

READING WORKS – USER GUIDE

General Notes

- Reading Works is designed as a non-phonetic, short reading scheme, for average to high IQ - low reading ability students, with a focus on increasing reading interest. The primary aim of the program is to improve word recognition and reading fluency through regular “word recognition” drill and the daily reading of controlled story passages that gradually increase in difficulty and length.
- Reading Works will be effective in helping non-readers improve their reading ability while working alone in the program, however it is highly recommended that a competent reader assist students when they are using the program. (*The supervisor does not have to be a trained teacher.*)
- A much faster rate of improvement will be shown if the program is used regularly for 10 – 15 minutes per day, 3 to 4 days a week. It is suggested that students only read one passage per session.
- Printing the story passages for practice away from the computer should result in improved word recognition and reading fluency when reading the same passage within the program for the final time. For this reason, Reading Works is programmed to automatically return students to a revision list of the stories read when they were last logged in.
- A wide variety of story passages have been provided in the program so that all students will find at least 20 stories of interest within each level.
- A small number of students may have difficulty coordinating the “mouse click” and reading of the story sentences. There are several ways around this:
 - a. students can practice reading off screen and tapping their finger on the desk to get into the rhythm and habit; or
 - b. a competent reader supervising the session can click the mouse button for the student.

Remember if you waste time it will lower the overall reading score. Also, more benefit will be obtained if all areas of the program are read aloud rather than silently.

- It is useful to keep a folder of story passages that have been read previously and then encourage regular rereading of these for additional practice.
- Macintosh users:
 - a. “left-click” = single mouse click
 - b. “right-click” = Ctrl + mouse click
- Voiced instructions can be switched “On” or “Off” when the “Instruction” button is available on the upper toolbar of a screen.

User Login

Click on the “New Student” button to enter a name for the first time. This name will then appear in the “Student List”, from which it can be selected at any time. Click the “OK” button to start using the program for the selected student name.

There is no limit to the number of student names, and unwanted names can be deleted by visiting the “Admin” area from the User Login screen.

Administration

Click the “Admin” button to access these user variables:

- User name edit / delete
- User password edit / delete
- Main Menu unlock options
- Story Menu unlock options
- Change the reading exercise, story “target”
- Reset the Placement Exercise

NOTE: Remember to click the “Save” button after making any changes.

Main Menu

All options except for “Placement Exercise” are locked. The program automatically locks and unlocks these menu options to ensure students are guided systematically through each reading session, which ensures maximum benefit is received from its use.

If needed, the Main Menu options can be unlocked in the Administration section of the program. (refer above)

Placement Exercise

Note: A competent reader MUST assist with this exercise.

For each word that “can” be read easily, click the left mouse button or letter ‘z’ on the keyboard. For each word that “cannot” be read easily, click the right mouse button or letter ‘x’ on the keyboard.

The number and difficulty of words that cannot be read easily determines the most suitable level for the student to start within the program. When the student gets to the Story Menu (Reading Exercises) the appropriate levels will have been “unlocked” for them.

High Frequency Words

This exercise gives students the opportunity to practice reading the words they’ll encounter the most often. Quick recognition of these words leads to faster reading speeds as students have more time to “decode” words that are less familiar to them.

Choose one of the “active” list buttons to begin. When a whole list can be read without any help, a green light will appear next to the button for that list. When a list has 3 green lights, the button for the next list will become active.

All lists preceding a revision list must be completed before the “Revision” button will be activated.

When reading the high frequency words, click the left mouse button or letter ‘z’ on the keyboard if the word can be read easily. Click the right mouse button or letter ‘x’ on the keyboard if the word is unfamiliar or cannot be read easily. (*Note: the mouse pointer can be anywhere on the screen when clicking.*)

Letter Warm Up

There are two Letter Warm Up exercises; visual and auditory. Each is designed to improve a student’s reading ability by systematically increasing their letter recognition skills.

