

**Instruction
Manual
for
Nord and Bert
Couldn't Make
Head or Tail of It**

INFOCOM

If you've never played Infocom's interactive fiction before, you should read this entire instruction manual. If you're an experienced Infocom game player, you may only want to read *Section I: About Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*.

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SECTION I: ABOUT NORD AND BERT COULDN'T MAKE HEAD OR TAIL OF IT

Preface to the Story

Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It is different from any other Infocom story you may have seen. Rather than being one long story, it's a collection of eight short stories, or scenarios. Each of the eight short stories involves some sort of punning, wordplay, or verbal trickery.

The people and items you meet in one scenario won't appear in another, and so each story is played independently of the others. However, to get into the scenario called Meet the Mayor, you need to know seven passwords. You get one password each time you complete one of the other seven scenarios. You can play these other seven scenarios in any order.

Nord and Bert also differs from other Infocom stories in that no mapping is needed, and you won't use compass directions to move from one place to another. Instead, the status line (at the top of your screen) will tell you what places you can get to next. For example, the status line might say something like this:

You can go: Barn, Stable, Field

Just type the name of the place you want to go and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key; in this case, you can just type BARN or STABLE or FIELD.

Another new feature of *Nord and Bert* is the inclusion of hints. If you ever get stuck, you can type HINT and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. Then follow the instructions on your screen. Hints are organized by subject: so if you're stuck on a problem which involves a hat, look for hints under the word "hat."

Nord and Bert also has a new way of examining objects. You can examine an object in any of the stories just by typing the name of the object. For instance, to look at a trash compactor, you can type LOOK AT THE COMPACTOR or, more simply, COMPACTOR. Of course, you might also want to LOOK INSIDE or OPEN THE COMPACTOR.

To solve some of the short stories, you will need to "transform" some objects into other objects by using homonyms or "spoonerisms." (Homonyms are different words that sound the same, like "bare" and "bear"; spoonerisms are words with sounds transposed, like "blowing grade" and "growing blade.") For example:

There are some lunching mobsters here.

>MUNCHING LOBSTERS

With guns and butter, but without missing a mouthful, the lunching mobsters around the table become munching lobsters.

or

A tuft of hair rocks gently in the breeze. The hair twitches.

>HARE

A cute brown hare hops towards you, nose and tail twitching.

Sample Transcript

This transcript is not from *Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*, but it does show some of the strange things you can do in the game. It shows a few simple puzzles and their solutions, and it will give you a good idea of how this game works. The player's commands appear in capital letters after each prompt (>).

YOUR BEDROOM

[You can go: HALLWAY]

As dawn breaks through the window above your head, yet another day of your youthful existence is illuminated. And so is the wreck you call your bedroom. Suddenly, the alarm clock to your right explodes to life, ending any hope of additional sleep.

>TURN OFF THE ALARM CLOCK

As you lunge for the offending timepiece, you knock it off the night table along with a lamp and a tepid glass of water.

>GET OUT OF BED

Your foul mood requires a more specific strategy.

>GET UP ON THE WRONG SIDE OF BED

You do a slow roll off the left side of the bed, which in this case is actually the right side of the bed since the right side of the bed is awash in a sea of jagged glass and alarm clock parts.

>LOOK

This is your bedroom. It is a homogeneous mass of everything that is you rolled up into one big disorganized ball. There is an open door leading to the hallway.

>HALLWAY

HALLWAY

[You can go: BEDROOM, KITCHEN]

This is the upstairs hallway of your home. There is a door leading to the bathroom. The door is closed and there seems to be some muffled sound coming from behind it.

>LISTEN TO THE SOUND

It is the sound of your younger sister in the shower singing one of her beloved punk rock anthems, all of which you despise. You know from years of experience that your sister's showers are long, drawn-out affairs and that she has at least seven more punk rock anthems to sing before the final rinse.

>KITCHEN

You trundle down the stairs and follow the smell of breakfast to...

KITCHEN

[You can go: HALLWAY, STUDY, STREET]

This is the kitchen of your home. A note resting on the table is impaled by a golf tee on the green of the Formica table top.

>READ NOTE

The note is folded in half and is therefore unreadable.

