

Matchem 1.1



Welcome to **Matchem!**

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Credits

- Thanks to all those special people

Introduction

General

Matchem is a colorful, fun filled educational game for children (and adults) of all ages. It was designed to be entertaining while introducing the child to several basic learning concepts.

Specifically, this game was designed to allow the parents the option of either guiding the children through the game playing process while explaining/teaching some of the concepts presented or optionally, just turning the kid loose allowing them to progress at their own pace. A large toolbar containing buttons for common game manipulations is located on the game board itself so children can change minor settings themselves without having to access the Matchem menu bar.

Flexibility

Matchem is very flexible. Parents can easily configure the game so that only the game features the parent feels are useful are implemented within the game playing environment. All gauges, timers, etc. can be enabled and disabled at the user's control. Additionally, game layout details such as the number of game pieces and type of graphics to display on the game pieces can be configured directly by the user.

Even finer details concerning the game playing environment (such as message display suppression) can be easily set.

Educational Value

We must stress that the game was designed so that it can be played by children of all ages, from toddlers through adults (us big kids). Game timer functions can be set to offer a challenging, more competitive game playing environment for the older players or disabled entirely for the smaller kids. The colorful gauges and pictures make it especially attractive to toddlers. The game has been tested with children ranging in age from 2 years to 32 years (2-year olds fared amazingly well but did require assistance with the mouse manipulations).

Matchem implements a variety of graphical methods to aid in this learning process. Of course the basic tenant of the game (matching game pieces) teaches children to think and build concentration. The objects presented include simple pictures, letters, numbers, shapes, colors, or a combination of all of these which can easily be selected by the child using the large buttons located on the right side of the game board. Objects are loaded into the game using a Picture Pack that can be switched out with other Picture Packs to offer even more variety. With adult participation, explanations of objects, letters, shapes, etc. provide a fun-filled method of educating your child.

Gauges, clocks, and timers can be used to teach children time keeping and measurement principles as well as providing a 'busy' background that kids seem to like. Matchem is flexible in this matter also, allowing you to disable any objects you think may be distracting, although we have found that children like the gauges running in the background as an added visual stimulation.

Statistical principles are presented to the player in a graphical manner. Upon completion of the game you have the option of displaying the **statistics display**. This display shows the player's progress throughout the game using a simple bar chart display.

Game hints are provided with a simple right-click of the mouse. The hints are very general but are meant to assist the child in learning basic direction principles (such as left and right, above and below, etc.).

Parental Control Feature

A **Parental Control** feature is built in which allows the parent to limit the playing time of your child if desired. This feature can be actively enabled so that the game actually halts when time allotted for the day has expired or it can be disabled so that the Parental Control gauges still function but the game play is not halted when the allotted time expires. If the Parental Control feature is enabled, once game playing time allocated for the day has expired, Matchem game play cannot be restarted without the parent disabling the Parental Control function or increasing the time allocation.

Getting Help

Although we can't solve all of your problems (first thing I would do is make that mortgage disappear..... poof), we can make playing Matchem a little clearer by providing an easy-to-access online help engine. Matchem online help may be accessed in several different ways. You may start the online help from the Help-Index menu option from the main game board. This will bring up the Help 'table of contents'. This is a good starting point.

Specific game instructions can be obtained from the **Help-Game Play Instructions** menu option from the main game board.

Most controls, gauges, data entry fields, etc. have **context sensitive help** attached to them also. Click the control and press F1 to get specific help about that control. If you cannot access context sensitive Help for a control, try checking the status bar for a brief explanation of the control's function.

Also, screens that contain the **Matchem logo** contain general help discussions about that particular screen. Click on the Matchem logo to access online help pertaining to that screen.

Conclusion

Matchem was designed to be flexible. Many of the game playing functions are user configurable to allow the player to customize the game playing environment to his/her own specifications.

Also, the game was designed for players of all ages. The game is simple enough for even a toddler to play without adult supervision. At the same time, the game playing environment has enough depth to provide a maximum amount of educational content with the participation of the parent and to provide a challenging game playing environment for older players.

Enjoy!

Game Play Instructions

Beginning a new game

Before beginning a game, ensure that all of the **Game Layout**, **Game Environment**, and **Parental Control** settings are set to your liking. Then click on File-**New Game** to clear the game board and set it up for a new game or alternatively, click on the **Play Game button** located above the **Stop button** on the button bar.

Game play operation

To select the game pieces, simply click them. If you wish to reverse a selection, simply click it a second time. Once two pieces have been selected, Matchem will inform you of a match with a **Smiley icon** (located on the left side of the screen) and a brief message on the **status bar**. If the selections did not produce a match then a Frowny icon will appear instead. To continue, click on any active game piece (including the one's you just selected).

Obtaining Game Hints

Matchem will provide you with slight **game hints** regarding the location of the matching game piece. These hints are vague (such as 'the matching piece is located to the left of this one') but serve to teach your child basic directional concepts.

To obtain a hint, place the cursor on the game piece you wish to receive the hint for and click the right mouse button. A screen will pop up giving you instructions on where to look for the matching game piece.

