



Picture Context Reader

For Low Beginning – High Beginning English Language Learners

Complete program: 3 units
U.S. Reading level 2

For details about each unit, see the Contents section on page 3 - 8)
For teaching suggestions, see page 5.

Evaluation version: Unit 2
Tracks work for two students.

Windows 98/Me/NT/2000/2003/XP
8 MB RAM, 32 MB hard disk space
This program requires a minimum screen resolution of 800 by 600 pixels.

The program helps students to understand short sentences and improve their basic English literacy skills. Students see pictures relating to everyday situations. Emphasis is placed on learning nouns shown in the pictures. Students read and respond to complete sentences.

The program contains 216 illustrated vocabulary words and 432 questions.

The program is compatible with Merit Text Talker, which allows students to have the text read aloud to them.

This program is designed for low beginning – high beginning English language learners. It may also be used by adult literacy students who need help in reading and responding to basic sentences. Topics for context sentences are the body and health, family relationships, the home, community resources, shopping, cooking, dining, and everyday actions.

Picture Context Reader is self-paced improvement and management software that helps students sharpen their basic comprehension skills through interactive exercises. The program enables students to work independently, and teachers to monitor their progress.

After an assessment, students focus on specific concepts or learn in a mixed-practice format. They receive help and clear, contextual feedback. Students may track their own progress and print results.

Each lesson is self-directing and self-correcting. Students receive graphic rewards. Following each round on the summary screen is a Print option, which generates a progress-to-date report. Student scores are kept in a management system that allows teachers to view and print reports.

For logging on instructions, see Logging on and Class Management section of this guide. Versions are available for stand-alone, network, or home use.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Each unit of the program contains four MAIN MENU parts: Tryout, Warm-up, Workout, and Finals. Summary screens follow each round of each part of the Main Menu. The Print option shows the student's progress to date, not just the results of an individual round.

TRYOUT: The student will find out what skills to work on. He will be given three texts for each skill in this unit. To pass a skill, he must make correct choices for all texts. The bar at the bottom of the screen shows how much of the Tryout he has completed.

Summary-Tryout: When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how he did. A check next to a skill lets the student know he has passed. The skills that he passes in this section will also be shown as passed in the Warm-up.

WARM-UP: The student will have a chance to practice one skill per round. A tutor will take the student step by step through a sample text for each skill. Help messages, as well as sound and graphic rewards, are available. To pass, the student must make six correct choices in a round. The student is given a maximum of twelve questions per round. Checks on the Warm-up menu show skills that the student has already passed, either in the Tryout or in the Warm-up.

Summary-Warm-up: The student gets a star for each correct answer. When the student gets six stars, he gets a check that lets him know that he has passed. The bar at the bottom of the screen indicates how many skills the student has passed in the Warm-up.

WORKOUT: The student will be challenged to use all skills presented in random order. Help messages, as well as sound and graphic rewards, are available. To complete the Workout, the student needs to play at least six rounds, each containing up to eight randomly selected questions from several skill areas. To pass the Workout, the student must make six correct choices for each skill. The bar at the bottom of the screen first shows how far along he is in the whole Workout and then continues to show how far along he is in the current round.

Summary-Workout: At the end of each round a summary screen will show how the student did. The student gets a star for each correct answer. Red stars show correct answers for the current round. Gray stars show correct answers for preceding rounds. When the student has five stars in a skill area, he has passed it. When he has gotten five stars in all skill areas, he has finished the Workout. The bar at the bottom of the screen indicates how many skills the student has passed in the Workout.

FINALS: The student is tested on the same skills but with some different texts from those used in the Tryout. He will be given four texts for each skill. To pass a skill, the student must make at least three correct choices. The bar at the bottom of the screen shows how much of the Finals he has completed.

Summary-Finals: When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how he did. A check next to a skill lets the student know he has passed.

Targeted Workout (follows the Finals): If the student has NOT passed one or more skills in the Finals, he is prompted to do this optional exercise and then repeat the Finals.

PROGRAM HELP FEATURES

The program provides two help features. First, the Warm-up, individual skill drill, gives the student the opportunity to focus on a specific skill. A check next to a skill on the Warm-up menu indicates that the student has mastered that skill. Checked skills may be chosen for additional drill. Second, for the Warm-up and the Workout, whenever a student answers incorrectly s/he is told why the answer is incorrect and is asked to try again.

There are two options for adding student names to the record database.

- Teacher controlled – appropriate for most schools. Names added with the Teacher Program Manager (TPM) Set Up Student Names functions. See the Teacher Program Manager section of the guide.
- Student controlled – for home users and mature students. Names added at the Logon Screen.

For more information about class management and adding student names to the database, see the Teacher Program Manager manual. It can be printed out from a Merit Software CD or from this link on the Internet: http://meritsoftware.com/Teacher_Program_Manager.pdf

The program opens to a Logon screen with all previously entered class codes and student names. Students must select their class code in order to see the list of students in their class. They then click on their name to begin the program. If the program is in student controlled mode and students are logging on for the first time, they select their class code, click the New Student icon, and fill in their name on the form that appears on the screen.

The evaluation version of the program permits entry of only two student names. When a third name is entered, the first one will be deleted. The stand-alone version for one station contains record keeping for 42 students. Other school versions permit entry of as many names as disk space allows. When disk space is filled, the name that was entered first will be deleted.

SCORING

Students may print out their scores at the end of round progress-to-date screen. Teachers may view detailed scoring in the Teacher Program Manager.

