

## Word building using multiple text Grids

This is a word building activity. The objective is to choose a starter letter, a central vowel and a final letter from the third Grid. When the word is complete, correct words will be illustrated in the document and spoken.

The activity has three separate text Grids, but the document has symbols. It is suitable for adapting for switch users, who are unable to use a mouse.



This activity assumes you have covered the features shown in the tutorials **Getting started with Grids-1** and **-2**. It should take you no more than 20 minutes.

**1**

### Creating a text Grid

Start in the designer with a single Stage at the bottom of the screen.

Click on the **New Grid** icon, and create a Grid that has 3 columns and 2 rows.

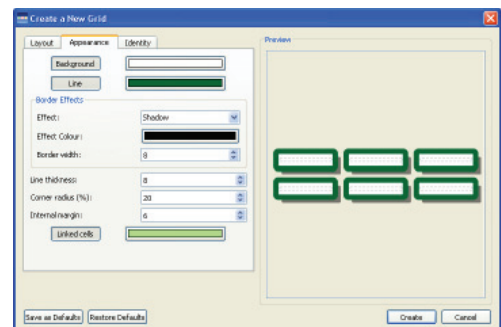
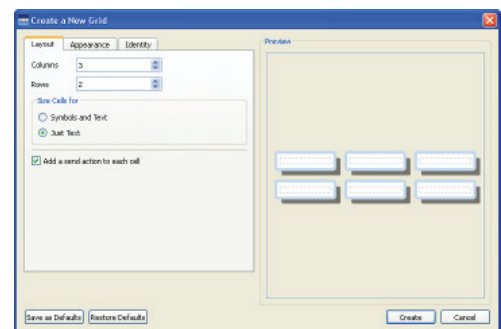
Just below the place where you set the rows and columns there are radio buttons to set whether you want the Cell contents to be in symbols or text. Choose **Just Text**.

Click on the **Appearance** tab.

Change the **Line** colour to green and make the line thickness 8.

Click **Create**, and place the Grid on the Stage.

Use the blue handles on the Grid border to reduce the width of the Grid so that the Cells are square. Position this Grid towards the left of the stage. This will have the word starters.

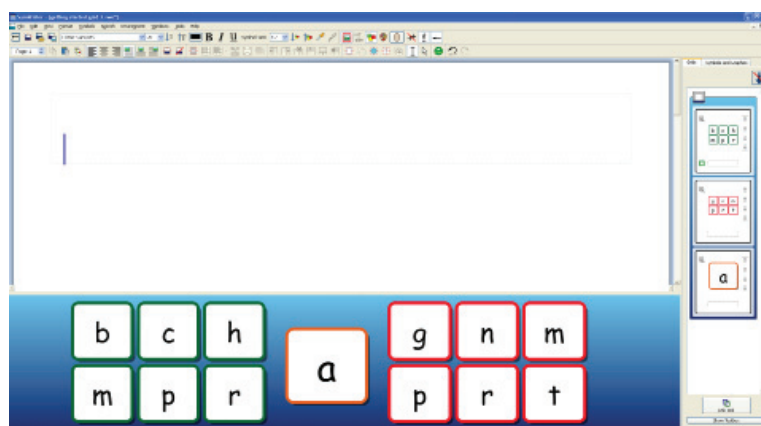


## 2 Adding other Grids to the layout

Create another Grid like this but with the lines red. Position that to the right of the Stage. This will have the final letters.

In the centre we will add a third Grid with a single Cell to contain the single central vowel. This should have an orange border.

Arrange the Grids as illustrated and then change to **Text mode** and add the content to the Cells.



**HINT:** Changing the font.

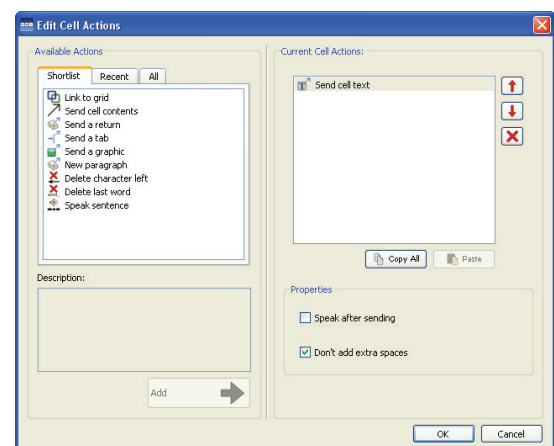
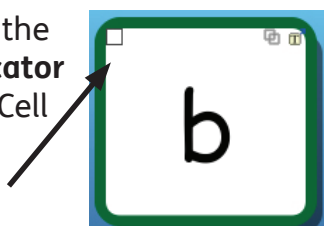
The Grids are automatically made using the default font. If you want to change the font after you have made the Grid, you can select the Grid in **Object mode** and then change the font from the toolbar. You will need to do this to all three Grids. You will also need to change the font in the document.

## 3 Setting the properties

At the moment, each letter sent to the document would be followed automatically by a space. We do not want this.