Game conclusion

Once all of the pieces have been matched, a screen will appear informing you of such. From this screen you can click the **View Statistics Button** to view a graphical representation of the player's progress during this game. Click OK to close this screen and select File-**New Game** (or click the **Play Game button**) to start another game.

Menu Options

The Matchem Menu Bar contains the following items. Click on the Menu Bar item below for more information.

- File** - File menu options
- Options** - Set game options
- Help** - Help, registration, distribution instructions

File Menu

The File Menu contains the following options. Click on the file menu option below for more information.

Open Picture File - Opens a new Picture Pack

New Game - Starts a new game.

Exit Matchem - Exit Matchem

Open Picture File (File Menu)

Introduction

The authors of Matchem chose to implement the display of game pieces a little differently than you may be used to. Rather than develop the game so that all game pieces were included within the game itself, Matchem uses a specially formatted input file called a Picture Pack. This allows you to change Picture Packs and present the player with a little more variety. Additional Picture Packs are constantly being developed and are available for a modest charge to registered users (contact SparTech Software for a list of currently available Picture Packs, including 'seasonal' Picture Packs).

The default Picture Pack file is loaded automatically into Matchem when the game begins. The last Picture Pack file used will be the default Picture Pack file. To switch to another Picture Pack, you use this menu option.

Opening a Picture Pack

Ensure that all Picture Packs are kept in the same directory as Matchem to assure that they show up correctly in the Open Picture File screen. To switch to another Picture Pack, simply scroll to the Picture Pack you wish to load and click. This Picture Pack will be loaded into the game board and used in all subsequent sessions (until you change to another Picture Pack).

New Game (File Menu)

The **New Game** menu option will clear the current game board and set up a new game. Pictures will be randomly selected and arranged on the game board.

This option may be chosen at any time (including while in the middle of playing a game).

Note that it may be necessary to press the Play Button in order to actually start the game. This is usually necessary if a game has just been completed or some part of the game layout has just been changed. If you select **New Game** menu option while in the middle of playing a game, the game pieces are set up and the game started automatically.

Exit Matchem (File Menu)

The **Exit Matchem** option will close the Matchem program and return control back to Windows.

All game settings will be saved and restored the next time Matchem is restarted.

Options Menu

The Options Menu contains the following options. Click on the option below for more information.

Game Layout - Set Game Layout options

Game Environment - Set Environment options

Parental Control - Set Parental Control options

Game Layout (Options Menu)

Changing the Matchem game layout

This screen allows you to change the layout of the game board. The types of objects to be displayed and the number of objects to display can be specified from here.

When changes are made here, the current game (if one is in progress) will be halted and a new game automatically set up. All changes made will take effect when the new game is started.

All changes made are saved and will be automatically take affect the next time Matchem is played.

Changing game piece types

To change the type of graphic displayed on the Matchem game board, click on the selection(s) desired. Multiple selections are allowed. Game piece types include **Objects**, **Shapes**, **Colors**, **Numbers**, and **Letters**.

Note that the game piece type buttons located on the button bar will also be depressed to correspond to the selections you have currently made.

Changing the number of objects displayed

To change the how many objects are displayed on the game board, drop down the **Number of Objects** list of selections and click the number desired.

Objects

Check the **Object** check box option to select **object** game piece types. Objects game piece graphics include pictures of common objects (such as scissors, houses, cars, etc.) and usually offers the greatest variety of game pieces (Picture Packs typically contain around 100 object type graphical images). The complexity of the object pictures may vary with different Picture Packs.

Shapes

Check the **Shapes** check box option to select **shapes** game piece types. Shapes graphics include simple and complex shapes (such as square, triangle, cube, line) as well as 3-D shapes.

The complexity of Shapes graphics varies with each Picture Pack and some Picture Packs may contain combinations of two or more shapes per game piece.

Colors

Check the **Colors** check box option to select **colors** game piece types. Colors graphics include various colors in varying degrees of brightness and shade.

Since Matchem was written in a 16-color mode (for greater compatibility), this choice may necessitate the changing of the number of game pieces if you are playing with 30 (the max) game pieces. This may occur with some of the simple Picture Packs that only contain a single color per game piece. This is due to only 14 colors remaining (black, representing an open game piece and gray, representing a match, cannot be used). If you choose Colors game pieces alone and there are not enough Colors images available to fill the game board, Matchem will adjust the number of pieces displayed to the maximum amount possible.

Colors game piece graphics in some Picture Packs may also contain color combinations (such as green on red or black on white).

Numbers

Check the **Numbers** check box option to select **numbers** game piece types. Numbers graphics include bitmapped images of numbers with varying values (from 0 on up).

The range and style of numbers presented varies with each Picture Pack.

Alphabetic Letters

Check the **Letters** check box option to select **letters** game piece types. Letters graphics include bitmapped images of alphabetic letters.

Different Picture Packs contain different styles of letter graphics and some Picture Packs contain upper case letters and some contain lower case letters.

Number of Objects

The **number of objects** selection allows you to specify how many objects you wish to display on the game board. This value may range from 4 to 30 (max number of objects allowed).

To change the number of objects, select a number from the drop down list.

