

Getting started with Hot Potatoes

by Deborah Healey

Hot Potatoes lets you create interactive exercises that students can do on the web or from a diskette. It has five options:

JBC lets you create multiple choice exercises.

JQuiz lets you create short answer exercises.

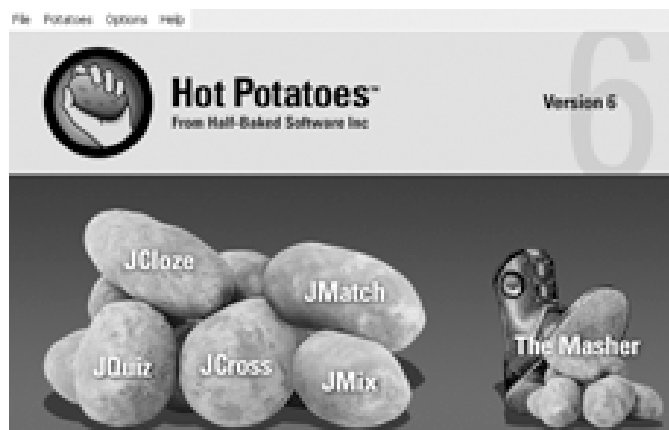
JMix is for scrambled sentences.

JCross creates crossword puzzles.

JMatch is for creating matching exercises.

JCloze creates cloze (gap-fill) exercises.

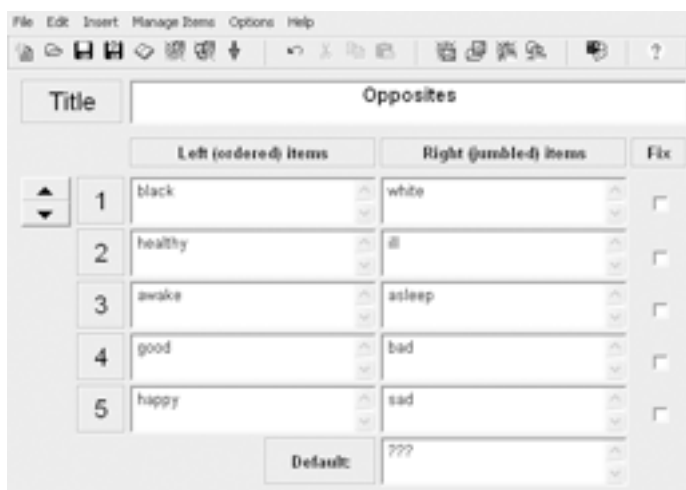
You can add a reading to any of these exercises. You can also use pictures and sound with many of the exercises.



Easiest to create: JMatch

A very easy Potato to use is **JMatch**, which lets you create a matching exercise. When you create your list of pairs, make sure you put them together correctly. The program will mix them up for you!

You can use JMatch with any set of pairs, including dialogues. Be sure that each pair is unique.



When it's ready, just click on one of the Create Exercise icons.

The icon on the left creates one format; the one on the right creates a drag-and-drop format. Try them both and see which you prefer.



This will create an HTML file that you can save and put online or use from a flash drive. It's best if you don't put any spaces in the file name and just use lowercase letters if you want to use your file online. This is true of all of the exercises that you create.

For example:

Good: opposites_match (the program will add .html, so you will end up with opposites_match.html)

Not so good: Opposites Match (you'll get Opposites Match.html, but some web browsers won't be able to open the file because it has a space in the name)

If you want something to print out instead, pull down the File menu and choose Export for printing. You don't need to create the HTML first.

Viewing the exercise you created

After you create your exercise, you can choose to View exercise in the browser. This lets you test it to see if it's working correctly. Here are a couple of cautions:

1. You may see an alert box that says, "Did you notice the Information Bar?"

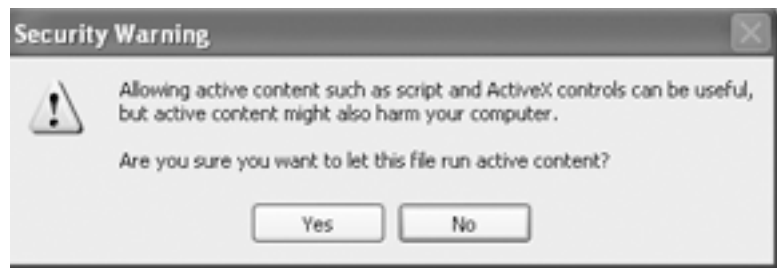
This is telling you that you need to allow pop-ups in order to view your exercise correctly.

Look at the top of the exercise. You will probably see something that looks like this:



Click where it says Click here for options... and choose Allow Blocked Content. It may give you another warning:

Go ahead and click Yes. Refresh the screen, and you should be able to see your exercise correctly.



2. If you need to correct the exercise, go back to JMatch (or JMix, or JCloze - however you created the exercise). You can't change it in the browser.

Sample drag-and-drop result, with two items answered. The learner will click on Check to see which ones are correct. Incorrect answers bounce back to their position on the right.

