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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CONTENTS | 2 |
| IMPORTANT HEALTH WARNING ABOUT PLAYING VIDEO GAMES | 7 |
| ABOUT THIS MANUAL..... | 7 |
| BACKGROUND INFORMATION..... | 8 |
| Key Principles | 8 |
| Reinforcement | 9 |
| STARTING OUT | 9 |
| Setting Up Users | 10 |
| Setting Up Classes | 10 |
| Logging In | 10 |
| MAIN ACTIVITY SECTIONS - OVERVIEW | 11 |
| Courses | 11 |
| Spelling Test..... | 12 |
| Word Lists..... | 12 |
| General | 12 |
| Printables | 12 |
| Additional features of the main screen..... | 12 |
| Settings | 12 |
| Logs | 13 |
| SPELLING TEST | 13 |
| Spelling Age..... | 13 |
| Results | 14 |
| PRINTABLES | 15 |
| Dynamic worksheets..... | 15 |
| Word List..... | 15 |
| Word Search | 15 |
| Non-dynamic worksheets or games | 16 |
| Stargame Cards..... | 16 |
| Handwriting | 16 |
| Topic Worksheets | 16 |
| Grammar/spelling Worksheets | 17 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| COURSES | 17 |
| Current courses | 17 |
| General Points | 17 |
| First Steps..... | 18 |
| Structure | 18 |
| Tackling the course..... | 18 |
| Reinforcement..... | 19 |
| Printables | 19 |
| Steps to Literacy | 19 |
| WORD LISTS..... | 21 |
| Spelling Patterns and Word Families | 21 |
| Search..... | 21 |
| At School..... | 22 |
| Homophones..... | 22 |
| Everyday Topics | 23 |
| Administrator Lists | 23 |
| Creating an administrator list..... | 23 |
| Admin Page 1 | 23 |
| Student Wordlists Screen | 23 |
| Recording words and sentences | 24 |
| The Self-Teach Course..... | 24 |
| High Frequency Lists | 25 |
| Essential Spelling Lists | 25 |
| Commonly Misspelled Words | 25 |
| Personal Lists | 25 |
| Custom Courses | 26 |
| WORD-LEVEL ACTIVITIES | 27 |
| Word Recognition Category..... | 27 |
| Find the word | 27 |
| Choose the word..... | 28 |
| Word Flash..... | 28 |
| Sentence Builder | 29 |
| Word Search | 29 |
| Spelling Category..... | 30 |
| Spelling | 30 |
| Chunks | 31 |
| Word Building..... | 31 |
| Drop | 32 |
| Spelling Test | 32 |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Phonics Category..... | 33 |
| Sound Tiles | 33 |
| Sound Boxes..... | 33 |
| Initial Sounds | 34 |
| Memory Category..... | 35 |
| Visual Memory | 35 |
| Word Grid..... | 35 |
| Word Memory | 36 |
| Word Study Category | 36 |
| Definitions/Clues | 36 |
| GENERAL..... | 38 |
| Alphabet..... | 38 |
| Reference | 38 |
| Letter Names | 39 |
| Letter Sounds..... | 40 |
| Letter Chunks..... | 40 |
| Reversals | 41 |
| Alphabet Order..... | 41 |
| Numbers..... | 42 |
| Digits | 42 |
| Number Chunks | 42 |
| Number Grid | 43 |
| Reversals | 43 |
| Spatial..... | 44 |
| Directions | 44 |
| Perception..... | 45 |
| Spelling | 46 |
| Blends – initial..... | 46 |
| Endings | 46 |
| Silent –e | 47 |
| Short Vowels..... | 49 |
| Useful Stuff | 50 |
| Colours..... | 50 |
| Days..... | 51 |
| Months | 51 |
| GAMES | 53 |
| Pop the Balloon!..... | 54 |
| Blocks..... | 55 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Vowel Sounds..... | 56 |
| Clear the Skies | 57 |
| Fireworks | 59 |
| Snap..... | 60 |
| Vowel Ladder | 61 |
| Hangman | 62 |
| Four in a Row | 63 |
| NETWORK AND TUTOR ADMIN MENU | 64 |
| Managing Students | 64 |
| Add student..... | 64 |
| Delete Student | 64 |
| Modify student..... | 64 |
| View records | 66 |
| Print records..... | 66 |
| Wordlists | 67 |
| Admin wordlists..... | 68 |
| Managing Classes | 69 |
| Add class | 69 |
| Remove class | 69 |
| Rename class | 69 |
| Enrol student..... | 69 |
| Remove student..... | 70 |
| View records | 70 |
| Wordlists | 70 |
| Import students | 70 |
| Remove Corruption..... | 71 |
| Spelling Age Tool..... | 72 |
| Custom Courses | 73 |
| Custom Sentences | 77 |
| ADMIN PAGE 2 | 78 |
| Licence Code | 78 |
| Database Path | 79 |
| ADMIN PAGE 3 | 80 |
| ADMIN PAGE 4 | 81 |
| Settings | 81 |
| Admin Password..... | 81 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Backup | 82 |
| Accent | 82 |
| PATCHING | 83 |
| Network Edition | 83 |
| Non-preloader | 83 |
| Preloader | 83 |
| FAQ AND TROUBLE-SHOOTING | 84 |
| CONTACT US..... | 85 |
| Technical Support..... | 85 |
| Sales | 85 |
| SOFTWARE CREDITS | 86 |

IMPORTANT HEALTH WARNING ABOUT PLAYING VIDEO GAMES

A very small percentage of people may experience a seizure when exposed to certain visual images, including flashing lights or patterns that may appear in video games. Even people who have no history of seizures or epilepsy may have an undiagnosed condition that can cause these “photosensitive epileptic seizures” while watching video games.

These seizures may have a variety of symptoms, including light-headedness, altered vision, eye or face twitching, jerking or shaking of arms or legs, disorientation, confusion, or momentary loss of awareness. Seizures may also cause loss of consciousness or convulsions that can lead to injury from falling down or striking nearby objects.

Immediately stop playing and consult a doctor if you experience any of these symptoms. Parents should watch for or ask their children about the above symptoms – children and teenagers are more likely than adults to experience these seizures. The risk of photosensitive epileptic seizures may be reduced by taking the following precautions: Sit further from the screen; use a smaller screen; play in a well-lit room; and do not play when you are drowsy or fatigued.

If you or any of your relatives have a history of seizures or epilepsy, consult a doctor before playing.

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

There is a separate manual for the technical aspects of installation, which is designed for users of the Tutor Edition and Network Edition. There is also a Parent Guide, which specifically covers how to use the programme to support learners at home.

These manuals and guides will appear automatically on the desktop when that version of the program is installed, but they can all be downloaded from our website at www.learningstaircase.co.nz.

This manual is intended to cover information about the activities on the programme. This includes an explanation of each activity, how and when it can be used, and the purpose/research behind that activity.

Detailed teaching information for the remedial workbook courses is in the Teacher Manuals for each level of the course.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The **Steps** software program is designed for all ages from 6 upwards, including adults. It is suitable for all literacy learners, including the following contexts:

- Whole-class use as a general literacy/language support resource
- Literacy support for wider curriculum
- Structured course for learners with remedial literacy needs, including those with dyslexia, other learning disabilities or in the low-ability category
- Structured language/literacy course for ESOL learners
- Vocational/tertiary learners needing literacy support
- Learners with speech/language difficulties
- Home program for home-schoolers or parents wishing to support their child's learning
- Self-teach program for adults wanting to improve their own literacy

Key Principles

Steps is not designed to replace a teacher! It is designed to be used as an active teacher tool. Learners with remedial literacy needs **must** follow a structured workbook course in conjunction with the software activities. It is not recommended that Steps is used in isolation with these learners, although it can be used to support other courses, if necessary. However, the most effective remedial option is for learners to be using the **Steps to Literacy** or **First Steps** workbook courses, as these are specifically designed to work in conjunction with the software. The courses are as follows:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| First Steps | - | Learners with spelling levels of below 7 years |
| Steps to Literacy | - | Learners spelling at 7 year level and above |

Learners with major difficulties will also benefit from the supporting games/activities provided in the **Schools Resource Pack**. Information about these resources is available on www.learningstaircase.co.nz.

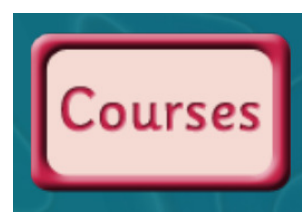
Important: Any educational software is best used to support and reinforce what the teacher has taught, not to replace the teacher!

This manual is not intended to provide teaching instructions or guidance, but just to give information about **Steps** itself. Detailed teaching information is given in the Teacher Manuals which go with the two workbook courses, or in the Teacher Guides for each aspect of the courses.

Reinforcement

Reinforcement is the key to success, particularly with dyslexic learners and others with processing difficulties. Research shows that a non-dyslexic learner typically needs only 4 – 10 exposures to a word to fix it in long-term memory. A dyslexic learner, on the other hand, may need 500 – 1300 exposures! This massive discrepancy is one of the most significant factors which cause these learners to fail in school. It is also the reason why software is one of the most valuable resources for these learners, as it enable each individual learner to have as much reinforcement as necessary.

If a learner is on one of the course options, (see the 'Courses' button) automatic reinforcement is built in. Periodically, the computer will analyse the learner's errors in the preceding units and create an individualised revision unit for that learner.



This is a very important feature and needs to be used with all learners following the courses!

The revision unit is the capital R in a circle:



In addition, it is highly recommended that teachers go back to previous units and encourage learners to upgrade medals. For example, a learner may be on Unit 4 or 5. The teacher may look back at a previous unit and say "Look, you got a bronze medal for that activity. Why don't you see if you can upgrade to a silver or gold?" This is an excellent way of building in additional reinforcement.

If it then appears that the learner has not retained that previous learning, he or she may be progressing too quickly and adjustments need to be made to their tuition programme.

STARTING OUT

There are full instructions on using administrator functions under the Admin Menu section. This part of the manual is only to help you get going with the programme. See the Admin Menu section for further information.

When you have installed the programme, you will see this screen:



This screen currently has no users and no classes. When you have entered users and classes, you will see these details in the lighter-colour screens under each heading.

Setting Up Users

1. Click 'Admin' and enter your password. If you have not changed the password yet then the default password is 'steps'. Press 'Yes!' to continue.
2. Click 'Add student'. Enter in a name. If you wish to give the user a password, enter it into the 'Student password' field. The tick boxes let the student access different sections.
3. Click 'Create'.
4. Click 'Back'. You will now see your student on the login screen.
5. The student now logs in to start working on Steps.

Technical Note: You can by-pass a student's password using the admin password.

Setting Up Classes

1. Click 'Admin' and enter your password. If you have not changed the password yet then the default password is 'steps'. Press 'Yes!' to continue.
2. Click 'Add class'. Enter in a name for that class or group.
3. Click 'Create'.
4. Click 'Back'

You will now see your class on the login screen (on the right-hand side).

Note: This section is just a very quick 'get you started' section. There is more detailed information under the Admin section.

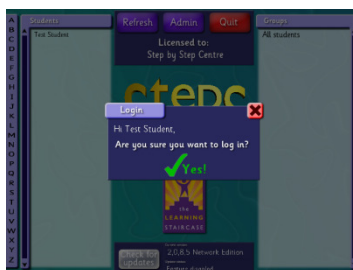
Logging In

For this example, we will log into "Test Student".

1. Find the student you want to log into in the table called 'Students'. If they are assigned to a class then you can click on the class name first (in the table called 'Classes').
2. Click on the student's name.

3. Click 'Yes!' to login. Alternatively, if you wish to choose a different student, then click on the red cross.

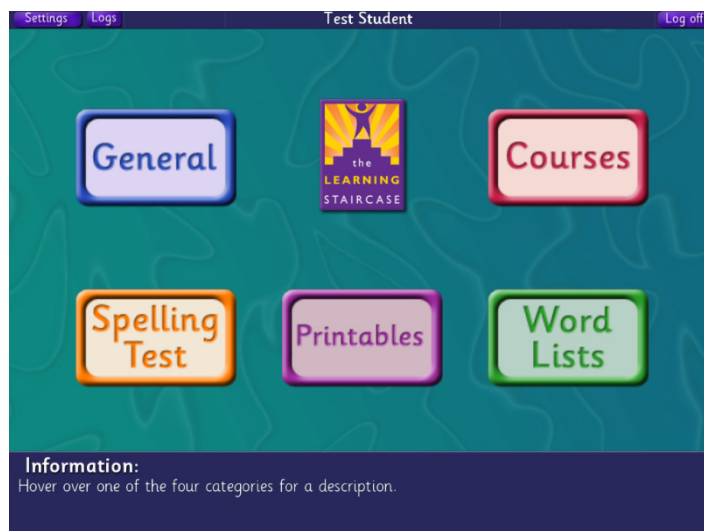
Note: If the student has a password then you will have to enter that too (or the admin password to override).



At any stage, you can click on the 'logs' button in the top left corner of the screen to see detailed logs for the current learner. These can also be accessed through the Admin section. Logs can be printed and incorporated into your records if you wish.

MAIN ACTIVITY SECTIONS - OVERVIEW

You will see the screen below, which gives you all of the sections in **Steps**. Each section is explained under a separate heading, but this is a quick overview:



Courses

The courses button takes you to the set courses on **Steps**. This currently includes the workbook courses **First Steps** and **Steps to Literacy**. These courses provide a set progression which the learner works through sequentially. Automatic revision is provided.

Spelling Test

The spelling test is the **Schonell Spelling Test**. It alternates between Schonell Test A and B and will give you an accurate spelling age for your pupil, as well as telling you which level of the courses to start on.

Spelling
Test

Word Lists

This section contains a variety of word lists, including word families, phonic patterns, homophones and topic lists. The section is intended to be 'dipped into', rather than being followed sequentially, although there is no reason why your learner shouldn't work systematically through a bank such as high frequency or commonly misspelled words, if you wish them to. However, automatic revision is not incorporated.

Word
Lists

General

This section contains a variety of topics and activities including alphabet knowledge, spelling topics and 'useful stuff' (like days and months!). The section can be 'dipped into' as required.

General

Printables

There is an extensive range of printable materials, including worksheets and game materials. Many of these are dynamic. This means that they will be generated by the computer for every list of words. In other words, if you put in your own list of words, you will get that range of printable resources for your list. See the section on Printables for further information.

Printables

Additional features of the main screen

You will see two buttons in the top left hand field of the screen.

Settings

Your learner can customize the program by choosing his preferred option for the progress table which appears in many activities. The default image is 'the Steps guy', which you can see is high-lighted here. The learner can choose an alternative image if he/she prefers.

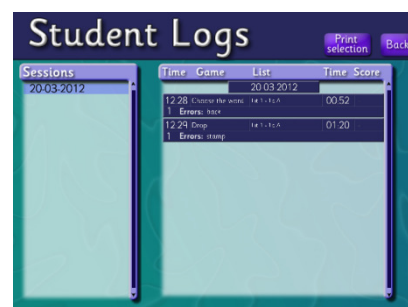


Logs

At any time, you can click on this button and find out exactly what your learner has been doing. Each session is listed under Sessions on the left.

If you click on that session, you will see it displayed on the right-hand screen. You can display several sessions at a time and these can also be printed.

This feature is also accessible through the Admin menu.

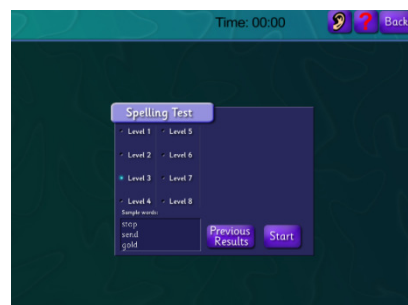


SPELLING TEST

The spelling test is the Schonell Spelling Test, which is a very well-established, well-standardized test. It has been around for a long time and some teachers regard it as less relevant than more up-to-date tests, but many clinicians in this field use it because it is so well standardized. It is also useful to teachers because it is not one which is likely to be used in class.

Spelling Age

The Spelling Test function will give you an accurate spelling age for your learner. As with all standardized tests, it is not recommended that the test is taken more frequently than once every six – twelve months. When deciding where to place a learner on a course, the spelling age is used, not the reading age (and certainly not the chronological age). With learners with processing difficulties (particularly dyslexia) there may be quite a discrepancy between reading age and spelling age. In these cases, it is the spelling age which is the most accurate indicator of what that learner understands about text.



The Spelling Test will initially give the learner Schonell Test A and, the next time, it will administer Schonell Test B. From then on, it alternates.

Choosing a starting point

As with a 'pencil-and-paper' test, the teacher does not necessarily have to start right at the beginning. If your learner can spell words like 'necessary', then there is no point in starting with 'sat' and 'can'. The teacher can choose the starting point. When you click on a particular level, the computer will give you some samples of words at a similar level. When you



have chosen the start point, just click 'start'.

It is always recommended that you start your learner at a lower point than you think he/she can actually manage. If you do start them too high, the computer will automatically adjust, but you may have badly affected their confidence!

The computer will dictate each word in turn and the learner needs to type the word in and press 'enter'. The learner can as much time as is necessary and can back-space to make corrections. The learner can also click on the 'ear' at the top right hand corner to hear the word again.

The computer will stop after 10 consecutive errors (as with the pencil-and-paper version). The result screen will then appear. This will give you the date and time. It will also give you a level. The level is actually the spelling age, i.e. a level of 5.4 means a spelling age of 5 years 4 months. It is displayed as 'level' because Steps is used by many adult learners and it would be very demoralising for an adult learner to be told that they have a spelling age of 5 years.

The Spelling Test screen will also suggest the right level of the workbook courses or the self-teach course. Bear in mind that these are recommendations only. The Teacher Manuals for First Steps and Steps to Literacy give more detailed guidelines on choosing the starting level. Teachers may wish to start a learner a little lower than the suggested guideline if they believe their learner would benefit from a slower (and easier) start to the courses.

It is always a good idea to start too low if there is any uncertainty. Time spent going over the basics is never wasted and will help to consolidate the foundations. If a learner starts at too high a level, he or she may become demoralised.

Results

The spelling test results can be printed and incorporated into learner records. There is also an analysis function, which is expected to be functional later in 2012. This will provide the teacher with an analysis of the learner's errors and teaching recommendations.

This section of Spelling Test can also take the learner directly to the appropriate workbook course or the correct level of the self-teach course.



Important Note

*We have noticed that many learners score slightly lower on the computerized version of the test, as compared with their score on the written version. This should, in theory, not occur as the tests are identical and are scored identically. From observation, it became clear that many learners in the dyslexic or ADHD category have a somewhat impulsive approach to tasks. They tend to type in the word, not bother looking at it and just press 'enter'. It is worth saying to learners that they should type in what they think the word should be, **then look at it**, and only then press enter!*

PRINTABLES

There are two categories of printable materials. These are 'dynamic' worksheets and 'non-dynamic' worksheets. A dynamic worksheet is one which the computer generates automatically for any list, including lists which you have put into the computer yourself. A non-dynamic worksheet is one which is already on the program and is 'fixed'.

