

## KWordQuiz

# Vocabulary Trainer

Planning your next trip abroad? Need a little help with the language so you can get around better? If you need to avoid those costly courses and beginner tapes, then Linux can ride to the rescue with the latest KDE application. KWordQuiz helps you train your basic vocabulary, or even technical terms. **BY STEFANIE TEUFEL**



**V**ocabulary training is not everyone's idea of a good time. However, you may have no alternative, that is, if you want to avoid using sign language on your next trip abroad. Thank goodness that tools are available to get the job done. This issue of KTools will be looking at KWordQuiz, an application that puts the fun factor back into what otherwise might be a dreary task.

## Export Hits

KWordQuiz is a KDE port of a Windows program called Wordquiz, a tool that language schools have been using for years to teach vocabulary and help students master the technical terms they need. The current version of the program is available from the developers' website at

<http://www.peterandlinda.com/kwordquiz/download.php>.

At time of writing, there are no binary packages available for KWordQuiz, so you have no alternative but to compile the program yourself. After entering `tar -xzf kwordquiz-0.3.tar.gz` to unpack the sources, perform the usual three-card trick `configure; make; make install` to compile and install.

The program selects `/usr/local/kde/` by default, although this is not the typical path to the KDE directory. If you prefer to install the program in `/opt/kde3/` instead (this is the KDE path for Suse Linux), type the following, rather than just typing `./configure`:

```
./configure --prefix=/opt/kde3/
```

After compiling with `make`, assume `root` privileges and enter the `make install` command. The program should install to the path you specified.

After completing the installation steps, you should find a KWordQuiz entry for the program below *Edutainment / Miscellaneous*. This means you can launch

the program via the K menu in future. As an alternative, you can always type `kwordquiz` in the shell.

When you first launch the program, an empty screen pops up. You are right in thinking that this will not help you with your vocabulary training. Fortunately, you can surf to <http://www.peterandlinda.com/kwordquiz/vocabularies.php>, where a few pre-configured Wordquiz files are waiting for you. Before you ask, yes, KWordQuiz can use these files, too. The collection includes less common languages, such as Swedish or Polish. You can use the other databases on this page to brush up your knowledge of US states, or Nobel prize winners.

In addition to Wordquiz files, KWordQuiz can also handle the KDE vocabulary format, `kvtml`. This allows you to continue using any files of this kind that you may already have on your machine.

`File / Open` opens an existing vocabulary file. KWordQuiz automatically assigns headings to the columns – English and Spanish in our example (see Figure 1).

## KTools

In this column we present tools, month by month, which have proven to be especially useful when working under KDE, solve a problem which otherwise is deliberately ignored, or are just some of the nicer things in life, which – once discovered – you would not want to do without.

You can sort the list in ascending or descending order by selecting *Vocabulary / Sort*. If you prefer to work with randomized lists, simply select *Vocabulary / Shuffle* to tell KWordQuiz to randomize your vocabulary list. *Vocabulary / Rows/Columns...* allows you to set the width and height of the columns.

You can add your own vocabulary to a list at any time, or simply define a new list that contains your own choice of vocabulary. To do so, select *File / New* and populate the empty page with your own content. When you select *File / Save*

as to store a file, you can opt for the default KDE format, or create a file in the proprietary KWordQuiz format, *wql*.

### Practice Makes Perfect

KWordQuiz shows its true value as a vocabulary trainer when you select *Go to* in the menu. This is where you can access the various types of exercise that the program provides. The first variety is a *multiple choice* test. No doubt, you still have fond memories of these from your days at school and college. If you opt for multiple choice, KWordQuiz will pick a word at random from the vocabulary list, and offer you a selection of three possible answers.

Click the right answer with your mouse – good luck! If you get it right,

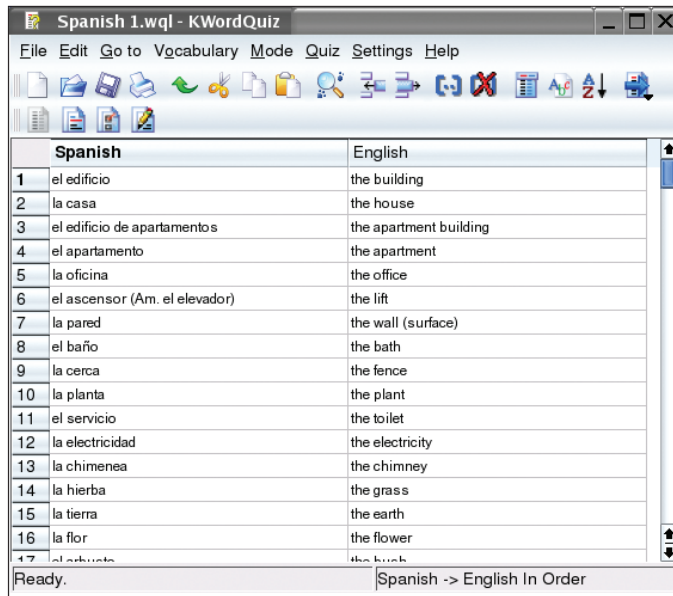


Figure 1: KWordQuiz has a well-organized list view.

