

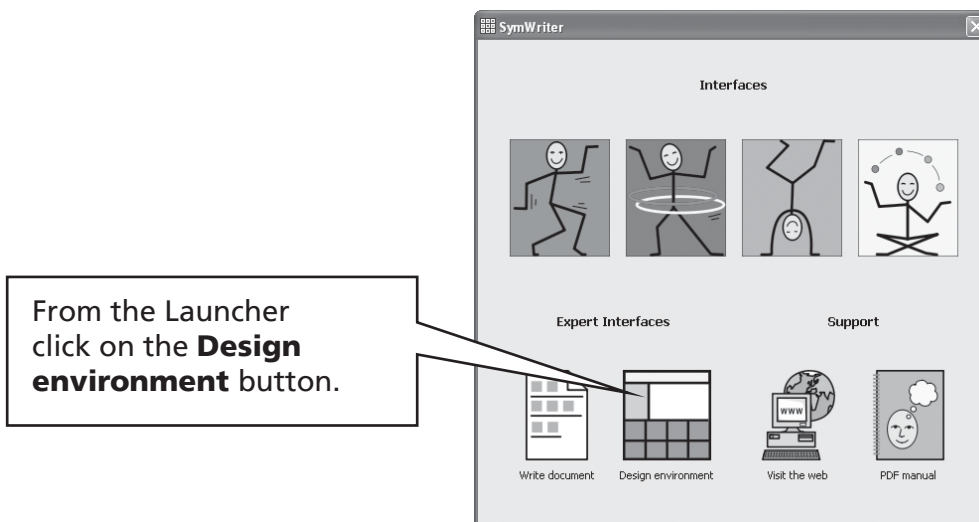
Communicate SymWriter: R1 Making a grid

This section describes the range of features that can be used to prepare a grid for use in making writing selections. In most cases only a fraction of this is needed in any particular case.

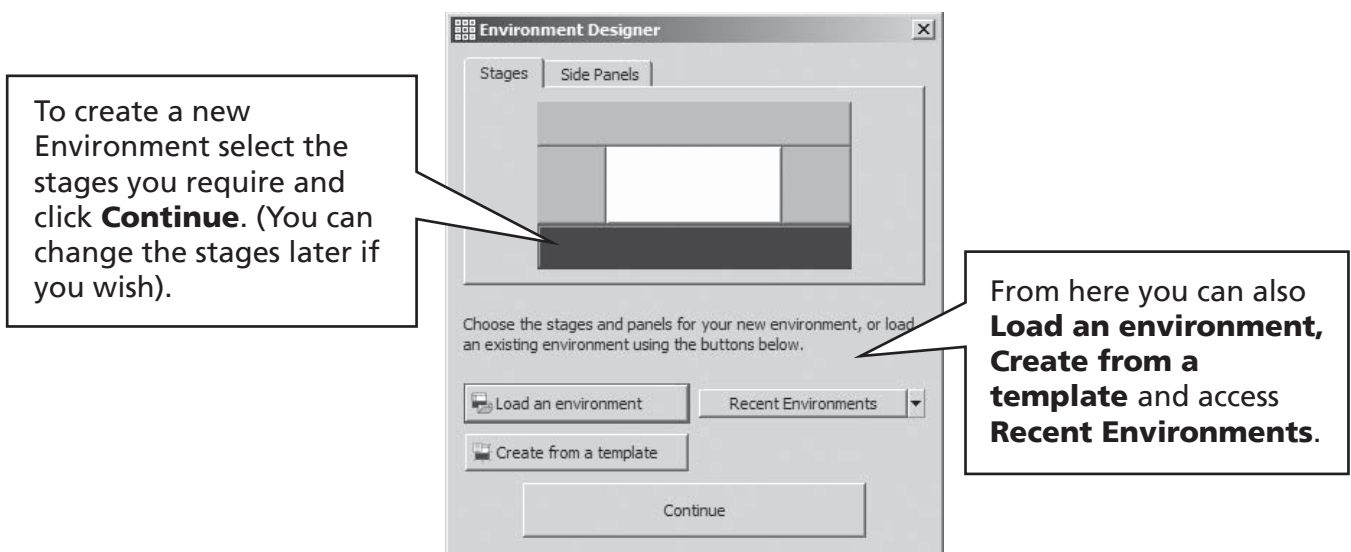
The **Getting Started With Grids** worksheets provide a step by step guide with the key features needed for making basic environments. You can find these under the Help menu in the folder Getting started.