>TAKE NOTE

The tee holds the note firmly to the table.

>TAKE TEE

You grasp the tee and give it a series of mighty tugs but, as with Excalibur, it will take more than muscles to extract the tee from the table.

>TEA

The golf tee is swallowed up into a huge divot which then dissolves, leaving in its wake a steaming cup of oolong tea. Resting beneath the cup of tea is the note.

>TAKE TEA

Taken.

>READ NOTE

[Taking the note first]

"Hey kiddo! I'm off to work early this morning to make an 8:30 meeting with the boss. I made you a cup of tea just the way you like it. I didn't have time to mail my tax return before I left, so I need you to put a stamp on it and get it into the mailbox before 9:00 AM!

Remember, if that return isn't mailed by 9:00 today, the IRS is going to come over here and repossess our new swimming pool. What will you do all summer then?

I know I can count on you, buddy. See you tonight.

Love, Dad"

>LOOK AT WATCH

Mickey's big hand is on the nine and his little hand is on the eight.

>STUDY

You enter your father's private sanctum. Better known as...

STUDY

[You can go: KITCHEN, STREET]

This is your father's fashionably decorated study. A large roll-top desk purportedly once owned by Andy Warhol dominates the room. The tax return is nowhere in sight. You notice one of the heavy velvet curtains moving suspiciously.

>LOOK BEHIND CURTAIN

Searching behind the heavy curtain you find a stranger.

>LOOK AT STRANGER

The stranger is tall with hair going in all directions. You notice that he is wearing a tee-shirt with the letters IRS printed on it. Is this one of your sister's weird boyfriends? If so, the kindest thing that can be said of him is that he's male.

>STRANGER, HI

The male shifts nervously on his feet.

>MAIL

The stranger's eyes start to glow and with a sudden violent spasm he collapses into a large manila envelope (proving that this probably is one of your sister's beaus).

>TAKE ENVELOPE

You pick up the hefty object.

>LOOK AT IT

The envelope is addressed to the Internal Revenue Service in your father's inimitable scrawl. You notice that there is no postage on the envelope.

>DESK

All you can tell is that the roll-top is closed.

>OPEN THE DESK

You roll back the top, revealing a clutter of papers and a stone lamp.

>L AT PAPERS

You ruffle through the papers and come across a memo regarding his parking space. You put down the memo after noting this useless information.

>G

You ruffle through the papers and come across a memo announcing the annual company trip to see the Red Sox. You put down the memo after noting this useless information.

>LOOK AT THE STONE LAMP

This is a beautiful Mayan oil lamp that your father smuggled out of Central America.

>LIGHT THE LAMP

You know there haven't been any matches in the house since your kid brother tried to set the dog on fire.

>LONE STAMP

The ancient Mayan relic flattens and its edges become perforated, leaving a lone stamp.

>GET THE STAMP

You take the stamp. It commemorates the Mayan innovation of indoor lighting.

>PUT STAMO ON ENVELOPE
(I don't know the word "stamo.")

>OOPS STAMP
Done.

>I
You have a manila envelope and a cup of oolong tea. There is a stamp on the envelope.

>LOOK AT WATCH
Mickey now claims it's 8:58. Better hurry or it's no more laps for you.

>GO TO STREET
STREET
[You can go: STUDY, KITCHEN]
This is idyllic Idlewood Street. On the sidewalk stands a mailbox. Your house rises majestically in back of you, a paean to suburbia. In the background your sister's singing disturbs the peace of the neighborhood.

Down the street you see the familiar right-hand-drive mail truck manned by your friendly postman, who looks suspiciously like Jack Nicholson.

>PUT THE ENVELOPE IN THE MAILBOX
You deposit the key to your summer of fun in the sun into the gaping maw of the mailbox. And not a moment too soon. As the postman pulls up and empties the box he looks at one of the envelopes and says, "Hey, isn't this one of your sister's boyfriends?"

About the Author

Jeff O'Neill was born in Southern California on a sunny day in May in the year the microchip was invented, 1958. He graduated from California State University, Los Angeles, in 1982 with an undergraduate journalism degree. As an Infocom tester, he logged more hours playing *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* than any non-alien resident of Earth. Nietzsche and Mort Sahl influenced him. *Ballyhoo* was his first Infocom story.

