Merit® Online Learning
Paragraph Punch®

Skill Levels 6-10
Upper Elementary through College Prep
Intermediate English Language Learners through Advanced
Suitable for Adult Literacy and Special Needs Students

Complete program: 5 units
REASONS (Unit 1), DETAILS (Unit 2), EXAMPLE (Unit 3),
CAUSE AND EFFECTS (Unit 4), SEQUENCE (Unit 5)

Internet Explorer 6.0+ (Windows)
Safari 3.0+ (Windows and Mac)
Firefox 2.0+ (Windows, Linux, and Mac)

What Does Paragraph Punch® Do?

Paragraph Punch helps students develop their paragraph writing skills. From pre-set writing prompts students develop an idea and write their own paragraphs. Students write a clear topic sentence and well reasoned support of that topic. The program guides them step by step through pre-writing, writing, organizing, editing, rewriting, and publishing.

Scope of the Program

The program contains 15 writing topics and 1,548 help prompts to guide students through each step in the writing process. Each unit in the program helps students learn a different way to write a paragraph: through reasons, details, sequence, example, and cause and effects.

Implementation

Suggested allocation of time for using the program
For best results we recommend that students use the program 35 to 40 minutes a session for two to three sessions to complete a writing topic. The program should be used throughout the school year to build and reinforce skills.

Suggested overview of student sessions
    First session: Choosing a topic, brainstorming, pre-writing, writing and organizing
    Second and third sessions: Revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing

Students advance through the program at their own pace. The program accommodates students with a wide range of skills and abilities. The program provides structure and support for students who need the help and engages advanced students by encouraging them to stretch themselves to improve their writing.

Tracking students' work
Students and teachers are able to view progress and time-on-task through students' Online Portfolios and Reports. The Online Portfolio stores all completed or published work. Students and teachers can review student writing to see development and progress over an entire year.

Program Structure or "Anatomy of the Program"

