WELCOME to WORD BLAST

WORD BLAST is an educational program designed to help children enhance their vocabulary and spelling skills in a fun computer game setting (adults enjoy the game too). In WORD BLAST, the player tries to guess a word letter-by-letter, like in the game of 'hangman'. When a letter is correctly guessed, it is displayed in its positions in the word. However, if a letter is chosen which does not belong in the word, then a segment of a fuse leading to a bundle of dynamite 'burns'. If the word is completed before 10 incorrect letter guesses have occurred, then the player receives an audio complement on a job well done. Otherwise, the dynamite 'explodes'. In either case, the word and its definition are displayed. However, children rarely lose the game since the definition of the word may be displayed before the fuse burns all the way down.

The game may be played either in the <u>blast</u> mode, which involves the picture of the dynamite, or in the <u>vocabulary-builder</u> mode, in which the definition of the words is displayed at the outset. The latter playing mode makes the game easier for younger children, and makes WORD BLAST an ideal medium for helping to teach children the meanings of the words on their weekly vocabulary lists. A <u>test</u> may also be taken, in which the computer cycles sequentially or randomly through a word list until all the words in the list have been presented once to the player.

Multiple words can be used in WORD BLAST. This creates some interesting possibilities. For example, a word list could contain the names of U.S. presidents, or the names of states or state capitals. WORD BLAST comes with all three of these word lists, plus a word list containing over 1700 words and their definitions. Easy-to-use menus enable the user to create new word lists or to modify existing ones.

Points are awarded for correctly guessing words, and the names of the players with the top 10 high scores appear on a scoreboard with trophies.

With WORD BLAST, learning vocabulary and spelling is a *blast*!

See Also:

<u>Blast Mode</u>
<u>Vocabulary-Builder Mode</u>
<u>Take a Test</u>
<u>Word Lists Included with WORD BLAST</u>
<u>Use Your Own Sound Files for Compliments</u>

How to Play WORD BLAST

WORD BLAST can be played in the <u>blast</u> mode or in the <u>vocabulary-builder</u> mode. A <u>test</u> may also be take in which each word in a word list is presented to the player.

Blast Mode

In the <u>blast</u> mode, a bundle of *dynamite* appears in the main window. When the user chooses a letter which is contained in the word to be guessed, then that letter is displayed in the letter boxes at the bottom of the screen. Otherwise, a segment of the fuse leading to the dynamite burns. After 10 incorrect guesses, the spark reaches the bundle, and an *explosion* occurs (it will be audible if you have a multimedia system with a sound card and your speakers are turned on).

Vocabulary-Builder Mode

In the <u>vocabulary-builder</u> mode, the bundle of dynamite which appears in the blast mode is replaced by the *definition* of the word to be guessed. This makes WORD BLAST ideal for teaching children vocabulary words, and specifically, for teaching them the meanings and usage of the words in their weekly vocabulary lists from school.

Take a Test

Use the <u>Take Test</u> (sequential or random) commands to take a "test" using a word list. This will cause WORD BLAST to cycle through a word list, and present each word in the list to the user. The words can be presented in *sequential* or *random* order. In either case, each word in the word list will be presented only once. At the end of the test, the number of correct answers and percentage of correct answers are given, and a grade of "Keep Studying", "Good", "Very Good", "Excellent", or "Outstanding" is displayed.

How to Play

At the start of a game, WORD BLAST randomly selects a word from the current word list (this list can be specified using the <u>open</u> command). Initially, there are a number of empty boxes at the bottom of the screen, under the *Word to Guess* label. Each box is a container for one letter of the word to guess.

Start by left-clicking on any of the letter buttons (A-Z). Alternatively, you can press the corresponding key on your keyboard. If the letter that you chose is contained in the word, then it will be displayed in the corresponding letter boxes for the word. The letter button for the letter which you chose will temporarily disappear from the screen to indicate that you have already used that letter (it will reappear at the start of the next game). If the selected letter is not part of the word to be guessed, then the number of remaining guesses will be decreased by one, and a segment of the fuse leading to the bundle of dynamite burns (in *blast* mode).