R1.1 Starting in Design-mode

To create Environments you need to start SymWriter using the Design environment button.



This will open the Environment Designer dialog.



R1.2 Choosing the layout of a grid

When working with grids and stages there are two modes to use:

- (a) Text-mode. This is used for writing text into grid cells.
- (b) Arrow-mode. This is used for most other purposes, for example resizing, linking, editing appearance and moving.

The mode is changed by clicking on the Text icon

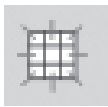


or the Arrow icon



on the toolbar, or by pressing **F2**.

To create grids you need it to be in arrow-mode.



Select the **New Grid** icon from the toolbar, or from the menu choose **Environment, Grids, New Grid**.

The screenshot shows the 'Create grid' dialog box with the following callout boxes:

- Set the number of columns.** (points to the 'Columns' spinner set to 2)
- Set the number of rows.** (points to the 'Rows' spinner set to 2)
- Select whether you want symbols and text, or just text in the cells. (You can change this from cell to cell later).** (points to the 'Size Cells for' section with 'Symbols and Text' selected)
- Click here to re-load the system default colours etc.** (points to the 'Load Defaults' button)
- Click here to save the current settings as the system defaults.** (points to the 'Save Defaults' button)
- Click **Create** and you will get a small image of the grid locked to the mouse. You can position a grid at the top, bottom, right or left of the screen. As you move the mouse in these places you will see stages appear in blue ready to receive the grid. Click when you are positioned where you want the grid. The rest of this section assumes a grid is placed at the bottom. (You may already have made a stage ready to receive the grid).** (points to the 'Create' button)

R1.3 Highlighting cells

Cells can be highlighted to enable the same action to operate on all highlighted cells.

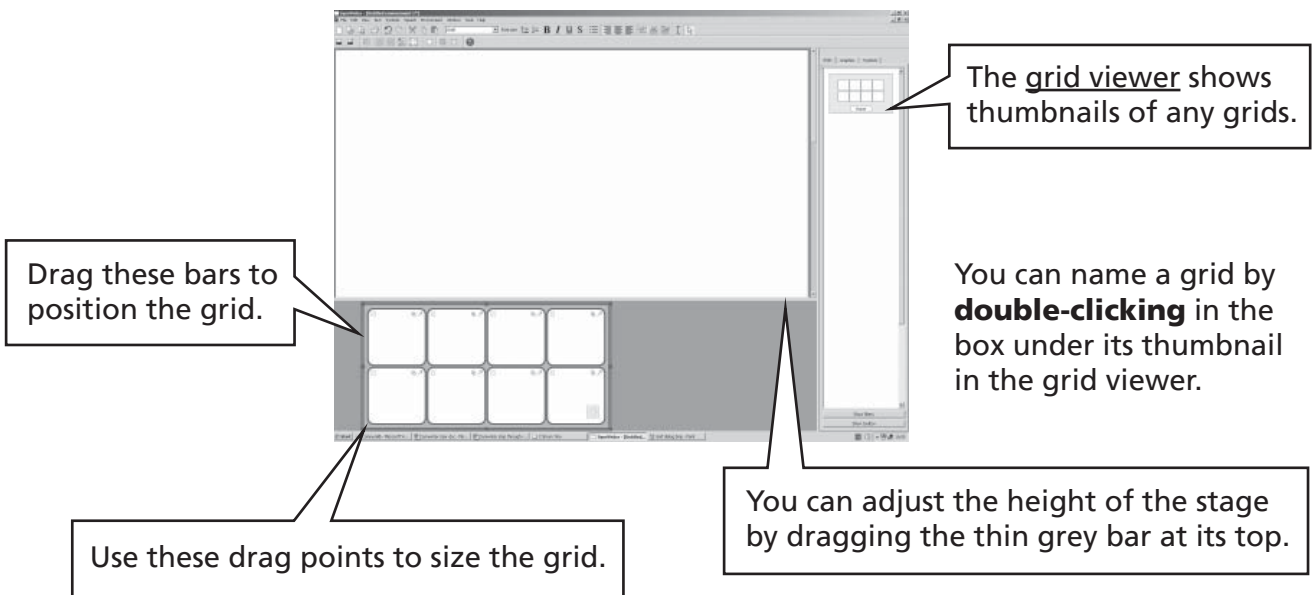
Method 1. Drag across a group of cells.

