

In this survey we analyse a number of [recently published multimedia software titles](#) designed to help children take early (or even first) steps in learning the English language. Most of these can be considered as generic language learning software that propose a range of different activities but there are also a few [dictionaries & vocabulary software](#) for consultation (which usually include some learning activities as well).

The descriptive label "for children" is often applied to software considered suitable for children in the 5 to 12 age range. However, this target group is extremely heterogenous, not only in relation to initial knowledge of English, but more importantly in terms of basic literacy skills, cognitive and meta-cognitive development, cultural knowledge, and computer skills (including keyboarding and mouse handling).

For this reason, we will examine not only the [common characteristics](#) that these software titles share, but more importantly the aspects that can make them more or less suitable and effective in relation to different learner profiles and teaching needs. The aspects taken into consideration have been divided into three general areas:

Language type	Language skills development	Educational characteristics
<a href="#">Target language</a>	<a href="#">Basic literacy</a>	<a href="#">Learning content</a>
<a href="#">First language</a>	<a href="#">Reading &amp; listening</a>	<a href="#">Pedagogical strategy</a>
	<a href="#">General oral production</a>	<a href="#">Lexical support</a>
	<a href="#">Pronunciation</a>	<a href="#">Interaction</a>
	<a href="#">Speaking</a>	<a href="#">Web-based support</a>
	<a href="#">Spelling &amp; writing</a>	<a href="#">Teacher personalisation</a>
	<a href="#">Grammar</a>	<a href="#">Learner personalisation</a>
	<a href="#">Creative expression</a>	<a href="#">Learning paths</a>
		<a href="#">Syllabus connections</a>

## List of software titles

Here is a complete list of the software titles considered in this survey: click on the title for a description. For a description of the general characteristics they share, see [Common Characteristics](#)

Title	Publisher
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese, 4/7 anni</a>	COKTEL/SIERRA
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>	SEI
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	EUROTALK LTD
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	ELI - EUROPEAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	ELI - EUROPEAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK), GRANADA LEARNING - GRANADA TELEVISION
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK), GRANADA LEARNING - GRANADA TELEVISION
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK), GRANADA LEARNING - GRANADA TELEVISION
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	GHISETTI & CORVI EDITORI
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	EDITORI RIUNITI
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>	BIG CHIEF
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>	DE AGOSTINI MULTIMEDIA
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	MEDIAPORT
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	MEDIAPORT
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	MEDIAPORT

<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	<i>MEDIAPORT</i>
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	<i>MEDIAPORT</i>
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini</a>	<i>KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE INC.</i>
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole</a>	<i>ERICKSON</i>
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	<i>OHIO DISTINCTIVE</i>
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	<i>DYNED INTERNATIONAL INC., OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (USA)</i>
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	<i>DYNED INTERNATIONAL INC., OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (USA)</i>
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	<i>DYNED INTERNATIONAL INC., OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (USA)</i>
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	<i>DYNED INTERNATIONAL INC., OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (USA)</i>
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	<i>DYNED INTERNATIONAL INC., OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (USA)</i>
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	<i>DYNED INTERNATIONAL INC., OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (USA)</i>
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	<i>LEXIA LEARNING SYSTEMS, INC.</i>
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	<i>NICOLA MILANO EDITORE</i>
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	<i>VEKTOR MULTIMEDIA</i>
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK), SHERSTON SOFTWARE LTD.</i>
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK), SHERSTON SOFTWARE LTD.</i>
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK), SHERSTON SOFTWARE LTD.</i>
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>

<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK)</i>
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	<i>ELI - EUROPEAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE</i>
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	<i>GARZANTI LINGUISTICA</i>
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>	<i>THE Q GROUP PLC</i>
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	<i>TALKING FINGERS INC.</i>
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK),SHERSTON SOFTWARE LTD.</i>
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	<i>OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (UK),SHERSTON SOFTWARE LTD.</i>
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>	<i>EF EDUCATION</i>
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	<i>AURALOG</i>
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	<i>AURALOG</i>
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	<i>AURALOG</i>
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	<i>FAIRFIELD LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGIES</i>
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	<i>FAIRFIELD LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGIES</i>
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	<i>FAIRFIELD LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGIES</i>
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	<i>FAIRFIELD LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGIES</i>
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	<i>LONGMAN PEARSON</i>
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	<i>LADDER INTERNET &amp; SOFTWARE</i>
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	<i>LONGMAN PEARSON</i>



## Common Characteristics

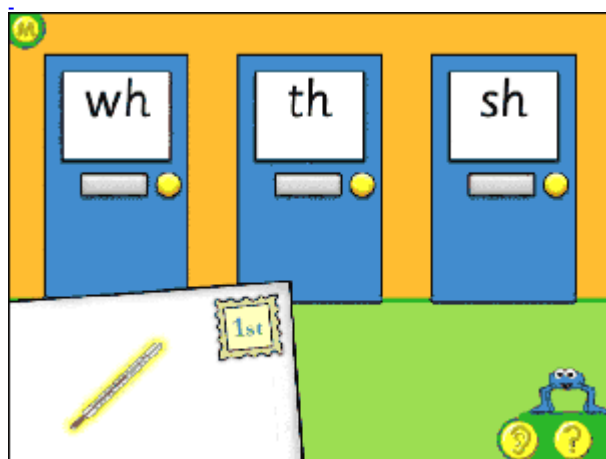
Despite the many differences they present, the [software titles](#) surveyed here do generally share some common characteristics.

- They are of the "closed" (or "language dependent") type, in that the learning material itself cannot be added to or modified, though in some cases it may be possible to reduce the list of language items to be presented/practised.
- A mixture of pedagogical strategies is usually adopted, with activities that commonly combine presentation and/or exploration, practice, exercise, game playing, etc.
- Most activities, especially exercises, are presented to the learner as "games". This sense of game playing is usually conveyed through a lively graphical interface and a mode of interaction that emphasises movement and action, challenge and competitiveness, sometimes within a well-known game format.
- Programs generally feature a rich blend of multimedia material.
- The graphic interface is usually very lively, with plenty of animation and sound effects, though photographs and video are very rarely presented.
- Activities usually feature a high level of interactivity.
- Greater emphasis is placed on language perception/comprehension than on language production.
- The program syllabus mainly comprises basic vocabulary items "appropriate" for children - usually single nouns that are often grouped together in word families dealing with familiar topics (the home, the body, numbers, animals, etc.).
- The learner may also encounter more complex structures and notional/functional areas: these are not necessarily presented explicitly for learning, but form an intrinsic part of interaction.
- Interaction language is often "pronounced" by an animated mascot who accompanies the young learner in all areas of the program.
- Italian (or other L1) may well be adopted to some degree, particularly in support, though sometimes in interaction as well.
- To make program structure plain and facilitate learner navigation, the different levels and/or sections of the program are often represented graphically in the form of physical environments that are familiar to children, be they natural or man-made (the town, the neighbourhood, buildings, the home, rooms, etc.).
- The graphic interface is usually very lively, with plenty of animation and sound effects, though photographs and video are very rarely presented.
- As part of feedback, special images and/or animations are often displayed as "rewards" for successful completion of activities and to indicate the progress made.

## Basic Literacy

Not all English language programs for kids up to 12 years old are entirely suitable for very young learners who are still acquiring basic literacy skills in their first language, though most provide some activities appropriate for this target. By contrast, some programs have specific features and characteristics that make them particularly useful for children who are taking their first steps in learning to read and write.

In some cases, specific exercises are proposed to help the learner acquire basic skills in phonetics, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, decoding, spelling etc. These are invariably targeted at children whose mothertongue is English. Nevertheless they provide valuable support in the EFL/ESL context, especially in view of the phonetic and orthographic peculiarities of the English language.



**Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities (OUP):** phonics exercise. Listen to the (illustrated) word and identify the digraph it begins with.

