

**"rhyming elements"**

Also known as "word families", these are very common vowel-consonant combinations that make up many short words. For example, "and" is not only a word, it also is a rhyming element that makes words like "band", "sand", and "hand." Some other common rhyming elements are "all", "at", "it", "op", "ick", "ump", "ill", "an"--most of these are used in Wordtrix.

**vowel-consonant-e ("silent e")**

There are a number of words that end in a vowel-consonant-e pattern, like "bike", "tape" and "rope". In almost every case the "e" is "silent", and the vowel before the consonant is "long"--says its name. If the "e" is removed, the vowel almost always reverts to a "short" sound. For example, "tape" without the "e" is "tap", and "cube" becomes "cub".

# Wordtrix Help



Welcome to Wordtrix Help! Click on the green, underlined topics to read about them. You can also print any one of these Help topics by clicking on **File** on the menu bar, then on **Print Topic**.

[What is Wordtrix?](#)

[Installing and Removing Wordtrix](#)

[Starting a Game](#)

[How to Play Word Invaders](#)

[How to Play Word Tag](#)

[How to Play Picture Tag](#)

[How to Play Make-a-Word](#)

[Guide For Parents and Teachers](#)

[Registering Your Copy of Wordtrix](#)

[Site Licensing for Schools and other Institutions](#)

[Technical Notes](#)

[Legal Stuff](#)

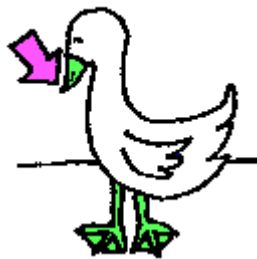
## Guide for Parents and Teachers



Wordtrix is designed to aid your children's reading development by helping them learn certain phonic patterns. Reading is a deceptively complex act, and learning phonics is only one part of learning to read. Besides learning to recognize the printed forms of words ordinarily used in speech, children also have to learn to concentrate and derive meaning from what they read. This comes only from wide reading in a variety of books and magazines over a period of several years. But the skills acquired by playing Wordtrix will not only give children a good start in acquiring a large sight vocabulary, it will also provide a set of skills that will be indispensable in learning to spell, which, in turn, will contribute to their growth in writing skills. Below are some suggestions to help you and your kids get the most from Wordtrix.

**Play the game yourself before turning it over to the kids.** After installing the game, take a few minutes to learn how to play each game. This will enable you to help your kids if they should encounter problems, and you will also be able to determine which kids can play alone, and which will need some help getting started. Also, if they are reluctant to try an "educational" game, they may change their minds if they see you playing it and having fun.

**Young children will need a lot of help.** Wordtrix was designed specifically with young children (ages 4-8) in mind, so playing techniques were kept very simple. However, it will still be necessary to show children how to access the game selection menu, where the arrow keys are, how to operate the mouse, "tap" a key gently rather than pressing hard and holding it down (keys will repeat if they're held down), and other basic operating skills, such as the "drag and drop" action required in the Picture Tag game. In addition, children will need help whenever they start a new level of the game. (See [What is Wordtrix](#) for a description of the game's six levels.)



### **Remember, pictures are ambiguous.**

Every effort was made to create pictures that were clear and obvious representations of each word, but interpretation of pictures is highly subjective--what seems obvious to adults may not be so obvious to children. They will probably need your help for a while until they learn which words go with each picture. Note that in some pictures (for the words "heel," "page" and "beak," for example) there is an arrow pointing to the specific part of the object represented. You may need to explain this.

**Emphasize fun, not scores.** Wordtrix has a pretty generous scoring system, and it won't be long



before the Top Ten List dialog box appears as shown below.

Children will need some help with this dialog the first time it appears as well. Show them how to type in their names and click the OK button. The Top Ten List appears immediately afterward, and it can be viewed at any time during the game by clicking on the High Scores button. Children, like adults, love a moment of recognition and fame, no matter how small or fleeting, so getting on the Top Ten List can become very important to kids. For this reason, downplay the scoring aspect of the game while kids are just learning to play, or entering a new level with new words and phonograms. Try to encourage kids to compete with themselves, not with each other.