Method 2. Hold down **Ctrl** and click in each cell you want to highlight.

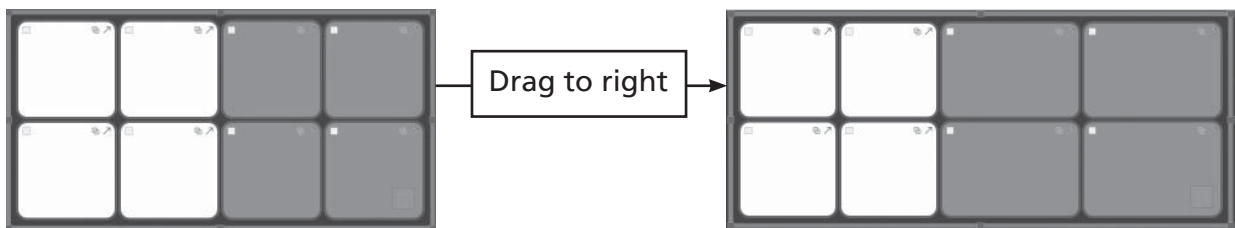


R1.4 Moving and resizing

In the example below we chose a 4 x 2 grid placed on the bottom stage.

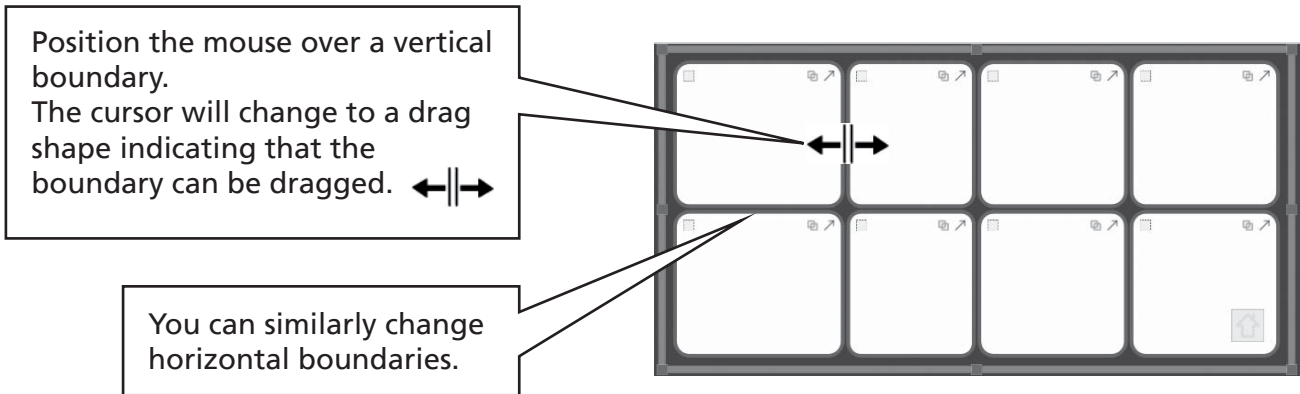


If you highlight a number of complete columns and drag horizontally, then only the columns highlighted will be resized.



Similarly if you highlight a number of complete rows and drag vertically, then only the highlighted rows will be resized.

