



How to teach with Primary i-Box

Introduction

This PDF provides an introduction to the games and the functionality of the *Primary i-Box*, and also a set of teaching tips for using the software in the classroom, including worksheets. For specific instructions on each page or game, please open the *Help* file in the bottom right corner of the screen.

There are five sections to this PDF: Did you know ...?; Main pages and tools; The games; Teaching tips; and Worksheets. The teaching tips explain in detail how to use the Presentation and Practice pages, and also provide activity guidance for the worksheets. The first worksheet is for the teacher and is designed to help you find your way around *Primary i-Box* – it will take only five minutes and is a good way to explore the software.

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Did you know ... ?

- ★ You can build your own vocabulary lists from over 350 images and audio files in *Primary i-Box*. The vocabulary lists can be as long or short, and as varied or focused as you want.
- ★ There is a presentation section and a practice section that support teaching of new vocabulary and reviewing of known vocabulary. These sections allow you to hide and show the images and words to explore the vocabulary creatively in the classroom.
- ★ There are seven state-of-the-art games for you to use in the class, and each game will be personalised to the vocabulary list that you choose.
- ★ There are five avatars (characters) to choose from and the games can be played by the class as a single team (against the teacher) or as a multiplayer game with up to four teams.
- ★ *Primary i-Box* offers both British and American English.
- ★ *Primary i-Box* has its own whiteboard toolbar and notepad, so if you only have a projector, you can enjoy some of the functionality of interactive whiteboards.
- ★ The *Primary i-Box* word lists and topics are taken from the Cambridge ESOL Young Learners exams and are all tagged at Starters, Movers and Flyers.
- ★ *Primary i-Box* can be used with any Young Learners course.

Main pages and tools

The Word list

The *Word list* page is the first and most important screen – it allows the teacher to choose the vocabulary that is going to be taught and used in the lesson. You cannot play any of the *Primary i-Box* games without first choosing a group of words, so this page is always the starting point. The *Help* file button in the bottom-right corner of the page provides simple instructions on how to use this page.

When creating word lists it might be useful to remember that if the vocabulary is new to your students, the list should be small. If the students know the vocabulary already, then you can include as many words as you like.

Once you have chosen your words, go to the *Presentation* page. You can get there by clicking on the big, blue *Presentation* button.

Presentation

This page is designed to present new vocabulary in a colourful and interesting way. If the students already know the vocabulary, you can use this page to check their knowledge of spelling or to make sure that they haven't forgotten the words. Remember that only the vocabulary selected in your Word list will be shown on this page. The *Help* file provides all the information you need to use the *Presentation* page. See *Teaching Tip 3* in this PDF for advice on how to present vocabulary with *Primary i-Box* in the classroom.

Practice

The *Practice* stage follows *Presentation* and allows the teacher to test the students' knowledge of the vocabulary in a playful way by slowly revealing parts of the image through blurring, revealing the image in jigsaw segments, or by showing the letters individually. The *Help* file provides information on functionality, and *Teaching Tip 4* in this PDF offers advice on how to use the Practice page in the classroom.

The Options page

When you choose a game, the first page that you see shows a *Start* button and a *Game options* button. The *Game options* button will open the *Options* page, but you can also open the *Options* page at any time during a game by selecting *Options* from the *Go to* drop down menu on the top navigation bar.

The *Options* page gives you more control over the game – it allows you to increase or decrease the number of players/teams, choose the characters (or avatars) that represent the players, and with certain games you can change the number of rounds and the time limit. Reducing the time limit is a great way to make a game more challenging: if the students know the vocabulary well, then you can add time pressure to keep the interaction lively and fresh. Conversely, if you are playing for the first time or with new vocabulary, it would be wise to allow more time.

The Toolbar

The *Toolbar* can be opened or closed at any time, and offers a pen with colours, an eraser and a notepad. You can take notes, draw and sketch with it, or use it for any activities that support your students' learning. Importantly, if you don't have an interactive whiteboard, you can still use the Toolbar.

