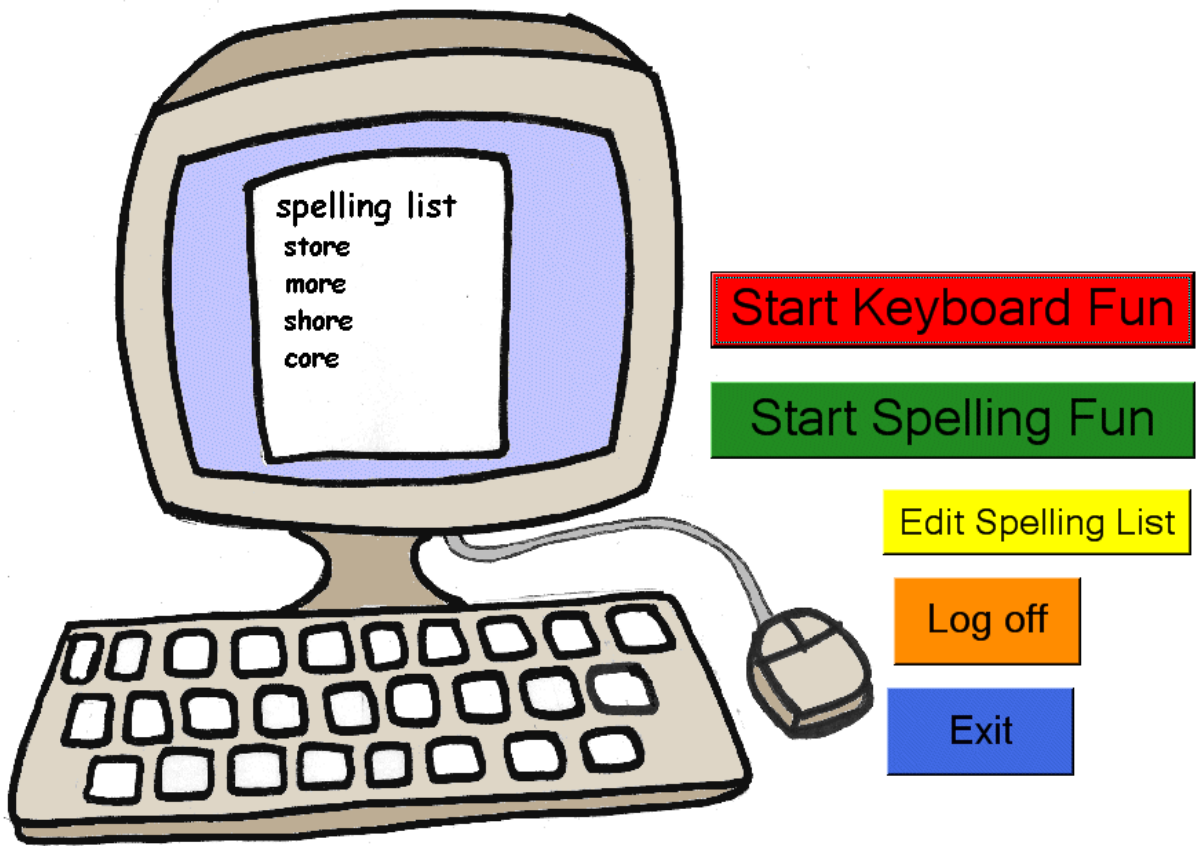
User Guide for “Miss Sue’s Keyboard Fun ©”



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V 3.0

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http://www.ot-care.com

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1 Introduction 3
2 Background to Miss Sue's Keyboard Fun 3
3 Main Menu 4
4 Keyboard Fun 5
4.1 Starting Keyboard Fun 5
4.2 Purpose 6
4.3 Steps 7
4.4 Options 8
4.4.1 Timer 8
4.4.2 Jump 8
4.4.3 Hide 9
4.4.4 Selecting keyboard lines 9
4.4.5 Automatically Jump To Next Letter 9
5 Spelling/Word fun 10
5.1 Setting up the spelling list 10
5.2 Options 13
5.2.1 Ignore Incorrect Letters 13
5.2.2 Timer 13
5.2.3 Hide 13
5.2.4 Turn Off Images 14
5.2.5 Say Letter Only 14
5.2.6 Printing 14
6 Setup Options 15
6.1 Layout Style 15
6.2 Key Line Colors 17
6.3 Left/Right Colors 21
6.4 Display Colors 22
6.5 Fonts 23
6.5.1 Printer Font 23
6.6 Key Font 24
Appendix A: List of Alphabet Pictures 25
Appendix B. Changing Pictures and Sound 26

1 Introduction

This program contains 2 separate parts: *Keyboard Fun* and *Spelling Fun.*

The first, *Keyboard Fun* is designed to encourage students to learn the keyboard, by matching keys to pictures, and to be rewarded with sight and sound. *Spelling Fun* takes this a step further, asking the child to type words with the same sights and sounds being presented for each letter. The list of words can be changed easily, so that the week's word list can be practiced. In this way the child learns where the keys are on the keyboard.

Note that this is not a typing tutor, but rather is designed to help children with physical or learning disabilities learn to spell and to communicate via the computer. If they are not able to write with a pencil, then using the computer may be an alternative form of communication, and a way to accomplish assignments or to take tests, but it can be difficult for a child to cope with learning letters, learning to read and write, and also to manage a keyboard with its arcane letter placement. It does not help that a standard keyboard is always presented with uppercase letters, whilst children are learning to read and write with lower case letters! However, Greystone Digital Inc, makers of the BigKeys keyboard sells lower case letter keys for their large-size keyboards, and sells keys with different colored backgrounds. This software is designed to utilize these features

2 Background to Miss Sue's Keyboard Fun

Working as an occupational therapist in the school system, I often come across children who experience difficulty with handwriting for various reasons. I spent some time working with a young boy with cerebral palsy, who had limited control of his arms, and was unable to hold a pencil in any way. He was in first grade, learning to read and spell, but could not write. He had enough control to point a finger, and with work he was able to press keys on an enlarged (Big Keys) keyboard. The problem was, since he was just learning letters and the alphabet, he could not easily find the letters he wanted on the keyboard. How was I going to help him learn his way around the keyboard so he could spell his words and learn to write sentences? I came up with *'Keyboard Fun'*, a game he could play while learning where letters are on the keyboard. We placed sticky labels on the keys with lower case letters[1]. With big letters on the screen, to show him where to find the corresponding letter on the keyboard, he learnt that when he pressed the correct key a picture with sound would appear.

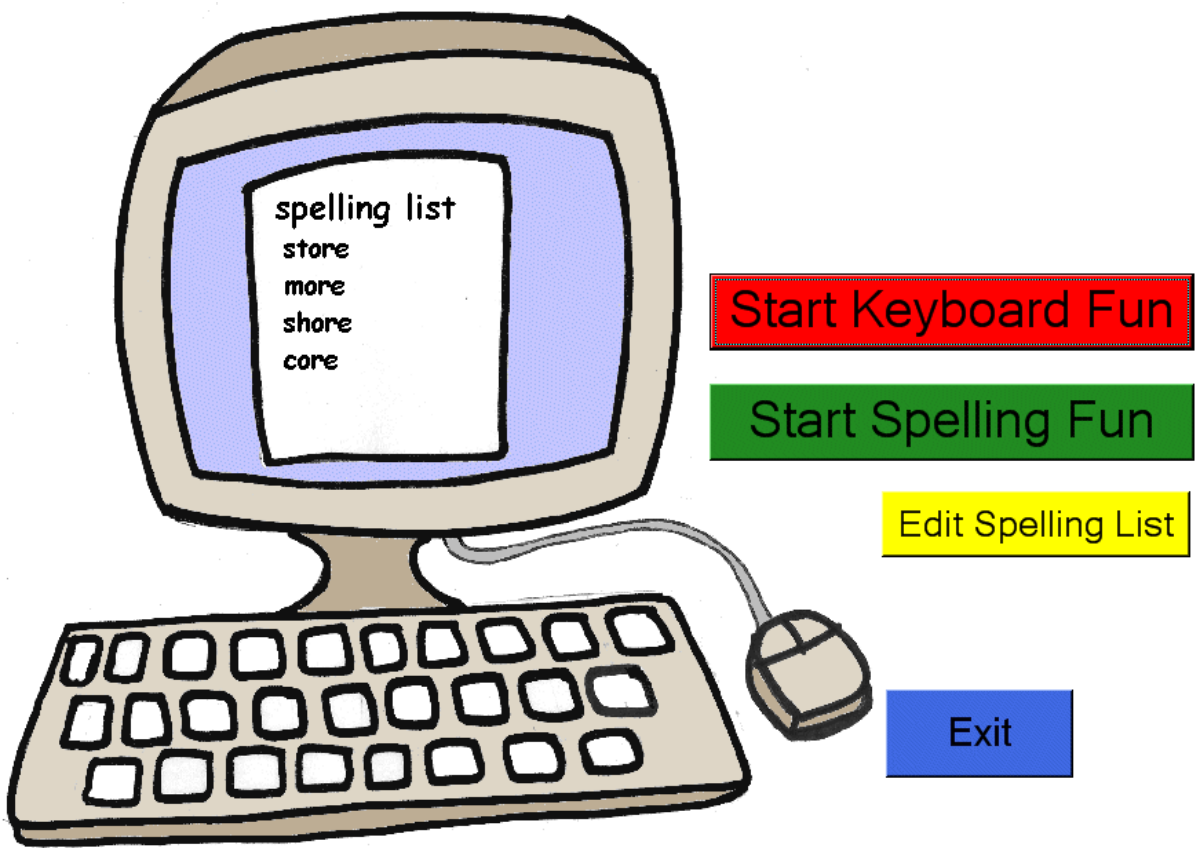
He cannot use the mouse – he has a touch-screen monitor in the classroom, but not at home or in the computer lab, so I made sure all options and features can be accessed thought easy key presses.

