

Mockingbird Test Generator

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Version 3.0.0

The *Mockingbird Test Generator LITE* version operates similar to the full version but is slightly limited in questions and there is no Test Editor available.

Mockingbird Test Generator continues our test generator series that will allow teachers to create and store tests based on classical literary works and topics that teachers will use as part of their class curriculum. More importantly, however, it will allow teachers to create their test questions once, and then it will give the teachers the power to instantly generate random, sequential, or a selected multitude of tests based on the original questions devised. This is extremely helpful when teachers have a group of classes covering the same subject area and tests are given to each class – one following the other.

I found that when similar classes take tests sequentially throughout the day (or on alternate days), some students have a tendency to consult with students who have previously taken the test. This wouldn't be so bad if they were really trying to learn about the subject from the knowledge they acquire, but many of them simply want a rote summary of the information – answers or questions memorized in sequence, so they can simply fill in the blanks, regardless of what they should have learned.

I often felt that it would be a boon to our testing environment if teachers could generate different versions of the same test, without a lot of work. For example, it would be helpful if we could take a twenty or thirty question test and quickly put together four or five variations of this test. Each test would be the same content for each class but with questions arranged in different orders.

I tried this by hand for a while when I was teaching, and it was amazing how many students I caught with red faces, when they ultimately realized that the test wasn't exactly like the one their friends took yesterday. On a multiple choice test, for example, some students (in a misguided attempt at helping their mentally challenged buddies) memorized the sequence of questions and answers. When the recipients tried using the same sequence of answers (without even reading the questions) they were stunned at the terrible grades they received. Hopefully they learned a lesson.

Well, generating a group of tests for the myriad of topics I was covering became quite a burden, so I decided it would be handy if I had a computer program in which I could do the following:

- Create collections of these kinds of questions: fill-in, short answer, multiple choice, open-ended response

- Save these collections of questions as files that I could edit and reuse in the future.
- Quickly and easily use the files of questions to generate tests with questions randomly selected from the entire file.
- Quickly and easily use the files of questions to generate tests with questions randomly selected from selected ranges of questions from the entire file.
- Quickly and easily use the files of questions to generate tests with questions I select from the list of question in the entire file.
- In all of the above cases the program should also provide a neatly formatted list of answers for each of the questions asked.

Notice that the key words from this list are quickly and easily. Teachers have lots of work to do, and a lot of this work eats up preparation time. A computer program that would do this prep work would save a lot of time that could be better spent on other jobs.

Mockingbird Test Generator will do the tasks outlined above. In addition, you can also format your finished tests the way you want them (you can even paste graphics into the final test you create); save the generated tests in named files, for use in the future; copy and paste your test information into other documents in your favorite word processor; search for and insert information in your final tests, and print hard copies to your printer. *Mockingbird Test Generator* even includes a test editor, so that you can quickly and easily make up your test data and save it in a format that *Mockingbird Test Generator* can import and append to the current database of questions and answers. We have even included a simple search puzzle maker, too. This is handy for creating search puzzles based on vocabulary, characters, key terms, etc.

Installing *Mockingbird Test Generator*

Installation of *Mockingbird Test Generator* is relatively easy. First of all be aware that this software only runs on Window PC machines. It will not work with MAC or other types of operating systems. If you received the installation on a CD, simply insert the CD in drive on your computer. If you have autostart set on your computer the CD will start up automatically after a few moments of initialization.

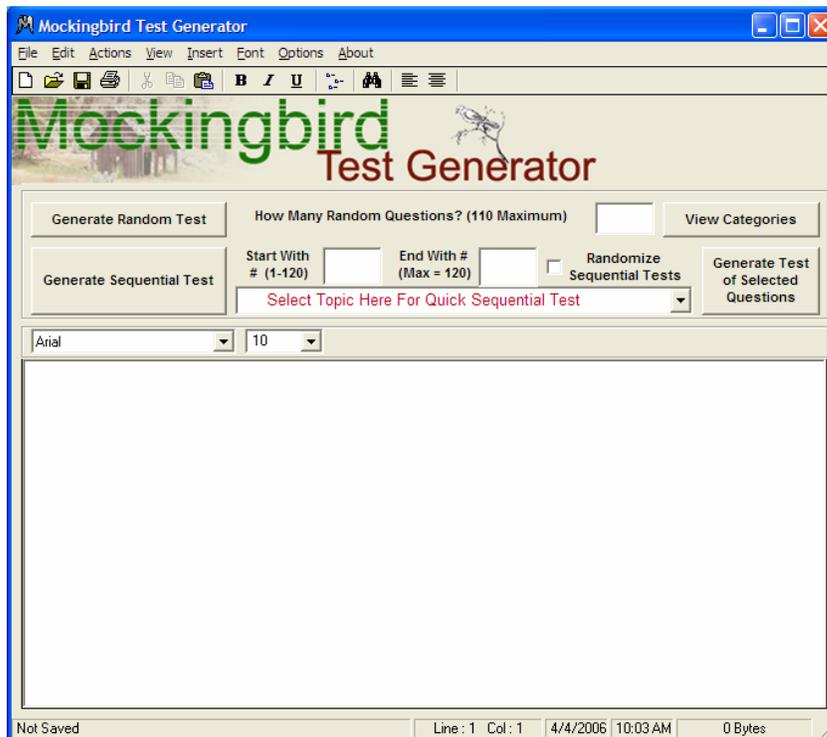
If the installation does not start automatically, simply open My Computer on your Windows desktop and double click the CD drive icon to open the CD window. Then double click the setup.exe file to get the installation started.