[Visual]

- The number of letters to be displayed and the current speed for the exercise are shown at the bottom of the screen.

- The number of letters and the speed are increased automatically.
- Two incorrect answers in a row will drop the exercise back one level.

[Auditory]

- The level for the exercise is shown at the bottom of the screen.
- The level is increased or decreased automatically.
- One incorrect answer will drop the exercise back one level.

Incorrect responses result in the same letters being displayed until they have been correctly recognised.

An achievement certificate is awarded when the highest levels have been achieved, at the same time, for both visual and auditory exercises.

Word Warm Up

There are two Word Warm Up exercises; visual and auditory. Each is designed to improve a student's reading ability by systematically increasing their word recognition skills.

[Visual]

- The number of words to be displayed and the current speed for the exercise are shown at the bottom of the screen.
- The number of words and the speed are increased automatically.
- Two incorrect answers in a row will drop the exercise back one level.

[Auditory]

- The level for the exercise is shown at the bottom of the screen.
- The level is increased or decreased automatically.
- One incorrect answer will drop the exercise back one level.

Incorrect responses result in the same words being displayed until they have been correctly recognised.

An achievement certificate is awarded when the highest levels have been achieved, at the same time, for both visual and auditory exercises.

Results (Main)

Here you can view and print all exercise results for each level of the program.

Results can only be viewed for the Levels and Colours that are active in the Story Menu by selecting the active Level and Colour options at the bottom of the screen. This ensures the most recent results achieved by the student are quick and easy to find.

Certificates

Student achievement is recognised with the awarding of printable certificates.

Warm up certificates are awarded when the highest results have been achieved in each of the Letter and Word Warm Up exercises.

The Level certificates are awarded when the "target" number of stories for all colour groups has been achieved.

When a certificate changes from black and white to colour, it can be viewed and printed.

Reading Exercise

Clicking the “Reading Exercise” option opens the Story Menu, from which students choose the passages they are going to read. Students can read any number of stories while they remain within this part of the program. Returning to the Main Menu resets the menu options, locking all but the Letter Warm Up buttons.

[Story Menu – Story Index]

Listed here are all of the reading passages for each level and colour group, with details including the author’s name and Flesch ratings.

The Flesch Grading System has been used to ensure the reading passages are uniform in structure while conforming to a consistent increase in reading difficulty across the program.

The Flesch Reading Ease (Difficulty %) score rates the texts on a 100 point scale; the higher the score, the easier the material is to understand.

Choose Level and Colour options at the bottom of the screen to view the respective story indexes.

[Story Menu – Levels]

The difficulty levels and colour groups are:

Level 1 - Reading age 5-6 years; Interest age 5-8 years.

- Red (Flesch Grade 0; Words 50)
- Blue (Flesch Grade 1; Words 60)

Level 2 - Reading age 5-9 years; Interest age 7-9 years.

- Red (Flesch Grade 1; Words 70)
- Blue (Flesch Grade 2/3; Words 90)
- Green (Flesch Grade 4; Words 100)

Level 3 - Reading age 6-10 years; Interest age 9-12 years.

- Red (Flesch Grade 1/2; Words 120)
- Blue (Flesch Grade 3/4; Words 140)
- Green (Flesch Grade 5; Words 150)

Level 4 - Reading age 7-12 years; Interest age 11-adult.

- Red (Flesch Grade 2/3; Words 170)
- Blue (Flesch Grade 4/5; Words 190)
- Green (Flesch Grade 6/7; Words 210)

Level 5 - Reading age 8-14 years; Interest age 13-adult.

- Red (Flesch Grade 4/5; Words 190)
- Blue (Flesch Grade 6/7; Words 210)
- Green (Flesch Grade 7/8; Words 250)

The difficulty levels and colour groups are initially unlocked to the level determined by the Placement Exercise. Students must complete the “target” number of stories (default = 20), displayed at the bottom of the menu, before the next level or colour button is unlocked.

