

Creating Customised Readers with Print Shop Ensemble III



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It should not be difficult for teachers on the lookout for effective and functional teaching aids to look beyond the face value of the projects offered in PSE3 and turn them to professional advantage.

Print Shop Ensemble III is arguably one of the most powerful software packages, currently used in state schools. By its very nature (practically a printing engine for the creation of customised yet professional-looking stationery) it neatly falls under the category of free-content software. It can easily be applied to any kind of subject or theme tackled in the classroom. This in itself increases its hidden potential enormously. In other words, its power of use is limited only by the user's own imagination.

Although its user interface may not appear so much attractive to the younger children as, say, that of *Kid Pix Studio*, it nevertheless has its own very functional place in Year 1-3 classes. As teachers, always on the lookout for transforming any possible resource available into an effective and functional teaching aid, it should not be too difficult for us to look beyond the face value of the projects offered in PSE3 to turn them to our professional advantage.

The ready-made examples of projects such as the Greeting Cards and the Signs and Posters,

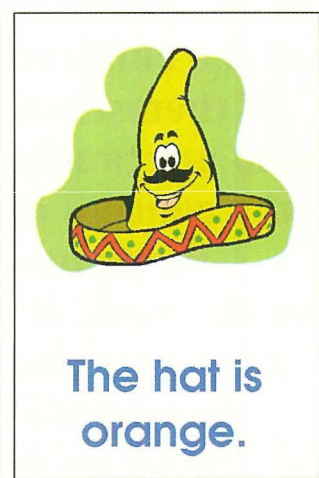
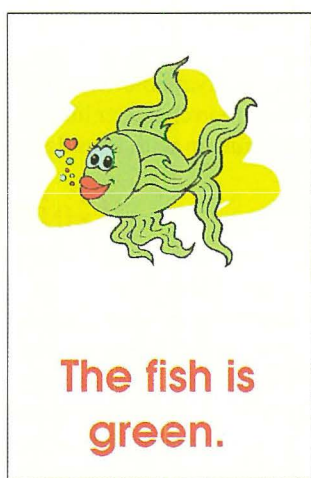


fig.1

for instance, suggest the use of the program for particular occasions, the most obvious being messages for best wishes on particular festive days or perhaps the odd poster or two for the upcoming school book fair or plant week. But of course, there's more to PSE3 than that.

For us teachers, Signs and Posters should read customised wall charts, flash cards, action cards, perhaps even the pages of a fully-fledged class magazine or newsletter. For us teachers, Greeting Cards should read a four-page A5 leaflet. Let us stretch the imagination a little further in this case. A combination of Greeting Card projects may be the basis of an eight- or twelve-page A5 booklet: *A Reader*.

The educational advantages here are obvious. For one thing, the teacher is able to create his/her own story and pitch it at the desired level. PSE3 can manipulate both graphics and text with equal ease. For the younger age groups, one can start by creating picture stories and using graphics without any text. One can then proceed to pictures and



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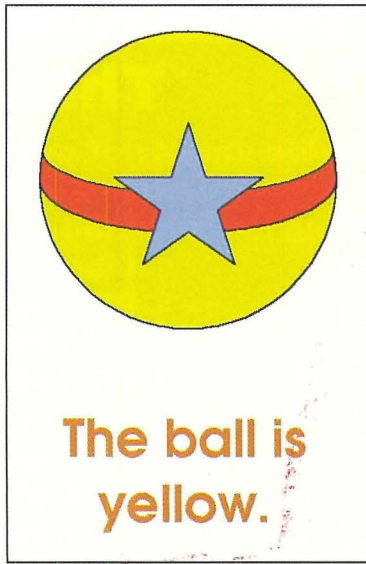
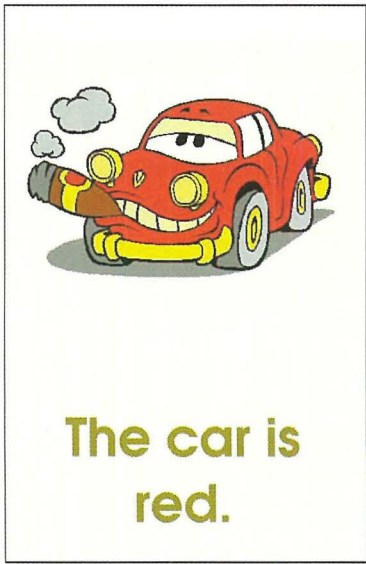


fig.2

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letters, pictures and words, pictures and phrases, pictures and sentences, and so on.

The interesting part here is the fact that the booklets can be created in the presence of the children themselves. In this way they are taught the concept of the home-made book, including its very structure and the way it is built up of single pages. Eventually, in the higher classes, they can be left on their own to create their own sequences. The subjects for such projects may not necessarily be complicated. Themes that readily come to mind are: members of the family; favourite foods; colours; different kinds of buildings; animals. Simply looking at the thousands of clip art available with PSE3 itself (especially its cartoon character libraries) would be enough to come up with countless other themes.

Going about it

Creating a reader with PSE3 may be either a springboard to, or the climax of a book awareness program, depending on the theme you wish to tackle and the children's disposition. Reference to real books is therefore a must in any case.