SECTION II: ABOUT INFOCOM'S INTERACTIVE FICTION An Overview

Interactive fiction is a story in which *you* are the main character. Each interactive story, such as *Nord and Bert*, presents you with a series of locations, items, characters, and events. You can affect the story by moving from place to place, using the objects you find, and interacting with the other characters.

An important element of interactive fiction is puzzle-solving. You should think of a locked safe or a ferocious giant not as a permanent obstacle, but merely as a puzzle to be tackled. (Figure out how to unlock the safe, or how to tame or defeat the giant.)

In *Nord and Bert*, time passes only in response to your input. Nothing happens until you type a sentence and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key, so you can plan your turns as slowly and carefully as you want.

To measure your progress, each scenario in *Nord and Bert* keeps track of your score. You may get points for solving puzzles, performing certain actions, or visiting certain locations. A perfect score in each scenario is your ultimate goal; making sure you have fun getting there is ours.

Starting and Stopping

Starting the story: To load *Nord and Bert*, follow the instructions on the Reference Card in your package.

After a brief introduction to the game, you will be shown the names of the eight scenarios, which are: Go to the Shopping Bizarre, Play Jacks, Buy the Farm, Eat Your Words, Act the Part, Visit the Manor of Speaking, Shake a Tower, and Meet the Mayor. You will then be asked to choose the scenario you'd like to play first. Simply type your choice at the prompt and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. (To play Meet the Mayor, you'll have to know seven passwords, which you'll get by playing the other seven scenarios.)

Saving and restoring: It will probably take you several hours to complete each story of *Nord and Bert*. Using the SAVE feature, you can continue a scenario at a later time without having to start over from the beginning, just as you can place a bookmark in a book you are reading. SAVE puts a "snapshot" of your place in the story onto another disk. You should also save your place before (or after) trying something dangerous or tricky. That way, even if you get lost in the story, you can return to your saved position.

To save your place in the story, type SAVE at the prompt (>), and then press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. Then follow the

instructions for saving and restoring on your Reference Card. Some computers require a blank disk, initialized and formatted, for saves. Using a disk with data on it (not counting other *Nord and Bert* saves) may result in the loss of that data, depending on your computer. You can save your position as often as you like by using additional blank disks.

You can restore a saved position any time you want. To do so, type RESTORE at the prompt (>), and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. Then follow the instructions on your Reference Card. You can then continue the story from the point where you used the SAVE command. You can type LOOK for a description of where you are.

Quitting and restarting: If you want to start over from the beginning, type RESTART and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. (This is usually faster than re-booting.) Just to make sure, *Nord and Bert* will ask if you really want to start over. If you do, type Y or YES and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key.

If you want to leave the scenario you're currently playing and go to another scenario, type BEGINNING and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. You will then be given the opportunity to enter whatever scenario you like. The difference between RESTART and BEGINNING is that when you RESTART, you're reloading the game off the disk, whereas BEGINNING merely gives you an opportunity to change scenarios but does not reload the disk (so you could reenter the scenario you left and pick it up where you left it).

If you want to stop entirely, type QUIT and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. Once again, *Nord and Bert* will ask if this is really what you want to do.

Remember when you RESTART or QUIT: if you want to be able to return to your current position, you must first use the SAVE command.

Communicating with Infocom's Interactive Fiction

In *Nord and Bert*, you type your commands in plain English each time you see the prompt (>). *Nord and Bert* usually acts as if your commands begin with "I want to...", although you shouldn't actually type those words. You can use words like THE if you want, and you can use capital letters if you want; *Nord and Bert* doesn't care either way.

When you have finished typing a command, press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. *Nord and Bert* will then respond, telling you what happened as a result.

Nord and Bert recognizes your words by their first *nine* letters, and all subsequent letters are ignored. Therefore, INVESTIGator, INVESTIGATION, and INVESTIGatory would all be treated as the same word by *Nord and Bert*.

To move around, just type the name of the place you want to go. The names of the places you can go appear in the status line.

Nord and Bert understands many different kinds of sentences. Here are several examples. (Note some of these objects do not actually appear in *Nord and Bert*.)