Note that if there are not enough game pieces available to meet the number of objects selected, you will receive a message informing you of such and the number of game pieces will be set to the maximum amount possible. This may occur for some [Picture Packs](#) if Colors is the only game piece type chosen and there are not enough color graphic images available to fill a game board (you can rest assured that there are always enough color graphic images to fill a game board containing 28 game pieces).

Game Environment (Options Menu)

Changing the Matchem environment

Options selected from this screen affect the general game playing environment within Matchem. This allows you to configure Matchem precisely to your specifications.

Unlike **Game Layout** options, changes made to the Matchem Environment will not automatically set up a new game (if a game is currently in progress). The new changes made are simply applied to the current game and will take effect immediately.

All changes made are saved and will be automatically set the next time Matchem is played.

Changing the gauge display

These options allow you to choose which gauges are displayed. Multiple selections are allowed as well as no selections. Selections include **Game Timer Gauge On**, **Elapsed Time Gauge On**, **Parental Control Gauges On**, **Match Count Gauge On**, and **Enable Status Bar Display**.

If Matchem seems to be running rather sluggishly, you can suppress display of some or all of the gauges to increase performance (although this should not be necessary since Matchem has been tested on low-end 386 machines with no performance problems).

All gauges can be displayed if desired, including the **Parental Control Gauges**. These Parental Control gauges can still be displayed whether or not Parental Control has actually been implemented (set from the Parental Control screen).

Also, the **status bar** (located at the bottom of the screen) can be disabled.

Changing the timer setting

This allows you to set the **Game Timer Limit Setting**. This time limit is actually not very restrictive. If the game time specified expires, the player is still allowed to continue (the time remaining gauge will change from 'time remaining' to 'time over').

The lower the time limit specified, the quicker the Timer Remaining gauge will change.

Changing the game play environment

More specific items related to the Matchem game playing environment can be selectively configured by choosing from the **Display Session Expire Message**, **Enable Hints on Right Click**, or **Auto Clear Pieces on Next Click** options.

These settings are basically used to configure how fast the game responds to your actions. Clearing the Display Session Expire Message and Enable Hints on Right Click check boxes while checking the Auto Clear Pieces on Next Click option will result in the fastest game play response time. For smaller children, you may wish to turn off the Enable Hints on Right Click and Auto Clear Pieces on Next Click options.

Game Timer Gauge On

Setting the **Game Timer Gauge On** option will allow the display of the **Game Timer Gauge** on the game board. This is usually the most popular gauge option selected.

Elapsed Time Gauge On

Setting the **Elapsed Time Gauge On** option lets you display the Elapsed Time Gauge on the game board allowing you to keep track of how long you have been playing Matchem.

Parental Control Gauges On

Setting the **Parental Control Gauges On** option allows you to display the **Parental Control Gauges** on the game board in order to monitor how much time and how many sessions have been used.

Match Count Gauge On

Setting the **Match Count Gauge On** option allows you to display the **Matching Pieces Gauge** on the game board.

Enable Status Bar Display

Setting the **Enable Status Bar Display** option allows you to display the Matchem **Status Bar** at the bottom of the game board.

Game Timer Limit Setting

The **Game Timer Limit Setting** option allows you to specify a **game time limit** for the current game. This game timer will be updated immediately without affecting any game you may currently be playing.

Display Session Expire Message

If the Parental Control feature has been implemented you will receive a message each time a session has expired. If the session time setting has been set low (possibly so that the gauge display will update more rapidly) then this message can become quite irritating. Choosing this option will suppress the display of this message.

Note that you will always receive a message when you begin the last session available to you.

Enable Hints on Right Click

Choosing the **Enable Hints on Right Click** option will allow you to obtain Game Hints by clicking the right mouse button on any active game piece. If you would rather use the right mouse button to select game pieces then you can disable this option.

You may wish to disable this option for smaller children if they appear to be having some difficulty manipulating the mouse. This will allow them to use either the left or right mouse buttons to select game pieces.

Auto Clear Pieces on Next Click

The **Auto Clear Pieces on Next Click** option allows you to configure how the game piece pairs are cleared. Normally the game pieces will remain displayed until you click on them a second time to clear them. By enabling this option, the game pieces will automatically clear when you select the next game piece.

This is a useful option to enable if you are 'playing against the timer' since it basically saves you a mouse click.

You may wish to disable this option for smaller children in order to make the concept of playing Matchem simpler and therefore less confusing. This would allow the child to view the two pieces he has turned over and then click anywhere to turn them back over. Then the child can continue to select two new game pieces from this point (the child may find himself/herself confused when beginning to select two new game pieces if the two old ones are still showing).

Game Time Limits

A game time limit may be set to provide a more competitive game playing environment. This time limit is not very restrictive. When the time expires you simply receive a message informing you of such and are allowed to continue (if the Game Timer Gauge is displayed, the gauge will change from a 'time remaining' gauge to a 'time over' gauge.

Parental Control (Options Menu)

Introduction

The Parental Control feature is somewhat unique. This feature can be used to its full extent or it can be disabled while still allowing the Parental Control gauges to display and function visually.

If this feature is enabled, the player will be allowed to play a limited number of timed sessions. When time expires for one session, the timer is reset and time automatically begins accumulating for the next session.

