

AlphaCore Guide

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What is AlphaCore?

AlphaCore is a communication pageset designed for people with ALS/MND and other literate adults with a wide variety of, often changing, physical abilities. AlphaCore provides smooth transitions to new access methods (e.g. eye tracking, mouse, scanning, etc.) while maintaining customizations and access to important AlphaCore tools (e.g. computer navigation, books, music, YouTube, etc.). AlphaCore incorporates features proven effective by research and inspired by the day-to-day experiences of speech device users and their caregivers.

AlphaCore was authored by Amy Roman, a licensed speech language pathologist and augmentative communication specialist, with over 23 years of experience providing solutions to people with ALS/MND and others with complex communication needs.

How to Use This Guide

The **Getting Started in 4 Steps** portion of this guide will enable you to quickly start using and customizing AlphaCore. It can function as a self-guided tutorial or to help speech therapist create lesson plans with **Activities**, **Video Tutorials**, and learning goals. Clicking on underlined words will take you to additional information with great tips for users and speech therapist alike.

Accompanying videos are available within the Video Tutorials  tool in AlphaCore or at the Jabbla YouTube Chanel.

How to Try AlphaCore

AlphaCore for Mind Express software is available for a 30-day free trial. It can be installed on any Windows computer or speech generating device. To download Mind Express software and the AlphaCore pageset follow these directions:

Download Mind Express

1. Download Mind Express communication software at the Jabbla website <https://www.jabbla.com/en/mind-express/>. Select Download Demo.

2. Run Mind Express exe to install Mind Express

Open Mind Express  located on your device desktop. Select Start demo.

Download AlphaCore

3. When Mind Express opens on your device, select Add Profile then select Create a new profile. Add your name and select a voice from the drop down menu. Choose a profile picture and select Done.

4. Select your new profile. It will open to a page offering Mind Express content for your device.

5. In the search box type “AlphaCore” and then press the search icon. Select AlphaCore in the language of your choice. Then select the Import button.

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6. Once the import has completed, select the AlphaCore  pageset in your Portal.
7. A popup will appear stating that you can try the pageset for free (29 days remaining). Select OK.
8. You will be directed to select a keyboard. Once you have done this, you can use the [Getting Started with AlphaCore](#) guide within this document or the **Watch Tutorials** tool on AlphaCore's **Topics & Tools**  page, to learn how to use AlphaCore.

How to Get AlphaCore

AlphaCore may already be installed on your speech generating device (SGD). Open Mind Express  on your device desktop. Once open, you will see the AlphaCore  profile, if AlphaCore was ordered along with your device.

If you decide to acquire AlphaCore, follow the directions above in **Download AlphaCore**. Once AlphaCore is downloaded, you can contact info@jabbla.com to activate the license for the pageset on your computer or speech generating device. You do need Mind Express Software to run this AlphaCore pageset.

Getting Started with AlphaCore for Mind Express

Follow these 4 steps to become a competent AlphaCore user.

Step 1: Select A Keyboard

When you first open AlphaCore you will be asked to choose a keyboard. You can change keyboards easily at any point by selecting the Change Keyboard button on the **AlphaCore Settings**  page. Many users will select a familiar keyboard such as the QWERTY Standard or QWERTY Large Keys. Other keyboards are provided for people who are using a special way to select keys (e.g. eye tracking, scanning, etc.), or have specific keyboard needs and preferences. If you would like some information to help choose the optimal keyboard for you, go to [About AlphaCore Keyboards](#).

There you will find more information about what each keyboard has to offer and how it might benefit you.

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 **Tip:** There is also an **Eye Control Test**  to help you determine which keyboard or keyboards enable you to type with maximum accuracy and efficiency. Upon completing the test, a report is generated with information about your performance and a keyboard is recommended for you. The Eye Control Test is located both at the end of the Keyboard Options pages and on the **Topics & Tools**  page.

Activity 1: Choose Your Keyboard

- 1) Look at the [About AlphaCore Keyboards](#) section of this guide to decide which keyboard you would like to try first.
- 2) Open the AlphaCore Program and Select the **Choose Your Keyboard** button. If you already chose one but want to try another, follow this path to select a keyboard:
Topics & Tools  → **Settings**  → **Change Keyboard**
- 3) Select the keyboard you will try first. Optional: If you will be using eye tracking and would like to use the Eye Control Test for a recommendation of which keyboard to try first, select the **More Keyboards & Eye Control Test** button 2 times. Select the **Eye Control Test** button to begin the test.
- 4) Once you (or a helper if you are not able to use the touchscreen) select a keyboard you are ready for Step 2. Once you complete Step 2 you will be able to independently operate AlphaCore.

Step 2: Tailor Your Settings for the Right Fit

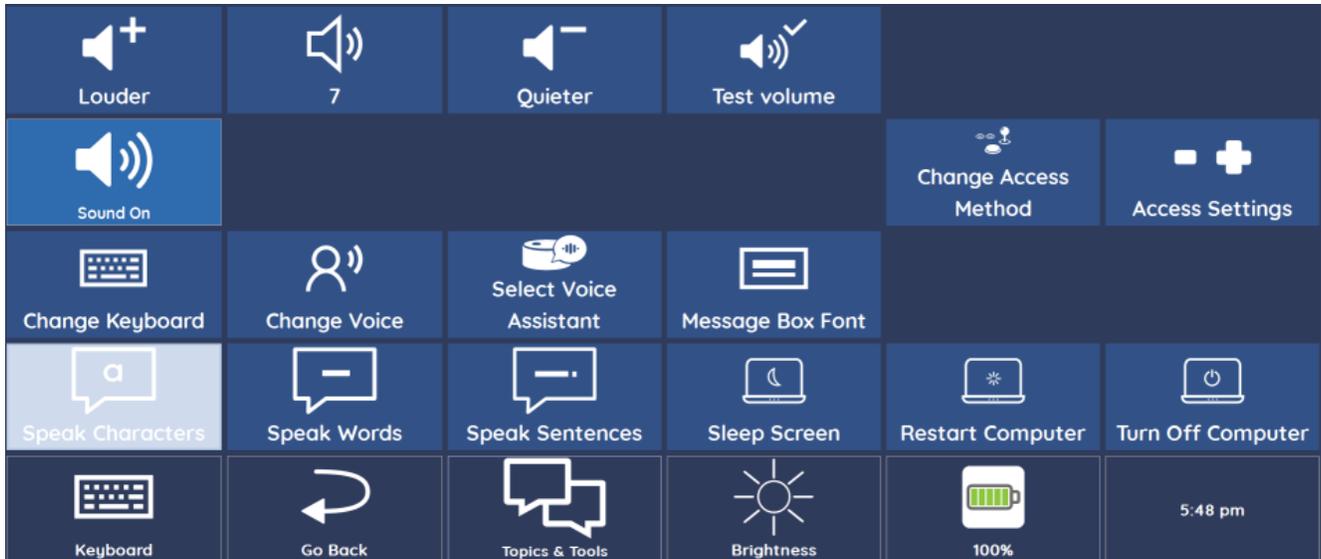
It's essential to make a few settings selections so AlphaCore feels comfortable to you and you can control it independently. To simplify this process, the **AlphaCore Settings page** displays only the most frequently used Mind Express settings and this page is accessible to users of all access methods. To open the AlphaCore Settings page from your keyboard follow this path:

Tools & Topics  → **Settings** 

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 **Note:** There are also Mind Express Settings  (represented by a gear icon) located in the drop down Menu  at the top left side of the screen. This includes a comprehensive listing of settings and is **not** the area in which we are working now.

The AlphaCore Setting page we are using looks like this:



AlphaCore Settings  Page

2A. Keyboard Options

The first time you opened AlphaCore you were asked to choose a keyboard. In fact, you may have already done this. Just remember, you can change keyboards at any time by selecting the **Change Keyboard** button on your **AlphaCore Settings page** (above). To help determine which of the 9 different keyboards will provide you with the best accuracy and speed please refer to [About AlphaCore Keyboards](#) and consider using the Eye Control Test if you will be using eye tracking.

2B. Voice Options

To select the synthesized voice that you will use, select the **Change Voice** button on the **AlphaCore Settings page** (above). If you did voice banking, the synthesized voice you created will appear in this list of voice options once you have installed it onto your speech device. The voice banking service will provide instructions for installing the file into a speech device. To locate the Change Voice button, follow this path:

Topics & Tools  → Settings  → Change Voice

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Tip: More Voice Options

To download additional voices, follow this path:

Menu  → Settings  → Speech → [Install more voices?](#)

Activity 2: Choose Your Voice

- 1) If you haven't already chosen a voice, choose one now.
- 2) Follow the path **Topics & Tools**  → Settings  →
- 3) Listen to the different options by selecting a voice and then using the **Test Voice** button. You may also want to experiment with speeding up or slowing down your selected voice.

2C. Access Method Options

The method you use to select keys and operate your speech device/computer is called your access method. Your access method may change over time if your physical abilities are changing. Also, some people use more than one access method during the day to rest certain muscle groups or practice a method for the future.



Touchscreen with Stylus



USB Touchpad

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Switch for
Clicking

Wedge for Wheelchair
Footrest

Trackball

Grippy Bottom
Socks



Reflective Dot for Head Tracking

Examples of Access Methods

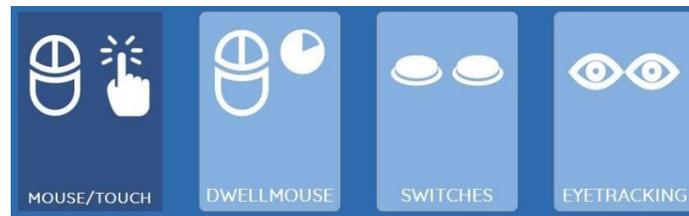
Options for Access Methods Include:

- Standard mechanical keyboard and mouse
- Touchscreen
- Touchscreen with stylus
- Mouse (using left click for selecting)
- Mouse with switch selection (for those not able to left click on the mouse but who can use an [ability switch](#) to make selections)
- Mouse with dwell selection (for those not able to left click on the mouse but who can use a [dwell selection](#) timer to make selections)
- Mouse emulator (e.g. touchpad, joystick, ergonomic mouse, trackball, foot trackball, head tracker, eye tracker) with left click, switch, dwell, or [blink selection](#).
- [Scanning](#)

AlphaCore enables you to change your own access method by selecting the Change Access Method button on the AlphaCore Setting page. To locate the Change Access Method button, follow this path:

Topics & Tools  → Settings  → Change Access Method

[Back to Start](#)



Change Access Method Page



Note: Expert assistance is often required for selecting the right access method and adjusting settings and positioning. Ideally you are already working with a professional (e.g. a speech therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, or assistive technology specialist) familiar with speech devices. This becomes more important with increasing movement challenges. Clinics and non-profits specializing in care and services for people who may require speech devices can often help you locate an expert with whom you can work. If not, you can reach out to your local member associations of the International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations or your local chapter of the International Society for Augmentative Alternative Communication for referrals and resources. Speech device vendors can also provide professional referrals and support.

