



DICTIONARY BLASTER



User Guide



Dictionary Blaster

ENGLISH VOCABULARY TRAINING

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Getting Started

Introduction

Thank you for using Dictionary Blaster. Dictionary Blaster features a selection of arcade style games, all of which have been designed to be fairly simple but lots of fun.

However, Dictionary Blaster should not be regarded purely as a source of entertainment, but rather, as a tool for learning.

Research into memory enhancement has determined that learning arbitrary material such as vocabulary can be more effective if the brain is in a heightened state of arousal*. This can be induced by performing a stimulating task whilst being presented with the material to be remembered.

Dictionary Blaster aims to harness this relationship thus providing students with an opportunity to learn English vocabulary more quickly and more enjoyably than has been possible until now.

There are many computer based puzzles available on-line, which are intended to help in many subject areas, including English speaking. Dictionary Blaster is completely different to these, for the following reasons:

- Dictionary Blaster is designed especially for non-native English language (TEFL) students, although it also caters for native speakers who would like to practice spelling.
- Dictionary Blaster provides spoken words at all times ' all words are presented in the spoken and written forms; users can change this configuration as required.
- Dictionary Blaster does not feature puzzles - all games are arcade game style.
- Dictionary blaster features advanced 3D graphics.

So we believe that Dictionary Blaster & Dictionary Blaster Pro offer a unique approach to enhance the learning process.

A recent paper by *Rolf Palmberg* entitled *Computer games and foreign language vocabulary learning* further highlights the potential for computer game software to improve the experience of foreign language students.**

*Arousal-Mediated Memory Consolidation: Role of the Medial Temporal Lobe in Humans

K.S. LaBar1, E.A. Phelps1

Effects of Emotion on Memory Specificity in Young and Older Adults

Elizabeth A. Kensinger, Rachel J. Garoff-Eaton, Daniel L. Schacter

Immediate memory consequences of the effect of emotion on attention to pictures

Deborah Talmi, Adam K. Anderson, Lily Riggs, Jeremy B. Caplan, Morris Moscovitch

Remembering the Details: Effects of Emotion

Elizabeth A. Kensinger

**Computer games and foreign language vocabulary learning
Rolf Palmberg

Who can benefit from using Dictionary Blaster ?

- English language students of ages 5+, from beginner to intermediate level.
- Native English language speakers who want to be exposed to spelling through a fun & stimulating medium.
- Advanced level English language students who want to consolidate the vocabulary they have already learned.
- Anybody who enjoys playing computer games.

Program Features

- 7 different arcade-style video game levels.
- Over 1000 English words, including verbs, nouns & adjectives.
- All words are presented in spoken & written forms.
- Learn, Revise and Test modes for all levels.
- Facility to save a game and continue it later.

Control

Dictionary Blaster is controlled by the mouse.

All games are played using the mouse and the left mouse button.

Program navigation and set up is controlled by buttons on the screen which can be clicked with the left mouse button.

The game screen size can be adjusted by clicking and dragging the bottom right of the window.

