

## Introduction

Hot Potatoes is a software package that allows you to make six different types of interactive exercises:

- Multiple-choice quizzes
- Short answer quizzes
- Jumbled sentence exercises
- Crossword exercise
- Matching exercises
- Fill-in-the-blanks exercises

The exercises, Hot Potatoes, are produced as web pages and so need a browser such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator to work. They can be used successfully on or offline and as provide an easy way to produce a 'virtual classroom'. You can include, hints, checking and scoring in the exercises.

To get an idea of how the software works try out the Hot Pots *First Attempt*. The software can be downloaded from Halfbaked software [www.halfbakedsoftware.com] and used free of charge by educational establishments. Hot Potatoes is very easy to use but it is a god idea to work your way through the tutorial that comes with the software before you start producing your own Hot Potatoes.

## In the Science Classroom

You will probably want pupils to work through Hot Potatoes independently and so the most obvious use of Hot Potatoes is for revision but you might also use them at the start of a topic to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They could also be used effectively as plenary exercises or perhaps as extension exercises. If you can put them on your school website you could use them for homework or to help students with their revision. I have found it particularly useful in supporting home study at times when the student has to work independently such as during holidays and exam leave.

However, I have found one of the most effective ways of using Hot Potatoes is to involve the students in preparing their own quizzes and exercises to share and test the other members of the class. These class experiences are greatly enhanced if there is easy access to the website or a digital projector. This also cuts down on the amount of work that you have to do preparing exercises for the future use!

## How to use Hot Potatoes in Science

Type of Hot Potato Exercise	Use in Science Lessons
<b>Multiple-choice quizzes</b> [JBC]	The multiple choice tests can have a whole array of answers and give the student a percentage mark after each question to indicate their performance. Useful for revision. You start by writing a question and supplying the answers plus distracters. You can have as many distracters as you want and make it so that pupils have to select more than one answer to get it right. The example given here is on forces.
<b>Short answer quizzes</b> [JQuiz]	Students provide a single word to answer the question or complete the sentence. These are particularly useful for those questions that have more than one answer e.g. give an example type of questions. Specific examples of these questions could be name an alternative energy resource, give an example of a fossil fuel or name a metal more reactive than sodium. The example given here is on simple chemistry.
<b>Jumbled sentence exercises</b> [JMix]	Students have to arrange a set of jumbled words to make a sentence or jumbled letters to reveal a word. These are particularly useful as a quick fun activity at the end of a lesson to review the key definition [s] or word [s]. The example given tests pupils' knowledge of the order of the planets.
<b>Crossword exercise</b> [JCross]	A quick way of making online crosswords. Type in a list of words JCross will generate a crossword and then you write the clues. Crosswords help to develop pupils' scientific vocabulary. The example given focuses on states of matter.
<b>Matching exercises</b> [JMatch]	This can be used either as a way of ordering statements or as a matching exercise. These exercises are particularly good at promoting thinking and discussion. Students can use them for ordering exercises such as organs in the digestive system, the rock cycle or the reactivity series. They can also be used to match words with their definitions or link pictures to their name or function e.g. matching the correct organ with their function or the correct organism with their adaptation. Other possible uses are matching different types of rock with examples of type or descriptions of the rock, energy resources and their descriptions, linking nutrients with pictures

	of different food types and pictures of electrical symbols with their names. The examples given are on digestion and nutrients. The digestion one illustrates the different ways that organising statements can be achieved using HotPots.
<b>Fill-in-the-blanks exercises [JCloze]</b>	Pupils have to fill in the gaps in a sentence. The software also allows you to give hints for the answers. They can be used in every lesson to monitor learning. They are particularly suitable for less able students. You may wish to let students print the exercise once they have completed it. The example given is on photosynthesis.

### **Moving On**

Hot Potatoes is a great piece of software that allows the teacher to make web-based activities quickly and easily. The examples show the most basic type of HotPot. But you can easily enhance it, by adding images, such as gifs or jpegs, which can be read by browsers. You can also add links to websites for the students to go and find answers to the questions. Furthermore If you use the configure output option from the Options menu you can change the colours of text and background as well as changing several other things such as the instructions that appear on the screen.