Non-dynamic worksheets will therefore not appear for lists you have entered into the program yourself.

Printable worksheets can be accessed by clicking the 'Print Menu' button, which appears under each list (see illustration), or by going through the Printables section.



Dynamic worksheets

Examples of dynamic worksheets which are currently available:

Word List

There are two options under this section.

Option One – Print as list.

This prints the word list as a list, which can be sent home for homework or given to the class teacher.

Option Two – Print as grid

This prints the word list as a grid, which can be used to make flashcards. These can be used for a variety of games.

Word Search

There are two options:

Option One – Show words

This prints the word search with a list of the words underneath.

Option Two – Show clues

This prints the word search with sentences underneath. The sentences appear as a cloze exercise. The learner has to find each word in the word search itself and then enter it into the appropriate sentence to make sense. Obviously this option is a very useful one for language development.

Recommendations

Our recommendation is that the Word Search Option Two (show clues) is printed out for additional written work. The learner would do the computer activity in class and then take the printed worksheet back for homework, which provides considerable additional reinforcement.

Non-dynamic worksheets or games

These are worksheets which have been created by us and entered into the program for specific lists. These will not generate automatically for lists you have entered. New worksheet materials are being added to the program on a regular basis and will appear when you download an update.

Examples of non-dynamic worksheets:

Stargame Cards

The Stargame is a very valuable card game which develops sight vocabulary, decoding ability and vocabulary. Stargame cards can be printed for all of the lists on First Steps and Steps to Literacy. They are also available at present for lists 1 – 30 of the High Frequency Lists and may be added to some other lists in due course.

If you wish to use the Stargame, you will need to print each wordlist Stargame set onto 250 gm white card (preferably in colour). Then laminate the sheet and cut it into word cards using the cut lines. You will need any four sets of word lists, plus the X-change cards and one Starcard. Instructions are printable from the same section of the website.

Handwriting

Handwriting sheets are available for the First Steps level and the High Frequency wordlists. They are also available for all of the letters of the alphabet under General/Alphabet/Reference.

The handwriting font is Sassoon, which is a font designed for dyslexic learners. It is used because research shows the easiest handwriting style for dyslexic learners to use is one which has the cursive 'flick' to letters. This style makes it easier to make the transition to joined writing.

Topic Worksheets

As each new topic is added to Steps, printable supporting worksheets and reading materials are added. For example, the Volcanoes topic includes reading material, cloze exercises, background information and language activities.

Grammar/spelling Worksheets

Grammar or spelling worksheets are included with most of the topics covered. For example, under the Silent –e section (General/Spelling), there are printable resources covering each silent –e option.

General point about worksheets: It is important that some kind of written work is used to reinforce computer work. Research indicates that learning gained only on computer is not generally 'transferred'. Both aspects are equally important.

COURSES

The Courses button takes the learner to the set courses, which are intended to be used in a sequential manner, not be just 'dipped into'. At present, there are two workbook-based courses in this category, but more options will appear in further updates/patches, including the following:

- Whole-class literacy course (primary)
- Word study course (upper primary and high-school)
- Steps to Literacy introductory course (workbook-based)
- ESOL/language course

Current courses

When you click on the Courses button, it will take you to the following screen:

The learner needs to click on the appropriate course to enter. You will notice that each workbook has a bar underneath it. A green progress bar will appear here to indicate where the learner is currently. A medal will also appear to the left of each book when that book has been completed. This will be gold, silver or bronze, depending on the learner's accuracy.



The book displayed at the top of each column will be the one which the learner is currently working on.

General Points

Specific features, such as **Print Screen**, **Logs** and **Set work** are the same for the Courses and for Wordlists. These features are described in more detail on in the Admin Menu section.

First Steps

The First Steps course is designed for learners (of any age) with a spelling level of less than 7 years. There is a Teacher Manual which covers teaching instructions for this course. Generally, a learner will be working through the workbook and doing the computer activities to provide reinforcement. However, a learner who only needs a more structured approach to literacy (and does not have processing issues as with dyslexia or other learning disabilities) may follow through just the computer activities and do the printable activities from Steps itself. Just bear in mind that research indicates that learning generated only by computer is generally not well retained and is not transferred to written work. Any learner with processing weaknesses should definitely be doing the workbooks as well as the computer activities.

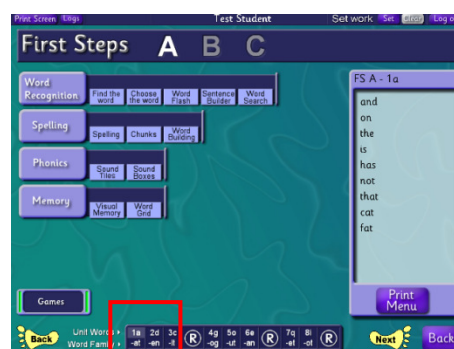
Structure

First Steps consists of three workbooks, A, B and C. The relevant workbook is highlighted at the top of the screen and the learner can switch to the next workbook by clicking on the right letter.



Tackling the course

At the bottom of the screen, you will see the units. The first unit in this workbook is '1a' (see red box). The learner will click on that unit. The words in that unit are then displayed in the list on the right and the activities are next to each category in the main screen. The learner can right-click on any word (including labels and headings) to hear it spoken.



The learner should do each activity in the order specified, starting with the top left and working across to the right. As each activity is completed, a gold, silver or bronze medal will appear, depending on how accurately it was completed. At any stage, the teacher can click on the Logs button at the top left of the screen to see what the learner has been doing.

If a green tick appears (instead of a medal), it shows that the learner has completed the activity, but not very well! Clearly, the teacher needs to pick up on this and identify what the problem is. If the learner is on the right level of the course, it may be that the learner was not sure how to do the activity or was simply guessing rather than bothering to work out his answer. Activities can be re-done at any point and it is possible to go back to previous units and upgrade medals.

Teachers need to make up their own mind about accepting Bronze medals or green ticks. It is recommended that a learner is asked to repeat an activity if he/she only got a green tick, as this indicates that there are some serious problems with this activity. The best approach is for the teacher to do that activity with the student, so that the problem can be identified and tackled.

Some teachers insist that a student also re-does an activity if they didn't get a gold. Bear in mind, however, that the activity has to be done with no errors at all to get a gold. One or two errors in an activity are satisfactory from the educational point of view. However, if the student has got mainly bronze or silver medals, with no golds at all, this is also a possible warning sign. Key point is to know your student and be aware of any difficulties which are occurring.

Note: When the Word Grid activity has been completed, it will display a number rather than a medal. The number shows how many words the learner managed to remember.

When the learner has completed all of the activities, he should then click on the word family shown below the unit list, i.e. the -at family appears below Unit 1a. He should then do all of the activities for this word family before moving onto the next unit.

Reinforcement



(also see the section on Reinforcement on page 7)

After every three units, there is an automatic revision unit, which looks like a letter 'R' in a circle. The computer will analyse the learner's errors in the previous three units and produce an individualised revision unit focusing on those errors. The learner should do each revision unit in the same way as the previous units. Printable resources for this revision unit are also available.

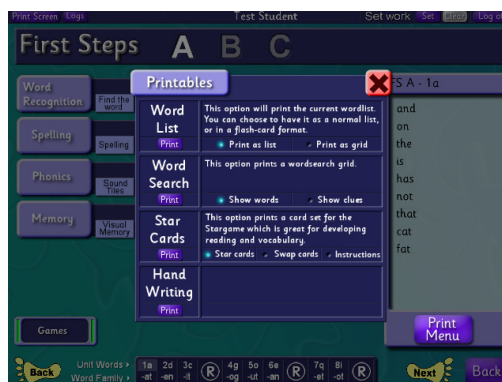
Another excellent reinforcement activity is to periodically look back through past units and see if any medals need to be upgraded to silver or gold. Those activities can be re-done.

Printables

(see the Printables Section on page 15)

There is a print menu below every list in Steps. This will give all of the available printed materials for that list. If a button is greyed out, it means that that resource is not available for that particular list.

Please note that you need to have a printer attached to your computer to print these resources!



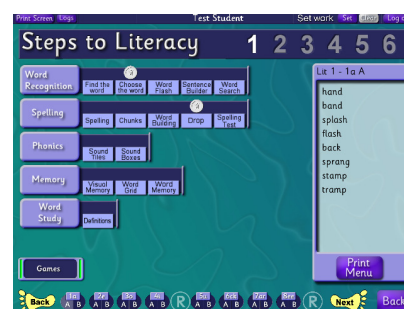
Steps to Literacy

This is the higher level course for learners with spelling ages of 7 years and over. The principles are exactly the same as for the First Steps level. The workbooks are listed at the top and the learner clicks on the correct workbook to start. The units are at the bottom of the screen.



The 'A' button shows the A list of words (shown in the workbook on the left hand side). The 'B' button displays the B list (shown on the right hand side). It is normally easier for your learner to do all the activities with the A list, followed by all the activities on the B list. However, a teacher may prefer to specify that the learner does each batch of activities with both lists before moving on.

You will notice that the Revision Unit occurs after every fourth unit. Each unit is also broken down into an A list and a B list. These correspond to the two spelling lists in the workbooks. The learner should usually do all activities with the A list and then the same activities with the B list.

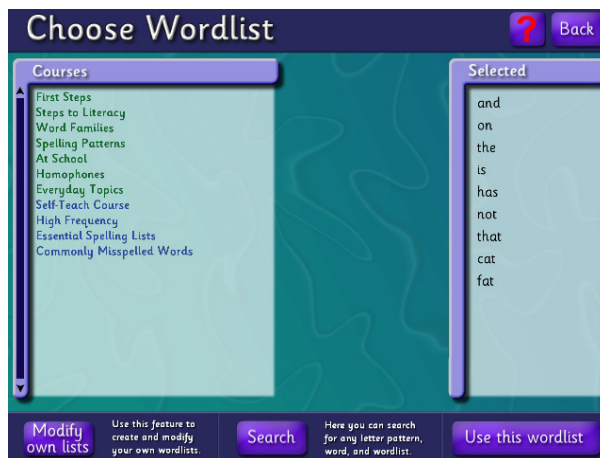


There are several additional activities in the Steps to Literacy level. This is because the intention at this level is that the learner is able to spell all the key words by the end of each unit, whereas the intention at the First Steps level is to build a well consolidated sight vocabulary for reading. The learner is expected to be able to read the word fluently and without hesitation, break it down into sounds or build it using onset + rime.

However the learner at the First Steps level is not expected to know all of the spellings independently, so the activities Drop, Spelling Test and Word Memory are not included at the lower level.

WORD LISTS

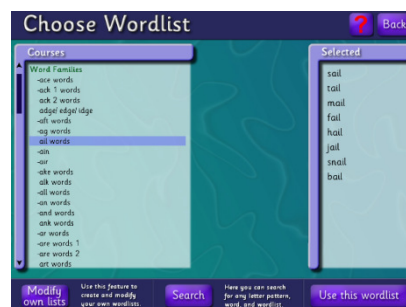
The Word Lists button takes you to a collection of word banks, which can be 'dipped into' as necessary or worked through in a systematic way. Click on a heading in the Courses field on the left hand side to open that word bank and see individual word lists.



As you can see, you can access the First Steps and Steps to Literacy wordlists through this button. However, this will not incorporate the automatic reinforcement which is provided through the Courses button, so this is not recommended.

Spelling Patterns and Word Families

There is an extensive collection of phonic patterns (Spelling Patterns) and Word Families. Click to select a word family and you will see the word list displayed in the **Selected** field on the right. Then just click '**Use this wordlist**' to do all of the reading/spelling activities with this list and to access all the printable resources.



If you are looking for a specific word or spelling pattern, you can use the **Search** facility. See below for instructions.

Search

The 'Search' menu allows you to search for any kind of letter pattern or word throughout every list in Steps.

Instructions for finding this menu:

1. Log in.
2. Enter the 'Word Lists' section.
3. Click on 'Search'



The screen on the right shows the 'Search' screen when you first open it. To make a search, simply type in the word or letter pattern into the button in the bottom left of the screen and click 'Search'.

The left column contains the names of wordlists that match your search. The middle column contains the words that match your search. Written next to them are the wordlists they were found in.

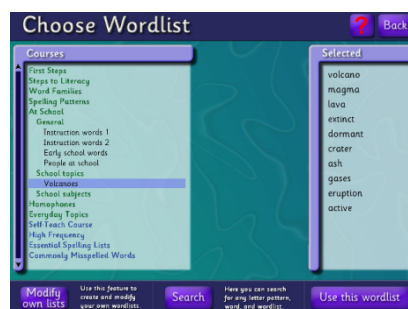
Left click on a word or a wordlist to select it. You will see the list you've selected in the right column. Click 'Use this wordlist' once you're happy with your selection.

You will now be able to do all of the activities with the list you have chosen.



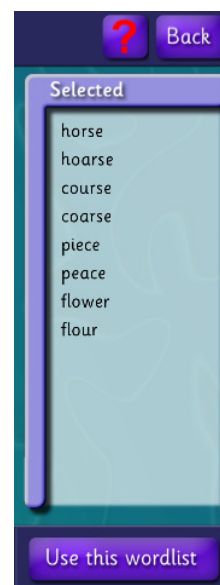
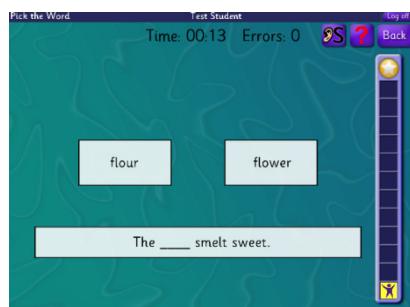
At School

The At School wordbank contains word lists and topics which are relevant at different stages of the school curriculum. Many of these topics include extensive printed resources, including reading comprehension, cloze exercises, word-level work and crosswords.



Homophones

This is a bank of 40 lists of homophones (words which sound the same, but have different meanings). This is a word bank which can be used for language development and extension work. There is an additional activity for this bank of words:



Everyday Topics

This is a bank of over 1,000 topic words, broken down into individual topics. It is intended mainly for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teaching.

The topics chosen correspond to the AUT picture dictionary, which is a photographic dictionary divided into topics.



Administrator Lists

There is a facility to add your own lists under the Administrator List heading. This list will be available to all learners. You need to be logged in as an administrator in order to create a list in this category. Full details of other administrator functions are in the administrator section.

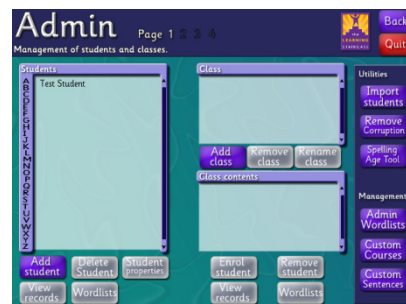
Creating an administrator list

1. Go back to the main log-in screen.
2. Click on the Admin button in the centre top.
3. Enter the Admin password, which is 'steps'.
4. Press 'enter' or 'OK'



Admin Page 1

You will see the screen on the right. This screen is used to create students and classes and to access records and change settings. On the right hand side, you will see a button marked 'Admin Wordlists'. Click on this button.



Note: Please see the full Admin section for more detail about administration functions.

Student Wordlists Screen

1. Click on 'Add New Wordlist'.
2. Enter the name of the new wordlist.
3. Click 'Create'.
4. The Wordlist heading will now appear in the Wordlists bank on the left.
5. Highlight that list.
6. Click in the first space under 'Words'.
7. Type in your first word.

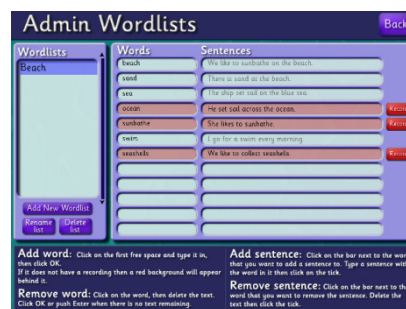


The example illustrated below is the topic 'Beach'. To illustrate the available functions, we will add a topic list which includes some words already recorded on **Steps** and some words which you can add yourself.

You will see below that the first three words are 'beach', 'sand' and 'sea'. All of these words are already in **Steps**. When those words were entered, the available sentence automatically appeared in the **Sentences** section on the right.

The next word 'ocean' is not already in **Steps**. You will see that this appears with a red background and there is no sentence showing. Click in the blank sentence field to add your own sentence. Make sure that the target word is exactly as written. In other words, you cannot have a sentence with 'oceans', if your target word was 'ocean'.

We will now put in a sentence and add some more words in the same way. Each time you add a sentence, you need to click the green arrow. You can now see that the words 'ocean', 'sunbathe', and 'seashells' were not in **Steps** and need to be recorded.



Recording words and sentences

1. Click on the red 'record' button.
2. A 'chunk' of the sentence will appear.
3. Click on 'Record' and say that chunk clearly.
4. Click 'Stop'.
5. Then click 'Play' and check that it has recorded well.
6. If it has, click 'Save' and the program will give you another chunk to record.
7. If not, click 'Record again' and check that it is satisfactory.
8. Then do the next words/sentences.



Note: The program will generally give you the sentence in chunks. This is because of the cloze exercises which appear in the programme.

When you have finished recording the words and sentences in that topic, click 'back' and 'back' again to get back to the log-in page. Then log in as a student and you will find the list you have just created under Administrator Lists.

The Self-Teach Course

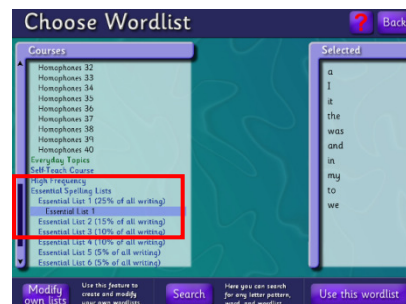
This is a course for learners who do not have access to tutoring. It is particularly suitable for adults who can test themselves using the Spelling Test function. The program will then take them to the right level of the Self-Teach Course and they should do every activity for every list in the order specified.

High Frequency Lists

There are 51 High Frequency lists, which can be worked through in order. These are based on the Dolch list and Fry list, which are well-known lists of words in the order in which they occur in English.

Essential Spelling Lists

Many schools use these specific lists, so they are provided here for convenience, although in reality they are based on the High Frequency lists as above.



Commonly Misspelled Words

This is a word bank of words which often cause problems. A learner can work their way through these lists, doing the spelling test to identify if there is a problem with that list and working through all the activities if there are problems.

