

## HOT POTATOES

### ACTIVITY-MAKING SOFTWARE

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Hot Potatoes is a robust set of classroom activity tools that teachers can use to construct quizzes, cloze or matching activities, and crossword puzzles. Hot Potatoes is an open-source software program that can be downloaded [here](#).

Hot Potatoes, like any technology used for the first time, can seem overwhelming. However, it only takes a little practice to get comfortable with the basics. Once these basics are discovered, begin to try the more advanced features shown at the end of this week's Teacher's Corner. Not everything needs to be learned at once so don't rush and don't panic!

What makes Hot Potatoes a valuable tool in a technology toolkit is that the files created by the software are simple .htm, or webpage, files. This means the files can be placed on computers in a lab, emailed to and from students, added to course management systems such as Moodle, or printed out and given to students as worksheets. Hot Potatoes can fit the realities of the classroom no matter the technology infrastructure.

The basic layout of Hot Potatoes is enough to work in many classroom situations; however the software can be extended far beyond its initial capabilities with audio, images, and video.

In this week's Teacher's Corner, we look at ways to use Hot Potatoes to make basic activities. The first set of ideas below will offer a basic tutorial on the JQuiz feature of Hot Potatoes. Once this has been mastered it is easy to transfer the knowledge over to the other features of Hot Potatoes such as JCloze, and JMatch. While each creates unique activities, the design and layout of the software is the same.

After some practice with the basics of Hot Potatoes, consider adding images, audio, or video to your activities. The second set of instructions below show how to use some simple HTML code to breathe life into your activities through multimedia. Hot Potatoes is far more robust than what can be shown in this tutorial, so it is important to play and experiment with all the settings. Be sure to have fun!

#### BASIC: INTRODUCTION TO HOT POTATOES

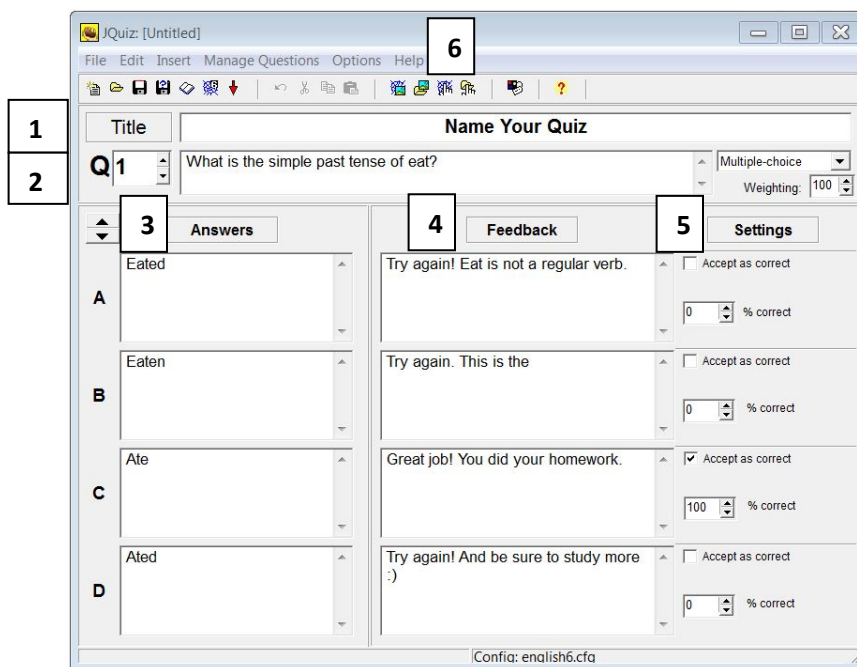
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The Hot Potatoes suite is a set of six authoring tools that allows you to create different types of interactive quizzes. The quizzes are viewed using a web browser. Each program can produce a different type of quiz:

- JCloze – is used to make gap-fill or cloze exercises.
- JCross – is used to make crossword exercises.
- JMatch – is used to create matching exercises.
- JMix – is used to make jumble exercises.
- JQuiz – is a tool for making question-based exercises. Each quiz can consist of an unlimited number of questions.

For these instructions, JQuiz will be used as an example. JQuiz can feature multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions. Quizzes can also feature a mixture of multiple choice and short answer known as a hybrid question; questions can also be designed to allow students to select multiple answers.