I had made it very easy to change the pictures for each letter, so we took photos of him and his classmates and recorded their names, so that now instead of 'A for Alligator', 'B for Bear' he got 'A for Andrew', 'B for Brian' and so on. This was a lot of

fun (and he loved "Quack, quack, quack", the sound for Q!) and was a great motivator. Since he can only use one finger on each hand, I was not looking for correct keyboard fingering, only the ability to find the letter he needed. I added a timer so he could see how fast (or slow) he was – sometimes distraction got the better of him! Then as he progressed I added the 'hide' key so that only the current letter was shown. As he moved into second grade learning his spelling words became an issue, so I added "Spelling Fun". Here his teacher could set up his spelling list for the week so that he could practice typing them. He has progressed to the point where he can type a dozen five-letter words in 20 minutes or so.

3 Main Menu

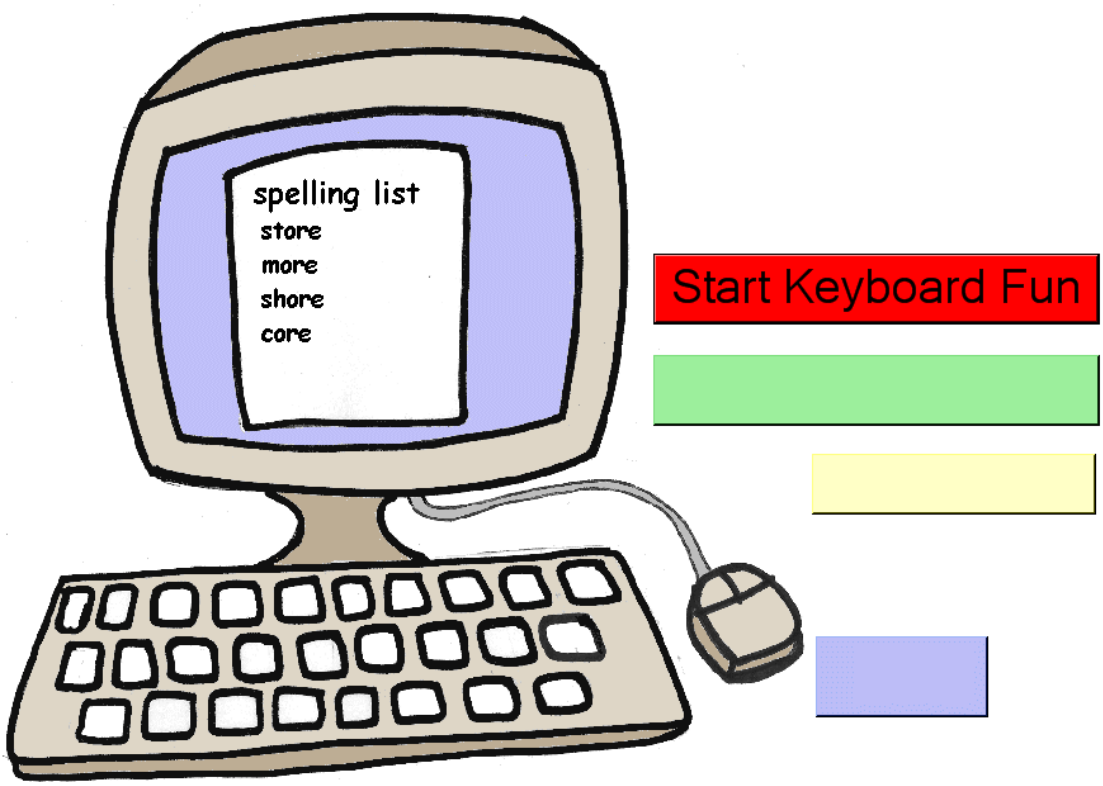
The main menu gives you the ability to select *Keyboard Fun*, *Spelling Fun*, *Edit Spelling List* and *Exit*.



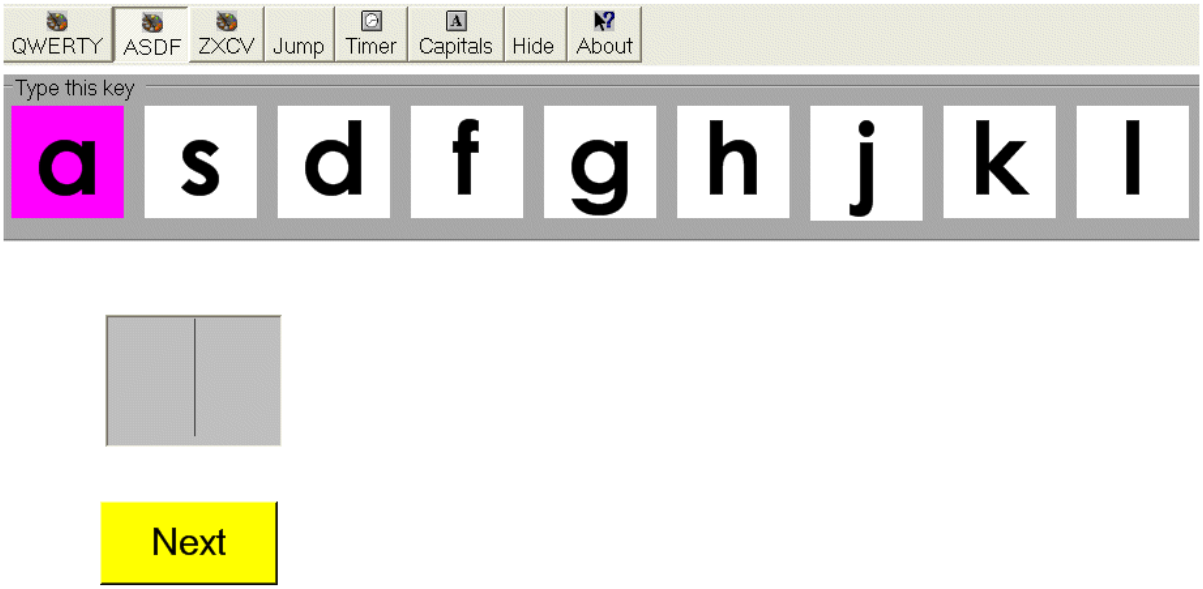
4 Keyboard Fun

4.1 Starting Keyboard Fun

To reach Keyboard Fun click on *Keyboard Fun* from the main screen:



The following screen appears:



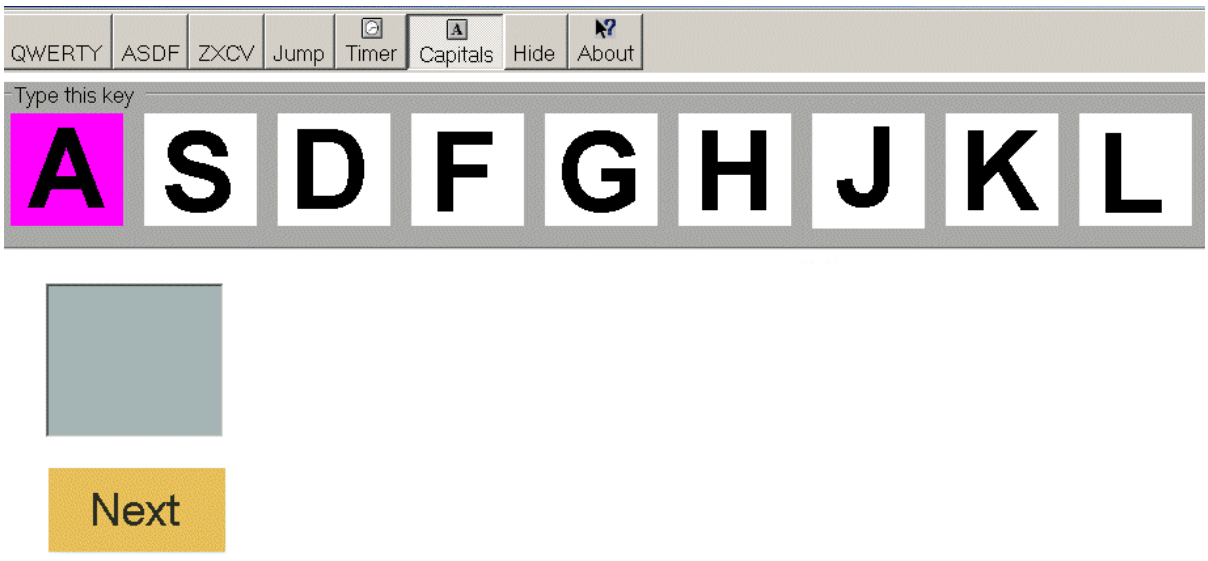
4.2 Purpose

This screen contains the keys from one line of the computer keyboard. (You may select which line to work on from the buttons at the top of the screen). The purpose of this 'game' is to show the student how to find the letters on the keyboard, and to build up expertise at finding the correct letter. At any time, the letter to be typed is highlighted (in this case in pink). When the student finds and presses the corresponding letter on the keyboard, a picture will display and a voice speaks: for example, 'A is for alligator". The student can be shown the time taken to find the letter as an incentive. The next letter is highlighted, and the process repeats. Each letter has a fun picture with corresponding spoken text, to reinforce by auditory and visual means the correct letter. The software comes with a set of pictures with an animal theme, but it is simple to create your own pictures and voice, for things that the student may find motivating – pictures of classmates, friends and family for example.