In both cases above, read the installation screen to complete installation on your computer. After installation is complete, store your CD in a safe place for backup use in the future. You won't need it in the drive to run the program.

If you received your installation via download from the internet, save the file to a new folder you create on your Windows desktop. You will need WinZip installed on your computer (available as a free download from www.winzip.com) to unpack *Mockingbird Test Generator* installation. If you already have WinZip installed, double click the file you downloaded and WinZip will give you instructions to unpack the installation and documentation files to the same folder. Once this is completed you will have the same files that would be found on the CD. Simply double click the setup.exe file and follow the screen directions to install the program on your Windows machine.

Using Mockingbird Test Generator

Once you have installed *Mockingbird Test Generator* on your Windows PC, you will see a shortcut icon in the Baggetta_Ware Literary Test Generator folder, on the Windows desktop. Double click this with our mouse button and a splash screen will appear for a few moments. This will be followed by the program's main screen, illustrated here.

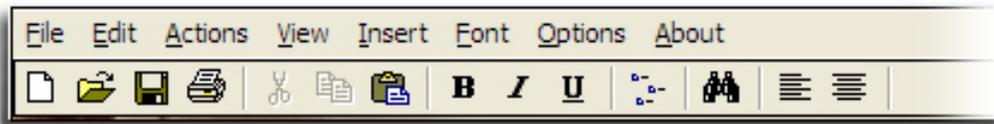


Mockingbird Test Generator is ready to go to work for you with its power to manipulate test data that you create. Before getting into the process, let's take a closer look at the screen and menu controls.

At the bottom of the text window there is a status bar with current information

about the file being used. Just above the text window you will find a format bar, which will allow you to format text you enter in the text window. This works similar to most word processors. First you must highlight text in the window before making changes to the font type, and font size. Most of the time you will probably not even have a need for these functions, but they are there if you choose to use them.

At the top of the screen you will see a menu bar. Here is where you will go for many of the program's important functions. Let's take some time to review the features of this bar (below it many of the same functions are graphically represented on a toolbar).



New	Ctrl+N
Open A Test File...	
Save	Ctrl+S
Save As...	
Print Current Test	Ctrl+P
Exit	

The drop-down **File** menu has the options to start **New**, when you want to import or generate a new test format. **Open A Test File...** will allow you to open final tests that you have saved. You will only be able to edit and print these saved tests. **Save and Save As...** will allow you to save final versions of the tests you create. **Print Current Test** will allow you to send the test on display to a

printer you have attached to your computer. **Exit** is the only legitimate way to close the program when you are done. Make sure you save any tests you have created before exiting the program.

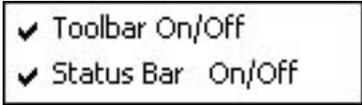
Select All	Ctrl+A
Cut Selected Text	Ctrl+X
Copy Selected Text	Ctrl+C
Paste Text	
Clears Selected Text	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Word Wrap On/Off	
Find Selected Text	F3

The drop-down **Edit** menu allows you to **Select All** (contents of the text window). **Cut or Copy Selected Text**. **Paste Text** (in the text window). **Clear Selected Text** (from the text window). **Word Wrap** text in the text window (This is a toggle switch to turn this feature off or on. It is on by default -- checked.). **Find Selected Text** in the text window. This feature can be very helpful in a long test when you want to locate a small

piece of information. These features are grayed out if there is no text in the text window to be manipulated, as you can see by the illustration here.

Make Puzzle
Clear Text Windows
Open Question Editor
Import Your Question List

The **Actions** drop-down allows you to **Make Puzzles** from the default word list (customizable). **Clear** (all) text windows. **Open Question Editor** (for generating new data files of questions and answers). **Import Your Question List** (data files for use in generating new tests).



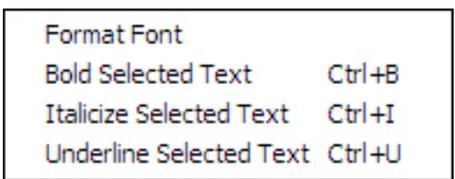
The **View** drop-down menu offers two features. These are toggle switches again (checkmark indicates they are on). With these you can turn the **Toolbar** and **Status Bar** on and off screen

view.