All game times are stored at various times throughout the game play as well as upon exiting Matchem. If all time and sessions have expired for the current day, the player will not be allowed to start up a new game (don't you wish your TV had such a feature!). You may still start Matchem and make configuration changes (including resetting the Parental Control time and sessions) but will be unable to start a new game.

Parents may wish to disable this feature (unless your child is some sort of game junkie) but still allow the Parental Control gauges to run in order to provide a 'busy' visual background for children.

Setting Parental Control features

You may check the **Parental Control Enabled** option to turn on the Parental Control feature. Also, you may wish to password protect the access to the Parental Control screen to discourage unauthorized players from altering your settings by checking the **Password Protect Parental Control** option. The password may be set by clicking the **Change Password** button located at the bottom of the screen.

Setting session controls

Select the desired **Session Time** and **Sessions Per Day** values from the drop down list provided.

If the player has used up all of his sessions and you wish to allow him/her to continue or you just wish to reset the accumulated Parental Control Time and Sessions back to zero, simply click the **Clear Parental Control Time** button.

Parental Control Enabled

Checking the **Parental Control Enabled** option will enable the Parental Control feature. If this option is not checked and the **Parental Control Gauges On** option (from the **Game Environment** menu option) is turned on, the **Parental Control Gauges** will still function visually but the player's sessions will not actually be limited (when the gauges reach their maximum they simply reset themselves).

Password Protect Parental Control

Checking the **Password Protect Parental Control** option will force the user to enter a password to gain access to the Parental Control screen.

The first time this option is used, the password will be empty. You must remember to set a new password (by clicking the **Change Password button**) for this option to truly be functional. Without a password set, you may simply click OK from the password entry in order to continue.

Session Time

Choose a value from the selections provided in the drop down list box.

This selection will set the amount of time allowed for each session. Once this time limit is reached, it will be reset to zero and the Sessions count increased by one. This process continues until all of the player's sessions allocated for the day have been used.

Sessions Per Day

Choose a value from the selections provided in the drop down list box.

This selection will set the number of game sessions allowed per day. Once the maximum number of sessions is reached, Matchem will automatically terminate the program's execution.

Clear Parental Control Time Button

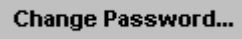


Clear Parental Control *T*ime

Clicking the **Clear Parental Control Time** button will reset all of the Parental Control session time and sessions per day values back to zero.

The Clear Parental Control Time button text will turn red indicating that clicking OK at this point will clear all of the Parental Control values. You may click Cancel to undo the clearing of the Parental Control values.

Change Password

A rectangular button with a grey gradient and a thin black border. The text "Change Password..." is centered on the button in a black, sans-serif font.

Clicking the Change Password button (from the **Parental Control Screen**) will bring up the **Change Password Screen** where you may set a new Parental Control password.

Change Password Screen

This screen allows you to change your Parental Control password or set a new password.

Enter your password in both **Password text boxes**. The purpose of entering the password twice is to verify that you entered it correctly. If the passwords do not match exactly, you will receive a warning message and be allowed to try again.

The password entered will be encrypted and saved.

Password

Enter your password in the text box(s) provided.

The password must be between 5 and 15 characters long.

Password Required to Continue Screen

This screen requires you enter your Parental Control password before continuing.

Enter your password in the password text box and click OK to continue.

If you have lost or forgotten your password, please contact SparTech Software for instructions on how to bypass password security.

Help Menu

The Help Menu contains the following options. Click on the option below for more information.

- Index** - Display the Help Index
- Game Play Instruction** - Display brief Matchem instructions
- Matchem Registration** - Access Matchem registration functions
- Create Distribution Copy** - Create a Matchem distribution copy
- About** - Display the Matchem About screen

Index (Help Menu)

Clicking the **Index** menu option brings up the **Matchem Help Index** (Main Menu).

Game Play Instruction (Help Menu)

Clicking the **Game Play Instruction** menu option brings up the Matchem Help Instruction screen containing brief instructions on playing the Matchem game.

Matchem Registration (Help Menu)

Matchem 1.1 is distributed under the shareware concept. This method of distribution allows you to try out our software before you purchase it. If you do not continue to use the software you simply agree to remove it from your system. Otherwise, you are expected to register the software with the vendor (see [registering Matchem](#) for further details and **benefits** of program registration).

Clicking on the **Matchem Registration** menu option will bring up the registration screen. This screen allows you to actually register the software by clicking on the **Register Button** or print the registration form by clicking the **Print Registration Form Button**.

Program Registration

Matchem is NOT free.

Matchem 1.1 is distributed under the shareware concept. This method of distribution allows you to try out our software before you purchase it. If you do not continue to use the software after a reasonable length of time (generally regarded as 30-days), you simply agree to remove it from your system. Otherwise, you are expected to register the software with the vendor.

To register the software you must first send in your registration fee. Once the fee has been processed, you will promptly be supplied with a user name, serial number, and pass code that you then enter on the Help-Matchem Registration-Register screen. Once the correct codes have been entered, the program will be flagged as registered.

The unregistered version of Matchem is very close to the same as the registered version. The primary difference is the number of game piece pictures you are allowed to display in the Picture Pack file. With the unregistered version you are limited to using only 15 of the total pictures available for each game piece type (Picture Packs average over 175 pictures per Picture Pack). Also, with the registered version you may notice some performance improvements.