The following pages are a teacher orientation to the Paragraph Punch program structure, using sample screens from the program.
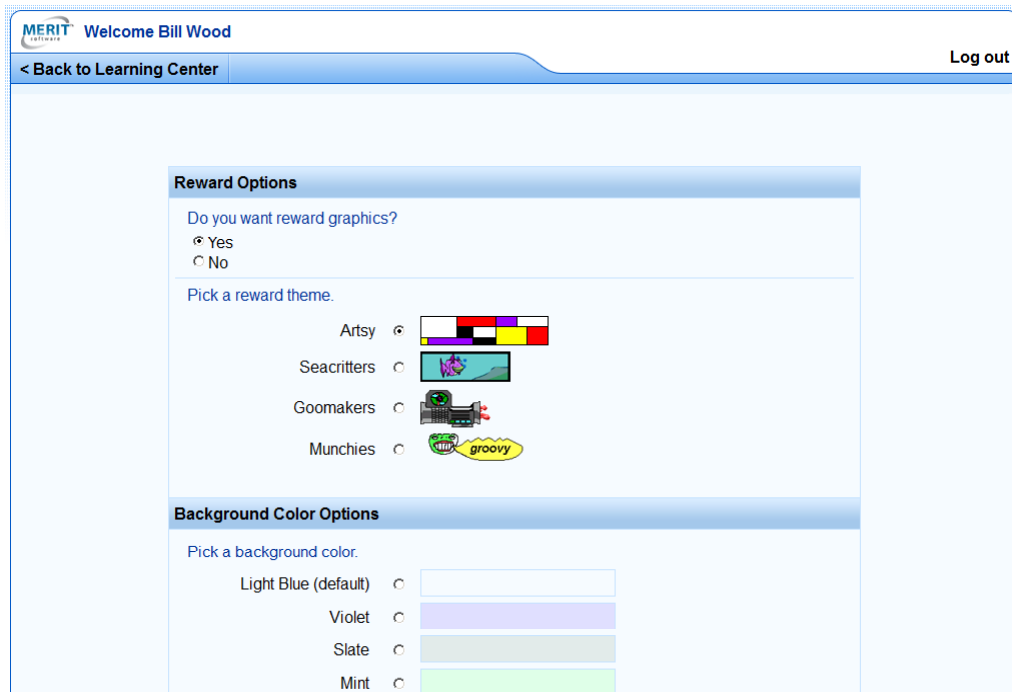
Student's Learning Center
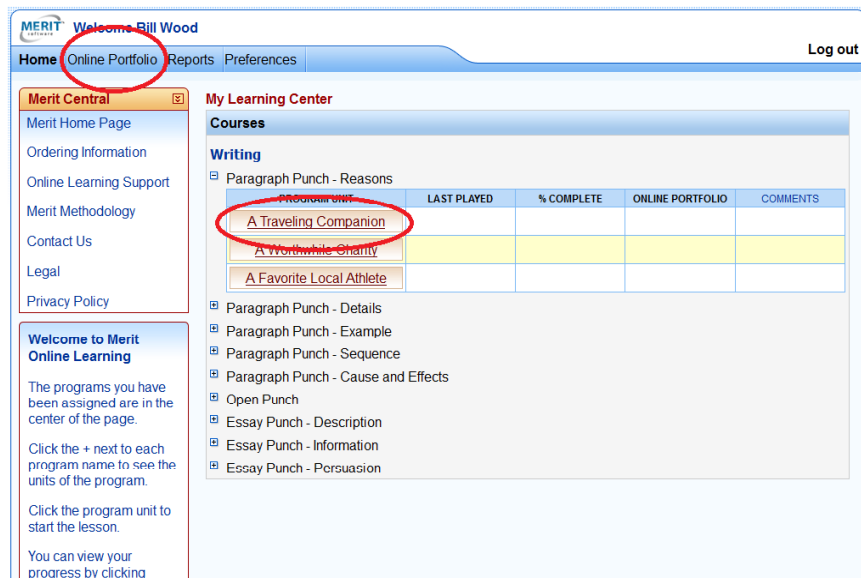
The student clicks the + next to the Paragraph Punch program to see the units of the program. The student clicks the topic they would like to write about to start a lesson.
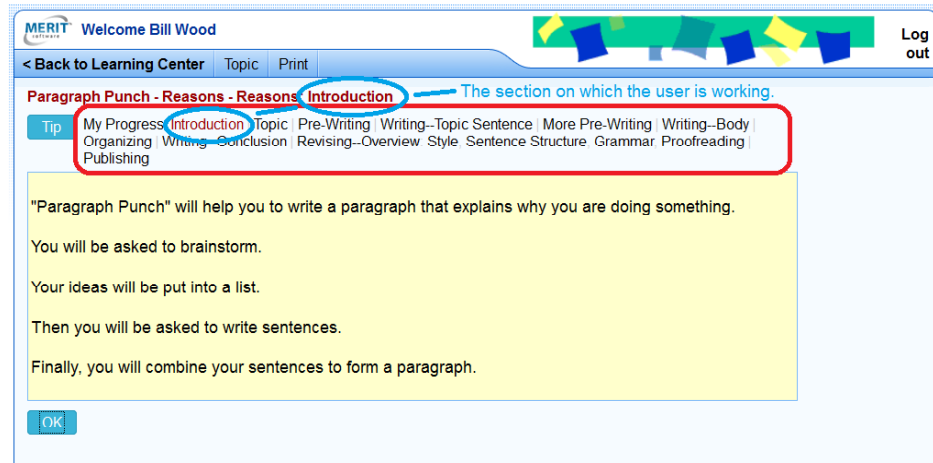
To see all saved writing the student clicks Online Portfolio in the menu bar.

Display Options: Text Size, Rewards, Background Color

Students can choose a graphic reward theme and choose a different background color when they start a Paragraph Punch unit.

My Progress

The section or "step" on which the student is working is shown following the program name and unit name, as well as in "My Progress."

Introduction

The program introduces a specific type of paragraph - one that presents reasons, details, example, cause and effects, or sequence to support the topic of the paragraph.