**Help kids look for the game words/phonograms in other contexts.** Kids will often do this by themselves, but you can help by drawing their attention to a game word or phonogram whenever it occurs on a sign, package label, on TV or in magazines--any place at any opportunity. Psychological studies have shown that recognition or recall of newly-learned items in different contexts (sometimes called transfer) is a very effective way to reinforce that learning and help make it permanent.

# Installing and Removing Wordtrix



## Installing Wordtrix on Your Hard Drive

I have always thought it was rather silly to put instructions for installation in an online help file, which, of course, cannot be accessed unless the software has already been installed. But there are occasions when it can be useful, such as telling others how to install Wordtrix, reinstalling it on a new computer, and so on.

The process is very simple, and instructions are on the diskette(s) as well. If you have downloaded the shareware version from a bulletin board or other online service, instructions are in the *readme* file, which is contained in the WDTX20.ZIP file:

- (1) Insert the Wordtrix diskette into the floppy drive.
- (2) From the Windows Program Manager, select **File**, then **Run**. Type the following:  
**a:setup** (or **b:setup**)  
and press the ENTER key. Then simply follow the directions as they appear. Installation should take a couple of minutes at most.
- (3) When installation is complete, Wordtrix for Windows will be placed in a Program Manager group called "Tea Time Software." Of course, you can move Wordtrix to any other group by simply dragging the icon, then delete the Tea Time Software group if you wish.

## Removing Wordtrix from Your Computer

All that is required to remove Wordtrix from your hard drive is to erase the WORDTRIX subdirectory and all the files in it. Wordtrix does not create .INI or other special files in subdirectories other than its own, nor does it alter any of your PC's system files. Thus you do not need to use special "uninstalling" software to remove Wordtrix.

The following steps will completely remove Wordtrix:

- (1) Bring up the Windows File Manager (in the Main Group in the Program Manager).
- (2) Locate the Wordtrix subdirectory and click on it to highlight it.
- (3) Click on **File** in the Menu Bar, then select **Delete**. A dialog box will appear asking if you really want to delete the subdirectory. Click **OK**. A second dialog box may also appear, asking if you want to delete the files in the subdirectory. Click **OK** on this box also. Wordtrix is now removed from your hard drive.
- (4) Exit the File Manager. You will still have to remove the Tea Time Software program group and the Wordtrix icon inside it. Just highlight them, then select **File**, then **Delete**, just as before.

## Legal Stuff



### The Shareware License Agreement

Upon receipt and installation of the shareware version of this program, you are granted a "Shareware License." What this means is that you are free to use the software for a period of 30 days in order to evaluate it, that is, to decide if it meets your needs. At the end of the evaluation period, the "Shareware License" expires and you are obligated to (1) register the program by sending the registration fee to Tea Time Software, or (2) erase the software from your computer.

Copyright laws apply to both Shareware and commercial software, and the copyright holder retains all rights, with a few specific exceptions as stated below. Shareware authors are accomplished programmers, just like commercial authors, and the programs are of comparable quality. (In both cases, there are good programs and bad ones!) The main difference is in the method of distribution. The author specifically grants the right to copy and distribute the software, either to all and sundry or to a specific group. For example, some authors require written permission before a commercial disk vendor may copy their Shareware.

Shareware is a distribution method, not a type of software. You should find software that suits your needs and pocketbook, whether it's commercial or Shareware. The Shareware system makes fitting your needs easier, because you can try before you buy. And because the overhead is low, prices are low also. Shareware has the ultimate money-back guarantee--if you don't use the product, you don't pay for it.

All files that support Wordtrix for Windows, including the pictures (files with a .BMP extension) and sound files (.WAV extension) are property of Tea Time Software and are copyrighted along with the software. **You cannot alter these files or incorporate them into another program or document without written permission from Tea Time Software.** Please respect the program's copyright.

### Disclaimer and Agreement

Users of Wordtrix for Windows must accept this disclaimer of warranty:

"Wordtrix for Windows is supplied as is. The author disclaims all warranties, expressed or implied, including, without limitation, the warranties of merchantability and of fitness for any purpose. The author assumes no liability for damages, direct or consequential, which may result from the use of Wordtrix for Windows."