Personal Lists

This is a list which is specific to that learner. It will only be visible to that learner when he or she is logged on. No other learner will be able to see the list. It can be created in one of two ways:

Creating the list while logged in as the student

1. Click on '**Modify own lists**'.
2. Click '**Add New Wordlist**'.
3. Enter list as for Administrator wordlists.
4. Record words if necessary.
5. Click on '**Back**'.
6. The list will appear under Personal Lists.

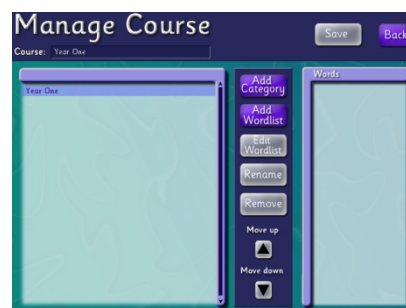
Creating the list while logged in as administrator

1. Log off as student and on as administrator.
2. Highlight the student's name.
3. Click on '**Wordlists**' at the bottom of the screen (left).
4. Enter wordlist as above.
5. Log out as administrator.
6. When the student logs in, he/she will be able to see and use the list.

Custom Courses

It is also possible to create an entire Custom Course, which will also appear in the Wordlist section. Follow these steps:

1. Log in as administrator.
2. Click on '**Custom Courses**'.
3. Click '**Create**' and enter the name of the course (often a school name).
4. Click '**Create**' again and the '**Manage Course**' page will open.
5. Highlight the School Name and click '**Add Category**'.
6. The example given is 'Year One'.



Layout

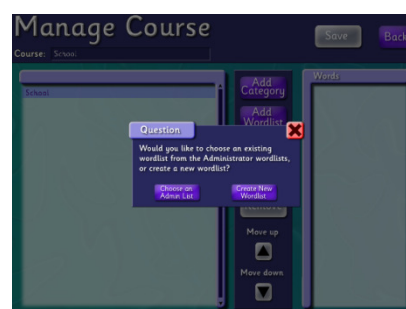
Just like the courses already loaded into **Steps**, you can sort your word lists into categories. You can place categories inside other categories, for example: Year One > Science > Biology > Biology 1

To add a category or wordlist, first select the category that you want to add it in. For example, to add the 'Biology' category, we'd need to click on 'Science'. The selected category has a blue background.



Adding individual wordlists to categories:

1. Select the category you want to add a wordlist to.
2. Choose from the options – choose an admin list or create a new wordlist.
3. Follow the instructions on screen.



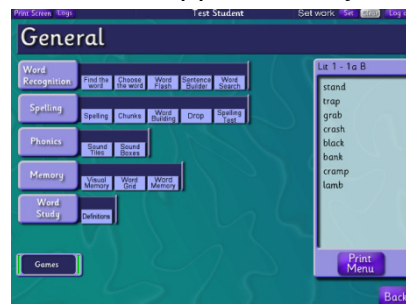
WORD-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

These activities appear for each of the wordlists, whether they appear in the **Courses** section or the **Wordlist** section. Some activities do not appear if they are not relevant (or do not meet the criteria) to that particular list of words.

This section explains each activity in detail. It explains how to tackle the activity and what the educational purpose of the activity is.

As explained earlier, it is important to do the activities in the order specified. In other words, start with 'Find the word', then work along that line, completing each section before going onto the next section. Activities can be repeated if desired.

Note: Every activity in Steps (including games) is research-based and in most cases supported by many years of 'best practice'.



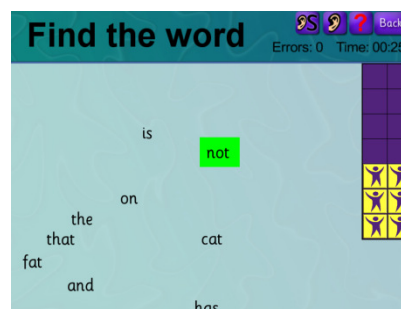
Word Recognition Category

This category of activity does not require the learner to actively generate the spelling of the word.

Find the word

Aim

The purpose of this activity is simply to give the learner practice in recognising and reading the word. Research shows that learners with dyslexia and other processing difficulties need significantly more exposure to words in order to 'fix' them in long-term memory.



Instructions

The learner hears each word individually and has to click on the correct one. He can hear the word again by clicking on the ear symbol in the top right corner and can hear the sentence in a sentence by clicking the button with an ear and the letter 'S'. This is the same for other activities where the word is spoken.



If the learner clicks on the correct word, the word goes green momentarily and then the next word is spoken. If the learner clicks on the wrong word, that word goes red. The learner hears the word again and has a second chance.

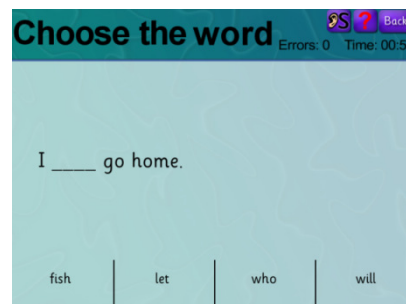
Choose the word

Aim

This activity is to practise using the words in context, which involves understanding the meaning of the word and of the complete sentence.

Instructions

Fill in the missing word in the sentence by clicking on one of the four options below. A correct answer will light up green when clicked, a wrong one will light up red.



Hover over a word to see it placed in the sentence temporarily. Read the full sentence and see if it makes sense. Then click to select that word.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs at least 2 words in the wordlist to have sentences, or at least 3 words in the wordlist to have sentences, if the sentences have been added by a user.

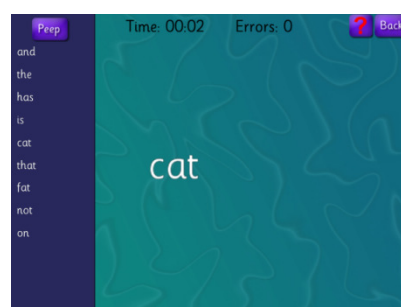
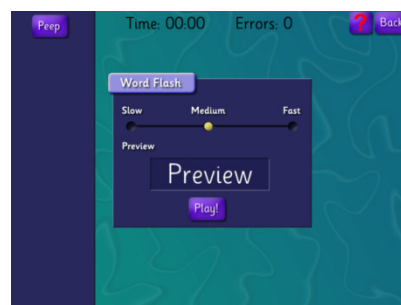
Word Flash

Aim

This activity practices the instant *whole word recognition* which is necessary for fluent reading. The activity is purely visual because it is the visual recognition which is being practised. The ability to read the word is practised in other **Steps** activities.

The activity is designed to activate the *occipito-temporale*, which is an area towards the rear of the left hemisphere of the brain. This area is responsible for instant whole-word recognition (as opposed to decoding). Research shows that this area is not activated in most dyslexic learners, but that the right kinds of teaching activities can activate this area.

In many cases, a learner may have needed to start with the slow speed but, within 3-4 weeks, most of these learners will be able to use the fast speed, even for new lists. This is an indicator that the *occipito-temporale* is beginning to activate.



Instructions

Choose the speed of the flash by adjusting the slider to either slow, medium or fast. The preview box below it shows the speed of the current setting. Once you are happy with the setting, press '**Play!**'.

In a random order, each word from the current wordlist will flash up and you have to find it in the list on the left. Use the '**Peep**' button if you need to see it again (Pressing '**Peep**' will add an error to your error count).

Sentence Builder

This activity uses the current wordlist.

Aim

Sentence Builder practices sequencing words to make a sentence. This requires sequencing skill, an awareness of syntax and reading comprehension. 'Clues', such as the capital letter at the beginning of the sentence and the full stop at the end are left, because the intention is to develop the learner's ability to recognise and use these clues.

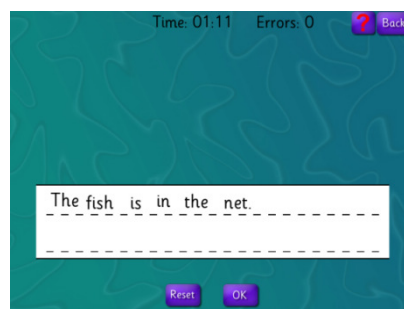
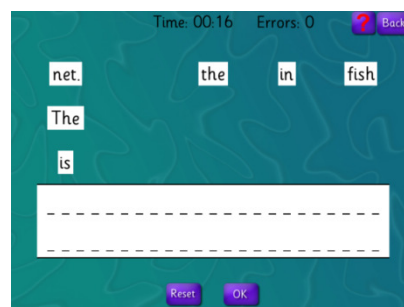
Instructions

Re-arrange the words to make a complete, grammatically correct and logical sentence. You can move the words by left-clicking and dragging them into place.

Push '**Reset**' to place the words back where they started. You may need to use this button if you've accidentally dragged a word off the screen.

Push '**OK**' to see if the sentence is correct.

If all of the words are in the right order when you click '**OK**' then a white bar will show up in the middle with the finished sentence and the sentence will be read out. After that, it will give you another sentence to re-arrange.



Wordlist Requirements

Needs at least 2 words in the wordlist to have sentences.

Note: This activity is particularly difficult for dyslexics because most dyslexics have sequencing problems. It is also very challenging for learners with language problems, or ESOL learners, so it is a particularly useful activity for these learners.

Word Search

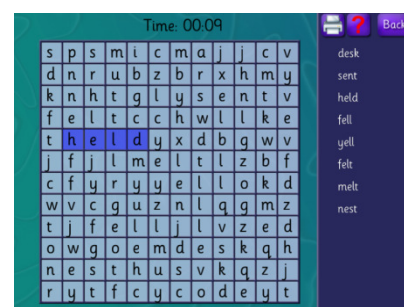
Aim

Wordsearch practises visual recognition of the words. It involves pattern recognition and visual discrimination. Words are only presented horizontally because there is little educational value in recognising words diagonally or vertically.

Instructions

The grid on the left contains all the words from the list on the right as well as a bunch of random letters. Find the words from the list inside the grid.

To select a word, left click and drag from left to right over the whole word. The letters that you are selecting show up in blue (see illustration). Once you have released the left click, the word will be highlighted in green if you got it right.



Note: If you have words that fit into other words in the same list (e.g. *that* and *hat*) then you must find the right entries for each. Selecting the **h-a-t** inside **t-h-a-t** will not give you a right answer.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs at least 1 word in the wordlist to be less than 13 characters in length.



Printables

You can print out a worksheet with the current word search by clicking the print button in the top right corner (see right). You can choose to have clues or just the words printed. If you choose the 'clues' option, this is also a valuable language exercise.



Note: Steps will produce these printable options for any list in the program, including lists you have entered yourself.

Spelling Category

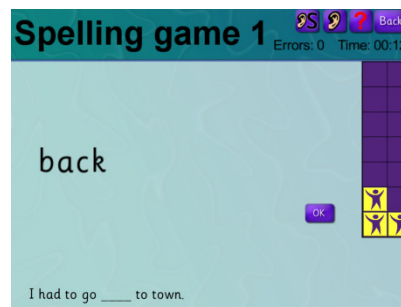
Spelling

Aim

This activity teaches and actively practises spelling the word.

Instructions

A word is shown for a fixed amount of time. While the word is on the screen, spell it aloud, looking at the letters. A sentence for that word is displayed at the bottom of the screen. Once the word disappears, type it in and press **OK** or press enter. If you spelt it correctly then you will go onto the next word. If not, then the word will be corrected and you will get another chance. Please wait until after the correcting is finished before trying to type it in again.



Get 14 words correct to finish the activity.

Note: If the word is spelt wrongly 3 times then the activity will move on to the next word.

Wordlist Requirements

Requires at least one word in the wordlist to be less than 19 characters long.

Chunks

This activity uses the current wordlist.

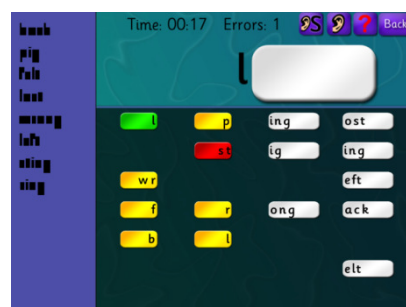
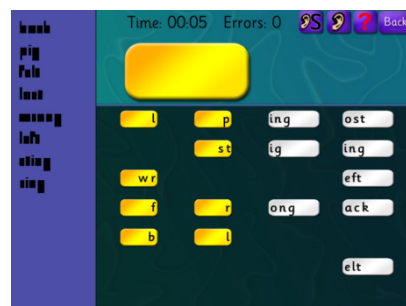
Aim

This activity builds an awareness of *onset and rime*. The learner needs to listen for the initial sounds and the end 'chunk'.

Instructions

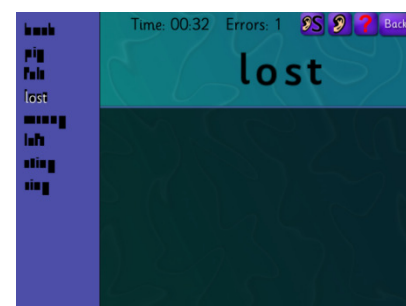
Listen to the word then pick out its *onset and rime* (start and end chunk). Choose the onset first (yellow blocks) by left-clicking on them. A wrong answer will turn the block red, a right one will turn it green and put you onto choosing the rime.

Once you have chosen both the *onset and rime* correctly, your cursor will become the word and you have to match it with its shape on the list on the left (see below). Left click on its shape to try.



Wordlist Requirement

Needs at least 3 words in the wordlist to be split up into sounds (currently only the words that come with **Steps** are applicable for this).



Word Building

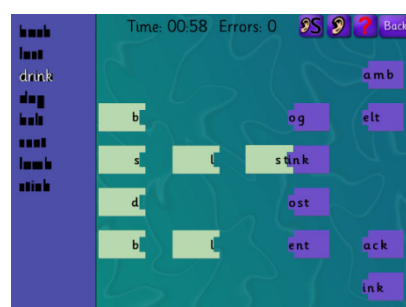
Aim

The aim of this activity is to practise word building utilising *onset and rime*.

Instructions

Listen to the word then pick out its *onset and rime* (start and end chunks). Choose the *onset* first (light green pieces) by left clicking on it. A wrong answer will increase your error count, a right one will pick up the piece.

Move the piece around and try matching it against the light purple pieces until you find the one that matches. When you have found the right one, left click when both pieces are lined up together.



Once you have chosen both the *onset and rime* correctly, your cursor will become the word and you have to match it with its shape on the list on the left. Left click on its shape to try.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs at least 3 words in the wordlist to be split up into sounds (currently only the words that come with **Steps** are applicable for this).

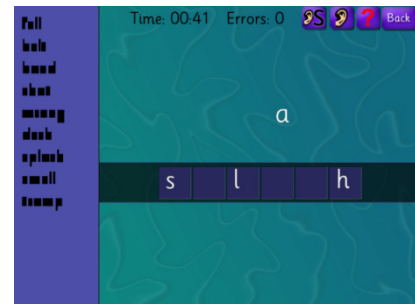
Drop

Aim

The aim of this activity is to develop an awareness of the spelling and structure of the word. It also develops visual and auditory sequencing skill, which is weak in many learners with dyslexia. It is necessary to visualize the word in order to do this activity successfully.

Instructions

A word is spoken and empty boxes appear in the central bar. One letter appears at a time, in random order. The letter has to be 'dropped' into the correct empty box. When it is dropped into the right box, the next letter appears. This continues until all of the letters have been correctly placed.



Then the learner has to drag the word and place it onto the correct shape on the left.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs at least 1 word in the wordlist to be less than 10 characters in length.

Spelling Test

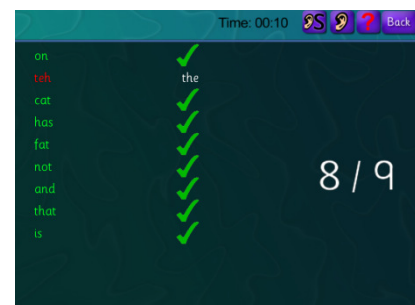
Aim

This is a straight-forward spelling test, rather than a teaching activity as such. It is designed to be a check to make sure that the learner can now spell the words. However, it can also be used to pre-test to see if other activities need to be done, or as a revision check once the learner is onto further lists.

Instructions

The words will be spoken one at a time. After you hear the word, type it in and press enter. Once you have pressed enter, the next word will be spoken.

After pushing **Enter**, you cannot go back and change anything. Once you have gone through all of the words you will be shown the results. The incorrectly spelt words will have the correct spellings next to them.



Phonics Category

Sound Tiles

Aim

This activity is designed to make the learner more aware of the individual sounds (*phonemes*) in words. The learner needs to find the tile which shows the correct sound. In other words, the learner needs to be analytical about which letters make which sounds, i.e. 'th' as one sound, not 't' and 'h'.

Instructions

Listen to the word then click on the sounds that make it in the correct order. If you click on the wrong sound then you can press the 'back' button to go back one. 'reset' will clear all of the sounds you've selected. Press 'OK' once you are happy with your answer to see if it is right. The correct answers will get listed on the left.



Note: Make sure that your learner understands that he is clicking on the tile that makes the sound, not the tile that spells the word. For example, if the word is 'the', it would be incorrect to click on the 't' tile first. The first sound in 'the' is 'th'.

Wordlist Requirements

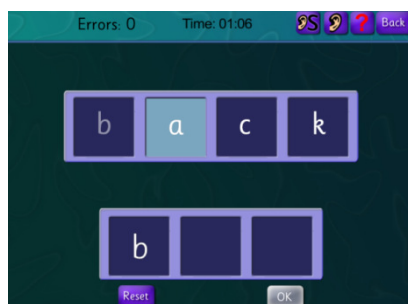
Needs at least 3 words in the wordlist to be split up into sounds (currently only the words that are pre-recorded on **Steps** are applicable for this).

Sound Boxes

Aim

This activity is designed to make the learner more aware of the individual sounds in words. It also teaches the learner which letter or letter pattern represents those sounds. It therefore develops both phonological awareness and phonic knowledge.

The learner needs to find the tile which shows the correct sound. In other words, the learner needs to be analytical about which letters make which sounds, i.e. 'ck' as one sound, not 'c' and 'k'.



Instructions

Listen to the word and think about the sounds that make it. The example above shows the sample word 'back'. '**Back**' is split into 3 sounds, **b-a-ck**. There are three boxes below for each sound. Click and drag over each sound, then left click in the corresponding box down below. You can drag over several letters if needed (like 'ck'). Press '**OK**' once you are happy with your answer to see if it is right.

Wordlist Requirements

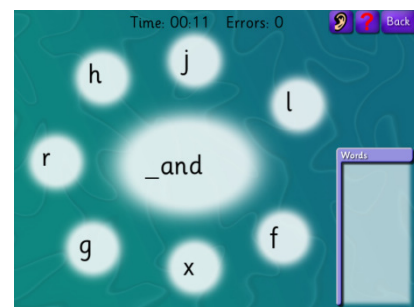
Needs at least 3 words in the wordlist to be split up into sounds (currently only the words that are pre-recorded on **Steps** are applicable for this).

