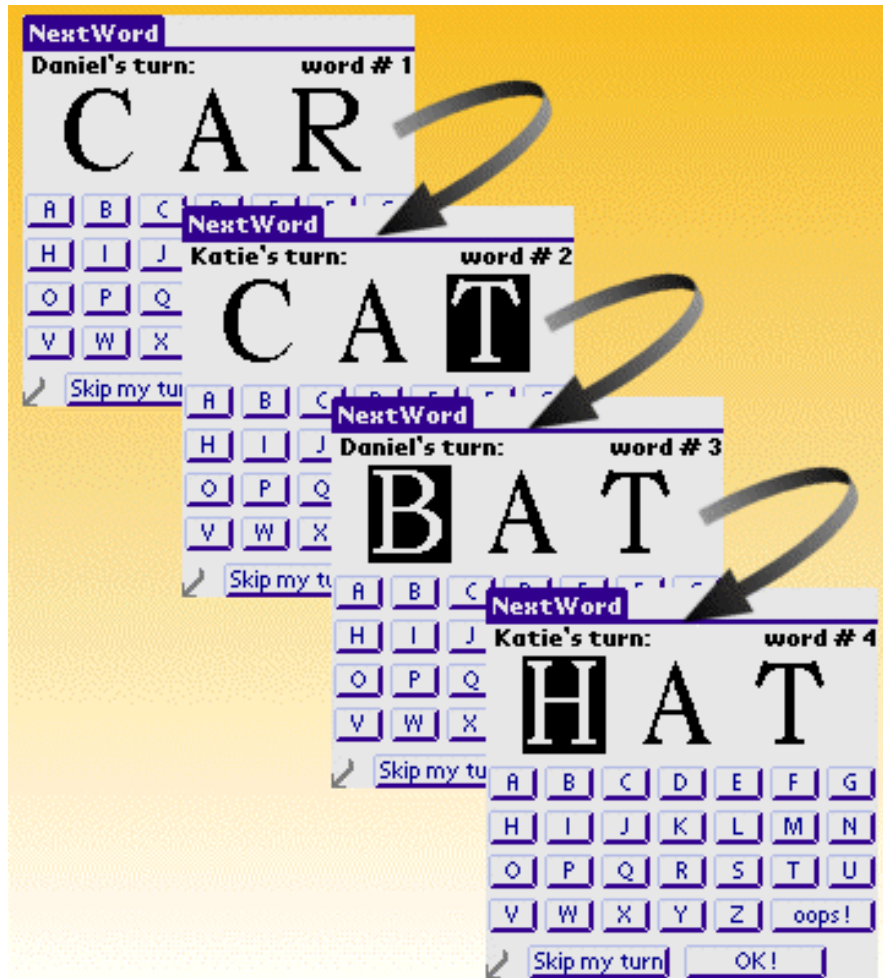


NextWord



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Dedicated with love to my children,
Daniel and Katherine, and my wife Annette

Even as I write this, my 7-year-old son Daniel came downstairs (he couldn't sleep), sat on my lap, and proceeded to read this list of words!

NextWord is designed to spur on this desire to read and learn words!

When Daniel was learning to read, we played a game on paper. Starting with a word, we'd take turns changing one letter to make a new word.

NextWord is that game – and more – for Palm OS® handhelds.

To accommodate players of varying abilities, *NextWord* is highly configurable. Not only can you choose the number of letters per word (from two to five letter words), but you can configure settings for each player to balance their abilities. Beginning readers might be allowed to reuse words, but more accomplished readers might be prevented from using a word previously used.

In addition, *NextWord* includes a “Speed Game” – where a single player plays alone, spelling words as rapidly as they can.

Both my children have watched *NextWord* develop, and keep asking to play it. I hope you and your children will enjoy *NextWord* as much as my children do!

Alan Jay Weiner

note: Actually, Daniel read a slightly different list – the last word was “BAD” instead of “HAT.” As I was putting this document together, I kept being bothered that the most prominent word in the list was “BAD” – I hope you won't mind my changing it. Daniel can read “HAT” too...



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The Fine Print – Legal Stuff: Privacy Notice

I will keep all information you supply to me (Alan Jay Weiner, or my company Technology 21) as confidential. I don't like when companies sell or give my name, email address, or other information, and I promise not to do it to you.

I also will not bother you with frequent emails, trying to sell other software or products. I will inform you of new versions and upgrades; these should be infrequent and short. When new products come out, I will send a *short* note letting you know about them and that's it – no annoying “email de jour”! I wouldn't expect more than a single email every two or three months. If you don't even want *that*, please let me know and I'll do my best to honor your wishes.