2D. Access Method Settings

Access Settings are important adjustments available for each access method. These should be customized to your unique abilities. Once you have selected an access method, only settings you need to consider will appear when you look at the **Access Settings** page. Default settings may work well for you but everyone should at least look at access settings and familiarize themselves with what can be adjusted.

Activity 3: Explore your Access Method's Setting

Once you and your specialist have chosen your access method, take a look at what settings are available for your access method. To locate **Access Settings**, page, follow this path:

Topics & Tools  → Settings  → Access Method Settings



Tip: (Additional Access Settings) There are additional, less common, access settings options within the Mind Express Menu  . If you don't see an access setting you want to alter in the AlphaCore Settings, check in the Menu  Settings or call tech support for your speech device. The Mind Express Menu is not accessible to people who use scanning, dwell selection, or eye tracking so a helper may be required.

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To navigate to the **Mind Express Access Settings**, follow this path.

Menu  Menu → Setting  → Access



Note: Always change your Access Method and available Access Settings from within the AlphaCore Settings  page. Doing so turns on special AlphaCore features for that access method. If a setting is not provided in **AlphaCore Settings**, it is fine to change it in **Mind Express Settings**.

2E. Select Voice Assistant

If you use a voice assistant like Alexa, Okay Google, or Hey Siri, you must select the brand you use so AlphaCore knows how to address your system properly. To set AlphaCore to interact with your Voice Assistant brand, follow this path:

Topics & Tools  → Settings  → **Select Voice Assistant**

2F. Additional AlphaCore Settings

Take a look at the additional settings on the AlphaCore Settings  page. They should be self-explanatory but it is important to know what is on the page since you may need it later. Notice that you can **Restart** or **Turn Off** your speech device on this page. There is also a **Sleep Screen** button. This page presents a dark screen to cut down on light while you rest. The benefit of Sleep Screen is the device remains on and accessible to you. Additionally, you can decide using the **Speak Characters**, **Speak Words**, and **Speak Sentences** buttons when AlphaCore will speak as you compose messages.

2G. Useful Mind Express Menu Menu Settings to Consider

A compressive list of all settings options offered by Mind Express is located in the Menu  dropdown in the upper left of the screen. There you will find Settings represented by the gear icon . Menu  items are not accessible if you use eye tracking, dwell selection, or scanning so you will need a helper to access any Menu dropdown items.

Here are a few Menu Settings you may want to customize and instructions to do so:

- **Have Mind Express Start Up Automatically When Device Turned On**

Menu  Menu → Settings  → System. Locate "Start Mind Express at Windows Startup" and toggle to YES.

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- **Have the AlphaCore Profile Start Up Automatically**

Menu  → **Settings**  → **System.**

Locate "Start with a Specific Profile" and toggle to YES. Select AlphaCore from the "Name of this Profile" dropdown list.

- **Provide Click Sound Feedback When a Selection is Made**

Menu  → **Settings**  → **Access.**

Find and select your access method under Access (Mouse/Touch, Joystick, Eye Tracking).

In right column scroll down to Indicator Options. Locate "Sound When Selecting" and toggle to Yes.

- **Have Word Prediction Learn to Predict Words You Use**

Menu  → **Settings**  → **Prediction** → **Word Prediction.**

Scroll to locate "Learn Words" and "Learn Word Pairs" and toggle both to YES.

- **Have Sentence Prediction Learn Your Sentences**

Menu  → **Settings**  → **Prediction** → **Sentence Prediction.**

Scroll to locate "Learn New Sentences" and toggle to YES.

- **Add a Sentence so it Appears in Sentence Prediction**

Menu  → **Settings**  → **Prediction** → **Sentence Prediction.**

Scroll to locate the large + sign. Select it and add your sentence.

- **Have The Eye Monitor Appear on Each AlphaCore Page** (within Pause Cell)

Menu  → **Settings**  → **Access** → **Eye Tracking** (under Access)

In right column scroll down to Eye Monitor. Locate "Pause Cell Contains Eye Monitor" and toggle to YES.

Activity 4: Explore Useful Menu **Settings**

Read the above list of popular Menu settings and chose any that appeal to you. Adjust them using the provided directions.

Step 3: Orientation



[AlphaCore Orientation](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorials tool.

3A. Topics & Tools **Page**

The **Topics & Tools**  page is AlphaCore's main navigation hub. From **Topics & Tools** you can navigate to all of the stored message pages and helpful tools offered in AlphaCore. Select the  button on any page to bring you back to the **Topics & Tools** page.

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Mind Express Menu

Dwell Pause & Eye Monitor



Topics & Tools Page 

Parts of the Topics & Tools Page

Topics

The light blue buttons at the top of the **Topics & Tools** page each link to a topic page already populated with common and useful stored messages. Rather than typing out your frequently used phrases, stored messages are spoken with one selection and designed to speed up communication. You can add your own personal topics, hide or delete topics that you don't expect to use, and change the order of topics on the page. You will learn how to customize topics in Step 4.

Activity 5: Get to Know Your Topics

- 1) Navigate to the **Topics & Tools**  page
- 2) Select Greetings
- 3) Select a few stored messages on the Greetings page.
- 4) Notice that light blue buttons speak a whole message and white buttons provide a starter phrase that navigates you to another page with options for completing your message.
- 5) Navigate back to **Topics & Tools**
- 6) Read the names of topics and explore any that interest you.
- 7) Think about a topic you might want to add. You will do this during an activity in [Step 4G](#) or jump ahead now.

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Tools

The medium blue buttons in the 4th and 5th rows of the **Topics & Tools** page have links to useful tools. These include Video Tutorials, Computer Control, Streaming Radio Stations, Kindle, Remote Controls, Email and SMS, a YouTube Browser, and more.

Select the **More Tools** button to see all the tools. You can move the tools you use frequently to the first page or hide tools that you don't expect to use often by selecting **Edit Tools**.

Quick Buttons

The bottom row on the **Topics & Tools** page contain buttons you will use frequently including links to your **keyboard**, a **Go Back** button that returns you to a previous page, AlphaCore **Settings**, and three communication topics including

Communication Tips, **Questions and Continuers**, and **Yes/No, Please/Thanks**.

These are topics you may want to use frequently so they are located at the bottom of the all topic pages for quick access. Message buttons on these 3 pages are "speak only" so they don't get inserted into a message you may be constructing in the Message Box.

Communication Tips: This page contains messages that empower you to educate others with tips to make communication more efficient and enjoyable. Often, people aren't aware of behaviors that may be frustrating or helpful to you when you are using a speech device. This page provides you with a quick way to guide and teach your communication partners.

Questions and Continuers: Navigate to this page when someone is telling you a story or talking. The quick comments and questions on this page such as "Tell me more", "What do you think?", or "I know." will help keep you in the conversation. Comments such as "I'll tell you what I think." and "Well, listen to this." work as rapid place holders so you can steer the conversation and add your thoughts.

Yes/No, Please/Thanks: This page enables you to rapidly respond to questions. It also has modifiers that help with requests such as "When you have time", "right away", "a bit more", "that is perfect", and "Stop!". It is especially useful when you are using one of the Needs topic pages or the Comfort & Positioning page.

Pause Cell / Eye Tracking Monitor.

The cell in the upper right of the **Topics & Tools** page is reserved for a **Pause Cell and/or an Eye Tracking Monitor**. The cell will appear differently depending on your settings.

■ If you don't use dwell or eye tracking, the cell will appear dark blue. Not in use.



If you use mouse dwell access, the cell will contain a mouse dwell pause icon. This will function as a toggle to pause or activate dwell selection.

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If you use eye tracking with dwell selection the cell may contain an eye tracking pause icon. This will function as a toggle to pause or activate dwell selection. You can have this cell display the Eye Monitor while still functioning as a Pause Cell. To turn on "Pause Cell Contains Eye Monitor" follow this path:

Menu  **Menu** → **Setting**  → **Access** → **Eye Tracking** (under Access)

In right column scroll down to Eye Monitor. Locate "Pause Cell Contains Eye Monitor" and toggle to YES.



If you have the "Pause Cell Contains Eye Monitor" set to YES in Menu  settings, you will always see the Eye Monitor. This Eye Monitor will function as a toggle to pause or activate dwell selection.



Tip: Having your Eye Monitor appear in the Pause Cell on each page enables you to always see if the device is positioned properly for optimal eye tracking.

3B. Topic Pages

Topic pages are designed to speed communication and reduce your effort by providing predictable messages for common situations. In addition to message buttons (light blue) and sentence starters (white), topic pages have other buttons to assist you.

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Toolbox
Contains Tools:
Undo, Sound Effects, Translator, Attention Chimes, Share, & more

Message Box

Pause Dwell Select & Eye Monitor (if toggled on)

 Toolbox	 Delete All	That was a really nice dinner.		 Pause	 Speak/Stop
 Well, I better be going.	 Looks like it's time to go.	 I'm afraid I have run out of steam.	 It was so good to see you.	 It was really nice to meet you.	Goodbyes — Page Name
 I love you!	 Thank you so much!	 Where are you off to?	 When will I see you again?	 Goodbye	} Tools to add, delete, move, hide, & record messages
 Goodnight.	 Send my love to (People)	 That was a really nice (Event)	 Good luck with your (Event)	 Have a good (Event)	
 Enjoy your (Event)					 More
 Keyboard	 Go Back	 Topics & Tools	 Communication Tips	 Questions and Continuers	} Quick Buttons

Example of a Topic Page (Goodbyes)

Activity 6: Practice Using Stored Message (Greetings & Questions and Continuers)

- 1) Go to the **Greetings** page
- 2) Play each button to learn what is on the page. Sometimes the messages are longer than what you see of the label.
- 3) Roll play with a partner or by yourself that someone has come to visit.
- 4) Use phrases on the page to greet them, ask them a few questions, offer them something to drink, and respond to questions you imagine they would ask you.
- 5) Now go to the **Questions and Continuers** page (find it at the bottom of the **Greetings** page within the Quick Buttons area).
- 6) While the person is talking to you, imagine how the messages on this page could
 - a. Let the person know you are listening and interested. “Great”, “No way!”
 - b. Keep the conversation rolling by asking questions and encouraging them go on “tell me more”, “then what happened”.
 - c. Interject your quick opinion “Awful”, “You have got to be kidding”, “I don’t think so.”, “Right”.
 - d. Change the conversation to a story or thought you want to contribute “Well, listen to this.”, “Okay, this is what I think”.
- 7) Think about little things you say often when someone is telling you a story. Do you want to add some of those phrase? Are there things you wanted to add to the **Greetings** page that you imagined yourself saying?