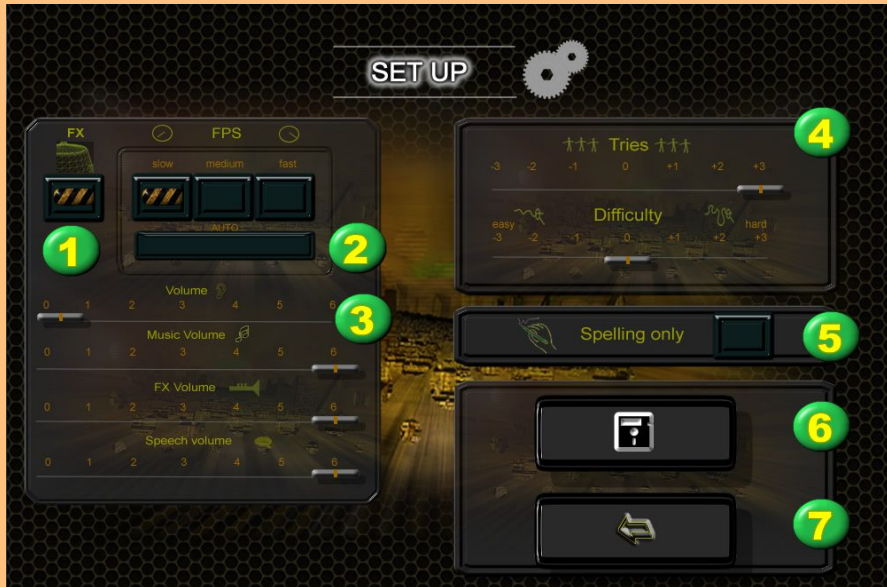
Program Navigation

Title Page



- 1) Brings up information.
- 2) Go to set-up page.
- 3) Start a new game.

Setup Page



This page allows the user to set up various preferences.

1) FX on/off:

Dictionary Blaster includes some optical effects which unfortunately can slow the program down when used with some graphics cards. If the game runs slow or slows down intermittently, try disabling the optical effects with this button.

2)FPS:

This controls the frame rate (the rate at which the screen is updated). You can try different settings here to see which is most comfortable for your computer system.

When set to Auto, the software checks your CPU speed and determines a setting from this. The automatic setting does not take into account other hardware considerations and thus, may not be optimal.

3)Audio volume control:

You can adjust spoken, fx and music volumes independently using the bottom 3 sliders. The top slider in this section controls overall volume.

4)Difficulty level:

Use these sliders to adjust the difficulty to your liking. The top slider controls the amount of chances a player has (tries). The bottom slider effect depends on which game variant you are playing.

5)Spelling only:

When this mode is checked, a word will only be presented as written text (not spoken) when it is presented without a word icon (picture). This mode is for those who can speak English well and want to practice spelling.

6)Save preferences to disk:

Saves the preferences to disk and returns you to the title screen.

7)Discard changes

Exit back to title screen without saving.

Selection Page



1) Word category selection:

Dictionary Blaster words are grouped into categories. You can select which category to work with using this panel.

Buttons with two arrows change the category in increments of ten.

The button with the question mark(?) assigns a randomly selected category.

2) Game mode:

Learn - a relevant image is presented along with each English word initially.

revise - words are presented without images.

Check - words are presented without images and the dictionary page also has images removed.

3) End game:

Ends the current game session and returns to the title screen .

4) Game selection:

Use the left and right buttons here to select the game level you wish to play.

5) Game statistics:

Displays the current score and rating.

