

# Write On



ARNOLD-WHEATON  
SYSTEM  
SOFTWARE

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# ***Write On***

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**Teacher/Parent Guide**

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## 2. Using Write On

Once the program has been loaded (see section 2.1), the child is able to start writing and displaying text straight away using the two Control Keys. These are the two outermost keys on the bottom row of the keyboard and are referred to as the **LH** (left-hand) and **RH** (right-hand) keys. To control other **Write On** functions such as Saving and Loading wordsets, changing words and the Printer option, several other keys must be used. These are called the **Command Keys** and details of their use are given in section 2.4. It is not essential for the child to be familiar with the Command keys, although as they become more proficient with **Write On** they may wish to be able to construct their own wordset, for example. However it should be emphasised that the child need only press the Control Keys (**LH** and **RH**) to write text. By pressing letter keys they may find themselves in another option. If this happens, they can easily return to their writing by pressing **ESCAPE** (BBC) or **SHIFT SPACE** (Spectrum).

## 2.1 Loading the program

### BBC

Turn on your microcomputer and insert the disc or tape. If you want to use a printer you must 'set up' the printer now. Type in the commands you normally use for your particular printer (e.g. \*FX6) but do not enable it (i.e. do not type CTRL B or VDU2). See section 2.5 for further details.

Having set up your printer:

#### For disc:

hold down **SHIFT** and press **BREAK** once

#### For cassette:

type **\*RUN** and press **PLAY** on your cassette recorder

### SPECTRUM

Turn on the microcomputer and insert the tape into the cassette recorder

type **LOAD ""** and press **PLAY** on your cassette recorder.

The title page will then be displayed and the program loaded automatically. Remove the **Write On** program disc/tape as this must not be used to save wordsets.

## 2.2 Writing Text

Words and functions are selected by moving the flashing square, called the cursor, into the appropriate box and then pressing the **RH** Control Key. The **LH** and **RH** Control Keys are **SHIFT LOCK** and **COPY** on the BBC microcomputer and **CAPS SHIFT** and **SPACE** on the ZX Spectrum.

When starting off, the cursor is always at the top left of the screen. Pressing **RH** moves the cursor one box to the right. Once it gets to the last box it goes back to the start again. Pressing **LH** moves the cursor down one box. When it gets to the bottom blank area it then goes back to the top again. By choosing the correct column with the **RH** key and then choosing the correct row with the **LH** key any box can easily be selected. If you miss a box or change your mind, move the cursor to the bottom blank area and press the **RH** key to get you back to the starting position.

Once the cursor is in the correct box, press the **RH** key to select that particular word, page or function. If a word is selected, that word is printed at the bottom of the screen. If a page name is selected, then that page is shown. If a function is chosen (e.g. **rub out**), then that function will be performed.

There are nine different pages containing words, letters and functions available to the child. Initially page one is displayed. This is the **home page** to which the program returns after completing most operations. It also contains all of the functions, the page names and 17 very common words. Section 2.3 describes these pages and has a diagram of page one.

The best way to get to know about **Write On** is to use it and see what happens. It is really quite easy and children catch onto the idea very quickly once they are at the keyboard. The following example shows how **Write On** can be used to write **The elephant sat on the paintbox**.

Assuming that you are on page one (see the diagram in section 2.3) move the cursor to the **the** box and press **RH** ..... **The** appears at the bottom of the screen. Capitals are generated automatically at the beginning of a sentence and spaces are put in after each word. Now look for **elephant** on page one .... no .... well look at the page containing words beginning with e:

Move the cursor to the box containing the page name **efgh** and press **RH** ..... page three appears with **elephant** as one of its words. After selecting **elephant** the program goes back to page one.

Now look for **sat** ..... it is not on page one so look at the page named **qrst**. It is not there so you can either add the word to this wordset (see section 2.4) or have a go at spelling **sat** using the **letters page**. Go back to page one by selecting the **go back** box (any blank box will do the same) ..... select **letters** and spell **sat** using the **letters** page. Notice that you stay in **letters** until you choose to go back. You can add spaces using the **space** box but the program automatically puts a space after a word when you return to page one.