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You can do this during an activity in [Step 4A](#) or jump ahead now.

Activity 7: Practice Using Stored Message (Reminiscing & Communication Tips)

- 1) Think of a friend or family member you have not seen for a while and imagine they have come to visit. You already greeted them. Now it's time to share some stories. Go to the **Reminiscing** page. Play each button.
- 2) When you press the white sentence starter buttons, which memories/stories would you pick when talking to this person?
- 3) Imagine some of the communication challenges you might have during this conversation.
- 4) Now go to the **Communication Tips** page (find it at the bottom of the **Reminiscing** page within the Quick Buttons area). Play each message once.
- 5) Identify a message on this page that would help in the following situations.
 - a. You would like to add something to the conversation but can't seem to get a chance to say it.
 - b. The person is excited and continuously finishes your messages. Sometimes they get it wrong and it is starting to get annoying.
 - c. You are getting a little tired and would like it if they ask you yes/no questions instead of questions that require a lot of typing.
 - d. They don't seem to remember what movement you perform when you are saying "Yes" and you need to remind them.
 - e. You have a good story to contribute but it may take a few minutes to type. Let them know they should continue chatting amongst themselves and you will use a bell chime to let them know when you are ready with your message.
 - f. You have typed out part of a story but the conversation is moving on. Let them know you want to add something. **Notice** that the messages on this page don't add to your message window. They are Speak Only messages and therefore they don't get inserted in the memory you are recounting.
- 6) Are there things you wanted to add to the **Reminiscing** or **Communication Tips** pages that you wish you could quickly say? You can add them during an activity in [Step 4A](#) or jump ahead now.

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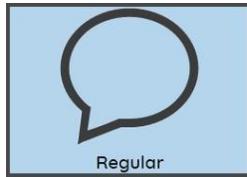
Activity 8: Practice Using Stored Message (General Needs & Yes/No/Please/Thanks)

- 1) Think of a few things you typically request. Go to the **General Needs** page (notice there are also pages for **Medical Needs**, **Personal Care**, and **Comfort & Positioning**. Read each message in **General Needs**).
- 2) What are messages you might say in the following situations:
 - a. You are feeling hot.
 - b. You need your spouse.
 - c. You need a tissue.
 - d. Your glasses have slid down your nose.
- 3) Now go to the **Yes/No/Please/Thanks** page (find it at the bottom of the **General Needs** page within the Quick Buttons area). Look over the messages.
- 4) What are messages you could use to let people know the following:
 - a. You need your request done as soon as possible.
 - b. They don't need to rush.
 - c. You would like something done more.
 - d. They have done too much.

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3C. Message Button Types

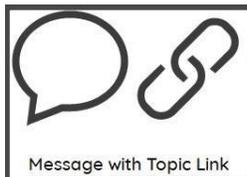
There are 4 types of message buttons in AlphaCore



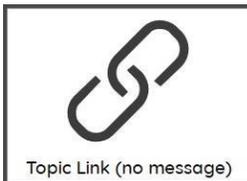
Regular message buttons place the message in the Message Box and speak the text (if "Speak as Type" is turned on in the Toolbox).



Speak Only message buttons only speak a message and do not put text in the Message Box. These buttons are helpful if you want to say something without adding it to a longer message you are constructing in the Message Box. Speak Only buttons are used in the Quick Button topics.



Message with Topic Link buttons place the sentence starter in the Message Box and then navigate you to another topic page to complete the message. These buttons will display the name of the topic page they link to in parenthesis.



Topic Link buttons navigate you to another topic page. They don't produce a message. These buttons will automatically be labeled with the name of the topic page they link to in parenthesis.

3D. Toolbox



[What's in Your Toolbox](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

In order to provide users with big, easy to target buttons, some of the tools you will need are tucked away in the Toolbox. These tools include the following:

Attention Chime: A soft chime that is useful in getting someone's attention before you speak your message or in letting people know you are ready with a message you were composing.

Edit: Provides a page with tools to edit the text in your Message Box. Edit page also provides a way to save documents and speak them one sentence or paragraph at a time (good for presentations). The editing tools also contain buttons to add or delete words or sentences from appearing in prediction.

Share: Enables you to send the text in your Message Box as an Email or SMS.

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Sound Effects: Sound Effects can add humor and emphasis to a moment or a message.

Speak As Type: Have Speak As Type turned on  when you would like messages to be spoken when selected. Within AlphaCore Settings you can choose if Characters, Words, or Sentences are spoken.

Turn Speak as Type off  when you would like the text in your Message Box to only be spoken when you select the Speak/Stop button to the right of the Message Box.

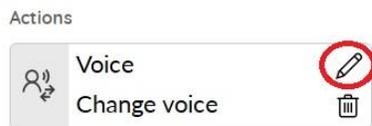
Translate: This feature translates the text in your Message Box into another language and enables you to speak it. You must pick the language your phrase will be translated into by selecting the translation Settings  button when you are on the Translation page. You can change the language your phrases will be translated into as needed. In order to speak a message in another language with the proper **accent** you may need to upload speech engines for the different languages you plan to translate messages into. Here are instructions to do this.

Add the Speech Engine for a Different Language

1. Follow this path:

Toolbox  → Translate → Settings  → Voices 

2. Select Menu 
3. Select Edit
4. Select the button on the page with the language you are translating into.
5. Under Actions, select the pencil icon (edit tool).



6. Select the drop down menu of voices and pick a voice in the language you will be translating into. It is likely that one will **Not** be there. If it is, selected it then select OK and the check  to exit Edit Mode. Select Go Back twice and try out your Translate Tool.
7. If a voice in the language you are translating to is not already downloaded (this is likely) then continue with these directions.

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8. Follow this path:

Menu  → Settings  → Speech → [Install more voices?](#)

9. Scroll to the language you need and select a male or female, adult voice.

10. Once download has completed, go to the Downloads folder on your device. Double click the language installer you just downloaded. Follow the directions presented to install. You will need to close Mind Express. Finish the install.

11. Open Mind Express on your desktop.

12. Again follow this path:

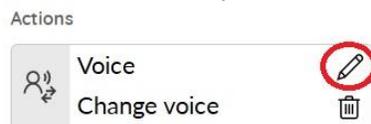
Toolbox  → Translate → Settings  → Voices 

13. Select Menu 

14. Select Edit

15. Select the button on the page with the language you are translating into.

16. Under Actions, select the pencil icon (edit tool).



17. Select the drop down menu of voices. Your newly imported voice should be in this list. Select it. Select OK and then select the green checkbox to exit Edit Mode. Select Go Back twice and try out your Translate Tool.

Undo: Un-does one or a series of actions you have performed. Undo is useful if someone asks you to repeat a message you already cleared.

 **Tip:** Some keyboards display the **Edit** button next to the Message Box not in the Toolbox. The Core Vocabulary and Frequency Scanning Keyboards provide all of these tools on your keyboard not in a Toolbox.

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Step 4. Customizing AlphaCore

4A. Add a Message



[Add a Stored Message](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Start on your keyboard and type a message.
2. Navigate to the topic page on which you want to save the message.
3. Select the “Add Message” button.
4. Choose the [type of message button](#) you want.
5. Select OK (or optional: Choose an image, record a message, or choose a topic link, and then select OK).
6. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4B. Replace Message Label



[Edit & Move Messages](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Start on your keyboard and type the label you want to appear on the message button.
2. Navigate to the topic page containing the message you wish to edit.
3. Select Edit Message List.
4. Select the message you want to modify. A red outline will appear around the message button you are about to edit.
5. Select Replace Label and confirm. Remember, this does not change the text that enters the Message Box.
6. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4C. Replace Message Text



[Edit & Move Messages](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Start on your keyboard and type the new message text.
2. Navigate to the topic page containing the message you wish to edit.
3. Select Edit Message List.
4. Select the message you want to modify. A red outline will appear around the message button you are about to edit.
5. Select Replace Message Text and confirm.
6. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

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4D. Replace or Add a Recording to Message Button



[Edit & Move Messages](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Navigate to the topic page containing the message you wish to edit.
2. Select Edit Message List.
3. Select the message you want to modify. A red outline will appear around the message button.
4. Select Replace or Add Recording.
5. When ready to record, press the Record button.
6. At the end of your message press either the Record button again or Stop.
7. Select Play to preview the recording. You can re-record if needed.
8. If you want to use the recording, select the green button. If you don't want to make any changes, select the red button. If you want to use synthesized speech instead of the recording, select the blue button.
9. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4E. Remove a Message Button



[Edit & Move Messages](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Navigate to the topic page containing the message buttons you want to remove.
2. Select Edit Message List.
3. Select the message button to be deleted. A red outline will appear around the message button you are about to remove.
4. Select Remove. Confirm.
5. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4F. Move a Message Button



[Edit & Move Messages](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Navigate to the topic page containing one or more message buttons you wish to move.
2. Select Edit Message List.
3. Select the message button to be moved. A red outline will appear around the message button you are about to move.
4. Use the arrows at the bottom of the page to move the button.
5. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

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4G. Add Your Own Communication Topics



[Add, Hide & Organize Topics](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Start on your keyboard and type the name of your new topic.
2. Navigate to the **Topics & Tools**  page.
3. Select Edit Topics.
4. Select Add New Topic.
5. Your new topic will appear in the list of topics outlined in red.
6. Select the arrow buttons below if you want to move it to the top or other location in the list.
7. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4H. Rename a Topic



[Add, Hide & Organize Topics](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

1. Start on your keyboard and type the new name for a Topic.
2. Navigate to the **Topics & Tools**  page.
3. Select Edit Topics.
4. Select the topic to be renamed. A red outline will appear around the topic button.
5. Select Rename Topic and confirm.
6. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4I. Show/Hide Topic



[Add, Hide & Organize Topics](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

Shown topics will appear on your **Topics & Tools**  page.

Hidden topics do not appear on the **Topics & Tools** page but are not deleted.