In **Object mode**, click in the first Grid to see the three Cell properties icons in a Cell.

In the first Cell, click in the little **Cell Actions Indicator** square to bring up the Cell Actions dialog.



- 4** The Action **Send Cell Text** is listed in the **Current Cell Actions** list, but at the bottom you will see two other items that can be selected. Check the box **Don't add extra spaces** so that the trailing space after the letter is not sent.

Click **OK**.

Repeat this for the central single Cell.



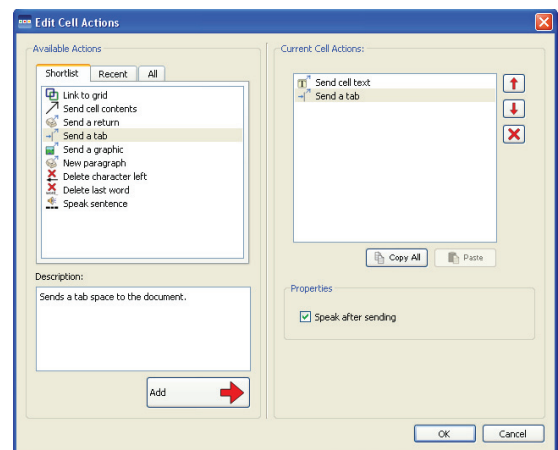
**HINT:** Rather than adding this option individually to each Cell, you can select each of the Cells you want to change (by holding down **CTRL** when you select the Cell) and then right click on one of the Cells to show the **Cell Properties** menu. Select **Edit Properties for this Cell**. This will bring you up the dialog box as above. When you click **OK** this change will be applied to all the highlighted Cells.

**5** **Separating the words and speaking the text**

In SymWriter, a symbol will only appear for a word when the space (or tab or paragraph break) is sent after the text, so we want to keep the space after the final letters in the red Grid. However, just adding a space will put the words very close together, and so it would be better to add a tab between each word to separate it.

Select all of the Cells in the red Grid. Right click to get the **Cell Properties** menu and choose **Edit Actions for this Cell**. From the left shortlist choose **Send a tab** and add this to the list. It would be nice to hear the word as well, so check the box that says **Speak after sending**.

Click **OK**.



**6** **Document text and symbol size**

In **Text mode**, click in the document and type one of the words. To change the text and symbol sizes highlight all of the text you have written, make the changes you want on the toolbar. You can change the size of both the text and symbols together using the combined size button or you can set the sizes individually. In this example the text is 20 and the symbols 12.

Increase  
Symbol and  
text size



Decrease  
Symbol and  
text size

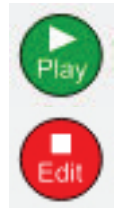


**7 Saving and testing your work so far**

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

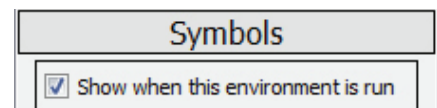
Click on the red **Edit** button to return to the designer. Make any changes or corrections.

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



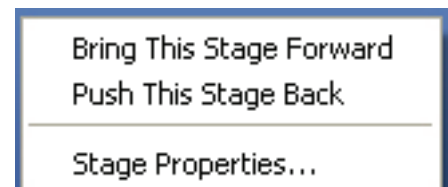
**8 Symbol and graphics panels**

You certainly do not want the graphics panel showing when the activity is run, and you probably don't want the symbols browser showing either. Before saving the Environment for the last time, uncheck the little boxes at the top of the symbols and graphics panels that say **Show when this Environment is run**.



**9 Changing the colours of the Stage**

There is one final change you could make if you wish. The default background colour for the Stage is blue. To change this colour in **Object mode**, right click on the Stage area outside of the Grid. This will give you the Stage menu.

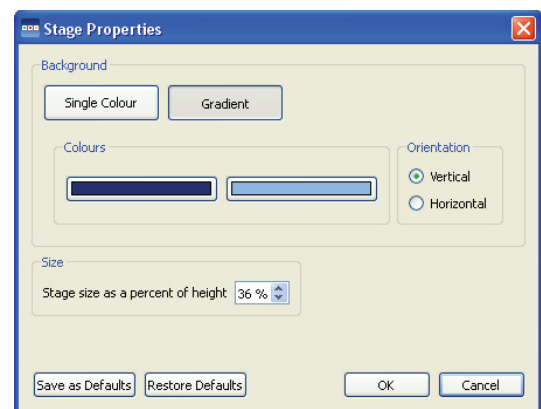


Select **Stage Properties**.

This will bring up the Stage Properties dialog.

You can choose to have a single colour or a graduated background. Change the direction of the fade on the right. Change the colour(s) by clicking on the coloured boxes.

In this example we have changed the colour from right to left to lead the eye across the Stage.