Once the student has mastered finding each letter on the line in turn, keys may be selected randomly, by clicking the 'jump' button. Now the student cannot just move his/her fingers to the next key, but must begin to memorize where the keys are located. The highlighted letter on the screen gives a visual cue as to where to find the letter.

Once the student had mastered 'jumping' from one letter to another, try the 'hide' button which hides all keys except the current one. Now even fewer visual cues are given

Note that the keys are shown in lower case, since most students learn to read with lower case letters. However, if your keyboard shows letters as upper case, which can cause confusion, you may wish to display the keyboard keys in uppercase on the screen (to match the keyboard). Click the 'Capitals' icon on the menu bar. The student does not have to type capitals, or turn on the Caps Lock, the program matches keys regardless of case typed.



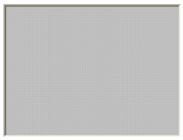
4.3 Steps

It helps initially if the other keys on the keyboard are covered with masking tape. Point out to the student that the letters on the keyboard line match those on the screen. The letter to be typed is highlighted in magenta (or whichever color you choose). Now, encourage the student to press the 'A' key: A picture appears ("A for alligator") and a voice says "A is for alligator".

You (or the student) can now either

- Press the space bar or
- Press the enter key or
- Click on the **Next** button

in order to highlight the next key in the line. [Note: You can also set the next letter to appear automatically, see options 4.4.5 below]

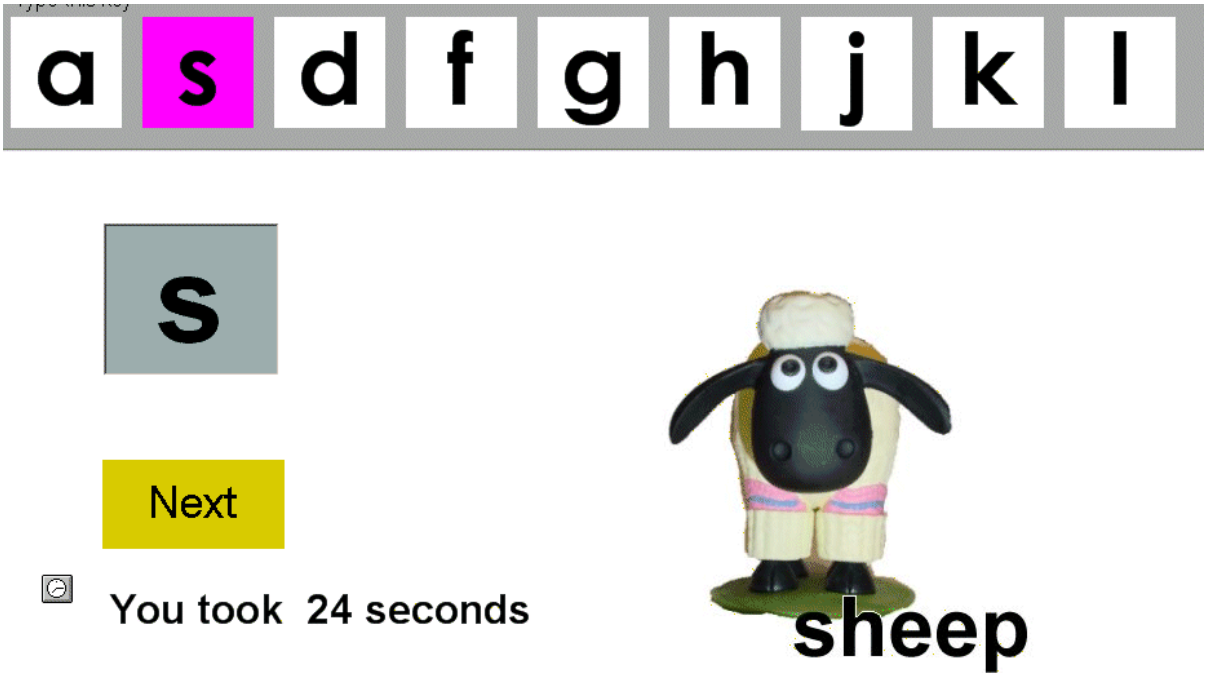


Proceed in this way until every key has been pressed and the student rewarded with a corresponding picture and sound. To return to the main menu, click the Exit button

4.4 Options

4.4.1 Timer

The timer button on the menu bar will show the student how long it takes him/her to find the next key. Click it on or off. When activated (button pressed in) the time in seconds will be shown for each letter. Times starts from when the 'Next' button is clicked until the correct key is pressed.



4.4.2 Jump

When the 'Jump' button is pressed, the 'Next' button works randomly rather than getting the letter immediately to the right of the current letter. Thus, without the Jump button pressed, the letters are presented in sequence, 'a' 's' 'd' 'f' 'g' 'h' 'j' 'k' 'l' . With the jump button on, after 'a' may come 'g' then 's' then 'f' – it will be different each time.

4.4.3 Hide

Pressing the 'Hide' button in the menu bar will hide all keys except the current one. So if 'd' is the currently highlighted key when hide is pressed, the screen will change to this:

When that key is successfully pressed, and the next letter requested, only that key will be shown and highlighted. Use this option when the student has become fluent in finding keys by looking at the screen to see where the key is located. This will help the student's memory, by removing reliance on the screen for hints as to where to find the key.

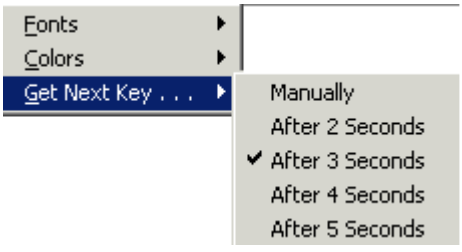
4.4.4 Selecting keyboard lines

In *Keyboard Fun* each line of the keyboard is displayed, with corresponding letters, sounds and pictures. Select which line is currently displayed with the three buttons at the top left of the menu bar. QWERTY for the top line of keys, ASDF for the middle line of keys and ZXCV for the bottom line of keys

4.4.5 Automatically Jump To Next Letter

If the student is able to work independently, you may want to set the program to jump to the next letter automatically after a brief pause. From the menu bar, select Teacher's Tools, then Get Next Letter.

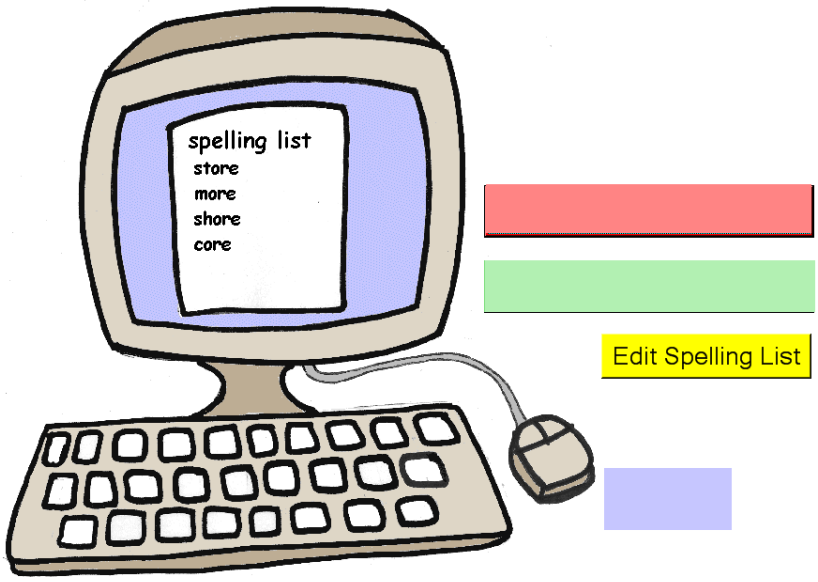
Click on one of the time periods to automatically get the next letter after this amount of time. Now, when the student types the correct letter, the sound and picture will appear, but after several seconds (as selected by you) the picture will go away and the next letter will be highlighted.