1. Navigate to the **Topics & Tools**  page.
2. Select Edit Topics.
3. Select the topic to be hidden or shown. A red outline will appear around the topic.
4. Select Show/Hide. A hidden topic will display a line through its label. A topic that was previously shown will now be hidden and one that was hidden will now be shown.
5. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

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4J. Remove a Topic



[Add, Hide & Organize Topics](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

Topics that are removed do not appear on your **Topics & Tools**  page and are **permanently deleted**.

1. Navigate to the **Topics & Tools** page.
2. Select Edit Topics.
3. Select the topic to be deleted. A red outline will appear around the topic.
4. Select Remove Topic. Confirm
5. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4K. Move a Topic



[Add, Hide & Organize Topics](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

Move your frequently used topics to the top of the **Topics & Tools**  page or to a location on the page you find easiest to target.

1. Navigate to the **Topics & Tools**  page.
2. Select Edit Topics.
3. Select the topic to be moved. A red outline will appear around the topic.
4. Use the arrows at the bottom of the page to move the button.
5. Your changes will be saved. Select Go Back when you have completed editing.

4L. Add Your Banked Messages (recordings)



[Import Banked Messages](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool. This video go into more detail than provided here.

1. Import your folder of labeled recordings onto your speech device. To do this use a cloud drive such as Dropbox, Box, Google Drive, etc. or use a USB flash drive

OR

On your speech device, download your folder of labeled recordings from MyMessageBanking.com.

2. In Mind Express follow this path:
Menu  **→ Settings**  **→ Speech** **→ Message Set** (in left column)
3. In the right column Scroll down to Import/Export

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4. Select the "Choose File to Import"  icon
5. Locate your folder of banked messages (likely in Downloads if you did not pick a location). Select the folder. It will become highlighted.
6. Select Open. The import may take a few minutes.
7. Select OK when you receive message that import was completed. Select OK to close **Menu**.

4M. Play Your Banked Messages

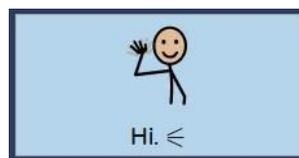
There are many ways to play your banked messages including:

1. Type the message (it must be typed to match the label on the recording. Capitalization, spaces, spelling, and punctuation matter. Select **Speak/Stop** and your recording will be played.
2. Begin typing a banked message and your banked messages starting with those words will appear in Sentence Prediction. Select the phrase and your recording will be played (if [Speak As Type](#) is on).
3. Any message button with text matching one of your recorded message labels will play your recording.
4. All of your Tags from MyMessageBanking.com become new Topic pages in AlphaCore. These pages contain your recordings that you marked with that Tag name. If your Tags match any pre-existing AlphaCore Topics, your recorded messages will be added to that existing Topic page.

<input type="checkbox"/> Title	Text	Confidence	Recording	Tags / Categories
<input type="checkbox"/> Good morning. English - United States	Good morning.	 98%	 0:01	 Greetings 
<input type="checkbox"/> I need a kiss. English - United States	I need a kiss.	 98%	 0:09	 Affection  Greetings 

MyMessageBanking.com Screenshot

 **Tip:** Message buttons that play a recording contain the  icon following the label.



Example of a Recorded Message Button

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4N. Add Your Banked Voice (synthesized)

To install the synthesized voice that you have created through voice banking, download the voice into the speech generating device you are using. Follow the directions provided by the company with whom you created your voice. Once you have download and installed the voice it will appear with the other voices when you select the Change Voice button on the AlphaCore Settings  page.

4O. Connect to Cell Phone for Texting and Phone Calls

Having access to your phone is important for communicating socially, letting people know you need something, scheduling, and for use in an emergency. Most speech device users find texting easier than phone calls since there is less time pressure but there are pages in AlphaCore to help with both.

1. To connect your speech device to your phone, have your phone with you and turn on Bluetooth in your phone settings.

2. On the speech device follow this path:

Menu  **→ Settings**  **→ Devices** **→ Phone.**

3. Select the dropdown menu under Settings and choose to Connect with Bluetooth. Read the instructions below that contain a link with current online instructions. For assistance contact your speech device's technical support phone line.
4. If you will be using your phone for calls you will need to set your cell phone to Route All Calls Through Speaker so you can hear your callers. On an iPhone follow this path:

Settings  **→ Accessibility** **→ Touch** **→ Call Audio Routing.**

Select **“Speaker”**

On **Android** phones follow the manufacturer's directions for automatically using the phone's speaker for calls.

Activity 9: Adding Contacts to AlphaCore

This activity will teach you how to add your primary contacts to AlphaCore so you can call, text, or email them. If possible, add the contact information for a person who is with you currently so you can practice texting and calling them in the next activities.

1. Before you start, go into the Toolbox  and turn off Speak as Type.
2. On the **Topics & Tools**  page select the Manage Contacts  tool.
3. Select Add Contact. Fill in the contact's name, phone number and email selecting the check mark  when you complete typing each. Select Save  when you complete a contact.

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4. Add a few more contacts.

Activity 10: Sending a Quick SMS (text message)

This activity will introduce you to a very quick way to send a text message. Have at least one contact added (see [Activity 9](#) above) to do this activity.

1. Go to the **Topics & Tools**  page and select the Quick SMS  tool.
2. Select a message or messages to send to your contact.
3. Select the Select Contact & Send SMS button at the bottom of page.
4. Choose your contact. Select Send. Confirm.

Activity 11: Write an SMS (text message) from Scratch

This activity teaches you how to write a text message using your keyboard. Have at least one contact added (see [Activity 9](#)) before you do this activity.

1. Start on your keyboard page or topics pages. Write the message you want to send.
2. Select Toolbox .
3. Select Share . **Note:** The Share button is on the Core Vocabulary, AEIOU, and Frequency Scanning keyboard pages, not in Toolbox.
4. Choose your contact. Select send. Confirm.

Activity 12: Role Play then Make a Social Phone Call.

This activity will teach you how to make a phone call. Have at least one contact added (see [Activity 9](#)) before you do this activity.

Recommendation: Do one role play without placing the call. Just practice the dialog. After you are comfortable with that, place a call to someone who ideally is with you doing the activity. They can go into another room to take the call so they won't hear feedback.

Role Play

1. On the **Topics & Tools**  page select Phone Chat topic page. The Phone Chat page is a good hub for things you need during a phone call (i.e. links to Greetings, Keyboard, Call Types, a Phonetic Alphabet, helpful speak only messages such as "Hold on. I'm typing", a Hang Up button).
2. Play each message. If you navigate to another page by selecting a white button, select **Go Back**  to return to the **Phone Chat** page.
3. Role play a call in which you
 - a. ask to speak with someone specific (Use "May I please speak with..." button).

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- b. tell them you are just calling to find out what they are up to (Use the “I’m calling to…” button).
 - c. tell them you love them.
 - d. Ask and answer a few questions on the (Use **Greetings** page).
 - e. Say that you are getting tired (Use **Goodbyes** page).
- 4) Add any messages you wish you had during the role play or edit messages so they work better for you. Now you are ready to make the call.

Make Call

- 5) On the **Topics & Tools**  page select the **Phone Call**  tool.

Before you make your first call be sure you set your cell phone to [Route All Calls Through Speaker](#) so you can hear your callers.

- 6) To place a call, select the contact and your call will connect. You will also be automatically navigated to a **Phone Chat** page.
- 7) When you complete the call, select the Hang Up button on the **Phone Chat** topic or **Phone Call** tool.
- 8) Be patient with yourself. Phone calls are more challenging than texting due to the added time pressure.

Activity 13: Practice an Anticipated Call

Do you need to make calls to schedule with people, or for transportation or an appointment? If there is a call you need to make, go through these steps to practice before the call. This will ensure you have the messages you need and know where to find them as quickly as possible. Complete Activity 12 first.

- 1) Role play the call by yourself or with a partner.
- 2) On the **Topics & Tools**  page select the **Phone Chat** topic page. The **Phone Chat** page is a good hub for things you need during these type of phone calls (i.e. links to **Scheduling, Yes/No/Please/Thanks, Phonetic Alphabet, Communication Tips**, and a Hang Up button).
- 3) Include the following if applicable: (all but “d” can be done with messages already stored on the Phone Chat page)
 - a. Let the person know you are using a speech device.
 - b. Ask for the person with whom you need to speak.
 - c. Tell them why you are calling.
 - d. Make certain you have a plan for what to say if a time or item is not available. What is plan B?

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- e. Be prepared for if they say “are you still there?”
- f. Confirm they have the correct information.
- 4) Add any messages you wish you had during the role play or edit messages so they work better for you. Now you are ready to make the call.
- 5) On the **Topics & Tools**  page select the **Phone Call**  tool.
- 6) To place a call, select Type Number and Dial, or select a contact.

4P. Access Your Email Account

There are two ways to access emails when you are using AlphaCore. Each has advantages and disadvantages as shown in the chart below.

The “standard” way involves using the same steps you have always used to navigate to and interact with emails. If you are using eye tracking, dwell select, or scanning this would mean using the **Computer Control** tool.

Alternatively, you can access your emails within Mind Express using the **Email** tool. The **Email** tool provides a large button interface to make targeting easier. It also provides stored phrases to speed email writing.

Use the chart below to decide which will work best of you. Some people use both for different situations or depending on fatigue level.

	Within Mind Express	Standard
Accessibility	Buttons are large and easy to target. This may be the only way to access your email if or when targeting is challenging for you.	Accessing your email directly on the internet can involve very small targets. If your targeting accuracy is good, this is likely a better option.
Contacts	All contacts must be added in Manage Contacts . Most people just add their primary contacts since this is time consuming.	All your contacts are available.
Composing Messages	 <p>Stored messages can make writing emails faster.</p>	Type using onscreen keyboard or you can copy and paste text from your Message Box into body of email. Copy is located on Edit Page in AlphaCore. Paste is in Fn Keyboard in Computer Control .

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Detailed Information, Instructions, and Tips

About AlphaCore Keyboards

Each of the 9 AlphaCore keyboards provide features that can enhance the speed, ease, and efficiency of communication for certain users. Descriptions are included here to help you identify a keyboard or keyboards that will work best for you.

