



Punch™
Software for teaching
writing and reading.

Read and Respond Punch™

Skill levels 3 - 5

Complete program: 3 units
Reading level 3 (Unit 1), Reading level 4 (Unit 2),
Reading level 5 (Unit 3)

For details about each unit, see the Content section on page 4.
For Teaching Suggestions, see page 5.

Evaluation version: Reading level 3 (Unit 1 sample, three of five topics)
Tracks work for two students.

Windows 98/Me/NT/2000/2003/XP
5 MB RAM, 55 MB hard disk space

This program requires a minimum screen resolution of 800 by 600 pixels.

Read and Respond Punch combines reading comprehension and writing skills. It helps students with reading levels of three through five to understand passages and write paragraphs that answer writing questions. As students relate reading to writing, they build up critical thinking skills. Teachers gain greater understanding of students' vocabulary and writing ability.

Read and Respond Punch can also be used for remediation by ESL, middle school, high school or adult students. The program contains 15 topics. There are 1,050 instruction prompts to guide students through each step in the comprehension and writing process.

To use Read and Respond Punch, students need to be able to write basic sentences on a word processor. A step-by-step approach emphasizes content and organization. Teachers may write a comment to the student that will be saved until the student sees it.

Versions are available for stand-alone, network, or home use. 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.

Operating Overview

The student progresses through the program by typing in input boxes and by clicking on buttons or typing keyboard shortcuts to select actions. Next, their entries are placed and edited in notepads.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION: Each unit of Read and Respond Punch contains five short passages for the student to choose from. After the student selects a passage, he/she will read it on the screen and then answer four multiple-choice questions that will test his/her understanding of the passage. If the student passes this section, a print button is available for the student to print the passage.

Then the computer will guide the student in answering a writing question based on the passage. Program instructional prompts guide the student step-by-step through writing an opening sentence and body sentences, organizing, writing a concluding sentence, proofreading and publishing.

When the student is answering the writing question, he/she creates his/her work by selecting from the notepads. The student is frequently encouraged to develop his/her work. Students are also encouraged by the program's sound and graphic rewards, as well as by seeing his/her work develop and progress. The student may transfer his/her finished paragraph to a commercial word processing program.

Students' Work in Progress

When students exit, the program saves their work and allows them to return to it at another time. The program will quickly scroll students' work and stop at the place they left off. Starting at the Organizing section they will be able to print out their work in progress.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS:

Vocabulary: In the first exercise, the student reads through the passage and is presented with two vocabulary-in-context questions. The student is asked to select the best replacement or definition from among four multiple-choice answers. If he/she answers incorrectly he/she is asked to try again.

Reading comprehension and inference: Next, the student is asked to answer one comprehension and one inference question. The student will be given three answer choices. If he/she answers incorrectly the computer explains why the answer choice is incorrect.

WRITING QUESTION

Writing Opening Sentence

If the student has scored at least 70% on the multiple choice questions he/she will go in to the final exercise: writing a paragraph that will answer the writing question based on the passage.

Writing - Opening Sentence: The computer provides guidance on how to write an original opening sentence to introduce the student's paragraph. The student is given a partial opening sentence and asked to complete it, or to erase it and type in a new opening sentence. The student's opening sentence is then placed in the Pre-Writing Notepad.

Writing - Body: The student begins the body of the paragraph by choosing an item from a list of words or phrases from the Pre-Writing Notepad and moving it to the Writing Notepad. The list is related to his/her answers to the multiple-choice questions. The student then writes a sentence that incorporates the chosen item. The student continues to choose other items and write a sentence about each to complete the body of the paragraph. Students are encouraged to write complete sentences. The sentence must begin with a capital letter, have appropriate end punctuation, and include at least two words.

Organizing: A Paragraph Notepad with the student's opening sentence is on the right half of the screen. Students transfer sentences from the Writing Notepad on the left half of the screen and arrange them in the Paragraph Notepad, deciding which sentences to use and in which order. All the sentences do not have to be used, but a minimum number of three must be chosen for the computer to proceed.

In the second step of the Organizing section, students see their work for the first time in paragraph form in the Paragraph Draft box. Complete sentences now appear in wrap style. Next, students are encouraged to reread their work.

From this point on, students may print their work. (The printout will show the section of the program from which the work was printed.)

Writing – Closing Sentence: The computer provides guidance on how to write the closing sentence. Students then write an original closing sentence to end their writing. The sentence is then put into the Paragraph Notepad.

Revising: In Revising, the Paragraph Draft appears for review with the paragraph as a whole unit. The students are encouraged to make corrections or changes to help strengthen their work. Spell checking is an available tool.