Wordtrix for Windows is a "shareware program" and is provided at no charge to the user for evaluation. Feel free to share it with your friends, but please do not give it away altered or as part of another system. If you continue to use Wordtrix for Windows after a reasonable trial period, you must make a registration payment to Tea Time Software. This registration fee will license one copy for use on any one computer at any one time, unless the program has been site licensed for use on multiple computers.

Anyone distributing Wordtrix for Windows for any kind of remuneration must first contact Tea Time Software for authorization. This is automatically granted to distributors recognized by the Association of Shareware Professionals as adhering to its guidelines for shareware distributors, and such distributors may begin offering Wordtrix for Windows immediately. (However, Tea Time Software must still be advised so that the distributor can be kept up-to-date with the latest version.)

This program is produced by a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP). ASP wants to make sure that the shareware principle works for you. If you are unable to resolve a shareware-related problem with an ASP member by contacting the member directly, ASP may be able to help. The ASP Ombudsman can help you resolve a dispute or problem with an ASP member, but does not provide

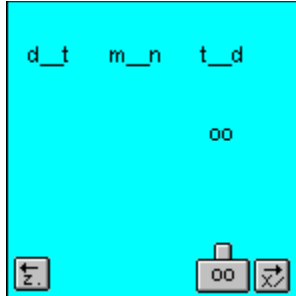
technical support for members' products. Please write to the ASP Ombudsman at 545 Grover Road, Muskegon, MI 49442 or send a CompuServe message via CompuServe Mail to ASP Ombudsman 70007,3536.

If you have any problems or questions about Wordtrix for Windows or any Tea Time Software product, please contact Joe Kretschmer at the above address, via CompuServe at 71020,1350, on America On-Line by addressing e-mail to JoeKretsch, or on the Internet at JoeKretsch@aol.com. Technical support is available for all Tea Time products for a full year after the software is registered.



## Playing Word Invaders

The object of Word Invaders is to keep the lines of word frames from reaching the bottom of the playing area where the cannon is. A typical Word Invaders screen is shown below:



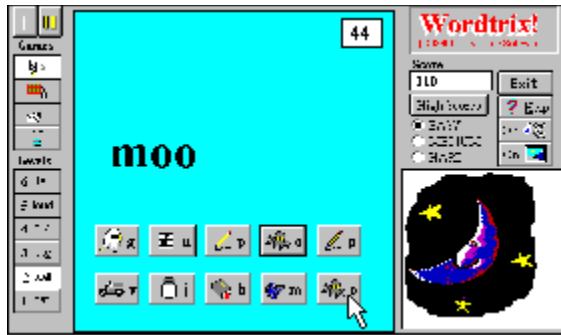
The "cannon" has a phonogram on it. A player "shoots" the phonogram by pressing either of the two Control keys on the PC keyboard, or by clicking anywhere on the cannon with the left mouse button. The cannon then "fires" a phonogram up at the word frames. If the cannon is not directly below the correct word frame, then the player must move it sideways by clicking on one of the two directional buttons at the bottom of the playing area. The player can also use the "Z" or "." keys to move the cannon left, or the "X" or "/" keys to move it right. This choice of keys accommodates both left-handed and right-handed players.

There is a picture clue for each word. (In the registered version, there are sound or "spoken" clues as well.) The picture appears when the line of word frames appears, and serves as an additional clue to identifying the word. If the phonogram is shot at an incorrect word frame, it simply passes through the frame and disappears at the top of the playing area. Shot at the correct frame, the phonogram will blend with the word frame to make the word, and the entire line of word and frames will flash three times. Points are then awarded and can be seen in the score window. As kids get better at recognizing the words, they can turn off the sound clues, which increases the point value of each correct "shot."

The difficulty levels can also be set by clicking on the appropriate buttons. See Starting a Game for a full description.

## Playing Make-a-Word

Falling Letters and Word Tag require recognition, the ability to select a correct answer from several alternatives. Make-a-Word, on the other hand, requires what teachers call a *constructive response*, or the ability to recall and reconstruct the parts of something. Spelling is the constructive aspect of reading, an essential skill in writing. Make-a-Word provides practice with the same words used in the other two games.