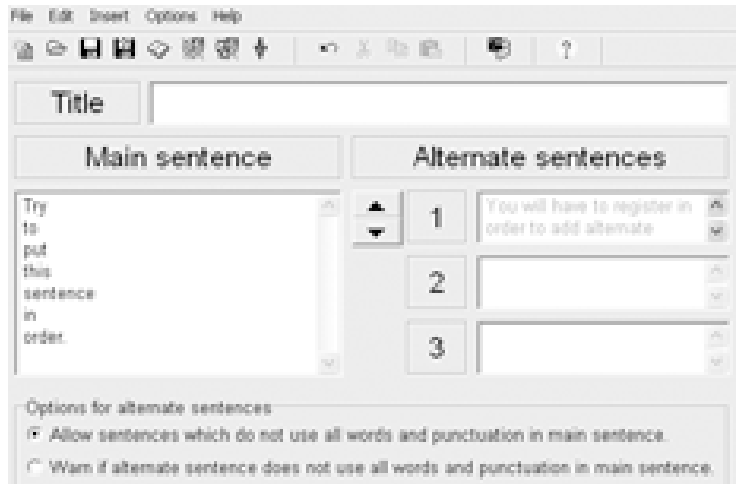


Also easy: JMix

Another easy exercise to create is a **JMix** puzzle, a scrambled sentence. Begin by clicking on JMix, then type your sentence with one word (or short phrase) on each line.

Make sure you have one word (or short phrase) on each line - that's how the program knows what the pieces are for the learner to put back together.

You don't need to put anything into Alternate Correct Sentences.



When it's ready, just click on one of the Create Exercise icons.

The icon on the left creates one format; the one on the right creates a drag-and-drop format. Try them both and see which you prefer. (See information above about saving files and viewing your exercise in the browser.)



Sample drag-and-drop version - learners drag the separate words (or phrases) up to the line, putting them in the right order. When finished, they click Check to see if they got it right.



JCloze - Creating gap-fill/cloze exercises

JCloze lets you do gap-filling exercises that can have clues and multiple correct answers, as well as feedback. The more you add, the longer it will take - and the better the exercise will be. Before you register, you can only create an exercise with four gaps. To register, click on Help on the top menubar, then click Register and follow the instructions. It's free for non-profit educational use.

Step 1: Enter the text into the large field first.

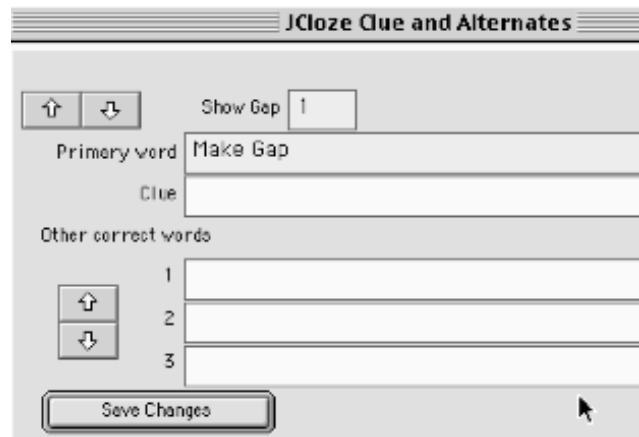
Step 2: Once you have the text ready, highlight one word or phrase and click **Make Gap**. This will bring up a dialog box (see below).



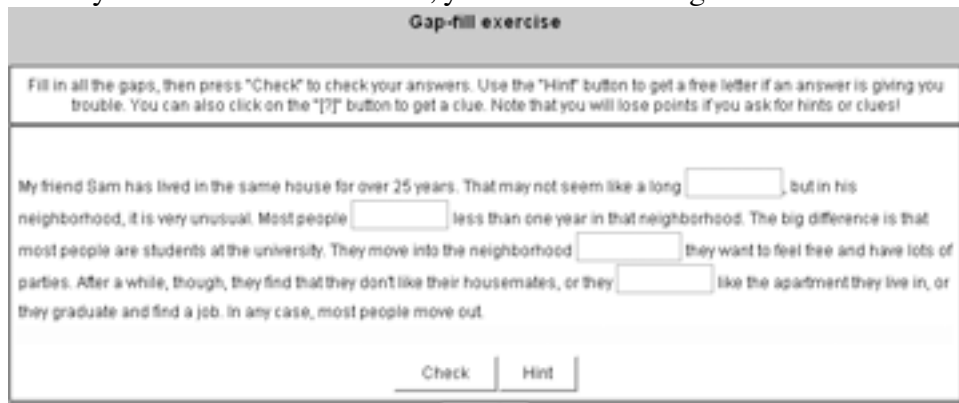
Step 3: Add clues and alternate correct words, if you like.

Step 4: Click Save Changes when you are finished. It will turn the gapped word red.

Step 5: When you have gapped all the words you want to gap, just click on the Create Exercise icon. (See above for details.) Make sure you're giving each file a different name - like oppositescloze, oppositematch, etc.