As regards using software with children who are just learning to read and write, a crucial aspect is the role text plays in learning activities (reading, text manipulation, writing), as well as within interaction (instructions, prompts, feedback) and/or support (lexical support, online help, etc.). For more on this point, see [Comprehension](#) and [Interaction Support](#).

**Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini (Knowledge Adventure):** Activities are based entirely on aural/oral skills. Text is absent from both learning material and interface.



The table below lists various characteristics that may make software particularly suited for use with very young learners who are still acquiring basic literacy skills.

title	Basic literacy exercises	Listening only - no text	Reading - single words only	No writing activities	<a href="#">Support in audio</a>

<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>			•	•	• 1
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>					• 1
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>			•	•	• 2
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>					• 1 3
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>					• 1 3
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	•		•		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	•				
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	•				
<a href="#">Happy English</a>					• 1
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>			•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>			•		
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>			•		• 1
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>		•		•	• 1
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>			•	•	
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>				•	• 1
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	•				• 3
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	•				• 3
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	•				• 3
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	•				• 3
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	•				• 3
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	•				• 3



<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	•		•4		•3
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>					•3
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>					•2
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>			•	•	•3
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	•		•		•3
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	•		•	•	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	•		•	•	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	•			•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				•	
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>				•	
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>			•		•3
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>			•		•1
<a href="#">Q.Steps</a>		•5			•3
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	•				•3
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	•		•		
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	•		•		
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>			•6	•	•1
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>					•1
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>					•1
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>					•3

<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	.					• 3
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>						• 3

1 - In Italian

2 - Multilingual

3 - In English

4 - Some sentences in one exercise type (upper levels only).

5 - By default without text but button available to display single target words.

6 - Listening/reading of complete passages in Karaoke and Cartoon sections only.

## Reading & Listening

Multimedia language software is particularly effective for developing reading and listening skills, thanks to the possibility of integrating written and spoken communication codes, images, animations, sound effects, music etc., in a flexible manner. These characteristics are especially useful in the foreign language education of children (especially the very young), where language reception definitely takes precedence over language production. The presence of visual and auditory stimuli is especially important for children whose basic reading skills are still developing.

Obviously, in order to exploit these advantages, the teacher needs to ensure that the learning material that the software presents is suitable for the specific target group (see also [Learning Content](#)) and that the activities proposed are sufficiently challenging but, at the same time, do not impose an excessively heavy cognitive load. Five-year-olds cannot be expected to read (and understand) whole sentences - certainly not in a foreign language as orthographically opaque as English; on the other hand, eleven-year-olds may well lose interest if limited to working with single words.

So special attention should be paid to the size of language chunks that the learner is exposed to, and to the code (written and/or spoken) in which they are expressed: the examples below give some idea of the range of difficulty that can be present in reading and listening tasks.



**Costruiamo i vocaboli? Inglese (Eurotalk/Winkler):** Working with single words. Learner listens to and reads word, and can later record voice and compare recording with model.

**Let's Go (Dyned):** Working with sentences. Read/listen to the reply and construct the related question by selecting the appropriate words.



**Muzzy at the Disco (Vektor Multimedia):** Working with whole passages. Read and listen to the story, then produce a personalised version.











Determining the suitability of a software program for a specific target group is not always so simple: multimedia cannot be skimmed as easily as the textbook, and relatively few programs present a detailed description of the learning syllabus or of the activities proposed. The table below may be useful in this respect. It indicates the maximum size of target language chunks (for both written and spoken codes) that is presented within the software, although this maximum does not necessarily apply to all the activities proposed. So, for instance, children who are not yet able to read whole written sentences could well use some parts of a program that present these, but not necessarily all of them.

Other important aspects to consider are the language adopted for [Interaction support](#) and the availability of [Lexical support](#).










































The table below shows the maximum size of language chunks presented in each program, and the related activity:




 reading

 listening

title	Single words	Single words & individual sentences	Complete passages
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>			
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>		 	
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	 		
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>			 
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>			 
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	 		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>		 	
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>		 	
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>			 
<a href="#">Happy English</a>			 
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>			 

<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>			
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>			
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini</a>			
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole</a>			
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>			
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>			
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>			
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>			
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>			
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>			
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>			
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>			
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>			
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>			
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>			
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>			

<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	 		 
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	 		 
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>			 
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>			 
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>			 
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>			 
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>			 
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>			 
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	 		
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	 		 
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>		 3	
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>			 
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>			
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>			
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>			
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	4  		
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>			 
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>			 
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>		 	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>		 	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>		 	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>		 	

<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>			
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>			
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>			

1 - Text hiding button available.

2 - Some sentences in one exercise type (upper levels only).

3- By default without text but button available to display single target words.

4- Complete passages in Karaoke and Cartoon sections only.

"Eye-con" GIF courtesy of [UVic Language Teaching Clipart Library](#)

## General Oral Production

There are two quite distinct kinds of activity available for developing verbal skills. The most common type focuses on [pronunciation and prosody](#) skills and involves emulation of a presented model, be it a single word, a sentence, lines of a dialogue, a song, etc. This activity is similar in some respects to the traditional classroom speaking drill ("now repeat after me") but is presented in a more attractive, stimulating and less inhibiting form.



**Costruiamo i vocaboli? Inglese (Eurotalk):** Learner listens to and reads single words, then records voice and compares recording with model.

The other kind of activity is more similar to [speaking](#), in that the principal focus is on what is actually said rather than how it's said, although the utterance is usually limited to a choice of pre-defined words or sentences.

**A Scuola con Abidù - Imparo l'Inglese (Coktel):** the learner speaks the answer to the multiple choice question after listening to the three options. If the recording is "understood", feedback is given about the appropriateness of the choice, otherwise the learner is invited to repeat the recording.





## Pronunciation

Pronunciation activities for children are usually based on voice recording and playback of the kind adopted in audio-active comparative (AAC) language labs, although some use is also made of [automatic voice recognition \(AVR\)](#).

Voice recording allows learners to record their voice and compare their pronunciation and prosody with the presented model. The simplest application is for practising the pronunciation of single words (or sentences), presented either individually or within longer passages (songs, nursery rhymes, etc). Where the context is a cartoon dialogue, a "dubbing" facility may be available so that the user can substitute the voice of a speaker with his/her own.

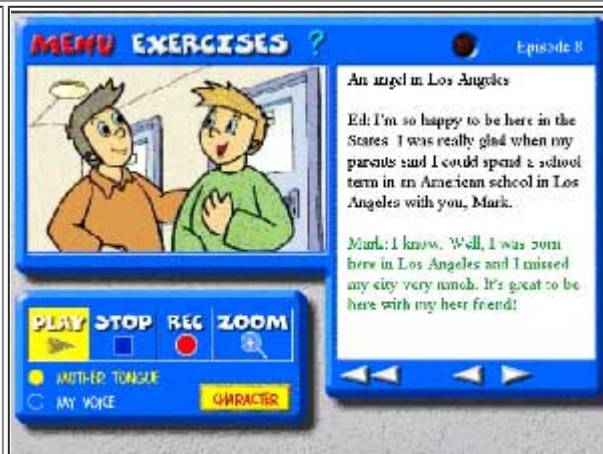
Sometimes, the recording/model comparison is automatic, with immediate consecutive replay of the learner's voice and the model. In other cases, it is the learner's job to play back his/her own recording and then compare it with the model (and ideally keep trying until satisfied with the result). This manual comparison may involve a number of (sometimes intricate) operations, so very young learners may well require some assistance if they are to make full use of voice recording.

As to emulation accuracy, voice recording largely relies on the learner's capacity to hear and distinguish variation in pronunciation and prosody, an ability that very young students may not yet possess (although using such applications may well be a way of acquiring it!). To aid comparison, some programs also display voice graph readouts of the user's recording and of the model audio file; if nothing else, these may induce the learner to make further recording attempts.



**Costruiamo i vocaboli? Inglese (Eurotalk):** Learner listens to and reads single words, then records voice and compares recording with model.

**Give Me 5 (Ghisetti & Corvi):** dialogue presented progressively in blocks. After reading and listening to the lines, the learner can record his/her own voice and dub the various characters in the cartoon.