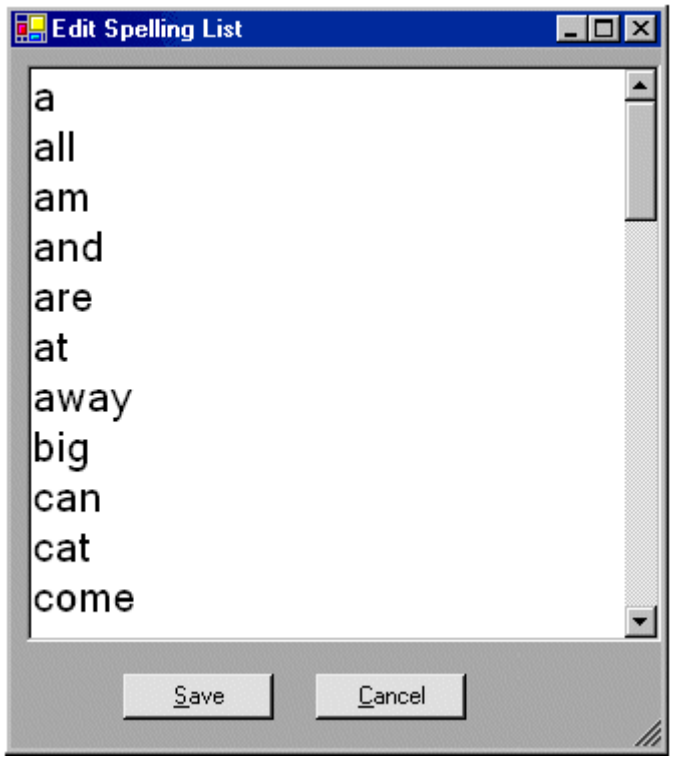
5 Spelling/Word fun

5.1 Setting up the spelling list

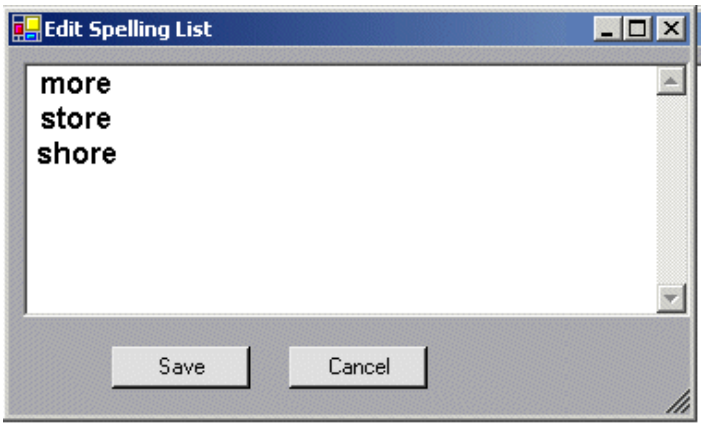
Select *"Edit Spelling List"* from the main menu



You will see this screen:

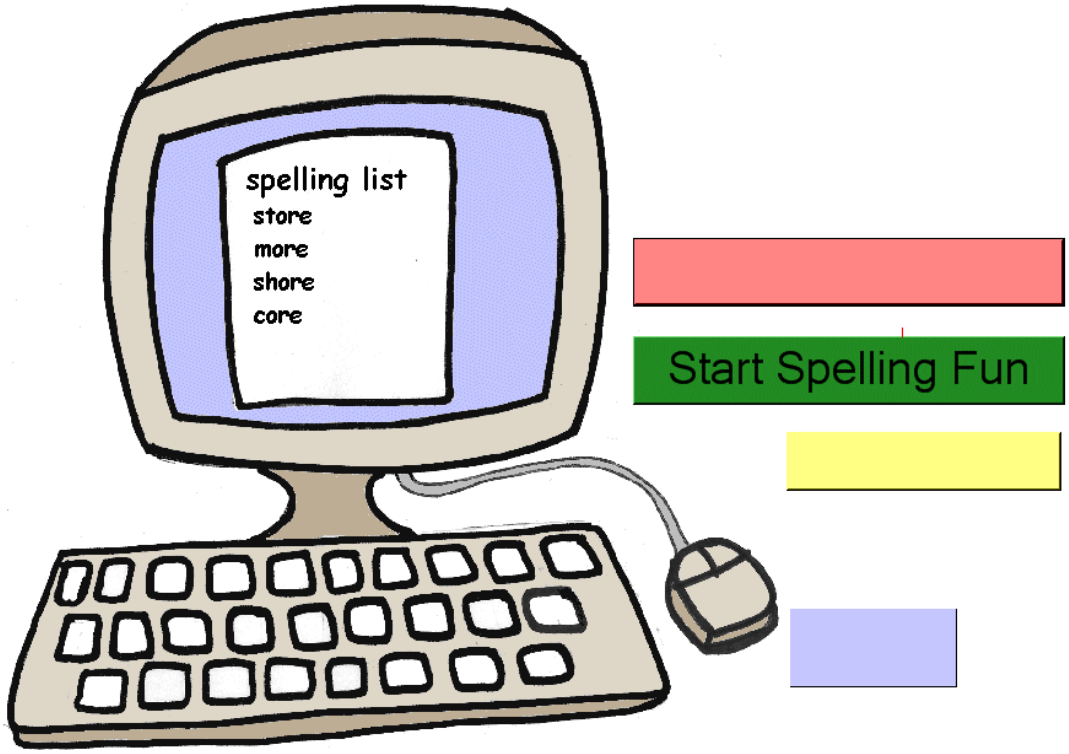


Type as many words as you like as a list:

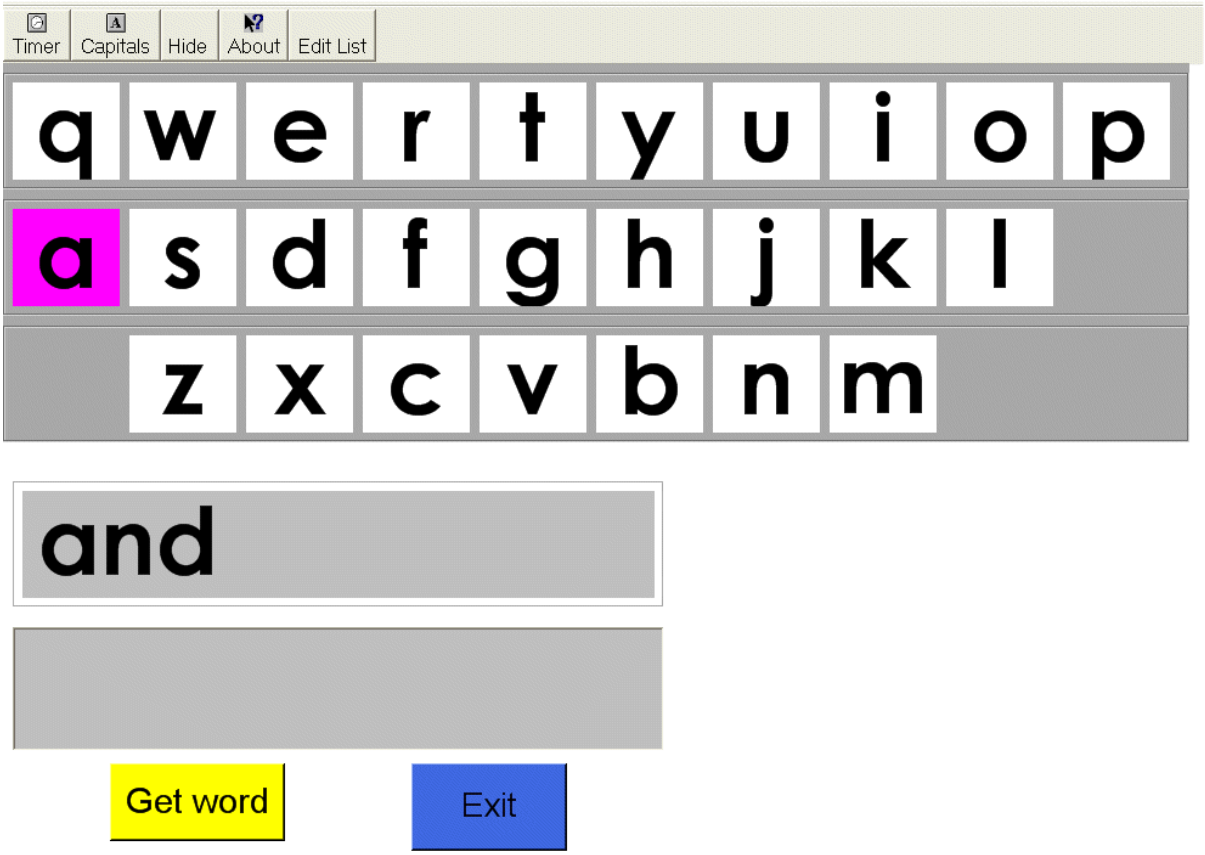


Press 'Save' to save this list. If you press 'Cancel' your changes will be discarded and any words already in the file will be retained.

Steps
Select '*Spelling Fun'* from the main menu:

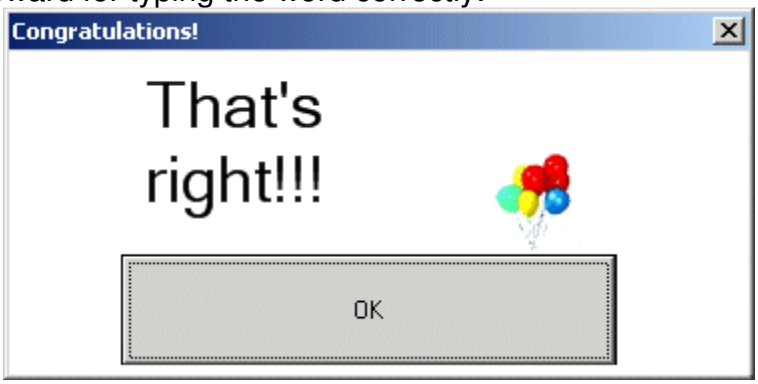


The following screen appears:



Notice that now the entire keyboard is shown. Also the first word in the spelling list is displayed in the grey box. The first letter of the word (in this case 'm') is highlighted in magenta. This should guide the student to the location of the key on the keyboard. Again, Capitals may be selected if preferred.