R1.5 Moving cell boundaries



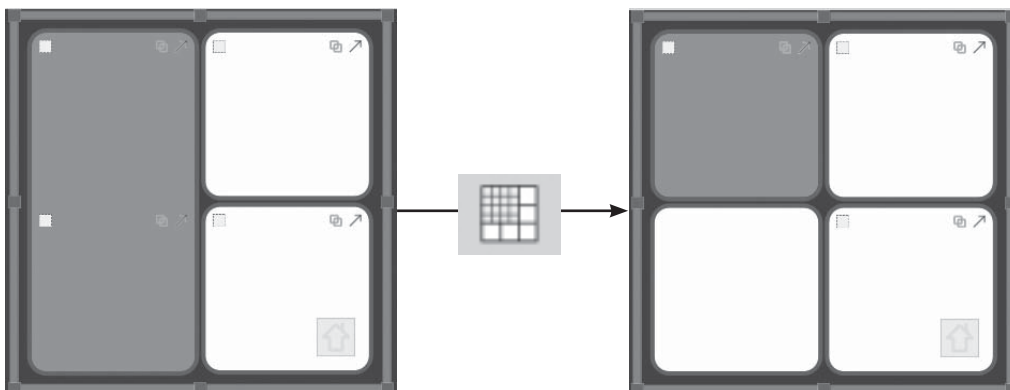
R1.6 Merging cells

Highlighted cells can be merged. Simply select the **Merge** icon from the toolbar, or from the menu, **Environment, Grids, Merge cells**.



R1.7 Breaking up cells

Cells which have been previously merged can also be broken up. Highlight the merged cell and select the **split cells** icon from the toolbar, or from the menu, **Environment, Grids, Split cells up**. You cannot split cells that have not previously been merged.



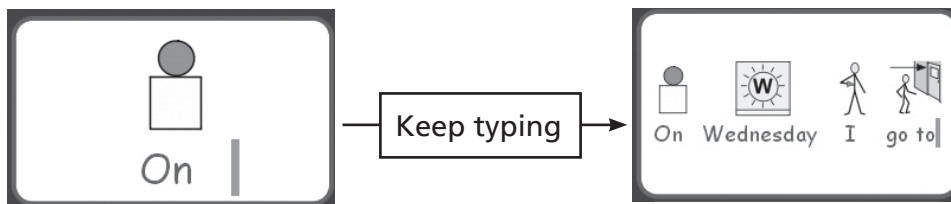
R1.8 Putting in content

To write text into a grid you need the program to be in **text-mode**. When moving and resizing, you need to be in **arrow-mode**. The icons for switching are on the toolbar, or you can press the **F2** key.



Once you are in text-mode you can click in any cell and start writing. The functionality in section A of this manual applies except that the contents of a cell will auto size to fit the grid. Note that in grids **centre align** is often useful.

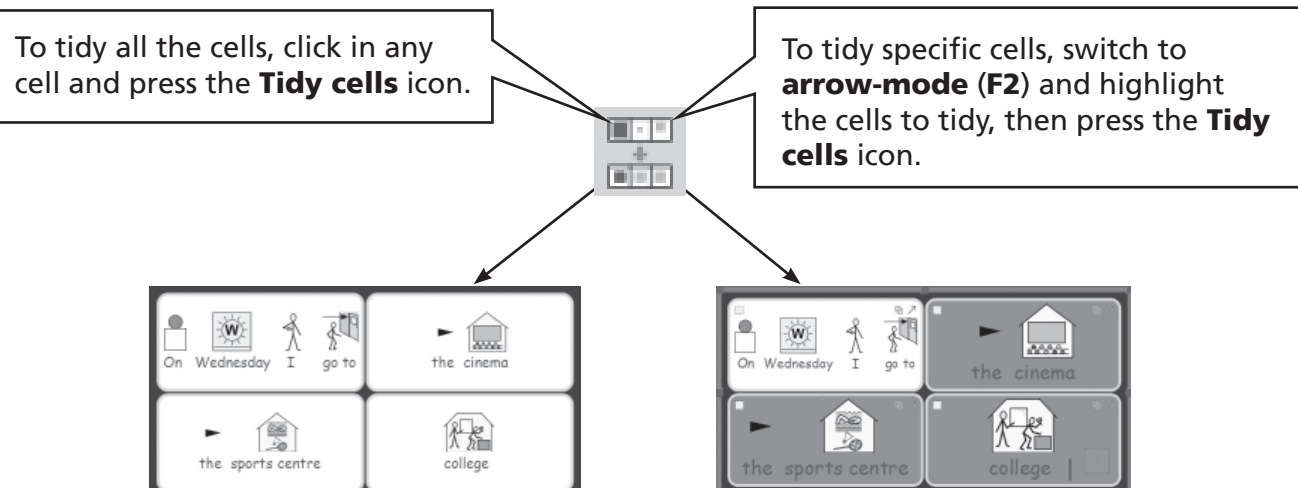
Make a basic square of four cells, and in **arrow-mode** stretch them horizontally a little so that you can type into them. Switch to **text-mode** and in the top left cell, write the following:



