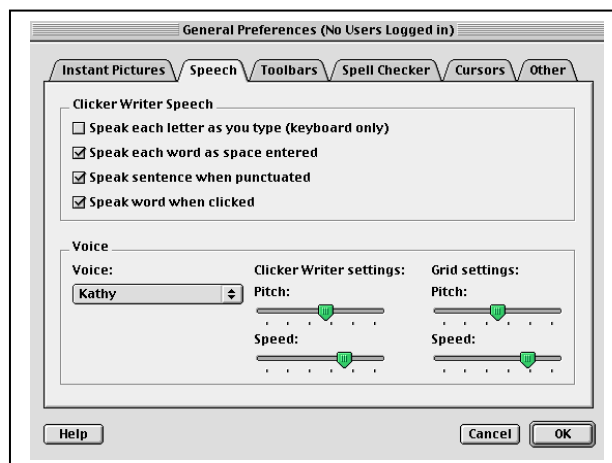
- (1) the speech output from the ClickerWriter document (if you are using one) - you can set it up to speak from the document end, in one go (quicker).
- (2) the speech output from the Clicker grid - you can set it up to speak from the grid, cell by cell.

It depends where you are starting from and what exactly you want to do, which is the best route. Whatever you do, though – **don't do BOTH** – or your grid will say each word twice, which is confusing!

1. Document

If a grid is ready-made (eg. downloaded from Clicker Grids for Learning), it is quicker to change the speech setting for the whole document, in one go.

- Open **Options Menu > User Preferences > Speech** (tab at top).
- Click to tick the bottom three of the four available options.
- Click **OK**.



2. Grid

Left click – sound output.

When the user left-clicks to select a cell, the default setting in Clicker is for the word (and possibly picture) to be sent to the ClickerWriter document, but with 'No sound'.

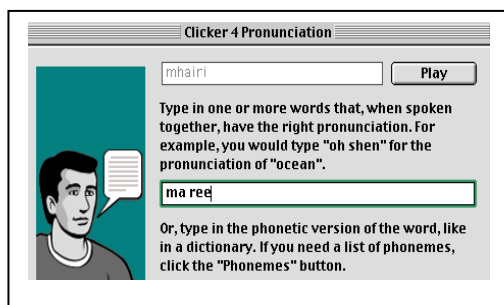
If you want to change the speech setting while you are building a grid, you can do it as you set up each individual cell.

This is especially useful if you want the button to say something different to the word that is written on it. To do this –

- Select cell (shift + right click)
- Select **Sound and Video** (tab at top)
- In the Left Button section, click in the button for **Software Speech** (the message that is written on the cell will pop into the box. Usually that is what you want. Click on **Play** to hear it – check it sounds right. Then Click **OK**
- *If you do NOT want the button to say out loud what is written on it, then click in the button for **Software Speech as before** and type into the box exactly what you DO want it to say. For example, the cell might have 'apple' written on the screen, but you might want it to say out loud "I would like apple juice please". Click on **Play** to hear it – check it sounds right. Then Click **OK***
- Test it by clicking on the cell and checking that it speaks out as expected.

Pronunciation

Sometimes words are just not pronounced properly by the speech synthesiser – especially proper names. You can fix this.



- Type in the word you want to fix, eg. **Mhairi**. As it is a name, it will know that it is not in the dictionary, so will invite you to add it. Click on **Next**
- A screen will come up that shows the spelling at the top, and two further boxes below. Type **ma ree** into the second box down.
- Hit **Play** to hear how it sounds.
- If you don't like it, try other combinations, eg. **mahree**

Sometimes you have to play around with different spellings, and use combinations of letters that are not 'real words' and spaces to separate out bits of words (acting as a pause). For example, **edin burruh** for Edinburgh.

- When it sounds satisfactory, Click **Finish**
- Click **No** (to email to Microsoft)

If you have a word that you cannot 'fix' in this way, you may want to try building it up from scratch phoneme by phoneme (or by adapting little parts of the phonemic make-up). Click on **Phonemes** to see the list, and type in any changes you want to try

Avoid this if possible – it can be very fiddly and time consuming!