TEACHER PROGRAM MANAGER

All Merit Software applications utilize a centralized student record keeping/management system utility program called Teacher Program Manager (TPM). For more information about class management, scoring, and other program features see the Teacher Program Manager manual. It can be printed out from a Merit Software CD or from this link on the Internet: http://meritsoftware.com/Teacher_Program_Manager.pdf

Here are the program features the teacher may customize for students using the Program options menu in the TPM.

1. Hide/Show Sound
2. Hide/Show Graphics
3. Control which program parts are active

CONTENTS OF PICTURE CONTEXT READER

UNIT 1 Topics: The Body and Health

1. The Human Head: A Woman
2. The Human Head: A Man
3. The Human Head: The Mouth
4. Inside the Body: The Head
5. Inside the Body: Middle Parts
6. Inside the Body: Blood Flow
7. The Upper Body: Below the Neck and above the Hips (1)
8. The Upper Body: Below the Neck and above the Hips (2)
9. The Upper Body: Aches and Pains
10. The Hand: Front
11. The Hand: Back
12. The Hand: First Aid
13. The Lower Body: The Hip, Leg, and Knee
14. The Lower Body: The Foot
15. The Lower Body: First Aid
16. Personal Care: The Hair
17. Personal Care: The Tooth
18. Personal Care: Hand Washing

UNIT 2 Topics: The Family and Community Resources

1. Family Relationships: Father, Baby, Mother, Child
2. Family Relationships: Wife, Husband, Son, Daughter
3. Family Relationships: Grandmother, Grandfather, Grandson, Granddaughter
4. What Families Do Together: A Birthday Party
5. What Families Do Together: A Car Ride
6. What Families Do Together: Watch Television
7. Where Families Go for Fun: A Cookout
8. Where Families Go for Fun: The Zoo
9. Where Families Go for Fun: The Pool
10. The Library: Borrowing Books
11. The Library: The Reference Section
12. The Library: Library Book Information
13. The Post Office: Inside
14. The Post Office: A Letter
15. The Post Office: Types of Mail
16. Where Families Need to Go: The Bank
17. Where Families Need to Go: The Pharmacy
18. Where Families Need to Go: The Dental Care Office

UNIT 3 Topics: Shopping, Cooking, Dining, and Everyday Actions

1. Inside the Supermarket: Shopping
2. Inside the Supermarket: Containers for Food and Drink
3. Inside the Supermarket: Paying for Food
4. Food in a Supermarket: Fruits
5. Food in a Supermarket: Vegetables
6. Food in a Supermarket: Meat and Poultry
7. Everyday Actions: To Write, See, Hear, and Smell
8. Everyday Actions: To Walk, Sleep, Sit, and Stand
9. Everyday Actions: To Drink, Eat, Read, and Talk
10. The Kitchen: A Room for Cooking
11. Pots and Pans: Cooking Food
12. Serving Food and Drink: Dishes and Glasses
13. Eating Together: Place Settings
14. Eating Together: The Dining Place
15. Eating Together: A Family Meal
16. Eating in a Restaurant: Ordering Food
17. Eating in a Restaurant: Different Foods
18. Eating in a Restaurant: Paying for Food

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS PROGRAM

For best results we recommend that students use the program 20 to 30 minutes a session, two to three times a week, for six to eight weeks in conjunction with other methods of instruction. Program usage should be paced to allow students sufficient time between sessions to absorb the material.

Start out with Merit's *Tryouts* to see where students need reading help most.

Discuss problem areas with students.

Ask students what they read most outside of school. How much do they read outside of school? Do they use books or go online? What do they like to read?

Supplement Merit with material from social studies, science, and language arts classes, so students may practice skills in various subject areas.

Return to the software and let students try Merit *Warm-up* and/or *Workout* sections.

Follow up each software session by asking students what new vocabulary words they have learned. What new questions do they have?

Look at a sample text. Ask students to find the key words that tell the main idea. Can they list 1-2 details? Find a fact and/or an opinion? Explain text sequence?

Have students print scores received for completing software *Warm-up* and/or *Workout* sections. Later, discuss scores with students. Are they pleased with their progress? What seems easier to them? What needs more practice?

Relate skills practiced with the software to material in social studies, science, and language arts classes, so students can apply new skills to each subject area.

Ask students to try making up new titles for material being read in their social studies, science, and language arts classes.

Ask students to make up sentences using vocabulary encountered in social studies, science and language arts classes. Let them work in pairs to share sentences.

Have students imagine they are making up reading/vocabulary questions for the Merit program being used. Give students a short text. Have them work in pairs to create and write their own skill-related question and answers.

Return to the software and let students try Merit's *Finals*, to help prepare for and de-mystify standardized tests.

Follow up software units with written post-tests.

Compare students' software results with gains in standardized test scores.

TIPS FOR INTRODUCING MERIT TEXT TALKER

The Merit Text Talker is an optional feature that may be helpful for your students. Introduce the Merit Text Talker feature to students by demonstrating how it functions.

Show how they can right-click in a text box to have the "Say text" pop-up message appear. Then show that moving the mouse over the pop-up highlights the pop-up. Press the highlighted pop-up to have the text read aloud. Right-click again to stop the text.

Show students that using the Application Key (next to the right-side CTRL Key) is equivalent to right-clicking.

Have students practice using the Merit Text Talker.

Encourage students to change the Merit voice periodically from "Kate" to "Paul," so they can practice listening to two different voices.

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