The **Insert** drop-down menu allows you to **Insert Date/Time** into a selected area of the text window. Text you generate will have a generic heading on

them.



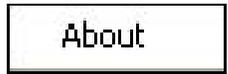
The **Font** drop-down menu will allow you to design the font you want to use in the text window. You will have to select the text first before making a selection from this menu. The functions on the toolbar perform these same actions. **Format Font**, **Bold Selected**

Text, **Italicize Selected Text**, and **Underline Selected Text**.



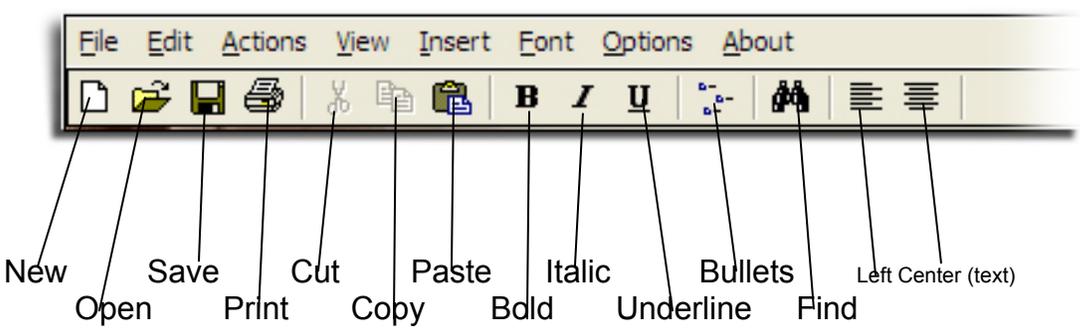
The **Options** drop-down offers one option. This is a toggle switch too, that allows the user to **Preview Font** (in the font window) as it will

actually look if selected.



The **About** drop-down will give the user information about Baggetta_Ware.

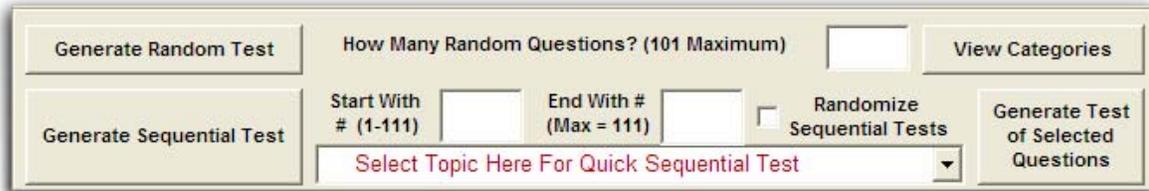
The graphic Toolbar does many of the functions, with a few added features, shown here.



The center of the main screen contains the control and test information panel. At the start of the program this panel shows the current database totals.

The control and test information panel is where you will find information about the current file of questions available. There are three types of tests: Random Tests, Sequential Tests (plain or randomized), and Selected Questions Tests. If the

Panel shown here is from another test generator

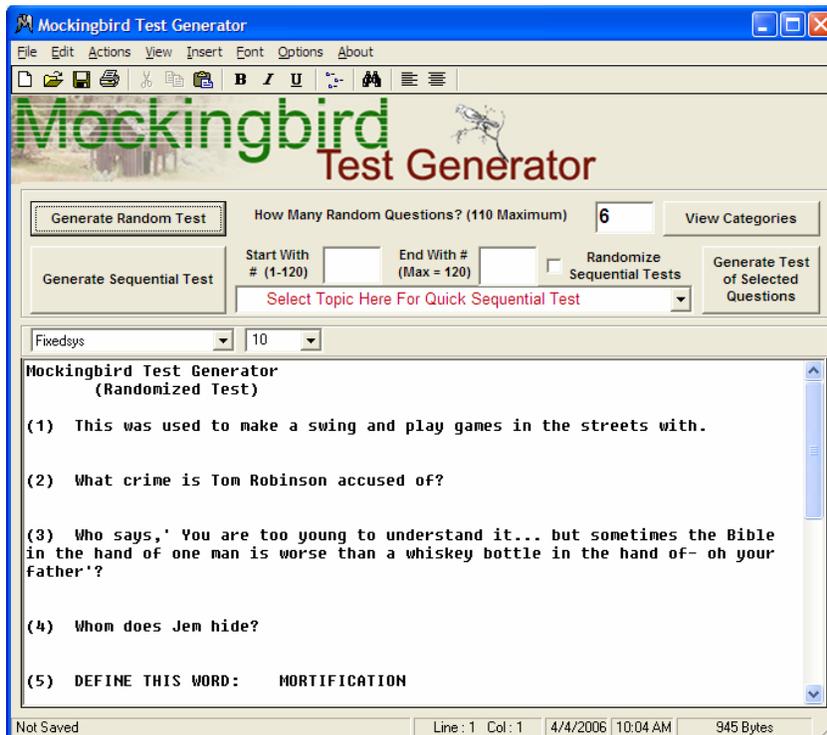


database is divided into categories you will see a “Select Topic...” dropdown list. From this list you can select categories of questions to generate Sequential or Randomized Sequential tests. Let’s experiment with a sample test included with the installation. You can view the available categories in the database by clicking the **View Categories** button.

