

# Talking Tape

## Try It Out

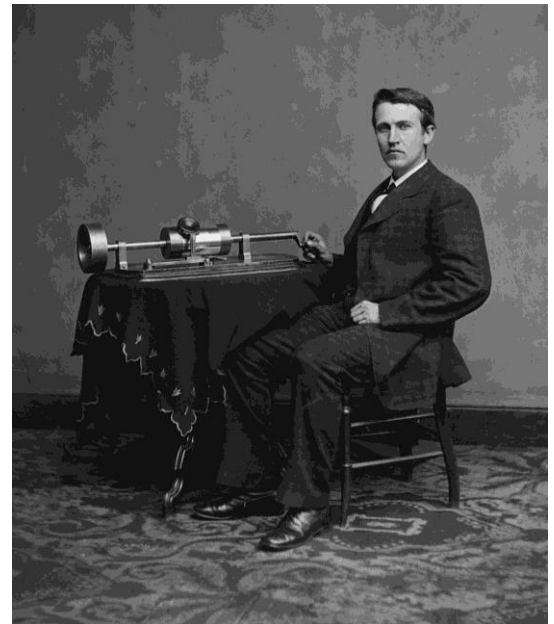
Pick up the cup with one hand. With your other hand, place your index finger against the smooth side of the tape and thumbnail against the rough side. Slide your fingers along the tape, pulling gently away from the cup. Can you hear someone talking? What are they saying? (The answer is in the "Wonder While You Walk" section below.)

## What's Going On?

Sound is a vibration. Higher or lower sounds can be made with faster or slower vibrations, and this is how we make language. In this case, there are ridges and grooves on the tape at different widths. When your thumbnail moves over them, it vibrates the tape, which vibrates the cup and amplifies the vibration into sound you can hear. (And maybe even perceive as talking!)

## Why Does It Matter?

Understanding sound has allowed us to record and play back sound for over a century. Sound recording has gone through a number of changes, including from analog to digital, but try to imagine a world without audio. Silent movies and television. No podcasts. No music. It would be very quiet.



*Thomas Edison and his second phonograph, one of the first recording technologies  
(Image: Levin C. Handy)*

## Wonder While You Walk...

This is our last exhibit until next spring. What would you like to see in the museum next year? Let us know on Twitter, Facebook, or via email. Contact info below.

*The Talking Tape is saying: "Science is fun!"*