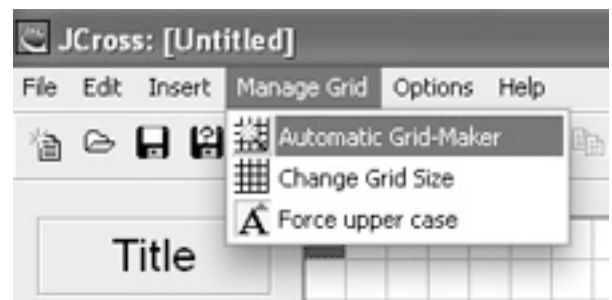
When you view it in the browser, you'll see something like this:



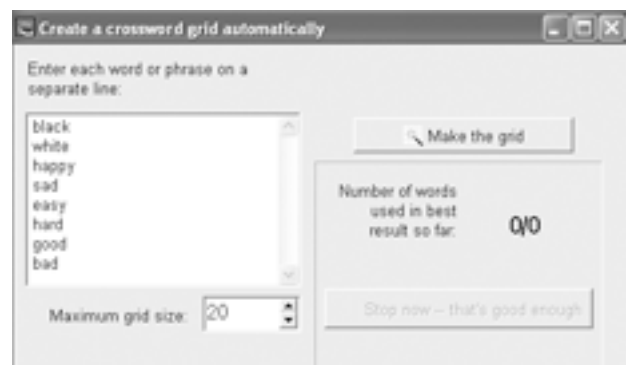
JCross - Crossword puzzles the easy way

JCross creates crossword puzzles. The hard part is thinking of the words and the clues - the computer will create the actual puzzle for you.

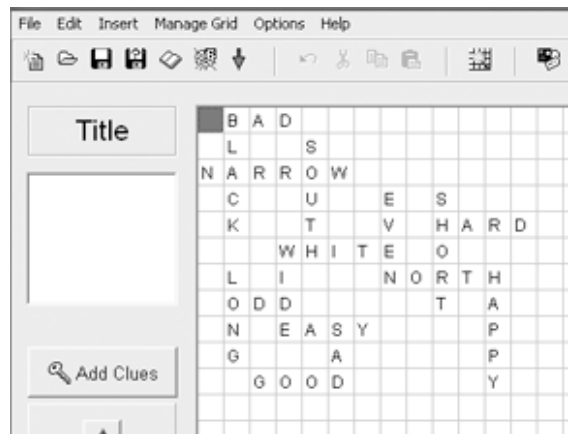
1. The important thing to remember in this Potato is to start by pulling down the Manage Grid menu and choosing **Automatic Grid Maker** - this will put the words in the puzzle for you.



2. If you choose Automatic Grid Maker, you will see the screen where you enter your words. Just type in your words, one word on each line. When you are finished, click **Make the Grid** and wait for JCross to make your grid.



3. When it is ready, click Close to see your crossword so far. If you decide you want to add more words, go back to Manage Grid and choose Automatic Grid Maker again. It warns that you may lose your work, but I have never had a problem with it.



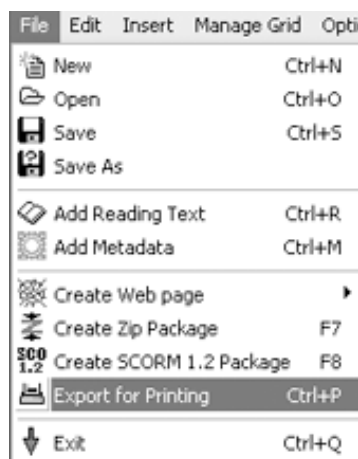
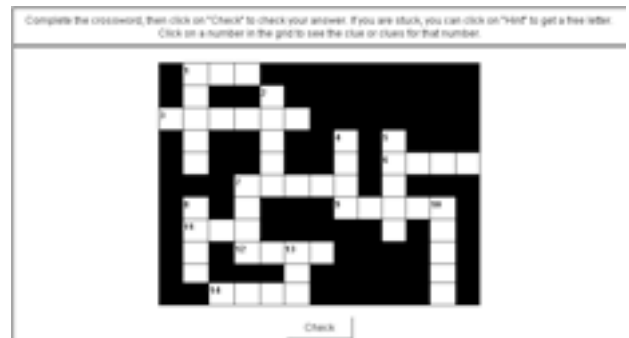
4. Next, you can enter clues by clicking on **Add Clues** from the first JCross screen.



You need to click one word at a time, type in the clue, then click the check mark on the right side.

After you have saved all the clues, click Ok at the bottom. You will need to enter all the clues before JCross will let you save your work.

When it's ready, just click on the Create Exercise icon to create an HTML file. If it won't create the exercise, it means that there is a clue that hasn't been filled in yet. Go back to Add Clues and find the one that's missing, fill it in, then click Ok again.



To create a puzzle to print out, pull down the File menu and choose Export for Printing.

Not easy to use: JBC

JBC, the multiple choice exercise piece, is more complicated. The hardest part is having good choices, since you will need between two and four choices for each question you create. The best first step is to select the reading, then create your questions. Once you have a reading and questions, you can click on JBC to begin to enter them. Start with the easier ones first!