Initial Sounds

This activity is only applicable for the Word Families category.

Aim

The aim of this activity is to build an awareness of sound patterns and word families. It also practises *phoneme transposition* (swapping sounds), which is an important phonological skill. The awareness of patterns in language leads to the development of *analogical transfer*, which is the ability to see a pattern in one context and apply it to another context. This is also a crucial phonological skill, which enables the learner to use word families effectively.



Instructions

Steps will read out an instruction, such as "**Make hand**". The end sound (rime) of the word ("and") is in the middle of the screen (see below). The correct initial sound ("h") including several incorrect variations are placed around the screen.

Hover over an initial sound to see how it fits with the end sound. Left click on it to try. If correct, the activity will move on to the next word. If wrong, an error sound will play and the bubble will turn red.



Memory Category

Visual Memory

This activity uses the current wordlist.

Aim

The activity practises visual recognition of the words and visual/spatial memory.



Instructions

Click on any two words in the grid. They will appear for a few seconds and then disappear. The aim is to find matching pairs. As each matching pair is found, those two tiles will disappear, starting to reveal the picture below. This activity is also useful for developing concentration and strategic thinking.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs the wordlist to be at least 4 words long.

Word Grid

Aim

The activity develops auditory sequential memory, as well as the ability to recognise and read the words in the list.

Instructions

The learner sees the blank grid and hears one word. There is a pause of several seconds and then the words all appear and the learner has to click on the one which was said. If that was correct, the program then gives the learner two words. The learner has to click on them in the correct order.

Each time the learner clicks on the words correctly, the program will give the learner one more word. If the learner makes an error or fails to click on the words in time, the program goes back down to the previous number achieved. In other words, if the learner makes an error with four words, the computer will go back down to three words.



Instead of a medal, the maximum number of words achieved is displayed on the main screen.

There are two levels. On **Level One**, the words always appear in the same place. On **Level Two**, the words appear in different squares each time.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs the wordlist to be at least 5 words long.

Note: This activity also appears in the numbers section (General), where there is a third level practising working memory.

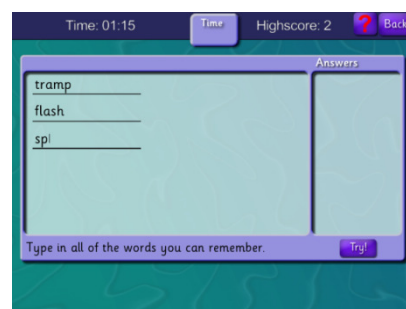
Word Memory

Aim

The aim of this activity is to develop auditory sequential memory and working memory. It also practises the spelling of the words.

Instructions

The program will say a word. Then there is a pause before the line appears on the left side of the screen. When the line appears, the learner types that word. If that was correct, the program will then dictate two words. These have to be typed on each line. The program will continue to increase the number of words. If the learner makes a mistake, the computer will reduce the number of words by one and then start to build back up again.



Instead of a medal, the maximum number of words achieved is displayed on the main screen.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs the wordlist to be at least 4 words long.

Word Study Category

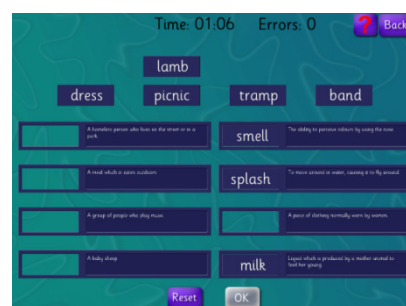
Definitions/Clues

Aim

The aim of this activity is to develop vocabulary and an understanding of word meanings.

Instructions

The words appear in moveable boxes at the top of the screen. The definitions appear below. The learner has to drag each word to its correct definition. The learner places each word in the empty boxes and then clicks '**OK**' to see if they are all correct. Any incorrect words will 'bounce' back out and can be replaced in the correct squares.



All definitions are also recorded. If a learner has difficulty reading the definition, he/she can right-click on it to hear it.

Levels

At higher levels of literacy, a dictionary-style definition is provided. At lower levels, this activity is known as '**Clues**'. Much simpler clues are provided instead of dictionary-type definitions.

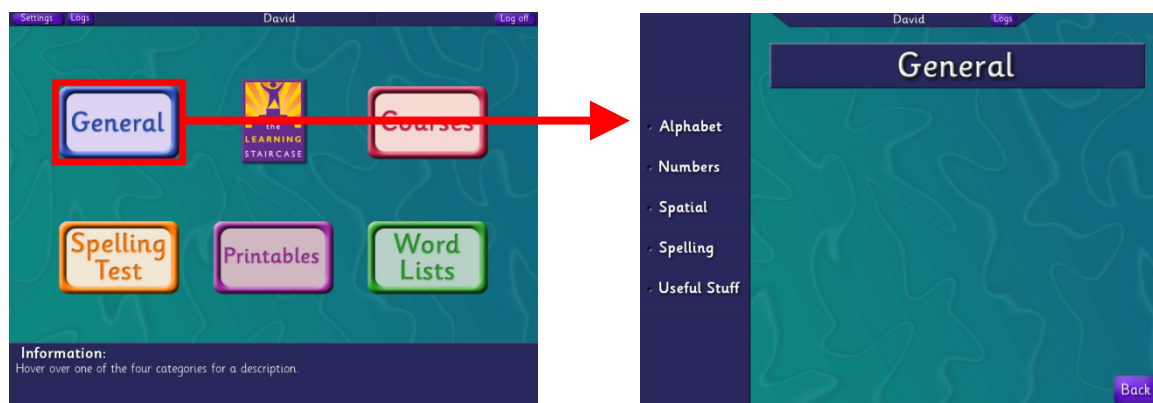
At a later stage in the programme's development, it is planned to include the facility for users to enter their own definitions. The definitions boxes will be expanded when the cursor is above them, so that definitions can be longer. This facility will enable subject teachers/vocational tutors can use this feature to teach subject terminology.

Wordlist Requirements

Needs the wordlist to have at least 2 words that came with **Steps**.

GENERAL

This section has several categories. Click on a category to see the activities within it. Then click on the activity box itself to see the available options and do the activities. The activities can be done several times if necessary.



Alphabet

Reference

This screen gives information about each letter of the alphabet. Click on the letter in the alphabet at the top of the screen to select it. Then click on the large-print letter in the lighter-colour box to see how the letter is formed.

The learner can also click to hear '**Letter Name**' or '**Letter Sound**'. At the bottom of the screen, there are sample words with that letter. These illustrate the various sounds which that letter can make. Right click on the words to hear them.



There are print options, which can be seen by clicking the printer icon in the top right corner of the screen. These include letter formation, handwriting, phonological activities and letter tracking.

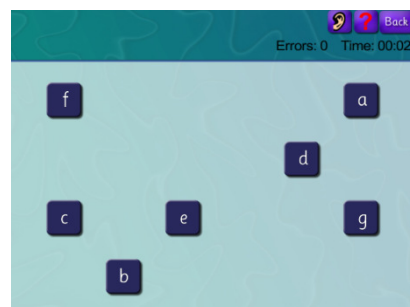
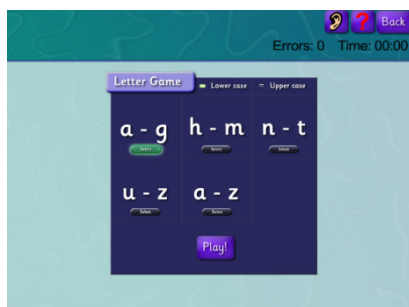
Letter Names

Aim

The Letter Name activity enables the learner to practise recognising letters. The teacher or learner can select just one section of the alphabet, or the whole alphabet. There is also the option to select upper case letters.

Instructions

The learner hears one letter name at a time and has to click on that letter.



Letter Sounds

Aim

The Letter Sound activity is the same format as the Letter Name activity. However, the learner hears the letter sound, not the letter name. For vowel sounds, the short vowel sound is used.

Instructions

As above

Letter Chunks

Aim

This activity practises alphabet sequencing and sequencing skill in general.

Instructions

There are two levels. At the first level, the alphabet is initially displayed in two chunks. At the higher level, the alphabet is broken into smaller chunks to begin with.

The red box labelled 'A' contains the settings to change to either upper or lower case.

The red box labelled 'B' contains the settings to change the difficulty setting. The alphabet blocks will be split up into many more chunks on 'Hard'.

The red box labelled 'C' contains the settings to change the order the alphabet must be constructed in.

If the setting '**Any order**' is selected then users can place the blocks in any order.

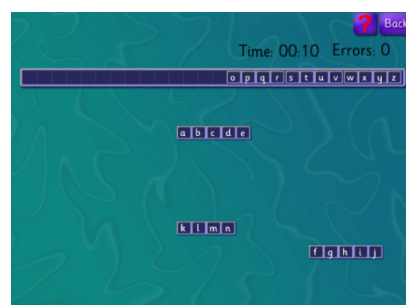
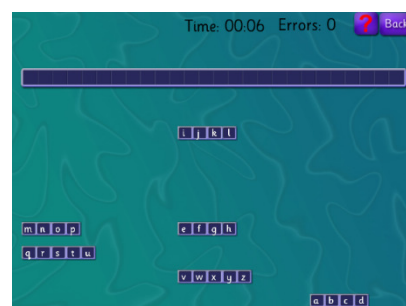
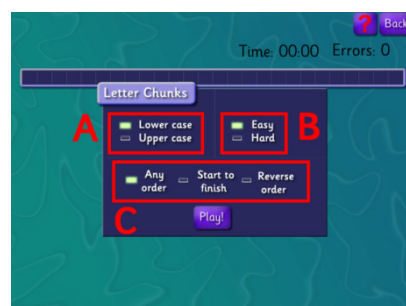
If the setting '**Start to finish**' is selected then users can only place blocks from left to right.

If the setting '**Reverse order**' is selected then users can only place blocks from right to left (see below).

Please note: This setting applies to the order the blocks are placed, not the order of the alphabet. I.e. if you choose 'Any order' then the alphabet must still read from a-z to be marked as correct.

The learner drags each chunk into the blue line, in the right order. It then breaks into three chunks. Each time it is correctly sequenced, it breaks into smaller chunks until the learner eventually has to sequence each separate letter.

The activity can also be done with upper case letters.



Once all of the pieces of the alphabet have been placed, the 'OK' button will appear. Press that to see if the pieces are in the right order. If they are in the right order then the screen will reset and the alphabet will be broken down into more pieces. This will happen 4 times. If they are in the wrong order then all of the pieces in the wrong place will be reset.

Reversals

Aim

This activity practises visual recognition of letters which are often confused. One of the most common confusions is 'b/d', but other letter combinations are included. The learner selects the appropriate letter combinations and also the level.

Instructions

At the lowest level, the learner drags the letters into the correct bin. At higher levels, the letters appear in letter pairs or complete words, which is obviously more visually challenging.



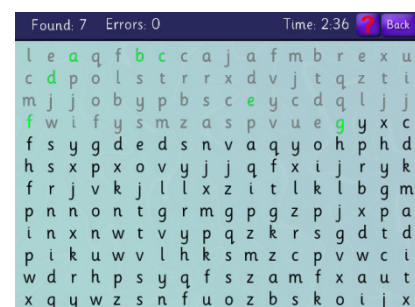
Alphabet Order

Aim

To develop alphabet sequencing, tracking, and visual discrimination.

Instructions

The learner tracks along each line in turn, clicking on the next letter of the alphabet. If he misses one, the computer will prompt him to go back and look for it.



Numbers

Digits

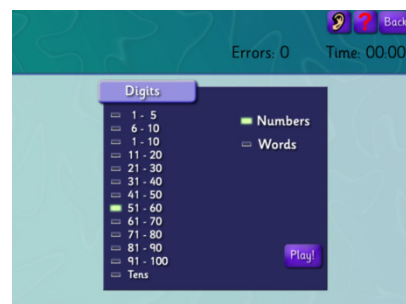
Aim

To practise number recognition or the ability to read number words.

Instructions

Click on one of the options to choose which set of numbers to practise. To practice recognising the number, ensure that the '**Numbers**' option on the right is selected and then click '**Play**'. To practise reading number words, select '**Words**' and then '**Play**'.

Listen to the number and click on the correct digit or word (depending on which option you selected).



Number Chunks

Aim

To practise number sequencing, including the ability to 'count on'. Also, to develop sequencing skills in general.

Instructions

The red box labelled '**A**' contains the settings to change the difficulty setting. The alphabet blocks will be split up into many more chunks on 'Hard'.

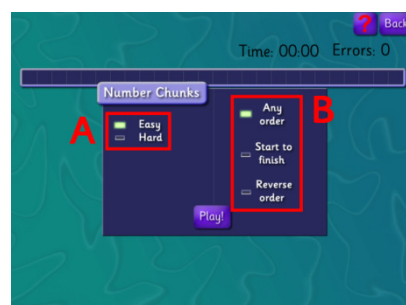
The red box labelled '**B**' contains the settings to change the numeric order.

If the setting '**Any order**' is selected then users can place the blocks in any order.

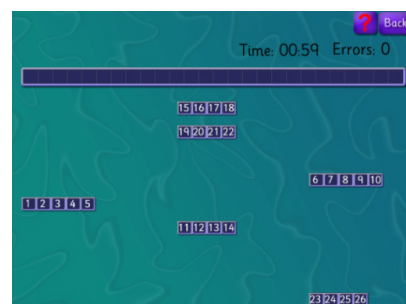
If the setting '**Start to finish**' is selected then users can only place blocks from left to right.

If the setting '**Reverse order**' is selected then users can only place blocks from right to left.

Please note: This setting applies to the order the blocks are placed, not the numeric order. I.e. if you choose 'Any order' then the numbers must still read from 1-26 to be marked as correct.



Once all of the number pieces have been placed, the '**OK**' button will appear. Press that to see if the pieces are in the right order. If they are in the right order then the screen will reset and the number sequence will be broken down into more pieces. This will happen 4 times. If they are in the wrong order then all of the pieces in the wrong place will be reset.



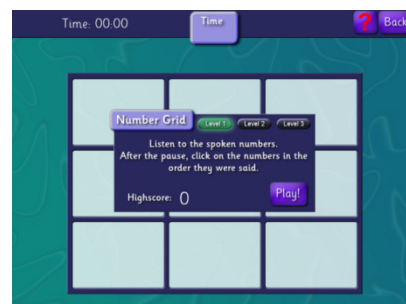
Number Grid

Aim

The aim of this activity is to develop auditory sequential and working memory.

Instructions

The learner clicks 'Play' and the program says a number. There is then a pause and all of the numbers appear. The learner has to click on the number he has heard. If this is successful, the program then dictates two numbers and the learner has to click on them in the correct order.



Each time the learner gets the numbers correct, the program dictates one more number. If the learner makes a mistake, the program reduces the number of items dictated by one and then builds back up. Instead of a medal, the program will display the maximum number of items achieved.

There are three options. **Level 1** keeps the numbers in the same places on the grid. **Level 2** changes the position of the numbers each time. **Level 3** requires the learner to click on the numbers in reverse order. This creates a working memory activity.

Note: Working memory is the ability to retain and simultaneously process information. It is crucial for many learning tasks.

Reversals

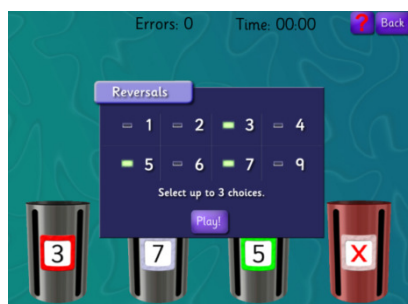
Aim

To practise visual recognition of correctly aligned numbers, building an awareness of correct directionality.

Instructions

Click on the boxes next to each number to select up to three digits. Then click 'Play'.

The screen will display a number of representations of the numbers selected, with some being correctly depicted, but others reversed. Click on a number and then drag it to the correct bin. Incorrect numbers go into the bin with a cross, on the right.



Spatial

Directions

Aim

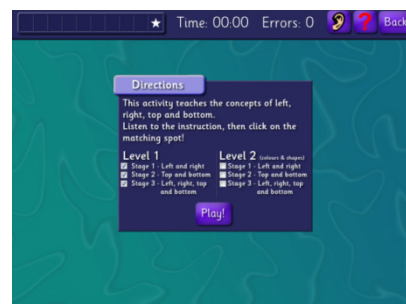
To develop the ability to tell left from right and to make this completely automatic. Later levels include the concepts 'top' and 'bottom' and introduce colours and shapes.

Instructions

The default setting has Stages 1 – 3 selected. The learner will start with Stage 1, unless this is de-selected and other Levels or Stages selected.

Level One – Stage One

The screen is divided into two halves, with a large white 'L' in the left half, and a large white 'R' in the right half. The learner hears 'left' or 'right' and has to click in that part of the screen. Once the learner has completed the number of repetitions specified in the top left corner of the screen, the letters will disappear and the learner completes the activity with no visual reminder.

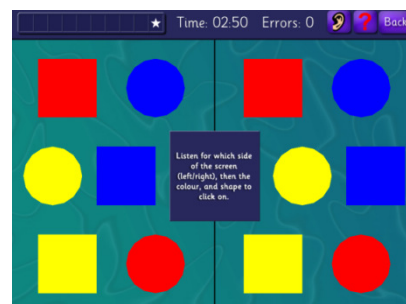


Level One – Stage Two

The same activity is repeated, this time with the screen divided into 'top' and 'bottom'. The letters 'T' and 'B' are shown for the first half of the activity.

Level One – Stage Three

The screen is now divided into four sections. The instruction will specify 'top, right', for example, and the learner clicks in the correct quarter. The letters are only shown for the first half of the activity.



Level Two – Stage One

The screen is divided into left and right. There are four colours in each half. The instruction will be 'left, red', for example. The learner clicks on the correct coloured square.

In the second half of this activity, the shapes can be either a circle or a square. Only three colours are included (see illustration).

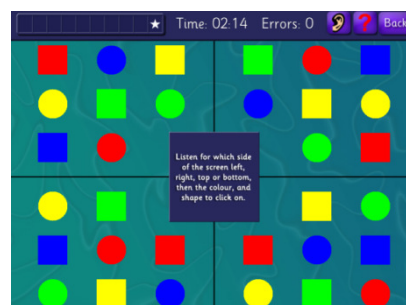
Level Two – Stage Two

The screen is divided into top and bottom. There are four coloured squares in each half.

The second half of the activity includes circles. Only two colours are included.

Level Two – Stage Three

The screen is divided into quarters. Each quarter has four coloured squares. The second half of the activity includes circles (as illustrated).