The Fine Print Part II– More Legal Stuff: End User License Agreement

NextWord, the documentation, and other works are copyrighted material. You do not own the *software* – you own a license to *use* the software. (it's a legal distinction)

You may freely use it on one handheld. You may transfer it from one handheld to another when you buy new devices. You may transfer the license to another person – please let me know when that happens and I'll send them their registration code. You may (of course) no longer use it after transferring it to them.

If you own multiple handhelds, you may use it on more than one, provided that only *one* is being used at any time. (If you have one at home and one at work, you could run it on both, as long as you're not at work and at home at the same time – a neat trick; let me know if you can do that!)

Basically, treat it like a book – only one person can read it at a time. (yes, others can read it over your shoulder, and they can play NextWord the same way.)

You may give copies of the *software and documentation* to others, but you may *not* sell or give copies of your registration code.

(Without the registration code, these copies become Trial copies.)

You *may* “beam” copies to other people – these beamed copies become Trial copies.

You may *not* charge for these copies.

You may *not* distribute NextWord in a commercial fashion (software library, rental, or CDROM or other media distribution, for example) without written permission *in advance* from Alan Jay Weiner.

You may *not* modify the software – either to bypass the registration mechanism, to create variants of any kind, or for any other reason.

The “Extremely Short Form” Instructions

- 1: *Install NextWord (NextWord.prc)*
- 2: *Build the word lists (the dictionary)*
- 3: *Configure the game as you'd like.*
- 4: *Play NextWord*
- 5: *Come back and read the manual to see what you've missed...*

Installation: The “Longer But Still Short” Instructions

If you can't wait to play, these are the steps to install NextWord and set it up...

1: “Unzip” NextWord.ZIP

You need to “unzip” the zip file to get access to the files within. There are many programs which do this, depending on which desktop computer you use. Macs users often use “Stuffit” while Windows users frequently use “WinZip” or other similar programs. Please see the documentation for the utility you use, and “unzip” the NextWord.zip file.

1: Install NextWord (NextWord.prc)

Usually you can simply double-click on the NextWord.prc file; this will start up the installer; then simply perform the HotSync™ operation and NextWord is installed on your handheld.

2: Build the word lists (the dictionary)

NextWord can pick the starting word and check that players are using real words. To do this, it needs to create its dictionary. Tap the menu button and select “Create word lists in Memopad.” Then tap the four buttons labeled “common”. Finally, tap “Ok.”

3: Configure the game as you'd like

Tap “settings” or select “Game Preferences” in the menu. Select any preferences you'd like; the defaults are usually fine, although you might want to log the games to Memopad memos. If so, tap the checkbox next to “log games to memos.”

From the Game Preferences, tap “set names” or tap the “Players” button on the main screen. Enter each player's name, and tap the checkbox next to their name to indicate they're playing this game. If you wish to allow that player to reuse words (the default is not to allow it) tap the “settings” button next to their name and select “allow reusing words.” To make it even easier for that player, also select “even “Ping-Pong” words” and “even player's own last move.” You can tap “Set all Players” to set everyone to the same settings. Then tap “Ok” to return to the main screen.

3: Play NextWord

On the main screen, tap “start NEW game.”
Enjoy!

4: Come back and read the manual to see what you've missed...

There's lots of information in here about configuring NextWord and other aspects to the game.

5: Purchase your registration code!

You have seven days to try NextWord. To continue using it after then, please purchase a registration code.

Registration and Trial Period

Trial Period

You have seven days to play NextWord on a trial basis. Only days that you actually play it count towards the demo time – if you play it every Monday, but no other days, you’ll use the seven day trial over a span of seven weeks.

During the Trial Period, you will be reminded you are in the Trial Period. You will see the reminder the first time you use it for the first three days, then each time you play it after that. During the last few days there is a short delay before you can continue playing. This delay gets progressively longer as the Trial Period continues.

At the end of the Trial Period, NextWord cannot be played without the registration code.

Benefits to Registration

In addition to supporting the development of NextWord, registration provides:

- elimination of registration reminders and delays
- automatic notification of upgrades and new releases
- free “point” releases and special upgrade pricing
- discount on other software – including future educational games and programs
- my wife will be very pleased!

Purchase and Registration

When you register (i.e., purchase) NextWord, you will be emailed a registration code.