Generating Tests

Okay. Now we are ready to generate a test. Let’s generate three different test formats. The first test we will create will be a short quiz of five questions only

(the label indicates the Maximum number of questions you can have in a Random Test). We’ll use the **Generate Random Test** button, but first we have to enter a number in the text window to the right of the maximum label. Type the number 5 in the window and then click the **Generate Random Test** button. Instantly you will have a five question quiz randomly selected from the collected database.



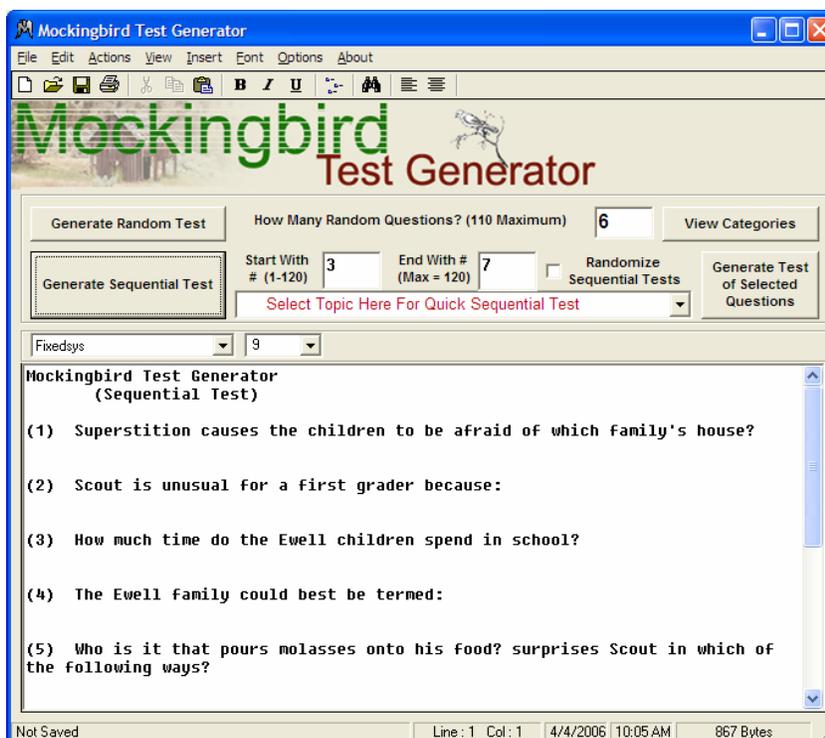
The screen will look like the illustration here.

The interesting feature here is that if you don't like this combination of questions, you can just click the **Generate Random Test** button again to get a different combination of questions. Also, if you like this combination, but want to type in additional information or add a graphic to this test you can type in your information or paste a graphic into the text box. You can also add line spaces to make more room, if you like. And of course you can use the formatting features to change other characteristics of the final test. DO NOT add anything, however, if you plan on using the **Generate Random Test** button to create another version of the quiz. Only make changes to the final version you will save or print.

If you scroll down the textbox page, you will find the answers to the questions you have created for the quiz. These are numbered accordingly. If you plan on printing from the program, you might want to tap down a few lines (using the computer Enter key) to make sure that your answers appear on a separate page for your use as a test key. You wouldn't want to print these for your students to use.

Now let's create, a sequential test, generated with the **Generate Sequential Test** button. Let's say you only want a five question quiz from this file using only questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 from the file, in that order. To do this first type the starting question number in the Start With... textbox. The number must be above 0 and below the maximum allowed. We will type a 3 in the box. In the End With... textbox we'll type the number of the last question we want and that is the number 7 question.

After you have done this, click the **Generate Sequential Test** button to get your results in the text window. You should get a quiz made up of the five questions



as they appear in the original text file (answers at the bottom, also), as illustrated here. You might want different versions of this test (questions 3 – 7 placed randomly as 1 – 5). You can do this by check marking the **Randomize Sequential Tests** box next to the End With... box. Now, when you click the **Generate**