Winning a Game

When all the letters of the word have been guessed, a window containing *happy faces* pops up which displays the *definition* of the word, and an auditory compliment follows.

Losing a Game

If 10 letters are selected which do not appear in the word to be guessed, then the game is lost. In this case, a window with the word definition still pops up, but it contains *sad faces*. In addition, the dynamite 'blows up', and an audible 'blast' is heard.

The *Show Hint* Button

Rarely will a game be lost with this feature. When the number of remaining guesses is fewer than 3, then a push button becomes visible which affords the player the opportunity to see the definition of the word. If the word to be guessed is contained in the definition, then it will be blanked-out when the definition is displayed. Accordingly, the definition can contain sentences which illustrate the *usage* of the word.

Use Your Own Sound Files for Compliments

When a player correctly guesses a word in WORD BLAST, an audio compliment is played (if sound is supported on the player's computer). WORD BLAST comes with a dozen sound files for this purpose. However, you can make and use your own sound files for the audio compliments.

Simply record your compliment using any program that creates a file with the "wav" extension – you can use the "Sound Recorder" program that comes with Windows 95 for this purpose. It can usually be accessed via Start->Programs->Accessories->Multimedia->Sound Recorder. When saving your sound files, make sure to start the filename with "WBC_". This tells WORD BLAST that the file is to be used as a compliment when the player wins a game. For example, if you create a file with the compliment "Great Job", you could name it "WBC_Great_Job.wav" (note that a program such as Sound Recorder generally assigns the file extension "wav" by default, so that you would specify the name of the file as "WBC_Great_Job".

Make sure to move the sound file into the folder in which the WORD BLAST executable resides (usually "C:\Program Files\Word Blast"). When a game is won and a compliment is to be played, WORD BLAST will select a sound file at random from among the compliment "wav" files (i.e. files with names that start with "WBC_") that are in the WORD BLAST folder.

What's New in Version 2.0?

Version 2.0 of WORD BLAST has three major new features, and a number of minor ones. The highlights of the major new features are described here. The internal workings of the code in regard to the storage of word lists has undergone a major overhaul in Version 2.0, with the added benefit that word lists load into the system faster than they did in the previous version.

Multiple Words

Multiple words can be used in the new version. This creates some interesting possibilities. For example, a word list could contain the names of U.S. presidents, or the names of states or state capitals. WORD BLAST comes with all three of these word lists, plus a word list containing over 1700 words and their definitions. Easy-to-use menus enable the user to create new word lists or to modify existing ones.

Take a "Test"

Use the Take Test (sequential or random) commands to take a "test" using a word list. This will cause WORD BLAST to cycle through a word list, and present each word in the list to the user. The words can be presented in *sequential* or *random* order. In either case, each word in the word list will be presented only once. At the end of the test, the number of correct answers and percentage of correct answers are given, and a grade of "Outstanding", "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good", or "Keep Trying" is displayed.

Use Your Own Sound Files for Compliments

When a player correctly guesses a word in WORD BLAST, an audio compliment is played (if sound is supported on the player's computer). WORD BLAST comes with a dozen sound files for this purpose. However, you can make and use your own sound files for the audio compliments.

Menu Items in the *Game* Menu

The *Game* menu offers the following commands:

<u>Change Player Name</u>	Change the name of the player.
<u>Blast Mode</u>	Set the game to play in the *blast* mode.
<u>Vocabulary-Builder Mode</u>	Set the game to play in the *vocabulary-builder* mode.
<u>Choose Another Word</u>	Choose another word from the current word list.
<u>Take Test – Sequential</u>	Take a "test" with words presented sequentially from the current word list.
<u>Take Test – Random</u>	Take a "test" with words presented randomly from the current word list.
<u>Show High Scores</u>	Display a score board which shows the names of the players with the 10 highest scores.
<u>Statistics</u>	Display game statistics (number of games played, won, and lost).
Exit	Exit the WORD BLAST program.

Change Player Name

When WORD BLAST starts up, a menu appears which prompts the player for his or her name. The name of the player may be changed at any time during a WORD BLAST session. However, when the player name is changed, the current score is reset to zero.

