

Using the spell checker

Help Sheet 9

There are many features of the spell checker in WWS2000 that makes it a very useful literacy aid.

- Words that have symbols are illustrated in the spell checker. This allows users to see the meanings of the words in the list. It will help with similar sounding words, such as 'pear' and 'pair', it will also show different meanings for a word spelt the same way, such as 'saw' and 'saw'.
- The word being checked is highlighted.
- Alternative words can be viewed and spoken in context before the user needs to confirm their selection. Seeing a word in the complete sentence can also help the user to select the right meaning.
- Individual words or the complete sentence can be spoken.
- New words can be added to the dictionary.
- Unusual mis-spellings, which do not usually show the appropriate correction can be added to the dictionary.

Even if the writer does not require symbols in their writing, the spell checker can help with language work.

The spell checker used by WWS2000 can be set to automatically mark errors as they are written, or can be activated at any time. It can be set to provide visual and/or auditory feedback. The feedback is set from the **Text** menu item.

Visual feedback of spelling errors

The visual marker is a red box around any word that is not recognised by the spell checker.



To provide this visual cue you need to make sure there is a check mark next to **Mark Spelling Errors** in the **Text** menu. As usual, clicking on this in the menu for a second time turns this feature off. The spellchecker indicates any word that is not present in the Spellchecker's dictionary. This means that some proper names may be indicated as a spelling mistake even though they are correctly spelt. If you wish you can add these words to the spelling dictionary so they are not marked as mistakes in the future.


Audible feedback of spelling errors

You can provide a sound whenever a spelling mistake is made. To do this you need to make sure there is a check next to **Hear Spelling Errors** in the **Text** menu. Clicking for a second time will turn this setting off again.

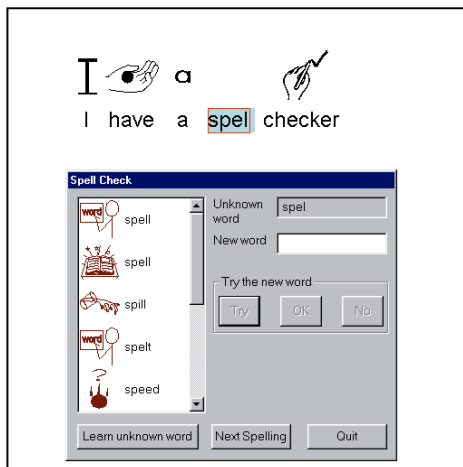
This sound warning can be useful for people who type without looking at what they are typing – the noise will be heard after the space that completes an incorrectly spelt word.

Using the Spellchecker

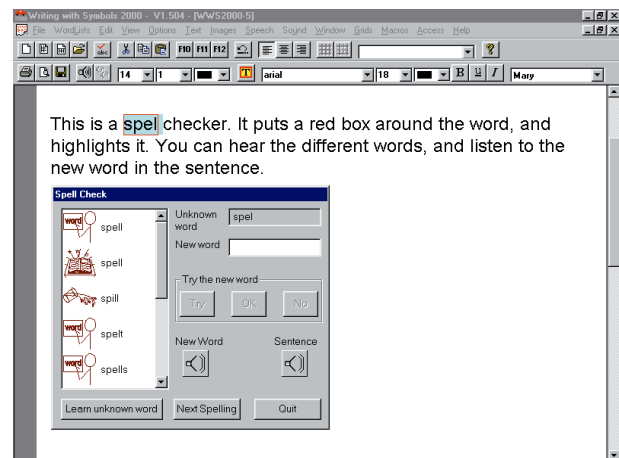
If either of the above options is selected, errors will be indicated as you type. You can choose to correct mistakes immediately, or go back and correct them later. You can also choose to correct words one at a time, or to go through the whole document.

To spell check the whole document you can either click on the spell icon  on the Additional Toolbar (or Simplified toolbar) or go to **Spell Check ...** in the **Text** menu. You can also produce the spell checker with CTRL + K.

This dialog box will then appear.



The basic spell checking dialog box



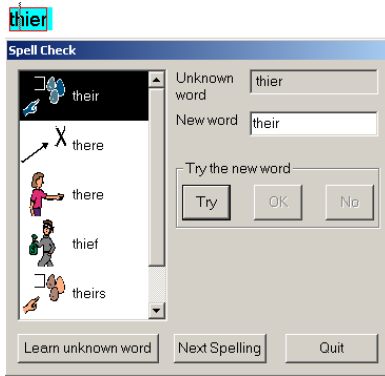
Spell checker with speech enabled, so you can hear the words in the list and the sentence being edited.