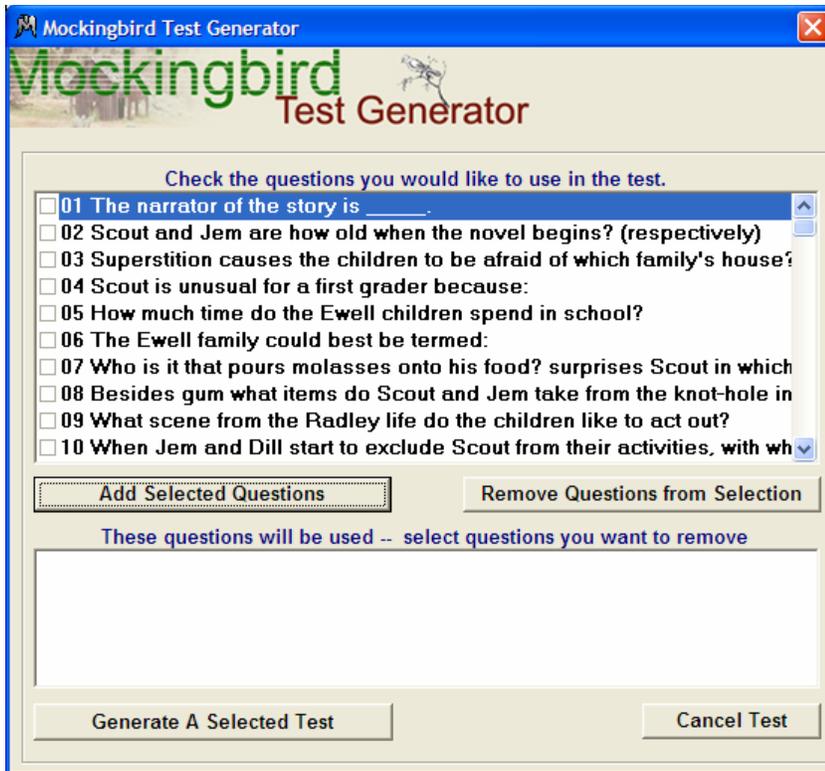


Sequential Test button you will get randomized quizzes of the five questions you opted for. Pretty neat, right?

Sometimes you might just want to pick the questions from the saved file and use

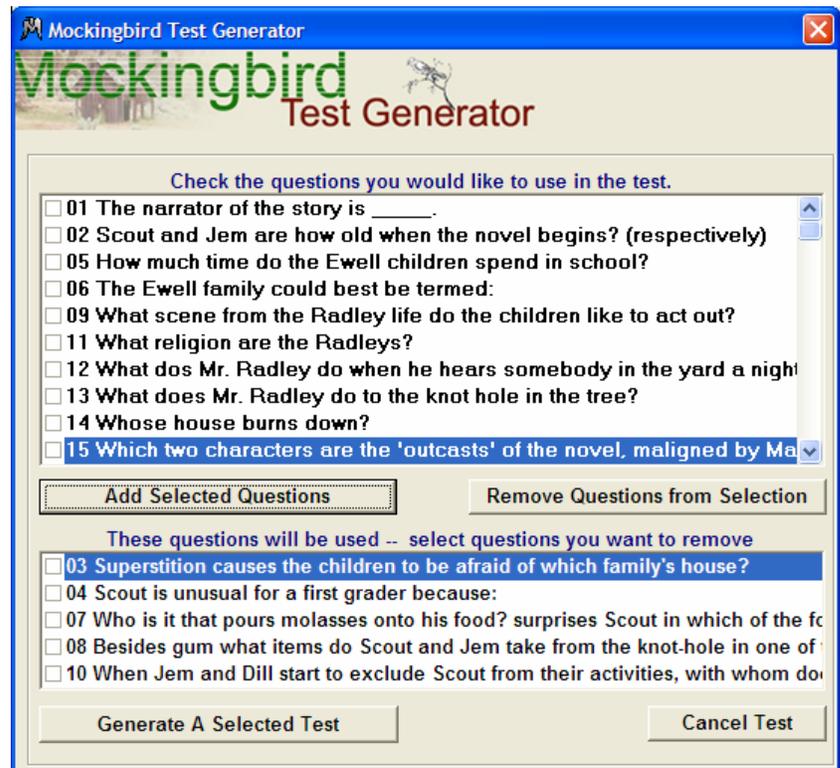
them to make up a quiz or test. Again, using the same file, let's create a quiz of question we want. We'll use questions 2, 5, 6, 7, and 10. To do this we will use the **Selected Questions** button.

When you click the **Selected Questions** button, you will get another window that will open on screen. For *Mockingbird Test Generator* it will look like the illustration here. All of the questions in your file are listed here numerically and each has a check box placed



to the left of the numbers.

You can select the questions you want to use in your selected questions quiz by clicking the respective check boxes. You will be able to scroll down the window if there are more questions you can't see. When you have completed your selection, click the **Add Selected Questions** button to place your selections in the bottom window. You can remove question you don't want by reversing the process, using the bottom window and then clicking



the **Remove Questions from Selection** button.

