

This activity shows how to make a sequence of Grids for writing

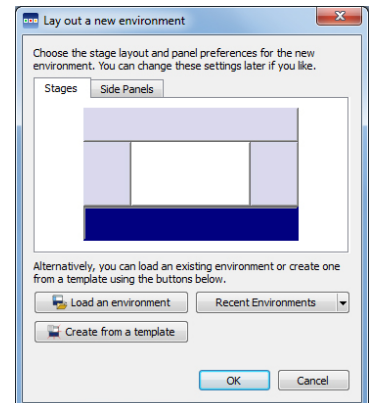


This activity follows the activity **Getting started with writing** and **Getting started with Grids-1**. It should take you no more than 20 minutes.

## 1 Setting up the Environment

Open **Design an Environment**. This dialog allows you to choose where the writing Grid will be positioned. The area for a **Grid** is called a **Stage**.

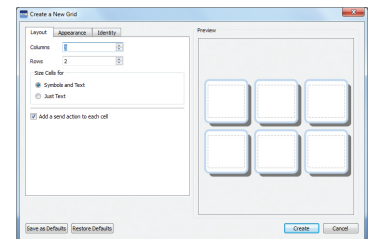
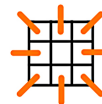
Click in the bottom Stage to highlight it and click **OK**.



## 2 Creating the first Grid

Click on the **New Grid** icon. This will bring up the **Create a New Grid** dialog.

Set the Grid to have 3 columns and 2 rows and click **Create**.



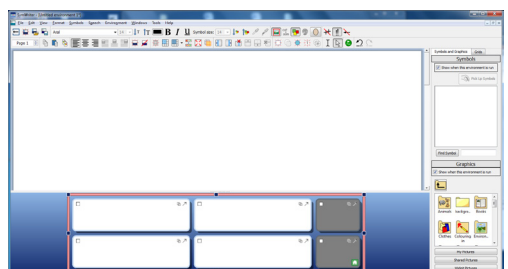
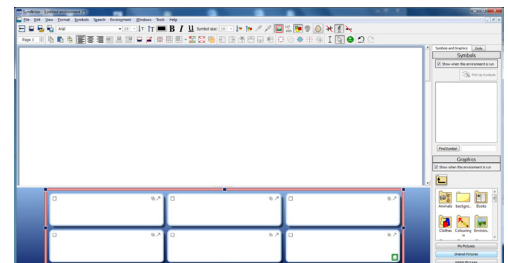
Drop this onto the Stage at the bottom of the screen.

Stretch the Grid using the blue handles on the frame.

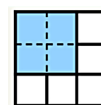
Hold down **CTRL** and click in the two Cells on the right to highlight them both.

Now, move the right edge of the Grid border inwards to make these two Cells square.

Pick up the Grid by clicking on the pink bounding box and place it in the centre of the Stage.



We want to merge the left column to make a single Cell. Highlight the two Cells in the left column and click on the **Merge Cells** icon.



This is the basic Grid and will be the model for all of the Grids in the sequence.



**3 Adding the content**

There are two editing modes in the designer: **Object mode** for making any changes to the Grid and its properties, and **Text mode** to write or edit the text. Change between modes using the toolbar icons.

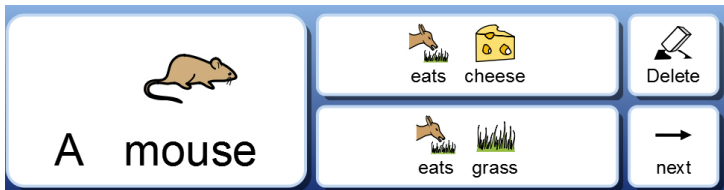
Object mode



Text mode

Click on the **Text mode** icon on the toolbar to change to Text mode.

Write into the Cells as shown.



Note: Choose the most appropriate symbols from the symbols viewer as you write.

**4 Tidying the Cells**

The text 'A mouse' is much bigger than the rest making the Grid look untidy.

In **Object mode**, highlight the three Cells on the left.

Tidy Cells



Click on the **Tidy Cells** icon to make the content in these selected Cells the same size.



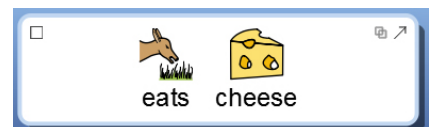
**HINT:** You can also use the **Format Painter** to select the ideal text and symbol size and apply it to the three Cells. The Format Painter is described in the tutorial Getting Started with Writing.

**5 Adding a speak Action**

We would like to add Actions so that the student can hear their sentence and then if necessary delete it and try again before going on to the next sentence.

