

Trace Effects User's Manual

Overview

Trace Effects is a 3D adventure game. It uses communication and puzzles to help you learn and practice English. It focuses on conversations and tasks, not on standard exercises.

If you want more traditional language-learning practice, there are many options. Look at the website menu for links to additional exercises and multi-player practice games.

You earn points for completing language-learning objectives in the game. You can also earn points by doing practice exercises and by challenging other students in head-to-head multiplayer language learning games.

You can download and print graphic novel summaries after each chapter. The graphic novels help you review the story and the language used in Trace Effects. You can also check helpful web links to other great language learning content online.

Trace Effects includes a dictionary tool from Merriam-Webster to help you look up definitions for problem words.

Getting Started

Minimum System Requirements

- Windows 2000 or later; Mac OS X 10.4 or later
- A 3D graphics card
- Intel Processor of at least 1.0 GHz
- At least 1 GB of system memory
- Graphics resolution of at least 1024 x 768 pixels
- A sound card and speakers/headphones to hear spoken dialog
- A mouse and keyboard
- For the online version, an Internet connection of at least DSL speed
- For the offline version, the ability to install software from a DVD-ROM or USB flash drive.
- Multi-player functionality requires an Internet connection.
- Offline and online player accounts will be independent of each other. Offline and online accounts will not synchronize points or status.

Software Required to Play Trace Effects

- The Unity game engine powers the Trace Effects interactive 3D game experience. Download the free Unity 3D Web Player by visiting www.unity3d.com/webplayer or by linking to the download from www.traceeffects.com. Once the software has been installed, you can create an account and play Trace Effects.
- The online game runs in numerous web browsers including Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari. The Unity web player sometimes has problems when running in the Chrome browser, so this browser is not recommended for playing Trace Effects.
- Make sure to turn off any popup blockers while visiting this site. If nothing happens when you click links inside the game, look to see if a popup is blocked (often a yellow bar at the top of the screen).

Other Hardware and Software Considerations

If you experience slow game play, please check these common causes:

- Suspend or pause any anti-virus scanning or automated backup utilities (like Mac OSX's Time Machine).
- Close all unnecessary programs and scan your computer with a virus checker for any malware that could be slowing it down.
- If the computer has not been restarted recently, restart the computer before playing.

Creating an Account

1. Visit www.traceeffects.com.
2. If you already have an account, enter your user name and password in the designated fields. To create a new account, click the "Create an Account" button.



3. Fill in all of the fields on the "Create an Account" page and click "Submit."

CREATE ACCOUNT

For full access to Trace Effects you'll need to create an account.

Create a username and password and use it in the form on this page! If someone else has already chosen your username then you'll have to try again using a different username.

Trace Effects also requires an email. Trace Effects will only use your email if you lose your password.

Email Address * Required

Username *

Password *

Password confirmation *

SUBMIT

4. If someone else has already chosen that user name, you will be asked to select a new name.

Username *

Username

A user with that username already exists.

5. Once your account has been created, you will be sent to the homepage for logged in users. You will be ready to play Trace Effects!

Playing Trace Effects

The Trace Effects website is composed of several activities. This section will describe how you interact with each section. These sections are:

- 3D Adventure Game (Home)
- Language Practice
- Multiplayer Challenges
- Comics
- Links
- Points
- Log Out



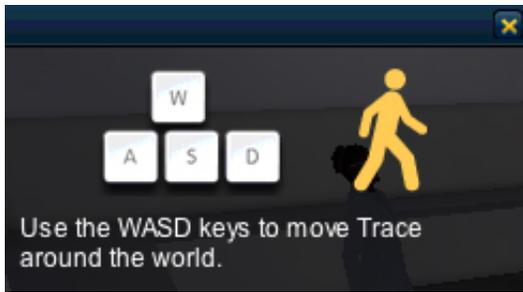
1. The 3D Adventure Game

You control the main character, Trace. Trace Effects is played in the 3rd person. This means that you see what Trace is doing, rather than seeing through Trace's eyes. Trace is a student from the future who accidentally traveled backward through time. He needs to complete certain actions in order to be able to return home. Each chapter contains a set of objectives for Trace. Trace moves around the game world, collecting items and interacting with different people. A console that appears at the lower left of the screen displays the choices for what Trace can say in an interaction.

The object of the game is to complete the objectives given to you. If you are successful, Trace will be able to return home to the future. All of the language in Trace Effects is there for a reason. Listen carefully to all dialogs for clues and important information.