Menu Command: Game / Change Player Name

Toolbar Button:

This command will pop-up the same menu for entering the name of the player that appeared at the start of the game. Either type the player name into the text field in the menu, or select an existing player name from the drop-down list (left-click on the down-arrow located at the right end of the text field in order to invoke the list of player names). In either case, press the *OK* button to register the name change and continue playing.

Blast Mode

Menu Command: Game / Blast Mode
Toolbar Button:

Set the mode to *Blast* either by left-clicking on the *Blast Mode* command in the *Game* menu, or by pressing the "dynamite bundle" toolbar button shown above.

In the *blast* mode, a bundle of *dynamite* appears in the main window. When the user chooses a letter which is contained in the word to be guessed, then that letter is displayed in the letter boxes at the bottom of the screen. Otherwise, a segment of the fuse leading to the dynamite burns. After 10 incorrect guesses, the spark reaches the bundle, and an *explosion* occurs (it will be audible if you have a multimedia system with a sound card and your speakers are turned on).

See Also:

Vocabulary-Builder Mode
Take a Test

Vocabulary-Builder Mode

Menu Command: Game / Vocabulary-Builder Mode

Toolbar Button:

Set the mode to *Vocabulary-Builder* either by left-clicking on the *Vocabulary-Builder Mode* command in the *Game* menu, or by pressing the "VB" toolbar button shown above.

In the *vocabulary-builder* mode, the bundle of dynamite which appears in the blast mode is replaced by the *definition* of the word to be guessed. This makes WORD BLAST ideal for teaching children vocabulary words, and specifically, for teaching them the meanings and usage of the words in their weekly vocabulary lists from school.

See Also:

Blast Mode
Take a Test

Choose Another Word

Menu Command: Game / Choose Another Word

Toolbar Button:

Occasionally, the word that WORD BLAST presents to a player may be too difficult (especially for young children). Use the *Choose Another Word* command to instruct the program to choose another word. This command can be used only if no letter guesses have been made. The use of this command does not affect a player's score.

Taking a "Test"

Use the *Take Test* (sequential or random) commands to take a "test" using a word list. This will cause WORD BLAST to cycle through a word list, and present each word in the list to the user. The words can be presented in *sequential* or *random* order. In either case, each word in the word list will be presented only once. At the end of the test, the number of correct answers and percentage of correct answers are given, and a grade of "Outstanding", "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good", or "Keep Trying" is displayed.

Activating the Command

Menu Commands: Game / Take Test – Sequential or Random

Toolbar Buttons:

See Also:

Blast Mode
Vocabulary-Builder Mode

Game Statistics

The *Game Statistics* command pops up a window which shows you the following information:

- Number of Games Played
- Number of Games Won
- Number of Games Lost
- Average Number of Incorrect Guesses Per Word

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Options / Game Statistics

Toolbar Button:

Reset

Press the *Reset* button to re-initialize (to zero) counters for the number of games played, won, and lost.

The game statistics are not saved, and therefore are not available at the start of a new WORD BLAST session.

Show High Scores

The *Show High Scores* command pops up a *scoreboard* which displays the names and scores of the WORD BLAST players with the 10 highest scores.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Player / Show High Scores

Toolbar Button:

Scoring

If a word is correctly guessed, the player is awarded 50 points, with 5 points deducted for each incorrect letter guess. Accordingly, the number of points awarded when a word is correctly guessed will be between 5 and 50.

If the player is unable to guess the word, the player's score is not changed.

The Scoreboard

The scoreboard shows the names and scores of the WORD BLAST players with the 10 highest scores.

The scoreboard is updated each time a player correctly guesses a word and is awarded points. The player will be informed if his or her score has changed position on the scoreboard (i.e. advanced from 5th place to 4th place).

Word Lists Menu

The *Word Lists* menu offers the following commands:

Create

Create a word list.

Open

Open a word list for use in the game.

Edit

Edit a word list (add and delete words, and modify word definitions).

Transfer

Transfer (or copy) words between two word lists.