The basic construction for JQuiz is:

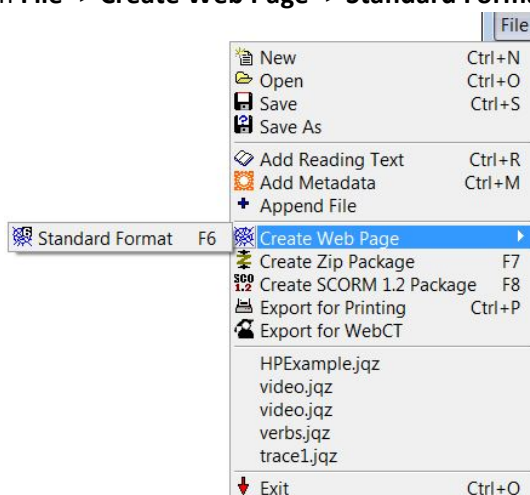


1. **Title** – This is where to place the name of your quiz.
2. **Q#** - This block is where questions can be added to the quiz. To scroll through the questions that have been added, select the up and down arrows located next to the question number.
3. **Answers** – In the blocks below **Answer** are where the answers to the question are added. These can be single words or entire paragraphs depending on the needs of the activity.
4. **Feedback** – Each answer can be given specific feedback that can specify why that answer is correct or incorrect.
5. **Settings** – Under **Settings**, conditions can be set for each answer. For JQuiz to properly work, at least one must have the **Accept as Correct** box checked.
6. **Menu** – The top row of buttons in Hot Potatoes is the basic commands for the software such as file, edit, and insert. These commands are similar to those found in more common programs such as Microsoft Word.

### PRODUCING A HOT POTATOES ACTIVITY

1. Begin by opening the software. For this example JQuiz will be used. Once opened, the software will display the screen shown above.
2. Questions and answers can be added to the boxes shown as in the image above. Once questions and answers have been added, save the file by clicking on File -> Save As
  - a. This save feature will produce a .jqz file. This is the working file that should only be used to create the activity and should not be shared with students.
3. Once the JQuiz activity is complete it can be published as an .htm file for classroom use.

4. To create the .htm file, click on **File -> Create Web Page -> Standard Format**



5. At the basic level this is the scale of Hot Potatoes and much of the interface is similar to more familiar software such as Microsoft Word. If you can copy and paste in Word, much of the interface of Hot Potatoes will feel familiar.
6. With this brief overview, it is best to begin by making three or four activities using just the basic structure and format of the software. Just keep in mind these basics:
- a. Hot Potatoes saves two files:
    - i. .jqz file – This is the working file to be used when making the activity. Each piece of Hot Potatoes has its own file format (.jcl for Jcloze, .jmt for Jmatch)
    - ii. .htm – This is the activity file that should be provided to students. This file is produced to look like a web page and can be opened with a browser (such as Internet Explorer, Chrome, or Firefox).
  - b. Stay organized – Create a folder for each activity and save both the .jqz and .htm file in the same folder. This will make it easier to find each activity.
  - c. After some time experimenting with the software, click on **Options -> Configure Output** in the menu bar.
    - i. The Configure Output panel allows for the material to be customized such as changing colors, changing texts, and adding additional instructions or information.

### HOT POTATOES PLUS: ADDING IMAGES

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Once you have the basics of Hot Potatoes, it is easy to branch out to more sophisticated activities. The key is to take your time, play with all the available options, and allow for failure. While the below instructions can seem very technical, it breaks down to three basic pieces of computer code. With only these three pieces of code, a wide variety of activities can be made.

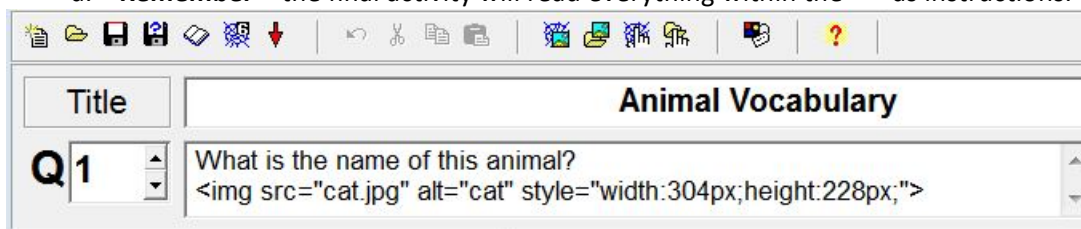
#### What is HTML?

Hyper Text Markup Language is the language that makes web pages possible. It works by containing instructions within a set of < > brackets. These brackets tell the computer that the information inside them is a set of instructions. For example a word in **bold** in HTML looks like this: <b>Hot Potatoes</b>. If this were placed on a webpage all the reader would see is **Hot Potatoes**.