Core Vocabulary Keyboard

Undo	Delete All											Speak/Stop	Attention
All	Also	And	Any	Are	As	At	Be	But	By	Can	Come	Could	Did
Do	Does	Every	Feel	For	Get	Give	Go	Good	Have	He	Help	Her	His
How	I	If	Is	It	Know	Let	Like	Make	May	Maybe	Me	Might	More
Move	Must	My	Need	No	Not	Now	Of	Off	Okay	On	One	Or	Other
Our	Please	Put	Rest	Say	She	Should	So	Some	Stop	Take	Tell	Thank	That
The	Their	Then	There	These	They	Think	This	Those	To	Too	Use	Want	Was
We	Were	What	When	Where	Which	Who	Why	Will	With	Would	Yes	You	Your
Hi, how are you?		I'm okay thanks.		I have something to say so please give me a moment.		I need some help, please.		I need something.		That's perfect thanks.		A bit more please.	
Capital On/Off	People	I		I'm		I'll		I've		And		Speak As Type	Alarm
Scheduling	Places	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	Backspace	Edit
Translate	Things	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	?	Delete Word	Sounds
Go Back	Topics & Tools	Z	X	C	V	space	B	N	M	.	? 123	Shift	Settings

Core Vocabulary Keyboard

Layout: 14 X 14
Cell Number: 196

Recommended for people who:

- Have very good accuracy using a mouse, mouse emulator, or touchscreen.
- Have used or will use a [paper-based AlphaCore board](#) with a laser pointer, stylus, or finger as their light tech communication method.

Features:

- Core vocabulary
- A Scheduling Core Vocabulary page for talking about appointments and plans with quick access to days of the week, times, months, dates, and more
- People, Places, and Things pages for your own personal vocabulary
- QWERTY letter order
- Word and sentence prediction displayed simultaneously

The Core Vocabulary Keyboard gives you quick access to the most commonly used words, known as core vocabulary, alongside a QWERTY keyboard to type less frequently used words.

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Research demonstrates that a small set of core words account for 80% of the words used in every day communication. This remains true across all context regardless of the topic being discussed.

Making a single selection for 7-8 out of 10 words, rather than typing letters, will speed communication for those who become familiar with this board.

The Core Word keyboard provides you with the most common of these core vocabulary words arranged in alphabetical order so they are easy to find. AlphaCore for Mind Express also expands to offer different variations and tenses when you select a word. For example, when you select ‘Some’ you are offered ‘somebody, somehow, someone, and ‘sometimes.’ When you select ‘know’ you are offered ‘knows’, ‘knew’, ‘known’, and ‘knowing.’ Additionally, words on the page change to the appropriate tense after selected particular words. For example, if you select ‘he’ (‘go’ becomes ‘goes’), if you select ‘is’ (‘go’ becomes ‘going’), and if you select ‘wants’ (‘go’ becomes ‘to go’).

QWERTY Standard Keyboard

 Toolbox	 Delete All									 Edit	 Speak/Stop
Hi, how are you?	I'm okay thanks.	I have something to say so please give me a moment.	I need some help, please.	I need something.	That's perfect thanks.						
I	I'm	I'll	I've	And	Is						
 Go Back	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	 Backspace
 Topics & Tools	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	?	 Delete Word
 Shift	Z	X	C	V	space	B	N	M	.	123 @,!	 Settings

QWERTY Standard Keyboard

Layout: 6 X 12
Cell Number: 72

Recommended for people who:

- Have good accuracy using a mouse, mouse emulator, eye tracker, or touchscreen.
- Like to see Sentence Prediction buttons at all times in addition to Word Prediction.

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Features:

- QWERTY letter order
- Word and sentence prediction displayed simultaneously

The QWERTY Standard Keyboard provides letters in the traditional QWERTY order and displays both Word and Sentence Prediction simultaneously to speed communication. Sentence Prediction is powerful because you can type a single word like “coffee” or “leg” and the Sentence Prediction buttons will display the sentences you have typed previously that contain that word.

 Toolbox	 Delete All	Leg	 Edit	 Pause	 Speak/Stop
Break a leg!	Can you shave my legs?	It costs an arm and a leg.	My leg hurts.	Please move my left leg.	Please move my right leg.

Sentence Prediction Using Key Word

QWERTY Large Keys Keyboard

 Toolbox	 Delete All							 Edit	 Speak/Stop
 Predict Sentences		I	I'm	I'll	I've				
Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P
A		S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L
 Shift	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	,	?
 Topics & Tools	 Go Back	 Enter	123 @,!	space		.	 Delete Word	 Backspace	 Settings

QWERTY Large Keys Keyboard

Layout: 6 X 10

Cell Number: 60

Recommended for people who:

- Have good accuracy using a mouse, mouse emulator, eye tracker, or touchscreen.
- Use eye tracking or head tracking and want a QWERTY keyboard.

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Features:

- QWERTY layout
- Wider buttons than the QWERTY Standard Keyboard
- Word prediction (must select Sentence Prediction to toggle to Sentence Prediction view)

The QWERTY Large Key Keyboard provides letters in the traditional QWERTY layout and provides wider keys than the QWERTY Standard Keyboard. While it provides both word and sentence prediction, users must toggle between the two options to choose which is displayed.

AEIOU Large Keys

 Toolbox	 Delete All					 Speak/Stop
I	A	B	C	D	 Backspace	 Share
I'm	E	F	G	H	 Delete Word	 Attention
I'll	I	J	K	L	M	N
I've	O	P	Q	R	S	T
 Predict Sentences	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
 Topics & Tools	 Go Back	123 , ? !	space	.	 Shift	 Settings

AEIOU Large Keys Keyboard

Layout: 7 X 7

Cell Number: 49

Recommended for people who:

- Benefit from larger keys for mouse or mouse emulation method but also want word and sentence prediction.
- Use an AEIOU organized light tech communication method such as partner assisted scanning arranged so AEIOU start each line (making it easier for communication partners to remember the letters to call out for each row) or the [AEeyeOU method](#).
- Are unfamiliar with a QWERTY layout or prefer alphabetical order layout.

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Features:

- AEIOU alphabetical order layout
- Wider buttons than the QWERTY Large Keys Keyboard
- Word prediction (must select Sentence Prediction to toggle to sentence prediction view)

The AEIOU Keyboard is perfect for people who use scanning but want their letters in a familiar layout (the Frequency Scanning Keyboard features letters in a unique order optimized for faster scanning speed). This keyboard also enables people who use an AEIOU organized light tech communication system to enjoy consistency in key arrangement.

Simplified Keyboard

 Toolbox	 Delete All				 Edit	 Speak/Stop
I	I'm	A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
 Page Back	 Topics & Tools	123/, !?	Space 	 Backspace	 Delete Word	 Shift

Simplified Keyboard

Layout: 6 X 7

Cell Number: 42

Recommended for people who:

- Use a mouse or mouse emulator with moderate to poor accuracy and require large keys.
- Do not want to use a keyboard requiring 2 hits but require largest keys possible.
- Would benefit from some Word Prediction buttons.

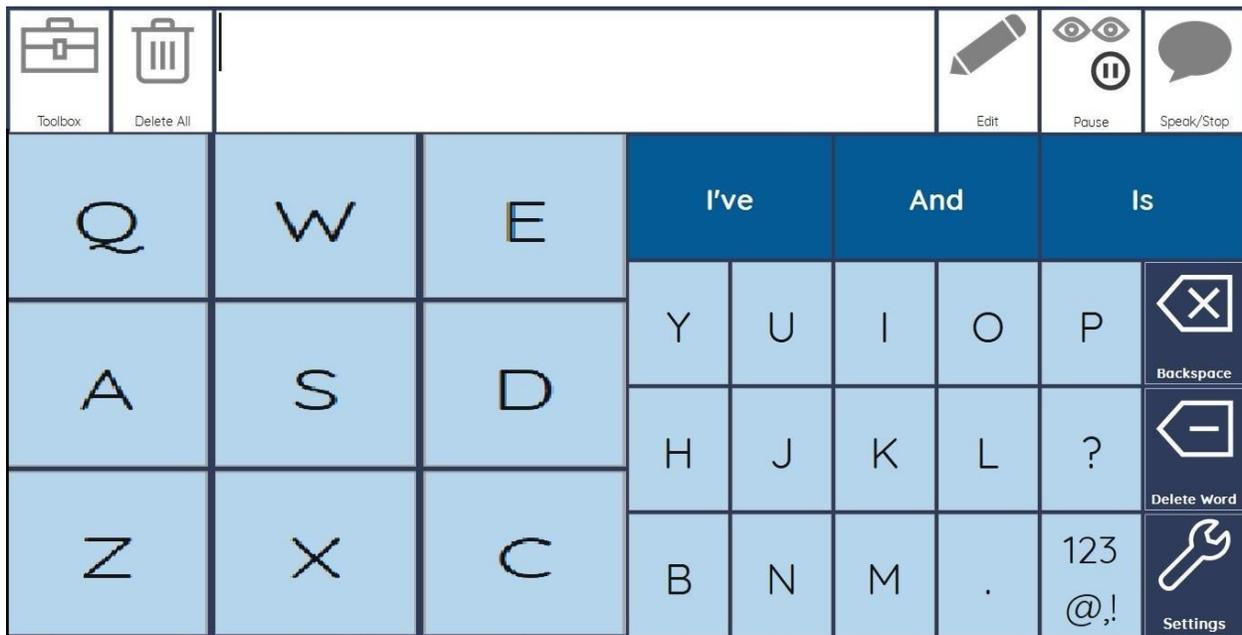
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Features:

- Very large keys
- Alphabetical order layout
- Taller buttons than the AEIOU Keyboard
- 2 Word Prediction buttons

The Simplified Keyboard is ideal for people who require very large keys but may become confused or frustrated by the process for using the Zoom, 2 Hit, or Frequency Split keyboards.

Zoom Keyboard



Zoom Keyboard

Layout: 6 X 10 zooms to 4 X 7

Cell Number: 60 zooms to 28

Recommended for people who:

- Want to continue using a QWERTY layout.
- Make frequent errors on the QWERTY keyboards so benefit from a zoom of the buttons within the area they selected.

Features:

- QWERTY key order
- Very large zoomed keys used to confirm or to correct miss-hits
- Word Prediction (must select Sentence Prediction button to toggle to Sentence Prediction view)

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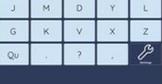
Many users want to continue using a QWERTY keyboard even if their accuracy declines. When miss-hits occur, they almost always involve the accidental selection of a button next to the intended button. Rather than frequently moving the cursor over to the delete button and back to the key to try again, this keyboard waits for a confirmation or correction on an enlarged set of keys provided in the location your cursor is already placed.

 **Tip:** If you require a bit more time to adjust your cursor after the initial area selection, experiment with adding a Delay Time After Selection. To navigate to the Delay Time After Selection setting, follow this path.