Topic
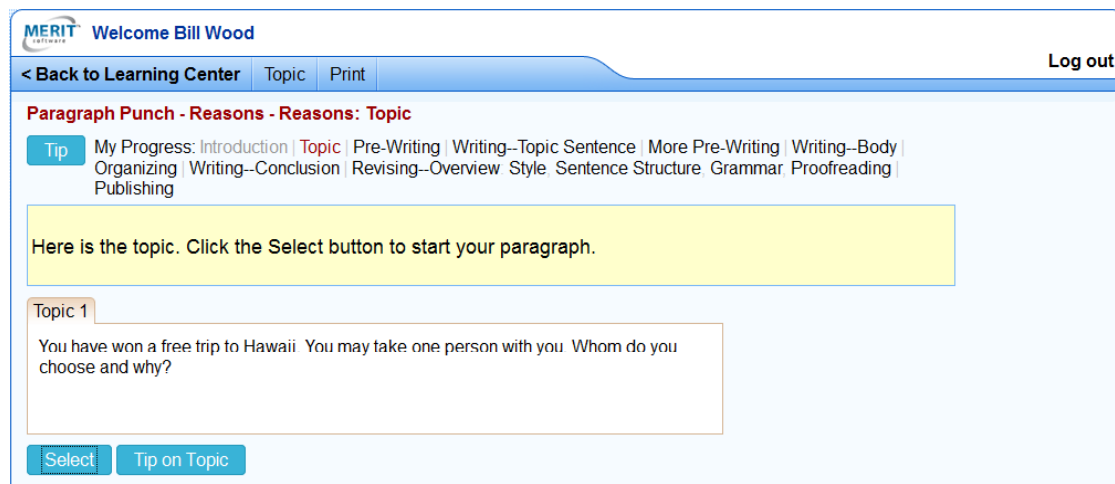
Students are shown the full writing prompt for the topic they selected in the Learning Center. Students personalize the prompt they have chosen.

Pre-Writing

A series of questions encourage students to brainstorm about their topic. Students enter words or phrases, not sentences. The program places students' answers in the Pre-Writing Notepad.

Writing--Topic Sentence

The program provides a sample topic sentence as an example. Students then write an original topic sentence to introduce their paragraph. Next, they look at their topic sentence together with their pre-writing items and review the items for relevance to the topic sentence.

Writing--Body

Students write sentences for the body of the paragraph. The student's opening sentence appears in the Writing Notepad. Students begin the body of the paragraph by choosing an item from the Pre-Writing Notepad. They use this item in a sentence, which is saved in the Writing Notepad.

Organizing

Students decide which sentences to use and in which order.

In the second step of the Organizing section students see their work for the first time in paragraph form in the Paragraph Draft box. Next, students are encouraged to add transitional words to help the sentences flow smoothly from one thought to the next.

Writing--Closing Sentence

The program provides a sample concluding sentence as an example. Students then write an original concluding sentence to end their writing.

Revising--Overview

Here, for the first time, students review their whole paragraph in the Paragraph Draft. The computer asks the students to check their work and guides them in the use of the Add, Change Text, Remove, and Move buttons.

Revising Options

Students are presented with optional lessons to help them improve their writing.

The Revising Options include four subsections: STYLE, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, GRAMMAR, AND PROOFREADING. Each subsection contains lessons designed to help students improve their language arts skills. The record-keeping program lets the teacher know which subsections the students have completed.

Publishing

Students are given the opportunity to continue revising their work before publishing. Students have a final opportunity to review their work before saving it – "publishing" it – to their online portfolio. All published writing is stored in the Online Portfolio.

Post Published Edits

Once students have finished the program, they can view their published work in the Online Portfolio. In addition to viewing completed work, students can make edits to published paragraphs.

In addition to making edits, students can see the current state of their work, review past versions, and print their newly updated paragraphs. The paragraph as it was initially published will be preserved both on the Published Paragraph screen, and on the Post Published Edits screen under the title "Original."

Monitoring Student Work in the Online Portfolio

The Online Portfolio shows the student's most recent work in each unit. In addition, the Online Portfolio stores all published work.

Accessing Student's Most Recent Work

To see more information about the last unit a student played, click on the unit name in the snapshot view.

Teachers go directly to a student's most recent work by clicking the unit name in the course Snapshot View on their home page. Although the Parent / Tutor interface looks different, users click the unit name on their home page as well.

Online Portfolio Performance Detail

The Performance Detail opens with the Notepad displaying the student's most recent work.