Character Movement / Controls

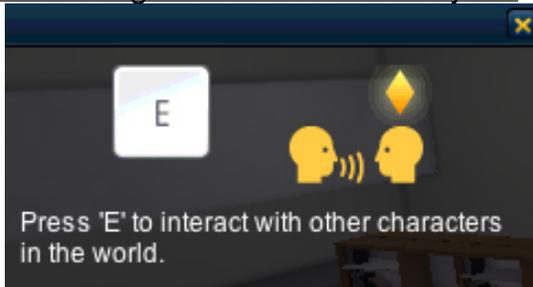
To navigate Trace through the game-world, use the following keys on a standard keyboard:



- W = Walk Forward
- S = Walk Backward
- A = Rotate Counter Clockwise
- D = Rotate Clockwise
- E = Interact with a nearby object or character
- Spacebar = Jump
- Shift = Run

The mouse lets you view the world from above as well as from different sides after you press CTRL.

Interacting with characters or objects



When Trace encounters a person or an object that he can interact with, you can press “E” to start the interaction.

Collecting Items

While moving through the game-world, Trace will encounter “collectables” that he can use in his “Actions tab” (described below). These collectable items fall into two categories:

1. Action Words



These are giant floating action words (verbs) scattered throughout the game-world. Trace can collect them by simply touching (passing over) them. The word then disappears from the game-world and can be used through Trace's action tab. Make sure to collect all the words you see or you may get stuck and be unable to perform a needed action. If you are stuck, look around for the word you may have missed. Note: Action words only remain within Trace's action tab for one chapter. Once a new chapter begins, Trace will start with no action words and will need to collect new ones.

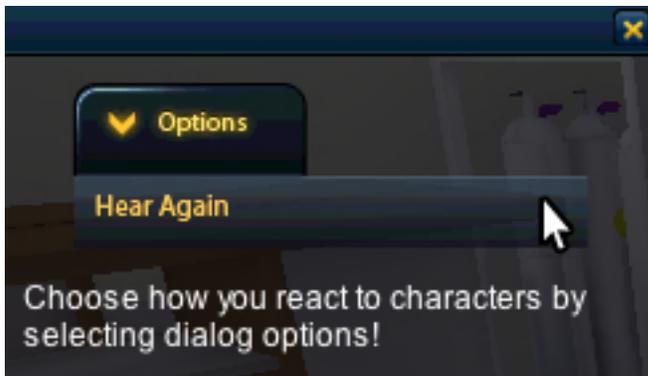
2. Inventory Items



Like action words, inventory items (nouns) are scattered throughout the game-world. In the game, these appear in the inventory when Trace interacts appropriately with the right people or objects. You can collect items by directing Trace to touch them or walk through them. After collecting an object, Trace will be able to access that object through the “Actions tab.” Note: Inventory items only remain within Trace’s action tab for one chapter. Once a new chapter begins, Trace will start with no inventory items and will need to collect new ones.

Character and Object Interaction

Certain characters and objects within the game world are designated as “interactive.” This means that Trace can engage with them by approaching and pressing the “E” key. Once engaged with an interactive object or character, you will have access to two “tabbed” menus in the console on the left side:



The “Options” Tab

This menu allows the player to select things for Trace to say from a variety of choices. This tab contains a scroll bar. Be sure to view all options available. If you would like to hear the character repeat the line and view it as text, select

"Hear again" from the options list. If you would like to end a conversation, choose the option "Walk away" from the options list. Choose carefully what Trace will say and listen to the response. A good choice will gain points. A choice that is not polite or that doesn't make sense may lose points.

The "Actions" Tab

When engaging with an object, Trace can also choose to "do something" in relation to that object, as opposed to speaking. Do this by selecting the actions tab where you combine the action words with items in the inventory. For example, when interacting with a locked door, you can combine the "Unlock With" action word with the "Key" inventory item - thus causing Trace to unlock the door with his key. You must have the words and items in the inventory to use them.

Points

You gain points in the 3D game by completing objectives. You can also gain points by choosing the correct dialog choices at certain key points in the game. Sound cues within the game let you know when points are being added or taken away from your total score. Chapter-specific points are displayed in the game interface.



Points earned in the 3D game will go towards your TOTAL SCORE, which is located in the top right of the screen.