**Tell Me More Kids (Auralog):** With the help of voice graph feedback, learners can practice recording the dialogue of cartoon characters and eventually dub the voices in the cartoon.

The table below shows the types of pronunciation/prosody activities proposed in the various programs.

title	Voice recording & playback				Automatic voice recognition - single words & sentences
	single words or sentences	dialogue (cartoon)	song	nursery rhyme	
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>	•		•		•
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	•				
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>			•		
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>			•		
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	• 1	•	•		
<a href="#">Happy English</a>					•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>			•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>			•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>			•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>			•	•	
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	•				
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>	•				
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>	•				
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	•				

<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	.				
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	.				
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	.				
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	.				
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	.				
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>		.			
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	.				
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>					
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>		• 1	• 1		• 2
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>		• 1	• 1		• 2
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>		• 1	• 1		• 2
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	• 1				• 1
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	• 1				• 1
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	• 1				• 1
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	• 1				• 1

1 - with voice graph feedback

2- songs and animated cartoons with voice graph feedback

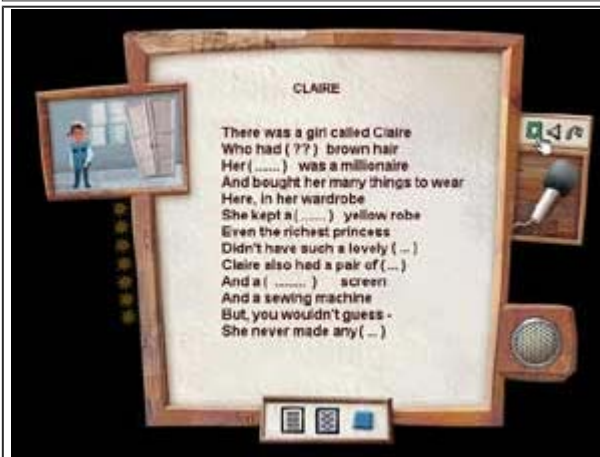
## Speaking

As opposed to [pronunciation](#) activities, speaking activities focus primarily on *what* is said rather than *how* it's pronounced. The most common application in children's software is multiple choice exercises where the student can say the answer rather than type it or click on it. This is made possible by automatic voice recognition (AVR) technology, which can identify the option the student has uttered, providing he/she does so with reasonably acceptable pronunciation (see also other [applications of AVR](#)). This activity does not (necessarily) require [reading](#) or [writing](#) skills, and so there are clear advantages for very young learners. In any case, extra opportunities for controlled speaking are to be welcomed, given that individual speaking practice is often quite limited in the traditional classroom setting.



**A Scuola con Abidù - Imparo Inglese (Coktel):** the learner speaks the answer to the multiple choice question after listening to the three options. If the recording is "understood", feedback is given about the appropriateness of the choice, otherwise the learner is invited to repeat the recording.

**Happy English (Editori Riuniti):** Nursery rhyme gap filling exercise. The learner first reads/listens to the whole text, then fills the gaps vocally via automatic voice recognition (right). A visual clue can also be displayed (left).



In a few isolated cases, the guidance in speaking activities is minimal or even totally absent, thus allowing learners to use their imagination (as well as language skills) to create personalised "speaking" comics or storyboards. These are [open activities](#): there is no fixed model to work with and no feedback, so direct teacher involvement is required in order to exploit the full educational potential.

**Costruiamo i vocaboli? Inglese (Eurotalk):** The learner can attach a voice recording to individual vocabulary flash cards and then play these back in sequence to create a sort of cartoon show.



The table below shows the different kinds of speaking activity available in each program and, in the case of exercise input, the type of tool used.

title	Vocal input for exercise answers	Open speaking activities (voice recording & playback)
automatic voice recognition	voice recording & playback	
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese, 4/7 anni</a>	•	
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>		•
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	•	
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	•	
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	•	•
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>		• 1
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	•	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	•	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	•	

1- Answer played back following learner's recording.

## Working with Text & Writing

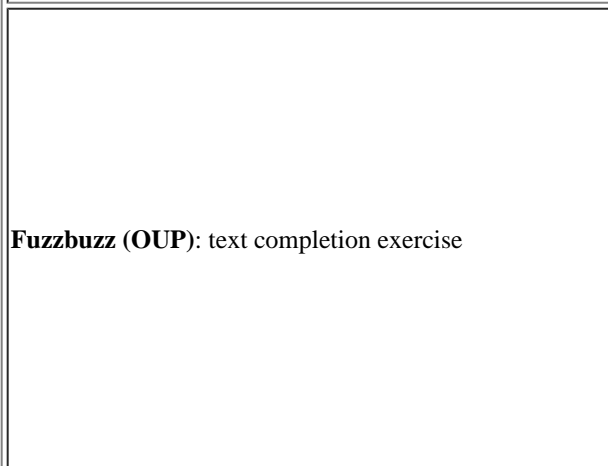
The development of receptive skills is understandably given precedence over language production, and this is especially true with respect to text. That said, activities involving interaction with text are quite commonly available, especially as an opportunity for practising spelling and reinforcing general learning.

Programs for very young learners often propose word-forming exercises and games designed to develop [basic literacy skills](#). Those aimed at children who have acquired these skills (usually around 8 years of age) propose more challenging activities that entail text manipulation (ordering, grouping, pairing, unscrambling) and text input (cloze-type completion).

Dictation and transcription exercises are sometimes proposed, and occasionally there is the possibility for more or less open writing: in this last case what the software provides is stimulus for written production without any feedback on morpho-syntactical accuracy, appropriate word use, etc. However, files can usually be saved and/or printed out for teacher assessment: see [Open Activities](#).



English with Toby (ELI): unscrambling exercise



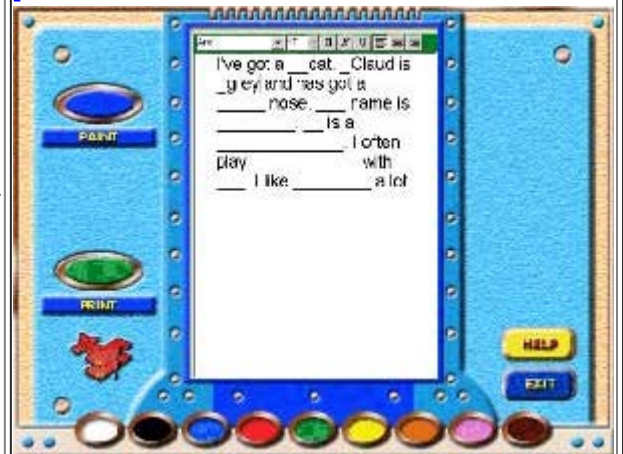
Fuzzbuzz (OUP): text completion exercise



Tell Me More Kids (Auralog): Dictation: sentences are displayed on red monitor, then hidden. They are then pronounced one by one and learner transcribes them in blue monitor.



**English with Toby 2 (ELD):** fill in the gaps to produce a personalised version of the text, then print out the result.



The table below shows the different kinds of text manipulation/writing activities proposed in each program.

title	Spelling only (writing/ completing single words)	Text completion - manipulation exercises	Dictation - transcription	Guided open writing
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	.	.	.	• 1
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>	.	.	•	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	..	•	•	.

<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	.	•	•	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	.	•	•	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	.	•	•	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	•2	.	.	.
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	•	..	..	.
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	.	•	.	•3
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	•	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	•	.	.	.
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	.	•	.	.
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	.	•	•4	•5
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	•	.	...	.
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	•	.	...	.