You now have **The elephant sat** < written at the bottom of the screen. Select **on** and **the** from page one and look for paintbox in the page named **mnop** ..... it is not there ..... but there is **paint** ..... so select **paint** and you will return to page one. To remove the space after **paint** use the **rub out** function. Every time you press **RH** you will keep on rubbing out a letter (or space). Press **LH** to stop. To add the **box** you can either try and find it under **b** (it is not there!) or spell it using **letters**. To finish off put '.' at the end. You now have

**The elephant sat on the paintbox. <**

written in the text area.

You can fit three lines of text at the bottom before they scroll upwards. To show all the text on one page use the **display** function. Then press either **LH** or **RH** to return to page one. You can write up to one screen full of double-spaced text. A warning message will tell you when you are on the last line.

If the printer is being used then the **prnt out** function will be displayed on the screen. If not, this box will be blank and the printer cannot be used. The **P** Command key is used to turn the **prnt out** function on or off (see section 2.4). Selecting **prnt out** will try and send the text to the printer. Note that the printer must have been 'set up' beforehand (see section 2.5). If the printer is not properly connected then the program might 'hang' and nothing will appear to be happening. Simply press **ESCAPE** (BBC) or **SHIFT SPACE** (Spectrum) to return to page one without losing any text.

## 2.3 The Pages

There are nine pages in all, each of which has 28 or 32 boxes. Page one (the home page) is shown below:

	abcd	efgh	ijkl	mnop	
	letters	qrst	vwxyz	my words	PAGE NAMES
*	rub out	display	print out	space	FUNCTIONS
	a	and	go	he	
	I	in	is	it	
	my	of	on	some	COMMON WORDS
	the	to	was	we	WORDS
	went	,	?		
					BLANK AREA

The elephant sat on the paintbox.

THREE  
LINES FOR  
TEXT  
(Scrolling)

\* Cannot change these words

## DIAGRAM OF PAGE ONE (BBC)

The first two rows are the page names and refer to pages 2 to 9. For example **letters** is page 6. These names may be changed using the **C** command (see section 2.4) so that a new wordset can be organised differently to form, say, a functional wordset (e.g. each page containing words associated with functions such as **doing, who, what, travel** etc.). The pages could even be referred to by numbers, colours or children's names.

The next row has the four functions outlined in the previous section. These functions cannot be edited using the **C** command. Note that you cannot write **space shuttle** using the space function!

The next five rows contain the common words and punctuation. These, like the words on the other pages, may be changed using **C**. Initially, page 6 contains the letters of the alphabet, page 9 is blank and the other six pages contain words classified alphabetically. Any or all of these pages may be altered and the complete set saved using the **S** command.

## 2.4 Command keys

### C Change word.

Press **C** when the cursor is over the word you want to change. If you decide not to change that word press **RETURN** (BBC) or **ENTER** (Spectrum) to return to the original word. Otherwise type the required word/letter or space and press **RETURN** or **ENTER**. When replacing words you may use **DELETE** rub out in the normal way.

### S Save Wordset on disc/tape.

Press **S** and type the filename for the wordset followed by **RETURN** or **ENTER**. Do not put spaces in filenames and only use names with 7 or less letters (10 on tape). Pressing **RETURN** or **ENTER** straight away will return you to page one. You should not attempt to save a wordset on the program disc/tape supplied. You will need a properly formatted disc or blank cassette tape for this purpose.

#### BBC disc

The wordset will be saved automatically.

#### Cassette

Press **RECORD** and then **RETURN** or **ENTER** when requested. Remember to stop the tape when saving is complete.

Error messages will be displayed if anything is wrong. Check your wordset data disc/tape and try again.

### L Load new wordset from disc/tape

Make sure that the correct wordset data disc/tape is in the disc drive/cassette recorder. Press **L** and type the filename of the wordset that you want to load followed by **RETURN** or **ENTER**. To return to page one at anytime press **ESCAPE** (BBC) or **SHIFT SPACE** (Spectrum).

## **BBC disc**

The wordset will be loaded in automatically.

An error message will be displayed if the wordset is not found on that disc.

## **BBC cassette**

The program will display 'Searching'. Press **PLAY** and the 'Loading' message will appear once the wordset has been found. Remember to stop the tape when the wordset has been loaded. Normal tape loading error messages will be displayed (e.g. Error — rewind tape) if loading is unsuccessful.

## **Spectrum**

The program will display 'Searching' and the names of any files found on the tape will be shown. After the chosen wordset file has been loaded the program will return to page one.