Change to **Object mode**.

Click in the 'eats cheese' Cell.



You will see a number of little icons in the top of the Cell: The little square on the left is the Cell Actions Indicator.

**6** Click on the **Cell Actions Indicator** to show the **Cell Actions** dialog.

On the right of this dialog is a list of Actions currently linked to this Cell.

At the moment the only Action is **Send Cell contents**.

We want to add an Action to speak the sentence after the Cell contents have been sent to the document.

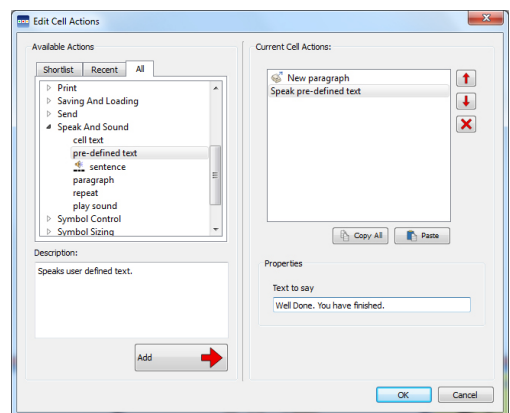
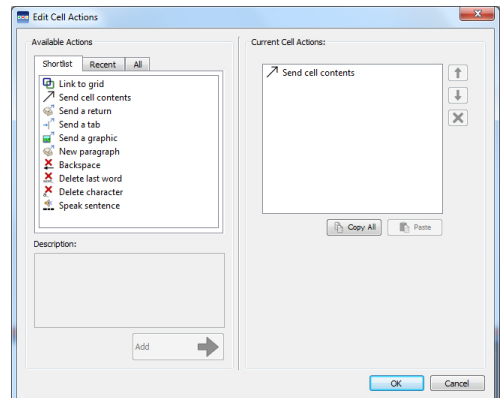
On the left there is a list of available Actions.

Make sure the **Common** tab is selected. This gives you a list of the most common Actions you may need.

Click on **Speak sentence** and then on **Add** to put it in the list.

Click **OK** when you are finished.

Add the same Action to the 'eats grass' Cell.



**7** **Adding the delete Actions**

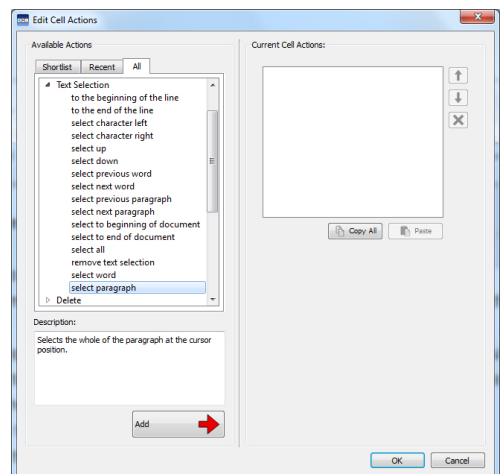
If the student is unhappy with the sentence, they may want to delete it and start again. The delete Action could simply delete the last word, but ideally it would delete the whole sentence.

Click in the **Cell Actions indicator** square in the 'Delete' Cell.

We do not want the word 'Delete' to be sent to the document, so click on that in the **Current Cell Actions** list and click on the **X** icon to remove it.

The Actions are to select the paragraph and then delete it. Click on the **All** tab at the top of the **Available Actions**.

From this list click on the little expand icon beside **Text selection**. Then choose **Select paragraph** at the bottom of the list, and then click on the **Add** button.



Return to the **Common Actions** tab, and add **Delete left**, to delete the highlighted sentence.

Click on the **OK** button to complete the **Current Cell Actions**.

## 8 Ending the sentence and creating a new paragraph

Before going to the next Grid we need to send a full stop to end the sentence and to **Send a return**. There is an Action **New paragraph** that will do both of these in one step. This Action is added to the 'Next' Cell before going to the next Grid.

Click in the **Cell Actions Indicator** square in the 'next' Cell to bring up the Cell Actions dialog.

Remove the **Send Cell Contents** Action (as above).

From the **Common** tab, select **New Paragraph** and add that.

Click **OK** to finish the Actions for this Cell.

## 9 Changing the background colour of a Cell

We want to change the background colour of the 'Delete' Cell to show that it is different.

In **Object mode**, click in the Cell to highlight it (This ensures changes are only made to this Cell and not the entire Grid).

Right click on the Cell to bring up the **Grid Properties** menu.