The game play is simple. A picture clue appears in the picture area and the word is pronounced ( on PCs with a sound card). Then ten buttons appear in the bottom third of the playing area. The buttons have letters and small pictures that represent the sound normally associated with the letter. (Pictures on the buttons with vowels represent their "short" sounds only.) The player's task is to spell the word by clicking on the letters of the word in the proper order. Each time a correct letter button is clicked, that letter appears in large type above the buttons, and the playing area background changes color. The letters **must** be chosen in the correct order, as this helps players memorize the spellings of each word. The score increases for each correct choice. As in the previous two games, a timer box displays the time remaining before the player loses the game.

Because this is a relatively difficult task, especially when there is time pressure, some kids will probably be "stumped" at first, unable to recall the spelling. This is especially true when a new set of blanks appears, and there is no clue except the picture (and the spoken word if the sound is enabled ). To avoid a completely frustrating situation, Wordtrix will supply a missing letter after several seconds if there is no response. When this happens, no points are awarded, but it gives kids an additional clue which, in many cases, enables them to complete the word. Eventually, the spellings will be memorized and they will be able to play very rapidly. When this stage is reached, the words are completely mastered, so Make-a-Word is generally played only after playing the other three games at the same level.


## Playing Picture Tag

Picture Tag is a matching game. Players must "drag and drop" each of the words from the word box to

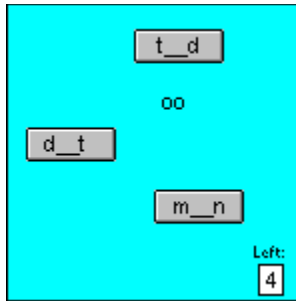


the right to the matching picture in the playing area.

Younger children may need to be taught how to "drag and drop." First they need to click on the word they want, which "highlights" it, like the word "boat" in the screen to the left. If your PC has a sound card, Wordtrix will pronounce the word as it is highlighted. Then they must hold down the left mouse button and move the mouse cursor to the picture they want. The word does not move, but the mouse cursor

turns from an arrow to an arrow with a box like this  to let players know that they are "dragging" the word. They "drop" the word over the picture by releasing the mouse button. If the word matches the picture, a "Yes" picture appears, points are earned, and the word disappears from the word box. If a player drops a word that does not match the picture, then a "No" picture appears. Players are timed, and the game is lost if a player fails to drag and drop something to each of the nine pictures before the time runs out.

## Playing Word Tag



In Word Tag, the mouse cursor, which is usually arrow-shaped, turns into a phonogram. The goal of the game is to put the phonogram into the correct word frame by moving it over the word frame and clicking the left mouse button. If the player's choice makes a real word, the word frame will be replaced with the whole word and points will be awarded. It's not as easy as it looks. Often, just as players get the phonogram cursor positioned for a score, the word frame suddenly moves to another part of the screen! To add to the excitement, there is also a time limit. The seconds remaining are shown in the lower right corner of the playing area. If the time expires, the game is over. The timer is reset whenever a successful tag occurs. The amount of time players have to "tag" the word depends on the difficulty level--Easy, Medium or Hard. The difficulty level also determines how often the word frames move.

## Registering Wordtrix

*Wordtrix* is *shareware*, a program that is freely distributed for your evaluation. All the games are fully functional, but the upper three skill levels are disabled, and Wordtrix will "talk" only at the first level. This gives you an ample opportunity to evaluate the software and decide if you would like to purchase it. To register your copy, follow the instructions below. When I receive your payment, you will receive a *registered* version of Wordtrix. The registered version of Wordtrix has all six skill levels available, as well as full sound support for all levels. Also, the "Wordtrix is shareware..." box will no longer appear when you start the program. (Your PC must be equipped with a sound card, for Wordtrix to "talk.") As a registered user, you will also receive notification of updates and news of other Tea Time Software product releases.

To register your copy, fill out the following form and send it with US\$19 and the appropriate shipping charge. Send check, cash, or money order (schools may send approved PO's) to the address on the form below. To print the form, make sure your printer is online, then click on **File** on the menu bar, then select the **Print Topic** option.

Wordtrix for Windows 2.0	19.00
Shipping and Handling	2.00
Sales Tax (Ohio residents)	1.00
<b>Total Enclosed</b>	_____

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_ (if outside the USA)

Send to:  
**Tea Time Software**  
**92 Acorn Circle**  
**Oxford OH 45056**  
**USA**

Where did you get this copy of *Wordtrix for Windows*?