## **P Printer on/off**

On startup the printer option is set 'off' and the **prnt out** function will not appear on page one Press **P** to display this option. Pressing **P** again turns the option off. In order to use the printer, it must have been set up before loading the program. Selecting the **prnt out** function using the **LH** and **RH** keys sends all the writing to the printer. If the program appears to stop then it is likely that the printer is not connected or switched on. You must press **ESCAPE** (BBC) or **SHIFT SPACE** (spectrum) to return to page one.

## 2.5 Setting up the printer

There are many different printers available for the BBC microcomputer and for the Sinclair Spectrum with one of the special interfaces. The ZX printer for the Spectrum can be connected directly to the microcomputer and can be used without giving any special commands before running **Write On**.

### **BBC**

These commands are given in the BBC User Guide and include

**\*FX6** to give a 'line feed'

and **\*FX5,2** for most Serial type printers.

You will need to consult the printer manual or a colleague for details of the printer type and 'baud code' (if necessary).

### **Spectrum**

ZX printer — no setting up required.

For other printers using either a Serial output (e.g. Interface 1) or an additional Parallel Interface, the relevant Interface and printer documentation should be consulted.

### 3. Teaching techniques

With a younger child who is just starting reading, one possibility is to start off with a blank wordset and use it as a basis for their own words. This may easily be done by erasing words on one or more pages using the **C** command. Talk with them about an interesting experience and get them to generate a simple sentence, e.g. "I saw a cat in the garden". Use only one page (page 2) for new words and simply arrange them in the order in which your child comes up with them. Show them how to select the words and read them out loud as you do it.

At first, do everything for them unless they can see a word — they will very quickly want to take over and will be strongly motivated to start recognising words.

If a sentence is too much for them, then limit them to simpler constructions at first e.g. "in the garden", "the cat", "on the chair" and then lead on to longer combinations e.g. "the cat is on the chair".

Don't try to go too quickly and overload them with new words. Each child learns at a different rate and the important thing is to keep them succeeding and confident.

As soon as you can, teach them initial letters and use a normal alphabetical wordset as a stimulus to develop this approach.

Show them how to work out spellings from the sound of words and how to build up or type in new words.

With older children who need a stimulus to progress further with literacy, use a functional wordset to key off constructions, e.g.

The	baby	was	in	the	picture
(page 1)	(who word)	(doing word)	(page 1)	(page 1)	(what word)

Let them play with the program to make up both possible and odd sentences (e.g. "the house was in the train"). Encourage them to develop their own wordset and to apply their own interests and knowledge.

For both groups, the text generated can be used as a stimulus for further work. If a printout is available they can build up their own work book (without a printer, either you or they can make a written copy). Even simply copying performs a valuable function, in that it is rehearsing the sequence of letters in a word and makes it easier to perform discriminations when reading.

## 4. Summary of Command Keys

- C** Change word
- S** Save wordset on disc/tape
- L** Load new wordset
- P** Printer on/off
- N** New text
- G** (Spectrum only) Games paddles on/off

## 5. Using games paddles

If the child is unable to use the **LH** and **RH** keys with sufficient accuracy it is possible to use **Write On** with games paddles or a joystick.

### **BBC**

These accessories plug into one of the sockets in the back (usually the 'analogue port'). **Write On** has been programmed to accept signals from the 'fire buttons' on the games paddles. You will need to find out which buttons correspond to the **LH** and **RH** keys respectively. Alternatively other switching devices may be connected to the computer to perform a similar function. You **must** have competent technical advice before attempting any such input to the microcomputer.

### **Spectrum**

Games paddles and joysticks can be used with a relevant interface unit attached to the microcomputer. If the games paddles are programmable they should be programmed to emulate the cursor keys. Press **G** to select the games paddles instead of the **SHIFT** and **SPACE** keys. A **G** will appear on page one to remind you. Press **G** again to return to normal key operation.

# Write On

**Write-on** is an easy to use computer program designed to assist children in the development and application of their ideas in the early stages of literacy. It is thus applicable in the home and at all levels of the education system where the basic literacy skills are being developed.

By pressing just two keys children can select from the screen those words they require to form sentences. These words are automatically assembled into continuous text as they are selected. Nine separate pages of words from which to select can be displayed and the content and organisation of each page can be determined by the teacher or parent.

The program removes much of the drudgery of early writing and encourages children to apply and extend their ideas and literacy skills in a context which is meaningful and relevant to their own language. In so doing, the program also reduces the frustration often caused by poorly developed co-ordination or handwriting.

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