You can also add points by using the practice exercises or engaging in the multi-player challenges. All points earned through various activities are combined and displayed in the "Total Score" area at the top right of the webpage.

Game Interface

Primary Interface

This is what you see when you can move Trace (i.e., when Trace is not engaged with an interactive object):



 **Stats**

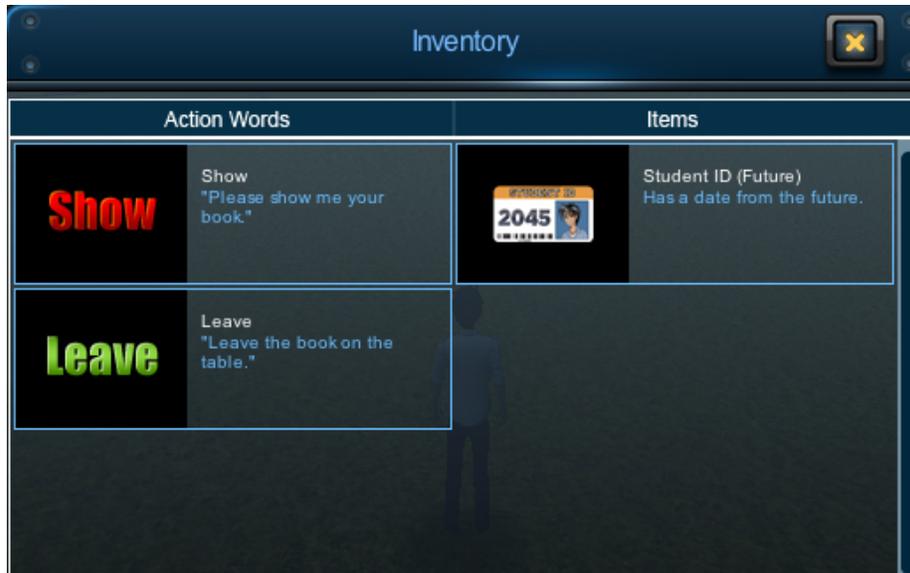
The stats menu item will show you all of your game progress and objectives.





Inventory

The inventory menu option will show you all the action words and objects in your inventory.



Dialog History

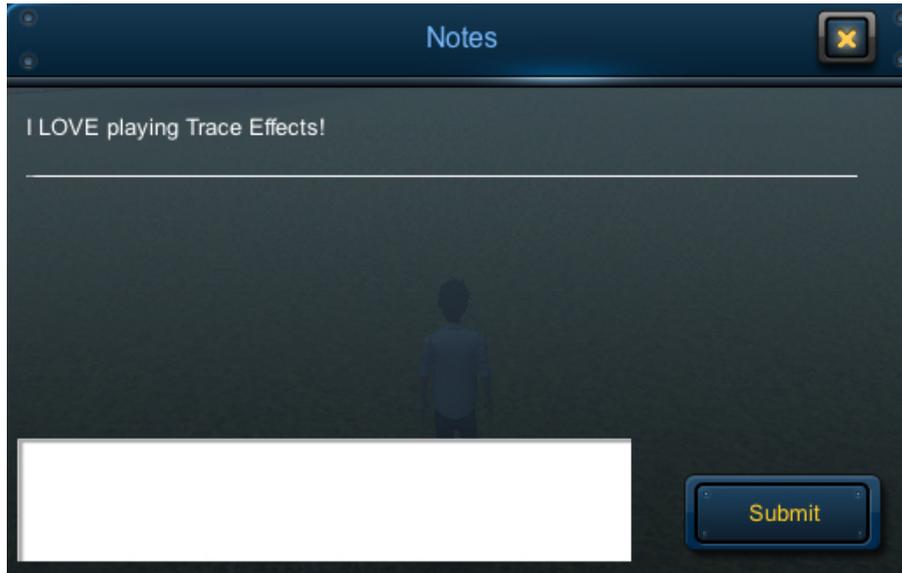
The dialog history keeps a record of all conversation in the game.





