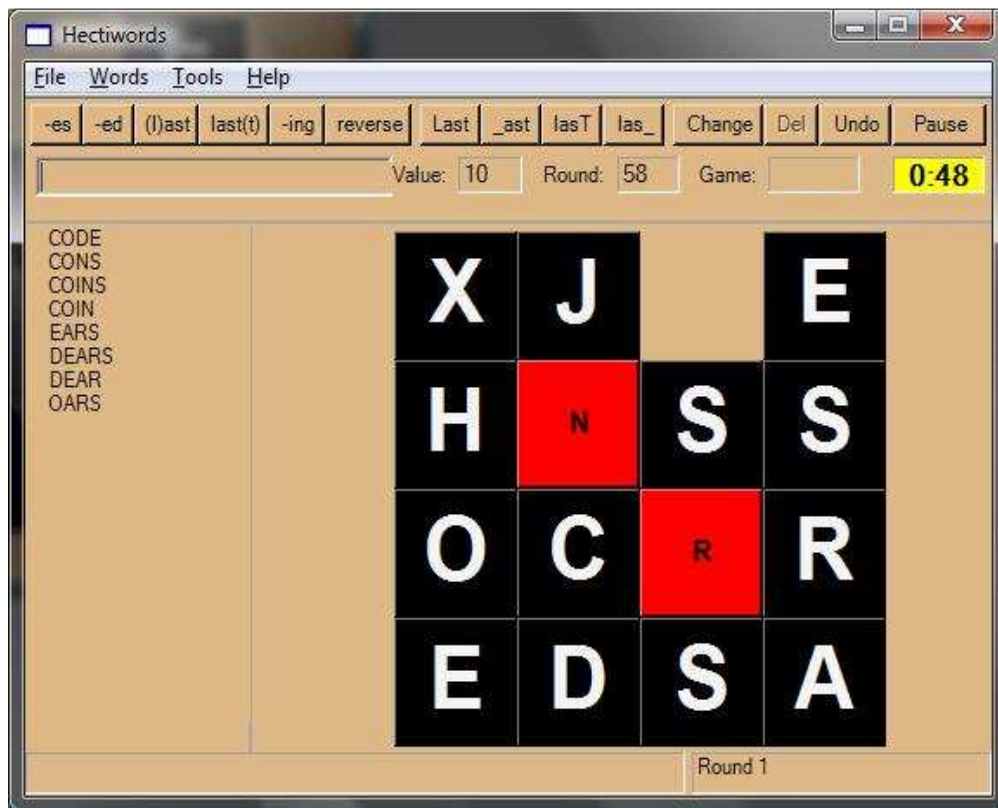


Hectiwords: An Instruction Manual



Hectiwords is a combination of anagrams, find-a-word, and a bit of Boggle™, with “dynamic letter action” added for fun. The player competes against the clock to find all valid words in the letter tray, and then to surpass the Game Score in a set number of rounds. The wrinkle is that the letters don’t remain the same. During a round, letters change: two may exchange places, a letter may be replaced by a new letter, letters may even disappear! This tends to add a little adrenalin to the search.

Hectiwords allows the player to specify many aspects of the game, including:

- The level of difficulty (Easy, Medium, Hard), which determines what letters are displayed (Easy tends to have lots of “E” and “S”, for instance).
- The Game Score required to win (default is 1000)
- Number of rounds in which to attain the Game Score (default is 4)
- Length of rounds (default is 2 minutes)
- Minimum length of word (default is 3 for Easy, 4 for Medium and Hard)

Plus other parameters.

The player also has several keyboard shortcuts to help in playing. Function keys can be used to automatically create a plural of the last word entered, as well as past tense, gerund, reversing the

letters, and so on. This helpful device can come in handy when the clock is against you. For instance, if you enter “DON” in the example above, you might notice that “DONS” is also valid. Having the shortcut available can really help, especially if the letters are changing while you type!