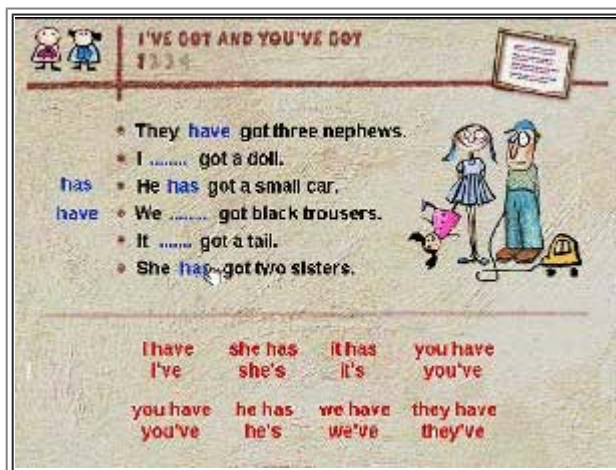


<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	.	.	.	.

- 1 - Complete gapped text to produce personalised description of oneself.
- 2 - Enter words in search engine for word searching (optional).
- 3 - Write story endings.
- 4- Includes tutorial and exercises to develop typing skills.
- 5 - Write mock email message replies.

## Grammar

Many teachers would consider it inappropriate to present grammar in the early stages of language learning (according to some it's even best avoided at later stages). This belief is also evident in multimedia software, where opportunities for specific study and practice of grammar rules are fairly limited. Nevertheless, some programs do include exercises that focus on grammar and functional/notional structures, and sometimes explanations of the rules are also provided.



**Happy English (Editori Riuniti):** "drag and drop" exercise based on the present indicative form of the verb *to have*. The learner can click on the page icon to see example sentences.

The table below lists the programs that feature grammar explanations and/or exercises.

title	Grammar explanations	Grammar exercises
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>		•
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>		•
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>		•
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>		•
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	•	•
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>	• 1	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>		•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>		•

<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>		•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>		•
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>		•
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	•	

1- In special section addressed to parents.

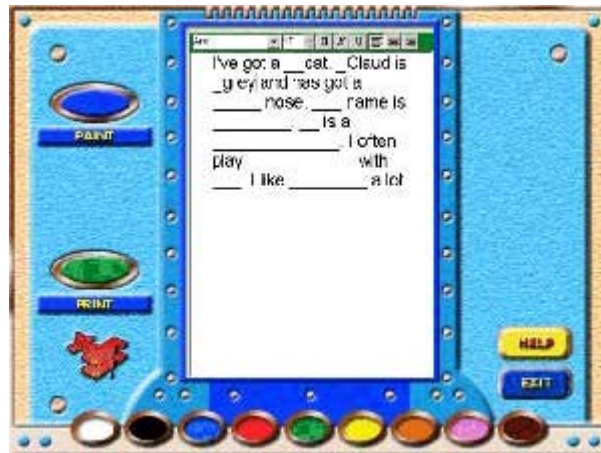
## Creative Expression

Very occasionally, opportunities are presented for producing personalised texts, "speaking" comic strips and picture cards. As well as helping to develop language skills, these activities permit a degree of creativity and personal expression. While these activities may be guided, there is no single "correct" response and so no feedback is provided about the appropriateness and correctness of any language output, which needs to be checked by the teacher (or indeed by classmates). The output can usually be saved and possibly printed out for classroom use.



**Magic Spell (Nicola Milano):** learners create a talking story-board by inserting a character in the frames of the cartoon sequence (bottom) and then recording their voices to construct a conversation.

**English with Toby 2 (ELI):** fill in the gaps to produce a personalised version of the text, then print out the result.



**English with Toby 2 (ELI):** make personalised picture cards by colouring in the chosen picture and adding a slogan. Result can be printed.

The table below shows

<b>title</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Picture making</b>
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	•		
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>		•	•
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Muzzy at the Disco</a>	•		
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>		•	
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>			•

## Pedagogical Strategy

Most programs adopt a combination of strategies, including presentation and practice, exercises, game playing, consultation, etc. In many cases, the sequence of activities proposed comprises an initial phase of presentation and/or free exploration of target language (often single words), followed by - or coupled with - opportunity for practice and guided exercises or games.



**Kids' Word Bank 1 (OUP):**  
*Presentation & exploration phase.*

Click on illustration to hear and read names of body parts.

**Kids' Word Bank 1 (OUP):**  
*Practice phase.*

Pair words with pictures of different body parts.



Providing a meaningful context for language learning is certainly an essential ingredient in motivating young learners and, as might be expected, game playing is commonly adopted within the language software designed specifically for this age group. For a detailed examination of this topic, see "[A proposito di software per...learning elementary English with games](#)"

Some programs adopt a more exercise-based approach for developing specific language skills. These programs may be dedicated to [basic literacy](#) development or designed for use with older children.

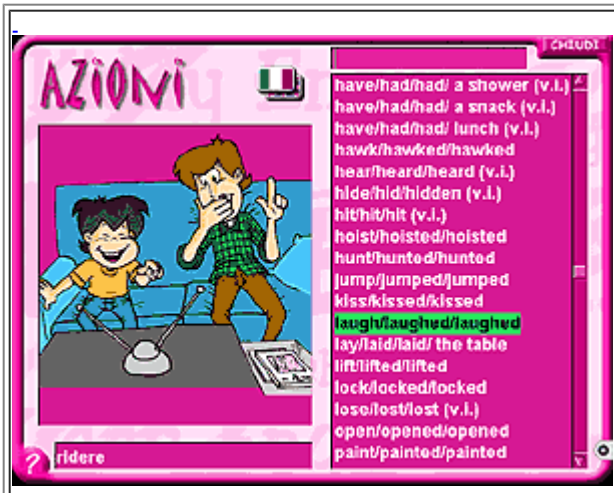
**Rhyme & Analogy Activity Software (OUP/Sherston):** Word recognition exercise. Form rhyming words by combining word parts.



Inglese per la scuola elementare (Big Chief): Word/picture pairing exercise



Programs designed for consultation are mostly [dictionaries and vocabulary software](#). As well as material for consultation, these programs generally offer some learning activities too.



Kiddy English Visual Dictionary (Mediaport): Dictionary entries for consultation.

The table below shows the principle types of strategy adopted by each program.

Title	Mixed Activities	Includes Games	Exercise Focused	Consultation
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>	•	•		
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>	•	•		
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	•	•		
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	•	•		

<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	.			
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>			.	
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>				.
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	.	.	• 1.	
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	.	.		



<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>			• 12	
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	.	.		.
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	.			.
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	.		.	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	.		.	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	.			
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.			
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.			
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.			
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.			
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>	.			
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	.			.
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>			.	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>			.	
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>		.		

<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	.			
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	.			
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	.			
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	.			
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	.	.		
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>		.		

1- Video game presented as a "reward" for successful completion of exercises.

2- Exercises feature "hangman" game feedback.

## Lexical Support

Some programs offer the learner lexical support to aid comprehension and thus, ultimately, facilitate user autonomy. This support may be provided in the form of a glossary, where all the target vocabulary is listed in alphabetical order, or through the optional display of translations ([see table below](#)).

The single words listed in glossaries are sometimes coupled with an illustration, and it is usually possible to listen to the pronunciation as well. Such multimedia features help recognition, comprehension and acquisition, and are particularly useful for very young children who are learning to read (see [Basic Literacy](#)).



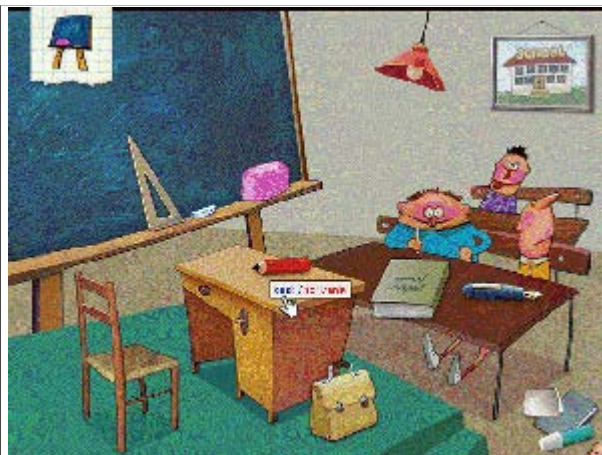
**Interactive English Junior (De Agostini):** the program includes an English/Italian "speaking" glossary that can be consulted for lexical support at any moment during interaction.