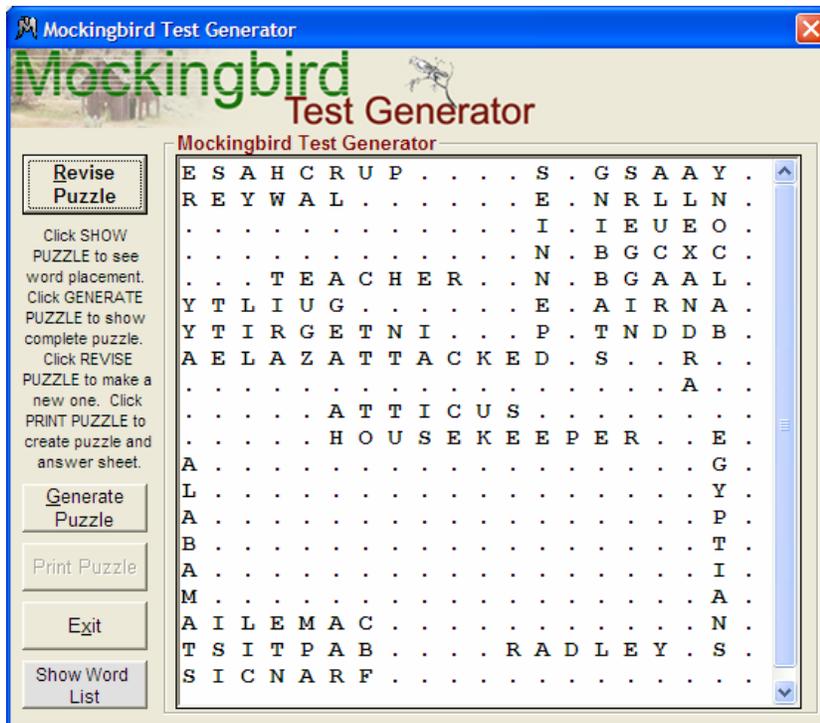
If you are happy with the questions you have selected, you can then generate your quiz by clicking the **Generate A Selected Test** button, located at the bottom of the screen. If you change your mind about this test altogether, just click the **Cancel Test** button to return to the main screen.

After you generate a test (or while you are working on one), be sure to save your work using the Save (or Save as...) option on the Menu Bar. If you do this you will assure yourself that you will have these tests to use or edit in the future.

A word about printing. *Mockingbird Test Generator* is designed mainly for creating tests and answer keys that teachers can use for in their classes. You can print from the program, but we suggest that you use the printout for your use in making copies of the tests you create. You will want to make sure that the answer key is not included with the test you copy for your students and it is generally more economical to use a photocopier to make duplicates for your class rather than printing an entire class worth of tests from your printer.

Don't forget too, that you can copy the contents of the text window in this program and paste the contents into a more elaborate word processor for printing or formatting.

Generating Search Puzzles



Mockingbird Test Generator will allow you to create search puzzles for your students to work with.

To generate a search puzzle click the **Make Puzzle** option on the **Actions** drop-down menu. This will open the puzzle window.

The puzzle screen will be blank when you first enter it. Click the **Show Puzzle** button and you will get the answer pattern created by the program for the

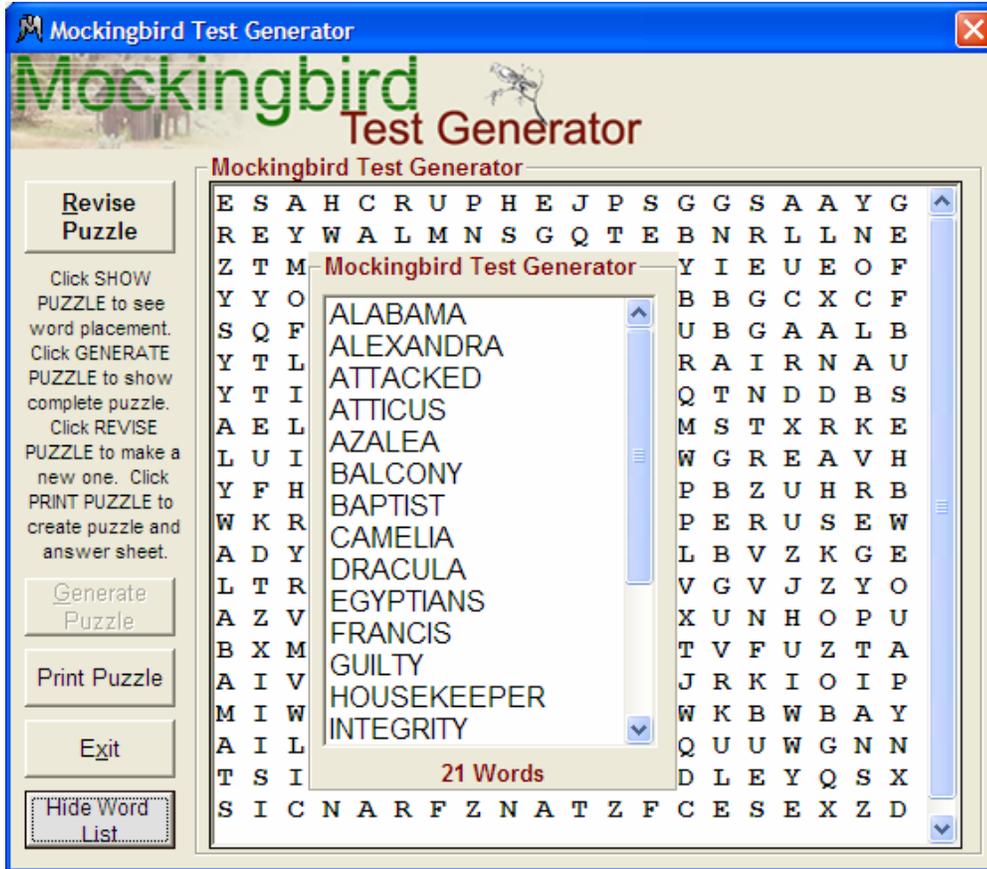
default list of words. If you don't like the structure of the puzzle answers, click the **Revise Puzzle** button to get a different version, until you are satisfied.