Hectiwords can be played in “contiguous” or “non-contiguous” mode. The beginner may wish to play in the latter. This means that as long the letters that make up a candidate word are present in the tray, the word is valid (assuming no letter is used twice). In contiguous mode, each successive letter must be in contact with the previous letter. Consider the tray below. Notice that “RACE” is a valid *contiguous* set of letters. “R” connects to “A”, which connects to “C” which connects to “E”. “NOSE” is a valid *non-contiguous* set of letters. No “N” touches an “O”, although all four letters are present in the tray. “NOOSE” would not be legal even in non-contiguous mode, since there is only one “O”, which would have to be used twice to make “NOOSE”.

I	A	E	O
R	C	S	E
N	G	A	Y
E	N	E	G

The player can also choose to be penalized for illegal words. This is a challenge that only better players might wish to enable. When Penalty mode is in effect, if the word that is entered is not possible in the current tray (either because the letters aren’t there, or because they don’t touch correctly in contiguous mode), the player’s score is decremented by the word value for the candidate word.

At the end of each round, all the candidate words are checked against a dictionary. To be counted, they must not only be properly constructed, but (alas) they must also be legitimate words (proper nouns are not allowed). The dictionary as delivered contains over 47,000 words, and certainly almost every word found in normal crossword puzzlery. However, if you type a word, and it’s not found in the dictionary, you have the option of adding it to the dictionary so that it will be there in subsequent games.

Installing Hectiwords

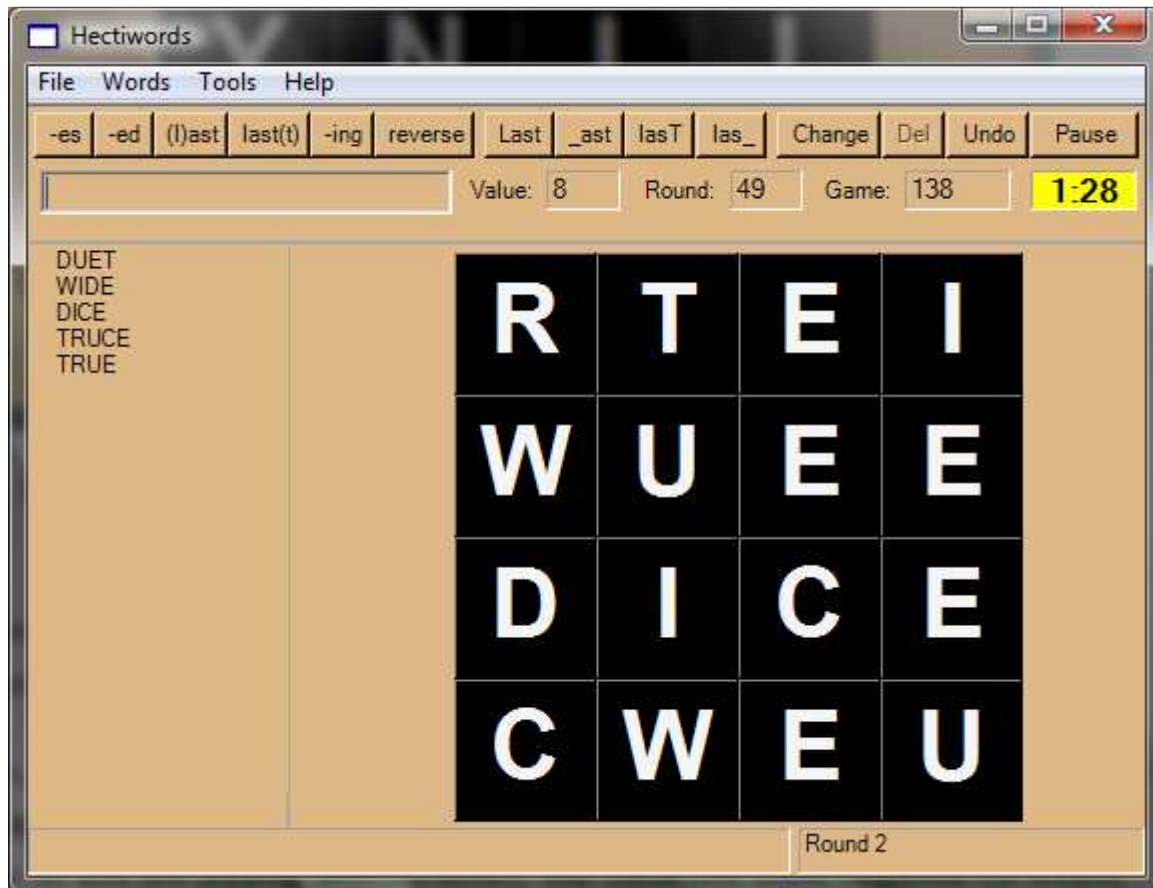
Since the program is in beta test, the installation is a bit primitive. Visit www.puckettpublishing.com and look for the Software page. From there, you can download a ZIP file, which contains the installation program. Click the link, download (or run) the ZIP file. (**NOTE:** in Windows Vista, you should probably run the ZIP and the installation as Administrator, which you can do by right-mouse clicking on the link).