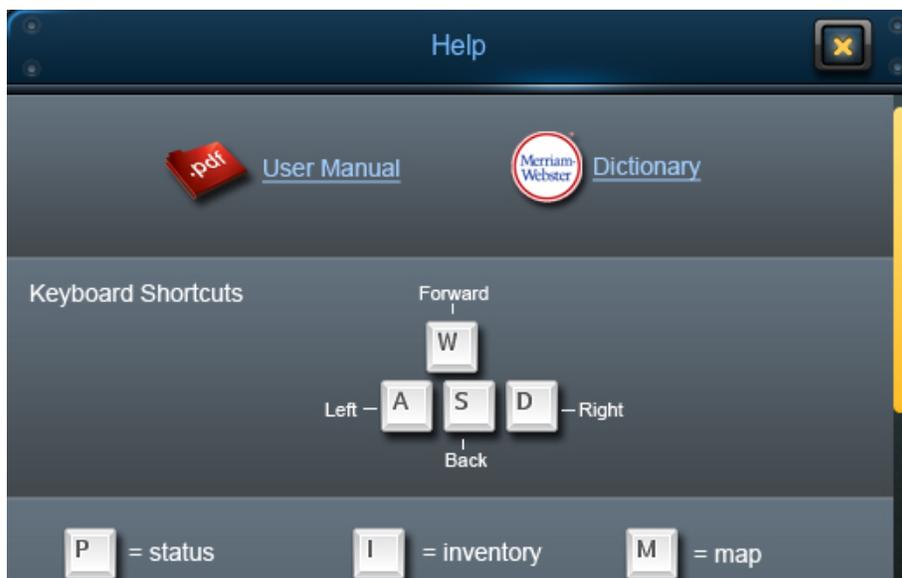
Notes

You can keep notes during each chapter by choosing the notes button in the menu. This is meant for temporary notes to help keep track of information during a chapter. These notes are temporary, and they will be erased once a new chapter begins.



Help

In the help menu you can find a link to this user's manual, access to a dictionary tool from Merriam-Webster, and a record of all the help instruction pop-ups that you have encountered throughout the game.





The full map graphic can be viewed by clicking the globe icon in the top right corner, next to the compass.



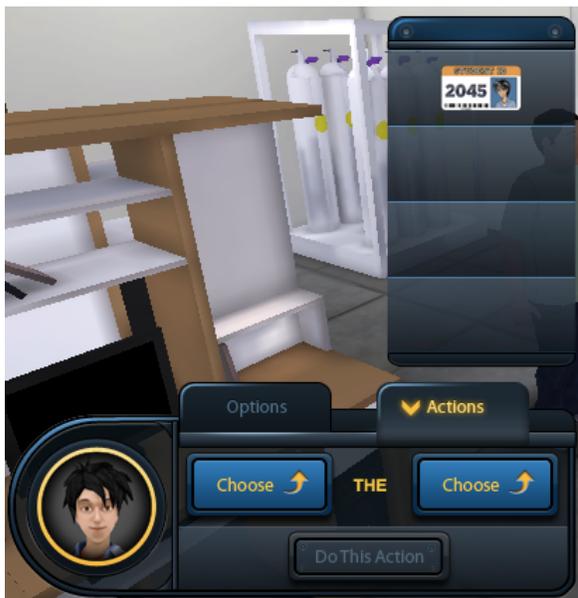
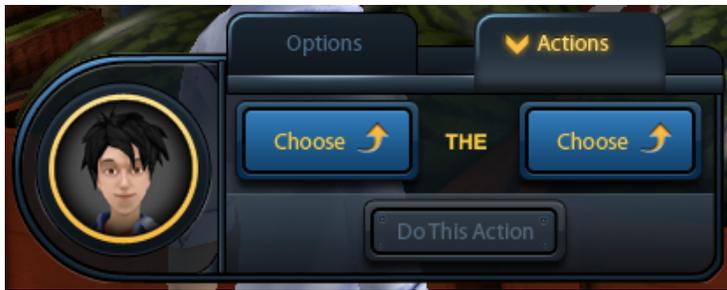
Interactive Object Interface (Options Tab)

You see this menu when you approach an interactive object and press the “E” key. The “Options” tab is selected by default, where you can select what you would like Trace to say.



Interactive Object Interface (Actions Tab)

This menu is displayed when you are engaged with an interactive object and select the “Actions Tab.” Here you can select an action word in the first box, and an inventory item in the second box. After you choose both, you can press the “Do This Action” button to make Trace perform the action.





Conversation Interface



When someone is speaking, you see a “letterbox” format. It displays a simplified interface that shows who is speaking. When that character has finished speaking, you can use the conversation controls to repeat the last line or to move on. Note: If you ask for the line to be repeated, you can see the words as text at the top of the screen.