Other comments:

## Site Licenses



Schools and other institutions with multiple computers may find it more economical to purchase a site license. A site license is an agreement in which Tea Time Software grants a school or institution permission to make multiple copies of Wordtrix for Windows for use on a certain number of personal computers. The site license fee represents a substantial discount, as opposed to registering each individual copy of the software.

Registration for a single-user copy of Wordtrix for Windows is US\$19. Site license registration fees are shown in the chart below:

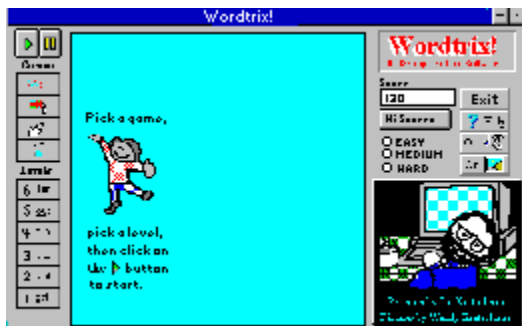
<b>Number of Copies</b>	<b>Fee per Copy</b>	<b>Discount</b>
5 - 30	11.40	40%
31 - 70	9.50	50%
71 - 120	5.70	70%
over 120	Call Tea Time Software	

Rates are the same whether or not the PCs are networked. As part of the site license agreement, the school or institution must agree not to distribute copies of the **registered version** of Wordtrix for Windows outside the school premises. The school or institution may distribute the **shareware** version, however, and is encouraged to do so.

For more information regarding site licensing, contact Tea Time Software at 92 Acorn Circle, Oxford OH 45056, e-mail at [JoeKretsch@aol.com](mailto:JoeKretsch@aol.com), or call (513) 523-3830 after 6PM EST or EDT.

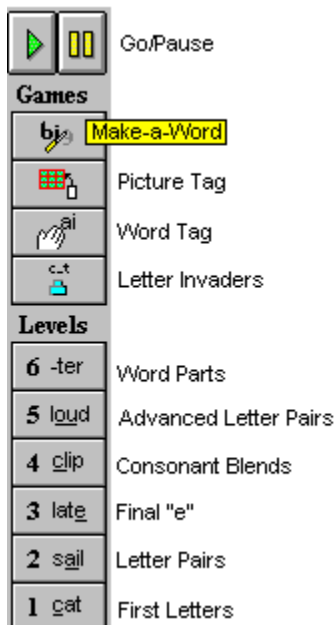
## Starting a Game

When you start Wordtrix, the first thing you see is a large version of the screen below:





You may have noticed that Wordtrix has no menu bar! After all, what use is a menu bar to kids who are just learning to read? Everything in Wordtrix is selected by pressing buttons, just like the TV and most other ordinary household appliances. For example, you pressed the Help button to read this online manual. Wordtrix's screen is divided into three general areas from left to right.

The area at the far left is the **selection area**. It has three groups of buttons. As the little cartoon figure suggests, you click on a button from the middle group to pick a game, one from the bottom group to select a playing level, and then you click on the button with the "go" arrow to start the game action.



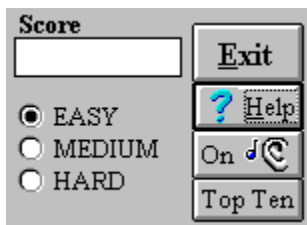
If you move the mouse cursor over one of these buttons and leave it there for a second, a small box will appear, (like the one shown on the Make-a-Word button) telling you the name of the game assigned to that button. The "Go" and "Pause" buttons are at the top, followed by the four game speedbuttons. The bottom six speedbuttons are used to select a playing level. In Wordtrix, "playing levels" represent different phonic skills in order of difficulty. You must select **both** a game and a level before you can begin to play one of the games. If you have a [shareware version](#) of Wordtrix for Windows, you will notice that the upper three levels are "grayed out" or disabled. The lower three levels are fully functional, as are all four games. If you have a sound card, you will also hear all the sound effects, and Wordtrix will "speak" the Level 1 words. If you decide to register (pay for) your copy of Wordtrix, then you will receive a registered version which will have all six levels enabled, and includes sound files for words for all six

levels.