The games

Spelling race

The *Spelling race* is a classic board game, with each team or player racing to the finish line to win the game. Each player spins the spinner to get a number, but can only move forward if the spelling task is completed. To complete the task, the player has to listen to the audio file of a word and then spell it on the game's keyboard. If the word is difficult, the teacher might provide one (or more) of the letters as a clue. Failure to spell the word correctly means the player's character doesn't advance and the next player or team takes their turn.

Beastigrams

Beastigrams requires the players to decipher words through the *Beastigram* symbols. The symbols or pictures all represent a letter (for example: 'cow' represents 'c', and 'dragon' represents 'd'), and the players have to look at the pictures and work out what the word is, then spell it on the game's keyboard. Each correct letter scores a point, with bonuses for a quick, correct answer. Be careful of the timer, though, as the players must decipher and spell out the full word within the time limit to achieve maximum points. The teacher can control the time limit to make the game more or less difficult.

Before playing *Beastigrams*, it is a good idea to introduce the symbols. You can do this by clicking the *a-z* button on the game screen and presenting them to the class. You can also use the *Beastigrams* worksheet at the end of this PDF to help you present the symbols – *Teaching Tip 6* explains how to do this.

Memory

The *Memory game* has two parts – it starts with a pelmanism or matching pairs task, and when a player or team correctly match a pair of images, they have to spell the word by dragging the letters into the correct order. Correct answers result in points to the team or player, and at the end of the game, the team or player with the most points wins.

Syllables

In this game, each player or team is presented with a word and they have to decide how many syllables the word has. To answer, they have to click on one of the following: golf ball (for one syllable), football (for two syllables), or basketball (for three syllables). Correct answers result in an animation of the selected ball scoring points; wrong answers result in no points and a smashed window!

Spin to win

Spin to Win is all about practising numbers, and it's the only game that isn't determined by the *Word list*. You can choose the number range from the four options at the bottom: 1-10, 1-20, 1-99 and 1 to 999. The team or player clicks the spin wheel to generate a random number within the range and then has to call out that number. The teacher adds the score manually by clicking on the score tabs, and the first player or team to reach ten points wins. To make the game more fun, the teacher can add double points for more difficult questions, or deduct points for incorrect answers.

Treehouse challenge

Treehouse challenge is based on the classic *Snakes and Ladders* game, with each player or team moving along the board to the finish line. If you land on a ladder or a tunnel, you have to complete a task: correct answers on ladders move the player up to the next level, but be careful of the tunnels as an incorrect answer will move the player down a level, or possibly two!

This is a very interactive game, with students coming up to the board to complete the tasks. For each task there will be a randomly generated word represented as text, audio or a picture. If it is audio then students have to write the word on the notepad or draw a picture of the word; if it's a picture, the students have to say the word or write it on the board; if the word appears as text, the students have to either read it out or draw a picture of the word. The teacher decides if the answer is right or wrong and clicks the *tick* or *x* button.

Broken words

Broken words is a matching game, where the players have to match the second half of the word to the first half. Correct answers earn points and a quick finish earns a bonus. Changing the timer on this game can increase or decrease the level of difficulty, so remember to go to the *Options* page.

Teaching tips

Tip 1: Discovering the CD-ROM

The first and most important tip is for the teacher to complete the orientation task on worksheet on worksheet 1 on page 7.

- Install the *Primary i-Box* software and then take ten minutes to find the answers to the questions asked in the orientation task. This will help you understand what is in the software and all that you can do with it.

Tip 2: Word list

The *Word list* gives teachers complete control over the selection of vocabulary to be taught, practised and played with. You can make the list of words as long, short, focused or varied as you like. By clicking on the categories at the top of the *Word list*, you can sort the list by topic, level (Starters is the lowest level and Flyers is the highest) or by alphabetical order. Some points to keep in mind when selecting vocabulary groups:

- If the vocabulary is new to your students, keep the list short, and plan to spend more time in the *Presentation* and *Practice* sections before moving on to the games. If you are recycling known vocabulary, then you can build large and varied lists to keep the games full of surprises.
- Vocabulary is often learned in topic groups, and you can use the topic sorting option to explore related vocabulary with your students.
- Beyond the topic groupings, you can scan the list alphabetically and make selections based on spelling; choosing, for example, words with common letter combinations such as 'oo' or 'ck', conflicting combinations, such as 'ch' as used in 'school' and "chair", or difficult ones, such as the 'ui' in 'guitar' and 'biscuit'.