Please visit the NextWord website at <http://www.ajw.com/nextword> and select one of the purchase options there.

For phone orders, you may call PalmGear HQ at 800-741-9070 or 817-640-6558.

A note about software download libraries...

Several companies run web sites where you can download and purchase software. Typically these companies receive a commission on each sale. *Please* support these download sites by purchasing the software you download from where you downloaded it! If you simply use them as a download site, but go around them for purchases, they won’t be able to continue - and we’d all be worse off for it; we’d have a much more difficult time finding the latest software and news.

When you receive the email with the registration code, start NextWord and either press the “register” button (if you see the registration reminder screen) or select the “Register” menu option.

That brings up the Registration screen:



The registration email contains your registration code along with the HotSync ID and registration name.

Enter your Registration Name and Registration Code, then tap “Ok.”

If you have a problem, check that the “Name Code” in the email matches the Name Code displayed on the Register screen. If it doesn’t match, then I do not have your correct HotSync ID; email the correct ID to me and I’ll email you the proper registration code. Please send:

- your HotSync ID
- Name Code
- Your Name
- Your email address
- When and where you purchased NextWord

Please send it to nextword@ajw.com so I can respond rapidly.

Playing NextWord

Playing NextWord is simple: starting with one word, change the word into another word. During their turn, each player changes one or more letters to create a different word. If they can't think of a word, they skip their turn. When each player skips their turn for the current word, the game is over.

While simple, it deceptively encourages learning new words and connecting letters and sounds. I've watched my children trying different sounds as they work to come up with a new word for their turn. Occasionally I will suggest something like "try a different vowel" or "try a different last letter."

To start a new game, tap either of the "start game" buttons on the main screen. If a game is in progress, but was interrupted, a third button is available: "continue CURRENT game."

During game play, NextWord displays the current word – either the starting word or the last player's word – at the top of the screen. Below that is a "keyboard." It is in alphabetic order, (rather than the usual keyboard "QWERTY") to encourage learning the order of letters in the alphabet.

You have several ways to change letters in the current word.

The first method is to tap the letter you wish to change, then tap one of the keyboard letters.

When you tap the letter in the word, that letter is highlighted. When you tap the keyboard, the highlighted letter changes to that letter, and the next letter in the word is highlighted. This makes it easier to change multiple letters.

You may enter the new letter using Graffiti. Again, tap the letter in the word, then enter the new letters using Graffiti.

Finally, you may drag the stylus between the letter in the word and the keyboard letter. You may drag in either direction; for convenience, both ways are recognized. Put the stylus down on the letter in the word, then slide it to the keyboard letter and lift the stylus. Or drag the keyboard letter to the word letter.

When you've changed whatever letters you wish, tap the "OK" button. If there's a problem with that word, NextWord displays an error message. This will tell you if your word isn't in the word lists, it's already been used, or you changed too few or too many letters, NextWord displays a "complaint" message and let you try again.

If you wish to discard your changes and start over, tap the "oops" button – that restores the word as it was at the beginning of your turn.

The Display Screens

Main Screen

This shows information about the game; how many players are playing and who's turn is next. To begin the game, tap the "start NEW game" button, or tap "start SPEED game" to begin a single-player SpeedGame.

When a game is being played, a third button "**continue CURRENT game**" returns to that game.



The **Settings** button displays the game configuration settings. This is the same as the menu option "**Game Preferences.**" These settings are described below.

The **Players** button displays the player names and their individual settings. This is the same as the menu option "**Player Names and Settings**" and is also described below.

Regular games alternate turns between players. During Speed games a single player plays as rapidly as they can.

Menu Options

You must be on the Main Screen to bring up the menu.

New Game starts a new game. (gee, how confusing! :)

New SPEED game starts a new Speed game (but you knew that!)

Game Preferences displays the game configuration screen (described below).

Player Names and Settings displays the screen where you enter names and select who is playing. This screen is also described below.

Create word lists in Memopad displays the screen where you create the built-in dictionary of words. This is also described below.

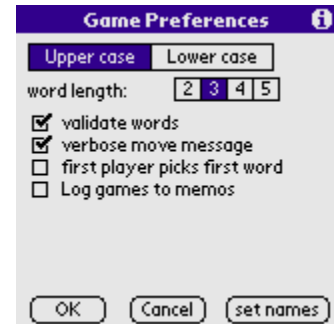
Register displays the registration screen where you enter a registration code. Registration is described in the section "**Registration and Trial Period.**"

About displays the program information; copyright, version number, etc.