The Play and Pause buttons, located at the top left corner of the Wordtrix window, have symbols on them similar to those on VCR play and pause buttons. Select a game and level, then click once on the button with the "play" arrow  to start the game. The Pause button, the one with the  symbol, has two functions. When you click on this button, the game is paused and a dialog box appears asking if you want to quit the game. The game action and timer is shut off while this box is on the screen, thus you can also pause the game using this button.



The aqua (light blue) rectangle in the middle is the **playing area**. This is where all of the game action in Wordtrix occurs. When you click on the play button, the little cartoon character disappears and the playing area sets up for whatever game you have selected. This area changes colors in three of the games. To read specific instructions for each game, click on one of these titles: [Word Invaders](#), [Word Tag](#), [Picture Tag](#), [Make-a-Word](#).



The area to the right of the playing area is the **options area**. The bottom of this area holds the picture clue for the target words in each game (except for Picture Tag, which has pictures in the playing area). Above the picture are four buttons. Use the **Exit** button to end the Wordtrix program and return to Windows. The **Help** button accesses the help file you are reading now. The **Sound on/off** button (the one with the ear) turns the game sounds on or off. Your PC must be equipped with a [sound card](#) to hear the game sounds and the voice that pronounces each word. The shareware version of Wordtrix has voice files for only the first level (First Letters). The [registered version](#) of Wordtrix has voice files for all levels. Since turning off the sound clues makes the game play more difficult, players earn more points for correct responses with the sound clues turned off. Clicking on the **Top Ten** button displays a list of the players with the top ten scores.

To the left of these four buttons are three [radio buttons](#) labelled EASY, MEDIUM and HARD, the three difficulty levels in Wordtrix. Wordtrix has two types of "levels," six *skill levels*, such as First Letters, Vowel Pairs, etc., and the three *difficulty levels*--**easy**, **medium** and **hard**. These provide a more challenging game for players whose reading skills are above the beginner level. Selecting a higher difficulty level reduces the amount of time a player has to complete a task, and may add other obstacles such as requiring more moves to move the cannon in the Word Invaders game. Although you can change difficulty levels in the middle of a game, it might not take effect until the next word or set of pictures is displayed.



## Technical Notes



Wordtrix for Windows requires a 286 or better processor to run (386 or better recommended). It also requires at least 2MB of RAM and 2MB of free hard disk space. (To hear the sound effects and spoken words, you will also need a Sound Blaster(TM) or compatible sound card and speakers.) Since it is a Windows program, it also requires Microsoft Windows 3.1, (or Windows95) and a mouse or equivalent pointing device.

The registered version of Wordtrix for Windows requires 5MB of free disk space due to the additional sound and picture files for the upper three levels.

The WDTX21.EXE is the main program file of Wordtrix, the one that is called to run when you click on the Wordtrix icon. (The registered version's executable is WDTX21R.EXE.) However, there are many other files that Wordtrix needs to run. These should have been installed when you ran the Setup program. The registered version includes about 260 picture files (files with a ".bmp" extension), a dozen or so text files (with a .txt or .doc extension) that hold the game words, 240 or so sound files (with a **.wav** extension), and two files called "hinames.wtx" and "hiscores.wtx", which, as you might suppose, hold the scores and names for the high score list. If these last two files are missing or somehow deleted, the program will generate two default files which produce the names and scores you see the first time you look at the high score list.

Wordtrix for Windows is technically Version 2.1 of the original Wordtrix, a DOS program released in 1992. The DOS versions were 1.0 and 1.5. These versions were written in C, using the Borland compiler. Wordtrix for Windows was created with Delphi, Borland's new programming environment for Microsoft Windows. Delphi is a Pascal-based, object-oriented, event-driven programming language with a robust collection of visual components that enable the programmer to concentrate on the application rather than the often frustrating and baffling Windows API. Because of the increased possibilities afforded by Delphi, Wordtrix for Windows has better and more interesting games than the old DOS version. I heartily recommend Delphi to any of you who may be considering writing educational software.