Perception

Aim

To develop shape recognition, perceptual organisation and spatial awareness.

Instructions

Level One

The learner sees the target shape in the top left corner and has to click on the matching shape.

Level Two

The shape selection includes the same shape in a variety of sizes. The learner has to make a spatial judgement.

Level Three

The learner has to cope with rotation.

Level Four

The learner has to cope with rotation and spatial judgements (objects of different sizes).



Spelling

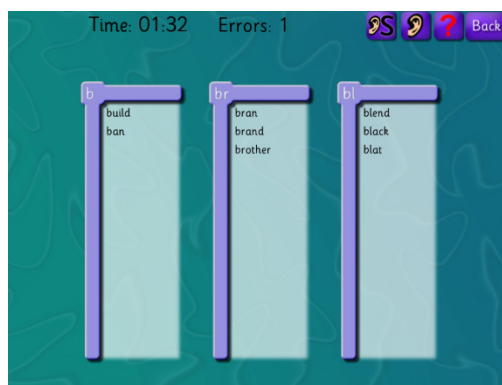
This section contains a number of spelling patterns. As well as developing an awareness of spelling rules or word structure, this section can be used to develop auditory discrimination (the ability to tell the difference between similar letter sounds).

Blends – initial

At present, this contains only bl/br, but further blend combinations will be added over time.

Activity One

Three words are displayed, usually containing one with just the single sound ('b'), one with the 'bl' blend and one with 'br'. The learner hears one word and has to click on the correct word. To do this, it is important to be able to hear the blend sound correctly, so this activity is developing phonological awareness, as well as the knowledge about blends.



Activity Two

A selection of the words in that section are displayed on the left hand side. There is a sentence in the main screen, with a word missing. The learner clicks the correct word.

Activity Three

Three columns are displayed. The learner hears a word and clicks in the correct column. This develops auditory discrimination.

Endings

A variety of endings are included in this section. The rule should be taught and the learner then practises applying the rule.

Endings –k, -ke, -ck (featured as an example)

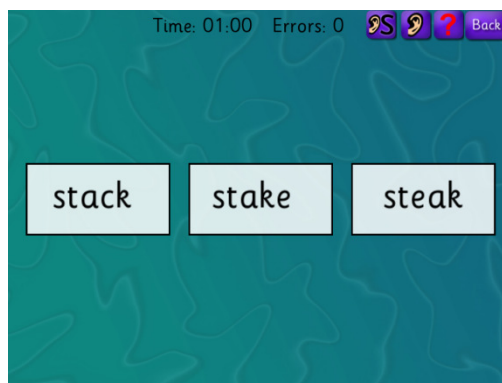
The rule is that 'ck' goes after a short vowel and 'k' goes after a long vowel. The silent –e- ending '-ke' is also included.

Aim

To teach the rule and also develop phonological awareness (auditory discrimination) and a visual memory for the correct spelling pattern.

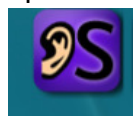
Instructions

Choose the selection of endings. The Intro section will give the rule and some examples. Worksheets are available (where applicable) under the Printables button.



Activity 1

Three words are shown and the word is spoken. The learner clicks on the correct word. Sometimes, homophones are included (stake/steak). Where those are spoken, the learner will have to click on the Sentences button to hear the word in context, before deciding which is the correct option.



Activity 2

A selection of words is displayed on the left. A sentence appears in the central screen with a word missing. The learner clicks on the correct word.

Activity 3

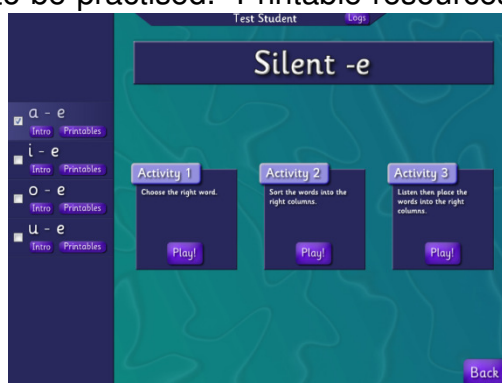
Three columns are displayed, one for each ending. The learner hears the word and then clicks the correct column. As before, it will sometimes be necessary to hear the word in context by clicking the sentences button.

Silent -e

The learner can select whichever options need to be practised. Printable resources are available for each option.

Activity 1

Two options are displayed, one with the short vowel sound and the other with the silent -e pattern. The learner hears the word and clicks on the correct option. This activity is designed to develop auditory discrimination.



Activity 2

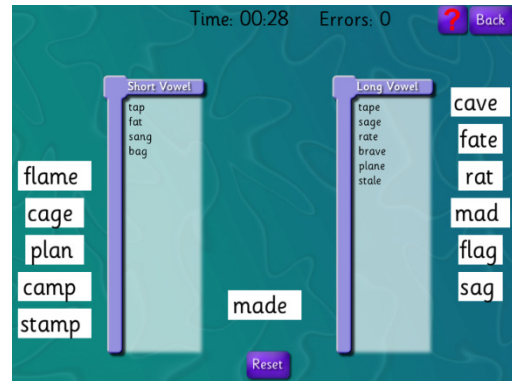
Aim

To practise visual sorting between short and long vowel sounds. To build the awareness of how the rule is applied.

Instructions

The learner sees the words displayed. He has to click and drag the word to the correct column, depending on whether the word has a short or long vowel sound.

This activity can be done with only one vowel or up to five.



Activity 3

Aim

To develop auditory discrimination and an awareness of short or long vowel sounds.

Instructions

The learner hears the word and clicks in the correct column. If correct, the word appears in that column.

This activity can be done with any number of vowel sounds.



Short Vowels

This section works on the same principle as the Silent –e section, but practises the short vowel sounds and spelling patterns. The learner must select at least two variations.

Activity 1

Aim

To develop basic decoding ability and an awareness of medial short vowel sounds.



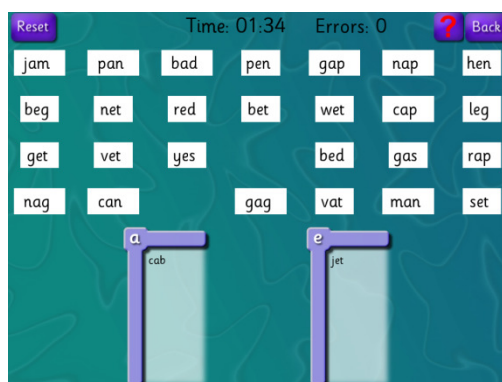
Instructions

The learner hears the word and sees at least two possibilities (depending on the variations selected). The learner needs to click on the correct word. There will be one word with each of the short vowel sounds selected.

Activity 2

Aim

To practise visually discriminating between the letters representing short vowel sounds.



Instructions

The learner sees a variety of words with the selected short vowel sounds. The learner has to click and drag those words into the correct column.

Activity 3

Aim

To practise and develop auditory discrimination and an awareness of individual short vowel sounds.



Instructions

The learner hears the word and clicks in the correct column. If the selection is correct, that word appears in the column.

Useful Stuff

Colours

Activity 1

Aim

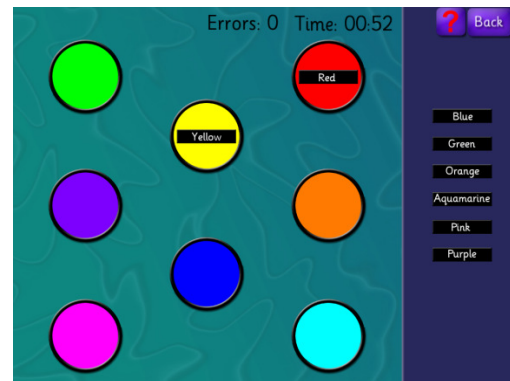
To develop a familiarity with colours and colour names.



Instructions

Level One – The learner hears the word and clicks on the correct colour. If correct, the word appears in that circle.

Level Two – The learner drags each word to the correct circle. No word is spoken, so this activity is purely visual.



Days

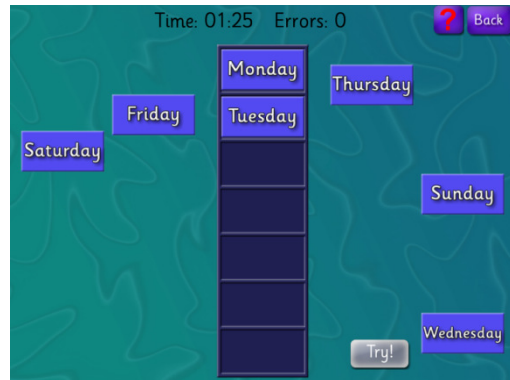
Aim

To become familiar with reading and sequencing the days of the week. Activity Two also develops auditory and visual sequencing ability.

Instructions

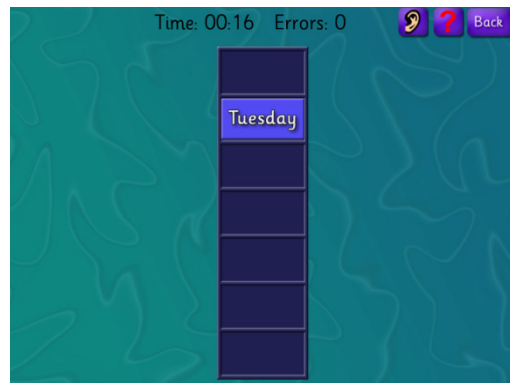
Activity One

The learner sees the words correctly sequenced. The words then blow up and re-appear in random order around the column. The learner has to drag the days to the correct spaces. The learner then clicks 'Try' to see if he is correct.



Activity Two

The learner hears the days of the week in random order. The learner clicks on the correct space and the word appears briefly before the next word is dictated.



Months

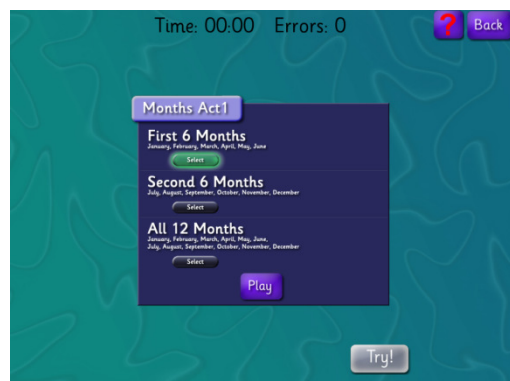
Aim

To practise reading and sequencing the months of the year.

Activity Two also develops auditory and visual sequencing ability.

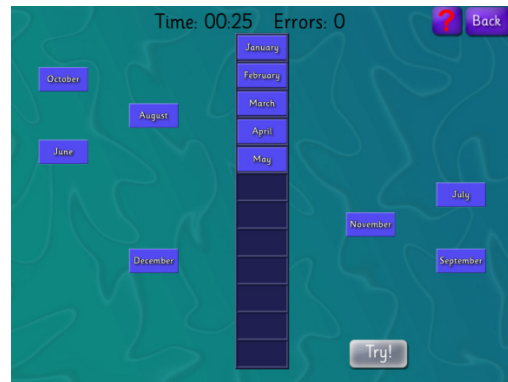
Instructions

Select the option you want. You can specify the first 6 or last 6 months of the year, or the whole 12 months. Then click Play.



Activity One

The learner sees the months correctly sequenced. The words then blow up and re-appear in random order around the column. The learner has to drag the months to the correct spaces.



Activity Two

The learner hears the months of the year in random order. The learner clicks on the correct space and the word appears briefly before the next word is dictated.

GAMES

All of the games in Steps are intended as teaching/learning tools, as well as being motivational rewards. Every activity in Steps, games included, is research-based.



Games can be accessed through the **Courses** button or the **Wordlist** button. The **Games** button will appear whenever a wordlist has been selected. The **Games** button can be accessed through any wordlist.

Teachers need to make up their own minds about how they use games. Many teachers choose to make the rule that the learner can choose a game after each 'row' of activities, or after a certain amount of time. When looking at the logs, it is easy to identify which activities are games, as these have a green background, whereas other activities have a blue background. This enables the teacher to see at a glance whether their learners are spending too long on games.

Bear in mind that games should also be strategically used to develop particular processing skills or reinforce knowledge. It is therefore important that teachers understand what each game does.

Pop the Balloon!

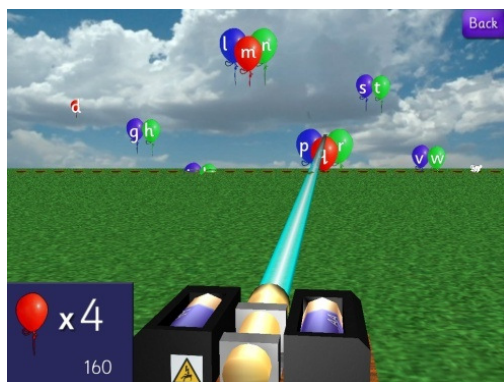
Aim

To develop a spatial awareness of the alphabet and the ability to sequence and broken-sequence the alphabet. This activity is also useful for developing an awareness of the keyboard.

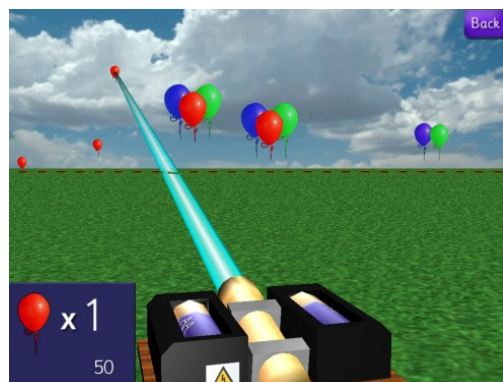
Instructions

There are 26 holes, each corresponding to a letter of the alphabet (in correct order). Balloons will randomly spawn from the 26 holes. The aim of the game is to pop as many balloons as you can. To pop a balloon, press the letter on the keyboard that matches the balloon that you're trying to hit. If you press the wrong key then the laser will fire at the hole anyway so you can see how much you missed by. If you press the right key then the laser will point at the balloon, fire, and pop it!

The '**Show letters**' option is used to display the letters on the balloons. Learners should start with this option until they are very familiar with the alphabet. Then they can turn the option off. A cluster of balloons can be shot by pressing any key in that cluster. In other words, if the cluster has 'n, o, p', then that cluster can be shot by pressing any of these three keys.



Shooting at a balloon



Playing with 'Show letters' off

The difficulty settings (easy, normal, and hard) define how large the groups of balloons can get. The smaller the group of balloons, the more points you get.

- **Easy setting** contains balloons up to 3 spaces wide.
- **Normal setting** contains balloons up to 2 spaces wide.
- **Hard setting** only contains single width balloons.

Occasionally a bunny will appear for a short time over a random hole. Shoot the bunny with the correct letter to get extra points!

The 'Slow Bunny' setting will make the bunny stay around for twice as long, but in return it will give you fewer points when shot.



Note: Bunnies will never have letters on top of them.

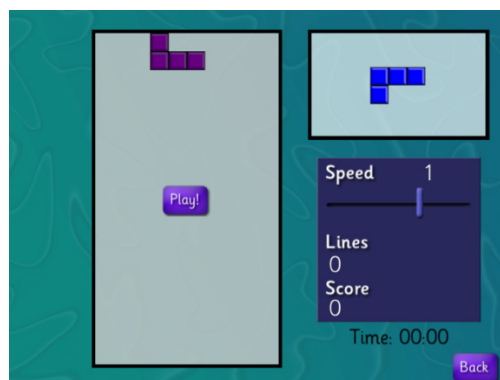
No bunnies were harmed in the making of this game.

Blocks

Aim

This game develops spatial awareness, hand-eye coordination, fine motor control and quick thinking. Research shows that learners who do this activity have measurable changes in neurological activity.

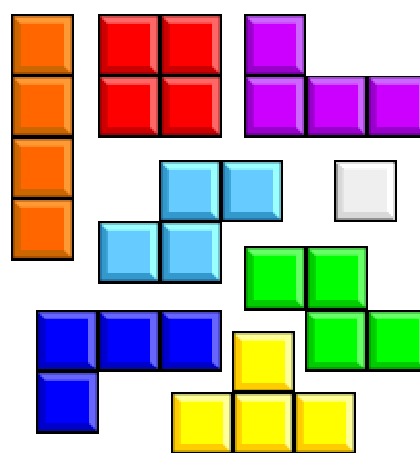
The learner must use the arrow keys to move or rotate the shapes so that complete lines are formed at the bottom of the screen, i.e. no gaps or 'holes'. Each time a complete line is formed, that line disappears.



Instructions

Different shaped blocks drop from the top of the screen. With the exception of the white block, all of the other blocks contain all of the possible shapes 4 joined squares can make.

Using the left and right arrows, align the shape so it best fits the blocks already on the screen without leaving any gaps. You can also use the up arrow to rotate the blocks. Every time you complete a row, it disappears and gives you more points. The aim of the game is to complete as many lines as possible. Eventually the blocks will reach the top of the screen and the game will end.



All the pieces of Blocks

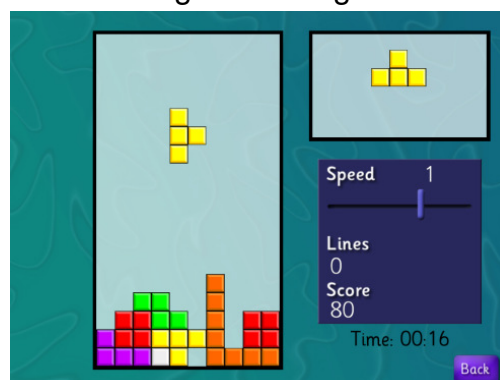
Note: This could take a very long time if the player is skilled. It has been mathematically proven that no one can play Blocks forever, but that doesn't stop students from playing a single game for hours if left to it.

The box in the top right shows which block is coming next.

The slider under '**Speed**' controls after how many seconds the block will fall. Its default value is 1 second. Click and drag the slider left and right to change it. 'Lines' shows how many lines have been completed. 'Score' is how many points you have received in total. The faster the speed, the more points you get.

Note: The speed does not automatically increase as the game progresses.

Once the game is completed, your score will be logged and you can compare it against other students that have played Blocks. Only your highest score is logged.



Vowel Sounds

Aim

This game develops an awareness of medial vowel sounds. It starts with short vowel sounds and then incorporates the silent 'e' pattern. The final levels also incorporate vowel digraphs.

This game (as all of the games) can be accessed either through the **Courses** button or through the **Wordlist** button.

If accessed through the **Courses** button, the game will only incorporate word patterns/vowel sounds which have been covered by that learner as he/she goes through the courses. In other words, if a learner is currently on First Steps Workbook B, this activity will only include vowels which have been taught by the end of that workbook (left hand illustration).

