

**Talking Stick Games Inc.**

**Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar Parent Guide  
For Nintendo® DS™**

## **Introduction**

We all know that kids find computer games fun, exciting and motivating. But what about the benefits of using computer games for educational purposes?

According to the research, using computer games to learn encourages the learner to take an active role in his or her learning, take risks, and engages the learner in an interactive, fun way. Using computer games to learn ensures children get immediate feedback, understand each new skill before moving on to the next level, and challenges children to keep going to improve their scores or get more points and, while doing this, reinforce what is being learned.

## **The Importance of the Skills Being Developed in Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar**

Good spelling and grammar skills are essential for effective communication in writing and also to reinforce skills needed to be an effective reader. Research has shown that effective readers and writers unconsciously use a range of skills and strategies as they read and write, and that these strategies and skills can be identified and taught to enable all students to become effective communicators.

## **Playing Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar**

Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar was designed for children from 7 – 12 years old as a way to reinforce their everyday spelling and grammar skills.

The game is divided into a Games Mode; an Exercise Mode; and a Career Mode. In the Games Mode, players play games that help them practice their skills; in the Exercise Mode, players complete skills-based activities without the time constraints; and in the Career Mode, players use the skills they learned when they completed the exercises and play the games to unlock new games.

Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar uses a spy theme to engage children in the games and activities. The games are divided into 5 categories: Searching for Clues, Secret Messages, Identify/Combine, Gadgets/Experiments, and Mission Training. Each of these categories contains a number of games within them that challenge the players to solve problems using various spelling and grammar skills.

This Parents' Guide is designed to help parents understand what children learn when they play each game, how these skills are tied to the Language Arts curriculum, and provides ways that parents can engage children in activities designed to help them practice their spelling and grammar skills when they aren't playing on the DS.

## **Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar: Skills**

### **Searching for Clues**

Reveal the Truth: determine whether or not a word on the screen is spelled correctly. This game reinforces children's knowledge of commonly spelled words, an important skill for people of all ages.

Binoculars: determine correct verb tenses. Children begin to learn about simple verb tenses from a very young age. This game helps reinforce that skill.

Spycam: fill in the missing letter to form the correct word. Identifying missing letters in words helps reinforce learning the correct spelling of words.

### **Secret Messages**

Suitcase Cracker: "crack the code" to uncover the correct word. This game uses alphabetic knowledge to help children determine the hidden word.

Newspaper Messages: reorder syllables and words to form a complete sentence. To correctly complete this game, children need to understand sentence structure; syllables and word order.

Microfilm Mania: identify correct word order. This game is based on children's understanding of the correct order of words to form complete, coherent sentences.

### **Identify/Combine**

Open the Safe – reorder letters to make a word. Children need to use the letters provided to form a word using their knowledge of spelling.

Spelling Spy – create words from groups of letters. Children need to be able to choose the correct letters to form the words that have been provided, using their ability to match letters and read words.

Fingerprint Database – select the missing letter to correctly spell a word. Children need to select the correct letter from a number of different letters to complete a partially spelled word.

### **Gadgets/Experiments**

Mixing Words – classify/categorize words into the provided themes. This game helps children understand how words fit together based on a common theme or idea. To be successful at these game children need to understand the words provided and place the word in the most appropriate category.

Laser Pointer – choose the correct letter to complete a word. Children have to complete a word by choosing the correct missing letter(s) from a pair of similar letters, using their knowledge of spelling rules.

Cell Phone Memory – alphabetize words. Children use their alphabetic knowledge to select words from the pile and place them in the correct alphabetic order.

### **Mission Training**

Choose the Chip – select the correct part of speech by analyzing each sentence. In Easy mode children identify nouns, verbs and adjectives. In Medium mode they identify subjects, objects or predicates. Children identify adverbs, adjective, prepositions and conjunctions in Hard mode.

Mission Briefing – select words according to their part of speech – noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. Children use their ability to identify parts of speech to successfully play this game.

Who Said What – identify the grammar rule being used in the sentence provided. For sentences provided children use their grammatical knowledge to determine if it contains contractions, rhymes, synonyms, antonyms homonyms or idiom

### **How Parents Can Help**

The chart below identifies the skills being developed when children play the games in Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar and how parents can support their children as they work their way through the games. One of the most helpful strategies would be for parents to try out the games themselves to determine what it is children are being asked to do. In addition, the suggestions below can be worked on as children complete homework assignments, when they're reading or anytime that's convenient.

Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar Skills	Games Using the Skill	How Parents Can Help
<b>Spelling</b>	<p><b>Searching for Clues:</b> Reveal the Truth; Spycam</p> <p><b>Identify/Combine:</b> Open the Safe; Spelling Spy; Fingerprint Data Base</p> <p><b>Gadgets/Experiments:</b> Laser Pointer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- encourage your child to look closely at words as they read and write – look for patterns; try to break the words into smaller pieces</li> <li>- talk to your child about the spelling of unfamiliar words</li> <li>- encourage your child to try spelling new words in their writing</li> <li>- play word games with your child such as hangman, Boggle, Scrabble</li> <li>- read with your child and encourage your child to read</li> <li>- visit the library</li> <li>- ensure a dictionary is available</li> <li>- practice the “Look-Think-Cover-Write-Check” method to help memorize unfamiliar words (Look carefully at the new word; Think about the parts of the words that might cause problems; Cover the word, close your eyes, try to visualize the word; Write the word from memory; Check to see if you got it right.</li> </ul>
<b>Verb Tenses</b>	<p><b>Searching for Clues</b> Binoculars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ask your child to read a sentence aloud and tell you whether the action or event is taking place in the present, past or future.</li> <li>- look at the word endings of verbs with your child. Talk about how different word endings help determine when the event, action or condition is taking place.</li> <li>- ask your child to listen as you read a sentence aloud and to tell you when the event or action is happening. Ask how they can tell whether it is happening in the past, present or future.</li> </ul>

<b>Kids Learn™ Spelling and Grammar Skills</b>	<b>Games Using the Skill</b>	<b>How Parents Can Help</b>
<b>Alphabetic Knowledge</b>	<b>Secret Messages:</b> Suitcase Cracker; <b>Gadgets/Experiments:</b> Cell Phone Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- make sure your child knows the order of the letters in the alphabet. Tell them a letter and ask them to tell you what letter comes before or after that letter.</li> <li>- write a letter of the alphabet and ask your child to write the letter that comes before or after that letter.</li> <li>- Provide your child with a list of words and ask him/her to choose the word that comes first based on the first letter of the word and proceed through the rest of the list, asking your child to number the words in order.</li> </ul>
<b>Sentence Structure; Word Order; Grammar Rules</b>	<b>Secret Messages:</b> Newspaper Messages Microfilm Mania <b>Mission Training:</b> Choose the Chip; Who Said What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- print a sentence making sure the first word starts with a capital and that it ends with either a period, question mark or exclamation mark. Cut between the individual words, making a pile of individual words. Ask your child to put the sentence in the correct order. Ask how they can tell which word the sentence starts with and where the end of the sentence is.</li> <li>- review the terms subject, object, predicate with your child (the subject, object, predicate are the combination of words that form a sentence). Ask them to define each (Subject – person or thing that carries out the action of the verb; Object – the person or thing upon which the action of the verb is carried out; Predicate – tells about what a person or thing does or what happened to the person or thing). When reading with your child ask them to identify the subject or object or predicate of some of the sentences they are reading.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Parts of Speech</b></p>	<p><b>Mission Training:</b> Choose the Chip; Mission Briefing</p>	<p>Review the definitions of the following terms with your child:</p> <p>Noun: a person, place or thing. Verb: an action word. Adjective: a description. Adverb: describes any word or phrase but a noun. Usually answers how, when, where, why, or to what extent. Adverbs often end in “ly.” Preposition: Linking words. These words link noun phrases to the rest of the sentence. Conjunction: Also linking words. These words link a list or set of descriptions together. Links nouns, adjectives, verbs, and sentences. The most common conjunctions are: and, or, but.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choose sentences from books your child is reading or from a newspaper or blog and ask your child to identify different parts of speech. Ask your child to explain why they selected that specific part of speech</li> </ul>
<p><b>Classify Words into Themes</b></p>	<p><b>Gadgets/Experiments:</b> Mixing Words</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- write down a group of 3 or 4 words that relate to a specific category (eg. Stove, fridge, microwave) and one word that doesn't belong (eg. Bicycle). Ask your child to find the word that doesn't belong and to tell why it doesn't fit with the others.</li> <li>- ask your child to identify a category (eg. Clothing) and to list 4 or 5 items that belong in that category</li> <li>- provide your child with a list of 4 or 5 items that all belong together and ask them why these objects fit together</li> </ul>