



4.3 Playing Shops

The Player who uses AAC plays the shopkeeper with an adult Helper and a few pals /classmates, as 'customers'. A real life trip to the local shops might be better, but this takes less time, may be easier to set up, and allows for more flexible communication opportunities. You can do (a series of) 'quick shopping trips' with each customer each taking 5 minutes, or a longer shopping experience (30 minutes).



Communication Aims

- Role play, with appropriate choice of message from a stock of phrases pre-programmed in, for the shop-keeper role;
- Repetitive use of a small number of pre-programmed phrases, to facilitate fluency and confidence;
- Gradually, use of a wider range of phrases.

How to Play:

Who: 2 or more Players, with a Helper to facilitate.

- The 'shop keeper' (and Helper) can stay in place, and different 'customers' could come and go;
- Helper and Player who uses AAC decide what kind of shop it is today, and set out the wares and prices.

Hints and Tips

- When starting out, have 'primed' adult customers or older pupils coming in at first, until the 'shopkeeper' gets up to speed.

What You Need

- General Grocery store with a range of popular foodstuffs is a good shop to start with - collect a range of real snacks e.g. bag of crisps, banana, raisins, chocolate biscuit, small bunch of grapes etc;
- Stationery store is an easy one to cobble together on the spot, in a school, with no prior preparation - sellotape, pencils, pens, rubber, ruler, etc;
- Collect shopping bags to offer the customers (plastic carrier or re-usable jute bag - opportunities here to integrate with recycling topic);
- Lots of questions to ask the other Player (including plenty of 'closed' yes/no questions);
- Set of vocabulary phrases programmed in for Playing Shop (see below).

Vocabulary

- A set of standard greetings which may be already in the Talker, or which may be added on a special 'Shops' page (OK to duplicate): e.g. *Good Morning, Good afternoon, Nice to see you, Goodbye;*
- Some 'chat' phrases: e.g. *how are you today?; lovely day today; horrible weather!;*
- Set of 'shopkeeper phrases': e.g. *How can I help you? ; what are you looking for today?; This is nice/this is popular; good choice; sorry we don't have any/we've run out; how many?; please; thank you; enjoy it!; this is 'on special' today;*
- Numbers/money: e.g. *10p, 50p, 1 pound; it's dearer; it's cheaper.*

- Keep the money side really simple: use only a few coins, e.g. 10p, 50p, £1 (unless the maths is a major aim of the exercise);
- Keep the language simple, vary the customers and the goods not the vocabulary Repetition is fine in this context. Add new phrases gradually, for variety;
- From time to time, swap roles and let a classmate play the shop keeper. When he/she uses a new turn of phrases, ask the AAC Player if he/she would like that added to his /her set of phrases;
- If the AAC Player is going to swap and take a turn as the customer, they will have to point to their choice of purchase (unless they have a good page already in their Talker, e.g. for fruit). Just program in a few basics: *how much is it?; That's too dear.*

Extensions – integrate the activity with other curriculum activities. E.g.

- Maths – talk about pricing, use computer software to print out numbers on sticky labels, make price cards;
- Art – use art materials to decorate shoe boxes for packaging shop goods, or design wrapping paper (e.g. potato prints or stamps etc);

Variation - Having extracted as much as possible from one kind of shop:

- take a break for a week or two;
- discuss with Player who uses AAC and choose a different kind of shop. Make it as different as you can;
- collect the materials needed, program in relevant new phrases needed, then set up the new shop.

Suggestions:

Fruit shop; Chemist/Pharmacy/Toiletries shop; Shoe shop; Hardware shop; Post Office Real Life Shops (change pricing to suit); Lemonade, Milk-shake or Smoothie Stall - much loved of American kids – opportunity here to integrate with other activities e.g. choose fruits, crush fruit, mix etc. (possibly using switch operated mixer/smoothie-maker); Bakers Shop (opportunities here to team up with older pupil buddies and distribute or even sell for real money (e.g. to staff) real baked goods from school home economics or baking activity.); Charity/Bric a Brac shop (opportunities to actually sell unwanted goods brought in by staff, for real money, to donate to school's favourite charity); Second hand book (or CD, or DVD, or toy) shop – as above

Vintage/secondhand clothes shop (opportunities here for some real life clothes swapping amongst class/staff; - or anything the child happens to be particularly interested in.