

Games to practise literacy skills

Regular group activities in English included computer-based games for practising word recognition and spelling skills.

Students in Years 1 and 2 enjoy using this type of software because it provides a fun way of exploring word structures and practising spelling. This type of software allows the teacher to enter spelling lists tailored to individual students or groups of students. Many lists are also supplied within the software.

Wordsearch, crossword and flashcard activities are generally included to help students practise or explore word lists.

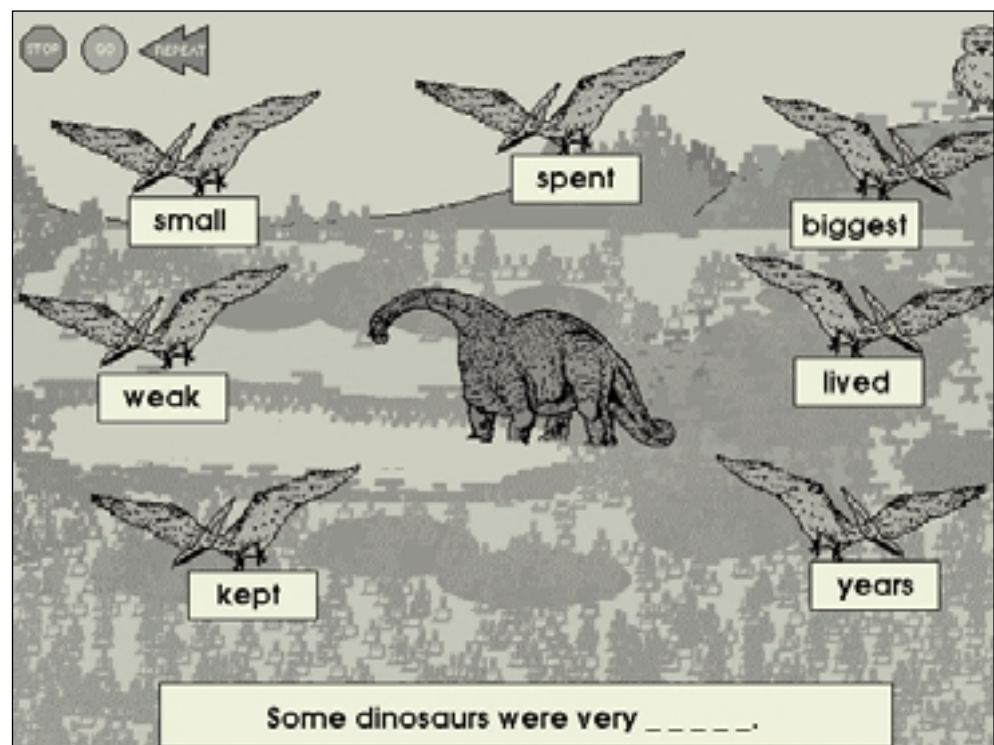
Spellbound is one of the packages I use with my students. Each time students begin a game, they complete spelling and reading tasks to earn points. When they have earned enough points they participate in a spelling bee or other reading game, competing against computer opponents. The words in the spelling bee can be either spoken by a digitised human-like voice or flashed on the screen.

These computer-based activities are completed by students working in groups of two or three. Groups rotate around the workstations so that everyone has a turn each week.

Incidentally, the activity has increased the students' ability to locate specific letters on the keyboard, to use the delete key to make corrections to their words and to use the shift key to make capital letters for proper nouns.

There are many software packages that provide similar features and can be used in a variety of ways. Criteria to look for when selecting good spelling software include:

- a wide range of attractive, educational and entertaining activities
- the capacity for students to enter, personalise or create their own word lists
- a feature that allows students to hear words spoken
- the inclusion of definitions
- the capacity to save and print student work.



Screen capture of a spelling activity from *The Computer Classroom*.