R1.9 Tidy cells function

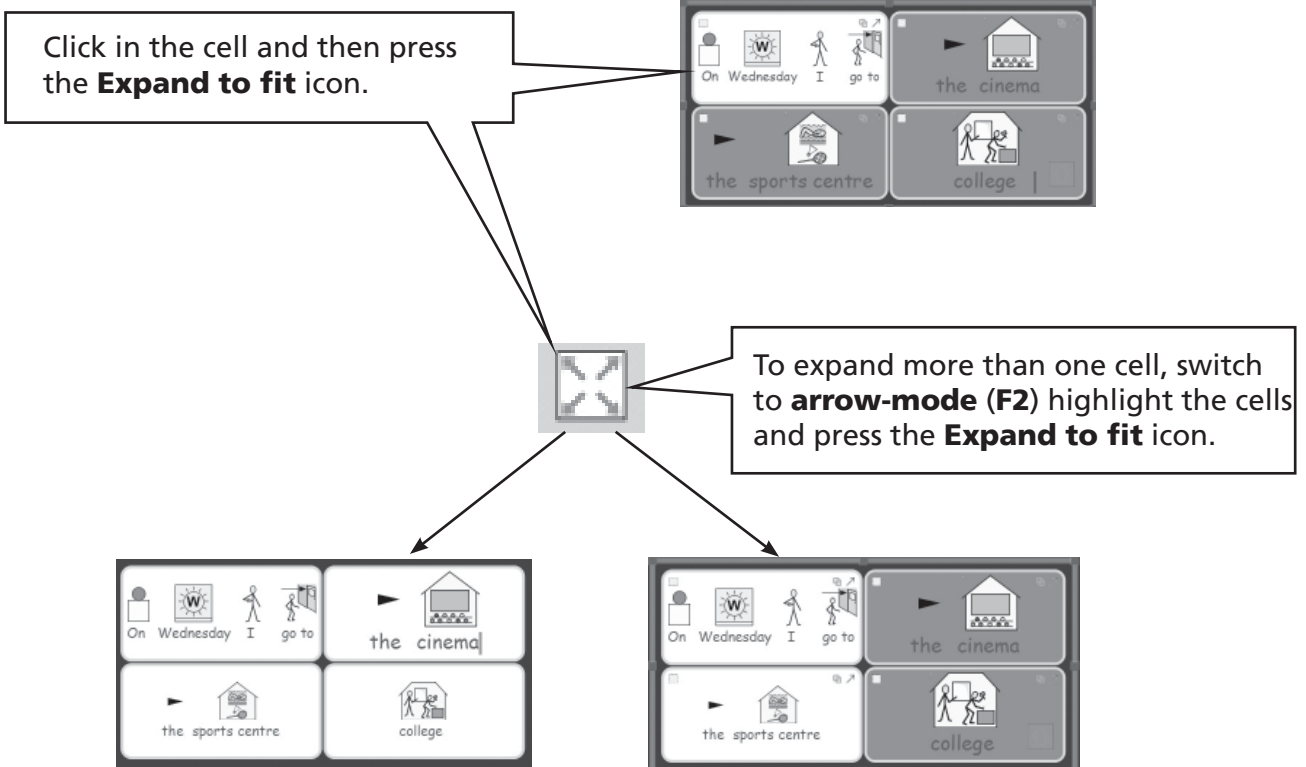
When typing in a grid it is often the case that the text and graphic sizes often vary in different cells. The tidy cells enables you to get a smart looking layout.

