

Boardmaker® 5.2 (Windows)

Creating a Story Response Board

Introduction

Boardmaker® is an excellent program to use for creating resources to support students as they develop literacy skills. Its large electronic library of symbols can be used in many different ways to help students develop their vocabulary and to express their understanding of concepts even when they can't speak, read or write. In this tutorial, you will learn how to use the very basic features of Boardmaker® to create a Story Response Board for Eric Carle's book "The Very Busy Spider".

Case Study

Students who have little or no verbal communication or those at the beginning stages of literacy who require visual supports for reading comprehension can benefit significantly from Story Response Boards that can be created with Boardmaker®. Story response boards can be very simple, designed to spark the memory or understanding of the story, or they can be very complex, allowing for complete responses for non-verbal students.

Lindsay is a Grade 3 student who has developmental delays which make it difficult for her to develop reading and writing skills. She is at the emerging stage of literacy. She understands that print conveys meaning, engages with print materials and has learned most of the names of the letters in the alphabet. She has a keen interest in books and likes to have others read stories to her. Her verbal skills are also delayed – she speaks in single words or short phrases but tends to be difficult to understand, particularly if she is excited. Since she is also, obviously, not able to write, her team was having a difficult time determining her level of story comprehension. They began using Story Response Boards created on Boardmaker® to engage her during and after the story and to help her express her understanding of story details. Lindsay also uses these boards during "Buddy Reading" time with the Grade 7 students. The boards have helped her team assess her level of comprehension and establish more appropriate literacy goals for her.

Learning Objectives

Completion of this tutorial will give you experience with the following:

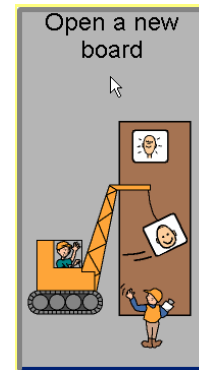
- Creating a Boardmaker® board
- Adding and modifying buttons
- Using the Symbol Finder to find and add symbols to a board
- Saving and printing a Boardmaker® board

Installing Boardmaker® (Windows)

Before beginning this tutorial, please refer to the Installation instructions that came with your Boardmaker® program or download the “**Boardmaker® Installation Instructions**” from the “**Resource**” area of www.setbc.org/psap.

Starting the Program

1. Launch Boardmaker® by clicking the alias on your desktop or selecting it from your “**Start – All Programs**” list.
2. When the splash screen opens, click on the “**Open a New Board**” button to create a new board from scratch. A blank board will open.



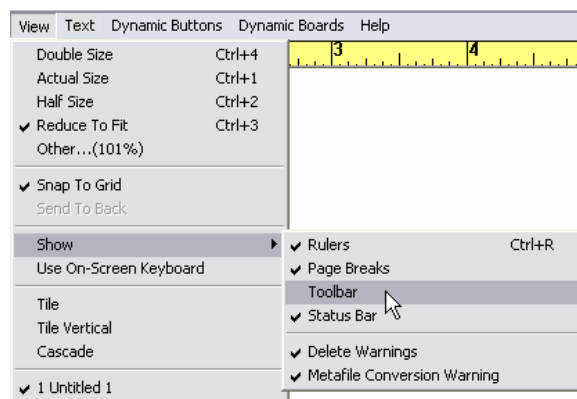
You are now ready to begin building your Story Response Board.

Creating the Story Response Board

In this section of the tutorial, you will create and modify the buttons on a Boardmaker® Story Response Board.

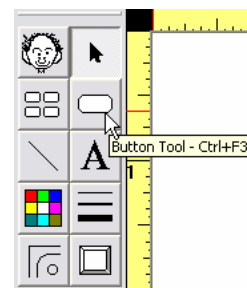
When you start a “**New Board**”, you are given a blank board area. There is also a Toolbar on the left hand side of that board to help you create and modify the buttons on your board.

If you can't see the toolbar, go to the “**View**” menu and select “**Show**” and “**Toolbar**”. Note that you can also select and deselect the board “Rulers”, “Page Breaks” and “Status Bar” from this menu.