Some of the advantages of registering Matchem (other than a clear conscience) include:

- (1) ability to display all pictures in the Picture Packs (no more 15-game piece limit).
- (2) no more 'Nag' screen!
- (3) half-price upgrades on future versions of Matchem.
- (4) 20% off on other SparTech Software software packages.
- (5) notification of new Picture Packs.
- (6) notification of new releases of Matchem.
- (7) notification of new SparTech Software software package releases.

To register Matchem:

- (1) Choose **Matchem Registration** from the **Help** menu.
- (2) Click on the **Print Registration Form** button.
- (3) Complete the registration form.
- (4) Make your check payable to **Brian F. Haddock**.
- (5) Mail the registration form and your payment to
SparTech Software
1309 Windy Meadows Dr.
Burleson, TX 76028

You will receive your registration user name, serial number, and pass code that you then enter to update Matchem's status to 'registered'.

Thanks for your interest in registering Matchem!

Register Button



Clicking the **Register Button** brings up the registration screen where you may register the Matchem software..

Registration Screen

After mailing in your registration form and payment, you should have received a packet containing a **User Name**, **Serial Number**, and **Pass Key**. If you did not receive these then **contact SparTech Software** for further instructions.

Upon receipt of the registration packet, enter the items in the text boxes provided. Click OK to accept the items you entered. If everything was entered OK then you will receive a message informing you that Matchem has been registered and requesting that you restart Matchem for the new 'registered' status to take effect.

If everything is not entered correctly then you will receive a message informing you that Matchem was **not** registered. If this occurs, please reenter the items specified again to assure that you did not enter one of the them incorrectly. Check to assure that all spaces, numbers, letters, etc. are entered exactly as they appear on your registration packet. Also look for common mistakes such as entering a 0 (number 0) rather than an O (letter O) or an l (letter l) rather than a 1 (number 1).

If Matchem still will not register then **contact SparTech Software** for further instructions.

User Name

Enter the User Name as specified in your registration packet. Please ensure that the User Name is entered exactly as it appears on the registration form provided.

Serial Number

Enter the Serial Number as specified in your registration packet. Please ensure that the Serial Number is entered exactly as it appears on the registration form provided.

Note that the Serial Number may contain a combination of letters and numerals.

Pass Key

Enter the Pass Key as specified in your registration packet. Please ensure that the Pass Key is entered exactly as it appears on the registration form provided.

Note that the Pass Key may contain a combination of letters and numerals.

Print Registration Form Button



Clicking the **Print Registration Form** button brings up the print registration form screen allowing you to print the Matchem registration form (which is mailed in along with your registration fee in order to register the Matchem software).

Create Distribution Copy (Help Menu)

Clicking on the **Create Distribution Copy** menu option will bring up the create distribution copy screen. This screen allows you to create a distribution copy of the Matchem software so that you may participate in the SparTech Software **Distribution Incentive Program** and possibly earn a free registered copy of Matchem.

About (Help Menu)

Clicking this option brings up the Matchem About screen.

Screen Layout

Click on the topic below for more information concerning screen components of the Matchem game. Alternatively, you may select the object on the screen and click the PF1 key to access the [context sensitive help](#).

Gauges - Colorful indication of game status

Smiley Indicator - Match or not?

Game Pieces - Game board description

Matchem Toolbar - Easy way to change objects

Gauges

Click on the topic below for more information concerning gauges used in the Matchem game. Alternatively, you may select the gauge on the screen and click the PF1 key to access the [context sensitive help](#).

- Parental Control Gauges** - How much time left?
- Elapsed Time Gauge** - How long Matchem has run
- Game Timer Gauge** - Game time remaining
- Matching Pieces Gauge** - How we doing?
- Status Bar** - Quick reference

Parental Control Gauges



The two (2) parental control gauges together indicate the time remaining of the allocated parental control time.

The first gauge (labeled Session Time) will gradually increment as the session time allocated is depleted. Once the gauge reaches its maximum, it will automatically be reset to zero and the Session Gauge will be incremented (indicating that all the time in one of your sessions has expired).

The second gauge (labeled Session) will increment as your sessions allocated are depleted. Each time a session is used up this gauge will increment. Each time as session expires you will receive a warning message (unless the message display has been suppressed from the **Game Environment Options** screen). Regardless of whether or not the session expire message has been enabled from the Game Environment Options screen, you will receive a warning message when you begin using time on your last session.

Note that the display on these gauges is dynamic in that whenever a change is made to the parental control time or sessions from the Parental Control Options screen, the gauge will be updated immediately to reflect the new value(s) specified (without losing any of the prior accumulated session time or sessions).

Elapsed Time Gauge



This gauge simply shows the total time that has elapsed since Matchem was started. The gauge consists of a ticking second hand with a numeric display located below the clock face that displays to total time in a minutes:seconds format.

Game Timer Gauge



This gauge displays the time remaining in the current game.

When the gauge reaches its maximum value it will automatically be reset to zero and begin counting again. You will receive a message indicating that the time for this game has expired. The gauge numeric display will change from black to red and the caption will be changed from 'time remaining' to 'time over'.