>TAKE THE RED CANDLE
>READ THE SIGN
>MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES
>OPEN THE HATCH
>PRESS THE GREEN BUTTON
>KEEP UP WITH THE JONESES
>KNOCK ON THE DOOR
>UNLOCK THE DOOR WITH THE KEY
>FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD
>LOOK AT THE PAINTING
>SPILL THE BEANS
>HANG THE PICTURE ON THE HOOK

You can include several sentences on one input line if you separate them by the word THEN or by a period. (Note that each sentence will still count as a turn.) You don't need a period at the end of the input line. For example, you could type all of the following at once, before pressing the RETURN (or ENTER) key:

>DROP THE BALL. SPILL THE BEANS
THEN OPEN THE CAN OF WORMS

If *Nord and Bert* doesn't understand one of the sentences on your input line, or if something unusual happens, it will ignore the rest of your input line (see "Common Complaints" on page 13).

The words IT and ALL can be very useful. For example:

>TAKE THE APPLE. POLISH IT. PUT IT IN THE BOX
>CLOSE THE HEAVY METAL DOOR. LOCK IT
>TAKE THE SHOE. EMPTY IT. PUT IT ON
>TAKE ALL
>TAKE ALL EXCEPT THE WET EGG AND THE KEY
>TAKE ALL FROM CABINET
>DROP ALL BUT THE PENCIL

The word ALL refers to every visible object except those inside something else. If there were an apple on the ground and an orange inside a cabinet, TAKE ALL would take the apple but not the orange.

In many Infocom stories, you will meet other characters as you play. You can "talk" to some of them by typing their name, then a comma, then whatever you want to say to them. Here are some examples:

>LOIS, HELLO
>FRED, GIVE ME A BOWLING BALL
>SALESMAN, TELL ME ABOUT THE PLATYPUS
>YOUNG WOMAN, PUT ON THE GLOVE
>HARRY, TAKE THE GUN

Remember: Most people don't care for idle chatter. Your deeds will speak louder than your words.

Nord and Bert tries to guess what you really mean when you don't give enough information. For example, if you say that you want to do something, but not what you want to do it to or with, *Nord and Bert* will sometimes decide that there is only one possible object you could mean. When it does so, it will tell you. For example:

>UNLOCK THE DOOR
[with the key]
The door is now unlocked.

If your command is ambiguous, *Nord and Bert* will ask what you really mean. You can answer most of these questions briefly by supplying the missing information, rather than typing the entire input again. You can do this only at the very next prompt. For example:

>CUT BAIT
What do you want to cut the bait with?

>THE KNIFE
As you cut the bait, you hear a fish swim toward the boat.

or

>TAKE THE BUTTERFLY
Which butterfly do you mean, the delicate magenta butterfly or the fat yellow butterfly?

>DELICATE
The delicate magenta butterfly flutters away as you reach for it.

Nord and Bert recognizes over 1,000 words, nearly all that you are likely to use in your commands. However, *Nord and Bert* uses many words in its descriptions that it will not recognize in your commands. For example, you might read, "The full moon is bright and clear, and the apple trees cast eerie shadows." If *Nord and Bert* doesn't recognize the words MOON or SHADOWS in your input, you can assume they are not important to your completion of the story, except to provide you with a more vivid description of where you are or what is going on.

Special Commands

There are a number of commands which have special meanings. You can use them over and over as needed. Some count as a turn, others do not. Type the command after the prompt (>) and press the RETURN (or ENTER) key.

AGAIN - *Nord and Bert* will respond as if you had repeated your previous command. For instance, typing SHOOT THE MONSTER WITH THE LASER GUN then typing AGAIN would be like shooting the monster twice in a row. You can abbreviate AGAIN to G.

BEGINNING - If you want to go back to the beginning of the game, where you choose which of the eight scenarios to play, type BEGINNING. You will leave the scenario you are currently playing and be able to enter any of the other scenarios. (If you leave a scenario with BEGINNING and then return to it, you'll find yourself back where you left it.)

