

Kidspiration

Kidspiration and visual learning

- Brainstorm ideas with words and pictures
Fire drill.kid :Our first example shows how Kidspiration helps students brainstorm ideas with words and pictures. In this example, students have brainstormed activities during a fire drill, and they've categorized them as things they do or don't do.
- Organize and categorize information visually
Sounds and letters.kid: The next example shows how Kidspiration is used to organize and categorize information visually. Here, students have grouped animals, plants, and other images according to the letter or sound their name begins with. Categorizing and sorting are important skills for K-3 students; Kidspiration's SuperGrouper tool - which we'll look at in depth a little later on - makes these activities easy and fun.
- Create stories and descriptions using engaging visual tools
Journal.kid :Our next example highlights how Kidspiration is used to create stories and descriptions using engaging visual tools. In this example, students use Kidspiration to create a daily journal of their thoughts and feelings. They've used symbols showing emotions to record their thoughts on the weather, home, school, and their friends. In today's example, we can see that this student is feeling pretty good about the weather and they had tasty pancakes for breakfast. Younger students, students who aren't yet writing much, use symbols only to show how they feel, whether they're happy, sad, content, excited, etc.
- Explore new ideas with thought webs and visual mapping
Stegosaurus.kid. The fourth example shows how students use Kidspiration to explore new ideas with thought webs and visual mapping. This very simple concept map about the Stegosaurus helps students explore how different ideas about the Stegosaurus are related. As they learn more information about the dinosaur, they can continue to add information to their diagram.

Kidspiration Starter Screen

The first thing you'll see is Kidspiration's Starter Screen. The Starter Screen lets students choose what they want to do - what kind of project they want to open or start - when they first start up Kidspiration.

Audio

One of the first things you'll notice is Kidspiration's use of audio. Here in the Starter Screen, the Talking Interface reads the buttons on the screen, helping students read and navigate Kidspiration. When we start working in Kidspiration, you'll see that we can use the audio features to read our own words aloud or to record sound for an idea. We'll also be able to turn off the Talking Interface



New Picture

By clicking on this button, we could start working in Kidspiration's Picture view. Picture view makes it easy for kids to see their ideas and information visually, taking advantage of the principals of visual learning.

New Writing

Writing view integrates with Picture view to help kids connect their visual thoughts with words

Open A File

Students can also click on Open a File to open and continue working with a project they created and saved earlier.

Activity buttons

Kidspiration also comes with over 45 activities. These are student-ready learning exercises or projects that focus on a specific subject. Activities are included for Reading & Writing, Social Studies, Science, and More.

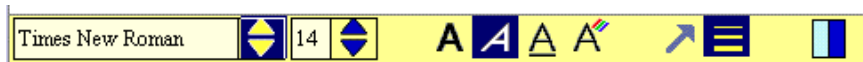
Activities.

Click on Reading and Writing, the Activity List shows you what each Activity looks like. When you click on an activity, a short description is displayed at the bottom of the dialogue box

- ➔ Select Alphabet Examples and then click OK: Young students use the Alphabet Examples Activity to connect images to the letters of the alphabet. After opening the activity, students add a picture or symbol for each letter.
- ➔ Symbol palette: We'll find images to use in Kidspiration's Symbol palette over here on the left. Kidspiration has over twelve-hundred kid-friendly symbols to choose from. To see a preview of a symbol, including its name, just hold the mouse over the symbol on the palette. The Talking Interface also reads the name of the symbol aloud.
- ➔ Replace 2-3 symbols. Replace A with Apple. To connect a letter with a symbol, first click on the letter to select it . . . and then click on the symbol to replace.
- ➔ Now do the letter "B." First click on "B" to select it. Find a banana in the Food & Health libraries. (Bananas are found in the second Food & Health library.) In Kidspiration, the libraries are organized by topic. To find a symbol . . . First click the Pick Library button, and then click the category you want to view. Go to "Food and Health." Then, to move between the symbol libraries, click the Next Library button until you see the bananas.
- ➔ Finish a row or so of the activity. Return to the Kidspiration Starter Screen by clicking on File and then New. When Kidspiration prompts us to save our work, let's go ahead and save it.