Game Preferences (“settings”)

To display the **Game Preferences** screen, either select **Game Preferences** from the main screen’s menu, or tap the “**settings**” button, also on the Main Screen. Either method brings up the display shown here.



Upper case / Lower case selects whether the letters displayed and on the keyboard buttons will be in upper or lower case.

The **word-length** selection selects how many letters the words will have. This is the same as the word length selection on the Main Screen.

When **Validate words** is selected, each player’s move will be checked against a list of valid words. This list is kept in Memopad memos, and is described below.

When **verbose move message** is selected, each player sees a message after each move. If it’s not selected, then only bad moves – words not in the dictionary, words reused, changing too many letters, etc – will show a message. If not selected, good moves simply change to the next player’s turn.

When **first player picks first word** is selected, the game starts with all the letters showing question marks. The first player enters any word they want (of the correct word length, and if **validate words** is selected, the word is checked against the dictionary). This makes the game slightly easier for the first player – they don’t start a game being unable to think of a new word on their first move.

When **Log games to memos** is selected, each move in every game is written to a Memopad memo. This allows you to review the words used during games; you can see where players made up words, reused words, or skipped their turn.

Some options require ending any game in progress. If you are currently playing a game, you will be warned that you must end that game. You have the option to stop the game and make the changes or skip the changes and continue with the game in progress.

Player Names and Settings

This menu option (from the main screen) allows entering up to 9 player names, and selecting which players are playing. You can leave names entered and set them “not playing” by unchecking the box next to their name.

Here, four player names have been entered, but only Daniel, Katie, and Daddy are playing right now.

This makes it easy to keep different settings (difficulty levels) for several players even when they’re not playing the current game.



Note: currently, the play order is top to bottom, for all selected players. There is no way to change player order except by swapping names around. Changing player order will be addressed in an upcoming release.

The checkbox to the left of the name indicates whether they are playing in the current game. You may change who is playing without starting a new game – this allows someone to drop out or be added without forcing the game to end.

Alphabet Screen

This is the main game screen; it shows the current word and the alphabet. The player may change any of the letters (according to their individual Player Settings) to create a new word.

You may change letters in any of several methods:

- tap the letter, then tap the keyboard letter
- drag the keyboard letter to the word’s letter
- drag the word’s letter to the keyboard letter
- tap the word’s letter, then use Graffiti



To drag, put the pen down, then slide it to where you are dragging it. For example, to change the word from “PLAN” to “PLAY” you could put the pen on “Y” then slide it up to the “N” and lift the pen. When you lift the pen, the N will change to a Y.

Press the “oops!” key to restore the word to what it was at the start of your turn.

When you have changed the word to a new one, press the “Ok!” button. If you can’t create a word, skip your turn by pressing the “Skip my turn” button.

The game is over when everyone skips their turn.

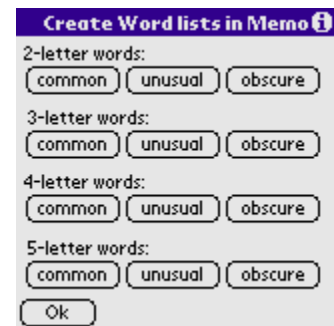
If words are being validated (see Preferences screen above) then the word is checked to be sure it's in the dictionary. If it's ok, then the game goes to the next player. If "Verbose move message" is checked, then a message pops up saying the word is good.

If the word is not found in the valid word list (see below) then an error message pops up and the player can try again.

Create Word Lists in Memopad

The menu option “**Create Word Lists in Memopad**” displays the screen shown to the right.

Tapping the various buttons creates memos containing the lists of words. The “Common” words should be sufficient for most grade-school players.



The word lists are described further in the next section, “The Dictionary.”

The Dictionary (Word Lists)

The dictionary is created from word lists kept in Memopad memos. This makes it easy for you to add words that aren't in the list, or remove words you don't want. Further, it allows creating separate groups of words; I've created groups of common, unusual, and obscure words.

In addition, words can be tagged to prevent them from being picked as a "starting" word (so a game won't start with "hate" for example). Tagging is described in the next section, "**Starting Words.**"

The memos **must** begin with the line:

```
NextWord n
```

where "n" is the number of letters in the words in this list. For example, the memo with a list of 3-letter words would begin with:

```
NextWord 3
```

Each word length (2, 3, 4, 5-letter words) has a separate memo or memos.