BRIEF - This command tells *Nord and Bert* to give you the full description of a location only the first time you enter it. On subsequent visits, *Nord and Bert* will tell you only the name of the location and the objects present. This is how *Nord and Bert* will normally act, unless you tell it otherwise using the **VERBOSE** or **SUPERBRIEF** commands. The **SUPERBRIEF** command tells *Nord and Bert* to display only the name of a place you have entered, even if you have never been there before. In this mode, *Nord and Bert* will not even mention which objects are present. Of course, you can always get a description of your location and the items there by typing **LOOK**. In **SUPERBRIEF** mode, the blank line between turns will be eliminated. This mode is meant for players who are already very familiar with the geography. The **VERBOSE** command tells *Nord and Bert* that you want a complete description of each location, and the objects in it, every time you enter a location, even if you've been there before.

HINT - If you have difficulty while playing a story, and you can't figure out what to do, just type **HINT**. You will see a list of items about which you can get hints. Just follow the directions at the top of your screen to read the hint of your choice.

INVENTORY - *Nord and Bert* will list what you are carrying. You can abbreviate **INVENTORY** to **I**.

LOOK - This tells *Nord and Bert* to describe your location in full detail. You can abbreviate **LOOK** to **L**.

SAVE - This puts a "snapshot" of your current position on your storage disk. You can return to a saved position in the future using the **RESTORE** command. See "Starting and Stopping" on page 7 for more details.

SCORE - *Nord and Bert* will show your current score.

SCRIPT - This command tells your printer to begin making a transcript of the story as you venture onwards. A transcript may aid your memory but is not necessary. It will work only on certain computers; read your Reference Card for details.

SUPERBRIEF - See **BRIEF** above.

UNSCRIPT - This commands your printer to stop making a transcript.

VERBOSE - See **BRIEF** above.

VERSION - *Nord and Bert* responds by showing you the release number and the serial number of your copy of the story. Please include this information if you ever report a "bug" in the story.

WAIT - This will cause time in the story to pass. Normally, between turns, nothing happens in the story. You could leave your computer, take a nap, and return to the story to find that nothing has changed. You can use **WAIT** to make time pass in the story without doing anything. For example, you can wait for a specific time, or wait for an event to happen, etc. You can abbreviate **WAIT** to **Z**.

Tips for Novices

1. **EXAMINE** all objects you come across in the story.

2. **TAKE** all objects you come across in the story. Most objects that you can pick up are important for solving one or more of the puzzles you'll run into.

3. Save your place as soon as you enter a new scenario. That way, if you mess up or get "killed," you can replay the scene anew without having to **RESTART** the entire game. See page 7 for instructions.

4. Read the story carefully! There are often clues in the descriptions of locations and objects.

5. Try everything you can think of - even strange or dangerous actions may provide clues, and might prove to be fun! You can always save your position first if you want. Here's a silly example:

>CHANGE THE LEOPARD'S DIAPERS

The spotted leopard bares its teeth and growls at you before you can get very close. His disposition is the problem!

Here you have a clue that maybe changing something else (his spots?) would be better.

6. Unlike other "adventure games" you may have played, there are many possible routes to the end of *Nord and Bert*. If you get stuck on one puzzle, move on to another. Some puzzles have more than one solution; other puzzles don't need to be solved at all. Sometimes you will have to solve one puzzle in order to obtain the item(s) or information you need to solve another puzzle.

7. You may find it helpful to go through *Nord and Bert* with another person. Different people may find different puzzles easy and can often complement each other.

8. If you really have difficulty, you can type **HINT**. The screen will then show you a list of items about which you can get hints. (Simply follow the directions at the top of your screen to read the hint of your choice.) You don't need to use the hints to enjoy the story, but it will make solving the puzzles easier.

9. Read the sample transcript on page 4 to get a feel for how Infocom's interactive fiction works.

10. You can word a command in many different ways. For example, if you wanted to pick up a yellow hoop, you could type in any of the following:

>GET HOOP

>TAKE THE HOOP

>PICK UP THE YELLOW HOOP

If you type in a command that *Nord and Bert* doesn't understand, try rephrasing the command or using synonyms. If *Nord and Bert* still doesn't understand your command, you are almost certainly trying something that is not important in continuing the story.