The numeric display located below the Game Timer Gauge is a textual representation of the game time remaining (or time over) in a minutes:seconds format.

Matching Pieces Gauge



The **Matching Pieces Gauge** is sort of like a visual thermometer. Each time a match is made the gauge rises. It will finally reach the top when all matches have been made.

Status Bar

The Matchem Status Bar displays some key items of interest.

At the left of the status bar you will find a brief description of the current Windows control your cursor is resting on. This is particularly helpful in determining what the buttons on the Toolbar will accomplish. Also, by placing the cursor on either of the Parental Control gauges, the status bar will display the exact amount of time or number of sessions that you have used.

Additionally, the text on the left side of the status bar will display a message informing you of the results of your last selection.

In the middle of the status bar is the current Match count. This displays the number of matches you have made and the total number of possible matches on the game board.

The last item on the status bar only displays upon completion of the game. It displays the total time that you incurred in the game. This display stays on the status bar throughout the play of the following game so you can compare your times.

Smiley Indicator



The **Smiley Indicator** is an interesting little character. He performs basic animated sequences depending upon (1) what the result was of your last action, and (2) the mood he is in today. You can generally tell the results of your last choices by the expression on Smiley's face.

One minor note, he is rather skittish and easily disturbed when approached (unless you sneak up on him).

Game Pieces



The game pieces located on the game board will be colored black when they are turned over (i.e. when they are not selected). Click on the game pieces to turn them over. Click on a visible game piece a second time will turn it back over.

When two game pieces have been turned over, Matchem will check to see if there has been a match. To clear the two visible pieces, click on any game piece on the game board (including the two visible game pieces).

When a match is made and the game pieces turned back over they will be colored gray.

Matchem Toolbar

The Matchem toolbar allows children to easily change the type of game pieces displayed and to pause a game in progress or start a new game.

Choices for game piece types include Objects, Shapes, Colors, Numbers, Alphabetic characters, or a combination of all of the preceding. Multiple selections may be made at the same time and at least one choice must be selected (Objects is the default).

Note that when game piece types are selected from the menu the corresponding button on the Matchem toolbar will be automatically depressed.

Click on the toolbar button below for more information about that button.



Objects Button



The **Objects Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) is used to specify Objects type game pieces.

Objects game pieces will display basic pictures such as animals, objects, etc. There is usually the greatest variety of choices to be made within this game piece type (Picture Packs typically contain around 100 object type graphical images).

Objects graphics complexity varies with different Picture Packs.

Shapes Button



The **Shapes Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) is used to specify Shapes type game pieces.

Shapes game pieces display basic shapes as well as selected 3-D shapes (such as pyramids).

Some Picture Packs may contain combinations of two or more shapes as well as more complicated shapes (lines, polygons, etc.).

Colors Button



The **Colors Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) is used to specify Colors type game pieces.

Colors game pieces are simply colored various colors.

Since Matchem was written in a 16 color mode (for greater compatibility), this choice may necessitate the changing of the number of game pieces if you are playing with 30 (the max) game pieces. This may occur with some of the simple Picture Packs that only contain a single color scheme per game piece. This is due to only 14 colors remaining (black, representing an open game piece and gray, representing a match, cannot be used). If you choose Colors game pieces alone and there are not enough Colors images available to fill the game board, Matchem will adjust the number of pieces displayed to the maximum amount possible.

Note that some Picture Packs contains Color combinations on a single game piece.

Numbers Button



The **Numbers Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) is used to specify Numbers type game pieces.

Numbers game pieces contain numeric numbers usually ranging from around 1 to 30.

The style of the number displayed will vary amongst different Picture Packs as well as the range of numbers presented.

Alphabetic Letters Button



The **Letters Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) is used to specify Alphabetic Character type game pieces.

Alphabet game pieces contain the letters of the alphabets.

Some Picture Packs contain upper case letters and some contain lower case letters. Styles of characters displayed will vary amongst different Picture Packs.

Combo Button



The **Combo Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) will generate a game board consisting of a combination of all of the possible game types (usually distributed equally).

Play Button



The **Play Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) serves two different functions. It can be used to restart a paused game or to start a new game.

If the game has been paused (via the stop button) then the Play Button will appear as an hourglass and will represent the restart function.

If different choices have been made concerning game piece types or the number of game pieces or if a game has been completed, the Play Button will become the **New Game** button (button graphic is a 'green' stoplight). Pressing the Play Button is required to restart the game and will automatically set up a new game board with the new options selected.

Pause Button



If the game has been paused (via the Stop Button) then the Play Button will appear as the Pause Button (with an hourglass graphic) and will represent the restart function. To restart the game, simply click on the Pause Button.

Stop Button



The **Stop Button** (located on the Matchem Toolbar) can be used to pause a game in progress. The game timer will also be paused.

Distribution Program

SparTech Software offers its users a unique software distribution program that was developed to provide users with an incentive to further the distribution of Matchem shareware software.

The concept is very simple. If you are an unregistered user you may earn enough credits to obtain a free product registration. If you are a registered user you may earn enough credits to get all of the money you paid back!

What do you have to do? Simple. Let us explain.