For example, let us create an 8-page book on the theme of Colours, using words covered in the Ladybird Reader and Practice and Play Book 4. In this case, we will be creating two Greeting Cards with four pages each. Before deciding on the text, we must look up the PSE3 clip art libraries to see what is available and associate the colours to the objects accordingly (see Box Out 1). Then, we will put one picture and a short sentence in every page, as follows:

- Page 1: Cover (just a picture)**
- Page 2: The fish is green.**
- Page 3: The cat is black.**
- Page 4: The car is red.**
- Page 5: The ball is yellow.**
- Page 6: The water is blue.**
- Page 7: The hat is orange.**
- Page 8: (We'll leave this page blank.)**

Once we run PSE3, we will select the

Greeting Cards project and start from scratch a Half-Page/Side Fold Spread card. This will yield four A5 pages. We will select No Background and No Layout so that the workspace will be completely blank.

If we intend to use the same sheet to print on both sides, we will here have to determine what goes in which page of the Greeting Card so that the finished product will have the pages the way we want them. For instance, the above sequence of pages will have to be set as follows:

- Greeting Card 1: front = Page 1 (cover)
inside = Page 2 / Page 7
back = Page 8 (blank)**
- Greeting Card 2: front = Page 3
inside = Page 4 / Page 5
back = Page 6**

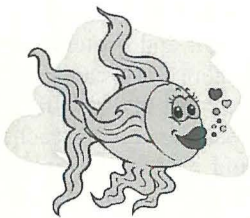
An alternative may be that of cutting the pages separately to glue them to a cardboard in order to render the end product more resistant to wear and tear. In this case, we do not have to think about the sequence of the pages, as this will then be sorted out later.

Putting Objects on the Cards

Every item which is to be put into a project is referred to by PSE3 as an Object (Box Out 2). Except for the Cover, in which we will only include a graphic, all the other pages of our reader will contain three objects: the Square Graphic, the Text and the Mini-Border. If we keep to the same format from one page to the next, it will be very simple to create the necessary objects only once, for one page. All items can then be copied and pasted on the other pages. It would then be a simple matter of changing the picture and some words in each consecutive page. For this project we'll keep to a single format. Fig. 1 illustrates the Inside for Greeting Card 1, containing pages 2 and 7 of our booklet. Let us go through the steps for creating page 2, the fish.

Once you have selected a Greeting Card/

“The booklets can be created in the presence of the children themselves who are taught the concept of the home-made book: its structure and the way it is built up of single pages.”



The Graphics

PSE3 has a wide variety of graphics which are quite useful for our needs. These graphics are grouped in libraries according to themes. The graphics we will be using for our small project can be found in the following libraries:

Project Page	Library	Graphic
Page 1 (Cover)	PSD Squares	Paintbrush
Page 2	CC Science and Nature	Tropical Fish
Page 3	CC Cool Cats	Midnight Cat
Page 4	CC Travel and Transportation	Car
Page 5	Education	Ball
Page 6	CC People Play	Surfing
Page 7	CC Home and Office	Sombrero

The Objects

Mini-Border: In our case we should use Mini-Borders rather than Borders so that we will be able to re-size them accordingly. This is impossible with Border objects.

Graphics: You always have the option of using other graphics than those available in PSE3. Load them into the project by selecting Add/Import.

Text: Text is more flexible than Headline in our case. Make sure you select fonts which are clear for our purpose (especially for the use of the rounded letter 'a').

Half Page/Side Fold Spread project, click on the Inside button, and select No Backdrop/Layout. Create a Mini-Border by going to Object on the menu bar, Add and Mini-Border. Double click on the Mini-Border icon to select the border you want. From the list, select the border called Single Light, and click on OK. You will be taken back to the Inside workspace. Stretch the border from the corner handles to fit the left side of the card's inside.

Create the graphic by selecting Object/Add/Square Graphic. Double click on the

Graphic icon. Select the CC Science and Nature library and the graphic Tropical Fish. Click OK, and enlarge the picture accordingly to fit within the border.

Follow the same steps to create the Text: Object/Add/Text. Double click to enter the text you like.

For the example here I used the Moderne font with a size of 58, set to bold. When you are finished click on OK, and position the text within the border accordingly.

Now you have all the elements for one page. In order to duplicate the format on the opposite page (page 7 in our booklet), simply go to the Menu Bar and select Edit/Select All. All objects will now be highlighted. Select Edit/Copy and then Edit/Paste. All the objects on the page will now be duplicated. Click once anywhere over the duplicated objects, and drag

over to the opposite page. All objects should move together.

This operation is possible even for the Front and Back portions of the Card. Click on the Back button, and select Edit/Paste. The same group of objects will now appear on the Back side of the card as well.

Before carrying on, you should save your project. Give it a simple title, say *Colours1*. Now, save it again, but with a different name: *Colours2*. At this point you have created two Greeting Cards with the same format. Load the Cards separately, and edit the duplicated objects to change the text and the pictures.

Whenever you change an object, save the project.

Options

There are a number of options for using such a project. If you intend to create multiple copies for every pupil, for instance, you can print the Cards as a Colouring Book. In this way, text and pictures are printed as black outlines suitable for reproducing on a duplicating machine.

You may wish to have a larger format rather than an A5 booklet. In this case, you can use the Signs and Posters project. You will have to fit one A4 page per project, and will therefore have to save one file for every page.

You may decide not to bind the pages at all. Sorting the sequence of a particular story may be used as an activity in itself. For older age groups, you can present story sequences with different endings.