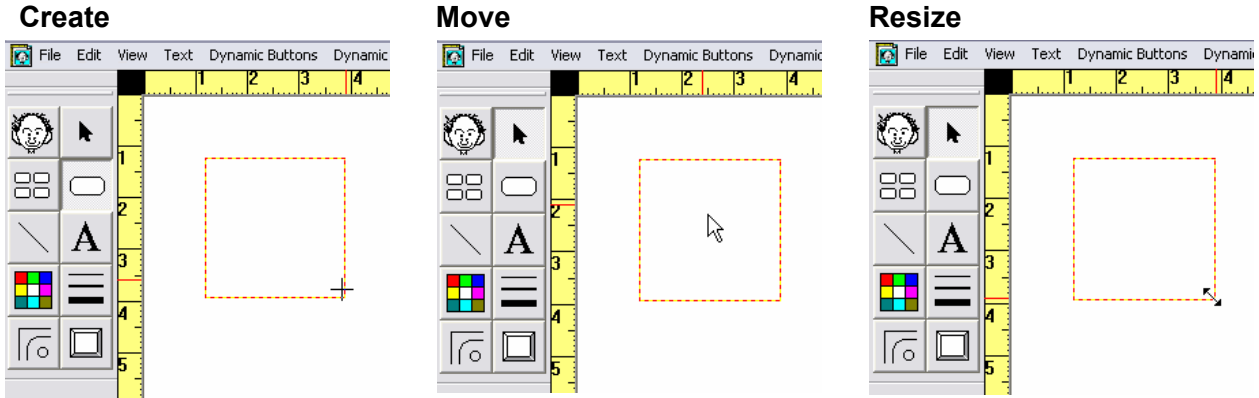
Let's get started adding buttons to the board.

1. On the Toolbar, click on the “**Button tool**”. When you move your cursor out into the board area, you will see a crosshair. Use this crosshair to line up the upper left corner of your button and then click, drag, and let go of the mouse to draw a button on the board. Make a button about 4.5 inches by 4.5 inches. Place it close to the upper left corner of your board.

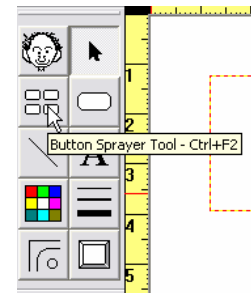


Note the following:

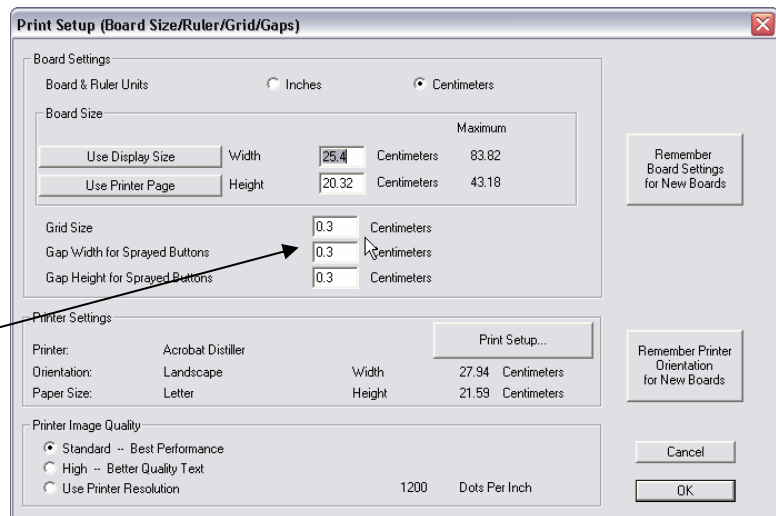
- As you draw the button, the button dimensions dynamically change at the bottom of your board area on the status bar.
- If you hold down the “Shift” key on your keyboard while drawing the button, it will make a perfectly square button.
- Once you let go of the mouse button, you can move it by clicking anywhere inside the button and dragging and dropping it and you can resize it by clicking and dragging any of the corners.



2. Click on the “**Button Sprayer Tool**” on the Toolbar. This button allows you to quickly create rows of identical buttons on your board. Click and hold in the middle of the button you created and drag around the board to add multiple copies of that button. Let go of the mouse button when you’ve made 4 rows of five buttons.



3. If you don’t like the amount of space between the buttons, you can adjust this by going to the “**File**” menu and selecting “**Print Set Up**”. On this window, you can type in different dimensions for the “**Gap Height**” and “**Gap Width**” to make the gaps larger or smaller.



Click “**OK**” to apply the changes and exit the window.