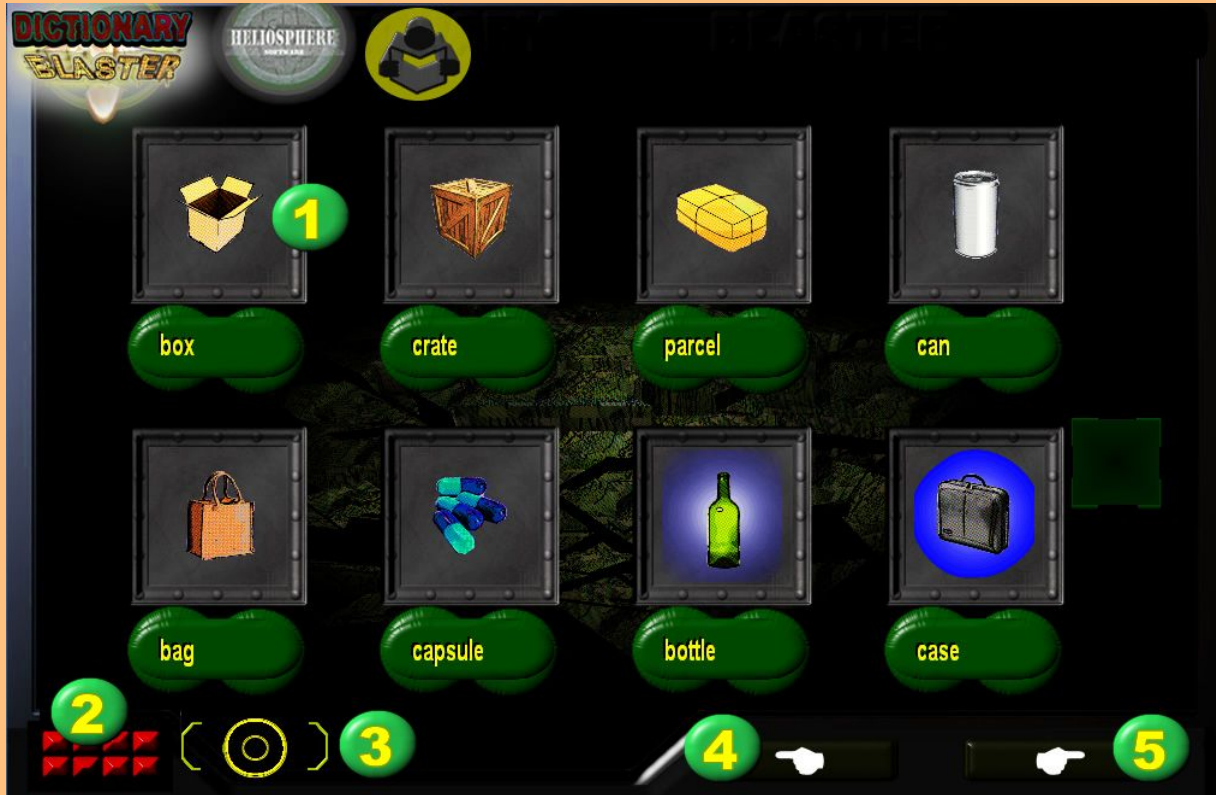
6) Load a previously saved game session:

The current selection settings will be discarded and a previously saved session will be loaded.

7) Continue

Navigates forward to the dictionary page.

Dictionary Page



The Dictionary page presents all words in the selected category as spoken and written words or phrases. Each word has an associated icon which should clarify the meaning of the word even to those people who have not come across the word before.

The vast majority of icons define the associated word very clearly but occasionally an icon may prove to be a little ambiguous. In this case take the time in this page to understand the icon or refer to an English dictionary if necessary.

If the current playing mode is set to check (see selection screen section) icons will not appear in the dictionary page.

Page Features:

1) Word Panels

These are the medium by which the words are presented. Words are presented sequentially but you can make them appear all at once by clicking the mouse near the bottom of the screen.

You may shoot the panels if wish.

2) Word takeout buttons

You may use these red buttons to select or deselect words. Deselected words will not be included in the game.

This is useful because you may already know some of the words in the category and there for don't need to learn them.

You cannot take out more than four words.

3) Aim practice sight

Fire at the moving practice sight to randomly stimulate word panels.

4) Navigate back

Navigates back to the selection page.

5) Navigate forward

Navigate forward to the game page.

Game Page



Game play varies across the different game variants but all have a number of common features, as described below:

1) Tries (lives)

When a new game is started, the player will be issued with a number of tries.

Various incidents in a game, such as targeting an incorrect word, will result in the player losing one of their tries. If the number of tries falls to zero, the game ends and the player will be returned to the title page.

2) Grade

Grade reflects the player's ability to remember learned English words. This ranges between F to A.

3) Progress

This indicates the percentage completion of a particular level.

4) Target Word

Here, the written form of the target word is presented. Target words are drawn at random from the list of words in the current category. Objects in the game play area are connected with different word icons. The player must shoot objects whose word icon matches the target word.

5) Target Word Icon

If the game mode is set to learn (in the selection page):

When a target word is presented for the first time, it is accompanied by an icon at this location. Further presentations may not be accompanied by the icon.