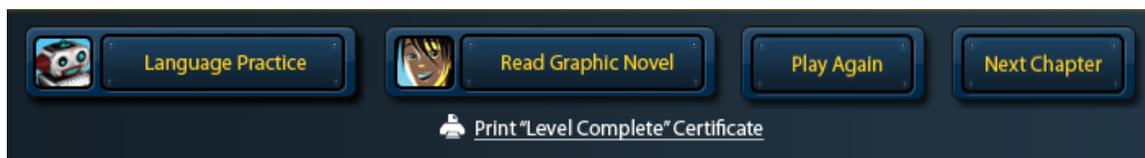


Chapter Beginning and Ending Videos

Each chapter has an introduction video and a closing video that have important story elements and clues. Listen and read carefully!

Chapter Completion Screen

After each chapter is completed successfully, you will see a completion screen. It shows you the language skills that you practiced during that chapter. The screen also alerts you to what is coming up in the next chapter. From this screen, you can choose to play the chapter again for more points or to move on to the next chapter. There are a number of links from this completion screen:

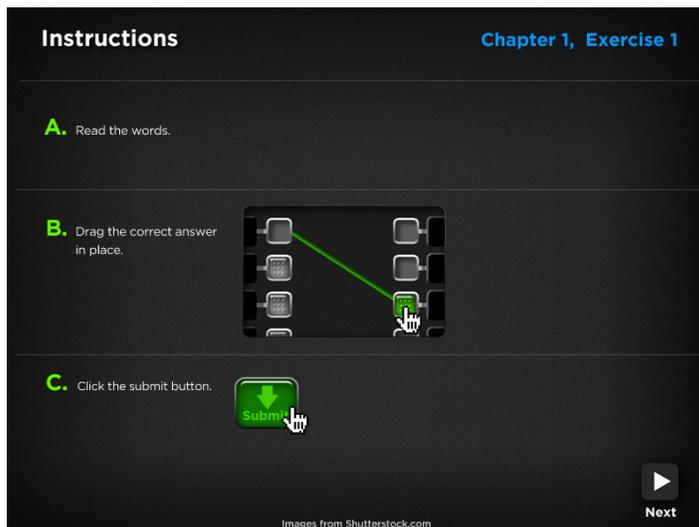


1. Link to the chapter comic: Each chapter has a graphic novel summary of the chapter's story, which opens in a pop-out PDF.
2. Link to the language practice activities: Each chapter has a group of language practice activities that relate to the story. (See Language Practice section)
3. Link to chapter completion certificate: Each chapter has a printable completion certificate to celebrate your success in completing the chapter.

2. Language Practice



If you want more language practice, select "Language Practice" from the main navigation menu across the top of the webpage. The chapter's practice exercises are unlocked after you complete each chapter. You can gain points each time you practice. Select an exercise from the drop down menu to begin. Follow the on-screen instructions.



Exercises are made up of several types including multiple choice, fill in the blank, ordering, and matching.

3. Multiplayer Challenges



Multi-player challenges are only available in the online version of Trace Effects. Some require two players to play. After you choose the game you want to play, you will see the instructions while you wait for other players to join. Once they join, the game will begin. Timed games will count down before they start. Multiplayer games will contain several rounds of play. Once the rounds are complete, the overall scores of each player are displayed, and a winner is announced.

4. Comics



Each chapter in the Trace Effects 3D game has a companion graphic novel that summarizes the chapter's storyline. The graphic novel is available after you complete a chapter successfully. If you have a printer, you can print out the graphic novel and take it with you.

5. Links



KIT'S HELPFUL LINKS

This page contains many useful links to help support your language learning experience. The links are categorized for easy reference by theme and chapter.

CATEGORIES

- ▶ Access English Resources
- ▶ Trace's Research Center
- ▶ Kit's Reading Lab
- ▶ Eddie's Tunes
- ▶ Chapter 1
- ▶ Chapter 2
- ▶ Chapter 3
- ▶ Chapter 4
- ▶ Chapter 5
- ▶ Chapter 6
- ▶ Chapter 7

ACCESS ENGLISH RESOURCES

[American English Internet Portal](#) : Your central location to find supplemental Trace activities, English resources, and much more!

[Office of English Language Programs](#): Find exchange programs and find resources at this site.

[Trace Information Page](#): Join Trace's followers on Facebook!

[Trace Fan Page](#): Become Trace's fan and learn game strategies, get an English tip or two, and meet other Trace fans here!