Copy

Copy a word list.

Delete

Delete a word list.

Rename

Rename a word list.

Word Lists Included with WORD BLAST

WORD BLAST comes complete with a word list which contains over 1700 words and their definitions. The words have been carefully selected to help children in elementary and middle schools enhance their vocabulary. About one-third of the words are fairly easy, and children will immediately recognize them and know their meaning. Another one-third of the words are such that most children in elementary school will have heard them, but probably won't be able to accurately define them. The remaining third of the words will be new to most children, and are words which they can use in everyday life. This word list which comes with WORD BLAST is named 'Words.wds', and is automatically loaded into WORD BLAST when you start up the program.

The WORD BLAST program also comes with three specialty word lists: U.S. Presidents, States (guess states given their capitals), and State Capitals (guess state capitals given the states in which they are located).

If you have opened another word list using the <u>open</u> command in the *Word List* menu, then that word list will be automatically loaded when you start WORD BLAST.

Create a Word List

Use the *Create* command to create a new word list.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Create

Toolbar Button: 📄

The *Create* Menu

The *Create* command invokes a dialog box for creating a word list. The dialog box contains the following controls:

- *Word* field (an edit box)
- *Word Definition* box (an edit box)
- *Word List* (a list box)
- *Filename* box (for display of the name of the word list)
- *Add*, *Modify*, *Delete, Save, and Cancel* buttons

The word list is initially empty and untitled (i.e. it has not been named and saved to disk yet). You may begin adding words to the list right away. You will be asked to specify a name for the list when you first save it.

Functions in the Create Menu:

Add a Word

- Enter the word into the *Word* edit box.

- Enter the definition of the word into the *Word Definition* edit box.

    You may include any number of lines of text in the definition, and are encouraged to use sentences which illustrate the use of the word.

- Press the *Add* button to enter the word into the list. The words in the list are displayed in alphabetical order.

Modify the Definition of a Word

- Select from the word list the word to modify.

    There are two ways to select the word. You can scroll through the word list until the word is found, and then left-click on it to select it, or you can type the word directly into the Word field. If the latter method is used, as you type, the word in the list which most closely matches what has been typed so far will be highlighted. Left-click on the highlighted word to select it. When the word is selected from the list, its definition, if one exists, will be displayed in the Word Definition box.

- Modify the definition of the word in the Word Definition box.

- Press the *Modify* button.

Delete a Word

- Select from the word list the word to delete.

  There are two ways to select the word. You can scroll through the word list until the word is found, and then left-click on it to select it, or you can type the word directly into the Word field. If the latter method is used, as you type, the word in the list which most closely matches what has been typed so far will be highlighted. Left-click on the highlighted word to select it. When the word is selected from the list, its definition, if one exists, will be displayed in the Word Definition box.

- Press the *Delete* button.

Save the Word List

- Press the *Save* button.

  If the list is being saved for the first time, a file dialog box will appear. Enter a name for the word list, without any file extension, in the *Filename* field in the file dialog box (not in the *Filename* field in the *Create* menu). Then, press the *Save* button in the file dialog.

  If the word list has previously been saved, then the file dialog box will not appear. The word list will be saved under its current name.

Cancel

- Press the *Cancel* button to exit the word list creation menu.

Sort Words

If the check box labeled "Sort Words" is checked, then the words in the word list will be displayed in alphabetical order. Click on the check box in order to toggle the display of the words between unsorted (the order in which you entered the words) and sorted (alphabetical). When a word list is saved, the words are saved in the original, unsorted order.

Edit a Word List

Use the *Edit* command to make changes to an existing word list.

You may use this menu to add new words and their definitions, delete existing words, and to modify the definitions of existing words.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Edit

Toolbar Button: E

The *Edit* Menu

The *Edit* command invokes a dialog box for editing a word list. The dialog box contains the following items:

- *Browse button*
- *Word* field (an edit box)
- *Word Definition* box (an edit box)
- *Word List* (a list box)
- *Filename* field (for display of the name of the word list being edited)
- *Add*, *Modify*, *Delete*, *Save*, and *Cancel* buttons

Select a Word List to Edit: *Browse* Button

You must select a word list in order to make changes to it. Press the *Browse* button. This invokes a file dialog box from which you can select the word list to edit. When you have selected the word list which you want to edit, press the *Open* button in the file dialog. The words from the selected word list will be loaded into the list box.