If the game mode is either revise or check, the target word icon will not appear at all.

6) Commentary:

This box provides text advice relating to game activity.

This advice is in English and is text only (not spoken). Users do not need to understand the text output here since it is incidental to the game.

7) Score

Interacting with the game in a skilful manner will generate points culminating in the player's score.

8) Navigate back

Navigates back to the dictionary page.

9) Pause

Pauses the game. Click anywhere on the application to continue.

10) Navigate forward

- Steps out of this game.
- navigates to the summary page and then back to the selection page.

11) Save current game session

This button will save the game in its current state. You can load the game at a later time from the selection page.

Summary Page

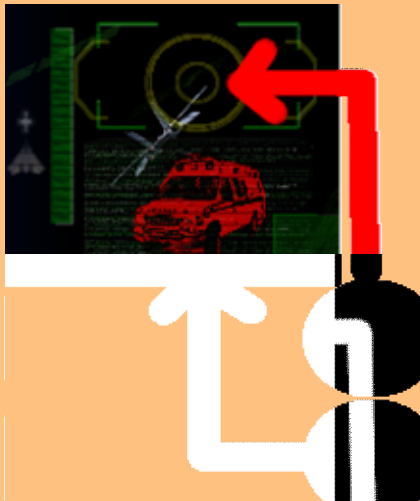


The summary page displays various game statistics. Click the mouse anywhere to exit this page and return to the selection page.

GAMES

City Raid

Shoot and destroy game word icons which correspond to the target word presented in the dashboard area.



1) **target area.** You must shoot this target several times to bring it down.

2) **Game word icon**

Does this icon represent the target word at the bottom of the screen?

If so, you must shoot it down - failure to do so will result in a lost try.

If not, please do not shoot at this object - doing so will result in a lost try.

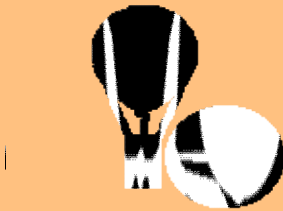


3) Enemy object

Unless shot down, this will drift steadily closer to the player. If it gets too close this will result in a lost try.

Shoot it down.

All other game components are incidental to the game - you do not need to pay too much attention to these and still successfully complete the game!



4) secondary object

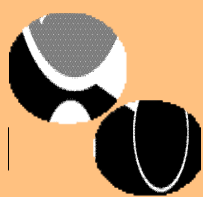
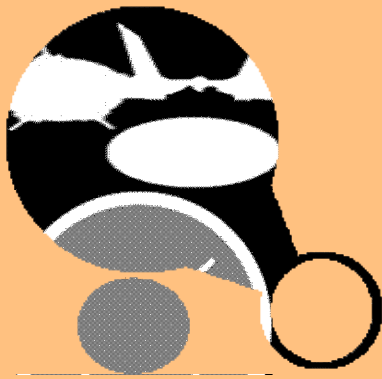
Shoot it down for points.



5) Masterpod

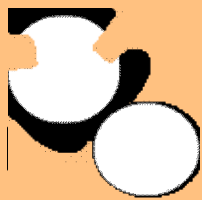
Masterpods will disintegrate when shot, into multiple pods. Each of these is assigned a word.

Shooting pods which have been assigned the target word will result in points, but shooting a pod which has been assigned an alternative point will result in penalties. You can check pod word status by rolling the mouse over a pod - a word icon will appear in the pod targeting sight (6).



7) Bonus icon

Shoot this to get bonuses.



8) Spaceship

Shoot this to get bonuses.

Defender

Shoot and destroy game word Icons which correspond to the target word presented in the dashboard area.



1) target area. You must shoot this target several times to bring it down.

2) Game word icon

Does this icon represent the target word at the bottom of the screen?

If so, you must shoot it down - failure to do so will result in a lost try.