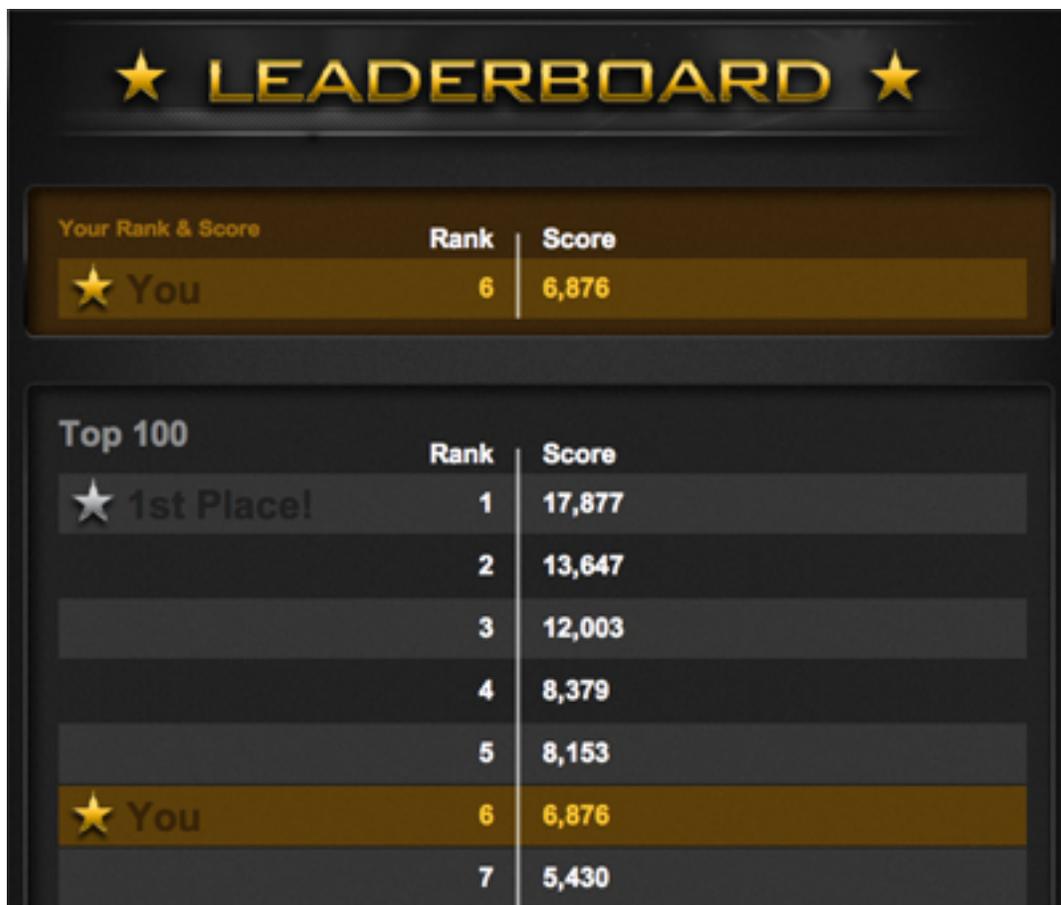
[Exchanges Connect YouTube Channel](#): Watch YouTube videos to find out how to participate in exchange programs to the United States!

This page contains many useful U.S. Department of State-approved links to help support your language learning experience. They are categorized for easy reference by theme and chapter.

6. Points



Many activities in Trace Effects award points. You can earn points by successfully completing tasks within the 3D games. You can also build up points by practicing language through the practice exercises or engaging in the multi-player challenges. All points earned through various activities are combined and displayed in the top right of the webpage, where you see "Total Score." Underneath, there is a leaderboard button. Can you beat the top score?



★ LEADERBOARD ★		
Your Rank & Score		
	Rank	Score
★ You	6	6,876

Top 100		
	Rank	Score
★ 1st Place!	1	17,877
	2	13,647
	3	12,003
	4	8,379
	5	8,153
★ You	6	6,876
	7	5,430

7. Log Out

If you are playing Trace Effects on a shared computer, be sure to log out when you finish. If you are playing online, all your points will be stored in an online database and will be there when you log back in. Once you close the browser, you will automatically be logged out.

8. Troubleshooting FAQ

Gameplay Questions

1. How do I know what to do when playing Trace Effects?

Each chapter has an introduction video and a closing video that has important story elements and clues. Listen and read carefully! Also characters in the game can help Trace by giving suggestions or directions. Finally check the objectives list on the right side of the game screen.