If needed, the Story Menu options can be unlocked in the Administration section of the program. (refer above)

[Story Menu – Categories]

There are eight story categories for each colour group, with five story passages in each category. Students can select any passages to read from any category in order to reach their “target” number of stories.

A green tick on a category button indicates that all five stories for that category have been completed successfully.

[Story Menu – Titles]

The five story titles are displayed when a category button is selected. Clicking on a title starts the reading exercise for that story.

A green tick on a story title indicates that the reading exercise for that story has been completed successfully and counts towards the “target” number.

A red cross indicates the reading exercise for that story has been attempted but not completed successfully.

[Story Menu – Bonus Story]

When the story “target” has been achieved for the Green groups in levels 2, 3, 4 and 5, the Bonus Story button is activated.

The bonus stories are special reading passages for the enjoyment of students, and are not assessable reading exercises.

[Reading Exercise – Page 1]

After seeing the story’ picture and hearing the title, click on the “Next” arrow to view the complete reading passage. The passage can be printed at this point, or read back to the student as each word is highlighted.

[Reading Exercise – Page 2]

After clicking the “Start” button, the first sentence from the story is displayed. Subsequent sentences are displayed automatically.

The sentences are read by using the space bar or the left mouse button to highlight and move from one word to the next. The speed at which the entire passage is read is recorded as “Words Per Minute” (WPM) and displayed on Page 3 and in the results.

The WPM speed function is provided as a means for users to have a measurable way of seeing their progress.

Unfamiliar words can be listened to by right-clicking when they are highlighted. *(It’s not necessary to click on the word itself.)* A list of unfamiliar words for the story can be viewed with the results at the end of the exercise.

Windows users; it is recommended the space bar be used to move from word to word, leaving the hand on the mouse free to right-click on unfamiliar words.

Macintosh users; keep a finger on the Ctrl button for quick access when clicking on unfamiliar words.

[Reading Exercise – Page 3]

On this page the complete reading passage is again displayed, including the highlighting of any unfamiliar words in red.

Reading speed, in Words Per Minute (WPM), and unfamiliar word results are also displayed.

At this point, students who want extra un-timed practice can read the passage again at their own speed.

[Reading Exercise – Page 4]

After clicking the “Start” button, the story will be played back by the program, one sentence at a time, with each word highlighted at the same speed they were read by the student. Unfamiliar words, highlighted in red, will be voiced automatically.

When the cursor progresses automatically, students may get a smoother reading if they are encouraged to ignore the blue highlight, read the complete sentence and then wait at the end for the next sentence to appear. Most students enjoy racing the cursor.

[Reading Exercise – Page 5]

After clicking the “Start” button, a series of four comprehension questions are displayed one at a time.

Students are encouraged to answer these on their own, as they test the students reading skills in a way that confirms their ability to decode and comprehend written words.

The questions are completed by clicking on an answer, which is immediately marked by the program. A new question will be displayed automatically after a correct response. Use the “space bar” or “Next” arrow to continue after an incorrect response.

Three out of four correct answers means the reading exercise for the story has been completed successfully.

[Reading Exercise – Story Results]

Displayed here are the most recent Warm Up results, and the results for the reading exercise that has just been completed.

Click on the “? Words” button to view a list of unfamiliar words for the story. These words were selected and listened to in the story by the student. The number indicates the total number of times that the word has been listened to across all stories. *(Click on the words to hear them again.)*

Further benefit is gained if the unfamiliar words are copied or printed out for practice away from the computer.

Click on the “Story Menu” button for another reading exercise.

Click on the “Main Menu” button to repeat the warm up exercises, or to access main Results, Certificates or Login.

Reading Revision

When a student logs in to Reading Works after a previous reading session, the program will display a “Revision List” of the stories last read. This “rereading” is an important part of the process that leads to improved reading ability.

It is only necessary to revise one of the stories, if there is more than one in the list, and does not involve redoing the comprehension questions.

The “Story Menu” cannot be accessed during the revision exercise.