Menu  **Settings**  **Access** **Mouse/Touch** **Delay Time After Selection.**

Though this setting is located in the Mouse/Touch area, it effects the timing for eye tracking too. Start with 2 seconds or more when you experiment with this setting.

Frequency Split Keyboard

 Toolbox	 Delete All					 Speak/Stop
 Predict Sentences	I	I'm	I'll	I've	And	
 Shift	A	E	I	O	U	 Backspace
123 , ? !	B	T	H	S	R	 Space
 Go Back	C	W	N	P	F	 Topics & Tools

Frequency Split Keyboard

Layout: 5 X 7
Cell Number: 35

Recommended for people who:

- Use eye tracking but have experienced a decline in targeting accuracy.
- Use word prediction consistently.
- Want to avoid the need to navigate to the second page of letters by using a research based frequency configuration. (see description below)

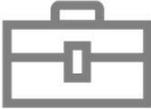
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Features:

- Extra-large keys by splitting the keyboard into two pages
- This frequency keyboard displays the letters that appear most frequently at the beginning of words on the first page of letters. By using word prediction, the need to navigate to the second page of letters is significantly reduced. This speeds up typing
- Taller and wider buttons than the Simplified Keyboard
- Word Prediction (must select Sentence Prediction button to toggle to Sentence Prediction view)

The Frequency Split keyboard is unique, efficient, and fast. It splits the keyboard into two pages in order to provide extra-large buttons. Then, rather than providing the letters that occur most frequently in all positions of words, this keyboard acknowledges that 84% of the time users only need to type 1, 2, and sometimes 3 letters of a word before their target word appears in word prediction (Microsoft website). Therefore, only letters that occur most often in the first 2 to 3 letters of words appear on the first page of letters (Norvig, 2012). By providing Word Prediction buttons on this keyboard the need to navigate to second page is very significantly decreased.

2 Hit Keyboard

 Toolbox & Delete Options			  Pause
I	ABCD _.	EFGH ,?	IJKLMNOP
I'm	OPQRST	UVWXYZ	123 : ! @
I'll	 Go Back	 Topics & Tools	 Speak/Stop

2 Hit Keyboard

Layout: 4 X 4
Cell Number: 16

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Recommended for people who:

- Use eye tracking but have poor targeting accuracy.

Features:

- Largest cell keyboard
- Word Prediction
- Taller and wider buttons than the Frequency Split Keyboard
- Enlarged button **Topics & Tools**  pages

This is the largest button keyboard. The **Topics & Tools** pages are enlarged to 4 X 4 also. Even Computer Control keys are enlarged in order to enable people with poor targeting accuracy to still control their computer. If you are experiencing frequent errors with eye tracking, go to [Ideas if Struggling with Eye Tracking](#).

Frequency Scanning Keyboard

 Speak/Stop	 Delete All				 Topics & Tools	 Attention	 Speak As Type
 Backspace	O	A	E	N	C	D	
I	T	H	S	L	M	K	
I'm	I	R	U	B	X	 Enter	
I'll	F	P	G	J	 Letter Left	 Letter Right	
I've	Wh	W	Y	Qu	 Word Left	 Word Right	
And	V	Z	'	&	 Start of Text	 End of Text	
 Predict Sentences	.	,	?	!	 Edit	 On/Off Cap Last Word	
 Go Back	space	123 .?!	 Shift	 Settings	 Undo	 Share	

Frequency Scanning Keyboard

Layout: 9 X 7

Cell Number: 63

Recommended for people who:

- People who cannot use eye tracking.
- Use word prediction consistently.
- Want to scan more efficiently and communicate faster by using a research based frequency configuration. (see description below)

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Features:

- This frequency keyboard displays letters that appear most frequently at the beginning of words, in the top left side of the screen which is the area that is scanned first. By using word prediction, the need to wait for scanning to proceed to the bottom rows and right columns of the keyboard is significantly reduced. This speeds up typing.
- Word Prediction (must select Sentence Prediction button to toggle to Sentence Prediction view).

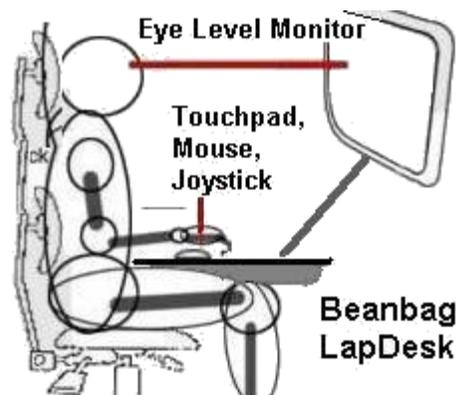
The Frequency Scanning keyboard is a unique, efficient, and fast keyboard for scanning. Rather than providing the letters that occur most frequently in all positions of words, this keyboard acknowledges that 84% of the time users only need to type 1, 2, and sometimes 3 letters of a word before their target word appears in word prediction (Microsoft website). Therefore, only letters that occur most often in the first 2 to 3 letters of words appear on the area of the keyboard scanned first (Norvig, 2012). By providing Word Prediction buttons on this keyboard the need to wait for scanning to reach the bottom, right of the keyboard is very significantly decreased. This speeds up the scanning process and provides faster communication than traditional scanning keyboards.

Access Method Information and Tips

Access for Those with Strong Hands and Arms

Typically, people experiencing no weakness in their arms and hands will choose to use a mechanical keyboard or touchscreen to type. Looking down at a keyboard or touchscreen does place a great deal of strain on neck muscles. If you are able to touch type, raise the screen to eye level to protect neck muscles.

If unable to touch type, you may prefer to use a mouse to type on an onscreen keyboards to avoid looking down at the keys or hovering your arms to reach the screen. Both of these can lead to unnecessary muscle use, fatigue, and discomfort. The mouse or mouse emulator can be placed on a lap desk. Be sure your elbows are supported.



Avoid Neck and Shoulder Strain
with an Eye Level Screen

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Access for Those with Mild to Moderate Arm and Hand Weakness

If your fingers are weak and you can't isolate a finger but your arms are stronger, try a horizontal stylus such as the one [pictured in 2C](#) that does not require grip strength. If you have any neck weakness, avoid looking down at keys which can result in unnecessary neck muscle use and strain.

A mouse may also work well for you even if you can't perform mouse clicks. If clicking is difficult, try mouse with [dwell selection](#) or [switch selection](#). A [switch](#) can be operated by your other hand, a foot tap, knee movement, head turn, or tilt, etc. Moving your hand from a mouse or [mouse emulator](#) to a switch is inefficient so use a different body part for clicking if possible or try [dwell selection](#).

If your arms are weak but you have good finger and hand movement, a touchpad may work well for you. A touchpad can be clicked by tapping it, [dwell selection](#), or [switch selection](#). Make certain your arm is well supported.

Access for Those with Severely Weak Arms and Hands

You will likely benefit from a mouse emulator that can be operated by head, foot, or eye movement depending on what you can easily move. Selections can be done with [dwell selection](#) or [switch selection](#). If using eye tracking, you have the additional option of [blink selection](#).

Dwell selection is most popular since it requires the least effort but it has two disadvantages. The first disadvantage is that you cannot select the Mind Express Menu  button in the upper left corner using dwell selection. For this reason, AlphaCore provides important settings in the fully accessible Settings  page.

The second disadvantage to dwell selection is it can add some time pressure especially when coupled with eye tracking because unless you pause your eye tracker (by looking at the Pause Dwell Select Box in the upper right corner) any cell you simply look at (for the set amount of time) will be selected. With experience, users can learn to quickly pause dwell selection when not actively selecting cells. Those not using eye tracking can just rest the mouse or mouse emulator on the last cell selected and it will not continue to select (unless you have turned Repeat Dwell "on" in Mind Express Menu  settings.)

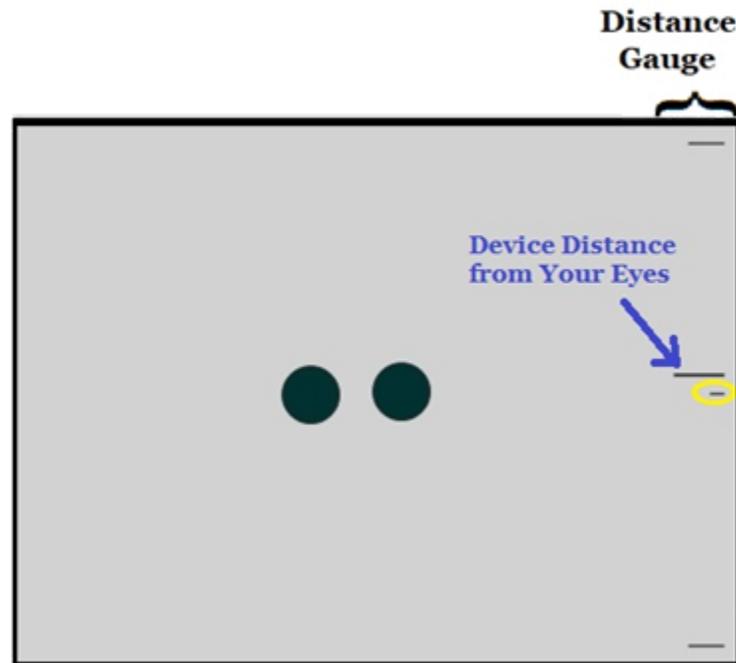
Eye Tracking Information and Tips

Eye tracking is an excellent access method if you experience limb and neck weakness which makes it challenging to use a mouse or [mouse emulators](#).

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While eye tracking is usually minimally physically taxing, the eyes can become fatigued or dry. Taking frequent breaks (of 20 seconds or more) to close one's eyes and shift your focus to something further away than the screen helps relax and hydrate the eyes. Natural tears style eye drops can also relieve irritation. They also help rinse away congealed eye fluids that, while typically impossible to see, can cause the eye tracker to jump and lose accuracy.

Eye tracking does present some unique challenges. Obtaining the correct position of the device relative to the user is essential. Eye cameras can only read eye movement if the device is positioned to capture the eyes in the viewing lens. To determine if your eyes are in the right spot for the camera, you must use the Eye Monitor. This is a box that appears on the screen and displays what the eye tracking camera sees. If your eyes appear in the center of the Eye Monitor, the device is generally positioned correctly. If your eyes appear close to an edge of the box or don't appear, move the device until your eyes appear in the center of the box.