You can take a look at the default list by clicking the **Show Word List** button at

the bottom of the screen. You will get a scrollable list to view. You can close the list window by clicking the **Show Word List** button again. This also acts as a toggle switch – off and on.

When you are happy with the arrangement of the answer scheme, you can click the **Generate Puzzle** button to

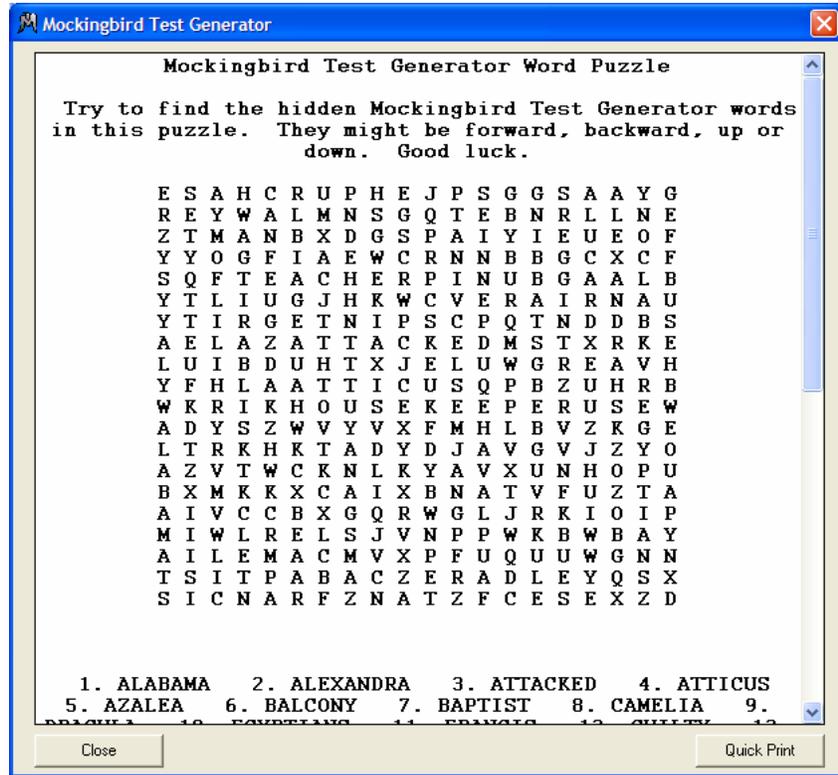
construct the final puzzle. Here we show the finished puzzle and the word list on display.



The final puzzle can be printed from the program or it can be copied and pasted into a word processor for final printing.

To get to the print preview screen, click the **Print Puzzle** button.

You can't see the complete page in the preview window unless you scroll down. The puzzle is printed at the top of the page and the list of hidden words is printed at the bottom. You can do a quick printing of the puzzle using the **Quick Print** button. If you would like a fancier more formatted print out, we suggest you highlight the entire puzzle and copy and paste it into your favorite word processor. Use the **Close** button when you are finished.



Making Question and Answer Files To Import Into *Mockingbird Test Generator* (Not Available in the LITE version of the program)

You can enhance the power of *Mockingbird Test Generator* by creating additional question files that you can append to the built in database. They are easy to create and will give you a larger base to generate from.

Questions you originate can be just about any type. Here are some typical formats:

- Simple fill-in questions. This can be a statement with a blank line that requires the students to answer with a word or phrase to complete it. It doesn't necessarily have to be in the form of a question.
- Multiple choice. The question or statement is presented, followed by three or four possible choices as answers.

- Short Answer. The question or statement is presented and students must provide an appropriate short answer.
- Vocabulary. A definition is given that requires a studied word, or vice versa.
- Problems. A problem is offered and the solution must be given by the students.
- Open Ended Question. An idea is offered and students must respond with their solutions. Your acceptable answers might just be suggestions.