Once the student presses the 'm' key the appropriate picture and sound appears, and the next letter - 'o' - is highlighted. As the student continues to locate and press the appropriate keys, the pictures and sounds continue to appear. When the complete word has been typed correctly, a 'success' box is displayed with moving balloons as a reward for typing the word correctly:



You (or the student) can now either

- Press the space bar or
- Press the enter key or

- Click on the **OK** button

to make the success box disappear and make the next word in the list appear.

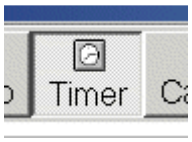
Words may include capitals or spaces (such as real names: Sue, New York)

5.2 Options

5.2.1 Ignore Incorrect Letters

You may select whether or not incorrect keys pressed should be ignored or not. For a child that is still learning the keyboard, it may be better if they are beeped but no incorrect letter appears. For more advanced students that are practicing their spelling, all keys pressed will appear, so they have to delete incorrect letters in order to achieve success for the whole word. To select the first option, to ignore incorrect letters, select the options menu, and "Ignore Incorrect Letters" To clear this option, select the options menu, the 'Ignore Incorrect Letters' option will be checked, click it to clear it.

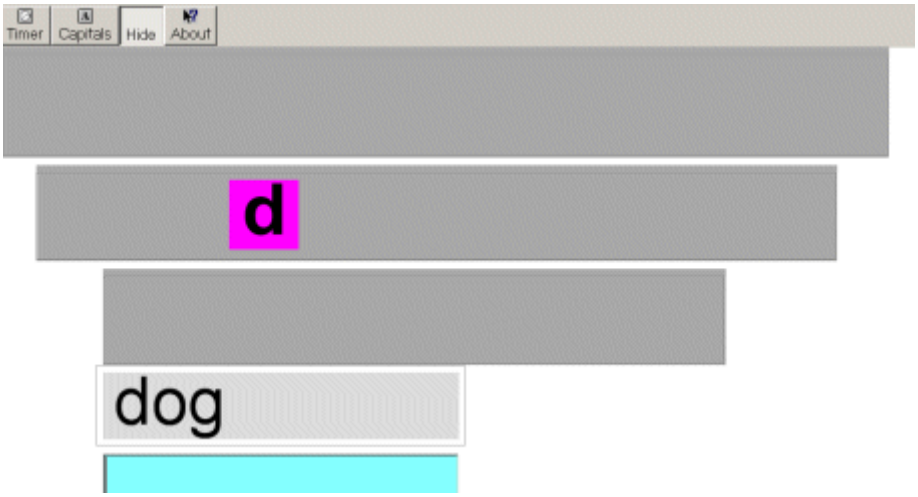
5.2.2 Timer



The timer button on the menu bar will show the student how long it takes him/her to type each word. Click it on or off. When activated (button pressed in) the time in seconds will be shown once the word has been successfully typed. Timing starts when the 'Get Word' button is clicked.

5.2.3 Hide

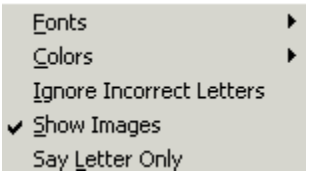
Pressing the 'Hide' button in the menu bar will hide all keys except the current one. So if 'd' is the currently highlighted key when 'hide' is pressed, the screen will change to this:



When that key is successfully pressed, and the next letter requested, only that key will be shown. Use this option when the student has become fluent in finding keys by

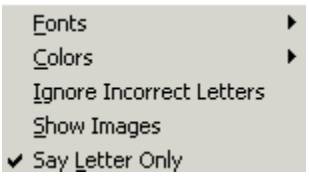
looking at the screen to see where the key is located. This will help the student's memory, but removing reliance on the screen for hints as to where to find the key.

5.2.4 Turn Off Images



You may select to turn off images, if that is distracting to the child. From the Menu bar, select the options menu. You will see that 'Show Images' is checked. Click on Show images. This will 'unselect' the option. Now when the student presses the correct key, no picture is shown.

5.2.5 Say Letter Only



For some students it may be distracting to hear *"c is for 'cat'"* for example when they are typing a word with 'c' in it. You may turn off this feature and hear only each letter spoken when the student types that letter. From the Menu bar, select the options menu. Click on 'Say Letter Only".

5.2.6 Printing

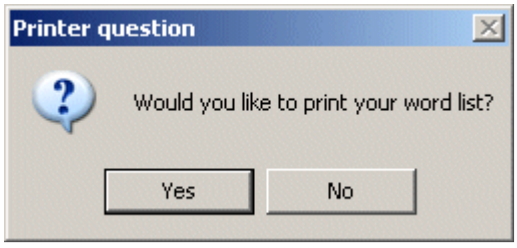
You may print out the words that have been typed by the student during that session. The start time and end time of the session is printed, along with each word and how long it took. For example:

Date 02-04-2006
Started at 1:28:38 PM

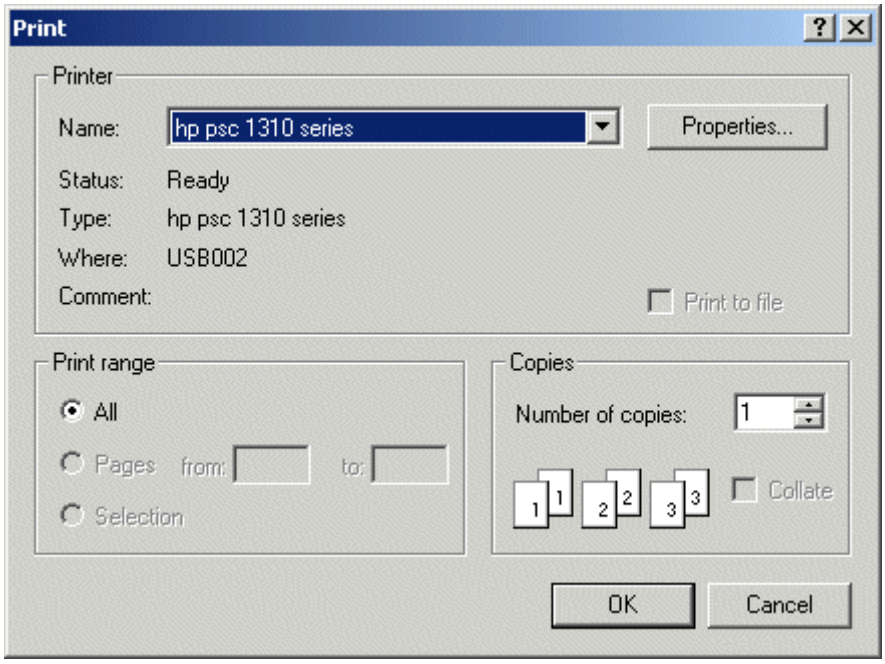
cat – you took 15 seconds
dog – you took 20 seconds
that – you took 23 seconds
the – you took 19 seconds
then – you took 29 seconds

Ended at 1:30:06 PM

When the session has been completed, press the 'EXIT' key. You will be asked if you want to print the session or not:



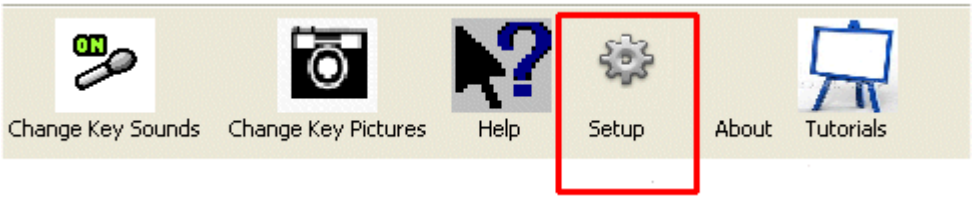
If you select 'No' you will be returned to the main menu. Press 'Yes' if you want to print the list for that session. You will then see the normal printer screen as appropriate for your printer:



Click 'OK' to print and return to the main menu.

6 Setup Options

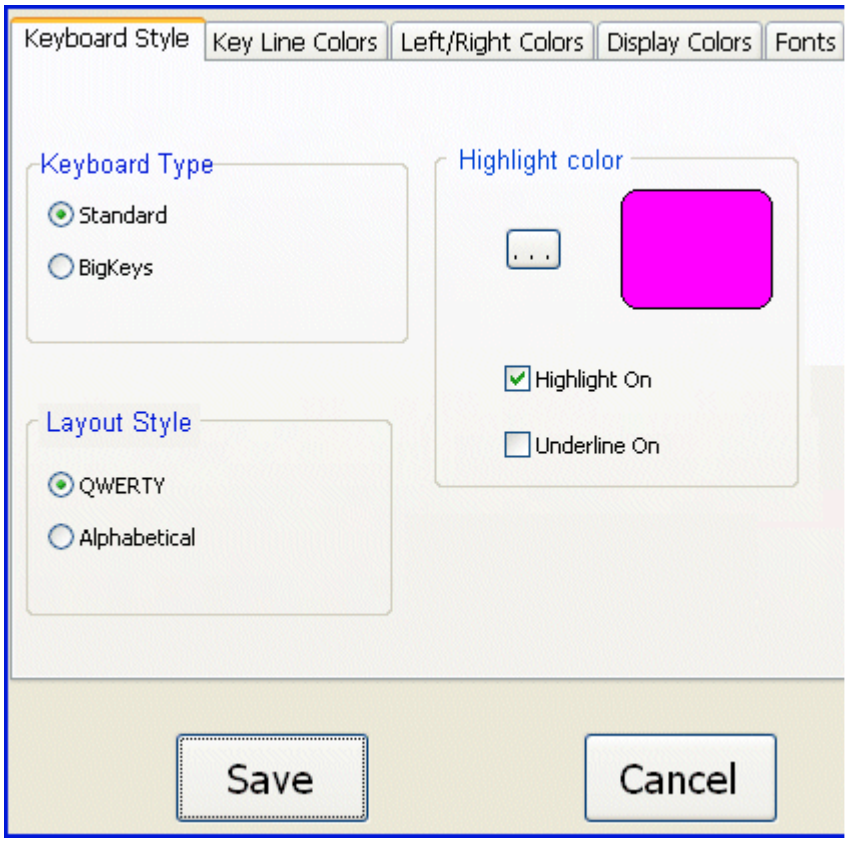
Click on the Setup Button from the main screen



