

## Activity 8

## Grids for Writing

You have looked at how to write using symbols and how to create symbol documents and grids for use by symbol users. These are largely the tools that a teacher or carer will use to create materials for a child or adult with a learning difficulty. Symbol users will either require help and support to write using the keyboard. If they wish to write independently, then they will need selection sets of symbols that they can choose, either with mouse or switch, to write into a document.

Writing with Symbols 2000 lets you create on-screen grids with symbols, pictures and words, to meet individual requirements. A set of on-screen grids with the writing document is called a writing 'Environment' because it contains all the content and settings for that particular user or purpose.

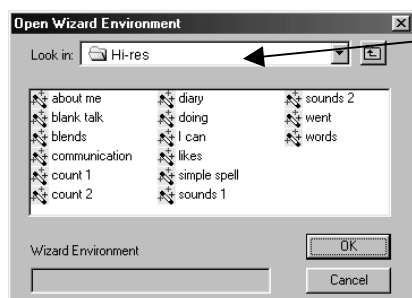
This activity takes you through some of the examples included with the program, and then the next activity shows you how to make these for yourself.

### 1. Looking at some of the example environments

From the front screen select **Grids for Writing** and then **Open Wizard Environment**.



You should see an open dialogue box like this:



This box shows NT2000, Hi-res or Lo-res, depending on the resolution you use on your computer. If there is something else here, you will need to navigate to this point to find the file.

If it looks wrong when you have opened the file, and it does not fit the screen, you should navigate to the other directory.

Help Sheets 1 & 3 give more information on these actions.

#### (a) Open the environment Diary:

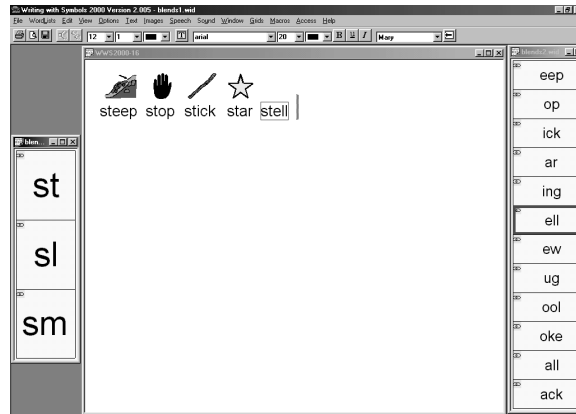
This has two grids, one on top of the other, positioned the full height of the screen. The two grids have the same number of cells. Whichever 'Day' cell you click on, it will jump to the second grid. This means that each cell has a link to the second grid. Similarly there are links from every cell in the second grid back to the first. (You can see the name of the current grid in the top blue title bar of the application. The two files are called **Diary 1** and **Diary 2**.)

There is an option to see or hide the links icon in cells. When reviewing or editing environments it is useful to switch this option on. From the Options Menu tick Show Links in Grid. Click on it again to un-check it, and so hide the links icon.

You can open a new environment either by returning to the front screen, using the back button, or you can select **Open Wizard Environment** from the **File** menu.

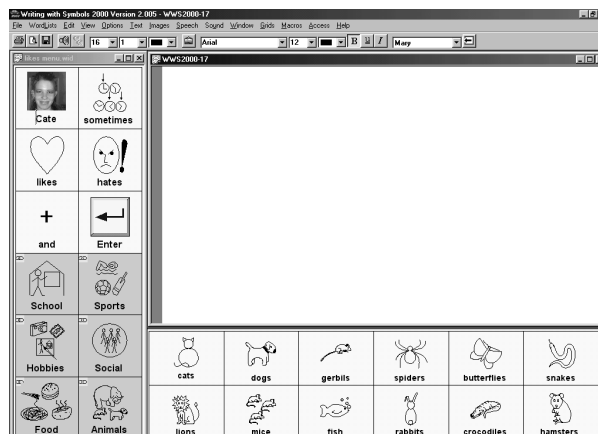
### (b) Open the environment **Blends**

This has two vertical grids. One has three cells the other has many more. Both of these grids are set to be in text mode, although the document is set to be in symbol mode.



- The word beginnings have just the letters shown, and are set to **type the text**
- The word endings each have a space after them in the cell so that when sent to the document the program looks for the symbol for the new word
- The document has been set to mark the spelling errors, and so the red box appears around incorrect words
- The speech has been set to be on, from the speech menu, has been set to speak after word

### (c) Open Wizard Environment **Likes**



This has two grid shapes.

The main grid is the vertical grid. This has some cells that are coloured green. You can see a small icon in the corner of these cells. This indicates that these cells link to other grids.

Click on these green cells in turn. Instead of sending anything to the document you will see that the horizontal grids change for each of the green cells. You can have as many of each type of grid as you like. This can give access to a large vocabulary selection.

In the other cells of the main grid you will see a photograph. You can add your own images to Writing with Symbols 2000. There is information on this in **Help Sheet 10, Using photographs and scanned images**.

There is also a cell that has the same function as using the **Enter** key. This is made using a macro command. You can add a range of different commands to a cell that makes it perform different functions. These are called macros. For example you could create a single macro of set of commands to highlight a whole sentence, change the text to bold and then centre itself – for making a heading perhaps. There is more information on macros in Activity 6, and in the on-screen tutorial, under the Switch access section,. Full details of all the commands available are given in the Help Sheet on Adding Commands to a cell.

## **SUMMARY**

You have seen how to make a window into send mode, and how to make a simple environment from the document sections of the program. You have also looked at some example environments ready to make your own.

There is a section at the back of the Writing with Symbols 2000 manual that describes the other environments.

**Activity 9 will take to through the process of making a Wizard Environment.**