Write the following into the appropriate cells,

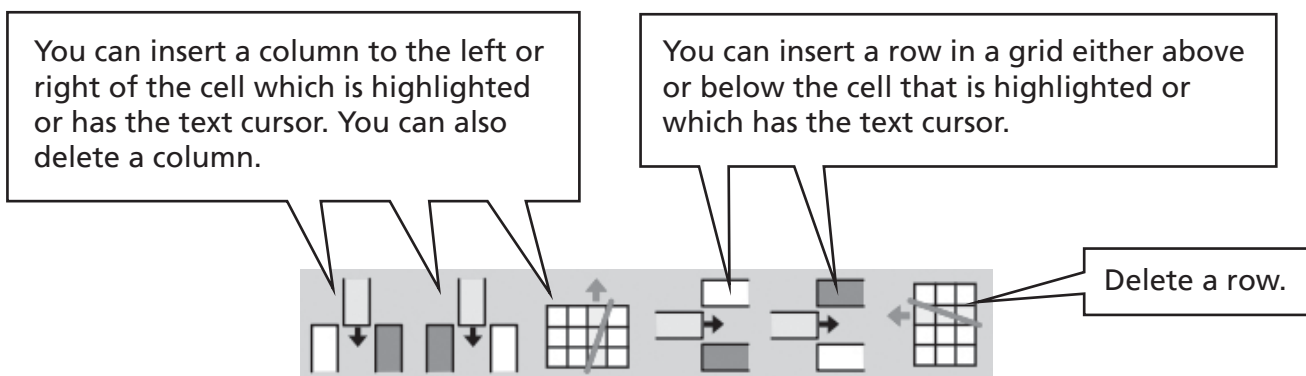


R1.10 Expand to fit

If, after tidying, you want the contents of a cell to fill the cell again, click in that cell and press the **Expand to fit** icon. This can also apply to a group of highlighted cells.



R1.11 Rows and columns



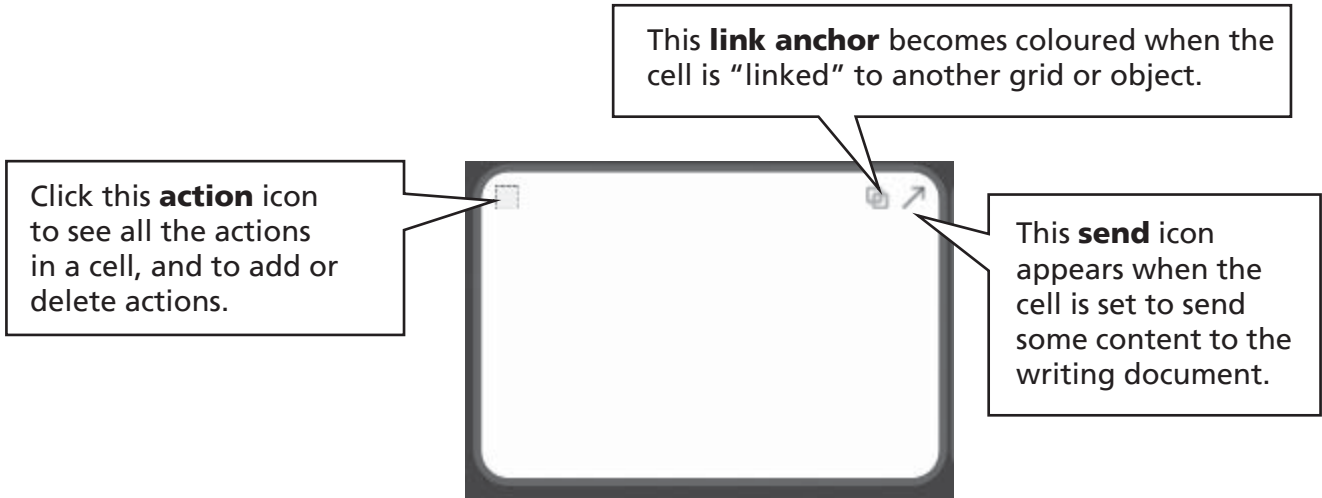
To insert or delete rows and columns, you need to be in arrow-mode.

