

# Spelling Tutor

**Version:** Version .98 - beta test

**Language:** Compiled from ZBasic by Zedcor

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**Date:** November 13, 1986

## History

This program was written for my eleven year old son in an effort to improve his spelling grades and to give him a vehicle through which to make studying his spelling more interesting. Although I can't guarantee that you will have the same results, I'm pleased to report that in the nine weeks that he has been using ***Spelling Tutor***, he has missed only two words on his weekly spelling tests (out of 180 total words)! Considering his performance previous to using this program, I'm thrilled! I hope that you can achieve similar results.

**Spelling Tutor** was designed to be used by a child (even most adults should be able to handle this one with a little effort) without having to refer to a manual or to this set of instructions. It makes extensive use of most of the common Macintosh interfaces including pull down menu's, buttons, message windows, and scrollable windows. It also requires that the owner of the system install the **MacInTalk** resource in the system folder of the boot disk or the default system file for a hard disk. **MacInTalk** must be supplied by the user since the author of this program is not licensed to distribute this program. At the present version level, it is recommended that this program, along with the files that it generates, be installed on an HFS Disk. It will work with the older MFS structure, however, the word lists for multiple grading periods of six weeks each will have to be stored on separate disks. More on this later.

## **Getting Started**

Since you are reading this document, you have already unpacked the original Packit3 files as transmitted. If you unpacked them all, you should find a "Spelling Tutor" Icon, this document, a "Week 1" Icon, and a "Weekph 1" Icon. The last two files are for demonstration purposes and may be discarded when desired. They represent the list of words from the first week of this quarter's grading period for my son. Leave them on the disk for now for a trial!

To use this program, you must have the MacinTalk resource file, available from Apple Computer, installed in the system folder of the boot disk. That's all there is to setting up the disk; you are ready to start. As in all Mac programs, double click the "Spelling Tutor" Icon to start the program, then enter your first name, or your first and last names when the Mac asks you for it (literally, the Mac comes up talking). A small surprise awaits those who try to close this name entry window without entering a name! When your name has been satisfactorily entered, the main screen will appear blank (normal gray background) and a menu bar will be displayed:

(Apple Menu)   File   Spelling Words   Options

The various options available from the menu selections are discussed in the following sections labeled to match the appropriate menu selections.

## **Apple Menu**

The normal desk accessories which you have previously installed will not be affected by this program. You will find that the normal "About..." function will now include a message about the author of this program. Other than that, all desk accessories should function normally.

## Files

The **Files** menu selection will now include four choices pertaining to this program:

**Directions**  
**Enter new list**  
**Edit Phonetic list**

**Quit**

The **Directions** selection will call a MacinTalk subroutine which tells the speller that he must make a selection of word lists from the **Spelling Words** menu, or select **Enter new list**, or **Edit Phonetic list** from the files menu.

**Enter new list** selection will bring up the appropriate window for entering a new list of twenty words for a file. Each word list is stored as a Week# file on the program disk. In addition, this selection will automatically create a Weekph# file which will store the exact word list as entered as the phonetic list for MacinTalk, when the list is completed and stored to disk.

This entry process uses a series of twenty edit fields which are activated sequentially each time an entry is made and the return key is pressed. The normal Mac edit procedures are functional during this process, i.e. cut, copy, and paste, and a field may be selected at any time by pressing the mouse button adjacent to the number desired. When the list is completed, close the window by using the normal close button in the title bar to activate the normal "save as" procedure. Files may be saved to the default disk (the program disk) or to another disk or hard disk file if desired since the "drive" button function is activated during this save procedure.

After the list has been saved, or at any time you wish to change the way a word is pronounced, select **Edit Phonetic list** from the **File** menu. When selected, a button window will appear requesting the Weekph# file for editing. Select the appropriate week number button, and an edit window will be opened displaying the current phonetic spelling for that week's list. Again, the **Edit** menu will be activated allowing the normal editing procedures. In addition, each time an edit field is selected, the word contained in the previous edit field will be annunciated by MacinTalk. This allows the user to repeatedly edit the phonetic spelling of a word to optimise the pronunciation for MacinTalk. When you are satisfied with the pronunciation of the list, close the window to activate the "save as" window.

It has been my experience with this program and with MacinTalk that words pronounced in the past tense, and words in plural form are often difficult to distinguish from their present tense or singular form. I have found that adding "- past tense" to the phonetic spelling of a word or "-plural" to the phonetic spelling will make the pronunciation of the words much easier to understand. The sample lists included with this download include examples of this procedure. You can examine these recommendations by choosing **Edit Phonetic list** and scrolling through the list to see how this is accomplished. To add these or any type of comments to a word to make it more understandable, use the - key or a space key. *Do not use punctuation marks such as commas or semi-colons or colons - this type of punctuation will cause the Mac to insert the comments as spelling words on the next line, and to purge the last words from the list.*

The final selection from the **File** menu is the normal "Quit" function and will operate as you would expect, returning the system to the current "Finder" or "Mini-Finder" depending on how the disk has been configured. As far as I know, all programming aspects used adhere to the standard Macintosh interface. This program was written on a Mac 512E and has been tested on this machine and a Mac Plus. It hopefully will work on the original 128 Macs and the Fat Macs although to date I know of no testing done on these machines.

### **Spelling Words**

In this version of **Spelling Tutor**, word list files are selected under this menu item by week number: the maximum number of weeks being set up for six week grading periods in accordance with our local school system. The purchased version will allow for an unlimited (disk space) number of weeks and for HFS folders according to quarters or other types of list organization. For now, the program is limited to a six-week list. These lists are selected under this menu item as would be expected.

After a week# list is selected, a window will be opened displaying the list for this week and option buttons will appear which will allow the following functions with this list:

Practice list  
Edit list  
Print list  
Cancel

These choices function as you would expect. If edit list is selected, and changes are made to the list (believe it or not, sometimes you can type the list in incorrectly on the original entry), the "save as" window will appear when the window is closed.

## Options

This selection is provided to allow for interactive spell checking of the words as they are entered (the default) or non-interactive checking which will allow the user to enter the entire list (like they do in school) and the list will then be graded. In the interactive mode, this program functions similar to the old T.I. "Speak and Spell" games. It allows the user three attempts at each word before proceeding to the next word.

In the non-interactive mode, the program functions much as a teacher would in grading the list after entry. The exception here is that after grading, the incorrect words are displayed along with the correct spelling, then the user is presented with only the mis-spelled words for another attempt. The Mac will make the appropriate comments concerning the speller's performance.

A second selection under this menu is **What's this?**. Making this selection will cause the Mac to explain the use of the interactive spell checking option.