First, you must put an original installation copy of Matchem in a separate directory (create one via MD if needed). This original copy is the first **unregistered** copy of Matchem that you downloaded and used to install Matchem on your machine - it should contain the SETUP program and its associated compress installation files. If this copy is zipped then unzip it before continuing and delete the *.ZIP file. Please be sure that a separate directory is used for this process to assure that only the required Matchem files are included in the new distribution copy you create.

Next you need to fill out the **Distribution Incentive Program form** (obtained from **Help-Create Distribution Copy** menu option). This will create a MATCHEM.DST file in your installation directory containing the necessary information about yourself (so that we may get you proper credits to you). The MATCHEM.DST file should have been created in the installation directory and not your Matchem directory.

Upon completing the Distribution Incentive Program form, you will be prompted with a screen requesting you select the directory that the installation files are located in. After selecting the directory and clicking 'OK', Matchem will perform a verification of installation files. If all required files are not found or additional files are found (that should not be included with the installation files) then you will receive a message informing you of the missing (or additional) files detected. Most often this is a result of specifying the incorrect installation directory. If you receive this message, assure that you specified the directory where the installation files have been unzipped. If you still receive the message then this is indicative of a corrupted copy of Matchem. You should contact the BBS where you obtained Matchem and inform them that the Matchem copy you download from them is incomplete or corrupted. A 'good' copy of Matchem (containing all the required files) should be obtainable from another online service provider.

Finally, zip the Matchem installation files and your new MATCHEM.DST file and upload the software to your favorite BBS or online service. Whenever a user registers a copy of Matchem, the registration form (printed) contains the info you entered above so that you will be properly credited with the registration.

Simple huh?

If you are a registered user of Matchem, you will receive an entire refund if 3 or more people register off of this distribution copy. If you are an unregistered user, it takes 10 people or more to earn you a free registered copy of Matchem.

These numbers actually are very reasonable. The larger the BBS or online service you upload the copy to, the better your chance of other users registering off of your copy.

The hardest part is finding a BBS to upload to. Most sysops won't allow you to upload an

already existing copy of software so you must find a BBS that doesn't already have a copy on file.

When you reach your required credits, we will promptly provide you with the appropriate serial number and pass code and inform you of the registration steps to take or, if you are a registered user, we will promptly refund your money.

In summary, to create a Matchem Distribution Copy:

- (1) Put your original (unregistered) installation copy of Matchem in a separate directory.
- (2) Unzip the original installation copy (if zipped).
- (3) Delete the zip file.
- (4) Complete the Distribution Incentive Program form (MATCHEM.DST file created in the installation directory) and specify the installation directory.
- (5) Zip the files back up to create uploadable copy for distribution.

If you have any questions concerning the Distribution Incentive Program, feel free to **contact SparTech Software.**

Thanks for your interest!

Distribution Incentive Program Form

This form should be completed in order to participate in the **Distribution Incentive Program**. The data you complete in this form is written to a file named MATCHEM.DST that you include with your uploadable Matchem software.

The Distribution Incentive Program Form consists of two parts. Only 1 of the two parts needs to be completed. If you wish to quickly receive your registration serial number and pass code then complete the Email section. If you do not have a Email address then complete the US Mail section.

Also, if you are a registered user be sure to enter your registration serial number.

Click on the topic below for further details on data entry in the Distribution Incentive Program Form.

Email

<u>Name</u>	- User Name
<u>Email Address</u>	- Internet Email Address

US Mail

<u>Name</u>	- User Name
<u>Address</u>	- US Mail Postal Address
<u>City</u>	- City part of mailing address
<u>State</u>	- State part of mailing address
<u>Zip</u>	- Zip code of mailing address
<u>Registration Serial Number</u>	- Registration Serial Number

Name

Enter your full real name. The data input can be any alphanumeric text but must be less than 30 characters long.

Email Address

Enter your Internet Email Address. This address cannot be a Online Service Email Address unless it is accessible via the Internet (most are).

This address will be in a form such as **YourEMailName@something.com**,

Address

Enter your mailing address. This is the US Postal Service mailing address such as the street address or Post Office box number.

Two lines are provided if your mailing address will not fit on a single line.

City

Enter the city part of your mailing address.

State

Enter the state abbreviation part of your mailing address. Note that this must be the state's name abbreviation and not the full name.

Zip Code

Enter the Zip Code part of your mailing address. Data input should be in the form such as 99999 or 99999-9999.

Registration Serial Number

If you are a registered user then please enter your Registration Serial Number that was provided to you with your registration packet.

For registered users, this must be completed for proper credit.

Credits

Kudos to the following, whom without, Matchem would never have materialized.

Blake - for the occasional communications (i.e. crying **I want my BOTTLE!**) that served as a reminder that there are other things in life more important than programming.

Cameron - for your grueling, relentless testing sessions, hour after hour, day after day, constantly pounding the keyboard looking for 'bugs' - that only a three-year old could have discovered. I owe you one son.

TNP and Friends - for the use of a wide variety of machines to test compatibility (who'd have ever thought that a simple game could bring down a network?)

And finally, to every user who supported the shareware concept by registering (in good faith) their copy of Matchem (I don't do this for fun you know..... on the other hand, maybe I do!).

Contacting SparTech Software

SparTech Software welcomes your questions, comments, and suggestions.