Tip 3: Presentation

The *Presentation* stage is the first part of the three steps: presentation, practice and games. It is here that you show and teach students new words, or revisit and check known ones. For each word there is an illustration representing both the singular and plural, an audio file and the letters that spell the word, all of them concealed. The hide and reveal functionality for the letters offers a powerful tool for eliciting, and there are a number of ways to take advantage of this:

- First show the students the image and ask if they know the word; if it is a new word, click on the audio icon or tell them. Ask the students to repeat the word, and then ask them what they think the first letter of the word might be. Click on the first letter to reveal it. If the students have good spelling awareness in English, work through the other letters. These can be partly or wholly elicited – you can show key consonants and then elicit the vowels, or vice versa.
- If the students have already met the words, you can use the letters to prompt their memories if necessary. And if they know the words well, you can increase the difficulty of the eliciting, asking the students to identify specific letters: for example, the fourth letter in 'autumn', and then the second, and so on. Reveal the letters as they are called out, or show them as clues if required.
- To hand over presentational responsibility and control to the students, you can give each pair of students a word from the list to learn as homework in advance of the class, and have them present the word in pairs – naming the word and also revealing the letters to show the spelling.

Tip 4: Practice

In the *Practice* stage the same word group as selected in the *Word list* is randomly sequenced and delivered in a concealed or hidden mode, with the image and letters covered. The students can be presented with clues either by revealing the image in jigsaw pieces, or as a blurred picture, or by showing the letters. The idea is to provide more and more clues until the students can guess the image.

- Ask the students which clue they would like: a jigsaw piece, a blurred image or a letter (if a letter, which one?). On showing the clue, ask them if they can identify the word. If they can't, offer another clue, and keep doing this until they guess correctly. Then move on to the next word.

- You can introduce an extra element of fun into the practice by organising the students into groups, and awarding points for good guessing. This would work as above, with each group receiving ten points for a word with a point deducted for every clue they require. You can keep score by opening up the notepad and using the pen tool.
- For a teacher versus class game, you can use the notepad again and give the class five lives, where they lose a life for every clue given. This is similar to the *hangman* game principle.

Tip 5: Sequencing

In addition to the sequence of presentation, practice and games, the games also offer an opportunity to scaffold the learning process. Two of the games in particular provide additional support for new vocabulary: *Beastigram* allows for words to be deciphered (once the students know the symbols), before they have been committed to memory; and the *Memory game* first requires matching only images, and then organising letters to build a word, with all the necessary letters present for the students to complete the task.

Tip 6: Pre-game tasks

To help the students understand how to play some of the games before they encounter them on the computer or interactive whiteboard, there are some simple worksheets at the end of this guide to use as pre-game tasks.

- For the *Beastigram* game, please see the *Beastigram* characters on worksheet 2 on page 8. Print these out and circulate them to small groups of students. As you present the *Beastigram* characters on the whiteboard or projector screen, ask the students to write the names of the *Beastigram* characters under the printed pictures. Ask the students to underline the key letter for each character – for example, ‘m’ at the start of monkey. Later, ask the students to create small words with the *Beastigram* characters by using the first letter of each *Beastigram* character as the active letter. For example, ‘cow’, ‘ant’ and ‘tiger’ to spell the word ‘cat’. Once the students are happy with the representations of letters through characters, ask them to spell their names using the *Beastigram* cards. They can then spell out their names to the class using the *Beastigram* pictures.
- For the *Syllables* game, print out worksheet 3 on page 9. There are three pictures on the right of the worksheet: a golf ball, a football and a basketball, representing one syllable, two syllables and three syllables respectively. Ask the students to say golf, football and basketball; count the syllables with the students so they know how many syllables each ball represents. Now tell the students to look at the words on the left and to match them to one of the balls to show how many syllables each word has. Check the answers and then start playing the game on the computer with a whiteboard or projector.
- Before playing the *Broken Words* game, print out worksheet 4 on page 9. This is a simple matching exercise where the students have to match one half of a word to its other half. This shouldn’t take long and the students may already be familiar with this kind of exercise. Once they have completed the exercise, though, the game should be easy to play.

