

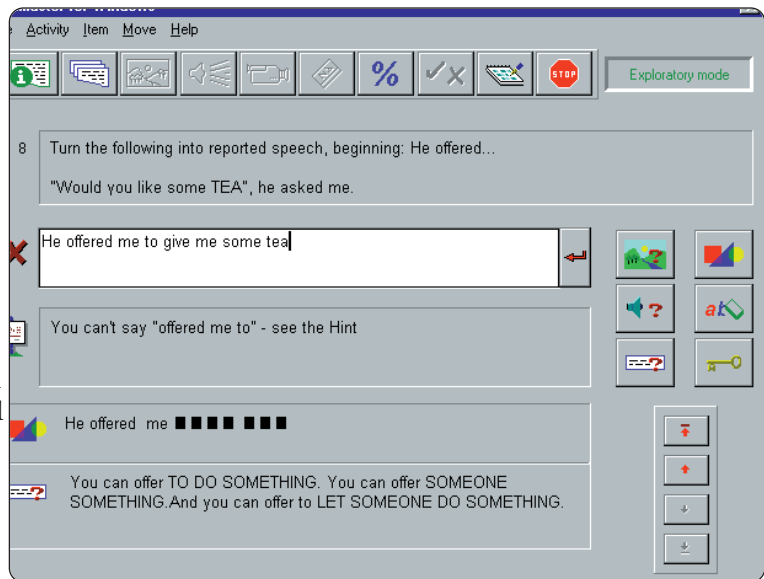


# Authoring Suite modules: —Testmaster

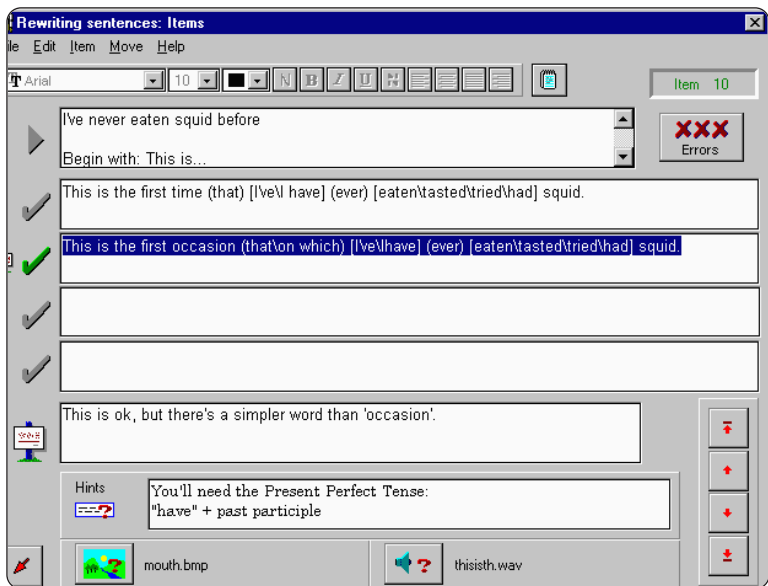


*Testmaster* is a question and answer program with a difference: it doesn't just rush you off to the next item as soon as you find a right answer. Instead, you can use its *Exploratory mode* to try out a range of possibilities. Once you've found *He offered me some tea* in this example, try adding *to give* after *offered*, or experiment with the verb *to let*. Or you can leave this item and come back to it later: the learner, not the program, decides when an item is finished.

If you need help, take a look at the Introduction or a text help page, or call up a picture or sound *hint*. Or you can use the program's powerful *shape* feature, which guides you towards the answer you seem to be making for. Those who prefer to work in examination conditions can select *Test mode*, which delays all feedback until the end of the activity.



Authoring *Testmaster* files is surprisingly easy. Each item can have up to four correct answer-strings, ranging from single characters to whole sentences, each with its own feedback message. So while you can limit yourself to simple items like *What's the opposite of light?* (*dark* and *heavy*), you can also get much more ambitious. A simple system of brackets and backslashes allows you easily to specify alternatives and options within each answer-string: in the exercise shown here, a total of 80 different answers has been allowed for in just two strings. You can also write hints, and specify whether punctuation, spaces, capital letters and accents are significant in answers. You can also add messages to accompany likely errors, appearing when elements are omitted or included by error. This flexibility makes *Testmaster* a very powerful but easily learned authoring module which can have wide applications in any subject. But because languages typically allow many ways of saying the same thing, it is particularly valuable in language learning:



- Sentence rewriting (e.g. both screens above).
- Expansion from prompts, e.g. *You/always/dinner/this time?*
- Joining sentences, e.g. *John left college. Then he went abroad. (After...)*
- Trivia quizzes written by learners, e.g. *She played Cleopatra and married the same man twice.* Answer: *[Elizabeth\Liz] Taylor.*
- Sentence completion with alternatives: *You can't afford to [turn down \refuse \say no to \decline \turn your nose up at] this offer of a job.*