After the ZIP file is opened, click (or double-click) on Setup.exe and Hectiwords will be installed. It will place an entry in the Windows Start menu, and you can copy this to your Quick Launch bar (assuming you become a Hectiword addict, you'll want it handy).

That's it.

The Playing Surface

The layout of the Hectiword application is straightforward. Look at the example game below:



The menu strip (File, Words, Tools, Help) contains various Hectiwords commands, and is explained in detail in the next section.

Below that are a series of command buttons which give the player access (via the mouse) to the most useful tools for playing a round. The meaning of these buttons is also described in the next section.

Below the command buttons, on the far left, is the word input textbox. This is where you will type in the words you find. Just to the right of that is the Value box. This will show the value of the word you typed after you press the Enter key. (If you are playing with Penalties, the value will show negative for invalid words).

To the right of that is the current Round Score, and to the right of that is the overall game score. This is updated at the end of each round. Finally, a timer counts down the time remaining in the round.

Below these devices is the main Playing Area where all the letter cubes are displayed. On the left is the Word List containing all the words you have entered during the round (valid or not).

At the bottom of the window is a status bar. The left hand side may present messages during play (Eg, "Illegal string, can only contain A-Z" will be displayed if you enter a string containing a numeral or other non-alphabetic character). The area to the right displays the current round number.

Playing the Game

Playing Hectiwords is easy. Start the program, and select New Game, (or press Ctrl+N). You can also immediately press Play Round (Ctrl+P); if you have not started a New Game, it will be automatically started). The Playing Area will display letters, and you start typing words that you see. The timer runs down until 0:00, and then the results of the current round are displayed. You will see the Round Score reflecting the words you entered, and the Game Score will show your total for the game. Select Play Round to start the next round. After you've exhausted all the rounds (or if your Game Score exceeds the points needed to win), the game is over. If you do not exceed the points needed to win in the allotted number of rounds, you lose. Otherwise, you win!

A Note About Q: In Hectiwords, there is never a bare "Q". This letter is always paired with a "u" (eg, "Qu"), since there are essentially no English words containing "Q" that do not use this combination. *Nevertheless*, when enter a word with a "Q", the player must still type the attendant "u". "QUIT" is good. "QIT" is always invalid.

After a round, if you have entered any invalid words, or words that are not in the dictionary, or duplicates (you can't enter the same word twice), you will see a Bad Words dialog. For instance,








This dialog will show words there were not valid, or repeated or unknown. If you think an unknown word should be in the dictionary you can select it (or however many you so deem), and then click the Add button to add them to the dictionary. (“QUARL” however is *not* a word 😊).

Hectiword Commands

The following table explains all the commands. It’s not very complicated.

The File menu contains commands that control the overall game. The Words menu contains commands that can help you in entering or editing new words. All of these have keyboard shortcuts. Note that the Word commands that create new words *do not take into account whether the word is legal or not*. They blindly do what they say they will do; it is up to the player to decide if the action would be valid.

The algorithms used to construct plurals, past tense and gerunds are not perfect; occasionally the English language will defeat them. And they never take irregular spellings into account; “CHILD” will result in “CHILDS” not “CHILDREN”. “GROW” will beget “GROWED” not “GROWN”.