Sometimes these icons may be greyed-out (i.e. not available). For example, if you have merged cells there are no clear horizontal or vertical positions to insert the **row** or **column**.

These functions are also available from the **Environments menu, Grids**, then **Rows** or **Columns**.

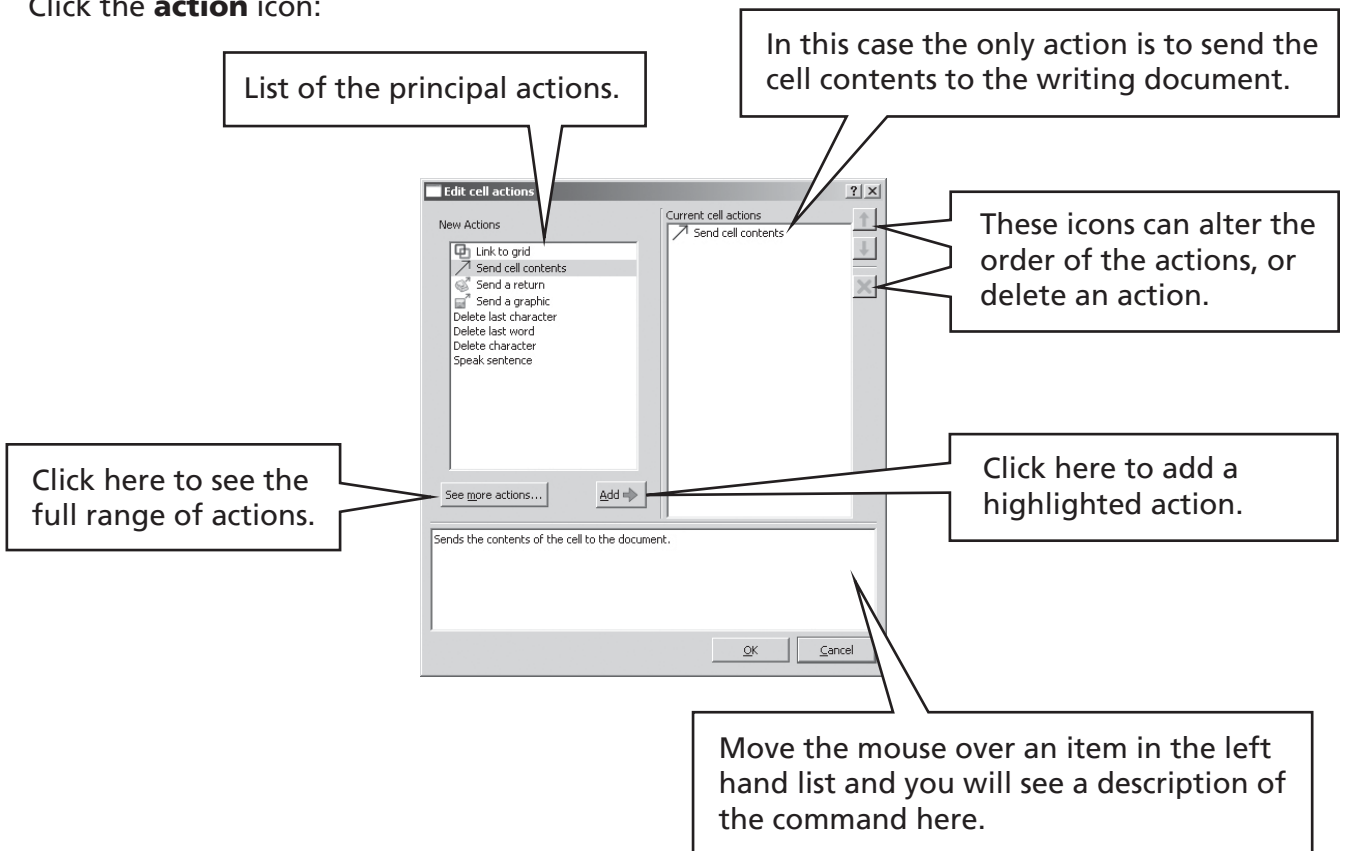
R1.12 Simple cell actions

In **arrow-mode** there are up to 3 small icons visible in a cell.