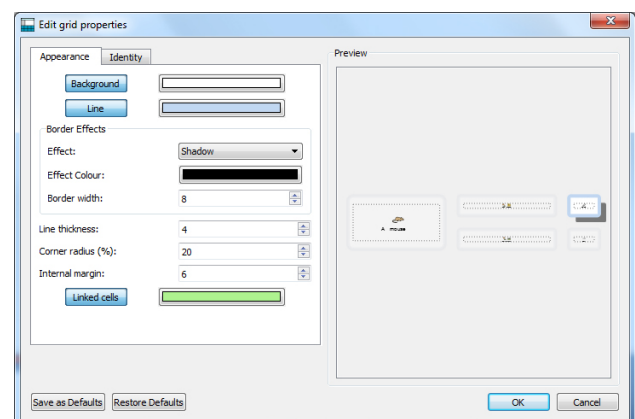
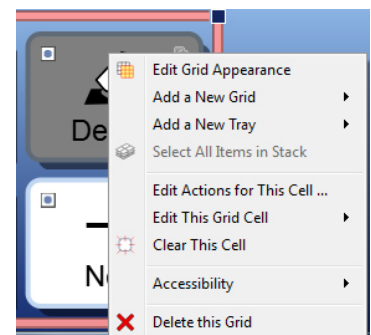
Click on the top item: **Edit Grid Appearance**.

You will notice in the image of the Grid on the right, that only the selected Cell is highlighted. This confirms that you are only changing this Cell.

Click on the colour bar next to the **Background** button. This will give you a colour palette to select the colour you want.

Click **OK** when you have the colour you want.

The colour for the 'Next' Cell is set by the **Link colour**. This can also be changed from the **Cell Appearance** dialog box.



**10** Saving and testing your work so far

The first Grid is now complete.

Save your Environment and then click on the green **Play** button on the toolbar to test your work.



You may also want to change the text and symbol size in the document.

If everything works as you intend, delete the text in the document and return to the editor by clicking on the red **Edit** button on the toolbar.



**11** Creating a new linked Grid

When creating the new Grid, we want to copy the contents and Actions of the Cells that we have added Actions to, to save remaking them. In **Object mode**, highlight each of these 4 Cells by holding down **CTRL** and clicking in each.

Right click over the 'Next' Cell, which is the one we want to link from.

From the **Grid Properties** menu select **Add a New Grid**. This will give you a choice. Select **Linked from this Cell**.



**12** The Grid viewer

On the right of the screen is the resources panel with two tabs: **Symbols and graphics** and **Grids**. Select Grids for the Grid viewer.

You will see thumbnails of the two Grids you have now created.

You will also see that the 'Next' Cell of your first Grid has been automatically coloured.

Your new Grid has a blank first Cell, but the contents of the central two Cells have been copied, in order to keep the Actions, so this text will need to be edited. In 'Text Edit' mode, change the contents e.g. A cat eats fish/eats peanuts

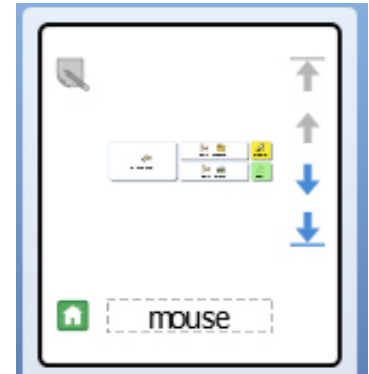


Repeat the 'Add New Grid' procedure, highlighting the Actions Cells as before to create the third Grid. Continue until you have as many Grids in the Stack as you wish.

When making an Environment with several Grids, it is generally helpful to name the Grids in the Grid viewer so that you can identify each Grid easily. You can do this at any time.

In the Grid viewer, double click in the label below the Grid thumbnail and type a short name, e.g. 'mouse', 'cat' etc.

The final thing is to edit the 'Next' Cell in the last Grid. Delete the text 'Next' and replace it with 'Finished'.



### 13 Adding a speech message at the end

If you wish, you could ask the Cell to speak a message to the student:

Open the **Cell Actions** dialog from that Cell.

From the **All Actions** tab, open the **Speak and sound** list.

Select the Action **pre-defined text**.

When you click **Add**, a new box appears for you to type the text you want spoken. Click **OK** to finish.



Save your Environment again and test it.

Congratulations. Your Environment is now complete.



Using the techniques you have now covered in **Getting started with writing** and **Getting started with Grids 1** and **2**, you will be able to make a very wide range of writing activities. You will see other similar Grids in the example Environments supplied with the program.

The next two activities explore some more complex Grids and using more than one Grid visible at a time.