Menu	Menu Item	Shortcut	Description
File	New Game	Ctrl+N	Start a new game. If one is in progress, you will be prompted whether to quit or not.
	Quit Game	Ctrl+Q	Quit the current game.
	Play Round	Ctrl+P	Start playing a round. If you are already playing a round, you will be prompted whether to quit the current round or not.
	Stop Round	Ctrl+Shift+P	Stop the current round.
	Pause/Resume	Ctrl+M	Pause the current round. If paused, then selecting this command will resume play. Can also be invoked by this command button: 
	Exit	Alt+F4	Exit Hectiwords.
Words	Undo Last	Ctrl+Z	Removes the last word entered. May be used more than once, until no words remain in the word list. Can also be invoked by this command button: 
	Plural	F3	Creates (and enters) a plural (-S) based on the last word entered. “VENT” will result in “VENTS”, “MUSH” will result in “MUSHES”. Can also be invoked by this command button: 
	Past Tense	F4	Creates (and enters) a past tense (-ED) based on the last word entered. “VENT” will result in “VENTED”. “CARE” will result in “CARED”. Can also be invoked by this command button: 
	Submit Last, Remove Start	F5	Removes the initial letter of the last word entered and enters the resulting word. “DARE” will result in “ARE”. Can also be invoked by this command button: 
	Submit Last, Remove End	F6	Removes the last letter of the last word entered and enters the resulting word. “CART” will result in

“CAR”. Can also be invoked by this command button:

`last(t)`

Gerund F7 Creates (and enters) a gerund based on the last word entered. “WILL” will result in “WILLING”. “SMILE” will result in “SMILING”. Can also be

invoked by this command button: `-ing`

Reverse F8 Creates (and enters) a word made from reversing the letters of the last word entered. “SNAP” will result in “PANS”. Can also be invoked by this

command button: `reverse`

The next four commands do not automatically enter a new word. They work on the last word entered and leave the result for the player to edit. They are generally useful when you see a base set of letters that might be reused in subsequent words.

Last At Start F9 Recalls the last word entered and places the cursor at the beginning of the word. Can also be invoked by

this command button: `Last`

Last Remove Start F10 Recalls the last word entered, removes the initial letter, and places the cursor at the beginning of the word. Can also be invoked by this command button:

`_ast`

Last At End F11 Recalls the last word entered and places the cursor at the end of the word. Can also be invoked by this

command button: `lasT`

Last Remove End F12 Recalls the last word entered, removes the last letter, and places the cursor at the end of the word.

Can also be invoked by this command button: `las_`


These last three commands can be used during the round to change things up.

Allow Non-Contiguous Ctrl+A If “Manual Non-Contiguous” is in effect (see next section, Options Settings), then selecting this command will temporarily switch to non-contiguous mode. For the player who plays in contiguous mode, this may be helpful if the round has not given many useful contiguous letters. It only switches modes for the duration of the round, and while in effect, each word is worth only the length of the word, regardless of the constituent letters. Thus “COLA” (usually worth 10 points) would only give 4.

Do Dynamics F2 When “Manual Dynamics” is enabled (see next section), this commands will force a change (swap letters, a new letter, or delete a letter). When no more dynamics are available for a round, selecting this command will result in a status message telling you that dynamics are used up. Can also be invoked

by this command button: `Change`

Delete Del Enabled when one or more words are selected in the Word List. If you accidentally type in a string you