SparTech Software may be contacted via Email at **Spartan001@AOL.COM** or via U.S. Mail at **SparTech Software, 1309 Windy Meadows Dr., Burleson, TX 76028**.

In your correspondence, please include the name and version number of the software package your question or comment refers to. Also include your name and address (Email address preferred). If you're a registered user, include your software serial number and registration code (for verification).

Any 'bug' reports should also be directed to the addresses above (yep, we're not perfect - remind us sometime to tell you the story of 'Dorian', the programmer who made a pact with the devil that in return for his programs being preserved as perfect, any problems that would have degraded his programs would afflict his own person instead - scary stuff!).

Once again, we welcome any comments (it gets awful lonely here in Texas).

View Statistics Button

This button will open up the **Statistics** screen where you may view statistical measurements of your game in a graphical (bar chart) format. Stats include total match attempts, total matches made, percentage matches (ratio of matches to attempts), and total time.

Statistics

The statistics are displayed in a bar chart format with the actual numeric value used to create the graph displayed below the chart.

At the top of the screen you will find the total number of objects you selected for this game and the timer limit setting.

The bar charts displays statistics on items such as **Total Matches**, **Attempts**, **Percentage Matches (Hit/Attempts Ratio)**, and **Total Time**.

Total Matches

The first bar chart displays your total **Matches**. This chart can be compared to the Attempts chart to the right to see how well you made matches without 'guessing'.

Attempts

The **Attempts** bar chart displays the total match attempts you made during the game. This is not a count of mouse clicks but rather a count of the total pairs of game pieces you turned over during the course of the game.

Percent Matches

The **Percent Matches** (i.e. hit/attempts ratio) bar chart displays the percentage of attempts to make a match that resulted in an actual match. It is a ratio of Matches to Match Attempts.

This particular chart, when compared to the **Total Matches** and **Attempts** bar charts, serves as an excellent example of how percentages work. You can indicate to the child how high the Total Matches chart has risen compared to the height of the Attempts chart and how this relates to the Percent Matches bar chart.

Generally the game-to-game level of this gauge will rise as the player develops better game playing strategies or as the child's memory retention increases.

Total Time

This chart is dynamically created depending upon whether your game was completed before the time limit specified or how long the game playing time went over the time limit.

If you completed the game before the time limit specified then the bar chart's maximum Y axis (height) will represent the time limit. The total playing time charted can be visually compared to this.

If the game playing time exceeded the time limit then the bar chart will be split into two charts. The chart on the right (charted in **blue**) will represent the time limit setting. The chart on the left (charted in **red**) will represent the amount of time you went over the time limit.

Game Hints

Matchem will provide you with slight hints regarding the location of the matching game piece. Hints are obtained by right clicking the mouse with the cursor placed on the game piece you wish to receive the hint for. These hints are vague (such as 'the matching piece is located to the left of this one') but serve to teach your child basic directional concepts.

As a variance of the game for adults, the game hints can be used to determine 'logically' where the matching game pieces are hidden. Try matching game pieces solely through the use of game hints to create a higher hit/attempts ratio (viewed through the **statistics display**).

Roving Eyes

The **Roving Eyes** are constantly moving, scanning the game board for the next available piece. They never tire, never get bloodshot, and always seem to be able to locate the matching game piece.

OK Button

Clicking on the OK button will close the current screen. If the current screen required data entry, the data will be saved before closing the screen.

Cancel Button

Clicking the Cancel button will close the current screen. If the current screen required some type of data entry (such as entering data in a text box, choosing an option from a drop down list box, etc.), the data will **not** be saved before closing the screen.

Help Button

Clicking this button will bring up Matchem Help regarding the specific function you are currently attempting.

A **Picture Pack** is a collection of specially formatted graphics files that contain the pictures used on the Matchem game pieces. These Picture Packs are user selectable and interchangeable (can be switched out with another Picture Pack) in order to offer more variety in the game playing environment.

Note that only a single Picture Pack can be selected at a time.

The **Game Board** is the term used to indicate the game playing surface area in Matchem. This includes the area where the game pieces may be located.

Context sensitive help is a special feature of the Windows Help system that allows you to select a control you need more information about (i.e. give the control the **focus**) and press the F1 key in order to bring up the online help specific to that particular control. If a particular control does not have context sensitive help attached to it, you will receive a message informing you of such.

You give the control in question the focus by clicking on the control.

If the control is a command button and you do not wish to actually execute the command buttons operation, then you click the command button and drag the cursor off the button before releasing the mouse button. This will give the command button the focus without actually executing the command buttons operation.

If the control is a menu option and you do not wish to actually execute the menu option's operation, then you click the menu option and press F1 before releasing the mouse button. This will bring up the context sensitive help regarding that menu option (after the online help screen is displayed you may release the mouse button).

ZIP file is a term used to indicate a file compressed using PKWare's PKZIP utility. This utility is also shareware and can be easily downloaded from any BBS or online service.

You asked for it, you got it! This is the 'official' Matchem logo (accept no substitutes!).



On screens that contain the Matchem logo, you may click on the logo to obtain a overview of that screen's particular function (in this case clicking on it will simply make it disappear).