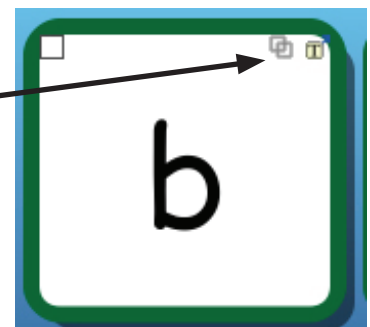
Save your work again. The Environment is now complete. The next page will explain how to make this switch accessible, if you need that.

**10 Making the Environment switch accessible**

If you have switch users, you will want to make activities that are switch accessible. In this example, the activity should start with the scan on the initial letter Grid. As soon as an initial letter has been chosen the scan should jump to the central vowel, and then to the final letter. From the last Grid it should return to the beginning again.

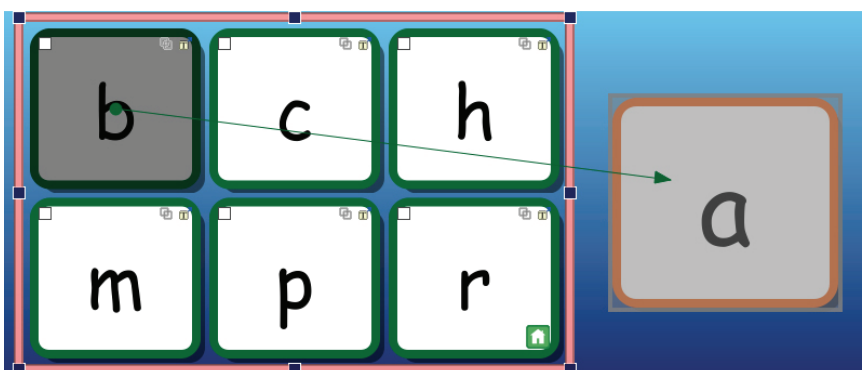
**11 Linking Grids**

When you click on a Grid in **Object mode**, you see the Cell indicator icons. The link icon is currently grey, to show the Cell is not linked.



Click on the link icon and a green dot will appear in the Cell with an arrow attached to your mouse pointer. Move this onto the central 'a' Cell where you want to link to, and click.

This means that the cursor will jump to that Cell when it is selected. Repeat this for all the Cells in this Grid.



**12 Changing the link colour**

You will notice that the Cells have changed colour when you made the link. In the Cell appearance dialog, there was an item to set the link colour. Generally you want linked Cells to be identified. However, in this case we don't want them to be this colour.

Highlight all of the Cells in the Grid and right click to bring up the **Cell Properties** menu.

Choose **Edit Grid appearance**, and at the bottom of the dialog, change the colour in the **Linked Cells** colour box. In this case we want it to be white. When you click **OK**, all the Cells will return to their original appearance.

**13** Linking the remaining Grids

Repeat this process to link the central vowel Grid to the third Grid. It doesn't matter where on the Grid you release the link arrow, as this applies to the whole Grid.

Similarly link all the Cells in the last Grid to the first one.

Reset the link colours in these other two Grids as well.

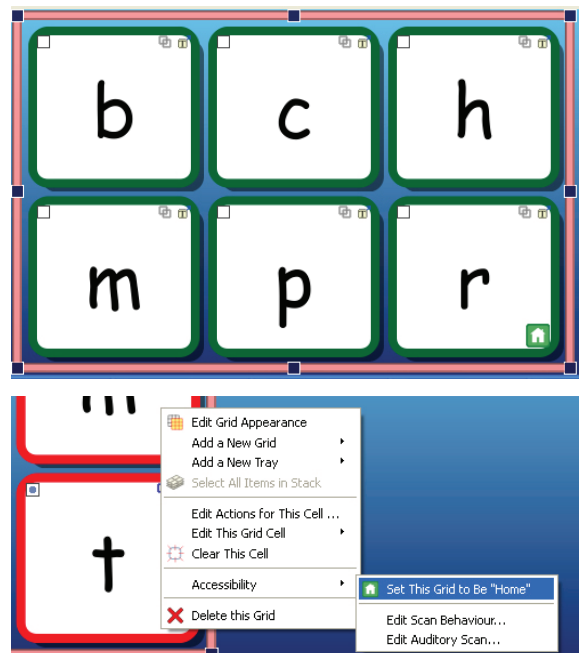


**HINT:** If you want to have different background colours in each Grid to help the student select from the correct Grid, you could use different link colours in each Grid instead of setting them all to white.

**14** The Home Grid

Each Environment has a **Home Grid**, which is the first Grid that is displayed when the Environment is opened. It is also the Grid where a switch scan will start. By default this is the first Grid you create in an Environment. The **Home Grid** is identified by a small 'Home' icon in the bottom right Cell.

You can change which is the Home Grid if necessary. To change the Home Grid, click the right mouse button on the Grid that you want to make the new Home Grid and select **Set This Grid to Be Home** from **Accessibility**.



Save and test your work again.

The Environment can now be used by switch users.

You can set the switch options when you are in **Play mode**. Go to the **Tools** menu, select **Accessibility** and **Set Switch Options**.