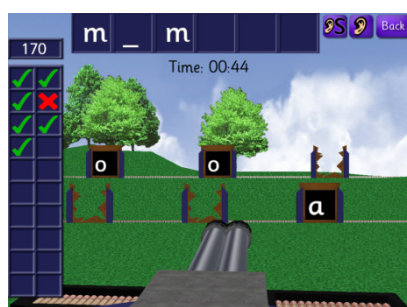


If accessed through the **Wordlist** button, the teacher/learner can specify the patterns required (right hand illustration above).

Instructions

A word will be spoken and displayed at the top of the screen, missing its vowel sound. Letters will travel right to left or left to right across the screen and the learner needs to shoot the correct vowel for that word. The learner needs to move his mouse over the letter and click to shoot. If you hit the wrong target, you will lose points and get a cross in the progress table on the left. Hitting the right target will give you points and get a tick.

The game finishes once the left bar is filled with ticks and/or crosses.



Clear the Skies

Aim

This game develops an awareness of medial vowel sounds. It also develops spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination and involves auditory discrimination, visual memory and an understanding of spelling patterns.

Levels

The game starts with short vowel sounds and then incorporates the silent 'e' pattern. The final levels also incorporate vowel digraphs.

This game (as all of the games) can be accessed either through the **Courses** button or through the **Wordlist** button.

If accessed through the **Courses** button, the game will only incorporate word patterns/vowel sounds which have been covered by that learner as he/she goes through the courses. In other words, if a learner is currently on First Steps Workbook B, this activity will only include vowels which have been taught by the end of that workbook (left hand illustration).

This game uses all of the CVC, CCVC, and CVCC words in the current workbook and all ones prior. For example, if you were on First Steps B, then you will be using CVC, CVCC, and CCVC words from workbooks A and B.


Note: *C = Consonant, V = Vowel, e.g. "not" is an example of a CVC word. "must" is an example of a CVCC word.*



If accessed through the Wordlist button, the teacher/learner can specify the patterns required (right hand illustration above).

Instructions

Clear the Skies works like a simple flight simulator.

A word will be spoken and displayed at the top of the screen containing a word missing its vowel sound. Fly your aircraft around and shoot down the balloon with the right vowel sound on it! To shoot a balloon, make sure your crosshair () is over the balloon and left click. If the laser from your aircraft hits the balloon then it

Steps Manual

will explode! Hitting the right balloon will give you a tick. Hitting the wrong balloon will give you a cross and not move on to the next word.

Controls

To look left, move your mouse left.

To look right, move your mouse right.

To point your aircraft up, move your mouse away from you.

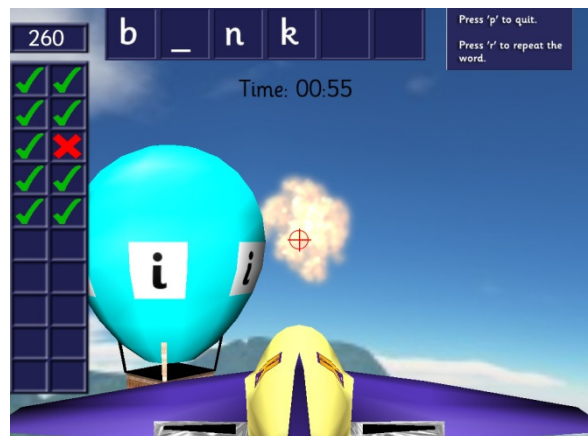
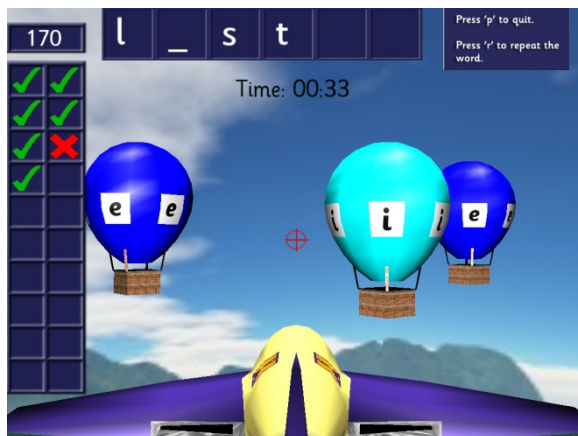
To point your aircraft down, move your mouse towards you.

Holding “W” or up on the arrow keys will make your aircraft go faster.
Holding “S” or down on the arrow keys will make your aircraft go slower.

Press “R” to play the word again.

Press “P” to quit the game.

Left click to fire the laser.



Fireworks

This game does not use the current wordlist.

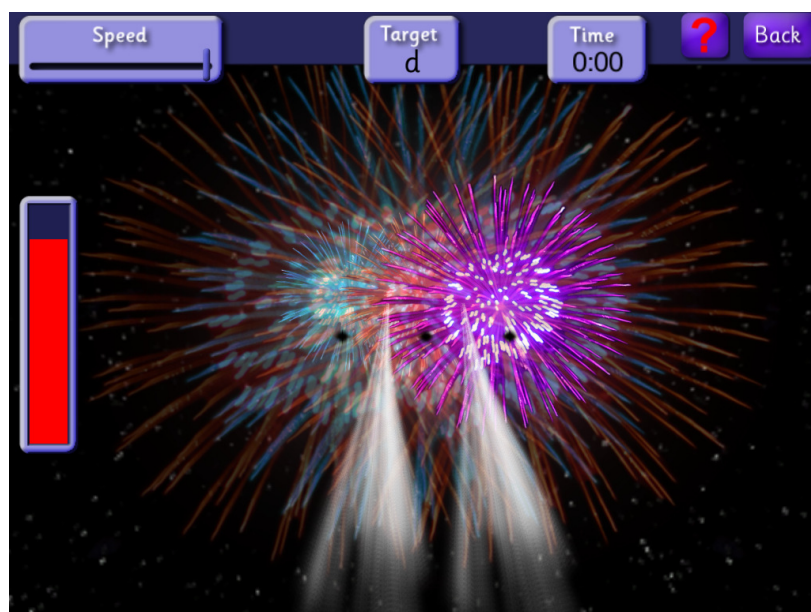
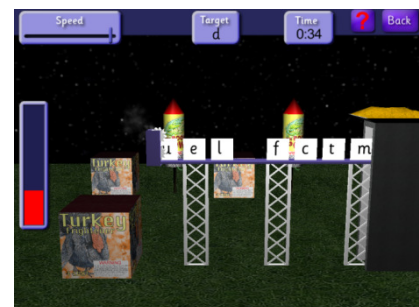
Aim

To practise recognition skills for letters, numbers, colours or words. The activity also develops tracking skills. The targets track from right to left, which means that the learner tracks from left to right (as you do when you read). Other processing skills which develop include visual discrimination.

Instructions

Choose a target letter, word, number or colour (see right). Then choose the duration of the game and select the speed required using the variable speed slider in the top left of the screen. This can be adjusted during the game.

Blocks will travel from right left across the screen and it's your job to click on the ones matching the target. Each target you find will increase the level of explosives in the firework. Each wrong answer will reset the progress in the current firework. Letting a target block hit the grinder will also reset the progress. Every time the bar hits the top, the completed firework moves to the back and a new one is started. At the end of the time limit all completed fireworks ignite!



Fireworks exploding!

Snap

This game does not use the current wordlist.

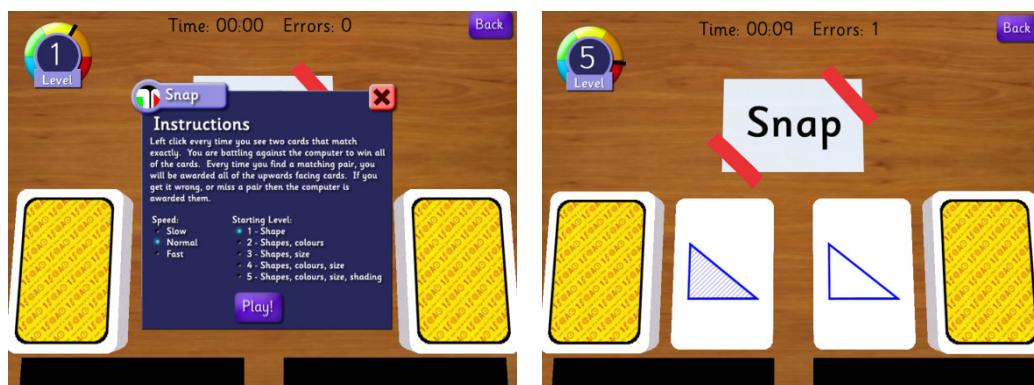
Aim

This activity is designed to develop visual recognition and visual discrimination skills. It is particularly useful for learners with weaknesses in perceptual organisation (the brain's ability to 'make sense' of visual information). The game also develops attentional skills.

There are five levels of difficulty and three speed levels.

Instructions

Choose an appropriate level of difficulty by clicking on the correct option under instructions. Choose the speed in the same way. Pairs of cards will be displayed and the player has to click as soon as matching cards appear. The game will continue until one player has run out of cards.



Vowel Ladder

This game does not use the current wordlist.

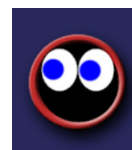
Aim

This activity is designed to develop phonic knowledge, and also to develop the phonological skills of phonemic awareness and blending. The activity also builds a visual memory for phonic patterns which cannot be learned by using a rule, i.e. whether a word is 'ee' or 'ea'.

There are 11 levels in total, going from CVC words up to quite complex vowel choices (ie or ei). There are also four possible speeds going from 'easy' to 'extreme'.

Instructions

Choose the appropriate options for level and speed and then press '**play**'. The learner (on the left) is playing against the **Steps Guy** (on the right). The winner is the first person to complete three cards.

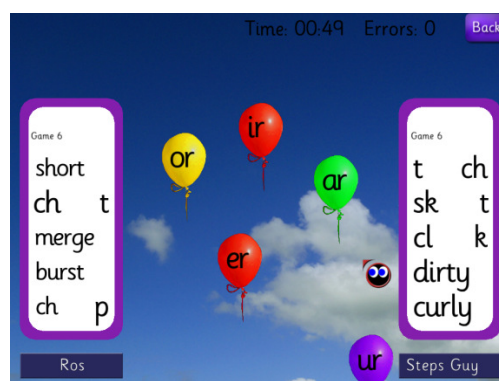
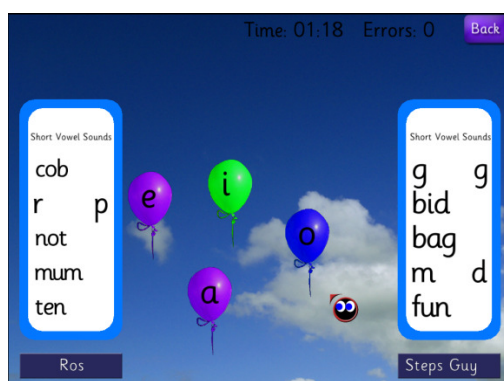


The learner has to click on a balloon to select it, then drag it to place the letter onto a space on his card (on the left) to make a real word. If the word is correct, the word will form. If it does not make a real word, the learner is penalised by losing a previous word. This makes it impossible to guess, so the learner has to sound out the individual phonemes, blend them together and then make a judgement about whether it is a real word.

The 'extreme' speed is extremely challenging (hence the name!). It is basically only there to challenge advanced learners – and teachers!

The **Steps Guy** is quite aggressive at times! He will steal the learner's letters, given half a chance. However, the learner can also steal back.

Note: very unusual words are not accepted because it would encourage learners to just guess on the off-chance that the word is a real one.



Hangman

This game does not use the current wordlist.

Note: Most institutions regard hangman as a common, fun game, which causes no offence. However, there are institutions, such as young offender institutions or prisons, who wish to avoid any connotation to do with hanging. If you do not wish your learners to use this game, there is an option under Admin to switch it off.

Log into the Admin section and go to page 4. On the left, you will find Settings, where you can untick the Hangman option. Your learners will never even know the game was there. You can turn the game back on again at any time.

Aim

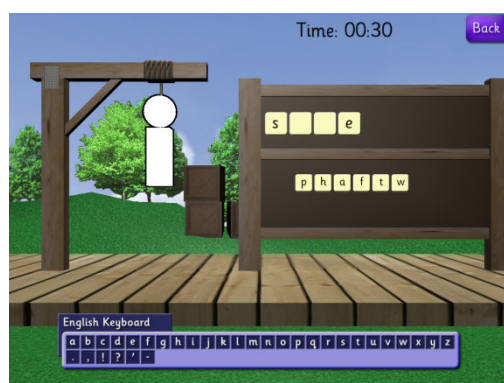
This activity is designed to develop an awareness of common spelling patterns.

Instructions

Choose an appropriate level of difficulty by clicking on 'Easy Word', 'Medium Word' or 'Hard Word'. Alternatively the teacher can tick 'Type in a word:' and then type in any word with no more than 9 letters (obviously so that the learner cannot see the word!). Then click 'Play'.

The learner must then try letters by clicking on them. If the word contains that letter, the letter will appear in the appropriate box. If not, the gallows will start to appear on the left, followed by the unfortunate 'hangee'. Once the victim has a head, body, two arms and two legs, the game is over and the player has lost.

A Maori word can be entered by selecting the Maori option in the settings box. Then play in the same way, using the Maori macrons which appear in the on-screen keyboard.



Four in a Row

This game does not automatically use the current word list, but can be used to practise specific word lists or units.

Aim

This activity is designed to practise spelling or homophones usage. It also develops an awareness of strategic thinking.

The aim of the game is to get four in a row, either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. The first player to achieve this has won the game.

Instructions

Click 'Next' at the bottom of the instruction box and you will see the options box (see right). On the left is a series of spelling levels. The reference letters and numbers below each level show you which lists that level is intended to practice.

For example, Level 1 reinforces the words taught in First Steps A workbook and High Frequency lists 1 – 10. Level 6 reinforces Steps to Literacy levels 3 and 4, plus the Commonly Misspelled Wordlists.

On the right, there is a choice of Homophones levels. These practise the lists under each Level. For example, Level 1 is practising the homophones taught in Homophones Lists 1 – 10.

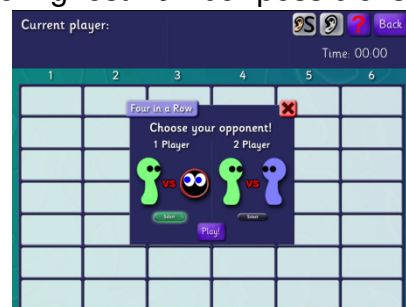
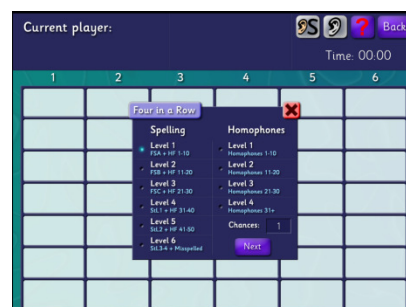
At the bottom right of this box is a smaller box marked 'Chances'. The default number in the box is '1', which means the learner only has one chance to get each item correct. You can click on this box and change the number to allow the learner to have several chances to spell the word correctly. The highest number possible is 9.

Once the learner has made his selection, he clicks on '**Next**' to continue. He will then see the screen on the right, where he can choose to play against the Steps Guy (the computer) or against a second player. Once he has chosen, he clicks '**Play**'.

The main game screen will appear and the player will see an instruction saying '**Click 'Roll Dice' to start!**'. He clicks on the red dice at the top of the screen. The dice will then roll and display a number. That column will then turn white, indicating that the player can choose any square in that column. The player clicks on the square he wishes to choose. Then a question appears. If the chosen option is 'spelling', Steps will dictate a word, which then has to be typed. The word can be repeated by clicking on the '**ear**' at the top right of the screen, or heard as part of a sentence by clicking on the '**ear + S**'. The learner then types the word and clicks '**Try!**'.

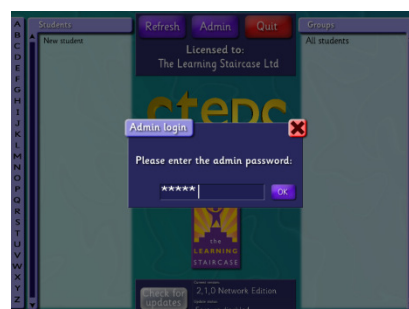
If the word is correct, it will appear in the chosen box and the Steps Guy (or other opponent) will play. The original player's boxes will be displayed in green, but his/her opponent's boxes will have a blue background.

If the player gets the item wrong, he loses that turn unless the settings have allowed him to have another go.



NETWORK AND TUTOR ADMIN MENU

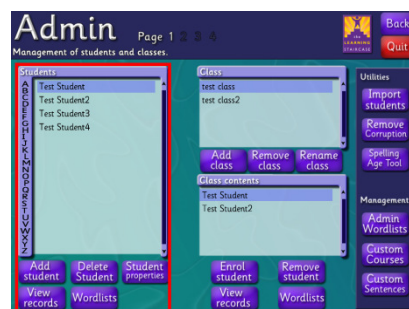
From the Login screen, click 'Admin' and enter your password. If you have not changed the password yet then the default password is 'steps'. Press 'OK' to continue. From the rest of this section, the instructions will be written as if you are looking at the Admin menu, page 1.



Log into Admin

Managing Students

This section covers the functions of everything inside the red box. Most of the buttons will likely be grey until you select a student or class.



Student Management

Add student

1. Click 'Add student'. Enter in a name. If you wish to give the user a password, enter it into the 'Password' field. The tick boxes let the student access different sections.

2. Click 'Create'.

Delete Student

1. Left click on a student's name to select them.
2. Left click on the 'Delete Student' button.
3. Click 'Yes!' to delete, or 'No!' to cancel.

You cannot undo deleting a student so be careful. Deleting a student means deleting their logs and wordlists too.

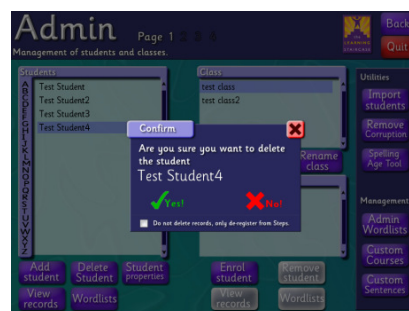


Figure 10.2 – Remove Student

Note: If you tick the box that reads 'Do not delete records...' then you can recover all of their data later and re-add them into Steps.

Modify student

1. Left click on a student's name to select them.
2. Left click on the 'Student properties' button.
3. You may change the student's name (so long as the new name isn't already taken), their password, and their access to each section.