Anything after the digit is ignored until the end of the line, so you can add something to the top line to indicate that it is another page; i.e., you can have memos titled:

```
NextWord 5-letter words memo 1
NextWord 5-letter words memo 2
NextWord 5-letter words memo 3
```

It is ok if the line word-wraps in the memo, so long as you don't enter an end-of-line manually. Memopad word-wraps the memo titled:

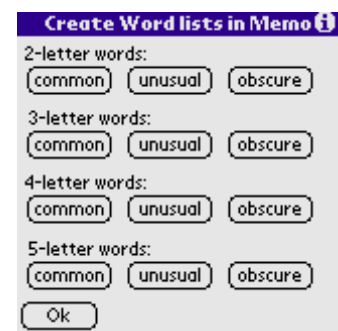
```
NextWord 5-letter words that start with A and are common words.
```

to two or three lines by Memopad, but that's ok – it's all one line until you forcibly go to a new line by entering a return.

If the list is too long for a single memo, you may create more than one memo, up to 30 memos for a single word length.

Any words in that memo that are the wrong length will be ignored. You can disable a word by making it longer; this allows you to keep it in the dictionary but it won't be a valid word for the game.

You can create the default word lists by the menu option "**Create word lists in Memopad.**" This shows a display with buttons to create common, unusual, and obscure word lists for each of 2, 3, 4, and 5-letter words:



I've collected words from a variety of places; some of these words are truly obscure. Scrabble™ players have books of valid words – most of these words would *never* come up in normal

human conversation! Far too many to use in NextWord word lists – they would allow beginning readers to make up words; they’re likely to hit something obscure but real!

As a result, I’ve attempted to categorize them into groups: common, unusual, and obscure. I have to admit, it’s rather arbitrary.

For the most part, *common* includes words that I would expect my daughter to know, and beginning readers to learn – cat, hat, bat, flag, milk, etc. (My daughter is in third grade, and a good reader.)

Unusual words are words that, while an adult is likely to know them, wouldn’t be known by most elementary grade children. Most commonly-known foreign words are in this category – nae (not), phi (Greek letter), etc.

Obscure are further less common – especially words that adults (never mind children) wouldn’t be likely to know. Often these are words that are in the Scrabble™ dictionaries, but would almost never be used – names of various currencies, strange and unusual plants or animals – “aal” (East Indian shrub), “ers” (European climbing plant) etc.

I’ve categorized a further group of obscene or offensive words – these aren’t included in *NextWord* at all. These include swear words and slang derogatory words.

In many cases, words have multiple meanings. I’ve tried to categorize them according to the “third-grade mind” rule. As an example, “dong” has an offensive meaning, but my daughter would think of it as a sound a bell makes, “ding-dong!” Therefore, it’s in the common word list.

Other examples:

“**diff**” – might be used by my daughter as “what’s the diff?” but it’s slang that’s been around a long time, so I put it into the Unusual list.

“**God**” – it’s in the common list, but it might offend some when *NextWord* is in lower-case mode. I apologize, but it could also be used as “a primitive god” – in lower case. Similarly, “**gods**” is in the common 4-letter list.

“**ass**” – while a swear (albeit minor in today’s language) it also means a donkey; it is also in the Bible. So it’s in the common 3-letter words.

“**euro**” – while as a prefix for “European” I would have put it in “unusual,” it’s now the common currency for many European countries. Grade-school children will read about it. So it’s in the common list, and “**euros**” is also in common.

“**gyre**” – while a real word, and used in Lewis Carroll’s “Jaberwocky” it is otherwise a rather obscure word; it’s in the “obscure” word list.

“**phat**” – this is newly-created slang; not included at all.

Quite frankly, creating and categorizing these lists has been as much work as writing the game itself. I’m sure there are words both missing and miscategorized. You may wish to review the word lists yourself. Please let me know if you find words that are blatantly miscategorized, or if I am missing words you think should be included.

In many cases, it’s very subjective and arbitrary as to what category a word should be in – most school-age children know a *dojo* is a martial-arts training hall; they’ve heard that term in

television shows and cartoons. But how many know that *kwoon* is the same for Korean martial arts? As a result, I've put *dojo* into the common words, but *kwoon* is in the uncommon words – and I mean no slight to practitioners of Korean martial arts!

Similarly, what do I do with “lightweight” swears – “ass” I've explained above, but what about “fart”? I decided to leave them out – even though many kids already know them (I'm too often telling my 7-year-old son to stop using “bathroom talk”) I decided to avoid offending people by having them in the word lists. Anatomical names for body parts are of course included. (and *I* was thinking of “femur” – you have a dirty mind!)