Common Complaints

Nord and Bert will complain if you type a command that confuses it completely. *Nord and Bert* will then ignore the rest of the input line. (Unusual events, such as being attacked, may also cause *Nord and Bert* to ignore the rest of your command, since the event may have changed your situation drastically.) Some of *Nord and Bert's* complaints:

I don't know the word " _____ ".

The word you typed is not in the story's vocabulary. Sometimes using a synonym or rephrasing will help. If not, *Nord and Bert* probably doesn't know the idea you were trying to get across.

You used the word " _____ " in a way that I don't understand. *Nord and Bert* knows the word you typed, but couldn't use it in that sense. Usually this is because *Nord and Bert* knows the word as a different part of speech. For example, if you typed PRESS THE LOWER BUTTON, you are using LOWER as an adjective, but *Nord and Bert* might know LOWER only as a verb, as in LOWER THE FLAG.

There seems to be a noun missing in that sentence. This usually means your sentence was incomplete, such as EAT THE BLUE or PUT THE BOOK IN THE.

There were too many nouns in that sentence. An example is PUT THE SOUP IN THE BOWL WITH THE LADLE, which has three noun "phrases," one more than *Nord and Bert* can digest in a single action.

I beg your pardon? You pressed the RETURN (or ENTER) key without typing anything.

You can't see any _____ here!

The object you referred to was not accessible to you. It may be somewhere else, inside a closed container, and so on.

That sentence isn't one I recognize. Please reword it or try something else. The sentence you typed may have been gibberish, such as TAKE ROPE WITH READ. Or you may have typed a reasonable sentence but used a syntax that *Nord and Bert* does not recognize, such as WAVE OVER THE MOUNTAIN. Try rephrasing the sentence.

We're Never Satisfied

Here at Infocom, we take great pride in the quality of our stories. Even after they're "out the door," we're constantly improving, honing, and perfecting them.

Your input is important. No matter how much testing we do, it seems some "bugs" never crawl into view until thousands of you begin doing all those wild and crazy things to the story. If you find a bug, or if you think a certain puzzle was too hard or too easy, or if you have some other suggestion, or if you'd just like to tell us your opinion of the story, drop us a note! We love every excuse to stop working, and a letter from you is just such an excuse! Write to:

Infocom, Inc.
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140
Attn: Brother-in-Law Bob

If You Have Technical Problems

You can call the Infocom Technical Support Team to report "bugs" and technical problems, but not for hints to solve puzzles, at (617) 576-3190. If your disk develops a problem within ninety (90) days after purchase, we will replace it at no charge. Otherwise, there is a replacement fee of \$5 (U.S. funds). If you call to report a bug, please provide your release number, which you can find by typing VERSION. Please return your registration card if you'd like to be on our mailing list and receive our newsletter.

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Quick Reference Guide

1. To start the story ("boot up"), see the separate Reference Card in your package.

2. When you see the prompt (>) on your screen, *Nord and Bert* is waiting for your input. There are four kinds of sentences or commands that *Nord and Bert* understands:

A. Movement commands: To move from place to place, just type the name of the place you want to go. (The names of the places you can get to are listed at the top of your screen, in the status line.)

B. Actions: Just type whatever you want to do. Some examples: READ THE BOOK or SKIN THE CAT or LOOK THROUGH THE WINDOW or SHAKE A LEG. Once you're familiar with simple commands, you'll want to use more complex ones as described in "Communicating with Infocom's Interactive Fiction" on page 9.

C. Commands given to other characters: To talk to characters in the story, type their name, then a comma, then what you want to say to them. For example: FRED, GIVE ME THE AXE or OLD MAN, HELLO.

D. Special commands: Some commands, such as INVENTORY or VERBOSE, give you specific information or affect your output. A list of these appears in the "Special Commands" section on page 10.

3. After typing your sentence or command, you must press the RETURN (or ENTER) key before *Nord and Bert* will respond.

4. Your location in the story is displayed at the top of your screen on a special line called the status line.

5. You can pick up and carry many of the items you'll find in the story. For example, if you type TAKE THE FLASK, you will be carrying it. Type INVENTORY to see a list of the items you are carrying.

6. When you want to stop, save your place for later, or start over, read the "Starting and Stopping" section on page 7.

7. If you have trouble, refer to the specific section of the manual for more detailed instructions.

