



## 2.4 Becoming a Smooth Talker

This is not for everyone, but suits some cheeky teenagers well. The aim is to have a smooth remark to deliver (appropriately) on as many as possible occasions, throughout the day, both in the classroom and when 'out and about' around the school. An appointed Helper or 'buddy' keeps a daily score and each week, the Player tries to outdo him/herself (or may compete with another pal who uses a Talker). The Smooth Remarks may be pretty 'tongue in cheek' but can also be good practice for social chitchat.



### Communication Aims

- Initiation – Player is in control of initiating an interaction;
- Social Competence - Player is in control of choosing an appropriate moment, and selecting an appropriate remark.

### How to Play

Remind the Player early each day about this game, and if necessary go over some of the available phrases in the Talker, maybe suggesting one that needs to be used more and talking about situations where it might be used. Remind key people around the school that they are likely to be on the receiving end of such messages and what their response might be (NOT 'Oh he used his Talker, well done' BUT something as natural as possible even if it's only 'aye right'/'yeah, yeah' (or equivalent). Or, if they 'spot' the game, they can say 'ooh - you Smooth Talker you!'. (A chorus of that coming from a group can be a fun communication interaction...)

For example:

- First thing in the morning, Player addresses class or teacher with 'Well folks, hope everyone has a good day today!';
- Meeting any other pupil, 'You're looking pretty fit today!';
- Meeting a familiar adult/staff member 'Looking good today';
- After another pupil gives a good answer in class 'Good Answer!';
- As the Player gets to the lunch area he/she could deliver a message like e.g. 'Hello ladies, lunch smells good today!'

### What You Need

This game needs plenty of preparation, working with the Player to think of suitable 'smooth' phrases, decide where to store them, and practising matching up appropriate phrases to situations.

Others in the school need to be informed about the game and told to expect 'unsolicited remarks' – so they need to be ready to listen or if necessary to say 'sorry – I didn't catch that, can you say it again?' and also told they are free to respond as they wish, or can use say 'ooh - you Smooth Talker you!'

- Make a simple Score Card and attach it (and a pen) to the Player somehow, so it's easy to see and access. Use happy faces, ticks and thumbs up symbols etc. to make it quick to fill in.

## Vocabulary

Choice of phrases is very personal and also needs to reflect age of Player and the range of contexts targeted. You don't necessarily need many phrases; results may be better just working on a few at a time. Developing the ability to use 'all purpose' phrases such as *go for it* in many different situations can be a useful communication skill.

### Variations - Message of the Week -

- If the above game is too complicated, try going with this variant, where the Player just has ONE new message every week (or even every month). Everyone in the school is told what it is. The Player has to use it as often as he/she can – but appropriately. Every time he/she says it, the listener has to tick the Score Card that the Player is carrying around;
- (If use is inappropriate, the scorer should mark the score card, but with a sad face/ thumbs down instead of a happy face/thumbs up);
- The score is checked each week. A decision taken as to whether to stick with that phrase, until it's been used 'enough' (at least two or three times each day).