



## READING STRATEGIES FOR CAREER SUCCESS

Skill levels 8 and up

Set 1: Units 1 and 2

Set 2: Units 3 and 4

For teaching suggestions, see page 3.

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 understand, interpret, and analyze written materials on a variety of employment-related topics. Each set contains 36 passages and 360 questions.

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

The program is designed for high school students with average to good reading comprehension. The program is also suitable for ESL and adult students interested in improving their reading skills.

The program contains short selections based on career-oriented topics such as memos, reports, and notices. Students read a text and do a variety of exercises, including matching vocabulary, writing a complete sentence to answer questions, finding key words, and testing their memory. Teachers can leave comments for the student that can be saved for later reading.

Each lesson is self-directing and self-correcting. Students receive graphic rewards. The summary screen at the end of each round displays a Print option, which generates a progress-to-date report. A management system tracks student scores and allows teachers to view and print reports.

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

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**TRYOUT:** The Tryout identifies the student's starting skill level. This section ends if the student does not pass a text. The student then moves on to texts in the Workout, where help is available. Because the Tryout helps to assess the student's skills, it does not include sounds or graphic rewards. The bar at the bottom of the screen will show how much of the Tryout has been completed. When the student has finished, a summary screen will display Tryout his results.

Stars show the number of texts passed. A check shows that the student has done an excellent job. 'Print' will generate a progress-to-date report.

**WORKOUT:** The student will be challenged to use all skills in the workout. Help messages, as well as sound and graphic rewards, are available. To complete the Workout, the student must complete at least six rounds. There are two reading ranges on the Workout. When the student begins, three texts in each

round are chosen randomly from the level's lower reading range. The student must complete all seven texts in this group of texts before moving on to the seven texts in the next group. A summary of scores appears after each round.

Five exercise categories facilitate the student's understanding of each text: (1) Vocabulary match (2) Choose a key word (3) Student's key word sentence (4) Find the clue (5) Memory skill.

In each exercise, students get twice as much credit for answering correctly on the first try as on the second try. A "You are having trouble" message after any exercise indicates that the student's score was not high enough to go on to the next exercise. Any text that the student does not pass will be included in the group of randomly chosen texts for subsequent rounds.

Students must answer at least 70% in each exercise to continue on to a wrap-up crossword. The text remains on screen while the student completes the corresponding questions or crossword, so the student can refer to the text when choosing an answer.

#### VOCABULARY MATCH

In exercise 1, the student reads the text and views three or four consecutively highlighted words seen both on a match list and in context. The student then selects the best replacement or definition for each word from among the multiple choice answers provided.

#### CHOOSE A KEY WORD

In exercise 2, the student reads a question based on the text and selects, from three choices, one that is the best answer.

#### STUDENT'S KEY WORD SENTENCE

In exercise 3, the student uses a key word from the preceding exercise to answer a question on the text. The computer then provides a sample sentence to convey the idea the student's sentence should express.

#### FIND THE CLUE

In exercise 4, the student finds the key words in the text that justify the answer to the preceding exercise's question.

#### MEMORY SKILL

In exercise 5, the text is removed from the screen and the student is asked to recall or understand something from the text.

At the end of each round a summary screen will show how the student did. The student gets a star for each text passed. 70% is passing. Red stars show the texts passed for the current round. Gray stars show correct answers for preceding rounds. When the student has seven stars in a group, he has passed it. When he has gotten seven stars in both groups, he has finished the Workout. The bar at the bottom of the screen indicates how many texts the student has passed in the Workout. The scores shown on the screen are only for this round. 'Print' will show how he did in this round as well as his progress to date.

**FINALS:** The student is tested on the same skills but with different texts from those used in the Tryout. The bar at the bottom of the screen shows how much of the Finals he has completed. When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how he did.

The summary screen displays the student's overall score for the round, the "All skills" score, as well as scores for the specific reading skills. In addition the screen displays a star for each text in which the student scores 70% or over. The student can get a maximum of three stars. 'Print' will show how he did in all the parts of the program.

**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.

## 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 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.

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 feature 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](http://meritsoftware.com/Teacher_Program_Manager.pdf)

Here are the customizable program features, accessible through the Program options menu in the TPM.

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

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS PROGRAM

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 to absorb the material between sessions.

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

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 career-related texts and web sites. Do students know how to research and understand employment ads or opportunities? Memos? Information about different careers? Do they know how to use community resources? Discuss what students already know and what they want to learn more about.

Return to the software and have students try the *Workout* section.

Follow up each software session. Ask students to name something from the software texts that was already familiar to them before their session. Can they name something they read about for the first time? 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? What can they infer from the text?

Have students print scores received for completing software *Workout* section. Later, discuss these 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 career-related material, so students can apply new skills within a different context. What reading skills can help them retain a job or find better employment? Discuss specific reading strategies that can help students in a variety of workplace settings.

Give students short, career-related texts. Have students work in pairs to create additional sentences that could be inserted into each text.

Suggest additional readings that students find interesting. Ask students to read something they like for an extra 20 minutes a day on weekends. Ask them to also keep a reading journal.

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.

Have students imagine they are creating a crossword puzzle for the Merit program being used. Tell them to choose words from classroom material, then work in pairs to write, draw and design their own vocabulary puzzles.

Tell students to work in small groups to act out passage about civics, work, or social class.. Ask them to take turns performing for other groups.

Organize students into small groups for games of charades based on passages about different kinds of careers.

Return to the software and let students try Merit's *Finals*, to help prepare for and demystify 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.