the program simply displays your answer lower down the window; if not, you get a reminder (see Figure 2). The statistics at the bottom of the screen tell you the number of questions you answered, and how many of them you got right or wrong.

As the developers have not quite finished porting the program, quite a few functions have not yet been implemented. These fields are grayed, just like the *Hint* function on the right-hand side of the window. On a brighter note, the developers are going full steam ahead to complete the port. You can expect the missing functions to be available in the next version.

*Question & Answer* mode (see Figure 3) adds variety to your training program.

Again select *Go to* to enter this mode, which allows you to train your vocabulary and spelling skills, as you need to enter the right answers.

Incidentally, the hint function has already been implemented here. When you click the *Hint* button on the right-hand side of the window, the program displays a few letters to help you on your way to the right answer. Just click the *Check* button, or press the [Enter] key to find out if you were right.

Select *Settings / Configure KWordQuiz / Quiz* to tell your virtual language teacher how to react in a test scenario. You

can opt to penalize the use of hints in “*Question & Answer*” mode, or simply allow hints. In the latter case, do not check the *Treat hint as error* checkbox – this is the default setting. If you prefer to display your grade as a percentage, this is where to select that option. Select *Show score as percent* to do so.

The *Settings / Configure Notifications* entry allows you to assign a sound file of your choice to right and wrong answers.

As you might suspect, *More Options* provides you with additional options. Instead of playing a sound file, you can opt to run a specific program (*Execute a program*) when a certain event occurs, or log your activities to a file (*Log to a file*). ■

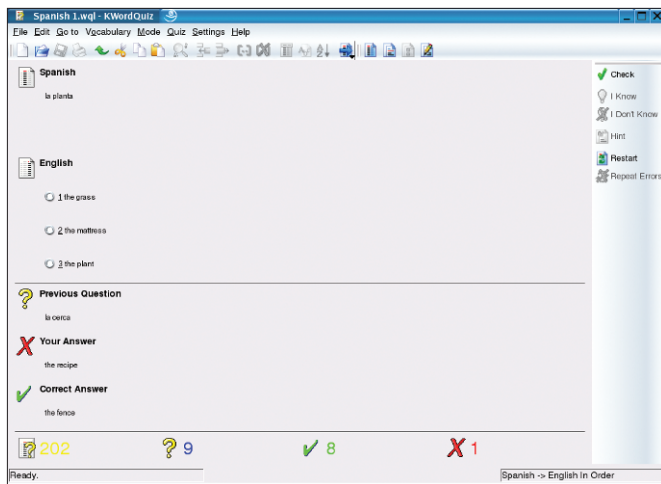


Figure 2: In multiple choice mode, you select an answer from three alternatives.

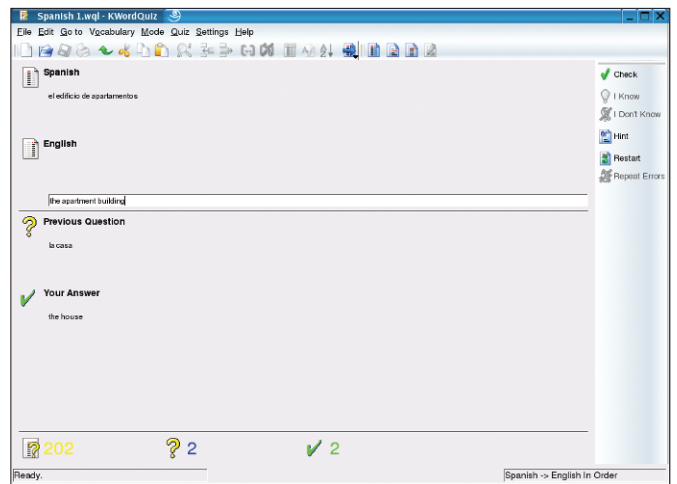


Figure 3: KWordQuiz's *Question & Answer* mode makes a welcome change from the usual online quizzes.