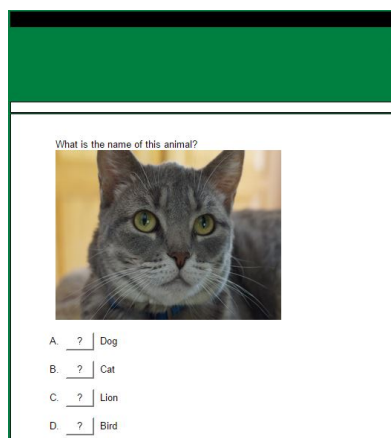
## Embedding Code into Hot Potatoes

A great place to practice embedding code into Hot Potatoes is with an image.

1. Begin by creating a new Hot Potatoes activity. Like the example above, a JQuiz is a good place to practice.
2. After starting a new activity, be sure to save it first. This will create a working .jqz file of the activity. Be sure to save the file in its own folder.
3. To embed an image into the activity, the HTML image code is needed:
  - a. ``
  - b. What is important to remember with HTML code is that text appearing between the "quotations" can be changed and the code will still work. For example in the code above `= "width:304px;height:228px;"` can be changed to `= "width:500px;height:500px;"` and the code will run with a new image size.
  - c. **Important:** If you use an image saved locally (on the computer), keep it in the same folder as the Hot Potatoes activity. If it is not in the same folder, the Hot Potatoes activity will not find the image, and it will not appear in the activity.
4. By adding the code into the question text block, the image appears as part of the question.
  - a. **Remember** – the final activity will read everything within the `< >` as instructions.



5. After the code has been inserted and the .htm file produced, the image will be displayed in the activity.



6. If the picture is too large or too small, the size can be changed by adjusting the width and height.
  - a. For practice, change the numbers in the `"width:304px;height:228px;"` in the activity. Save the file and then change the width and height numbers. See how the image changes size.
7. This code is extremely flexible and can be used to include images from the internet as well.
  - a. For example: Let's start with the code `` The `cat.jpg` can be replaced with the web address of an image.

- i. Try replacing **cat.jpg** with **[http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/styles/adaptive/public/frf\\_images/trace-480x350\\_0.jpg?itok=CUjWfJ36](http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/styles/adaptive/public/frf_images/trace-480x350_0.jpg?itok=CUjWfJ36)**
  - ii. This will instruct the Hot Potatoes activity to visit that particular webpage and add the image to the activity.
8. Try adding images to a Hot Potatoes activity to test the ability of the code. If mistakes are made, just revert back to the HTML code above and try again! It is important to play with these features to fully understand what is possible. Just remember:
  - a. The HTML code for images can be placed in any of the Hot Potatoes text boxes. Try adding images to individual answers or even the feedback boxes.
  - b. If images display incorrectly, be sure the local file of the image is in the same folder as the Hot Potatoes activity (.jqz) and .htm file. If an online image is being used, be sure the web address for the image is correct.

### HOT POTATOES PLUS: ADDING VIDEO

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1. Videos can also be added to Hot Potatoes but new code is needed:
  - a. `<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/mxg-KTJY-RA" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>`
2. The code above links to a video in the videogame *Trace Effects*. Try copying and pasting this code into a new Hot Potatoes activity.
  - a. Remember – the web address for any video online can be used to replace the web address in bold above.
3. Using this code can allow students to view a video online and then answer questions related to the video all without having to change web pages.
  - a. Remember – if using an online video in the Hot Potatoes activity, the computers the students use to complete the activity will require Internet access.
4. Again, if mistakes are made, just revert back to the HTML code above and try again! It is important to play with these features to fully understand what is possible.

### HOT POTATOES PLUS: ADDING AUDIO

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1. Using the code `<embed src="audio.mp3">` audio can be placed into an activity in the same way images and video can be added.
2. This code allows for the addition of locally created audio. This audio can be recorded on a desktop computer or phone using recording software such as Audacity.
  - a. **Remember** – if using locally created audio, be sure that it is saved in the same folder as the Hot Potatoes activity.
  - b. For more information on using Audacity to create audio recordings, check back later this month for Week 3 of the September Teacher’s Corner.
3. This code can also be used to add online audio materials into the Hot Potatoes activity. To add online materials just replace **audio.mp3** with the web address of the audio.
  - a. Remember – when using online audio, be sure to copy/paste the URL which will begin with **http://**

## HOT POTATOES: IN CONCLUSION

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The above material may seem overwhelming at first, but don't get disheartened. Any new technology takes time and should not be learned through reading alone. As with any skill, technology fits well with a learn-by-doing approach. This week's Teacher's Corner should be read step-by-step at the same time activities are made in Hot Potatoes. Using this approach will show how simple these steps can be. Just remember: approach learning new technology with a playful attitude, save often, and if everything fails it is always okay to begin again!