Modify Student

4. Click 'OK' to accept the changes, or press the red cross to discard the changes.

Schonell Results

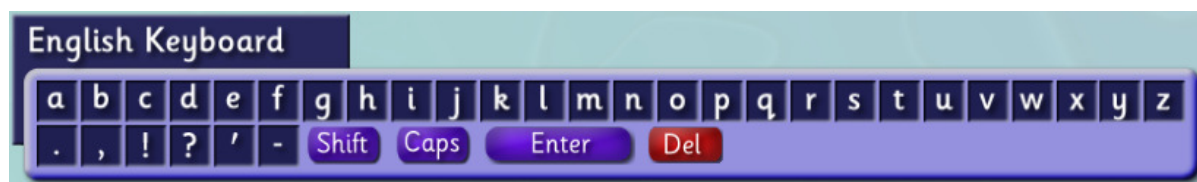
This is a list of Schonell Spelling Test results. You can select one and view the results by clicking the 'Analyse' or 'Print' buttons.

Force Activity Finish

This option will prevent a student from leaving an activity until it is finished. It was added after reports that some students would quit and restart every time they made a mistake.

On-screen Keyboard

Steps will show a keyboard on-screen when the student is using a non-English word list in a spelling activity. This option will force the keyboard to show for all spelling activities, regardless of language. It can be useful for touch screens too. Below is a picture of the on-screen keyboard.



View records

1. Left click on a student's name to select them.
2. Left click on the 'View records' button (see figure 10.4).

On the left is a table called 'Sessions' which lists every session played (see figure 10.5). The results from every completed game/activity are bundled together into a single session for every day.

On the right is a table that contains the selected sessions. As you can see, none have been selected so far. Left click on a session's date to switch it on or off. As you switch a session, you'll see the table on the right update. Figure 10.6 shows both sessions selected.

Listed below are the fields and what they show.

- Time:** The time in 24-hour that they started the activity.
- Game:** The name of the game/activity played.
- List:** The wordlist played.
- Time:** Time taken to complete the activity/game.
- Score:** Not applicable for most activities. Sometimes this field is used to show unique settings for the played game/activity.
- Errors:** Total errors made. This includes repeat errors on the same word. Lists all words that mistakes were made on.

Print records

This option is in the 'Student Logs' screen (see figure 10.7). Please follow the steps for 'View records' to find the button.

The 'Print records' button will create a print-able report based on the selected sessions. In this picture, 2 sessions are selected. The report is created and displayed like a website. To print it, click 'File' and then go down to 'Print...' (see figure 10.8).

Note: The 'File' and 'Print...' buttons will look different depending on your operating system. Note for Vista users: You may have to push 'Alt' to see this menu when looking at the report.

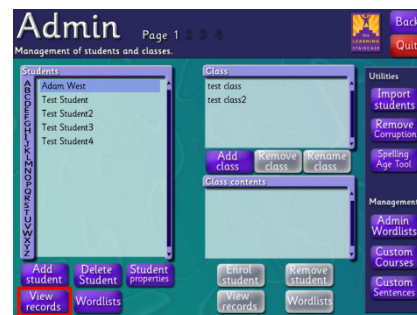


Figure 10.4 – View Records



Figure 10.5 – View Records Screen

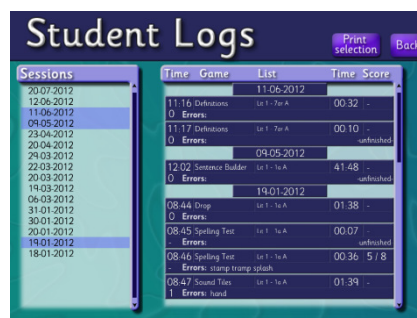


Figure 10.6 – Selected sessions

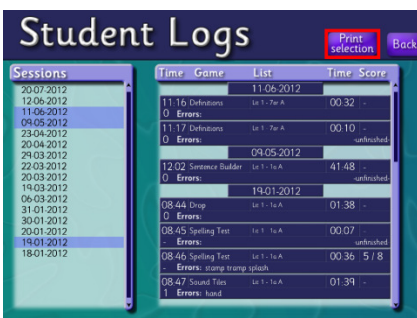


Figure 10.7 – Print Selection button

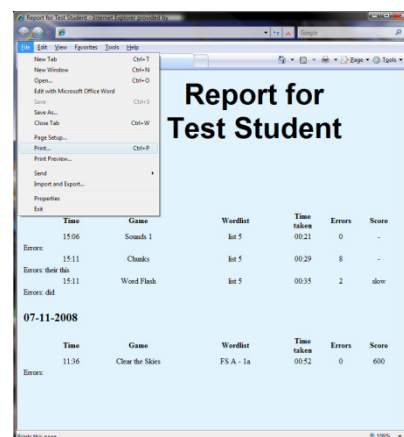


Figure 10.8 – Printable Report

Wordlists

This allows you to create custom wordlists for the currently selected student. You may use these lists under the 'General' section. Click on the 'Wordlists' button under the Admin page 1 menu (see figure 10.9).

A freshly created student will have no wordlists made for it so you can expect to see a screen like figure 10.10.

To create a new wordlist, click on the button 'Add New Wordlist'. It will pop up a window asking for the name of the list (see figure 10.11). Enter a name for the list and then press 'OK'.

To add a word, click on the first free box under the 'Words' column. The box will turn white and the cursor will blink to show it is active. Type in the word then press 'OK' or push the enter key to add the word. Repeat this process until you have entered in all of the words you want.

The 'Sentences' column will display a sentence for the word it is next to if there is one available. Sentences that come with Steps are written in grey, and cannot be modified. You may add your own sentence for words that are not in Steps yet. This is useful for activities like 'Choose the word' that require the student to place the correct word inside the sentence. You do not have to enter in a sentence for each word, but it is recommended.

Words or sentences that have a red background don't yet have recordings. If a sentence is written for the word then you will be able to record that too using the same button.

To record a word, click the 'Record' (or 'Rerecord')

button. When the recording dialogue (see figure 10.13) pops up, press the 'Record' button on it and speak the word. Once you have pressed 'Record', it will turn into a 'Stop' button. Press 'Stop' immediately after you have spoken the word. You may listen to the word by pressing the 'Play' button. Once you are happy with your recording, press 'Save'.

You may choose to add any word you want into Steps, even incorrectly spelt words so be careful!

Note: You cannot record over words that we have supplied you with.

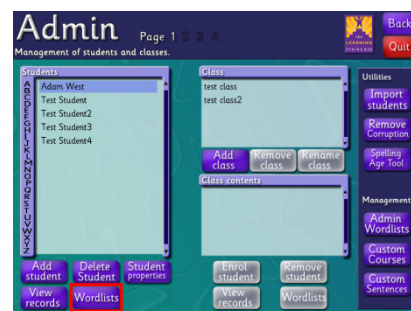


Figure 10.9 – Wordlists button

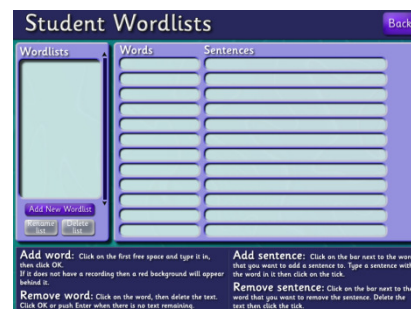


Figure 10.10 – Wordlists screen

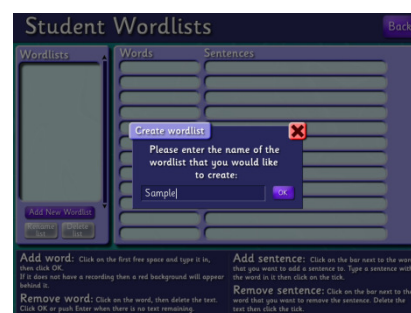


Figure 10.11 – Enter wordlist name

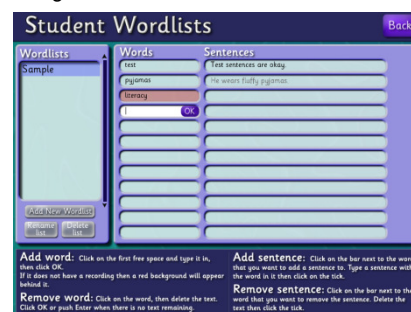


Figure 10.12 – Creating a wordlist

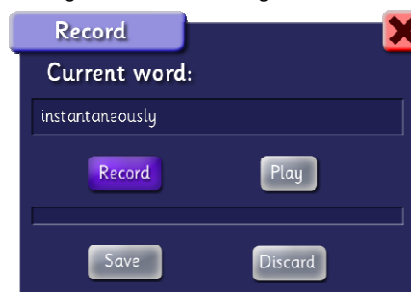



Figure 10.13 – Recording

A screenshot of the Steps interface. It shows a word 'pyjamas' in a light blue box on the left and a sentence 'He wears fluffy pyjamas.' in a light blue box on the right. The background is purple.

This word is in the Steps database and therefore has a predefined sentence and recording. Neither the sentence or the recording can be changed.

A screenshot of the Steps interface. It shows a word 'literacy' in a red box on the left and an empty light blue box on the right. A red 'Record' button is on the far right. The background is purple.

This word is not in the Steps database and has shown up red to show it hasn't got a recording. A sentence has not yet been entered for this word. The user can push the red 'Record' button to record a sound for the word.

A screenshot of the Steps interface. It shows a word 'wireless' in a red box on the left and a sentence 'Our wireless internet is really unreliable!' in a red box on the right. A red 'Record' button is on the far right. The background is purple.

This word is not in the Steps database and has shown up red to show it hasn't got a recording. A sentence has been added for it, which also does not have a recording yet. The user can push the red 'Record' button to record sounds for the sentence and the word.

A screenshot of the Steps interface. It shows a word 'test' in a white box on the left and a sentence 'Test sentences are okay.' in a white box on the right. A green 'Re-record' button is on the far right. The background is purple.

This word is not in the Steps database. It has a white background to show that the user has made a recording for it. The user has also written a sentence for that word, which also has a recording for it. The user can push the green 'Re-record' button to re-record the sounds for the sentence and the word.

You can right click on the white bars and the word/sentence will be read out.

Admin wordlists

The steps involved in managing admin wordlists are exactly the same as with normal wordlists. See the above section on 'Wordlists' for the full instructions.

The only difference is that the Admin wordlists are available for every student to play whereas a student's wordlist is only accessible by that student.

Managing Classes

This section covers the functions of everything inside the red box of figure 11.1. Most of the buttons will likely be grey until you select a student or class.

Classes simply make it easier to find a student when logging in. Once a student is enrolled in a class, you can click on the class name at the Login screen and see a list of only the students currently in that class.

Add class

1. Click 'Add class'.
2. Type in the name of the class you wish to create (see figure 11.2).
3. Click 'Create'.

Remove class

1. Select the class you wish to delete inside the 'Class' table by left clicking on it.
2. Click 'Remove class' (see figure 11.3).
3. Click 'Yes!' to remove the class. Click 'No!' to cancel.

Rename class

1. Select the class you wish to rename inside the 'Class' table by left clicking on it.
2. Click 'Rename class' (see figure 11.4).
3. Type in the new name.
4. Press 'OK'.

Enrol student

1. Select the class you wish the student to be enrolled in from the 'Class' table by left clicking on it.
2. Select the student you wish to enrol from the 'Students' table by left clicking on them.
3. Left click on 'Enrol student' (see figure 11.5).

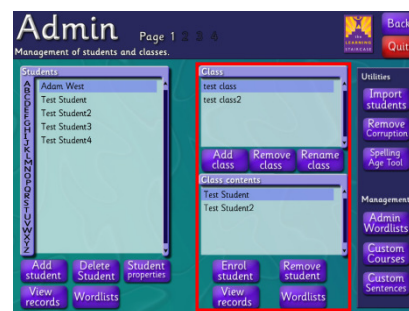


Figure 11.1 – Classes management

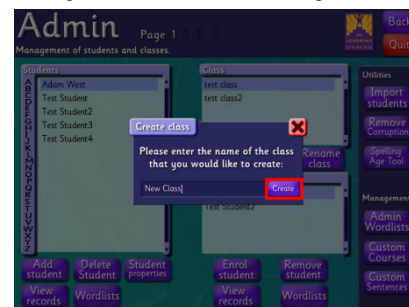


Figure 11.2 – Creating a class

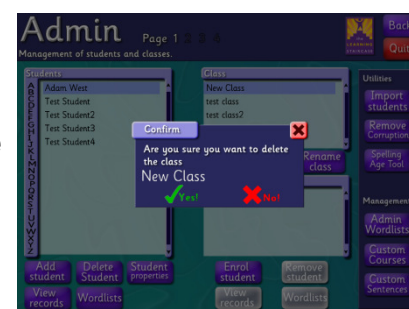


Figure 11.3 – Removing a class

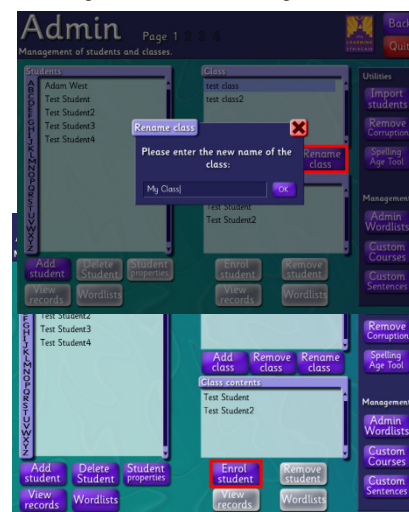


Figure 11.5 – Enrolling a student

Remove student

This button is for removing a student from a class. This will not delete the student.

1. Select a class from the 'Class' table using the left click.
2. Select a student from the table 'Class contents' using the left click.
3. Click the 'Remove student' button on the right hand side of the screen (see figure 11.5).

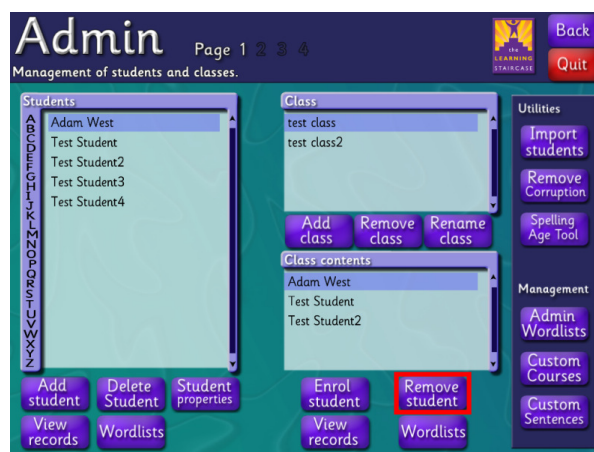


Figure 11.6 – Removing a student

View records

This button does the same thing as the other 'View records' button, only it does it for the student selected in the 'Class contents' table. See the earlier entry on 'View records' for instructions.

Wordlists

This button does the same thing as the other 'Wordlists' button, only it does it for the student selected in the 'Class contents' table. See the earlier entry on 'Wordlists' for instructions.

Import students

This function is a handy way to merge databases, copy students to other computers, or restore a corrupted groups_data.data file (the file that stores a master list of students).

You can even use it to transfer students from one Edition of Steps to another.

Inside the Steps database you'll notice a lot of files with students names on them followed by "_preferences.data" (displayed as Settings in the picture), "_log.data", "_medals.data", and "_wordlists.data". All of these 4 files make up a single student.

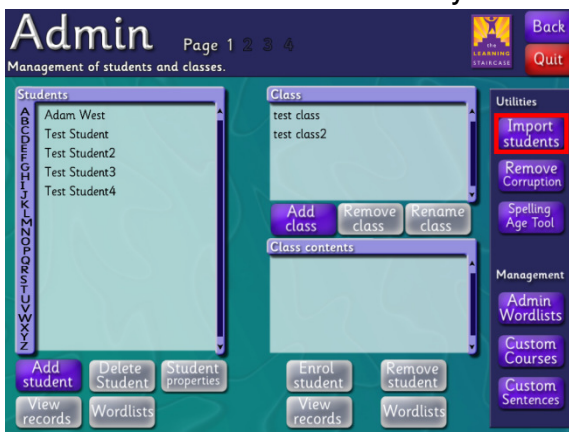


Figure 11.7 – Import students button



Figure 11.8 – Import students

In this example I took all of the files for 'Dave' from another computer and placed it in the example database. The 'Scan' button scans the database for any student files that are not yet added to the master list. As you can see in figure 11.8, it has picked up all 4 of 'Dave's' files.

Click the 'Import' button to permanently add the ticked students to the master list.

Remove Corruption

This function will attempt to read every file in the database. It will appear to freeze Steps for a short while as it does the checks, so don't worry! At the end of the check it'll tell you how many corrupted files were found (if any), and ask if you'd like to remove them.



1 corrupted file found

Clicking 'Yes!' will remove all of the found corrupted files. Steps will recreate these missing files as needed.

Corruption can be caused randomly by all kinds of things that are often outside of our control. If you are finding corrupted files more than once or twice a year then we'd suggest contacting your tech support about it.

Below is a list of things that could increase the chance of corruption occurring. This list is not extensive, and may have nothing to do with the reason you are getting corruption. However, it is a good place to start looking.

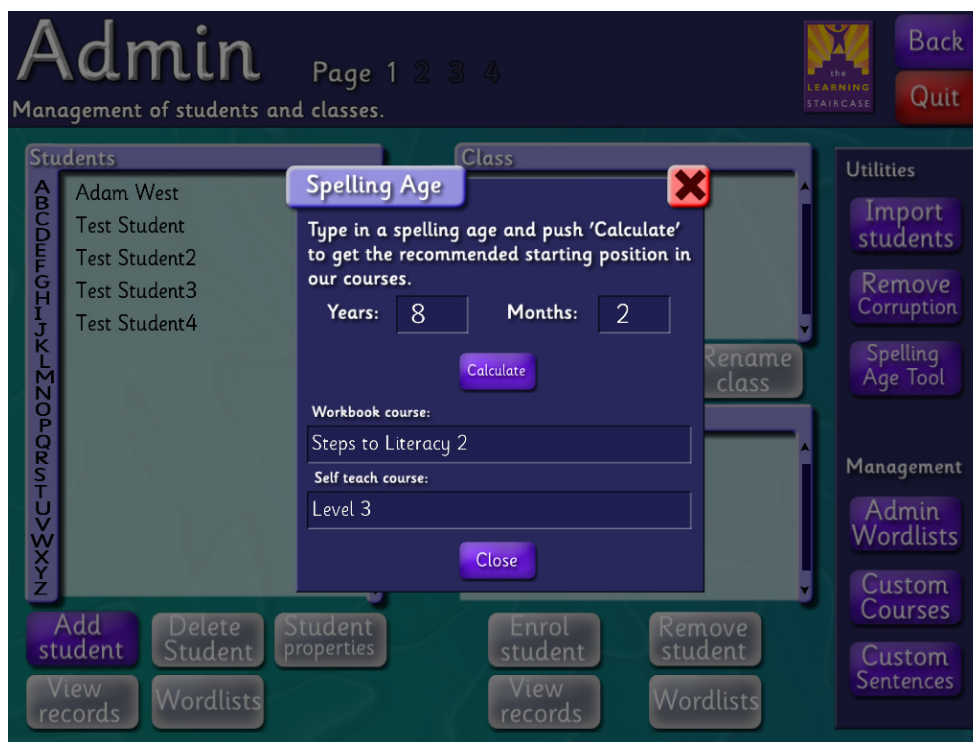
- An anti-virus program that is scanning the database files as they are being opened by Steps.
- Faulty hardware.
- Loose or damaged network cabling.
- An overloaded network.
- Nearby interference from a device emitting magnetic fields.