Ralph the Mouse: Character map: Open new Picture view

- ➔ In this example we're going to imagine that we're third graders. We're reading Beverly Cleary's book, The Mouse and the Motorcycle, and are ready to create a simple character map about Ralph, the main character in the book. Character maps help students demonstrate their understanding of a character by citing specific examples from what they've read.
- ➔ First Idea: Kidspiration's Picture view starts with a First Idea symbol on the screen. It is highlighted and ready for students to enter the topic they want to work with. We'll go ahead and type in "Ralph" and then click away from the symbol.
- ➔ Formatting toolbar: Along the bottom of the screen you'll see the Formatting toolbar. Here, at the click of the mouse button, are all of the tools we can use to customize and format a symbol's font or text size, color, style, and more.



Enlarge text: All of these tools are simple to use . . . Students can easily toggle through a couple of options and choose the one that looks best. With the Ralph symbol selected, let's click on the up arrow to the right of the font size to enlarge the text.

Symbol Colors tool: Change each of the colors in a symbol. Let's also change the color from blue to lavender using Kidspiration's Symbol Colors tool. To change a color in a symbol, click here on the color you want to change. Then select the color you want from the palette.

- ➔ Picture toolbar: start to build our character map by adding more ideas from the book. We'll find the tools we need to use on the Picture toolbar at the top of the screen. Let's add some ideas with the Add Symbol tool.



Add Symbol tool: This tool is used to add linked symbols to a diagram. To add a symbol, first select the symbol you want to start with and then click the Add Symbol tool.

- ➔ Add Ideas: Let's go ahead and do that. Since Ralph is selected, we'll click once on the Add Symbol button. You'll see that Ralph remains selected. We'll do it one more time to create another symbol. This is one way kids can use Kidspiration to brainstorm.
- ➔ Enter text: Now let's go ahead and type in our two new ideas . . . First we'll click on the symbol on the right to select it. Then let's type "loves." Next we'll click on the symbol on the left and type "fears."

One thing you probably noticed is that the two new symbols are purple and have larger text, just like the Ralph symbol. With Kidspiration's floating default, changes you make to the look of a symbol or link automatically carry forward to new symbols or links.

Using symbols from Symbol toolbar : We used the Symbol toolbar earlier as we worked on the Alphabet Examples Activity by clicking on symbols. We can also drag and drop symbols to add them to our diagram.

- ➔ Drag & Drop - dog: To do so, choose a symbol from the library, hold your mouse button, and drag the symbol onto the screen. Let's drag and drop the dog near fears. Ralph is afraid of the dogs that stay in the hotel. Now let's search for a symbol to represent something Ralph's loves - let's find his motorcycle. First click on the Pick Library button and then go to everyday. Then we'll click on the Next Library button five times until we find the transportation library. Now let's drag and drop the motorcycle symbol out near loves.
- ➔ Changing symbol colors
Earlier we changed the colors of the Ralph symbol. We can also change the colors in illustrated symbols like the motorcycle. Click the motorcycle to select it and then, from the Symbols Color tool, change the red motorcycle to blue.



- ➔ Link Symbols tool: Now that we've added some ideas to our character map, we want to use links to show the relationships between our ideas. To do that we'll use our Link Symbols tool.

Let's link fears to the dog. First click on the fears symbol, then click on the Link Symbols tool, and then click on the dog symbol where we want the link to end. After you click the Link Symbols tool, you'll notice a line coming out from the center of the selected symbol. This shows you where your link is going. As the link connects with another symbol, the symbol is highlighted in green. That way, students know

Goodies

Kidspiration also has a Goodies menu for students to spell check their work and customize backgrounds and paper colors

Return to Picture view

Now that we've seen a bit of how the Writing view works, let's click back to the Picture view.