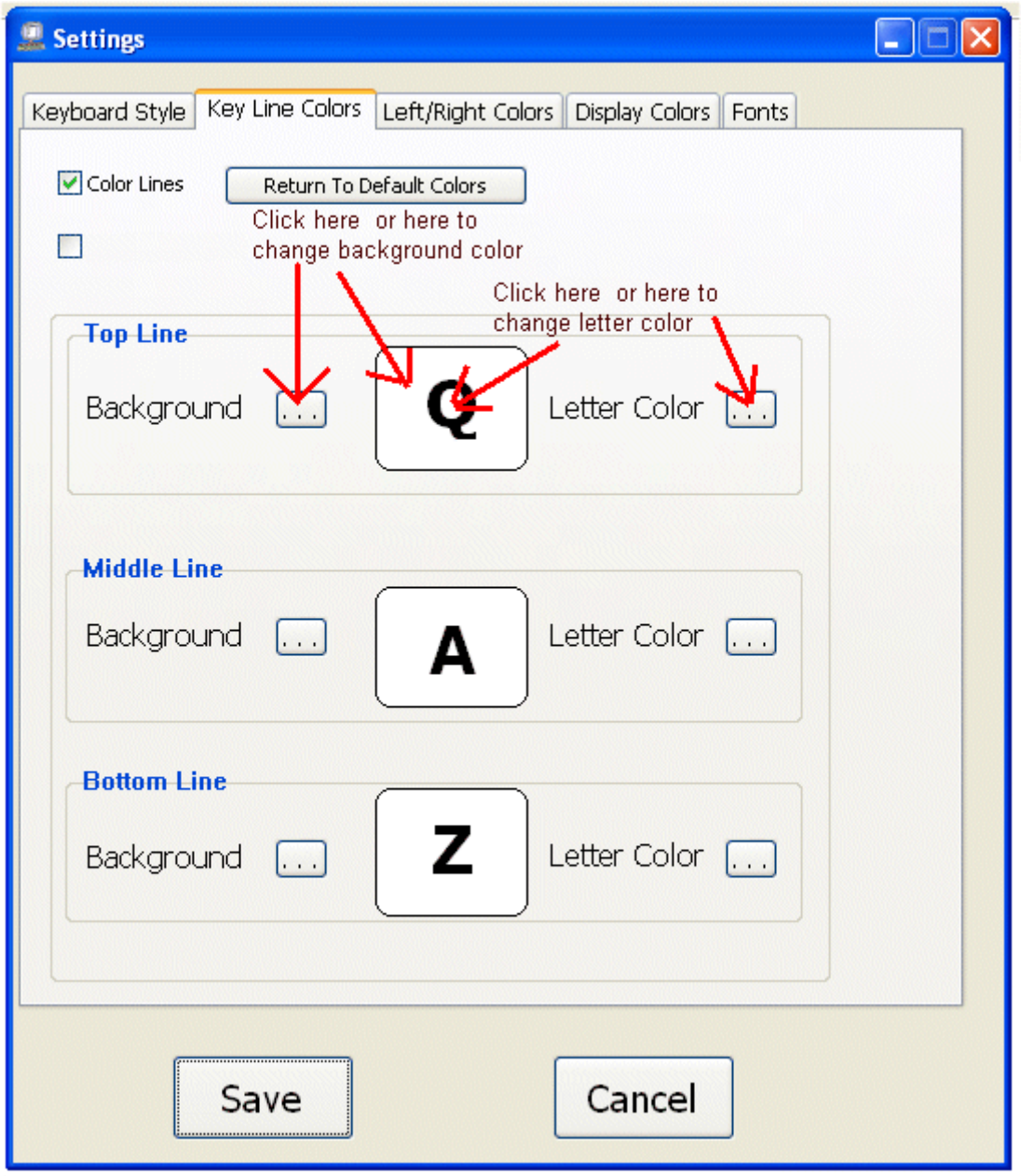
6.1 Layout Style

The initial screen specifies the layout style (BigKeys or standard keyboard; alphabetic layout or 'qwerty' layout.) Here is where you select the color to highlight the keys, and whether highlighting is turned on, and can select to underline the selected letter.

To change the color of the highlighting, click on the button to the left of the color square. You will be given a selection of colors, click the one you want to return to this screen



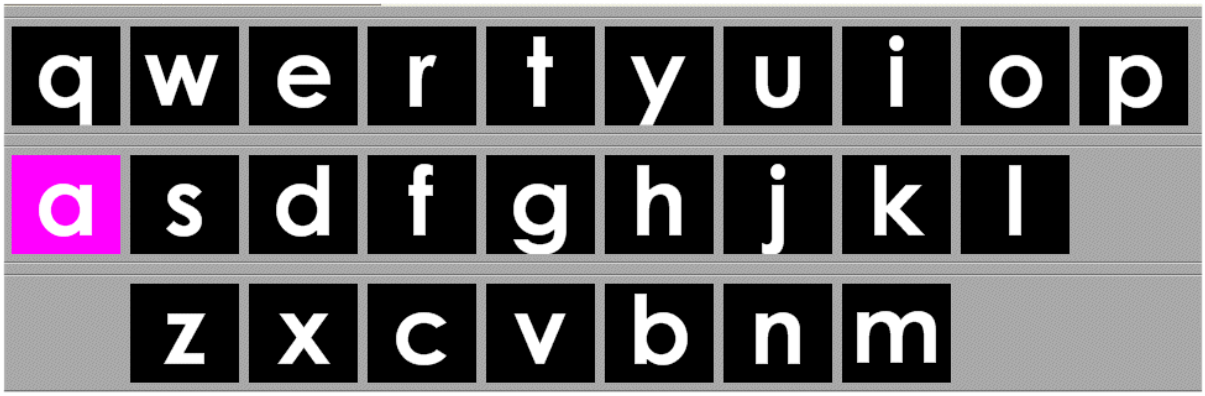
6.2 Key Line Colors



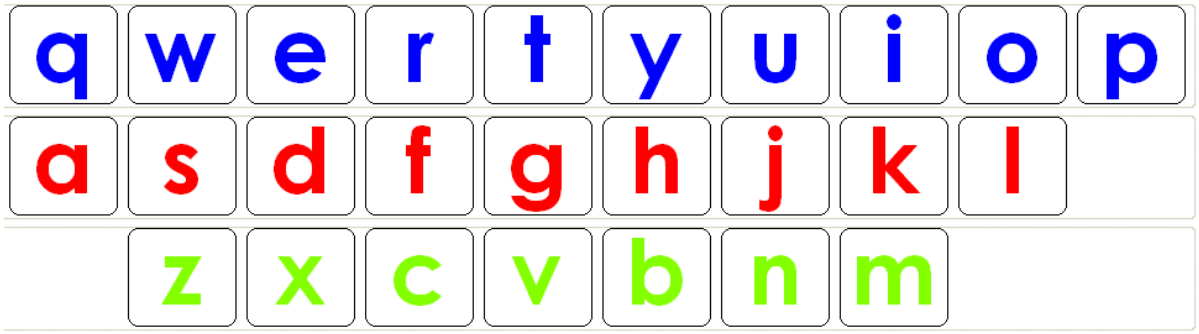
This is where you match the color of the keys on the screen to the ones on the keyboard. Clicking on one of the color boxes, will set the color of the keys on this line. Repeat for the second key line and the third key line. Whatever colors are chosen on one 'game' will be shown on the other – that is, the colors in Spelling Fun will show the same colors in Keyboard Fun. They will also be shown each time the program is started.

