

Activity 4

Using the Word Processor

1. The Word Processor - Writing in text mode

The second main button on the front screen of Writing with Symbols 2000 takes you to the word processor.

The Word processor is designed for

- users who write in text but who may be helped by some visual support through selective access to images
- text users who like to use some pictures and images to illustrate their writing
- creating documents that only use a small number of images
- students who would like extra help when writing, but want the final product to be all text, like their peers

An important feature of Writing with Symbols is its flexibility, with features that may meet the needs of a very wide range of users, and thus supporting inclusion.

The word processor uses the same formatting commands as those you saw in the previous activity uses the formatting commands shown above, and in that respect is like many other word processors. However, you can still easily add symbols to a word processed document in Writing with Symbols 2000.

- To turn a symbol on, put the cursor in the required word and press the **F12** key
- You can view a symbol temporarily and then turn it off again by pressing the F12 key again. This facility might be useful if a text writer just wants to check the meaning of a word (in the wordlist) or for instance to see if *pair* really means two things, rather than the fruit. Pressing **F12** on *pear* and *pair* would, of course give different symbols

When the symbol is first displayed, the text moves down the page to make space for the symbol. If you turn off all the symbols the text lines close up again.

Text mode is also very useful for writing if you only want a small measure of symbol support. If you want to write information that is not overloaded with symbols it may be easier to type in **text** mode, and then deliberately choose to turn a symbol on, rather than going through and turning many symbols off. It also makes one more careful to check each symbol used. This mode is particularly useful where the writer may not be experienced in writing in symbols for other users. It will help to avoid some of the problems of symbol use.

2. Changing modes within a document

You can switch between symbol processing and word processing within a single document. There are occasions when you may want a symbol paragraph in a word processed document, or vice versa.

To change between symbol and text modes either

- press the **F10** key or
- click on the mode icon on the **Normal** toolbar

The icon on the toolbar will change to show you the mode of the paragraph at your current cursor position:

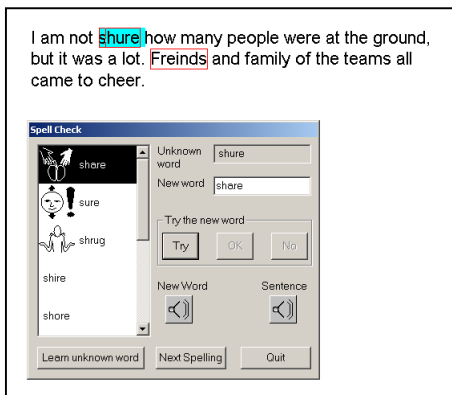


icon to show symbol mode and icon to show text mode

The mode works on a paragraph basis. You can have different modes for different paragraphs, but not different modes within one paragraph.

3. Using the spell checker

The spell checker has both pictorial and speech support, and can be of significant benefit to beginner writers and writers who are struggling with using text. Any word that is in the current wordlist will be illustrated, and you can try different alternatives, seeing them in context, before choosing the correction required.



Words that have symbols appear first in the list, but others are also listed. You can try a word from the spell check list, and it will be put into the writing instead of the highlighted word. You can then choose to accept or reject that choice. Sometimes seeing a word in context can help the writer recognize the correct spelling.

If you have speech activated (see below) then you can hear the new words or the entire sentence before making your final selection.

4. Using speech

Hearing the writing can both help with reading and can be very motivating. Type the following paragraph:

Alice said "Why do you like sitting on a mushroom?" The caterpillar answered "None of your business."

First check that speech is switched on. Look at the speech icons on the toolbar.



If the one on the left shows black (as illustrated) then the speech is ON. If not, go to the Speech menu and click on the first item – Turn Speech on.

Click at the beginning of the writing to put the cursor there and then click on the speaker icon on the toolbar.

It will speak the first sentence. Click on the icon again to hear the next sentence. The other icon (with two little speakers on it) will repeat the last speech rather than going on to the next sentence.

Look on the toolbar and you will see a box with the name of the voice.

It will probably be Mary. Highlight across all of the text you want to modify and then change the voice to Mike, by clicking on the little down arrow beside the voice name.

You will now hear it in a different voice. You can, in fact, have different voices through the sentence. Highlight the words that Alice says (“Why do you like sitting on a mushroom?”) and change that back to the voice **Mary**, and then highlight the words of the caterpillar (None of your business) and change that voice to **Sam**.



Listen to your writing again.

Where different voices may be useful

- This kind of speech can emulate conversation, and is great for things like jokes.
- It can help writers understand the difference between direct speech and narrative or indirect speech.
- You can set the speech voice in a grid to be different from that in a document window,
- You can use the Right Mouse button to hear the text in any cell. The different voice helps by making it sound different from the main writing.
- Plays and drama sessions benefit students being able to create plays and experiment with different character voices.