Making the most of Wordshark

FOR SCHOOLS – subject vocab, EAL, co-operative play

Vocabulary work (EAL, Modern Languages, Subject Words)

English as an Additional Language

The *Everyday vocabulary* 'course' is useful. The best games include, *Simple crossword* which practises very simple sentences, *Build sentence (from spoken)* which helps with word order and *Crossword 1* with illustrations which cleverly support the sentence vocabulary whilst not giving away the target word.

The *Co-operative play* setting is especially useful, as children can be encouraged to discuss their responses.

Modern languages

To add your own lists in another language, click on the keyboard sign. If the language you need is not there, you can create your own keypad under *Admin\Advanced features\Add/change on-screen keypad* to create new symbols. Remember to switch on the keypad when needed in games, under *Settings (name)*.

The facility to create a *Translations List* may also be useful (see later under 'Teacher Tips').

Subject words

The *Secondary subject lists* 'course' is useful for learning subject vocabulary in secondary school, over a wide range of subjects. The *Crossword 1* and *Save the sharks* games practise the words in context.

In addition to existing lists, **your own vocabulary** can be put in under *Actions\add your own lists*. You can also make use of *Description lists* and *Translation lists*.
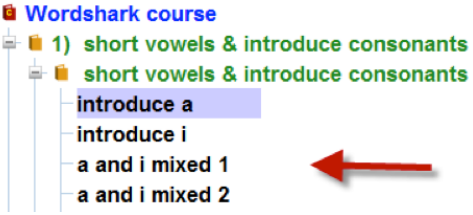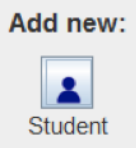
Co-operative play

Two students can play collaboratively together. One child signs on, then signs on a second via Users/Sign on another user and then selects *Users\Share with,* allowing them to select the name of the student they want to share with. They work on the same list and game. The program then provides alternate turn taking – noted in the top bar, and adds to both scores. (This is different to signing on additional users and switching manually between them by clicking on *Switch to*.)
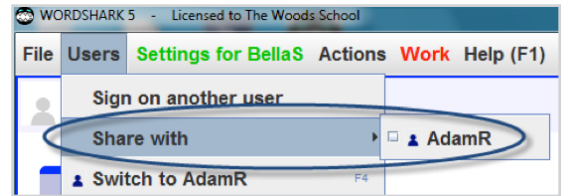
FOR HOME – tips for home use

By 'parent' we mean any responsible person who is helping a student to use *Wordshark* at home. Detailed instructions are available under the separate PDFs and video tutorials.

Setting Up – A Brief Summary

1 Make sure you are a Wordshark administrator. (A list of administrators is available under Users. If a child has become the administrator and has forgotten his/her password, contact tech support if you have problems.)	**5** Choose a word list Change word list Word list titles in black **Wordshark course** **1) short vowels & introduce consonants** **short vowels & introduce consonants** introduce a introduce i a and i mixed 1 a and i mixed 2 If you are not sure which list to use – see next page.
2 Add your students/children using *Admin* in the menu by clicking on: Add new: Student	**6** Choose a game Choose game
3 Use the Wordshark **course** for work on spelling.	**10-15 minutes 2-3 times a week is suggested as helpful. Younger children may need more frequent but shorter sessions.**
4 Click on *Help* in the menu if you need: • videos in the drop down menu • instructions that come up with each game.	

Which course to choose and where to start

- The *Wordshark course* is recommended for work on spelling. There is a *Test* that can suggest a starting point for this course. For more information see the PDF **'Which word list to start with - using Test '** under the section called **'The words'**.
- If you want a list with a particular spelling, for example *sh* just click on *Search* in the menu and type in *sh* and select a list that meets your needs.

Working through the course

- Once you have found a sensible starting point, it is important to keep up a good pace. Move to the next list when you are getting all the spellings correct or with just one or two mistakes on the current list.
- If you come to lists that are too easy then move on straight away.
- Always include a good number of spelling games and include revision lists – they refresh the words each game.

Adding your own lists (for spelling homework etc)

- A great way to practise your child's weekly spelling list – find under *Actions*.
- There is a short video under *Help*.
- Have 10 words or fewer (so that games aren't too long)
- Check there are no typing errors!!
- You can play many games with your list – and also print out a word search
- It can be great fun also to add your own recordings and pictures

Other suggestions for your own word lists
- A subject reflecting your child's interests
- Words that they need for their reading and writing and that they can be encouraged to practise, words that they have a tendency to get wrong.

Keeping the program interesting

A good guide is to keep sessions simple at first then add new things:

- Start with just a small number of games then add to the selection
- Change the sprite under your personal settings *Settings for (name)* in the menu – the sprite is 'you' in the games
- Change *Options* – for example change the look of the maze – top left of screen in many games
- Don't forget about adjusting the speed
- Add your own icon under *Settings* – for when you sign on
- Change other personal settings for example choosing your favourite reward games
- Create your own lists under *Actions* and add your own recordings and pictures
- Try *Co-operative play* where 2 users are signed on and take turns

See the PDF 'Tailoring the program' if you want to get the best from the program for particular groups of children. This includes tips for use with younger children, for teenagers, for able spellers, for those with dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD, ADHD or Scotopic Sensitivity.