Examples:

or this:

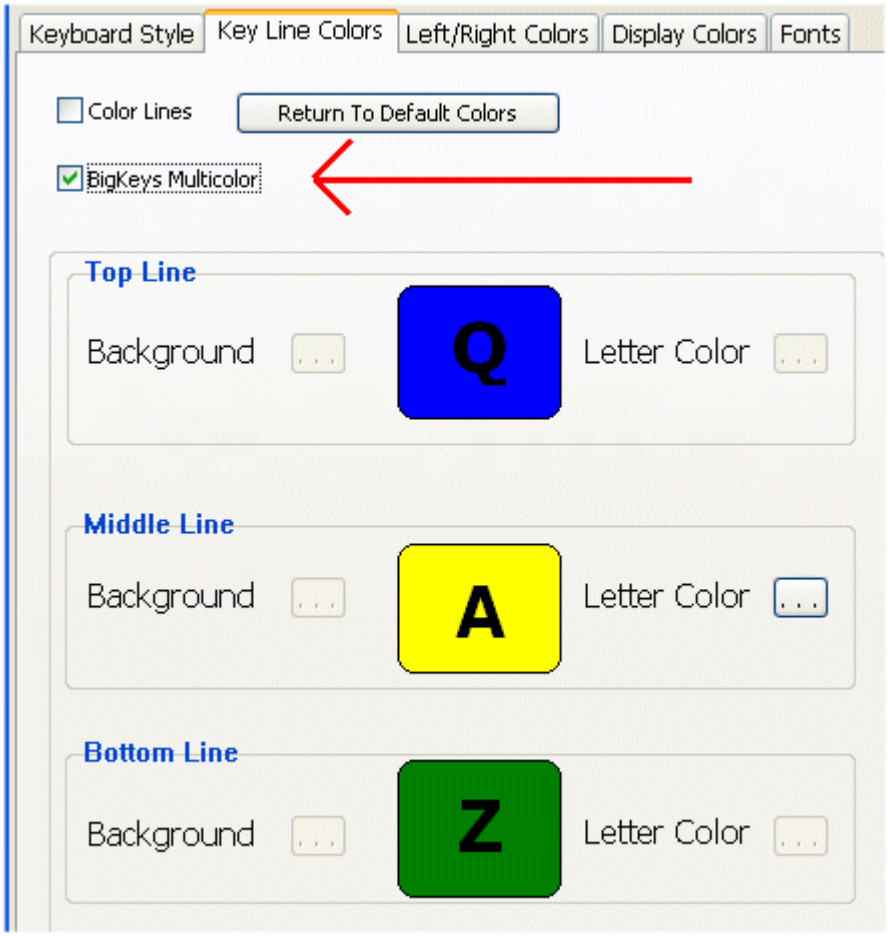


or this:



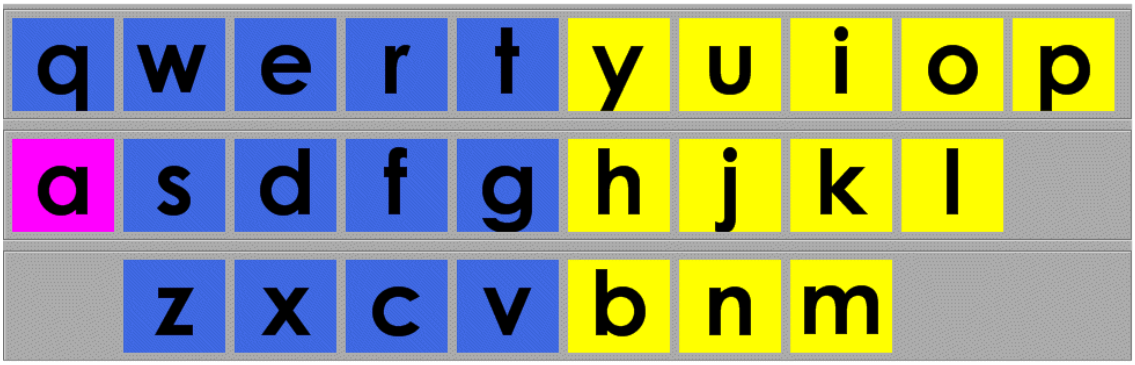
BigKeys provdes a keyboard with the following multi-color layout.

To get this affect click the *BigKeys MultiColor*:check box

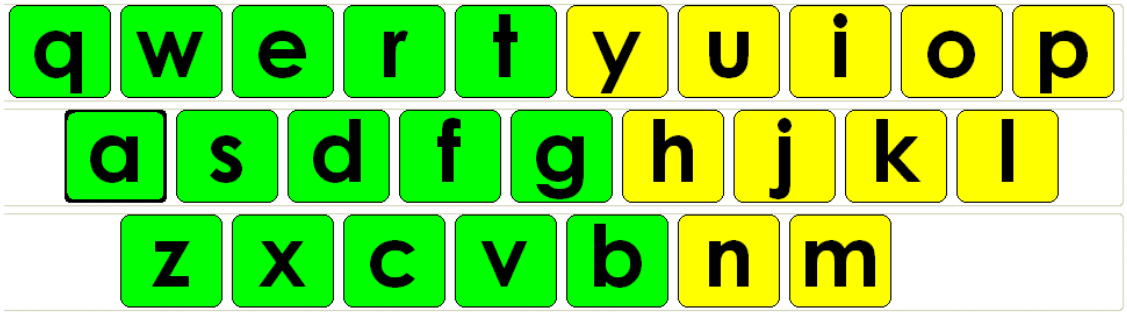


6.3 Left/Right Colors

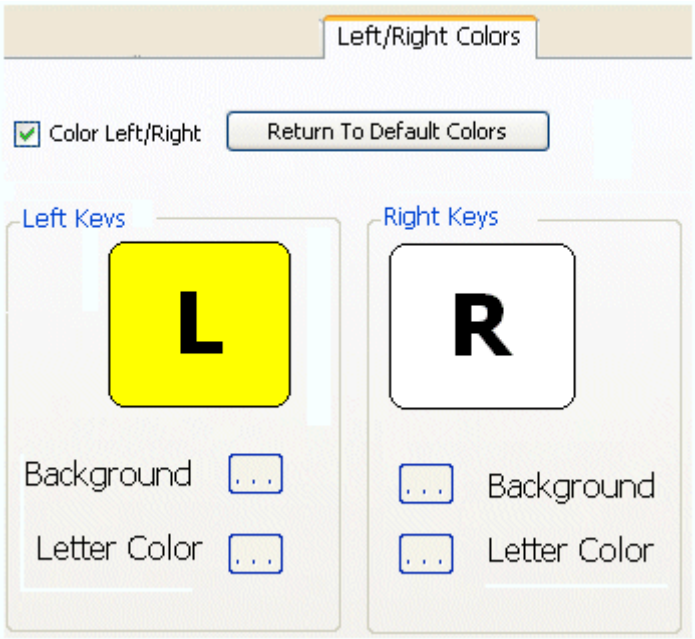
For those students who access the keyboard with both hands, it may be useful to set one side of the keyboard to one color, and the other to another color, such as this for example:



Or this for a standard keyboard

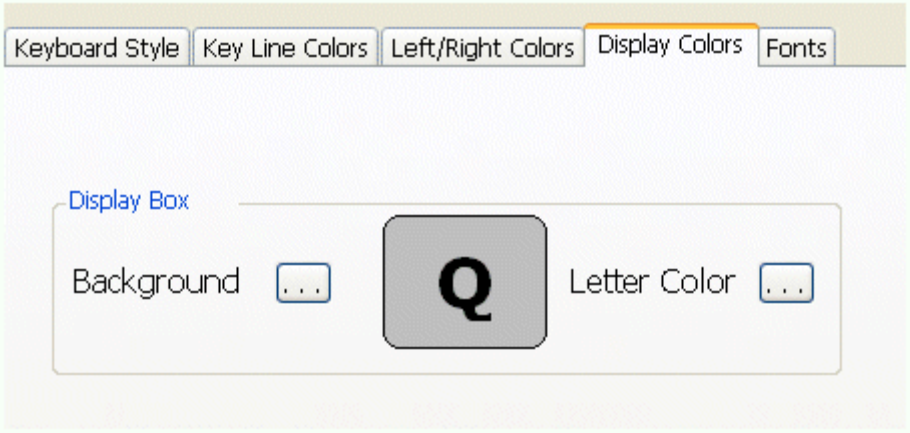


Click on the tab for Left/Right color

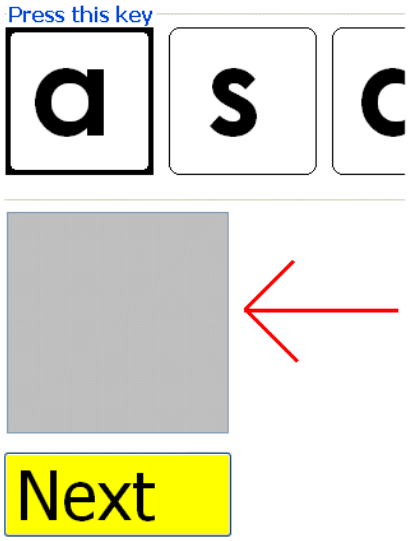


Make sure you select Color Left/Right first This will enable the buttons, so you can select the colors.
Click on the Background or Letter Color button and select the color you want

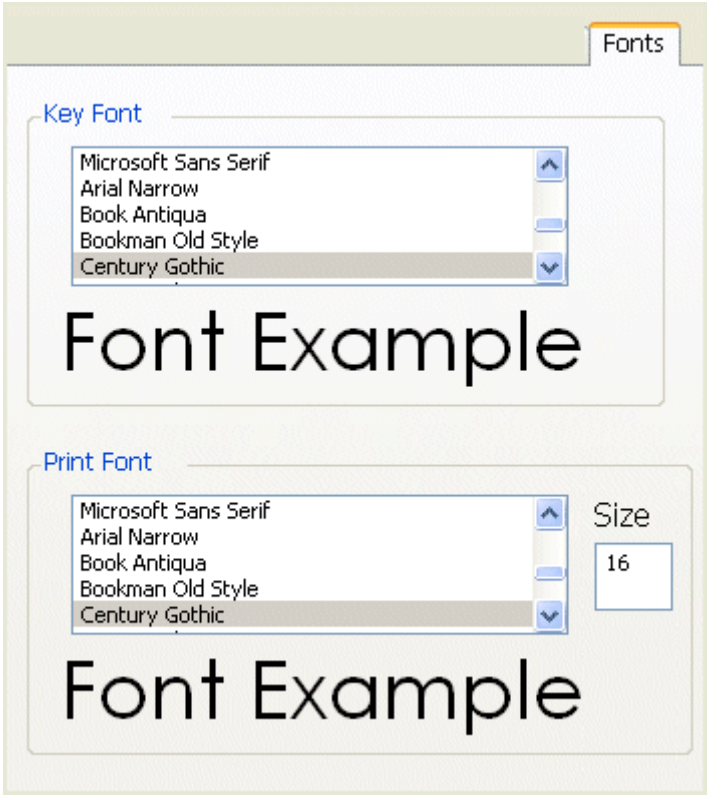
6.4 Display Colors



This tab selects the color of the box in which the typed letter is displayed.