A blue highlighter box will move from one mis-spelt word to the next. The unknown word will appear in the box at the top of the dialog box. A number of symbols and words, which are possible correct spellings, appear in the window on the left side of the dialog box. If you think one of these is the correct spelling you can click on the suggested symbol and word which is then highlighted. Click on the **Try** button. The selection then replaces the mis-spelt word in the writing and you can see how it looks, in context. If it still does not look correct you can click on the **No** button and the original word will be replaced allowing you to choose an alternative. When you have found the alternative you can click on the **OK** button and the spellchecker moves on to the next unknown word. To move onto the next word without making a selection click on **Next Spelling**. If you want the dictionary within WWS2000 to learn the unknown word, then click on **Learn unknown word**.

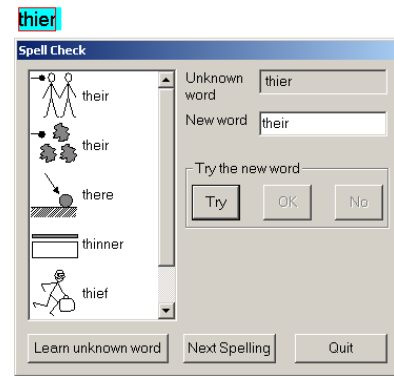
If speech is switched on in the document you will also have the option of hearing the new word or the sentence spoken out. If speech is on then the two icons in the Spell checker dialog box will become available (Shown on the right, above). Simply click on either one to activate the speech at any time when using the Spellchecker. When all the spellings have been corrected WWS2000 will let the user know that the spell check is completed.

Choosing which symbols are shown

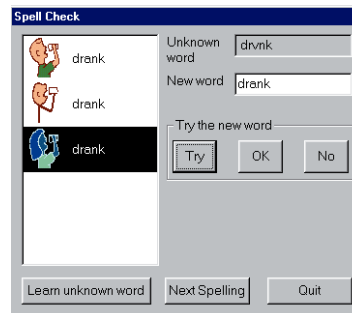
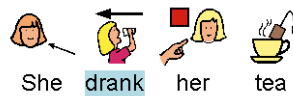
When the spellchecker offers alternative spellings it does so by using the current word list. The first alternatives in the list are for those words that have a symbol match, followed by the words that do not have a symbol match. You could experiment by trying a different wordlist (see Help Sheet 7) and seeing the effect of different wordlists.



An illustration of the different spell checker alternatives with the PCcolour and Spelling wordlists.



The symbol user may want to be able to choose between different symbols, even with the same meaning, and a long list would be fine. A text user may be better served with a spelling list that only had one alternative for each different concept.



The wordlist **Spelling.wus** was created with text users in mind. It makes use of only black and white symbols and offers the user only one symbol to represent each word. For example, instead of perhaps 5 symbol choices for the word “here” and 2 symbol choices for the word “hear” there is just one for each. However when a word has two meanings the word appears in the Spelling wordlist twice but with the two different symbols to help differentiate the meaning for users.

Checking the meaning of words that appear to be correctly spelt

This is likely to occur when writing in text mode. There are many occasions when a word may be correctly spelt, but may not be the required word. For example words which sound the same or similar. Words such as: **pear pair, through threw, bought brought**. In this case, it is useful to just ‘turn-on’ a symbol momentarily, to check the word.



He threw the ball through the window

This can be done by putting the cursor in the word and pressing the **F12** key to show the symbol. To remove it again you just need to press the **F12** key again. The final document can still be in text, but the symbols have been helpful in improving accuracy.

Adding your own alternatives to the spelling list

Some users make consistent spelling errors or errors that are as result of the way a word is pronounced in a local dialect. Many spellcheckers may not pick this up or if they do they do not offer any correct alternatives for the mis-spelt word. There is a feature in WWS2000 that can help with this. This is likely to be useful to users who are typing into the program and using the symbols as support for their spelling.

The example given in the Help file is a pupil from Newcastle-upon-Tyne who regularly wrote "**heea**" for "**here**". This pupil can be offered help by the spellchecker by including the mis-spelt word in a text file called ExtraSpell.txt. This file is found in your application directory (Usually c:\WWS2000). **Close** or **minimise** your WWS2000 application window, to reveal the desktop. From **My Computer**, open the directory for your hard drive and find the folder **WWS2000**. Find the file called **ExtraSpell.txt** and open it by double clicking on it. This will open into **Notepad**.

```
woz,was  
wos,was  
heea,here,hear  
muvver,mother  
muver,mother  
heear,here,hear  
sor,saw
```

Each line represents first the mis-spelling followed by a comma and then one or more correct alternatives. So for example '**heea**' has the corrections to both '**hear**' and '**here**'. You can try editing this file by using the following example.

The mis-spelling '**wright**' offers '**right**' and '**weight**' as alternatives but not '**write**'. Modify the ExtraSpell file by adding a new line. First type **wright** then **write**. Do not put any spaces in the line and end with a return. Then save the file. You will need to close WWS2000 and then re-open it again for the new list to load into memory. Do this and check it by typing **wright**.

The contents of this file will work with all the wordlists in WWS2000.

See also - Help Sheet 12: Using Speech