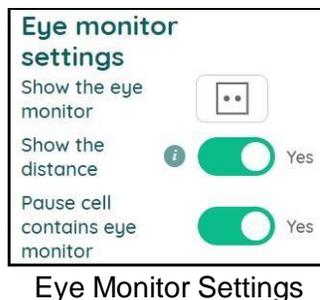
Eye Monitor (view when device is correctly positioned)

There is also a distance gauge that lets you know if the device is the correct distance from your eyes. When the long line approaches the center line (circled in yellow in the image above) the device is the correct distance. When the device is too close to your eyes, the line appears above the center and when too far away, it appears below the center. In order to have both positioning and distance feedback displayed, you must go into the Menu and turn these settings on. To do this, follow this path:

Menu  → Settings  → Access

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Then select Eye Tracking (in left hand column).
In right hand column, scroll down to Eye Monitor Settings and toggle both options to YES as shown below.



Ideas if You Struggle with Eye Tracking

Eye movement tends to be preserved longer than other movement in people with ALS/MND but it can become impaired over time. Before you decide you can't use eye tracking, try the large button keyboard layouts in AlphaCore (Zoom, Simplified, Frequency Split, or 2-Hit Keyboard).

There are also settings which can make eye tracking easier to use. First, experiment with dwell time but if your eyes move slowly also consider increasing the Delay Time After Selection setting. This gives you additional time after each selection to get to another location on the screen. This setting is located within Mouse/Touch settings but it functions for eye tracking too. To find this setting follow this path:

Menu  → Settings  → Access → Mouse/Touch → Delay Time After Selection. Start with 2 seconds or more when you experiment with this setting.

Access for Those Unable to Use Eye Tracking or other Mouse Emulators

If you don't have success with eye tracking or using other parts of your body to move a mouse or mouse emulator, you should consider switch scanning. Scanning typically utilizes a slight but reliable movement of a body part to activate a switch. There are dozens of sensitive switches that can be positioned to be activated by finger, hand, arm, toe, foot, leg, or head movement. Switches vary in the amount of movement and pressure required to activate them. There are even EMG switches that can respond to movement that is not visually perceptible. If no detectable movement can be produced, there are options that use specific brain activity to trigger a switch.

[Scanning](#) can be slow, but AlphaCore offers the [Frequency Scanning Keyboard](#) to enhance speed and reduce effort. It places the cells you will require most frequently in the upper left part of the screen for faster access and utilizes a research based letter arrangement.

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Message Banking (additional information)



[Importing Banked Messages into AlphaCore for Mind Express](#) video is available in the Watch Tutorial tool

Instructions for downloading your banked messages into AlphaCore can be found in [4L. Add Your Banked Messages](#). We have included some additional information and instructions here.

Each of your banked messages must be labeled to work properly in AlphaCore because the software looks for the label on the message to identify it. Most recorders will label your message with a time stamp only. You must use [MyMessageBanking.com](#) to have all of your messages labeled and placed in a zip folder that Mind Express can import. MyMessageBanking.com is a free online tool that listens to your messages and labels each with the transcript of the recording.



Tips for using MyMessageBanking.com:

- Your recordings must be in .wav file format to upload. If you recorded in another format such as MP3 or M4A you must convert your recordings to use MyMessageBanking.com.
- When downloading labeled recordings from MyMessageBanking.com you must put a check in the box next to Title.

The screenshot shows a control panel with buttons for "PRINT ALL MESSAGES", "SORT BY CREATED ↑", and "SHOW ALL". Below these are "Results (45)", "SHOW 25 ↓", and a navigation arrow. Below the panel is a table header with a red circle around a checkbox in the "Title" column, and columns for "Text" and "Confidence Recording".

MyMessageBanking.com page

The squares in front of all your messages will now have a check mark in them.

You will also see a new icon on the screen that must be selected. This will ensure that the title of each message contains the transcribed text.

Light Tech Communication Boards to Print

Having the right light tech communication method is as important as having a high tech speech generating device. Light tech is not only essential as a backup if your high tech system stops working, but it is often a superior communication method in some settings such as in the bathroom, during the middle of the night, or during transportation.

Below I provide some of my most successful low tech communication methods with a printable version and instructions for use.

 **Tip:** Print boards on cardstock for better durability or use a page protector. If you are using a laser pointer to make selections, do not laminate the board as the reflection can cause eye damage.

Light Tech Communication for Those with Strong Arms and Hands

Use writing as your light tech communication method. Consider getting an 8” LCD writing board such as the Boogie Board . These boards clear with the press of a button so you don’t go through hundreds of sheets of paper and they help maintain your privacy. Here is a printable card to put on the back of the LCD board.



Hello, I am **unable to speak
due to a medical condition.**

**I’ll write on this board to
communicate with you.**

My **hearing and thinking are
fine so you don’t need to alter
the way you speak to me.**

Thanks.

[LCD Board- Full size](#)

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Light Tech Communication for Those with Mild to Moderate Arm and Hand Weakness

Since gripping a pen or stylus may now be challenging, use the AlphaCore Board to communicate faster than an alphabet board. The AlphaCore Keyboard provides the most commonly spoken words on one page in alphabetical order so words are easy to find. By pointing to whole words rather than spelling them, you save time and physical effort. You also make it easier for a communication partner who does not need to keep track of all of the letters you point to since you are communicating mainly in full words. Letters are included on the board for spelling nouns and other less common words. There are a few blank spots for you to write in the key people, places, or things you talk about.

A	About	All	Also	And	Any	Are	As	At	Be	Because	Been	But	By
Can	Come	Could	Did	Do	Does	Down	Every	Feel	For	From	Get	Give	Go
Good	Had	Has	Have	He	Help	Her	Him	His	How	I	I'm	If	In
Is	It	It's	Just	Know	Let	Like	Look	Make	Many	May	Maybe	Me	Might
More	Most	Move	Much	Must	My	Need	No	Not	Now	Of	Off	Okay	On
One	Only	Or	Other	Our	Out	Over	Please	Put	Rest	Said	Say	See	She
Should	So	Some	Still	Stop	Take	Talk	Than	Thanks	That	The	Their	Them	Then
There	These	They	Think	This	Those	Time	To	Today	Tom-morrow	Too	Up	Us	Use
Want	Was	We	Were	What	When	Where	Which	Who	Why	Will	With	Work	Would
Yes	You	Your	QU	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	.
			MESSAGE CODE	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	,
			SPACE	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	BACKSPACE	START OVER	?
-ed	-ing	-s	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	:

Please say each word or letter aloud after I point to it.

[AlphaCore Board- Printable PDF](#)

 **Tip:** Point just below words, not covering them, so your partners can read them easily.

 **Tip:** If you can no longer isolate a finger, consider using a [horizontal stylus](#).

[Back to Start](#)

1	_____	5	_____	9	_____
2	_____	6	_____	10	_____
3	_____	7	_____	11	_____
4	_____	8	_____	12	_____

A	About	All	Also	And	Any	Are	As	At	Be	Because	Been	But	By
Can	Come	Could	Did	Do	Does	Down	Every	Feel	For	From	Get	Give	Go
Good	Had	Has	Have	He	Help	Her	Him	His	How	I	I'm	If	In
Is	It	It's	Just	Know	Let	Like	Look	Make	Many	May	Maybe	Me	Might
More	Most	Move	Much	Must	My	Need	No	Not	Now	Of	Off	Okay	On
One	Only	Or	Other	Our	Out	Over	Please	Put	Rest	Said	Say	See	She
Should	So	Some	Still	Stop	Take	Talk	Than	Thanks	That	The	Their	Them	Then
There	These	They	Think	This	Those	Time	To	Today	Tom-morrow	Too	Up	Us	Use
Want	Was	We	Were	What	When	Where	Which	Who	Why	Will	With	Work	Would
Yes	You	Your	Qu	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	.
			MESSAGE CODE	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	,
			SPACE	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	BACKSPACE	START OVER	?
-ed	-ing	-s	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	:

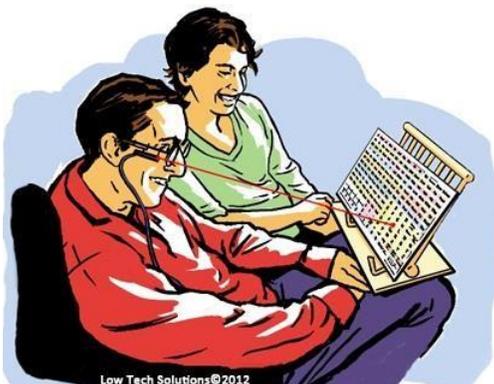
Please say each word or letter aloud after I point to it.

[Reduced Range of Movement AlphaCore Board- Printable PDF](#)

The Reduced Range of Movement AlphaCore Board is ideal for people who can no longer reach to the corners of an 8.5X11 board. The board is smaller leaving room for frequent messages to be written on the lines above. You do not need to reach up to select the written messages. Instead you point to the cell labeled Message Code and then to the number corresponding to the message.

Light Tech Communication for Those with Poor Arm/Hand Movement but Good Ability to Move Head

Consider using an **AlphaCore board** with an angle adjustable laser pointer that clips on your glasses or a hat.



-  **Tip:** Create a 2' X 3' AlphaCore poster to put on an easel or on the wall across from your bed or favorite chair. The further the poster is away from you, the less head movement is required to move the laser dot.
-  **Tip:** Find readymade laser pointers on eye glass clips with on/off switches or with switch adapted on/off control and communication posters (English & Spanish) at LowTechSolutions.org.

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Light Tech Communication for Those with No Limb or Head Movement but Good Eye Movement

I created the AEeyeOU board as an easy to learn board for people who want to be able to spell in order to communicate but have only eye movement. This is a two-sided board so you can print both sides on cardstock. If you are using paper, put a few sheets of paper between the two sides so the other side does not show through. This board is held between the user and a communication partner. The partner has the board printed on their side so they can just glance down to see at which group of letters the user is looking.