6.5 Fonts



You can select the font for the letters on the displayed keyboard, and for the print out of data collection,

6.5.1 Printer Font

The words will print out as font 'Century Gothic', font size 16. To change this setting, scroll through the list of fonts. As you select each one, the font example will change to show you how it will appear:

Select the font, style and size and click OK. This will now be retained as the font in the printed word list every time you print out the words, even after the program has been closed and reopened.

6.6 Key Font

By selecting Key Font you can change the font on the keys displayed on the screen. Century Gothic (if it is available) is a good choice to match normal school print letters

Note that you are not given the option to select the size. This is because the program automatically picks the size of the keys, based on the size of the screen on which the program is being run.

Appendix A: List of Alphabet Pictures

a.jpg

b.jpg

c.jpg

d.jpg

e.jpg

f.jpg

g.jpg

h.jpg

i.jpg

j.jpg

k.jpg

l.jpg

m.jpg

n.jpg

o.jpg

p.jpg

q.jpg

r.jpg

s.jpg

t.jpg

u.jpg

v.jpg

w.jpg

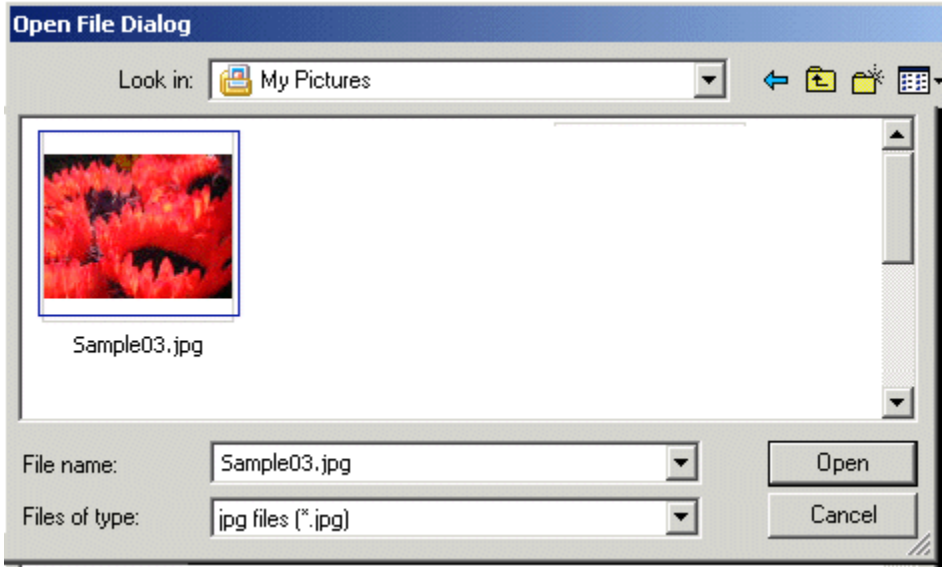
x.jpg

y.jpg

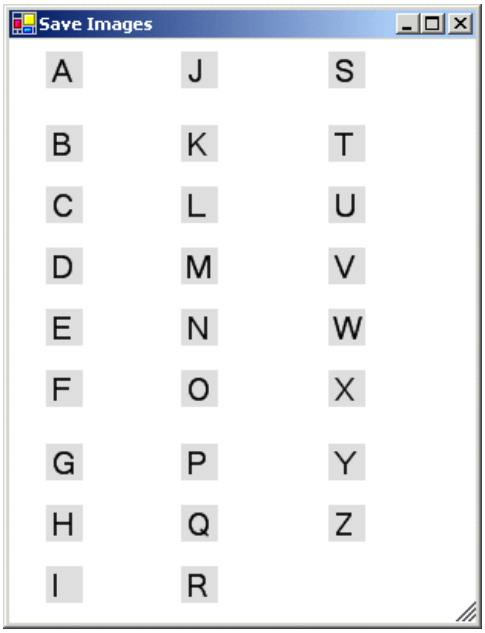
z.jpg

Appendix B. Changing Pictures and Sound

To change the pictures for any letter, you will need to import the photo from your digital camera, or scan a picture into your computer, or use any clip art you may access. The picture needs to be a JPEG file. Start up Miss Sue's Keyboard Fun, and at the main menu, select and click "Change Pictures"



This window allows you to find the photo you wish to use. Find and highlight the picture you want, and then click the open button. Note it must be a "jpg" file.

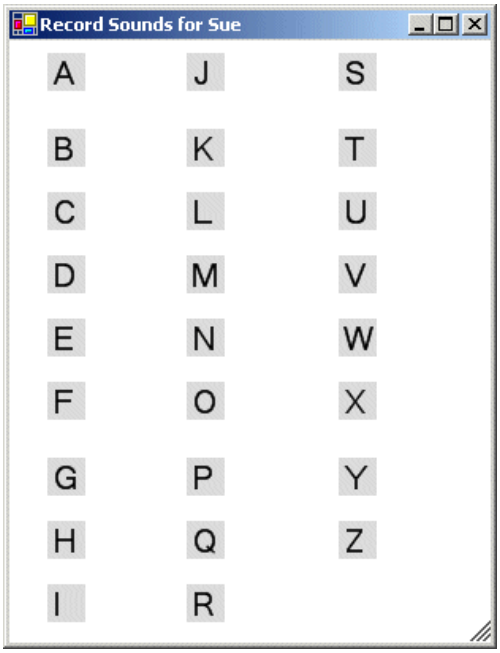


Once you have selected the photo and clicked the open button, select which letter you are illustrating. Click on the letter that matches the photo.

Now you need to record the new text for this letter. Suppose the picture above is to be used for the letter '**f**' : so "**f for flower**" needs to sound when the key is pressed.

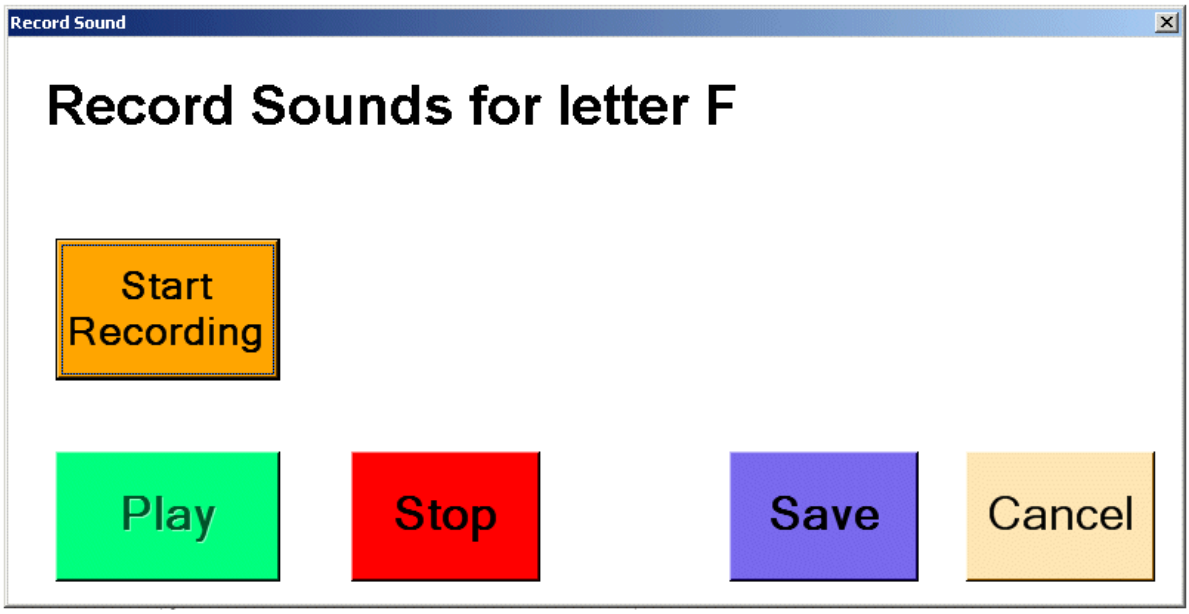
At the main menu, select 'Change Sounds'

Attach a microphone to the port on your computer.



You will be asked to pick which letter you are recording:

Click on the letter you wish to record. The Sound Recorder window will be displayed.



Click on the yellow 'Start Recording' button and begin speaking the text.

When finished, click the red 'Stop' button

Click the green Play button to play back what you recorded.

If you like what you hear, click the blue Save button. If not, you can click 'Cancel', or Click 'restart recording to try again'