You'll notice that the Picture-to-Topic labels appear in our diagram now as well as the Writing view . . .

Audio

Let's look again at Kidspiration's audio features. In addition to the Talking Interface we've been hearing, audio lets students hear their work read aloud or record their own words. But you need a microphone!!!!



The Listen tool helps students with reading and writing by reading the words in their projects. Being able to listen to their work helps students better understand what they have created and written.

Let's use the Listen tool to hear some of our ideas. We'll click on the Listen button to turn it on - you'll see the ear icon to tell you it's on - and then we'll click on "loves" and then "motorcycle." And then we'll click on the Listen button again to turn it off.

The Record command: Students can use the Record command to record sounds and attach them to idea symbols to expand and reinforce learning. Teachers can also record instructions for students to use in an activity. You need a microphone.

If you could: Record a sound for the dog symbol. We'll click on the dog to select it. Then we'll go to the Sound menu, and select Record. To start recording, Click on the red Record button. "Arf. Arf. Arf." Then click Stop and then Save. Listen to sound: You'll see the small sound icon on the right corner of the dog. I Click on it once to hear the sound we recorded.

Turning off the Talking Interface: We've been using the Talking Interface but we can turn it off in the Teacher menu. First, enable the Teacher menu. Then, go to Application Options, and click off Talking Interface. As you can see, Application Options lets teachers turn on or off many features in Kidspiration.

Student Name, Exporting/Printing options

Kidspiration also has other features such as a Student Name (point to button) option that lets students put their name and other information on the top of every page when printed.



You'll find the Print command under the File menu. The File menu is also where options like Export and Page Setup are found. If we wanted to, we could export from either the Picture view or the Writing view. If we export from Picture view, our options include JPEG, HTML, and more.

Conclusion

Now that we've developed a simple character map using Kidspiration's Picture view, and started to expand on our ideas in the integrated Writing view, we have a good representation of Ralph's likes and dislikes. Now when students start to read a new book, they can apply some of these analytical skills to other characters as well.

Return to the Kidspiration Starter Screen. We can click on File and New to start a new project. This helps older students learn traditional menus and how to use them. Kidspiration also has a shortcut for starting a new project . . . we can simply click on the Kidspiration Character.

SuperGrouper™ Tool

Start a new project working in Kidspiration's Picture view. This time we're going to work with a great tool unique to Kidspiration, the SuperGrouper tool. Categorizing and sorting are important skills for K-3 students; the SuperGrouper tool makes these activities easy and fun.

Click on and Delete First Idea

The SuperGrouper tool provides an easy way to create logical groupings or categories of ideas.

To use the SuperGrouper tool, click on the SuperGrouper button on the toolbar. Kidspiration gives you a choice of shapes. Once selected, the shape becomes a container for related ideas. Click to the right of that category and create a second one the same way.



We can add titles to our SuperGrouper categories just like we would a symbol. We'll click on the category to select it and then type in our labels. We'll type in "Things that are living" for the left one and "Things that are not living" for the right one.

Students would now start grouping symbols by placing them in the correct SuperGrouper categories. For example, they might put the dog into the "living" category and the chalkboard into the "not living" category.

Teachers could create an activity like this for their students using Kidspiration's Activity Wizard. After creating the categories and naming them, you'll find the Save as Activity option here under the Teacher menu. The Activity Wizard steps you easily through creating and saving your Activity.

When we're done adding symbols to our categories, we can switch to Writing view to see our work there. Our SuperGrouper categories became ideas . . . and the symbols we moved into them became sub-ideas. And again we can see that the Picture-to-Topic feature provided words for our ideas.

We could continue to work in Writing view. In this activity, older students might start to write about the common characteristics of each group, what living things have in common and what non-living things have in common. For example, the "living" things eat, grow, and need air.

We could continue to write and organize in Writing view. But we'll return to the Picture view to finish up.

You can see that once again the symbol labels now appear in the Picture view . . . and we can see that all of our ideas are grouped or categorized just how they should be.