

## 1. Using Penfriend XP

### 1.1 Lexicon

Predictors are of little use unless they offer the writer the words he or she wants to use. Therefore, it is essential to make sure the words required for the writing tasks are in the lexicon, and that they will be offered to the writer. Penfriend is supplied with three lexicons with 500, 2000 and 10,000 words. The larger the lexicon, the more likely it is to have the word required. But prediction with larger lexicons is also more likely to offer unwanted words, and it may require the writer to type more letters to get the correct word. Therefore, choosing a good lexicon is a compromise. If you are just starting with Penfriend for the first time, try the standard default 2,000 word lexicon to begin with. You can see the words in the lexicon by using the Lexicon option (see below).

Before the writer starts any writing and before you add new words to the dictionaries, load the lexicon to be used and adjust the settings, then save the lexicon under the writer's name - e.g. *Joe2K*. This means you will keep the original lexicon unaltered should you need it.

Before a writing session, it is important that the writer discusses the vocabulary which will be needed, with staff, parents or other helper. Then any new words can be added to the lexicon, with assistance to ensure the new words are correctly spelled. See below for how to add new words to the lexicon.

If the writer finds that a lot of words are having to be added to the 2,000 word lexicon, try the larger 10,000 word dictionary. The disadvantage with the larger lexicon is that the writer may have to type too many letters before the word appears in the prediction list.



## 1.2 Affixes

When typing words with affixes (plurals, -ing, -ed, etc.) there are two ways to work. Either you pick the whole word off the list (e.g. *liking*), or you can select the root version of the word (e.g. *like*), then go back, remove the 'e', and then add the ending 'ing' to the word. The best way to do this is to use the Backspace/delete key to remove the space and 'e' at the end of the word, then add the appropriate affix by selecting it from the Penfriend list, or typing it manually. Do **not** use the cursor keys to move the cursor back because Penfriend will get confused.

## 1.3 Templates and lexicons

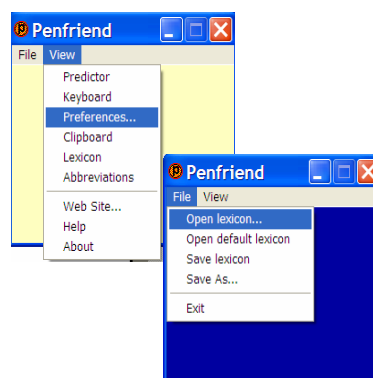
It is often useful to set up some blank 'stationery' templates for the word processor that the writer will be using, with the writer's name and the date at the top of the page and preferred particular colours or fonts. To start some work, the writer opens the stationery file and adds some text, then saves it under a new name. To create a template, open a new file, add the text you want at the top, set up the font, size and style, and then save it on the hard disc.

If there are several writers using the same computer, create a folder on the desktop for each user, and keep the writer's blank stationery template(s) and Penfriend lexicons together in the folder. It is important to keep backup copies of the work and especially of the writer's Penfriend lexicons, in case the ones on the hard disc get corrupted. Note that when you create and save a lexicon for a writer, it saves any settings (e.g. for speech, Penfriend font size etc) at the same time, so it's very important to create different lexicons for different writers.

To start work, open Penfriend first, then open the application or the stationery document.

## 2. Settings & Preferences

Preferences can be set up by clicking on **View** then **Preferences** in the Penfriend window. Lexicons can be viewed by clicking on **Open lexicon** in the **File** menu.



## 2.1 Lexicon

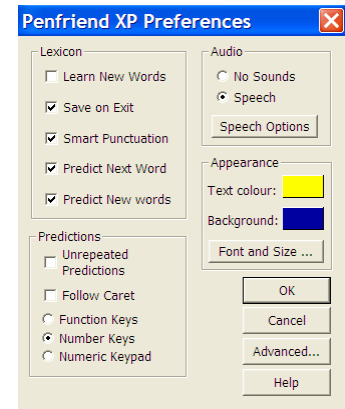
'default.lex' 2,000 word lexicon    Open this from the 'File' menu, then save it in the writer's folder, e.g. as 'Joe2K'.

