VocabTutor v1.10

An aid to vocabulary acquisition for S60 3rd Edition Smartphones

Overview

VocabTutor's job is to help you learn foreign language vocabulary. It does this by allowing you to enter lists of words or expressions in the form of word pairs, in your own language and in the language you're trying to learn. It can then test you by picking one at random and displaying it. You then have to enter its translation. If you're right, well and good. If not, it shows you the right answer before picking a different one at random. The test is over once you've got everything right once. It then displays a score at the end.

You can set up as many lists as your phone will store in its memory. Having set them up you can edit them, add to them or delete items from them as much as you like. You can name each list for easy retrieval later.

VocabTutor began life on the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, and has existed in various forms including for Psion machines and Ewe (a Java implementation for Windows CE devices), before this port for Java ME for S60 3rd Edition.

VocabTutor has been tested on the Nokia N95, and the screenshots in this document are from the N95. You may get slightly different results on other S60 3rd Edition machines, but the program should still run properly.

Download and install

To download and install directly on your phone, you should visit http://www.neilsands.plus.com/vocabtutor/, and download the JAD file in the notes about installation. This is called installation 'over the air' (OTA).

If you want to download to any other device prior to transferring it to the phone later, you need to download the JAR file from the same page.
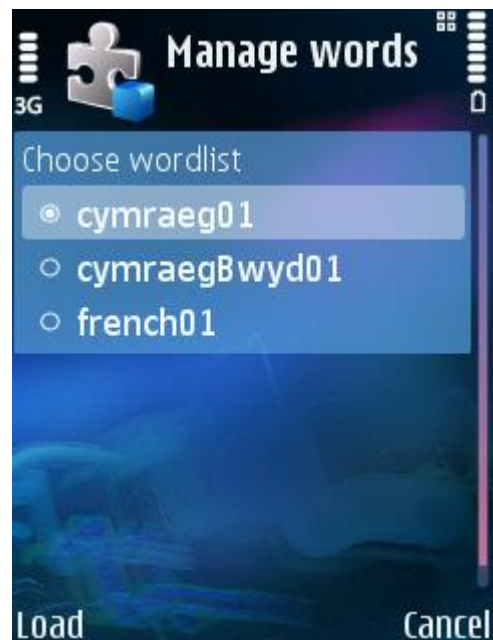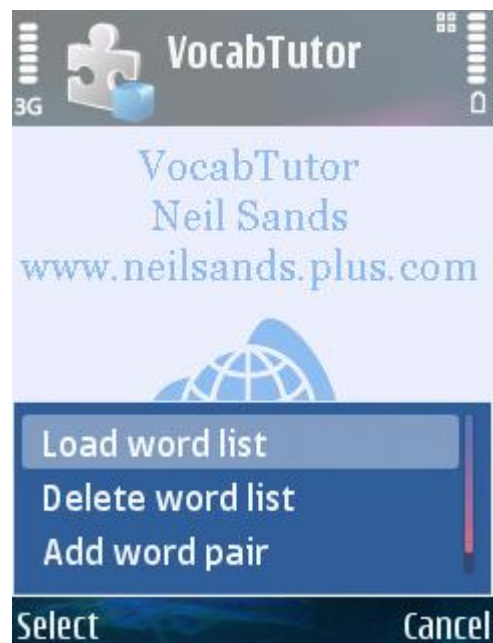
Either way, installation is automatic as soon as your phone opens the file.

How to use VocabTutor

On running VocabTutor, you should see this splash screen. The precise locations of the menus and their contents may vary between devices.