Alternatively, the student may have the option of reading the translation in the mothertongue. This possibility is more common in programs that feature lengthy reading/listening passages (see [Content](#)). L1 text may be presented together with the target L2 text to facilitate direct comparison, or require selection of a different target language (this option is sometimes available in multilingual programs). For an examination of the various ways in which the mothertongue is adopted, see [First language](#).



**Roddy on the Road (EF Education):** Subtitles can be displayed in both English and Italian.

**Happy English (Editori Riuniti):** when target vocabulary items are clicked, the corresponding word is displayed both in English and in Italian



title	lexical support tools				display translation	
	illustrated speaking glossary	speaking glossary	single target words	full text	English monolingual	English/Italian
	English monolingual	English/Italian				
<a href="#">Happy English</a>					•	
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>				•		• 1
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>		•				•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>		•				•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>		•				•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>		•				•
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>		•				
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>	•					•
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>				•		•
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>				•		
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>			•			•
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>	•					
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>						•
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>			•			
			•			

<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>						
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>			.			
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	.					

1- Accessible for consultation outside study environment.

## Interaction

Explanations, instructions and feedback are often presented in English, usually in audio. Comprehending this "interaction language" (as distinct from explicit target content) may be an integral (or even crucial) part of the learning experience: this will be no surprise to teachers of young children, especially those familiar with teaching methods such as Total Physical Response. The student may not need immediately to understand word for word what he/she has heard or read, but should be able to construe meaning from the context, if the graphic interface is sufficiently clear and intuitive. This potentially valuable means of transforming input into intake (see [Krashen's Natural Approach](#)) is given particular importance in some programs, which for example present a wide variety of feedback comments, sometimes in fairly colloquial language.

Other programs minimise exposure to non-target English language, making use instead of the first language both in interaction and, especially, support (see also [First Language](#)). The thinking here is to facilitate program use and thus maximise learner autonomy; this is an important consideration when the software is designed for very young learners who may well need to use the program without the constant guidance of a teacher.

Either way, explanations, instructions and (sometimes) feedback are often "delivered" by a friendly animated mascot, who accompanies the learner throughout his/her activities. This helps to give interaction a more personal feel and thus make the young learner more comfortable.



**Kids! English (Knowledge Adventure Inc.):** Interaction and support is based on listening: text is almost totally absent from the program.

**Word Bird's Word Land (Longman/Pearson):**  
In interaction both audio and text are adopted.





<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	.							
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	.							
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	.							
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>	.							
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>						.		
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	.	.		.	.			
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>					.			
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>					.			
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>					.			
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>					.			
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>					.			
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>					.			
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>					.			
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>				.				
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>						.	.	
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>					.			
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>					.			
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>				.				
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>				.				
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>				.				
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				.				
				.				



<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>									
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				.					
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				.					
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>				.					
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>				.					
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	.	.							
Q Steps				.	.				
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>				.	.				
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>				.					
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>				.					
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>	.			.					
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>		.	.						
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>		.	.						
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>		.	.						
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	.								
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	.								
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	.								
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	.								
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>				.					
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>				.					
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>				.					

## Web based support

As well as basic product information, publishers often make available supplementary resources on the World Wide Web, some of which are designed specifically for young learners and their teachers: these often present learning activities based on (or supplementary to) the material presented on the CD-Rom.

Some of the titles included in this survey also appear in other [Essediquadro surveys](#) dealing with related subject areas or target groups. In some cases a short demo is also available online to give teachers a feel of the software and a clearer idea of how it works.

title	Web site for CD-Rom or kids	Online demo	Essediquadro surveys
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese, 4/7 anni</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>			<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>			<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		<a href="#">fare, imparare, giocare</a>
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>			<a href="#">Italiano lingua 2</a>
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		

<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>			<a href="#">Il software per l'apprendimento della lingua inglese</a>
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>		<a href="#">Demo</a>	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>

<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>			<a href="#">Multimedia English Courses</a>
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	<a href="#">Web</a>		

## Teacher Personalisation

Some programs permit a degree of personalisation, so that the software may better meet the different needs of different users. In many cases, these features are explicitly addressed either to the teacher or to the [learner](#), and this gives some indication of the context of use that the software's designers have envisioned. Indeed, some software is designed for relatively autonomous learner use (even outside the school setting) without the direct support of a teacher, while other programs are clearly destined for classroom implementation.

Personalisation features may allow the teacher a degree of control over student interaction with the software and also make it possible to verify the outcome of interaction ([see table below](#)).

The teacher can control interaction, for example, by determining each learner's entry point and/or what levels (of difficulty) will be tackled, in effect constructing an approximate sort of individual study path (for further details, see [Study Paths](#)). More specific personalisation may be possible when options are available for modifying certain operational parameters like whether, and how, text is to be displayed in exercises.

**Oxford Reading Tree - Talking Stories (OUP):** teacher control panel for setting learning path and activity options.

**Lexia Phonics Based Reading (Lexia Learning Systems Inc.):** Teacher options for managing student interaction with the program.

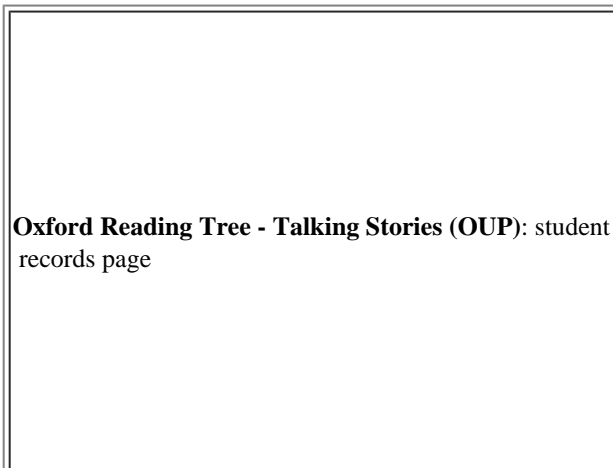
One of the [common characteristics](#) shared by the software considered in this survey is that they are of the "closed" type, i.e. the learning material itself cannot be added to or modified. Nevertheless, in some cases the teacher can customise the range of material to be presented to each learner by consulting the complete list of target language that the program proposes and selecting those items considered appropriate for the individual student.

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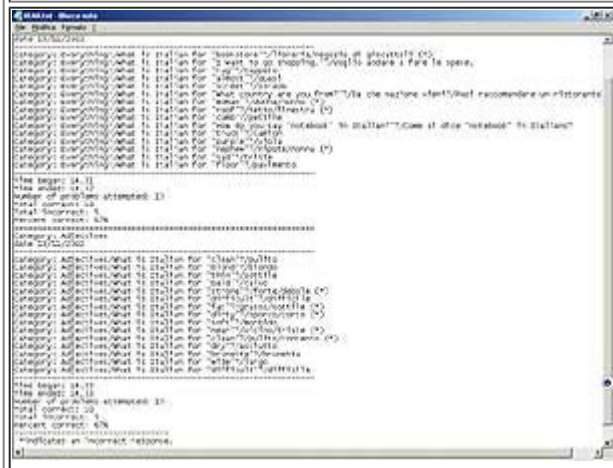
**Fuzzbuzz (OUP):** the teacher can select the words that individual learners are to work with (centre column).

Teachers undoubtedly need to have some idea of what individual students have done with the software. The recording and display of each user's interaction "history" is known as *student tracking*. This record may show the general progress that has been made (i.e. what activities each learner has tackled and/or completed) and sometimes also includes more detailed information like the time spent on each activity or on the session as a whole, the number of times that an activity has been attempted, etc. In some cases the precise results obtained are shown (percentage of correct responses, points score, top scores, etc.) for specific activities or exercises.