Checking what your child has worked on

If you want to see a record of your child's use of the program (including any incomplete games and errors), click on *Admin\Add and manage students and staff* then select your child's name and click on *View*.
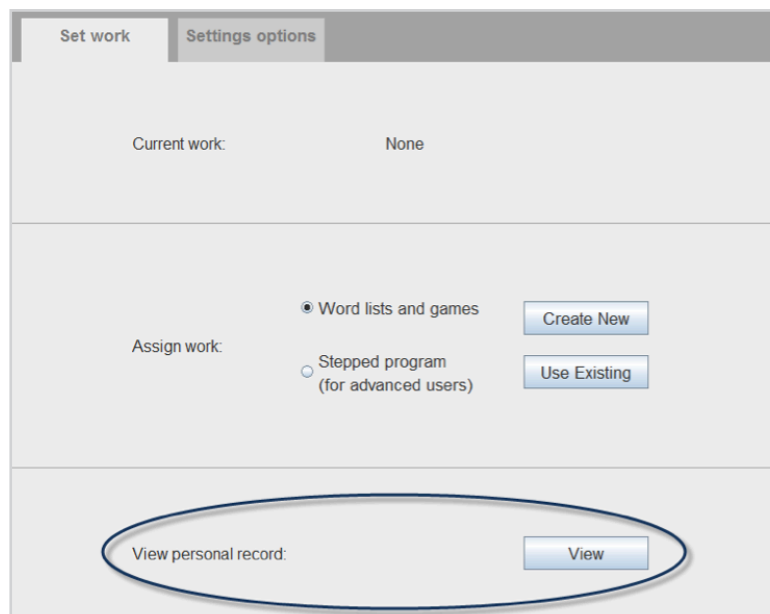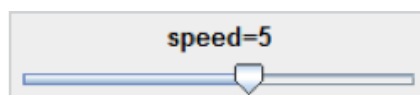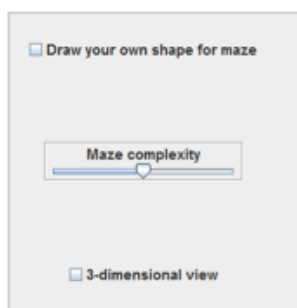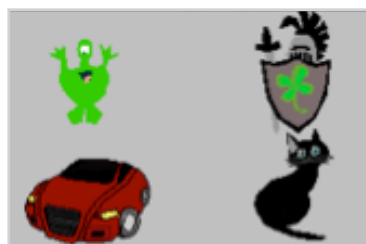
Maintaining progress

Keep an eye on progress. When left alone, some children may make little gains from the program because they go back to a very simple list, and may play favourite games repetitively. They need to be encouraged to try a variety of games – spelling as well as reading.

When making only 1 or 2 spelling errors in a list – move to the next list. If the next list is known – miss it out. In other words, it's important that word lists **always** set the right challenge for the student.

FOR ALL – Tailoring the program, maintaining progress, revision

In addition to the choice of word lists and games, to find other useful ways to tailor the program, go to your personal settings – in the menu under *Settings for (name)*.

Able spellers/those needing more pace – Can move rapidly through the *Wordshark course* which has a number of challenge words at the end of the course. Consider asking them to create their own advanced lists, and/or adding description lists to test each other with recorded clues for each written word.

Younger children – will benefit from frequent quality supervision from an adult to get the most out of the program. You will need to tick the phonics box when using a phonic approach – you can un-tick it at any point, to play the whole-word games.

In the main spelling games, consider the option (top left of games screen) *Use tiles for letters*. The *High Frequency Words (HFW)* 'course' is also useful for selecting appropriate lists. Consider changing the font under *Admin\universal settings to Sassoon Primary Infant WS*.

Consider giving each child an icon which will help sign-on time (if the children sign on individually).

Lower achieving groups – The *Wordshark course* provides a very structured approach to spelling. Have the box *Use phonics* **ticked** when using a phonic approach – you can un-tick it at any point to play the whole-word games.

Secondary school use – If using the *Secondary subject list* course, make use of the sentence games (and their worksheets) as they put the words into context and help with word meaning. Consider excluding games, which in your opinion, might appear too 'young'.

Go to *Admin\Universal settings* to do this.

Consider using The *Wordshark course* for general spelling as it provides a very structured approach. Consider adding your own lists and turning them into *description lists* by clicking on the spanner and adding recorded 'clues' for each word.

Dyslexia – The *Wordshark course* is an easy to use, structured course. (*Alpha to Omega* is also available.)

Have the *Use phonics* box ticked when using a phonics approach – and untick it at any time to play the whole-word games.

Students under *Settings for (name)* may like to turn down, or turn off, the *Groans and beeps* that you hear when a mistake is made.

Lowering speeds to give 'thinking time' and using games which impose no time limit will help early on.

High frequency words often present difficulties. You may wish to select appropriate lists from The *High Frequency Words (HFW)* 'course' to practise.

The games format, the structured lists, the phonic approach together with the reinforcement through playing a list with so many different games, are all designed to help students with dyslexia.

Dyspraxia – Consider turning speeds down. For *Sharks* -tick the box for *Automatic shark catching* under Options (top left of the screen) and for *Maze* – reduce the complexity of the maze under *Options*. Games that do not impose a time limit will also be easier to play.

ASD and ADHD – Consider ticking the box for *Static games icons* under *Settings for (name)*. Set work with a restricted number of lists and games as set work to reduce stimulus. Headphones will be needed.

Mears-Irlen Syndrome/Scotopic Sensitivity – Adjust the *Background colour* in games under *Settings for (name)*.

Adult poor readers – Consider excluding games, which in your opinion, might appear too 'young'. Go to *Admin\Universal settings* to do this. Consider looking at picture choices. Either the student does this under *Settings for (name)* \ PICTURE options, or the administrator does it under *Admin\ (Add and) manage students \Change students' settings and courses*.

Consider adding your own lists for high interest, and recording words in the student's voice. You can also turn these into *description lists* by clicking on the spanner and adding recorded 'clues' for each word.