The splash screen is present whenever there is no loaded data to display. Whenever this is the case, you can start off a new word list by adding a new word pair, by choosing the relevant menu option.
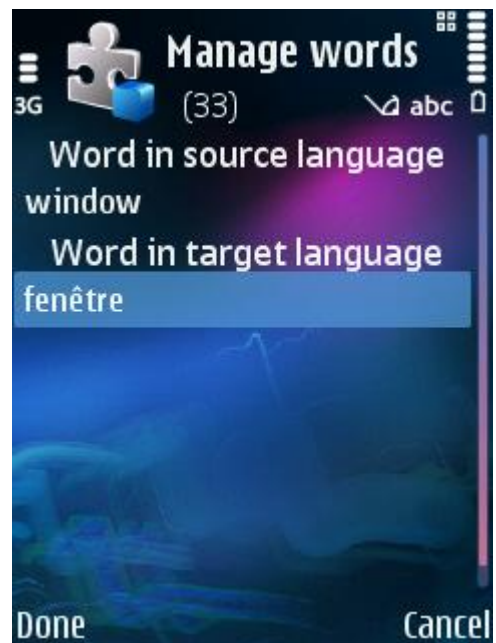
Additionally, if you've saved word lists in previous sessions, you can load in one of those. You see this screen whenever you're selecting a word list, for example to load it in or to delete it from the phone's memory.

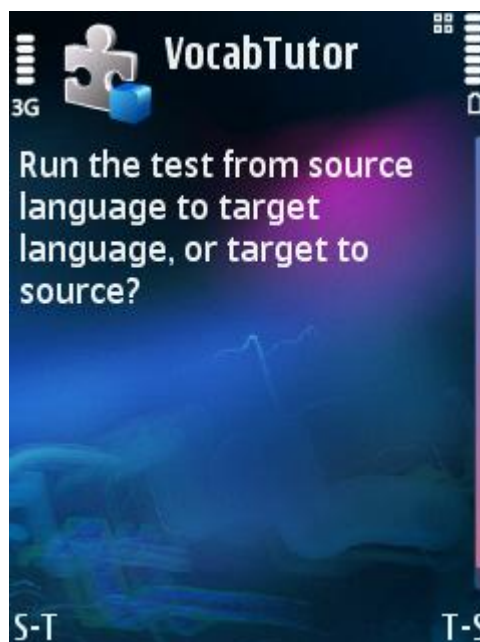Once VocabTutor has a word list available to display, it's shown like this:

From here, there are options to add to the word list, or to edit existing items. The display for editing or adding word pairs looks like this. You type words in using your phone's normal text-handling facilities.

Running the test

When your word list is ready, you can choose 'test' from the menus. You're then asked in which direction you want to conduct the test.

In the jargon, the 'source' language is your own language, and the 'target' language is the one you're trying to learn. So you can choose to test yourself from say English to French, or French to English. The 'S-T' and 'T-S' shown in this screen shot may be shown in full ('Source – Target' or 'Target to Source') on some devices.
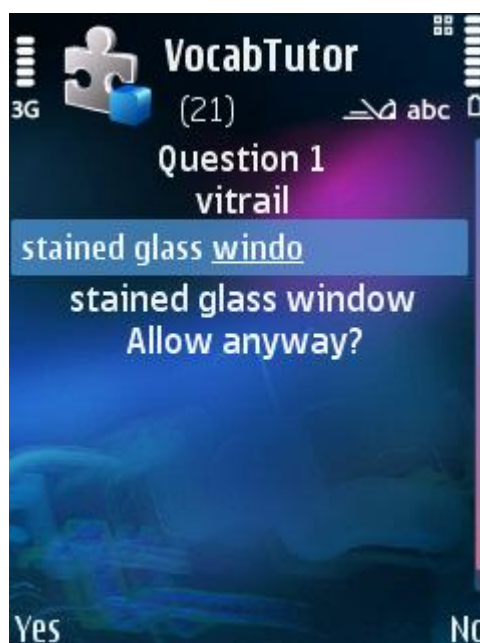
Once you start the test, you see this:

The shot shows the question ('vitrail') with an answer begun but not yet completed. You pick 'Done' off the menu when you want to submit your answer. What you see next depends on whether you're right or wrong. If you're right, you just get the next question presented. If you're wrong, you get shown the right answer first.
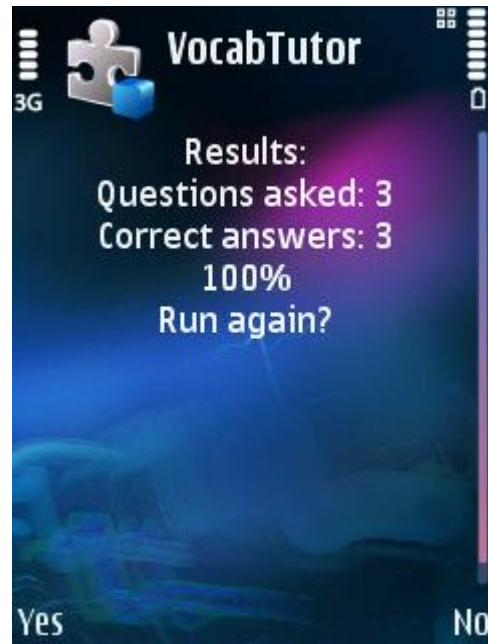
Now it may be that you make a mistake because of a silly typo, or because you enter something like 'to do, to make' when the word list has 'to make, to do'. VocabTutor will naturally take such answers as being wrong, but you get the option of allowing them anyway. So if you get an answer wrong, you see this.

If you feel you've misremembered the word and you'd like another crack at it later in the test, you press 'No'. But if you want VocabTutor to accept your wrong answer, press 'Yes'.

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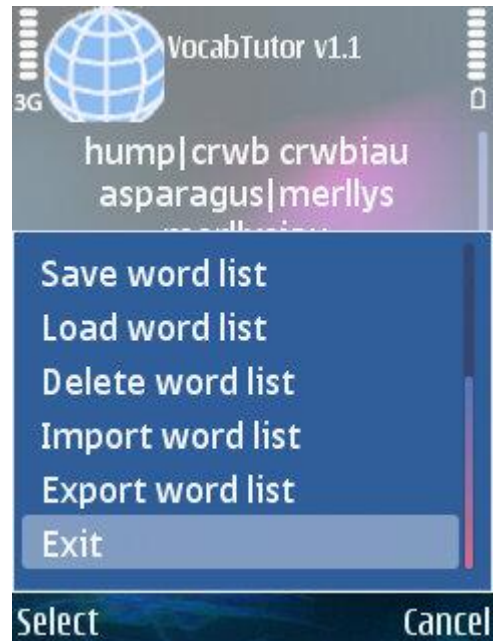At the end of the test, you are given a score, expressed as a percentage:

Import & Export

VocabTutor is able to import & export word lists as text files to & from other computers. This allows the easy exchange of word lists between ports of VocabTutor running on other computers.

Import & export are both available from the main options menu. Export is only offered if your current word list isn't empty.

File transfer within Symbian Java phones is limited. Better functionality is provided, but only in optional Java packages that are not included on all phones, and therefore may not be provided on yours. VocabTutor only uses functionality that should be present on all phones.

For this reason, importing & exporting with VocabTutor are both clumsy, but they work, and they allow you to prepare large amounts of data on a computer with a proper keyboard, which you may find more convenient, and then transfer it to the phone.

The phone will use the text file at C:\Data\Images\vocabtutor.txt for both import & export. If the file isn't present, it'll warn you. For export, the file should be empty before you start, as the export process will only overwrite as much data as it needs to, and any more will remain.

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Housekeeping

VocabTutor has a concept of 'clean' and 'dirty' data. A word list which is safely stored on the phone's memory is clean. If you make any changes to that list, the list becomes dirty.

If you do anything that unloads the current word list, and if that word list is dirty, VocabTutor will prompt you to save it before you carry on. For example, if you try to load a word list from memory to replace the current one, and the current one has additions in it, you will be asked if you want to save the current one before you lose the data. Similarly, using the menu's 'Exit' option will prompt you to save your data if necessary.

If you've saved the data before, it will simply be saved again later under a new name.
If not, you'll be asked for a name to save under.