**Oxford Reading Tree - Talking Stories (OUP):** student records page

	House For Sale	The New House	Come In!	The Secret Room	The Play	The Storm
Maria	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Gianni	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Miriam	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Stella	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Marco	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Giovanna	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Luisa	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Lucia	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Giorgio	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Stefania	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T
Alghemon	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T	W B T



**Leonardo's Language Bridge (Ohio Distinctive Software):** the program generates a TXT file showing details of interaction and the results achieved.

The table below shows the personalisation features that each program offers.

title	Teacher can set or choose...			Teacher can verify...	
	<a href="#">learning path</a>	exercise mode	learning material	progress made	results obtained

<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese, 4/7 anni</a>				.	.
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>					
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>				.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	.		.	.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	.		.	.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	.		.	.	.
<a href="#">Happy English</a>				.	
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>					.
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>					.
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>		.		.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>		.		.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>		.		.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>		.		.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	.		.	.	
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>		.		.	.
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	.			.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		.	.	.	

<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>				.	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>		.		.	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>		.		.	
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>				.	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>				.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>				.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>				.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>				.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>				.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>				.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>				.	.
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>				.	.
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>				.	



## Learner Personalisation

Some software applications present features for personalisation, so that the software may better meet the different needs of different users. In many cases, these features are explicitly addressed either to the [teacher](#) or to the learner, and this gives some indication of the context of use that the software's designers have envisioned. Indeed, some software is designed for relatively autonomous learner use (even outside the school setting) without the direct support of a teacher, while other applications are clearly destined for classroom integration.

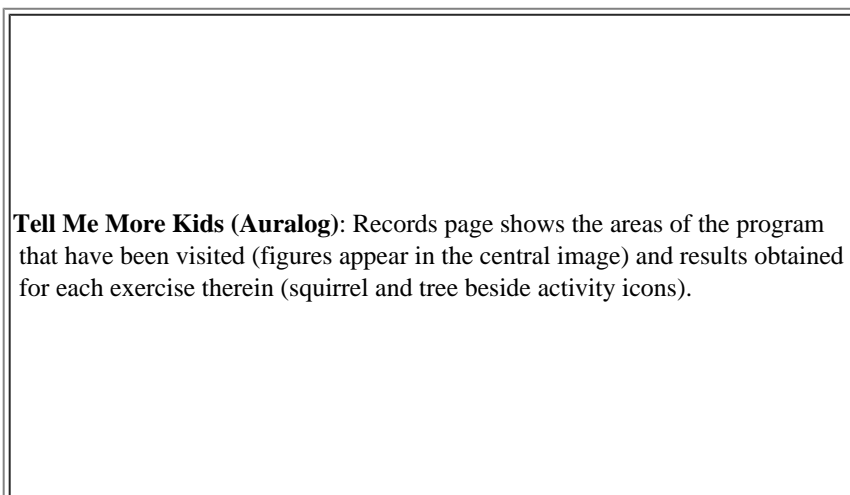
The personalisation features available to learners are effectively limited to student tracking, i.e. the possibility to verify the outcome of interaction ([see table below](#)). The only other possibility the student has is to customise the mascot character used for the program's on-screen pointer.



**Tell Me More Kids (Auralog):** When logging on, the learner can customise the appearance of the avatar (personification) and accompanying mascot. These images will be adopted as the on-screen mouse pointer during interaction.

The lack of opportunities to customise interaction is understandable: young learners rarely have sufficient awareness of their learning needs and priorities to make conscious decisions about them; in any case, there is a risk that the personalisation procedure might complicate interaction and thus compromise learner autonomy.

Student tracking needs to be presented in a suitable form so that young learners can fully understand and appreciate the progress they've made and the results they've achieved.



**Tell Me More Kids (Auralog):** Records page shows the areas of the program that have been visited (figures appear in the central image) and results obtained for each exercise therein (squirrel and tree beside activity icons).



The table below shows the opportunities for personalisation that are addressed specifically to the learner.

title	Customised pointer	Tracking	
			results

		progress	report
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese, 4/7 anni</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	.	• 1	.
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	.	.	.

<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	.	.	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	.	.	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	.	.	
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>	.	.	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	.	.	.
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	.	.	

1- Automatic bookmarking of exit point.

## Learning Paths

Many programs for children encourage free exploration; they seek to foster motivation by allowing learners the freedom to discover, to pursue personal interests, inclinations and curiosity. A common way this is achieved is by presenting program structure metaphorically to resemble physical environments that children are familiar with, be they natural (the countryside, the woods, the beach etc.) or man-made (towns, buildings, the home, rooms, etc.). These environments often play a dual function: they provide the setting for the presentation of target vocabulary items, and at the same time represent the means of navigating the program via (disguised) icons that are the gateway to learning activities.

**Zak's Word Games (Longman/Pearson):** one of several virtual worlds that offer the chance to explore vocabulary (by clicking on objects) as well as the means to access learning activities (by clicking on disguised icons).



### A Scuola con Adibù - Inglese (Coktel):

**Main menu** displaying activity areas and tools. The program is designed for free exploration: no explicit learning itinerary is presented.

**Sub-menu.** Having chosen a destination to visit, the learner accesses activities by entering one of the platform houses.



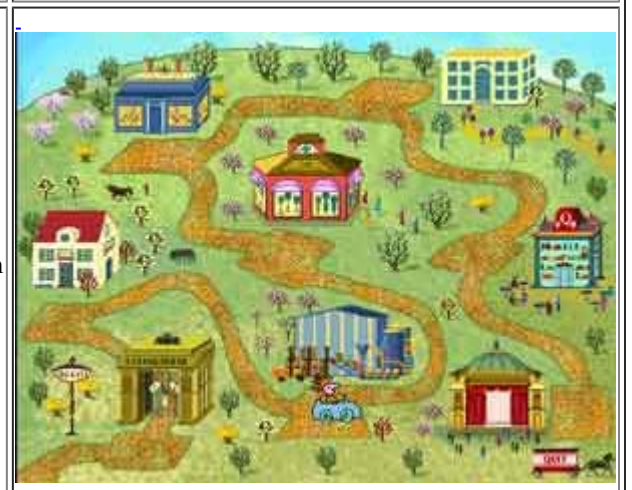
By contrast, some programs seek to maximise the effectiveness of interaction by guiding the learner along a specific learning path. In a few cases this guidance is total, i.e. the learner is presented with a single pre-set path to follow, in the manner of a tutorial. More commonly, an "ideal" path is suggested (e.g. an itinerary or a numbered sequence of activities) but the learner is free to choose whether to follow this route or not.

In some cases, guided learning paths that meet the specific needs of individual learners can be created by the teacher using [personalisation tools](#).



**Let's Go (Dyner):** A structured itinerary comprising a numbered sequence of activities that is presented in the familiar style of a board game.

**Q Steps (Q Group):** The main menu is presented as a path linking different buildings (sub-menus), each corresponding to a different theme/content area. This default learning itinerary is structured but the learner can move freely from one area to another.



**Oxford Reading Tree - Talking Stories (OUP):** teacher control panel for creating individual learning paths and activity settings.

The table below shows the different types of learning path proposed by each program.

title	free exploration	Single learning path	Personalised learning path	Suggested learning path
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>	•			
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>	•			
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	•			
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>				•

<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>				•
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	•			
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	•			
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	•			
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	•			
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	•			
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>	•			
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior 1</a>		•		•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	•			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	•			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	•			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	•			
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	•			
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	•			
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini</a>				•
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole</a>	•			
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	•			
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>				•
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>				•
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>				•
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>				•
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>				•
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>				•
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	•			
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	•			
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	•			
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	•			
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•			
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•			
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>		•		
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	•			
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	•			

<a href="#">Q Steps</a>				•
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type 3</a>	•	•	•	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B 2</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>	•			
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	•			
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	•			
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	•			
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	•			•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone American English Level I</a>				•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	•			•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	•			•
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	•			
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	•			
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>				•

1- The program proposes a narrative divided into five episodes (units) designed to be tackled consecutively.

2- These programs propose a choice of topics, each of which corresponds to a pre-set learning path. The choice of topic can also be personalised by the teacher.