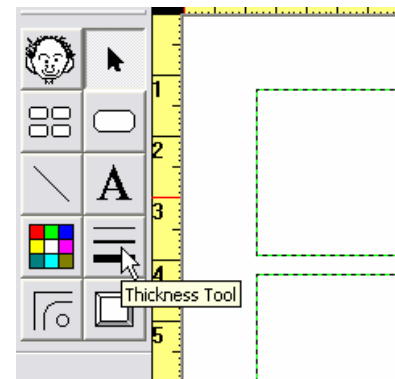
Now let's make the buttons look the way we want for this Story Response Board.

4. To make any changes to the buttons on the board, you first have to select them. You can select one button by simply clicking on it. You can select multiple buttons by:
 - Clicking and dragging your cursor over several buttons
 - Holding down the "**Shift**" key on your keyboard and clicking on each button you want to select
 - Holding down the "**Command**" key on your keyboard and pressing "**a**" (this selects all the buttons at once)

You deselect a button by clicking anywhere else on the screen.

Select all the buttons on your board using either selection method. You should see that the button borders have turned green.

5. Now we are going to make changes to how the selected buttons look. On the Toolbar, click on the "**Thickness Tool**". Select a thicker line by clicking on it. The line thicknesses of your selected buttons should have changed.

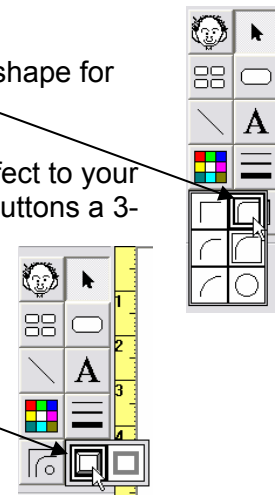


Next to the "**Thickness Tool**" is the "**Color Tool**". Click on it and notice there are two places you can change the color of the buttons – the **Button** itself (the fill) and the **Border** (the line). Click on "Button" to change the fill and "Border" to change the line.

Adjust the colours of both making the Button fill a soft blue and the Border a darker blue (or whatever colour combination you'd like!). Notice, like the line thickness, all the selected buttons accepted this change.

The "**Corner Tool**" allows you to select a slightly different shape for your buttons. Click on it and choose a rounded corner.

Finally, the "**Shadow Tool**" allows you to add a shadow effect to your button borders. Click on it and add that effect to give the buttons a 3-dimensional quality.

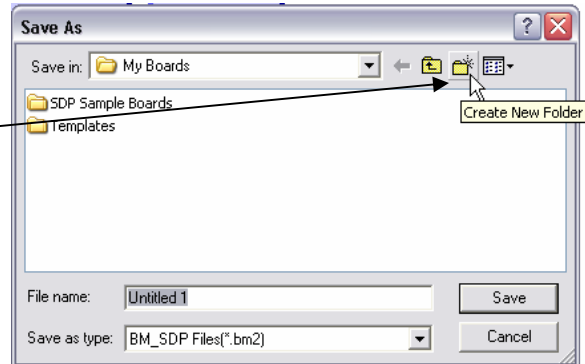


Deselect your buttons by clicking anywhere else on your board.

Saving your Boardmaker® board

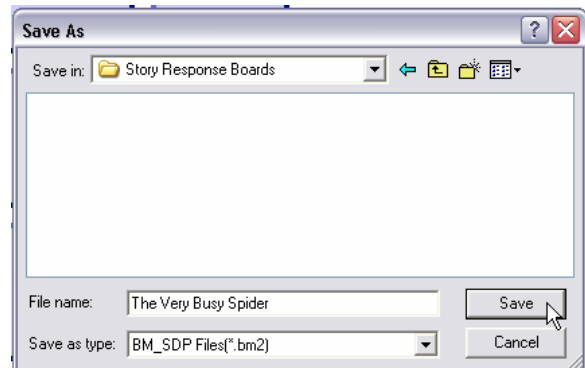
Now that you've done all this hard work, you should save it and continue to save it frequently as you work on it.

1. Go to the **"File"** menu and select **"Save"**. The **"Save as..."** window will open up and you'll notice that the default location for saving boards is a folder called **"My Boards"**. It is a good idea to use this folder to save your boards, but you may want to create sub-folders to help you organize them.
2. With the **"My Boards"** folder in the "Save in..." field, click the **"New Folder"** button and name the folder **"Story Response Boards"**. Double-click the folder to open it.



Now, click on the **"File name:"** field at the bottom of the window and name your board. For this tutorial, name your board, **"The Very Busy Spider"**. Click **"Save"** when you have finished naming it.