If not, please do not shoot at this object - doing so will result in a lost try.



3) Enemy object

Shoot it down.

Watch out for incoming fire!



4) debris object

Shoot it down for points, avoid incoming fire!

All other game components are incidental to the game ' you do not need to pay too much attention to these and still successfully complete the game:



5) chopper

Shoot this for bonuses.

Carousel

Aim at ducks which carry the target word icon.



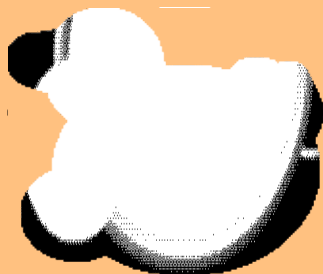
1) Duck with word icon.

Does this icon represent the target word at the bottom of the screen?

If so, you must shoot it - failure to do so will result in penalties.

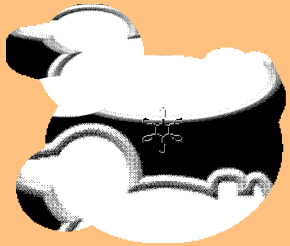
If not, please do not shoot at this object - doing so will result in a lost try.

All other game components are incidental to the game - you do not need to pay too much attention to these and still successfully complete the game!



2) word changer

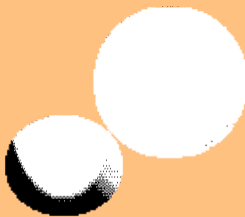
Shooting this duck will randomly update all duck icons.

**3) bonus duck**

Shoot it for bonuses.

**4) uniform duck**

Shooting this will cause all ducks to carry the target word icon.

**5) bonus target**

Shoot this for bonuses.

Breakout



Bounce the ball into bricks.

- 1) **Player bat.** You control this, using the mouse.
- 2) **Ball**
- 3) **Brick, with word icon**

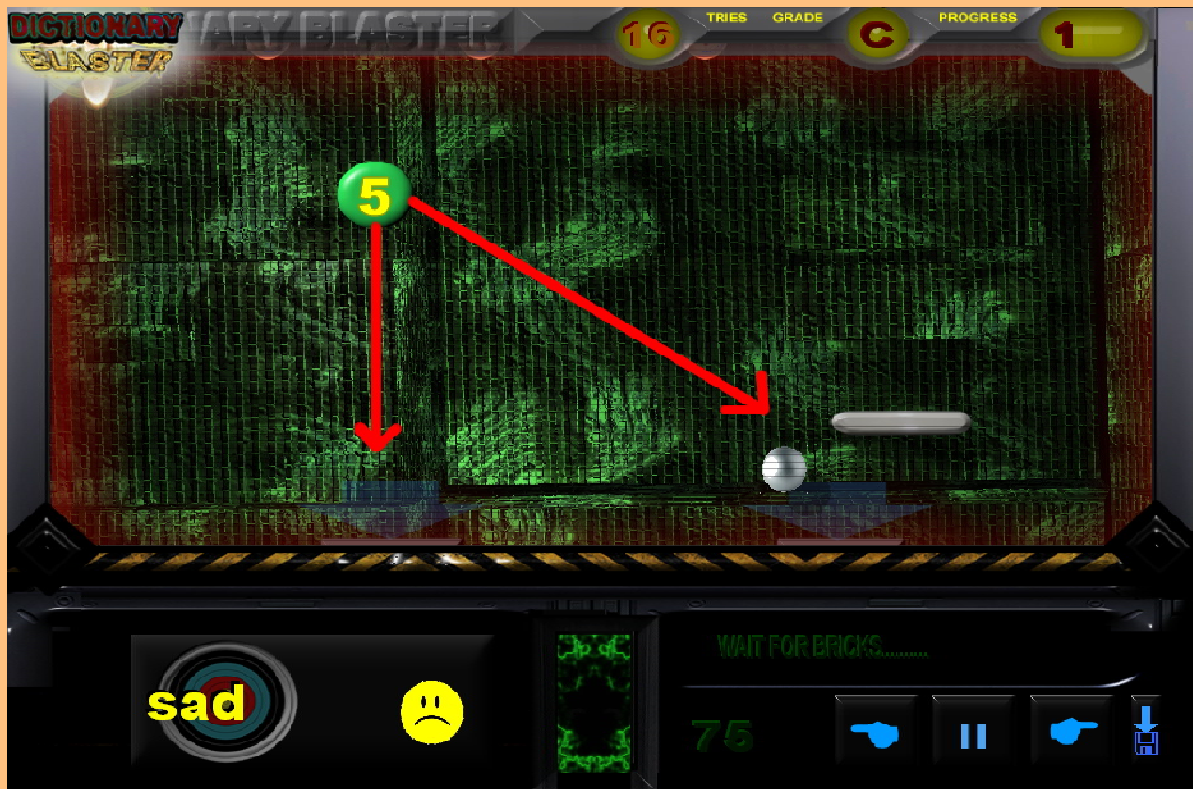
Does this icon represent the target word at the bottom of the screen?