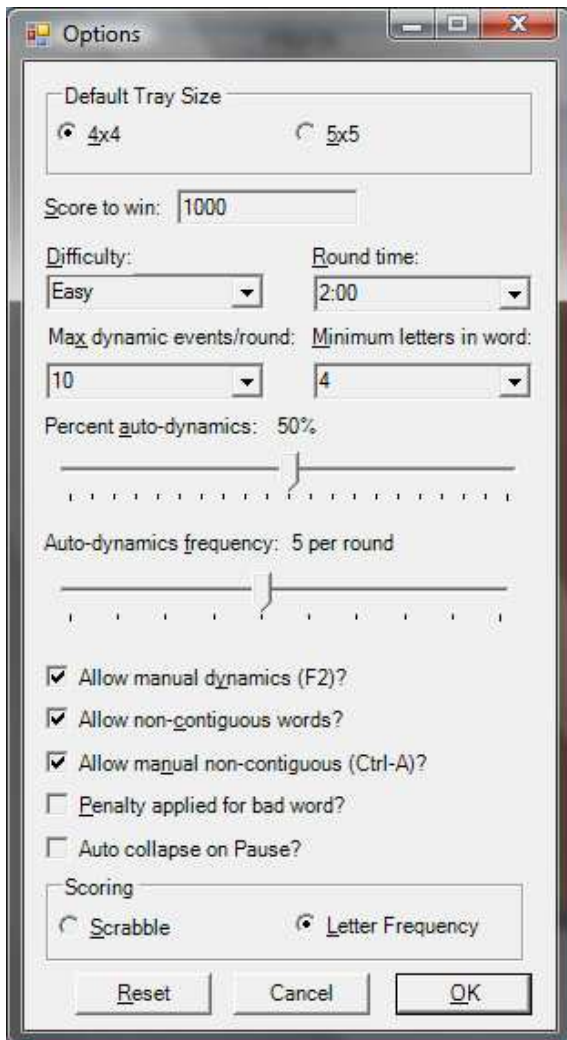
know is bad, you can delete it. If you are playing with penalties for bad words, the penalty will be removed when you delete the bad word. Can also be invoked by this command button: 

Tools	Options...	Displays the options form, discussed in the next section.
	Edit Words...	Displays the Edit Words form, which allows you to add new words to the dictionary.

Help	Quick Reference...	Displays a form which shows the most useful keyboard accelerators.
	About...	Displays the version information for Hectiwords.

Options Settings

The options dialog contains a number of settings that control how **Hectiwords** may be played. The dialog, with the default settings chosen is show below. The various settings are described in the following paragraphs. These settings are remembered from invocation to invocation of the program.



- **Default Tray Size.** Default is 4x4, but you can also play 5x5.
- **Score to win.** The points required to win the game. Default is 1000. Minimum is 100.
- **Difficulty:** Easy, Medium, Hard. Default is Easy. This primarily determines how many “common” letters are used in the game. Easy players will see plenty of vowels, and not as many “Q” and “X”.
- **Round time:** The length of time for a round. These come in pre-set values, minimum of 0:30 seconds, maximum of 3:00 minutes. The default is 2:00.
- **Max dynamic events/round:** The maximum number of times letters will change, swap or disappear. Minimum is 0 (effectively turning off the “hectic” in Hectiwords ☹). Maximum is 20. Default is 10.
- **Minimum letters in word:** Possible values are 3, 4, 5 or 6. Default for Easy is 3, for Medium and Hard, 4, but you can override these defaults.
- **Percent auto-dynamics:** Whatever the number of dynamics events in a round, if “Allow manual dynamics” is enabled (see below), this percentage will be reserved for automatically generated dynamics. It is the *uncontrolled* letter changes that give Hectiwords its special flavor. Default is 50%.
- **Auto-dynamics frequency:** Number of auto-dynamics per round. Default is 5.
- **Allow manual dynamics:** Toggles whether player can use F2 to cause a manual dynamics event. Default is true.
- **Allow non-contiguous words:** Toggles whether letters must touch or not. Default is false.
- **Allow manual non-contiguous:** When “Allow non-contiguous” is false, if this is true then the player can temporarily enable non-contiguous play during a round (shortcut is Ctrl+A). This permits a user to occasionally salvage words out of a dry round. The scoring is reduced however: after the user presses Ctrl+A, scoring is based only on the length of the word, one point per letter, rather than the frequency of the letter. (In normal scoring, letters that show up less frequently are worth more).
- **Penalty for bad word:** When true, then an entering an invalid word will result in the bad word’s value being *subtracted* from the round score. The player will see a negative value in the Value box.
- **Auto-collapse on Pause:** The so-called “office mode”. When true, then pausing the round (or pressing Ctrl+M) automatically collapse the Hectiwords window, so that is no longer visible on the screen (it’s still in the Task Bar). Useful in an office environment when one is not *suggested* to be playing games. When this is true, then restoring the Hectiwords window by clicking the icon in the Task Bar will *automatically* restart the timer and resume play.
- **Scoring:** Scrabble or Letter Frequency. Choosing Scrabble means that letters used in words are assigned the same points as those in a Scrabble game. The default is Letter Frequency, which determines letter value based on the frequency that letters appear in all English words.