Typically, a word list is selected in the file dialog by left-clicking on the name of the word list. However, if you type the name directly into the *Filename* field in the file dialog box, do not include the file extension (i.e. type *Words* to specify the file *Words.wds*).

Note that loading a word list in this manner does *not* make the list the *current* word list (i.e. the word list from which words will be selected during WORD BLAST games). Use the <u>open</u> command to specify which word list will be used in the WORD BLAST games.

Functions in the Edit Menu:

Add a Word

- Enter the word into the *Word* field.

- Enter the definition of the word into the *Word Definition* edit box.

  You may include any   number of lines of text in the definition, and are encouraged to use sentences which illustrate the use of the word.

- Press the *Add* button to add the word to the list. The words in the list are displayed in alphabetical order.

Modify the Definition of a Word

- Select from the word list the word to modify.

    There are two ways to select the word. You can scroll through the word list until the word is found, and then left-click on it to select it, or you can type the word directly into the Word field. If the latter method is used, as you type, the word in the list which most closely matches what has been typed so far will be highlighted. Left-click on the highlighted word to select it. When the word is selected from the list, its definition, if one exists, will be displayed in the *Word Definition* box.

- Modify the definition of the word in the *Word Definition* box.

- Press the *Modify* button.

Delete a Word

- Select from the word list the word to delete.

    There are two ways to select the word. You can scroll through the word list until the word is found, and then left-click on it to select it, or you can type the word directly into the Word field. If the latter method is used, as you type, the word in the list which most closely matches what has been typed so far will be highlighted. Left-click on the highlighted word to select it. When the word is selected from the list, its definition, if one exists, will be displayed in the *Word Definition* box.

- Press the *Delete* button.

Save the Word List

- Press the *Save* button.

    The list will be saved under its current name.

Cancel

- Press the *Cancel* button to exit the word list *Edit* menu.

Sort Words

If the check box labeled "Sort Words" is checked, then the words in the word list will be displayed in alphabetical order. Click on the check box in order to toggle the display of the words between unsorted (the order in which you entered the words) and sorted (alphabetical). When a word list is saved, the words are saved in the original, unsorted order.

Open a Word List

Use the *Open* command to change the current word list.

The *current word list* is the word list from which the words are chosen during a game.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Open
Toolbar Button:

How to Open a Word List

Left-click on the *Open* command in the *Word List* menu, or left-click on the toolbar button shown above. This invokes a file dialog box from which you can select the word list to open. When you have selected the word list which you want to open, press the *Open* button in the file dialog. The words in the selected list will now be used when playing a game in WORD BLAST.

Transfer Words between Two Word Lists

Use the *Transfer Words* command to transfer words from one word list to another, or to copy words from one word list to another. Words can also be deleted from word lists using this command.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Transfer Words
Toolbar Button:

The *Transfer Words* Menu

The *Transfer Words* command invokes a dialog box for transferring or copying words from one list to another. The dialog box contains the following items:

- Two *Browse* buttons (one for each word list).
- Two *List Boxes* (for display of the words in each list).
- *Arrow Buttons* (which indicate the direction of transfer or copying).
- *Delete, Save, and Cancel* buttons.
- A radio box for specifying the mode: *transfer* or *copy*.

Load the Word Lists to Modify

You must load two word lists, which are referred to as word lists A and B. First, click the *browse* button at the end of the filename field for word list A to invoke a file dialog box for selecting and loading word list A. Select the name of the word list in the file dialog box, then press the *Open* button in the file dialog. This loads the selected word list as word list A. Load word list B in the same manner, using the *browse* button at the end of the filename field for word list B.

Transfer Selected Words between Word Lists

First, set the mode to *transfer* by left-clicking on the *transfer* label in the mode radio box.