If so, you must bounce the ball into this brick ' failure to do so will result in a lost try.

If not, please do not hit this brick ' doing so will result in a lost try.

- 4) **Coin.** These are placed at the top of the screen and are dislodged when hit by the ball.

Capturing a falling coin with your bat will lead to bonuses and other effects.



5) Break holes

These holes open up temporarily after a target word icon has been successfully hit. If the ball enters either of the holes, the player loses a try.

Cavern Snipe

Shoot to select a word icon which corresponds to the target word presented in the dashboard area.



1) target area. Shoot here to switch between game word icons.

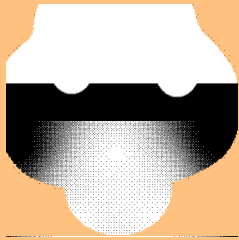
2) Game word icon

3) Game word icon

Which icon represents the target word at the bottom of the screen?

Shoot the switch target to select the correct word - failure will result in a lost try.

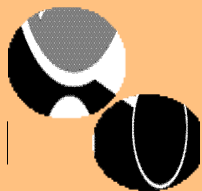
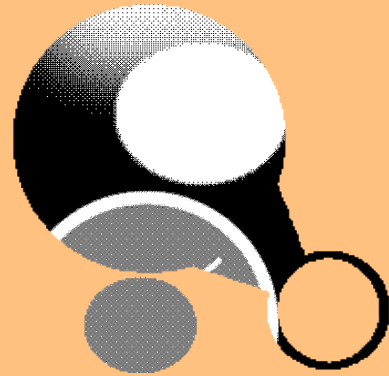
4) You must do this within a time limit indicated above the switch.



5) Masterpod

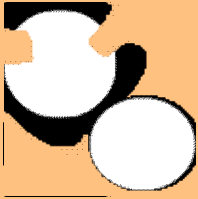
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7) Bonus icon

Shoot this to get bonuses.

**8) Spaceship**

Shoot this to get bonuses.

Snooker

Pot game word icons which correspond to the target word presented in the dashboard area.



- 1) White Ball.
- 2) Black ball - you must pot this ball.
- 3) Game word icon.

Does this icon represent the target word at the bottom of the screen?

If so, you must pot the black ball here; failure to do so will result in a lost try.

- 4) Red ball. Potting this ball leads to bonuses as shown on the screen (5).

Air Hockey

Send the puck into the correct goal, whilst the CPU attempts to deflect it.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT

Both Dictionary Blaster and Dictionary Blaster Pro are protected by international copyright treaties.

You must agree to the following terms and conditions before installing and using Dictionary Blaster:

You may not attempt to disassemble or alter any part of the Dictionary Blaster software or related files.

You may not distribute the Dictionary Blaster files to other individuals.

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