Note: If you want to find your boards on your hard drive, the **"My Boards"** folder is located in the User **"My Documents"** folder. (Start menu – My Documents – My Boards). You will need to go there if you want to move or delete boards.

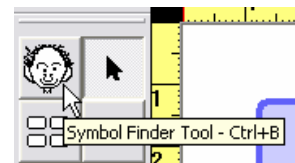


3. Continue to save your work by going to **"File"** and selecting **"Save"** (or using the keyboard command **"Command – S"**). Use the **"File – Save as..."** selection to save your board as another file name. This is really helpful if you develop a board that you would like to use as a template for others.

Using the Symbol Finder to Add Symbols to Your Buttons

The time has come to add symbols to your buttons. You search for symbols and add them to your buttons using the **"Symbol Finder Tool"**.

1. On the Toolbar, click on the **"Symbol Finder Tool"**.

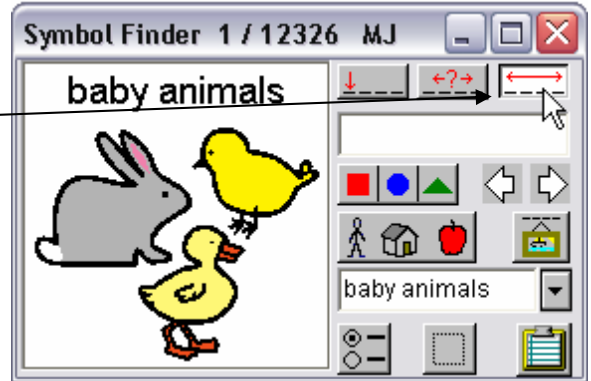


This brings up the Symbol Finder in a small, floating window. You can move this around by clicking on the top bar of the window and dragging it to a convenient spot in your work area.

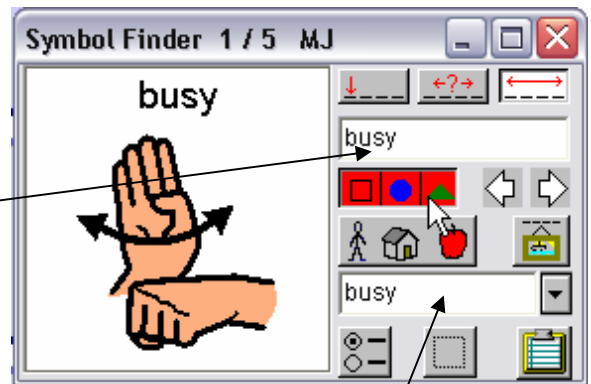
2. Since we are making a board for Eric Carle's book "The Very Busy Spider", we will start by looking for a symbol for 'busy'.

In the top right area of the Symbol Finder window, click on the third "Search letters must match a whole word" button.

This means when you search for 'busy', it will only give you symbols that match that word exactly.



3. Now, type in the word "busy" in the "Find" field. Notice that when you have finished typing the word, a symbol appears in the symbol window. To see ALL the symbols that have the exact word 'busy' in the name, click on the "Display Thumbnail View" button to see thumbnails of the 'busy' symbols.



4. By rolling your cursor over each symbol, OR clicking once on it, you can see the names of the symbols in the "Alternate Symbol Names" field.

You can also see any alternate symbol names for that symbol in the "Alternate Symbol Names" drop down menu.

You can also advance through the "busy" symbols by clicking the forward and back arrows on the Symbol Finder window.