## 2.2 Prediction Window Appearance



Adjust the size of the Penfriend window by dragging the bottom right hand corner of the window to show six predicted words (6 is the largest number that most people can 'scan' in

one glance). Use the Preferences Appearance box to set to Arial 14-point bold, yellow text, with a blue background. Monitor how the writer gets on with this arrangement - if he/she takes a long time to spot the word in the list, make the list smaller by dragging the bottom right hand corner of the Penfriend display.

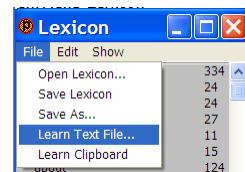


## 2.3 Penfriend Lexicon

### Learn New Words

If the writer has problems with spelling, turn this **off** to begin with so that wrongly spelled words are not collected by the program. If the writer needs a new word added to the lexicon, he/she should ask for help to add it and spell it correctly. New words can be added by

- turning on *Learn New Words*, typing the word, then switching it off again;
- by copying a section of text and then using 'Learn from clipboard' in the Lexicon File menu;
- and by 'learning' new words from a text file. (Learn Text File in the Lexicon File menu.)



See the Penfriend manual and the 'help' information in the Penfriend 'View' menu for more information.

### Save on Exit

Choose this so that any changes are updated automatically when Penfriend is closed.

<b>Smart Punctuation</b>	Choose this so that items such as a space and capital are automatically added after a full stop.
<b>Predict Next Word</b>	Turn this <b>on</b> so that the program offers the writer a word as soon as he/she has finished typing the previous one. If the writer just uses Penfriend for occasional long words, turn it <b>off</b> . If the writer is distracted by words being offered, and tends to choose one from the list instead of trying to think of their own word, turn it <b>off</b> .
<b>Predict New Words</b>	Choose this so that when new words are typed in (in discussion with a helper), they are offered back by the predictor.

## 2.4 Penfriend Predictions

<b>Unrepeated predictions</b>	Turn this <b>off</b> so that Penfriend will offer words several times in case the writer does not see it the first time. After a few weeks of use the writer should be adept at typing and looking for the word in the list, so <i>Unrepeated predictions</i> should be turned <b>on</b> . Monitor the writer carefully to make sure he/she picks up the words - if he/she misses them when they are offered the first time, turn <i>Unrepeated predictions</i> off again.
<b>Select with Number keys</b>	Choose this to select words from the list with the number keys. You can also use the function keys, although sometimes it causes confusion if the Function Keys are also used by the word processor.  See the manual for information on the other advanced options in Penfriend.

## 2.5 Audio

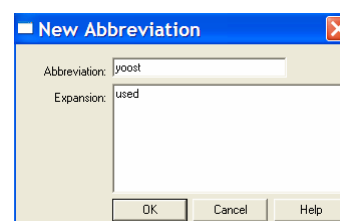
Adjust the speech by selecting 'Speech Options' in the Audio box.

- |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Speak letters</b>              | Each letter is spoken as it is typed. Use this for writers who need confirmation of the letter pressed - i.e. for beginning writers exploring the keyboard; or for writers who use the on-screen keyboard; or writers with visual impairment, for example, who may be focussing on the keyboard and not the screen, as they type. |
| <b>Speak Words</b>                | Each word is spoken as it typed. Most Penfriend writers will use this.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Speak Sentences</b>            | Each sentence is spoken as it typed. Most Penfriend writers will use this.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Speak Clipboard</b>            | Penfriend can speak the clipboard - select some text, then press CTRL-C, and Penfriend should speak it out. Use this for 'reading' text.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Predictions - right button</b> | Penfriend speaks the words in the prediction list when the right hand mouse button is clicked.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

If you are using a talking word processor such as Write:Outloud 3 or TextEase, switch the word processor's letter, word, sentence and paragraph feedback **off**, because they will not work with Penfriend's speech. Leave the word processor's other Speech facilities **on**, so you can still highlight a word or sentence and click on the 'Speak' button and use speech in the spellchecker.

## 3. Coping with the wrong first letter

Generally, you must start the word with the correct letter or two to get the word offered in the prediction window. However, it is possible to configure Penfriend so that it can offer the correct word even if the writer starts with the wrong letters - for example, to offer 'used' if the



writer types 'yoost'. To do this, you must add the mis-spelling and the correct spelling to the 'Abbreviations' list, which is in the Penfriend menu. To add a new word pair, click on the Abbreviations and type them in.

Thereafter, when the first few letters of the mis-spelling are typed, the correct word will be offered by the predictor.