Tip 7: Varying difficulty

If the students are familiar with a game and they know the word group well, the game could lose its fun factor. You can keep the game fresh and lively by using the timer and reducing the time allowed for task completion.

- To reduce the time limit of a game, choose the game, then go into the *Options page*, make sure the timer is switched on, and select a time limit that puts the players under pressure, but still gives them a fair chance of succeeding. You can continue to reduce the time limit with each round.

Tip 8: Additional activities

You can combine computer games with more traditional classroom activities by using the worksheets in this guide.

- To extend the *Memory game*, print out worksheet 5 on page 10. There is a simple empty grid with 20 squares on it, and each group should have one. At the start of the game, before the students come up to the board to play, click on each box in sequence and ask the students to write down the name of the picture they see. Later, a member of the team will come to the board and, using their noted grid as reference, click the correct sequence of pairs. When they move on to the spelling screen, ask them to check the spelling against the one they have on their grid; if they have a correctly spelt word on their grid, award them an extra point using the notepad. When one team has finished, move on to the next team and start again. Students from other teams can still take notes and check; this will keep them involved whilst other teams play, and it will support their writing skills development.
- Using the *Beastigram* pictures again on worksheet 2 on page 8, make a copy of the worksheet for each student in the class. Distribute the worksheets and ask the students to cut them up into individual character squares. Organise the students into pairs and ask them to play *Beastigram snap*: the students mix up the cards and each student takes it in turn to lay down a card; when two cards of the same *Beastigram* character are laid down, the first student to shout 'Beastigram snap' has an opportunity to win that pile of cards. To win, though, they must say a word which begins with the same letter as the *Beastigram* character: for example, if the snap pair is of two *Beastigram* cows, the student could say 'cat' or any other word beginning with 'c'. The game then continues until one student has all the cards.

Tip 9: Working with teams

The *Primary i-Box* games can all be played with between one and four teams. You can change the number of players or teams for every game by changing the settings in the *Options* page.

- When you first play a game, it would probably help to treat the class as a single team. Thereafter, you can break the class up into teams to introduce an element of fun competition. Each team will need a team member controlling the mouse or the interactive whiteboard to participate. Remember to rotate the person who comes to the front for each game – it's important to keep everyone involved.

Worksheets

Worksheet 1: Discovering the CD-ROM task

- 1 How many topics are there in *Primary i-Box*? Clue: look in the topics list on the *Word list* page.
- 2 How many jigsaw pieces are there in the practice image? Clue: before you can see words in the practice section, you need to select them in the word list.
- 3 What do you see if you click the button with circles on, in the bottom-left corner of the image screen on the presentation page?
- 4 What is the name of the panda character? Clue: you need to look in the *Options* menu.
- 5 What is the lowest time limit for a game? Clue: you'll find the timer in the *Options* menu.
- 6 What sound do you hear if you enter an incorrect answer in the *Syllables* game? Clue: you have to play the game to find out.
- 7 How many colours are there on the notepad toolbar? Clue: you can find the toolbar link on the top navigation bar.
- 8 What is the *Beastigram* image for the letter 'F'?

Answers

1) 14; 2) 9; 3) plural images; 4) Pango; 5) five seconds; 6) smashing glass; 7) six; 8) frog

Worksheet 2: Beastigram characters



Worksheet 3: Syllables game pre-task

astronaut	
bird	
bicycle	
armchair	
chicken	
elephant	
grass	
ruler	
car	

Worksheet 4: Broken Words game pre-task

astro	ler
arm	cycle
ru	ket
ele	chair
bi	naut
roc	cil
pen	tar
gui	phant

Worksheet 5: Memory game grid