Version 2.0 was released in mid-August of 1995. Despite the efforts of several beta testers, it took a seven-year-old boy to discover a couple of pernicious bugs. Unfortunately, the program had been released about a week before. I quickly fixed the bugs and released Version 2.1 early the next month. To my knowledge, the program is free of bugs, but, as anyone who has worked with computers knows, every program has the potential to "crash" on occasion, especially if you have several programs loaded and are switching back and forth among them, which has become commonplace since the general acceptance of the Windows environment. There are so many different brands of PCs, video cards, multimedia hardware, etc., that I'm amazed that anything runs at all! Under normal circumstances, however, Wordtrix should run without problems.

If you other questions about Wordtrix, you may contact me at any of these addresses:

Via CompuServe: 71020,1350.

Via America Online: JoeKretsch

Via the internet: joekretsch@aol.com

By US mail: Tea Time Software, 92 Acorn Circle, Oxford OH 45056 (USA)

By phone: 513-523-3830 (after 6pm EST/EDT during the week)

# What is Wordtrix?



Greetings! I'm Joe Kretschmer, author of Wordtrix and owner of Tea Time Software. Wordtrix is an arcade-type game that is designed to help children learn the most common phonic patterns. Learning these phonic patterns is essential to building a large sight vocabulary, which, in turn, is the basis for learning to read.

There are many reading and phonic programs on the market today. Wordtrix is different from the rest of these because:

(1) **Wordtrix is first and foremost a game.** All that is learned is a direct result of playing the game. There are no tutorials or "lessons." Kids learn the phonic patterns because they have to in order to master the game play and make higher scores.

(2) **Wordtrix was written by a programmer with a Ph.D. in Reading Education.** Most educational programs are written by programmers in consultation with a professional educator. While there is nothing wrong with this approach, educators are often unaware of all the programming options available, while programmers do not understand the educational principles involved. When I wrote Wordtrix, I not only knew what kinds of activities helped build phonic knowledge, I also knew the best programming techniques I could use to incorporate these into a game that was easy to learn and play.

## Wordtrix's Games and Levels

Wordtrix consists of four games and six skill levels. I'll describe the games first.

**Word Invaders** is similar to the old "Space Invaders" arcade game, where rows of aliens fall menacingly. Instead of aliens, a row of "word frames" such as "b\_\_d" or "ch\_\_" fall, and the player must shoot a phonogram at the right word frame so that it makes a real word. A picture clue appears in the lower right corner, and players shoot a "phonogram cannon" and try to make a real word. See [Playing Word Invaders](#) for complete playing instructions.

In **Word Tag**, three word frames appear and the normal Windows arrow cursor turns into a phonogram, which the player moves with the mouse. The object is to "tag" the frame that makes a real word by moving the phonogram cursor into the right word frame, then clicking the left mouse button. See [Playing Word Tag](#) for complete playing instructions.

**Picture Tag** is a matching game. Players must "drag and drop" each of the words from the word box to the right to the matching picture in the playing area. See [Playing Picture Tag](#) for complete playing instructions.

**Make-A-Word** builds and exercises spelling rather than reading skills. A picture and ten letter buttons appear. Players must spell out the words by clicking on the correct letters in sequence. Since this is a difficult task at first, the computer will supply a letter after an interval of about 5 seconds. See [Playing Make-a-Word](#) for complete playing instructions.

Each of the four Wordtrix games can be played at six different levels. These levels represent mastery

levels of different phonic patterns, and are roughly in order of difficulty.

**Level One** is called First Letters. It actually teaches two skills at once: initial consonants and "rhyming elements." These produce simple words like "bat," "cat," "rat," etc. **Level Two** is Letter Pairs. These are more formally known as vowel pairs or vowel phonemes, occurring in words like "feet," "soap," "good" and "mail." **Level Three**, "Silent e," provides practice in recognizing the vowel-consonant-e pattern. Words like "bike," "line" and "tape" are learned. **Level Four** introduces words with consonant blends. **Level Five**, Advanced Letter Pairs, adds more vowel pairs and mixes them with the consonant blends of Level Four for review. **Level Six**, Word Parts, goes beyond phonics and into structural analysis. It is the most difficult level.

For specific instructions on how to start a game, see Starting a Game. For more suggestions and background in using Wordtrix with your children or students, see Suggestions for Parents and Teachers.