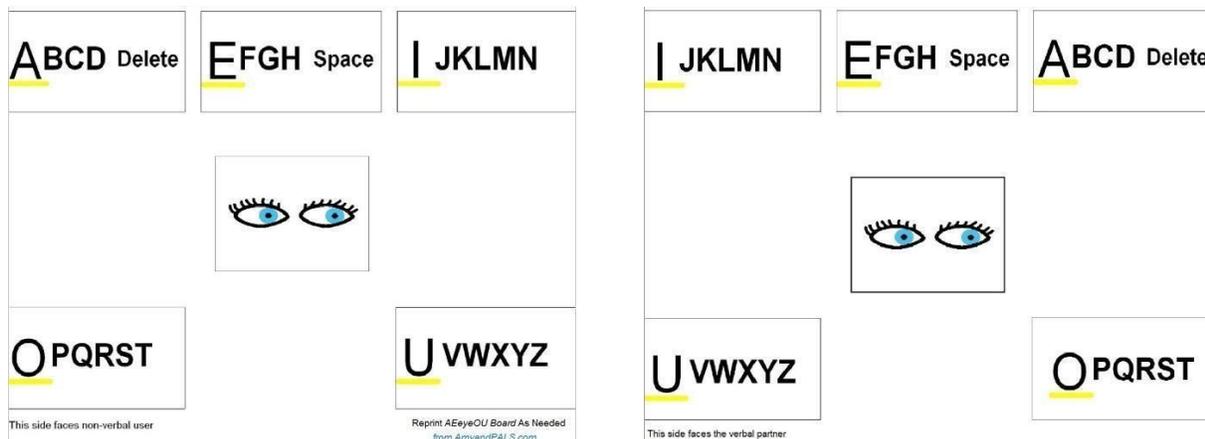


[AEeyeOU Board Light Tech Communication](#) video tutorial for using this board is available in the Watch Tutorials tool.

The AEeyeOU Board requires 2 steps to indicate a letter.

Step 1: The user gazes at the group of letters in which the letter he or she wants is printed.

Step 2: Next, the communication partner slowly reads each letter within that group until the user provides a “yes” signal. The partner writes the letter down and they continue until the message is completed.



[Download Front of AEeyeOU Board- Printable PDF](#)

[Download Back of AEeyeOU Board- Printable PDF](#)

There are other light tech communication options you can find online for people who have only eye movement including E-Tran, Eye Link, and Partner Assisted scanning.

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AlphaCore Learning Goal Suggestions

Operational Skills

1	Mr. Lastname and a caregiver will demonstrate basic maintenance and operation of SGD (on-off, adjusting menu features such as voice and display as well as charging procedure) without cues in 2/2 trials.
2	Mr. Lastname and his caregivers will independently demonstrate the physical set-up of SGD and adjusting access controls (including calibration if using eye tracking) in 2/2 trials.
3	Mr. Lastname will use the SGD and (name of access method) access accessory to target letters, words, and messages on his SGD with 90% accuracy.
4	Mr. Lastname will store a message independently in his SGD in 5/5 trials using his access method.
5	Mr. Lastname will successfully transfer a banked voice and or messages to his SGD.
6	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD to independently make and receive 2 phone calls during therapy.

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Linguistic Skills

7	Mr. Lastname will compose and independently correct errors in a novel message created using core vocabulary and spelling using his SGD in 5/5 trials.
8	Mr. Lastname will participate in 5 turns of a social interaction, using his SGD during role play, by alternating between spelling and retrieving stored messages at least once in 2/2 trials.
9	Mr. Lastname will provide identifying information , using his SGD during role play, in a potential medical setting or emergency situation (name, address, phone number, emergency contact name, pertinent medical information) in 2/2 trials.
10	Mr. Lastname will independently convey basic needs /make requests to caregivers, using his SGD during role play, by alternating between spelling and retrieving stored messages in 5/5 trials.
11	Mr. Lastname will demonstrate the ability to independently use and program rate enhancement features including stored messages buttons, core vocabulary, word prediction, and sentence prediction to generate one message each on his SGD.

Social Skills

12	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD to engage in social interactions with at least good success (scale: no success, poor success, good success, outstanding success) as rated/judged by himself and his caregivers.
13	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD to independently communicate basic physical needs (positioning, comfort, respiratory, a pain, etc.) and emotional status with at least good success (scale: no success, poor success, good success, outstanding success) as rated/judged by himself and his caregivers.
14	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD to direct home maintenance, chores, childcare and pet care with at least good success (scale: no success, poor success, good success, outstanding success) as rated/judged by himself and his caregivers.
15	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD to engage in his common community-based interactions , such as directing a store clerk with at least good success (scale: no success, poor success, good success, outstanding success) as rated/judged by himself and his caregivers.
16	Mr. Lastname will use the phone pages on his SGD to introduce himself, ask for the person he wishes to reach, and set an appointment or arrange an errand with 90% accuracy during role play. (Advanced Users)
17	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD to use the phone for medical, household maintenance, and social interactions with at least good success (scale-no success, poor success, good success, outstanding success) as rated by himself and the people with whom he communicates on the phone. (Advanced Users)

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Strategic Skills

18	Mr. Lastname will describe 2 language strategies to improve communication outcomes with partners who are unfamiliar with SGD (e.g., alerting chime to gain attention, strategic use of “Communication Tips” phrases).
19	Mr. Lastname will independently customize at least two buttons on his “ Communication Tips ” page to instruct people in strategies that improve communication (e.g. how to use his low tech system with him, or how he indicates yes/no, tips on interacting with SGD user, etc.).
20	Mr. Lastname will use “Greetings” and “Questions & Continuers” pages to take 3 turns in a conversation and change the topic, using his SGD during role play, in 2/2 trials.
21	Mr. Lastname will use his SGD twice during therapy sessions to communicate with people not within his proximate environment for social and call chime purposes (using Email, Instant Messaging, or Text Messaging).
22	Mr. Lastname and his caregiver will describe the importance of contacting the SLP and reporting if changes are occurring which are making any component of his AAC systems too difficult to use.

M=Goal Met

P=Goal Partially Met

Dictionary of Terms

Access Method (aka Selection Method): The method/s used to select keys and operate a speech device, computer, phone, activate an attendant call chime, or operate items around the home. There are a wide variety of access methods designed to enable people with different physical abilities to continue to use technology and control their environment. An access recommendation can be complex since it involves the choice of the correct tool (e.g. stylus, mouse, touchpad, foot trackball, head tracker, eye tracker, switch, etc.), body part, and movement to operate the tool, positioning of the body part, and software settings (e.g. mouse speed, delay times, acceptance times, etc.). For a list of access methods refer to [Options for Access Methods](#).

Blink Selection: A method for selecting a cell or other item that you have targeted using eye tracking. The settings for blink selection are customized so they ignore your natural blinks and only make selections when you prolong a blink slightly. To turn blink selection on, eye tracking must be selected as your access method. Then follow this path:

Topics & Tools  → **Settings**  → **Access Settings** → **Change to Switch or Blink Selection**

Now, toggle on any of the three eye tracking selection methods you wish to use.

Brain Computer Interface (BCI): An access method that uses a specific detectable brain activity to control a speech device or computer. BCI typically utilizes electrodes on the scalp or surgically placed on the brain to detect the required brain activity. Many BCI systems translate the brain activity to function as the switch activation required to perform [scanning](#). There are only a few commercially available options. Most BCI solutions are in the research phase.

Dwell Selection: A method for selecting or “clicking on” an item on a screen (e.g., letter, stored message button, desktop icon, internet link, etc.) that has been targeted by a mouse or mouse emulator (such as eye tracking). By hovering or dwelling the mouse cursor over a cell or object on the screen for a set amount of time (typically .8-2 seconds) the object will be selected.

Eye Tracking: An access method that uses eye movement captured by a camera, pointed at the eyes, to move a mouse cursor. Items on the screen are targeted by looking at them and then the item can be selected by a blink, [dwell selection](#), or [switch selection](#).

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Horizontal Stylus: PVC pipe with a whole drilled in it to place a stylus. The stylus is glued in place and a strip of two sided Velcro can be used to hold the PVC pipe in your hand.



Mouse Emulators: A pointing device on a computer or speech device that takes the place of a standard mouse. These include special ergonomic mice, touchpads, joysticks, trackballs, foot trackballs, head trackers, and eye trackers. Mouse emulators are often use with parts of the body other than the hand/arm if those areas are weak or lack coordination.

Scanning: An access method by which choices of items (e.g. letters, words, messages, desktop icons, etc.) are presented to the user sequentially through visual highlighting or auditory announcement (if the user is visually impaired). Selecting a desired item is achieved by activating a [switch](#) when the target item is highlighted.

The most effective scanning style for the majority of people with ALS/MND is **automatic, row/column scanning**. It only requires one switch and automatically moves the highlight in a predictable, sequential pattern until you activate your switch. To turn on automatic scanning follow this path:

Menu → **Settings** → **Access** → **Under Access select “Scanning”** → Make certain **Pattern** is set to **Row-Column** and **Scanning Method** is set to **Automatic**.

Switch (aka. **Ability Switch**): A tool to enable people with significantly limited movement to operate computers, speech devices, wheelchairs, call chimes, laser pointers, home controls, and more. There are switches designed to be activated by different parts of the body and even by brain activity. [Scanning](#) is the most common access method for people who can only operate a switch.



Spec Switch



Head Switch



Foot Switch



EMG Switch

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I	A	B	C	D	Backspace	Share
I'm	E	F	G	H	Delete Word	Attention
I'll	I	J	K	L	M	N
I've	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Predict Sentences	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

I	A	B	C	D	Backspace	Share
I'm	E	F	G	H	Delete Word	Attention
I'll	I	J	K	L	M	N
I've	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Predict Sentences	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

I	A	B	C	D	Backspace	Share
I'm	E	F	G	H	Delete Word	Attention
I'll	I	J	K	L	M	N
I've	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Predict Sentences	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

I	A	B	C	D	Backspace	Share
I'm	E	F	G	H	Delete Word	Attention
I'll	I	J	K	L	M	N
I've	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Predict Sentences	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

I	A	B	C	D	Backspace	Share
I'm	E	F	G	H	Delete Word	Attention
I'll	I	J	K	L	M	N
I've	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Predict Sentences	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Example of Row/Column Scanning Sequence

Row/Column scanning first highlights a row of items. The row remains highlighted for a set amount of time giving you the opportunity to select that row by activating a [switch](#). When you activate your switch, the cells within the row you selected become highlighted one at a time. When your desired item is highlighted, you again activate your switch and that letter or message is selected.

Switch Selection: The use of a switch to select items if a person is unable to left click a mouse (or mouse emulator) or the use of a switch to make a selection during scanning.

Norvig, P. (2012.). *English Letter Frequency Counts: Mayzner Revisited*. English Letter Frequency Counts: Mayzner Revisited. Retrieved January 8, 2023, from <https://norvig.com/mayzner.html>

Microsoft (n.d.). *How to use the Microsoft SwiftKey Keyboard*. SwiftKey Support. Retrieved January 8, 2023, from <https://support.swiftkey.com/hc/en-us/articles/204955281-How-to-use-the-Microsoft-SwiftKey-Keyboard>



Hello, I am **unable to speak** due to a medical condition.

I'll write on this board to communicate with you.

My **hearing and thinking are fine** so you don't need to alter the way you speak to me.

Thanks.

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