Online Portfolio Performance Detail – Reviewing Earlier Stages

To see how the student's writing developed you may view earlier stages of the work, such as the student's Pre-Writing Notepad.

Online Portfolio Performance Detail – Post Published Edits

To see changes that students have made to their writing after publishing, you can access the Post Paragraph Edits tab.

Online Portfolio – All Work for a Student

You can get a view of all of a student's work in a given program with the Table of Contents view.

Online Portfolio Table of Contents

To view the student's previous work select the Performance Detail you wish to view from the online portfolio table of contents.

Navigating the Performance Detail Interface

The Student Performance Detail also displays overview and progress statistics that the program tracks.

Monitoring Student Work With Reports

The Reports are useful for monitoring student summary information and statistics for the Paragraph Punch units. You can view and export information about individuals or a whole class.

Performance Summary Report

Performance Summary Report

Student Name: Wood, Bill
Course: Paragraph Punch - Reasons
Program: Paragraph Punch - Reasons
Teacher: Brown, Brad

Select the rows you wish to view, print or export.

[View/ Print] [Export]

	Program Unit	Published Works	Works in Progress	Completed Revising Sections	Date Started	Date Last Played	Time
☐	All Units	1	1	3	8/14/2014	8/21/2014	00:32:47
☐	A Traveling Companion	1	0	3	8/14/2014	8/19/2014	00:32:00
☐	A Worthwhile Charity	0	1		8/21/2014	8/21/2014	00:00:47

The Performance Summary report tracks the number of published works, works in progress, and completed revising sections. It includes Date Last Played, Date Started, and Time on Task.

Content of Paragraph Punch

Each unit concentrates on a specific type of paragraph - based on reasons, details, example, cause and effects, or sequence. Here are the topics within each type:

Unit 1: Reasons

Topic: A worthwhile charity - A relative has generously left you money in her will. You want to give some of it to charity. Which charity do you choose and why?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about a charity and its contribution to society.

Topic: A traveling companion - You have won a free trip to Hawaii. You may take one person with you. Whom do you choose and why?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about a close friend or relative, and why he or she would be fun to have with you in Hawaii.

Topic: A favorite local athlete - The editor of your local newspaper has asked you to write about the best athlete on a team in your school or community. Whom do you choose and why?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about your favorite local player.

Unit 2: Details

Topic: A place to show a visitor - A friend from far away is coming to visit you for the first time. What place in particular do you want your friend to see during the visit?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about your favorite spot.

Topic: A memorable place - One place stands out in your memory. It may be indoors or outdoors, close to home or far away. Tell about it.
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about a place you remember well.

Topic: Travel back in time - A special machine lets you travel back in time. Describe what you witness firsthand some time in the past.
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to tell about a period of time or an event in the past that especially interests you.

Unit 3: Example

Topic: A personal hero - Most of us have 'heroes,' people we greatly admire. Our heroes are usually people who help others. Describe one of your heroes.
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about a person you admire.

Topic: A necessary machine - Machines and gadgets have made life easier and more fun. Some machines we could not imagine living without. Write about a machine that you cannot live without.
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about the machine or gadget you enjoy or depend on most.

Topic: An unusual pet - We think of cats, dogs, and goldfish as commonplace pets. There are also other, more unusual pets available. Write about a pet that you think is unusual.
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to write about an unusual pet.

Unit 4: Cause and Effects

Topic: Moving on - You are moving on to another place or a new experience. How does this move affect you?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to tell how your life has changed.

Topic: Living without an important object - Something that you depend on breaks down. It takes a week to get it fixed. What does this do to your life?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to describe what it is like for you to live without an object that is important to you.

Topic: A community disaster - A natural disaster has struck your community. What are the results?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to describe how a force of nature affected your community.

Unit 5: Sequence

Topic: How to play a game - You enjoy playing a particular game. Your friend wants to learn how to play it too. Describe how you teach your friend to play the game.
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to tell how to play a certain game.

Topic: Organizing a party - There is a traditional holiday in three weeks. You want to have a party in your home. How do you organize it?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to describe how to plan a party.

Topic: Preparing a meal - You plan to surprise your mother by preparing a meal for her on Mother's Day. What do you do?
Tip: This topic will give you a chance to describe the steps involved in preparing a meal.