# Wordtrix is Shareware



Shareware programs are copyrighted programs that can be distributed and copied without charge. However, shareware is *not* freeware. It can best be described as "try before you buy" software. All the games in the shareware version of Wordtrix are fully functional, but three of the six skill levels are disabled, and sound card support is only included for the first skill level. This gives you an ample opportunity to try Wordtrix and decide if you want to purchase it. If you like this program and continue to use it, you should send a payment to Tea Time Software. In return, Tea Time will send you a "registered version" of Wordtrix with all features enabled.

[Click here to start Wordtrix.](#)

[Click here to see a registration form.](#)

[Click here for Wordtrix Help.](#)

**consonant blends**

These are common consonant pairs like "bl", "cl", "dr" and "sp". Some consonant pairs actually represent only one sound, like "sh" or "ch". These are technically *consonant digraphs*. In Wordtrix, both types of consonant pairs are presented in Level Four.

**Initial consonants**

Initial consonants, as the term implies, occur at the beginnings of words. Since English is read left to right, it is crucial to know the first letter of a word. Most English words begin with consonants, which are basically all of the letters that are not vowels (a-e-i-o-u and sometimes y and w).

**phonic patterns**

Certain spellings that consistently represent sounds in spoken English. For example, a "double e" pattern (ee) will almost always represent the sound at the end of words like *see* and *tree*, or in the middle of words like *feel* or *speech*.

**phonogram**

A phonogram is a combination of letters that represent certain speech sounds. In English, certain phonograms like **ee** and **ake** occur so frequently that learning to recognize them can significantly increase one's ability to recognize whole words, particularly in combination with context or picture clues.



**Radio Buttons** Radio buttons get their name from the row of pushbuttons on most car radios, where only one can be pushed in at a time. They are usually small circles that become filled when you click on them. Like the car radio buttons, only one can be selected from a group.

**Registered Version** A version of the software that has been paid for. Wordtrix, like many other shareware programs, has some features disabled in the shareware version. When you register your copy of Wordtrix, you will be sent a *registered* version, which will have the upper three skills levels enabled. In addition, the registered version comes with about 250 digitized sound files, one for each of the words in Wordtrix! (Your computer must be equipped with a sound card and speakers to use these files.) See [Registering Wordtrix](#) for instructions and a form to register Wordtrix.

**Shareware Version** A "trial" software version that is available for free (from online services like America Online) or for a small fee (from mail-order vendors or retail racks). Shareware offers an alternative to higher-priced commercial software. Big software companies criticize shareware as being buggy and of low quality, but the truth is that shareware often *better* than commercial software because you get to try shareware programs *before* you register (buy) them. No one sends in their hard-earned money for worthless programs, so lousy shareware disappears quickly. Because most shareware authors want (and deserve) to be compensated for their efforts, shareware versions of programs may have some features disabled. These features are restored in the registered version, which people receive if they pay for the software.

**sight vocabulary**

All the words that a person recognizes immediately or "on sight". The average high school graduate has a sight vocabulary of some 10,000 words.

**Sound Card** a circuit board inside your PC that enables you to hear life-like, stereo sound and music. PCs that come with *multimedia* kits have sound cards, usually Sound Blaster compatible. One way to tell if your PC has a sound card is if it came equipped with a set two small speakers, either standing outside the PC box, or built into the sides or bottom of the monitor.

**structural analysis**

This is a method of recognizing or spelling words by looking at individual syllables, which Wordtrix calls "word parts". Rules for syllabication can get complex, so Wordtrix presents only some of the most common patterns such as the "y", "ey" and "\_le" endings ("tiny", "money", "table", "eagle", etc.) and some other word parts to illustrate the basic idea.

**transfer** -- The ability to apply skills learned in one situation to different situation. The more familiar kids become with the phonic patterns that occur in Wordtrix, the more likely they will be able to discover those patterns in books and other reading materials, and use them to learn new words.

**vowel pairs**

Also known as "vowel phonemes", these are pairs of vowels that produce a single sound. In most cases, one of the vowels is "silent". In English, this is generally the second vowel. So the "oa" in "toad" represents the "o" sound, as in the name of this letter, while the "a" is "silent". Some common vowel pairs taught in Wordtrix are: ea, oa, ee, ai, oo, oi, ou and ow. (We tell children that letters "say" a sound or are "silent", but, of course letters don't talk, they only *represent* certain speech sounds.)