When planning the question and answer files you will be using, keep in mind the following set up format.

You will need a question.
You will need an answer for the question.

There are two ways to make the original files used by Mockingbird Test Generator. You can make them manually by using any standard text editor or word processor that can save files in text format. You can also make them by using our handy **Question Editor** that is built into the program menu, under **Actions**.

Using A Text Editor or Word Processor

If you create your question and answer file using a text editor (Microsoft Notepad, for example), open a New document and set Word Wrap on. Type your information using the following format exactly:

On the first line type the title of your question answer file
On the second line type the number of questions you will have in the file
On the next line type the first question
On the next line type the first answer
On the next line type the second question
On the next line type the second answer

Continue this pattern until you have typed all of your questions and answers. When you are finished, Save the file as a text file (this is especially important if you are using a word processor which usually saves as a document file). Some text editors automatically attach a .txt extender at the end of the file. If this is the case, after you save your file, locate it using My Computer or Explore and use the Rename option of Windows to change the extender from .txt to .tga. If you don't have this extender on the end of the file name it will not be recognized by the program

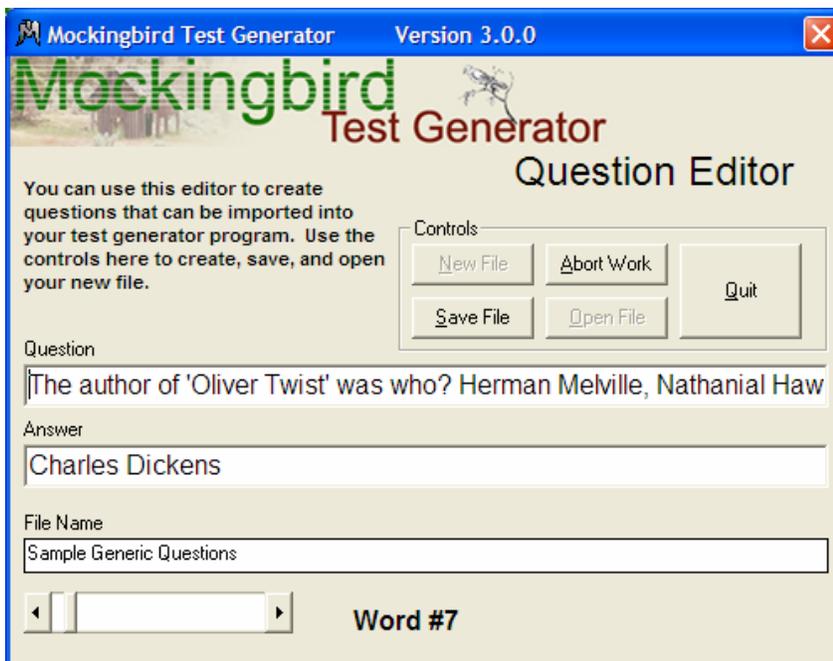
If you want to see how the actual files are constructed open the Sample Generic Questions.tga file that accompanies the program installation in your text editor and take a look at it.

Using the Question Editor in *Mockingbird Test Generator*



We have made question and answer file creation a bit easier with the inclusion of the **Question Editor**. You can get to this editor through the program Menu Bar. Click **Actions** and then click **Open Question Editor**. The blank editor will open on screen and look like the illustration here.

This add-in program makes file construction easy because you will only be typing one question and answer at a time. If you want to open our sample file or any other file you create, use the **Open File** button. To start a new file, click the **New File** button. First you might want to click on the **File Name** textbox to type in the title of your question answer file. Make the name simple and recognizable. After



you put in the name you can start creating the questions and answers for your file. Type a question in the **Question** textbox and then tab down to the **Answer** textbox to type the correct or suggested answer for this question. Click the scroll bar at the bottom of the screen to go to the next question.

Continue typing questions and answers

until you are done, and then click the **Save File** button to save your question and answer file. We suggest that you make a new folder with subfolders somewhere on your computer that will house all of your question and answer files.

If you decide not to use the file you can use **Abort Work** to stop work on a file and simply **Quit** to return to Mockingbird Test Generator.

PROGRAM UPDATES and SUPPORT

As with all Baggetta_Ware products we have tried to keep this software simple to use and yet functional enough to make it useful. We hope to improve the program yet and welcome any suggestions you might have. You can forward them to us through our web page or directly via email at the following address: baggetta@baggetta.com.

If you encounter any problems with the program, we will try to help you resolve them as quickly as possible. Please send us email at the above address detailing the problem. Be sure to include information about your computer system makeup and any error messages you might encounter. Baggetta_Ware and affiliates are not responsible for any damage caused by unforeseen bugs or issues to other software and hardware you may be using. Do not use this software if you cannot agree to these terms.

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A. Baggetta
Baggetta_Ware