Proofreading: The program reminds students about the proper use of capital letters. Examples show students how to use capital letters correctly. Students then revisit their paragraph for spelling errors. Spell checking is also available here. Students are reminded to reread their work after doing a spell check to make sure it makes sense.

PUBLISHING: When students arrive at the Publishing section they are given three choices:

Review: Review the revising section again.

Spell checking: This is an opportunity to review spelling.

Save: This creates a document with the name of the student, program unit, and a unique code so the file will not overwrite existing documents.

After the students' paragraphs are saved, students are presented with these options:

Print: Name and date appear at the beginning of the printout.

Word Processor: Moves the paragraph to the word processor that was selected in the Teacher Program Manager (TPM).

New Topic: Allows students to start a new topic without exiting the program.

LOGGING ON AND CLASS MANAGEMENT

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

- Teacher controlled – appropriate for most schools. Names added with the TPM Set Up Student Names functions.
- Student controlled – for home users and for 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 Log on 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.

TRACKING STUDENTS' WORK

In addition to student printouts of their work in progress, teachers may view students' work in the Teacher Program Manager (TPM).

TEACHER PROGRAM MANAGER

All Merit Software applications utilize a centralized student record keeping/management system utility program called Teacher Program Manager (TPM). To learn about these advanced functions, see the

Teacher Program Manager manual. It can be printed out from the Software Documentation section of the Merit Software Installation CD.

CONTENT OF READ AND RESPOND PUNCH

Here are the topics and the writing question for each unit.

Unit 1: Reading Level 3

Topic: The lost tooth

Writing Question: How does Sam feel about losing a tooth?

Topic: The Dalmatian

Writing Question: Why doesn't the Dalmatian have a job with firefighters anymore?

Topic: A fantasy dinner

Writing Question: What shows that the narrator, Cathy, is an imaginative person?

Topic: The shape of the earth (Only available on Home and School versions.)

Writing Question: How were people's ideas about the earth different hundreds of years ago?

Topic: Different homes (Only available on Home and School versions.)

Writing Question: How do people's surroundings affect the kind of home they build?

Unit 2: Reading Level 4

Topic: King Midas

Writing Question: What problems did King Midas have when he was granted of his "golden touch"?

Topic: Snow

Writing Question: Why do you think the Inuit people have many words for snow when we have only one?

Topic: The camel

Writing Question: Why is the camel perfect for desert life?

Topic: George Washington

Writing Question: Why is George Washington called the founding father of the United States of America?

Topic: American food

Writing Question: How has food from other countries influenced American eating?

Unit 3: Reading Level 5

Topic: The fable

Writing Question: The moral of the fable is the slow and steady person is the one who will succeed. Do you agree or disagree? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Topic: Palindromes

Writing Question: How is a palindrome different from other words?

Topic: The Silk Road

Writing Question: Why was this trade route called the Silk Road?

Topic: The success of J.K. Rowling

Writing Question: Describe the steps J.K. Rowling took to write her successful series.

Topic: What is a museum?

Writing Question: Do you think it is important or unimportant for there to be museums that have nothing to do with art?

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS PROGRAM

Ask students what kinds of writing they do for social studies, science, and language arts classes. Do they feel like writing? Why or why not? When is writing easy? When is it difficult? What kinds of writing do they most like to read? Least like to read?

Ask students what kinds of writing they do outside of school. Do they keep a journal? Write letters or email? Create stories or comic strips?

Have students use the program, going through *Pre-Writing* and inputting sentences for *Writing-Body*. Ask them to break into pairs in order to share sentences with each other.

Have students continue with their Merit writing program till they reach *Revising*. Ask them to work in pairs, helping each other as they edit.

Help students transfer their completed writing to their own disks, or to a word-processing, email, or HTML program. Have them “publish” their work by printing it.

Follow up by asking students to break into small groups and share their printed writing. What do they like about each other’s writing? Do group members have any suggestions for each other?

Follow up each session by asking students what they found easiest when using their Merit writing program. What was already familiar to them? What new things did they learn about writing?

Review any problem areas for writing in the classroom. Ask students what they found most difficult about starting, writing, or revising their writing.

Remove punctuation from a short text based on material they are reading. Give the text to the students and prompt them to observe that this text is missing punctuation, such as sentence breaks, capitals and commas. Have them edit by inserting punctuation.

Ask students to try doing pre-writing for their language arts or social studies classes.

Have students work in pairs to come up with a list of adjectives to describe people, places, and things. Ask the pairs to come up with a list of verbs to describe action, then a list of adverbs for describing actions.

Request that students try revising their writing for language arts, social studies, and science classes.

Put together a class publication of work done with this program.

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