3- The program proposes a tutorial-style sequence of learning activities, coupled with some optional games and exercises.

## Syllabus Connections

Some CD-Roms are based on, or supplementary to, a course textbook; the multimedia element may be destined primarily for classroom implementation or for additional (individual) study. In any case, familiarity with the related course book content and structure can often give a clearer idea of the CD-Rom's "scope and sequence" (i.e. the teaching syllabus adopted and the various learning paths that can be followed through the material). This in turn can make it easier to integrate the multimedia content into the teaching programme.

Another factor that can facilitate integration is when the software package includes additional reference material (teacher's guide, print dictionary, grammar etc.) or teaching/learning aids and material of the more traditional kind (exercise books, audio/video cassettes, flashcards, posters, puppets, etc.). Such material can provide a useful bridge between computer and non-computer based activities.

The table below shows the characteristics that may make it easier for teachers to relate the CD-Rom to the teaching syllabus.

title	Based on course book	Includes reference material	includes classroom aids & material
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	•		•
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>		•	
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	•		•



<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	•		•
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	•		•
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>		•	•
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>		•	•
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>			•
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	•		•
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>			•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>		•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>		•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>		•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>		•	

<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>		•	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>		•	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>		•	
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	.	•	•
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	.	•	•
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	.	•	.

## Dictionaries and vocabulary software

Most language learning programs for children focus strongly on vocabulary (see [content](#)) but a number are dedicated exclusively to this aspect.

Some of these can be consulted as dictionaries, via an alphabetical word list.



**Primavoce (Garzanti):** English/Italian "speaking" dictionary for younger learners; includes vocabulary learning activities.

**My Oxford Word Box (OUP):** The program is to be consulted like a dictionary, via alphabetical lists (top & left). Click on the word to hear pronunciation, click on illustration for an animation with sound effects. Access to learning activities (bottom) is from the dictionary entries.



Others present a series of thematic word families for exploration.

**Kids' Word Bank 1 (OUP):**  
*Main menu*  
Presentation of word families.



**Kids' Word Bank 1 (OUP):**

*Clothes word family*

Exploration of vocabulary items in the Clothes word family. Click on item of clothing to hear pronunciation and read word. A choice of four games (bottom) is available for language practice.



The single vocabulary items are often accompanied, or represented, by a picture. Sometimes items are set within an illustrated scene (as above) to contextualise vocabulary and encourage exploration and discovery. In other cases, the items are presented individually in a more explicit manner, possibly to simplify navigation. Interaction in the exploration phase is often accompanied by animations and sound effects, and it is usually possible to listen to the pronunciation as well. Such multimedia features help recognition, comprehension and acquisition, and are particularly useful for very young children who are learning to read (see [Basic Literacy](#)).



**Word Bird's Word Land (Longman/Pearson):** *Exploration*

Items in the "Body" word family presented individually in the exploration phase.

Presentation and exploration of vocabulary items is usually supplemented by learning activities to help students consolidate and increase their English vocabulary.

**Word Bird's Word Land (Longman/Pearson):**

*Practice phase*

Word Bird asks the learner to locate target items in the illustration by clicking on them. The interaction involves both reading and listening skills.



**Picture Dictionary (ELI):** Word-picture pairing presented as a memory game.

The table below shows the mode of consultation that each program adopts and the language/s available (for a detailed examination of language issues, see [Target Language](#) and [First Language](#)).

title	consultation mode		language	
	Alphabetical word list	Word families	English monolingual	English/Italian
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>		•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	•			•
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>		•	• 1	
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>		•	• 2	
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>		•		• 3
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	•		•	
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>			•	
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>		•		•

- 1 - Includes English/Italian glossary.
- 2 - Offers choice of target language.
- 3 - Vocabulary translation exercises.

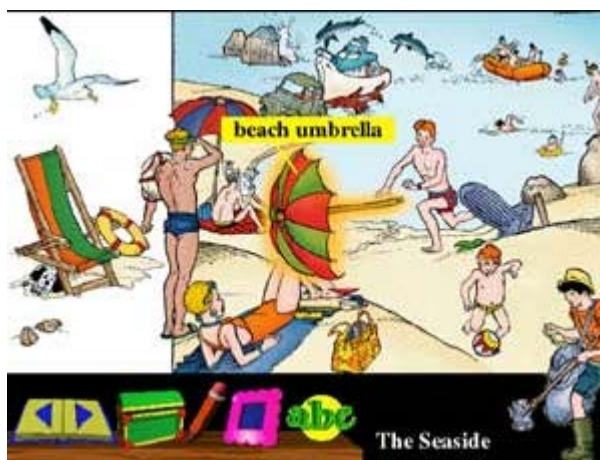
## Learning Content

Many programs for very young learners are primarily aimed at the acquisition of basic vocabulary. Accordingly, the syllabus usually centres on a core lexis of vocabulary items considered "appropriate" for children - usually single (sometimes compound) nouns that are often grouped together in word families dedicated to familiar topics: colours, the body, food, numbers, animals, etc. Target vocabulary may also include some adjectives and prepositions (particularly those of position), as well as key verbs and modals.



**Word Bird's Word Land (Longman/Pearson):** Main menu presenting the word families to explore.

**Picture Dictionary (ELI):** exploration of vocabulary items in "The Seaside" word family



In addition, the learner may well encounter whole sentence structures and some notional/functional areas, such as making requests, giving instructions, etc. In some cases, these are explicitly targeted for learning but more commonly they form part of interaction, for example in exercises in which the learner is expected to respond appropriately to a spoken command or request: the student may not be expected to understand each and every word but should be able to recognise target language and construe general meaning from the context.

**You & Me (Ladder):** Target vocabulary set within whole example sentences that are explicitly presented for learning.



**Zak's Word Games (Longman/Pearson):** The learner listens to the parrot's instructions and one by one throws each of the nominated spiders overboard. In this case comprehension of language structures is more inferential.



Many programs destined for the upper years of primary school present longer, more demanding passages for the student to read, listen to and interact with ([see table](#)). These may be displayed progressively line by line or in a single block. Generally, there are four types of passage: songs, stories, dialogues, and poems and rhymes. Obviously, when deciding whether these longer passages are suitable for use with young learners, the teacher will need to consider not just the difficulty of the language used but also the cognitive load involved.



**Let's Go (Dyned):** Song presented line by line. As well as reading and listening to the words, the learner can record his/her own voice.

**Muzzy at the Disco (Vektor):** narrative presented in paragraphs. After following the whole story, the learner can create a personalised version.

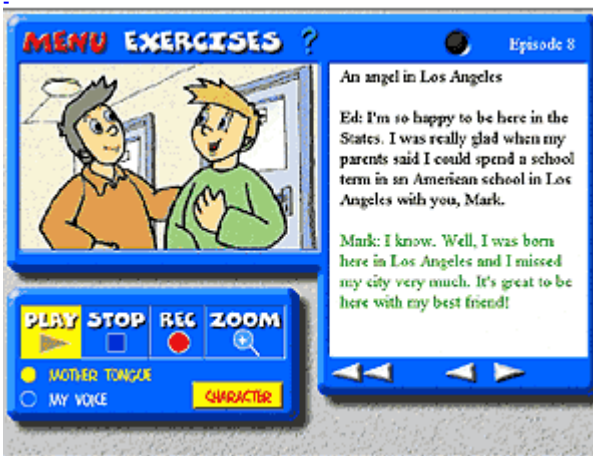






**Happy English (Editori Riuniti):** Nursery rhyme gap filling exercise. The learner first reads/listens to the whole text, then fills the gaps vocally via automatic voice recognition (right). A clue can also be displayed (left).

**Kiddy English (Mediaport):** On-going dialogue presented line by line. The learner can switch target language at any moment.



**Give Me 5 (Ghisetti & Corvi):** dialogue presented progressively in blocks. As well as reading and listening to the lines, the learner can record his/her own voice and dub the various characters in the cartoon.