We'd suggest running this tool if you find any students accounts that don't seem to work anymore.

Spelling Age Tool

This tool lets you manually put in a student's spelling age and find out where they can be placed on the courses. It is a rough guide, and not to be used over a tutor/teachers advice. It offers the same suggestions that the 'Spelling Test' feature does.

This particular example shows the spelling age of 8 years and 2 months being entered. Once you've entered the age, click 'Calculate' to see what levels in the courses to use.



Finding where to place a student in Steps

Custom Courses

You can use this feature to create multi-level courses, like the current courses already included in Steps. Any course you create will show up under the 'Wordlists' menu at the bottom of the list.

Courses are extremely dynamic because you can have as many categories, sub-categories, and wordlists as you want. The courses are in a 'tree' layout where categories can be as deep or as long as required.

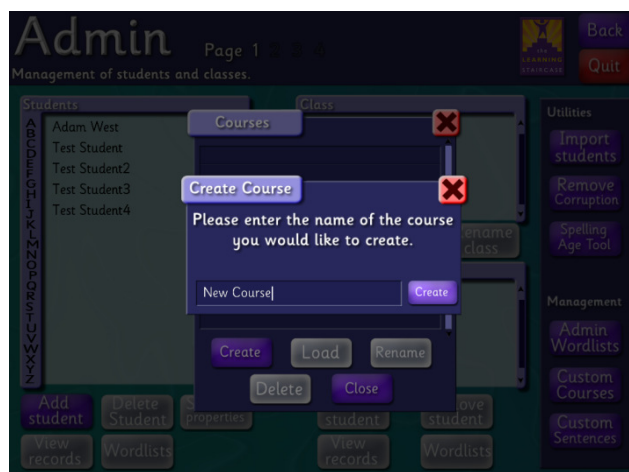
Wordlists are in black regular text. Categories are in purple and bold.

The indentation shows how deep the sub-category/wordlist is. In the example below, you can see that the wordlist 'Biology 1' is inside the sub-category 'Biology', which is in the sub-category 'Science', which is in the course 'Year One'.



To create a course:

- From Admin Page 1, click on 'Custom Courses'.
- Click 'Create'.
- Enter the new course name.
- Click 'Create'.



To load an existing course:

- From Admin Page 1, click on 'Custom Courses'.
- Click on the course you wish to load.
- Click 'Load'.

Note: *You cannot edit courses that came with Steps.*

Making changes to a course:

The label with the blue background (or, 'selected line') is the category that new wordlists or new categories will be added into.

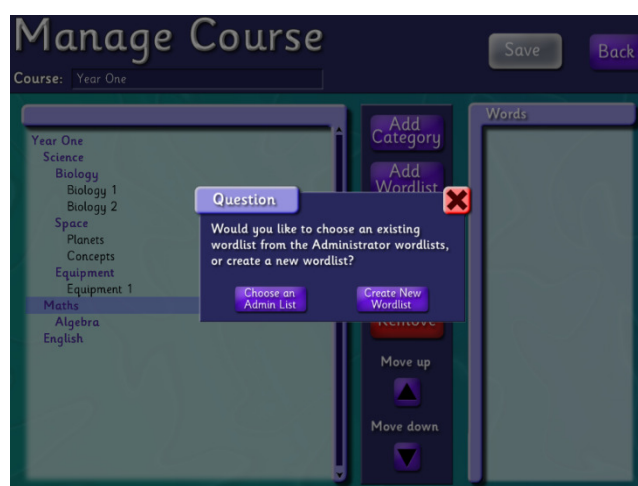
We're now going to show how to add a new Maths wordlist into the course shown before.

First, click on the category that you'd like to work from. In this case, we'd like to add our wordlist to the 'Maths' category. The category 'Maths' should get a blue background when it is selected.



Next, click on 'Add Wordlist'.

At this point you can choose to add an Administrator list that you've made previously, or make a new wordlist. We're going to make a new wordlist, so click on 'Create New Wordlist'.



Steps Manual

Now type in the name of the wordlist. For this example we'll be calling the list 'Terms'. If you have Maori options turned on then you can also choose the language of the wordlist. Once you are happy with the name, click 'Create'.

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Course' interface. At the top, there's a 'Course:' dropdown menu set to 'Year One'. To the right are 'Save' and 'Back' buttons. A sidebar on the left lists course categories: Year One, Science (Biology 1, Biology 2), Space (Planets, Concepts), Equipment (Equipment 1), Maths (Algebra, English), and English. A 'Create Wordlist' dialog box is open in the center. It asks to 'Pick the language of the new wordlist:' with radio buttons for 'English' (selected) and 'Māori'. Below this, it says 'Enter the name of the new wordlist:' with a text input field containing 'Terms'. At the bottom of the dialog are 'Create' and 'Cancel' buttons. To the right of the dialog, there's a 'Words' section with a list of words and 'Move up' and 'Move down' buttons.

This menu functions in the same way as you'd create Administrator or student wordlists. Page 68 covers the instructions for entering words, sentences, and recordings for a wordlist. When you have finished creating the wordlist, click 'Back' to return to managing your course.

The screenshot shows the 'Admin Wordlists' interface. At the top, there's a 'Back' button. Below it, there are two main sections: 'Words' and 'Sentences'. Each section has a list of input fields for adding words or sentences. Below these sections, there are instructions for adding and removing words and sentences. The instructions are as follows:

- Add word:** Click on the first free space and type it in, then click OK. If it does not have a recording then a red background will appear behind it.
- Remove word:** Click on the word, then delete the text. Click OK or push Enter when there is no text remaining.
- Add sentence:** Click on the bar next to the word that you want to add a sentence to. Type a sentence with the word in it then click on the tick.
- Remove sentence:** Click on the bar next to the word that you want to remove the sentence. Delete the text then click the tick.

Steps Manual

You should now see your new list with a blue background. Note that you can see the contents of that new wordlist in the right column.



Custom Sentences

Here you can add new words into Steps, as well as adding variations for words that already exist. For example, you may decide that a sentence is too high level for your learner, so you can create a variation in 'Custom Sentences' and use it in a new wordlist.

Variations can only be used in Administrator and student wordlists, not courses that come with Steps.



The above screenshot shows an example with several variations added. Note that some words have been added several times with different sentences.

This list will also contain all of the custom sentences created through the wordlists menu.

The 'Filter' text in the top left can make it easy to find a particular word. If you were looking for all variations with 'or' in them then you could type in 'or' and only the matching words would remain. To clear the filter, simply delete the text.

To add a new variation:

1. Click 'Add new'.
2. Type a grammatically correct sentence that includes the target word.
3. Click 'Next'.

You can now choose to record the word if you want. We'd recommend recording the word because a lot of activities require sound to function correctly.

To delete a variation:

1. Left click on the variation you would like to remove.
2. Click 'Remove entry'.
3. Click 'Yes!'.

ADMIN PAGE 2

The following images are taken using the Network Edition. The Tutor Edition does not have access to page 2, nor can it use the features listed on it.

Licence Code

Place the licence information that we provided you into the Licence Code boxes. It is important that you write in the institution name and code exactly as they have been given to you otherwise they won't be accepted. If you have purchased a newer code and the old one hasn't expired yet then you can press 'Clear' and type a new one in.

Once you have filled in all 4 boxes, a 'try' button will appear. Press the 'try' button. A green tick will appear if the code is valid. Click 'Save' to save the changes you have made.

The screenshot shows the 'Admin' interface with a dark blue header. The title 'Admin' is on the left, followed by 'Page 1 2 3 4' where '2' is highlighted. On the right is a logo for 'The Learning Staircase' and two buttons: 'Back' (blue) and 'Quit' (red). Below the header, the text 'Database path and licensing.' is displayed. The main content area has a teal background with a faint staircase pattern. It contains two sections: 'License Code' and 'Database Path'. The 'License Code' section is highlighted with a red border. It includes a tab labeled 'License Code', an 'Expires on:' field with the date '31-07-2013', a 'School/Institute:' text box containing 'The Learning Staircase Ltd', and a 'License Code:' section with four 'XXXX' boxes separated by hyphens. Below these are 'Test', 'Clear', 'reset', and 'Save' buttons. The 'Database Path' section has a tab labeled 'Database Path', instructional text about changing the path, a text box containing 'database\', and 'Test', 'Clear', 'reset', and 'Save' buttons. To the right of the text box are examples: 'E.g. database\', '\\server\steps_database\', and '/Volumes/Steps/'.

Figure 12.4 – Page 2 of Admin menu

Database Path

Steps can be run over a network or locally. To run it locally on a PC, type in 'database\' and click 'Save'. To run it locally on a Mac, type in '/Library/Application Support/Learning Staircase/Steps/database/' and click 'Save'.

To run Steps over a network, enter in the full network path (e.g. \\server\steps_database\) of a network share that has read, write, and modify access. Click 'Test' to find out if the path entered is accessible and if a Steps database is there to access. If it is accessible but no Steps database is present then you will be asked if you would like a new one to be created. Once you are happy with the database location, click 'Save'.

Note: The 'Save' button will be grey if the path isn't suitable or if you've already saved.

Technical Note: This works with current working directories, so keep that in mind when creating shortcuts.

Technical Note2: The symbol '~' has been programmed in to use the environment variable 'HOMEPATH'. You can make use of this in the database path on both Mac and PC. E.g. '~/volumes/steps/'

Technical Note3: If connecting to a server that requires login information for the Steps database then please make sure the user is authorized before running Steps. You can do this using login scripts, or mapped network drives.

The screenshot shows the 'Admin' interface with a dark blue header. The main content area has a teal background. A 'License Code' window is open, showing 'School/Institute: The Learning Staircase Ltd' and 'Expires on: 31-07-2013'. Below this is a 'License Code' field with four 'XXXX' placeholders. A 'Test' button is next to it. Below the 'License Code' field are 'Clear' and 'reset' buttons. A 'Save' button is at the bottom right of the 'License Code' window. In the foreground, a 'Database Path' window is open, outlined in red. It contains the text: 'To change the path, click in the box below and type a new path. Pressing 'Test' will see if a database exists there and if not, prompt to make one. Pressing 'Save' will save the current entered path.' Below this text is a text input field containing 'database\'. To the right of the input field is a small text box with examples: 'E.g. database\ \\server\steps_database\ /Volumes/Steps/'. Below the input field are 'Test', 'Clear', and 'Save' buttons. To the left of the 'Test' button is a 'reset' button. In the top right corner of the Admin interface, there are 'Back' and 'Quit' buttons.

Figure 12.5 – Database Path

ADMIN PAGE 3

This page is for settings relating to only the computer you are on at the time



These options allow you to choose how you'd like to print. it is sometimes necessary to change this when users see a 'flickering' as Steps tries to preview the document while the program is still open. If changing these settings doesn't help the flickering issue, then click the 'Run in windowed mode'.

ADMIN PAGE 4

Settings

Enable Hangman game:

This option shows or hides the Hangman game from the Games section.

Enable 'Check for Updates' at login.:

This option is usually left off for the Network Edition because the user rarely has permission to install the patch after Steps has downloaded it.

Enable Maori language options:

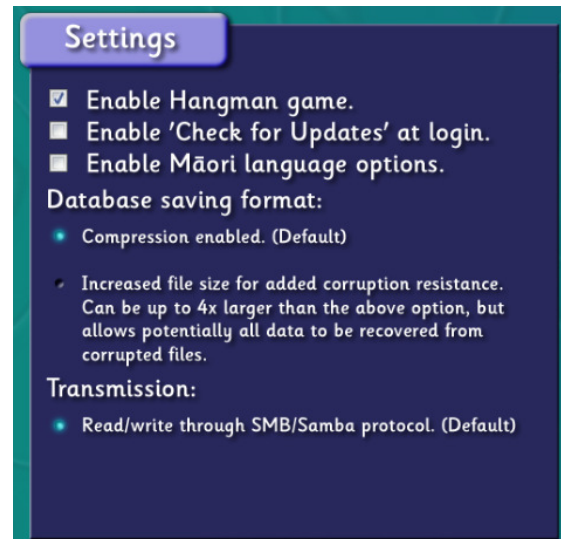
Maori is one of the official languages of New Zealand. Enabling this option allows you to create and use wordlists in Maori.

Database saving format:

These options are designed to assist networks which often suffer corruption. Usually there is no need to change it from the default option.

Transmission:

We are currently developing additional ways to transfer data across networks. While the option is fairly pointless now, it will have choices in the future.



Admin Password

The default Admin password is 'steps'. To set a new password, click inside the darker blue box and type a new one (see figure 12.2). Press 'Set' to apply the change of password.

Technical note: The administrator password is kept in a separate encrypted file called 'admin_data.data'. You can find this file inside the database folder on the server (or client PC if you aren't sharing a database). If you delete this file, it will reset the password and automatically get recreated again as 'steps'. Doing this will not change any student data/records.

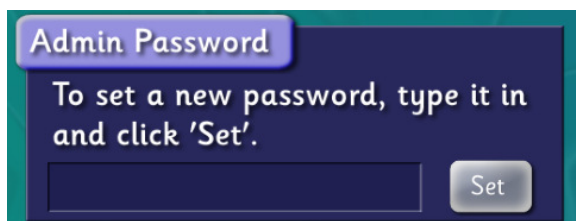


Figure 12.1 – Admin Password settings

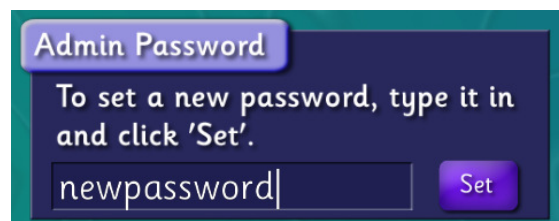


Figure 12.2 – Admin Password being changed

Backup

To backup, simply click the 'Backup' button (see figure 12.3). To restore from the most recent backup, click the 'Restore' button. A confirmation box will pop up after the backup or restore is complete.

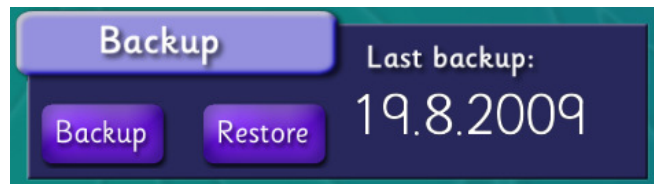


Figure 12.3 – Backup menu

We suggest backing up weekly, or bi-weekly. It is very disruptive and upsetting when a student is accidentally deleted and there are no backups to restore from.

Technical note: The backup files are placed in a folder called 'backup' inside the database folder. Every time you press 'Backup' it just rewrites the saved files so it would be a good idea to make a copy of the database for enhanced protection. The backup script copies everything inside the database folder (excluding the backup folder, of course) so all recorded sounds get backed up too.

Technical note2: You can restore individual students from the backup without restoring the whole lot. For example, lets say Student1 was accidentally deleted. You could copy Student1's data from the backup folder, then use the 'Import students' tool (Admin Page1) to add them back into Steps.

Accent

This option sets the default accent to use when playing sounds in Steps. We have had feedback that some of the vowel sounds in the 'New Zealand (female)' accent can be hard to pick up. For this reason, we'd suggest ether the 'British (female)' or 'Australian (male)' accent.

Due to the rapid development of Steps, there are often words that have not been recorded in all accents. When Steps encounters are word that has not been recorded in your chosen accent, it will use the default 'British (female)' sound.



PATCHING

It is our intention to continue to update Steps on a fairly regular basis. Because of this, we have attempted to make the updating process as harmless as possible. At no time will Steps ever automatically log onto the internet, it is up to you to download the patch files and install them using the instructions below.

You can find out what version your Steps is by looking at the top left (for home) or top right (for tutor and network) section of your screen when you first start the program.

Patches may contain bug fixes, new games, new activities or even requested features. You can see at any time what is in a new patch by reading the patch notes at: http://www.learningstaircase.co.nz/steps/patch_notes.txt

For your convenience we've added 'Check for updates' buttons on the login screen of Steps. This button, when clicked, can be used to download (and install) updates for Steps.

Network Edition

The Network Edition has two different types of patches.

Non-preloader

This patch functions like a normal patch, and will update just the computer you are running it on. It is recommended for networks that are locked down. Please make sure that every single computer using the database has the same version of Steps.

Preloader

This patch will place the updated content into your servers Steps database. The Steps clients will automatically update to the same version as the server the next time they run. This may mean that your clients take a few more seconds to load as they install the patch. Patching speeds will depend on the speed of your network. For this to work, the client must have write access to the Steps install.

Technical note: When Steps starts up and checks for a patch, it is checking with your local server, not an online source.

FAQ AND TROUBLE-SHOOTING

Why does the revision list change every time I click on it?

The revision list is generated using the words the student has made mistakes on. If there are not enough logged mistakes made by the user, then Steps will fill up the list using random words. This list gets regenerated after every activity.

Why do some activities keep their medals when I change list but others do not?

Most of our activities use the current wordlist. For these, the medals will change every time you change the list. For others (e.g. Perception) they will be same no matter what list you are on, so the medal will stay the same.

What is the Admin password?

steps

What are all of these black boxes that open when I run Steps?

Steps comes with a console window that sits behind the main screen and prints out any errors if they occur. This is extremely helpful for tech-support if you should ever run into any problems. For the Network edition of Steps, you'll see a 'preloader' window as well (which also comes with a console window), this checks for updates on your server and applies them before loading the program.

I'm entering in the license details but Steps won't accept them. Why?

It's important to enter in all of the details exactly as we have supplied them to you. This includes the institution name. The license code is all lower case but the institution name is case-sensitive. If that doesn't solve it, then check to make sure your computer has the current date set. If you are still having troubles, then contact our tech-support for assistance.

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Thank you to all of the schools, tutors, and users that have provided feedback and suggestions!

The license for Steps is located inside 'License.txt', found in the root install folder for Steps. Imported libraries used in Steps are credited with licenses linked (where possible/requested) inside the license file.