Select any number of words from *one* of the list boxes by left-clicking on the words to highlight them. A highlighted word indicates that it has been selected. If the words were selected from word list A, and are to be transferred to word list B, left-click on the -> button. The words, and their definitions, will be removed from word list A and placed into word list B. Conversely, if the words were selected from word list B and are to be transferred to word list A, left-click on the <- button.

Copy Selected Words between Word Lists

First, set the mode to *copy* by left-clicking on the *copy* label in the mode radio box.

Follow the steps listed above for transferring words between word lists. However, in this case, the selected words and their definitions will be copied from one list to the other, so that they will appear in both lists after the copying operation is complete.

Transfer All Words in a Word List to the Other Word List

First, set the mode to *transfer* by left-clicking on the *transfer* label in the mode radio box.

It is not necessary to select the words. Simply press the -> **All** button to transfer all words from word list A to word list B, or the **All** <- button to transfer all words from word list B to word list A.

Copy All Words in a Word List to the Other Word List

First, set the mode to *copy* by left-clicking on the *copy* label in the mode radio box.

It is not necessary to select the words. Simply press the -> **All** button to copy all words from word list A to word list B, or the **All** <- button to copy all words from word list B to word list A.

Transferring Words which Already Appear in the Receiving List

WORD BLAST will not transfer a word from one word list to the other if the word already exists in the receiving list. You will be notified about any words which are not transferred for this reason.

Deleting Words from the Word Lists

Select any number of words from one or both of the list boxes by left-clicking on the words to highlight them. A highlighted word indicates that it has been selected. Then press *Delete* to remove the words, and their definitions, from the word lists.

Creating a Word List in the *Transfer Words* Menu

One of the word lists (A or B) may be created so that words from an existing list may be transferred or copied into it. To create a word list, enter the name of a new word list in the filename field in the file dialog box, then press the Open button in the file dialog. The word list will be created and will be ready to receive words upon exit from the file dialog box.

Transferring (or Copying) from More than One Word List

If you wish to transfer (or copy) selected words from a number of word lists to one receiving list, simply load in another word list for word selection after you have finished processing the words in the current list. Generally, word list B is used as the receiving word list, and words are transferred (or copied) from a number of word lists loaded in as word list A.

Sort Words

If the check box labeled "Sort Words" below a list box is checked, then the words in the list box will be displayed in alphabetical order. Click on the check box in order to toggle the display of the words between unsorted (the order in which you entered the words) and sorted (alphabetical). When a word list is saved, the words are saved in the original, unsorted order.

Copy a Word List

Use the *Copy* command to make a copy of a word list (i.e. duplicate the word list and save it under a different file name).

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Copy

How to Copy a Word List

The *Copy* command invokes two file dialog boxes.

The first file dialog box is for specifying the name of the word list which you want to copy. Select the word list, and press the *Open* button in the file dialog.

The second file dialog box will appear *after* you have selected the word list to copy. In the second file dialog box, enter the new name for the copied word list in the *Filename* field, then press the *Save* button in the file dialog.

The original word list is unaffected by this operation.

Note that you can also make a copy of a word list using any of the standard Windows methods for copying a file.

Rename a Word List

Use the *Rename* command to change the name of a word list.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Rename

How to Rename a Word List

The *Rename* command invokes two file dialog boxes.

The first file dialog box is for specifying the name of the word list which you want to rename. Select the word list, and press the *Open* button in the file dialog.

The second file dialog box will appear *after* you have selected the word list to rename. In the second file dialog box, enter the new name for the word list in the *Filename* field, then press the *Save* button in the file dialog.

Note that you can also rename a word list using any of the standard Windows methods for renaming a file.

Delete a Word List

Use the *Delete* command to delete a word list.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Word List / Delete

How to Delete a Word List

The *Delete* command invokes a file dialog box. Select the name of the word list which you wish to delete, and press the *Open* button in the file dialog.

If the word list contains any words, then you will be prompted to confirm the deletion before the word list is actually deleted.

Note that you can also delete a word list using any of the standard Windows methods for deleting a file.