I intend to expand the word lists beyond “common” “unusual” and “obscure” so that you can pick and choose the word lists you'd like – if you want to include the names of Greek letters, there will be a word list for them.

Although in general, I put words into *common* rather than *unusual*, and *unusual* rather than *obscure*, what category do “pimp” and “porn” belong in? Again, I went back to my “third-grade” mindset, and decided to put them in *unusual* – though commonly known by adults, I doubt many grade-school children know the words. At least, I hope not...

I hope this explains my rationale in categorizing words as I have, and I do apologize to those who feel I've erred.

Please do contact me with any suggestions about words in the wrong category, or words that should be included or left out, and especially those which shouldn't be used as a starting word.

For the most part, you can use just the common words for beginning readers, and the common and unusual words for almost everyone. What I tried to avoid was a beginner misspelling a word and successfully spelling an obscure word.

If you have any doubt as to whether the player really knows the word, ask them to explain its meaning, or use it in a sentence.

Starting Words

There are many words in the word lists which, while valid words, might be uncomfortable if the computer chose them as the starting word; the first word of the game.

I imagine most parents wouldn't like their children to start a new game and see "hate" or "kill" as the first word. Similarly, "God" or "pray" might not be appreciated in public schools, while "devil" or "sin" might cause similar discomfort in a religious school. What about an overweight child seeing "fat" as the starting word? Or seeing "dead" after a death in the family?

These words are tagged so they will never be used as a starting word. Tagging them permits them to be valid words for players, but the game won't *start* with them.

To tag a word so it won't be used as a starting word, append "=1" to it in the memo word list. So the word list shows "kill=1" to prevent "kill" from being a starting word.

All words in the uncommon and unusual word lists are tagged in this manner, too; this is to prevent any "difficult" words from being used for beginning players.

To tag an entire memo of words, simply put the "=1" after the memo's title line, but before any words.

Many, many words have this tag; I've tried to mark any word which might cause anger or embarrassment if it came up as the starting word. Please let me know if you see any words that should be tagged which I haven't tagged.

School Version

This version of NextWord is lacking several features that are helpful in a school environment; such things as:

- locked word lists (students can't make changes!)
- unlimited number of players (more than the 9 in this version – unless you've got a *very* small school!)
- tracking students across multiple handhelds (so they mustn't always play on the same machine)
- automatic adjustment of player ability (especially important when students frequently play different opponents; match the abilities to each other)

Please contact Alan at alan@ajw.com for information regarding school-system usage, and for special purchase plans and opportunities for schools. (Including fund-raising and free license opportunities)

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I make the game easier (or more difficult)?

There are several ways to change the difficulty level. Each player has several settings that set such things as:

- can they reuse words that have already been used?
- how many letters are they *allowed* to change during their turn?
- how many letters *must* they change during their turn?

Changing these settings allows balancing a beginning reader against a more advanced reader.

Allow the beginner to reuse words – even “ping-pong” words. Allow them to change more letters.

Allow the beginner to pick the starting word, rather than letting the computer pick it.

Why aren't proper nouns (names) capitalized?

NextWord allows setting upper case or lower case. When in lower case, even proper nouns are in lower case. Mixed case (capitalizing the first letter, for example) will be evaluated for inclusion in a future version.

Why doesn't the computer pick the first word?

Either you have not created the word lists, or you have the Game Preferences setting “first player picks the first word” selected.

How do I add or remove words from the dictionary?

Simply edit the Memopad memos. If you want to create a separate memo for adding words, you may do so; be sure the title starts with “NextWord N” (where N is the word length). See *The Dictionary* for more about the word lists.

I want all my students to play NextWord, but our school budget is empty! What can I do?

Please contact me at alan@ajw.com. While I sell software to pay my own bills, there are various means to assist schools.

I have a lot of great ideas to make the game better! What should I do with them?

Please do email me and suggest them. I do have a *long* list of ideas and suggestions, but I'm very interested in any ideas, suggestions, comments, or whatever. (praise is especially appreciated!) My email address is alan@ajw.com.

What other software do you have?

Currently, the other software is two calculators; *AlCalc*, a high-precision calculator that supports multiple number bases, and *IPcalc*, an IP address calculator for networks.

I have plans for several other educational games and tools. One of the benefits of registering NextWord is early news about these upcoming products, and a discount purchase price.

How do I contact you?

My email address is alan@ajw.com. That's the easiest way to reach me.