2. How do I give items, like sandwiches, to other characters?

Trace can also choose to do something as opposed to speaking. Do this by selecting the actions tab and combine the verb, with an item in the inventory. For example, when interacting with a student, you can combine the “Give” action word with the “Sandwich” inventory item - thus causing Trace to give a sandwich to a hungry student. You must collect the words and items before you can use them.

3. What if the game has words I don't know?

Trace Effects includes a dictionary tool from Merriam-Webster to help you look up definitions for problem words. You can find the dictionary by clicking the ? icon at the bottom left of the game screen.

4. How do I earn points playing Trace Effects?

You can earn points by correctly responding in English to other characters in the game. Questions or replies with correct grammar and details are awarded the most points. Commands or rude responses can result in negative points so be careful! You can also earn points by completing objectives that help Trace on his mission. In addition to earning points by successfully completing tasks within the 3D games, you can also build up points by practicing language through the practice exercises.

5. Can I listen to the dialogues again?

When a character has finished speaking, you can use the conversation controls to have the last line repeated or to move on. Note: If you ask for the line to be repeated, a transcription is displayed at the top of the screen. You can read the dialogues by clicking the  on the bottom-left of the game screen.

6. What if I can't finish the chapter?

The Trace Effects game has checkpoints in the chapter after you complete objectives. When you reach an objective the game saves. When you return to the game you will begin at that checkpoint.

7. Where can I learn more about the places Trace visited?

The Helpful Links page contains many useful U.S. Department of State-approved links to help support your language learning experience. They are categorized for easy reference by theme and chapter.

Technology Questions

1. What if an error in the game or a 'glitch' occurs?

In video game vocabulary a 'glitch' is an unexpected error in the game. Should an unexpected game error occur where the game freezes or the character of Trace falls through the environment, please restart the chapter and play from the last checkpoint. The game saves automatically so if the game is restarted students will not need to restart from the beginning, but from the last checkpoint.

2. In my lab, how can I "start over" if a new student plays the game at the same computer?

On the DVD version, the main menu has a chapter button and a "start over" button. Click on the "start over" button and the game will re-set and clear the previous game play and scores.

3. Why don't the multiplayer games work?

Word Builder and Head to Head require **two players** to play, while Word Soup and Phrases in Space can be played alone. After you choose the game you want to play, you will see the instructions while you wait for other players to join. Once they join, the game will begin. Timed games will count down before they start. Multiplayer games will contain several rounds of play. Once the rounds are complete, the overall scores of each player are displayed, and a winner is announced.

If another player does not join after ten seconds then you will be asked to play as a single player. If this does not occur there may be a Internet connection issue. Refreshing the webpage can correct this problem.

4. Why does the game crash in Chapter 4?

This particular issue has to do with memory allocation of the Internet browser. Chapter 4 is a big chapter memory wise. If your Internet browser has too many Internet pages open it will run out of memory and crash the game. Restarting the chapter of course will bring you back to the checkpoint before the crash.

This is only a problem in Chapter 4. Before students play make sure that the Trace Effects webpage is the only webpage they have open.

5. How do I change the screen resolution?

Windows Trouble-Shooting

The Trace Effects game is designed to run at a screen resolution of 800x600.

1. Click the **Start** button and then select **Control Panel**.
2. Under **Screen resolution** select the new resolution; 800x600 is preferred for Trace Effects. Click **Apply**.
3. Click **OK**. Your screen may go dark. This is normal when Windows changes resolution.
4. After changing the resolution, you have 15 seconds to confirm the change. Click **Yes** to keep the new resolution. To keep the old resolution do nothing and the resolution will revert to the old setting.

6. Why has the display mode changed on my Mac?

If you attach your Mac to a TV screen, it might “remember” the display mode and not automatically revert back to a normal resolution. To change it manually, follow these steps:

1. Open a new Finder Window
2. Hold command shift and press the G key
3. Type ~/Library/Preferences
4. Delete the file named "unity.Department of State.U.S. Department of State - Trace Effects.plist"
5. Relaunch the app, and it should open in the correct sized window

7. How do I install Trace Effects from the DVD?

Upon insertion of the Trace Effects installation DVD, your computer should prompt you to run the disk. If it does not, double-click to open the DVD, and then choose the traceeffects.exe file.

Have fun and enjoy playing Trace Effects!