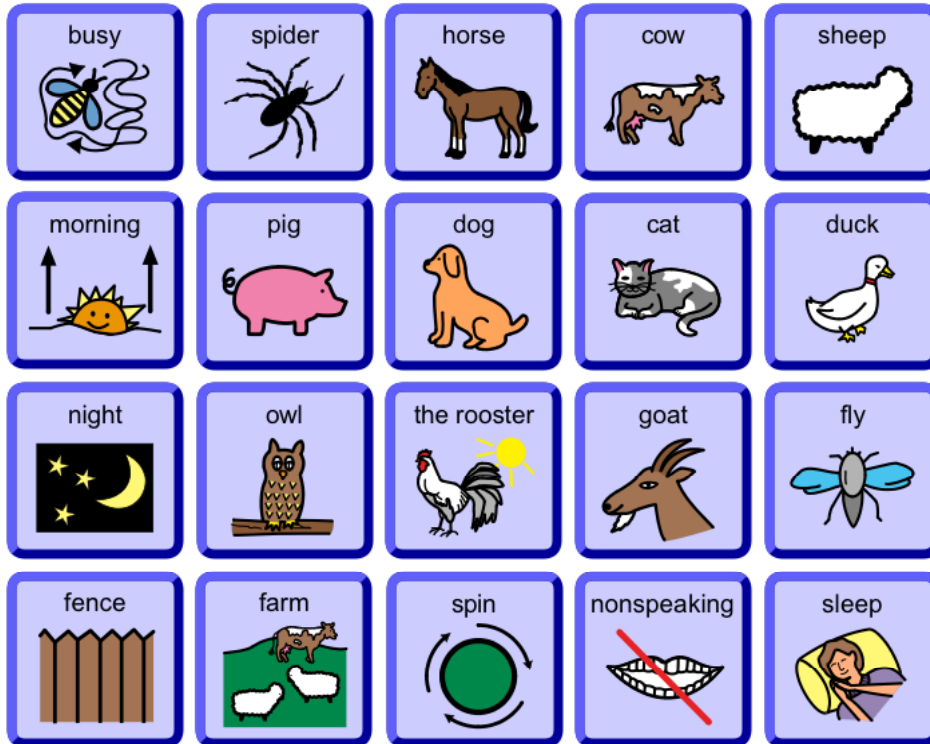
Many students are familiar with the expression "Busy as a Bee" so we are going to select the symbol that has a bee.

Click on it in the Thumbnail view or advance until you see it in the Symbol window.

5. To add this symbol to your board, simply click on first button in the upper left corner of your board. Boardmaker® drops the symbol into that button and then selects the next one in anticipation of your next symbol selection.
6. Repeat these steps to add the following symbols to your board:

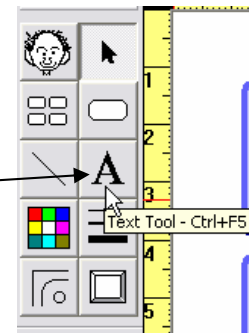
Spider, horse, cow, sheep, morning, pig, dog, cat, duck, night, owl, rooster, goat, fly, fence, farm, spin, non-speaking, sleep

Your board should look something like this:



7. We need to adjust the names of two of the symbols on the board to more closely match the vocabulary of the story. To do this, we use the “**Text Tool**” on the Toolbar.

Click on the “**Text Tool**” to activate it.

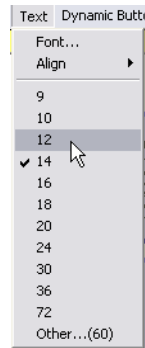


Now, click and drag through the “**nonspeaking**” name at the top of that symbol to highlight the word (just like in a word processor).

Type in a new name: “**didn’t answer**”.
 Change the name of “**spin**” to “**spinning her web**” in the same way.



Notice that the font size is too large for this change and the name extends beyond the button. With the words highlighted, you can change the font size by going to the “**Text**” menu and selecting a smaller size. If you choose “**Font**” from this menu, you can change the Font type and style as well.



Your board is finished and you are ready to print it out!

Printing the Board

In your board area, you should be able to see a green dashed line around the board. This indicates the edge of the paper so you can have an idea of how your board will look when it is printed out. In the “Scripted Game Board” tutorial, you can see how to adjust the size of the board for different sized paper.

For now, we will print it as it was created. Make sure to save your board before printing!

1. If you want a preview of what the board will look like printed, go to “**File**” and select “**Print Preview**”. You can print from this window, or close it to use the standard print sequence.
2. Go to “**File**” and select “**Print...**”. Choose your printer, how many copies you would like and then click “Print”. Your board will print in colour or grey scale depending on your printer.

Using the Story Response Board

This board can be used a number of ways to help non-verbal or non-literate students respond to the story. For example...

- The board could be cut into individual symbols and used in a story sequencing activity.
- Individual symbols could also be attached with Velcro to the pages in the book (match the symbol to the correct page).
- By pointing to the symbols, a student could use the board to respond to verbal comprehension questions.
 - Who asked the spider “Want to roll in the mud?”
 - What did the spider say to the rooster?
 - Which animal said “Baa! Baa!”
 - Why was the spider so busy? and so on
- A worksheet with blank Velcro spots could be “filled in” with individual symbols.
- Create several copies of the board, cut up the individual symbols and create matching worksheets or games with the symbol “cards”.

Please view or download the other Boardmaker® v 5.0 (Macintosh) tutorials to learn more useful features and applications of the program.