Options Menu

The *Options* menu offers the following commands:

<u>Sound</u>	Activate or deactivate sound.
<u>Show First Letter</u>	Display the first letter of the word to guess at the beginning of each game.
<u>Letters to Automatically Try</u>	Specify letters to automatically try at the beginning of a game.
<u>Save Window Size</u>	Record the size and position of the view window and use it in future WORD BLAST sessions.
<u>Use Default Window Size</u>	Use the default window size and position (now and in future WORD BLAST sessions).
<u>Bold Fonts</u>	Toggle between bold and normal fonts for the letter boxes in the main window.

Activating and Deactivating Sound

Menu Command: Options / Sound

Toolbar Button:

WORD BLAST can be played with sound activated or deactivated.

When a game is won, an auditory compliment is played. When a game is lost, the sound of an explosion occurs.

In a classroom setting, WORD BLAST is typically played with sound turned off in order to avoid disturbing others.

Deactivating Sound

To deactivate sound without turning off your speakers, either left-click on the *Sound* command in the *Options* menu so that it is unchecked, or press the following toolbar button shown above so that it appears in a 'depressed' state.

Activating Sound

To activate sound, either left-click on the *Sound* command in the *Options* menu so that it becomes checked, or press the toolbar button shown above so that it appears to be 'popped out'.

See Also:

Use Your Own Sound Files for Compliments

Show First Letter

The *Show First Letter* feature causes the first letter of each word to be displayed at the start of each game. This makes the game a little easier for young children.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Options / Show First Letter

Toolbar Button:

Both the menu command and the toolbar button may be selected to *toggle* the current state of the *Show First Letter* feature (i.e. if the feature is activated, selecting the menu item or pressing the toolbar button deactivates the feature, and vice-versa).

Letters to Automatically Try

The *Letters to Automatically Try* command may be used to specify one or more letters that you want WORD BLAST to try at the beginning of a game, i.e. to see if they are part of the word to be guessed.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Options / Letters to Automatically Try

Toolbar Button:

Example

Suppose, for example, that at the start of each game in WORD BLAST, you *always* select the letters 'A', 'E', and 'R' to see if they are in the word to be guessed. You can use the *Letters to Automatically Try* feature to tell WORD BLAST to always try those letters at the start of a game. Of course, if one or more of the letters are not part of the word to be guessed, then they count as incorrect guesses, and a segment of the fuse leading to the bundle of dynamite will burn for each of them.

How to Specify the Letters to Automatically Try

Left-click on the *Letters to Automatically Try* command in the *Options* menu, or left-click on the toolbar button shown above. This invokes a menu which contains 26 buttons, one for each letter of the alphabet. Left-click on the letters which you want WORD BLAST to try at the start of each game. The letters which appear in **bold-face** in the menu are the ones which will be automatically tried.

A maximum of **5** letters may be selected to be automatically processed at the beginning of a game.

The selections which you make in this menu will be saved, and will still be in effect the next time that you play WORD BLAST.

Save Current Window Position and Size

The *Save Current Window Position and Size* command causes the current position and size of the main window to be saved for use in future WORD BLAST sessions.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Options / Save Current Window Position and Size

If the feature is checked in the pull-down menu, then it is active. To deactivate it, select the <u>Use Default Window Position and Size</u> command.

Use Default Window Position and Size

The *Use Default Window Position and Size* feature causes the size of the main window to be automatically computed at the start of each WORD BLAST session. The upper left corner of the main window is positioned at the upper left corner of the desktop. The width of the main window is computed so that the letter buttons are nearly square in shape. This is done as a matter of aesthetics only. The main window may be maximized, but those buttons will generally be rectangular in that case.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Options / Use Default Window Position and Size

If the feature is checked in the pull-down menu, then it is active. To save the current position and size of the main window for use in future WORD BLAST sessions, select the Save Current Window Position and Size command.

Bold Fonts

Click on the *Bold Fonts* command in the *Options* menu in order to toggle the fonts for the letters in the letter boxes in the main window between bold and normal size. The bold fonts are provided to make viewing the letters easier for young children who are new readers.

Activating the Command

Menu Command: Options / Bold Fonts