

LESSON PLAN 43: MAKE A MAZE WITH WORD

Objective: Design and construct a puzzle using tables and borders

Age range: 6-12

Using a software program to play games and have a little fun is a great way to learn about its functions. Here we look at a way of using word processing package Microsoft Word to create simple mazes.

YOU WILL NEED

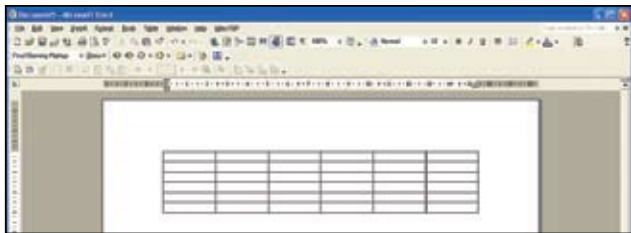
Computer, Word.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

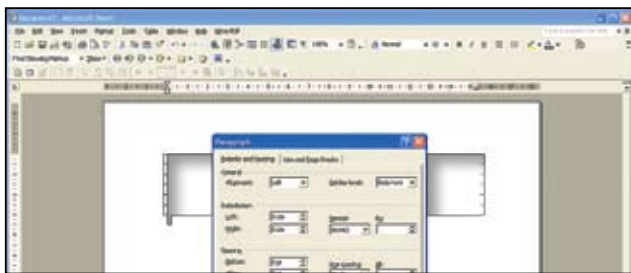
Computer use and confidence, design, visual perception, and problem solving.

METHOD

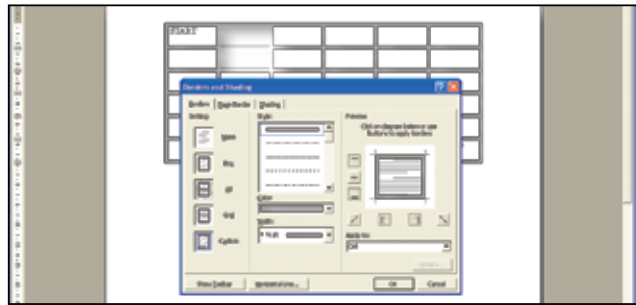
1. Introduce the concept of mazes to your class. Discuss their uses and history, and some famous examples of mazes – Wikipedia has an interesting and informative overview (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maze>) or you could try The Labyrinth Society (www.labyrinthology.org) for useful resources.
2. Talk about the objective of mazes, how they're created and how they can be solved. Ask your class to think about how they would design a maze.
3. Open Word and save a new document.
4. Click on Tools on the toolbar (or the Table and Borders button). Select 'Insert Table' and inside the dialog box select 6 columns and 6 rows. Word will create a table 6 x 6. (below) Then thicken up the lines a little, say to 4 or 5 point, to make it easier to follow.



5. Double space the cells to give you more room to work with. To do this, highlight the entire grid, on the toolbar click Format and select 'Paragraph'. Inside the dialog box choose double spacing in the Line Spacing drop-down box.

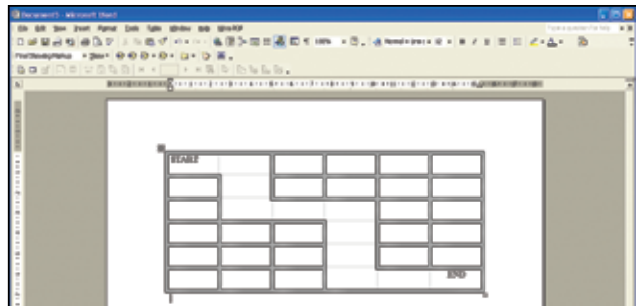


6. In the top left box type 'Start' and in the bottom right 'End'. To create your maze, use the Borders icon to remove cell walls. To do this, highlight the two boxes joined by the line you want to remove. Click Format, choose Borders, and in the Settings section select 'none'. Then in the preview pane, remove the line you don't want.



TIP: For younger students just starting out or ones who aren't familiar with Word, you can get them to design and draw their maze on paper before trying to create it on-screen.

7. Remove further lines to build your maze, connecting the 'Start' and 'End' boxes.



8. When you're done, add the creator's name, print the puzzle, and try it out.

WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR MAZE

Once you get the hang of things, there are several ways to develop, enhance and complicate your maze to make it more of a challenge:

- Increase the size of your grid;
- Change the Start and End points;
- Add dead ends;
- Use diagonal lines;
- Add colour and clipart;
- Come up with a theme for your maze.