**Give Me 5 (Ghisetti & Corvi):** Documentary video with script. Follow up comprehension exercise is available.



The table below shows the focus of the learning content proposed in each program.

title	Vocabulary	Sentences structures, notional/functional areas	<a href="#">Complete passages (click here for types)</a>

<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese, 4/7 anni</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	•		
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	•		
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	•		
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	•		
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini</a>	•		
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole</a>	•		
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	•	•	

<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	•		
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>	•	•	•

<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	•		
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	•		
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	•		
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	•		
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	•	•	
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	•	•	•
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	•	•	

## Target Language

For some teachers it is particularly important to consider what form of English the program presents. This is especially true in situations where multimedia software represents a major source of exposure to English as pronounced by mothertongue speakers.

In any case, the type of target language presented should be taken into consideration as software designed for young learners focuses very strongly on the development of listening skills and may also include activities for developing basic phonic-related abilities and pronunciation (for more details see [Reading & listening comprehension](#), [Basic Literacy](#) and [Pronunciation](#)).

The table below shows the type of English, American or British, that each program presents.

title	UK	US
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>	.	
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>	.	
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>	.	
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	.	
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	.	
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	.	
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	.	
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	.	
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	.	
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	.	
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>		.
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>	.	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	.	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	.	

<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	.	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	.	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>	.	
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>	.	
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>		.
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>		• 1
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>		.
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>		.
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>		.
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>		.
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>		.
<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>		.
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>		.
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>		.
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	.	
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	• 1	
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	.	
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>	.	
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>	.	

<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>	•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>	•	
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>	•	
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	•	
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	•	
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>		•
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>		•
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>	•	
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>	•	
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>		•
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	• 2	• 2
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	• 2	• 2
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	• 2	• 2
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>		•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>		•
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>	•	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>	•	
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	•	

[You & Me. A children's English course](#)

•

[Zak's Wordgames](#)

• 2

• 2

1- Includes other target languages as well as English.

2- Choice of UK or US English during installation.



## First Language Use

Precisely what role the first language should play in foreign language learning is a matter of some contention. Some EFL teachers try to avoid any direct L1/L2 comparison, at least in the learning material they use, if not in classroom interaction (though it can be a struggle to get students to speak in English, especially when everyone, including the teacher, shares the same mothertongue). Other teachers find L1 effective for language explanations (vocabulary, idioms, grammar rules, etc.) and possibly for giving instructions and maintaining class discipline - in other words as a support language.

When it comes to children's software, L1 is not uncommonly adopted as the language of interaction and/or support including online help, instructions, feedback, etc: see [Support Language](#). Parallel texts are also adopted as a way of aiding comprehension: see [Lexical Support](#). L1/L2 comparison may even be part of language learning activities, namely in short translation or L1/L2 text pairing exercises. Here are some examples and a [table](#) that lists the different ways L1 is adopted.



**Happy English (Editori Riuniti):** when target vocabulary items are clicked, the corresponding word is pronounced and is displayed both in English and in Italian.

**Kiddy English (Mediaport):** Italian translation can be displayed to help comprehension of nursery rhymes.



**Primavoce (Garzanti):** Pairing of English target words with Italian translation (right hand side). The interaction language is Italian.




The table below shows the different ways L1 is used in each program.

title	Activities	Lexical support		Interaction or support language		
		L1/L2 text pairing or translating	L1/L2 glossary	parallel texts	text	audio
<a href="#">A scuola con Adibù. Imparo l'inglese. 4/7 anni</a>					•	•
<a href="#">Base L2 Inglese - Corso di base</a>						•
<a href="#">Costruiamo i vocaboli? - Inglese</a>						•
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>						•
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>						•
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>					•	
<a href="#">Happy English</a>			•			•
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>	•				•	
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>			•	•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>			•	•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>			•	•	•	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>			•	•	•	













































<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>		.	.	.	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Visual Dictionary</a>		.		.	
<a href="#">Kids' Word Bank 1</a>		.			.
<a href="#">Kids! English. L'inglese per i bambini.</a>					.
<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>			.	.	
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	.	.		.	.
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>		.			
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>			.		.
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>	.	.		.	.
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>				.	
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>					.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>					.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>					.
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level II</a>				.	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - American English Level I</a>				.	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level II</a>				.	
<a href="#">The Rosetta Stone - British English Level I</a>				.	

## Learning Content: passage types












This table lists the programs that present complete passages (written/oral texts), shows the type/s of passage proposed, and specifies the activity involved (reading and/or listening).

 reading

 listening

title	.Songs	Stories	.Dialogues	.Poems & rhymes...
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	 		 	 
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	 		 	 
<a href="#">Give me 5</a>	 	 	  1 2	
<a href="#">Happy English</a>				 
<a href="#">Inglese per le scuole elementari</a>			 	
<a href="#">Interactive English Junior</a>		 	 	
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>			 	 
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>			 	 
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>			 	 
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>			 	 
<a href="#">Let's go level 1</a>	 		 	
<a href="#">Let's go level 2</a>	 		 	
<a href="#">Let's go level 3</a>	 		 	
<a href="#">Let's go level 4</a>	 		 	

<a href="#">Let's go level 5</a>				
<a href="#">Let's go level 6</a>				
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>				
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>				
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>				
<a href="#">My Oxford Word Box</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Big ABC</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Activities</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Literacy Web - Sound Stories</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 2 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 3 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 4 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree - Stage 5 Talking Stories CD-ROM</a>				
<a href="#">Oxford reading tree - The baby-sitter</a>				
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>				
<a href="#">Primavoce inglese</a>				
<a href="#">Q Steps</a>				
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>				
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. A</a>				
<a href="#">Rhyme and analogy activity software - vol. B</a>				
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>				
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>				

				
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>				
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>				
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>				
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>				

1 - Includes video documentaries.

2 - Includes collection of encyclopaedia-type texts to read.

Eye-con GIF courtesy of [UVic Language Teaching Clipart Library](#)

## Fun Games

Many programs seek to hold the young learner's attention and interest by providing variety in the range of activities they propose. These sometimes include fun activities which do not necessarily have a strong language learning focus (or any at all) but that help to reduce the cognitive load and stimulate interest. Some programs offer fun games as "rewards" for the successful completion of language-learning activities, so as to increase motivation, or as introductory warm-ups that stimulate curiosity.

In some cases these games may also be useful for developing general cognitive and motor abilities, as well as for exercising different types of "intelligence" (see [Garner's theory of Multiple Intelligences](#)); for these reasons they are particularly suited to very young learners. Occasionally, fun activities are also designed to reinforce learning in an entertaining manner (e.g. a colouring activity where the names of the colours are pronounced when selected). Colouring and picture making are often [Open Activities](#) with an element of personal expression and construction, which is usually reinforced by the possibility to save and/or print the final product.



**Happy English (Editori Riuniti):** Jigsaw puzzle

**My Oxford Picture Box (OUP):** visual memory game



**English with Toby 2 (ELI):** make a picture card by colouring in the chosen picture and adding a slogan. Result can be printed.



**Kiddy English (Mediaport):** "shooting gallery" video game

title	Jigsaw puzzles	Colouring & picture making	Video games	Treasure hunt	Spot the differences
<a href="#">English with Toby 1</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">English with Toby 2</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 1: word learning</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 10, 11 and 12</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Fuzzbuzz - level 2: books 7, 8 and 9</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Happy English</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 1</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 2</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 3</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Kiddy English Stage 4</a>	.	.	.	.	.



<a href="#">Le prime mille parole.</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Leonardo's Language. Bridge - inglese/italiano</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Lexia Phonics Based Reading</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Magic Spell</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Muzzy at the disco (Age 6-12)</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">My Oxford Picture Box</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Picture Dictionary</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Read, Write &amp; Type</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Roddy on the road</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (5-7 anni)</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (8-10 anni)</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Tell me more Kids (11-13 anni)</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Word Bird's Word Land</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">You &amp; Me. A children's English course</a>	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Zak's Wordgames</a>	.	.	.	.	.