In the case where there is just one grid the link anchor is grey. Adding grids and linking is dealt within Reference sheet R3 Linked grids.

Click the **action** icon:



Using actions is dealt within detail Reference sheet R4 Using actions.

R1.13 Testing a grid

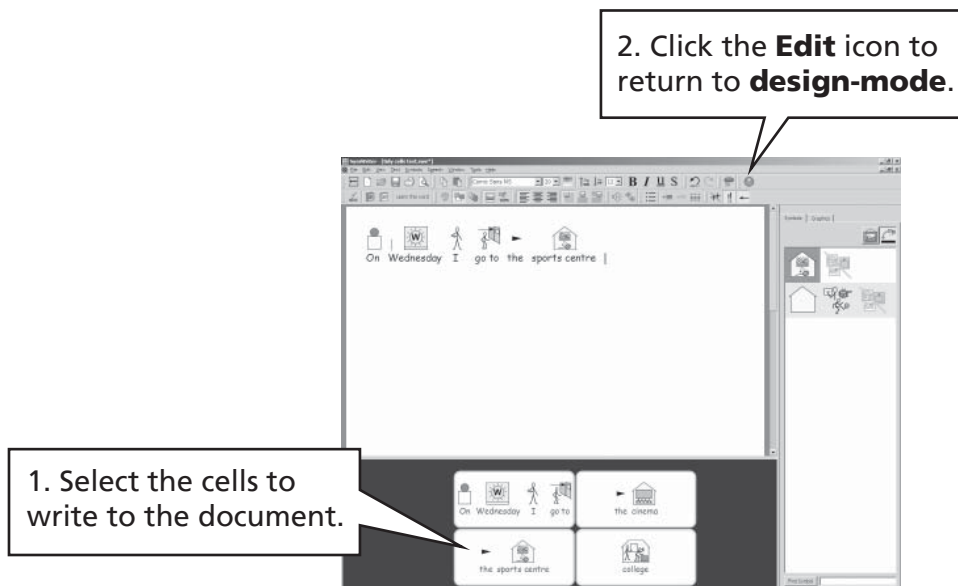
If you have made the grid from the previous few sections, you may like to test it.

Click on the green **Play** icon on the toolbar (alternatively select **Exit Design mode** from the Tools menu).



If you have not immediately saved your environment you will be asked if you want to **Save** the environment, **Save a copy** or **Use without saving**. We recommend that you save, or save a copy so that you can re-load the environment if necessary.

This program will then switch to write-mode, with the full Writing interface. When you have finished testing you can click on the red **Edit** button (or alternatively select **Switch to designer** from the **Tools** menu, and select **Confirm**).



R1.14 Grid appearance

Make sure you are in **arrow-mode**. Right button click in a grid.

Now select **Edit grid appearance**.

Click on these boxes to set the colours for the border, background and line.

This shows a picture, displaying the effects of your changes.

Click on these buttons to switch between colour and transparent.

Click to apply the changes you have made.

This sets the automatic colour to indicate that a cell is linked to another grid. See Reference sheet R3. Linked grids.

Use these boxes to set the values of the properties listed.

You can select the appearance of individual cells, or groups of cells, by first highlighting the cell(s) you want to change:

Highlight the cells you want to change.

Right click.

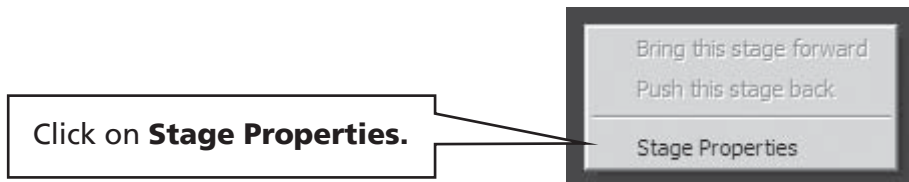
Now select **Edit grid appearance**.

Only these two cells will be changed.

In these ways you can change the appearance of all cells or selected cells at anytime.

R1.15 Altering the appearance of a stage

Right button click on the background of the stage (outside the grid) to get the context menu.



The dialog box that appears allows you to change the colour of a stage, or provide a colour gradient:

