



Merit Online Learning Reading Comprehension Booster

Skill levels 3 - 5
High Beginning ESL through Intermediate
Adult Learners

Complete program: 2 levels
Level 1: Skill levels 3 – 4, High Beginning English Language Learners
Level 2: Skill levels 4.5 – 5.5, Intermediate English Language Learners

Note skill levels correspond to U.S. equivalent grade levels.

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

What Does Reading Comprehension Booster Do?

Reading Comprehension Booster gives students personal, immediate feedback and provides online tracking for teachers.

The program helps students improve reading comprehension. Students read a non-fiction or fiction passage and then answer several skill questions about it. The questions focus students to determine main idea, comprehend logical development, make inferences, and read closely for details. Feedback explains incorrect choices and rewards correct answers.

Scope of the Program: Skills

Each Reading Comprehension Booster level contains 60 passages divided into 3 units of progressive difficulty.

All units provide Vocabulary, Sequence, Inference, Main Idea, and Interpretation skill practice. Optional Word Association and Crossword Puzzle exercises keyed to the passages offer a challenge for the more advanced student. Examples of questions for each skill are in the Tips and Strategies unit.

Tips and Strategies

A Tips and Strategies unit addresses each skill in the program. It contains examples of passages with skill questions and a step-by-step analysis of each answer choice. Teachers can use the Tips and Strategies unit as a together activity to introduce reading skills to a class. It can be used for group mini-lessons as well as for individual review of skills with which a student is having trouble.

Implementation

Suggested allocation of time for using the 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.

Suggested overview of student sessions

Students advance through the program at their own pace.

Each Reading Comprehension Booster unit is divided into three sections for students to work through:

- Tryout – A diagnostic pre-test
- Workout – Learning and practice with feedback and help messages.
- Finals – A diagnostic post-test

The Workout section of the program is designed to promote learning and mastery by providing feedback immediately after students select an answer. When students select a wrong answer, the feedback explains why the choice is wrong. Students try again until they answer correctly. The Workout section is designed so that students may do as many rounds as necessary to master the material.

Students can redo a unit or section of a unit for additional practice. Note that playing again will reset student scores but not time on task.

Tracking students' work

Students and teachers are able to track improvement through students' Online Portfolios and Reports. Using these tools to view the Workout rounds informs students and teachers of what skills students are mastering and what skills students are having difficulty mastering.

Program Structure or “Anatomy of the Program”

The Reading Comprehension Booster program appears in the student's Learning Center.

Student's Learning Center

Merit Central

- Merit Methodology
- Merit News
- Contact Us
- Legal
- Privacy Policy

My Learning Center

Courses

- Book Punch**
 - A Lion To Guard Us
 - Chocolate Fever
- Grammar**
 - Grammar Fitness 2
 - Grammar Fitness 3
- Reading Comprehension**
 - Reading Comprehension Booster, Level 1

Course	Program Unit	Last played	Section	% complete	Comments
Reading Comprehension Booster	Unit 1	2/7/2012	Workout	18%	
	Unit 2				
	Unit 3				
	Tips and Strategies				
 - Reading Comprehension Booster, Level 2
 - Developing Critical Thinking Skills, Level 1

Welcome to Merit Online Learning

The programs you have been assigned are in the center of the page.

Click the + next to each program name to see the units of the program.

Click the program unit to start the lesson.

Click the course name for details about the course.

You can view your progress by clicking Online Portfolio in the top menu bar.

Student User Guide (Adobe Acrobat Reader required)

The student clicks the + next to the Reading Comprehension Booster program level to see the units of the program.

The student clicks the unit name to start a lesson.

Next, the student selects a section. The section menu indicates whether the student has done the Tryout and Finals and the % complete for the Workout.

Section Menu

Choose a Section and click OK.

Tryout
See what you know. ☐ Done

Workout
Use all your skills. ☒ 34% ☐ Done

Finals
Finally, test your skills. ☐ Done

OK

Students can adjust the text size and choose a different background color at the start of each section. At the start of the Workout they can also choose a graphic reward theme.

Display Options: Text Size, Rewards, Background Color

Text Size
To adjust the text size at any time use the buttons in the upper right corner above Log out.


Reward Options
Do you want reward graphics? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Do you want reward sounds? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Pick a reward theme.
Artsy ☒
Go makers ☐
Congrats ☐

Background Color Options
Pick a background color.
Light Blue ☐
Berry ☒
Morning Sky ☐
Sage Green ☐
Electric Yellow ☐
Orange ☐

In all sections the student is asked to read a passage and then answer several skill questions.

Sample Question

 Welcome Bill Wood

[<Back to Learning Center](#) [Info](#)

Log out

Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1: Tryout

1 of 3

One hot summer day, Shameka decided to drive from the city to an ocean beach. She asked her neighbor, Leena, if she wanted to come, too. Leena quickly **consented**. She was glad to accompany Shameka because she enjoyed spending time with her. Leena thought she would like to walk on the sand and swim in the ocean. There had been many hot days in the city and the girls were delighted to escape the heat. So, Shameka and Leena packed their bags, put them in the car, and drove to the beach.

Find the best replacement for the highlighted word.

☐ lent


☒ agreed

☐ allowed

OK

Feedback, help messages, and reward graphics are shown in the Workout section.

Sample Question with Feedback

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Log out

Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1: Workout

1 of 2

One day, a fire started in Marcia's kitchen. She was heating oil in a frying pan and suddenly hot flames jumped from the stove. First, she tried to drown the fire with water, but it only spread the flaming oil. It was very frightening! Then, Marcia remembered that she had seen her mother extinguish a grease fire with salt. Marcia ran to the cupboard, grabbed a box of salt, and headed back towards the fire. After she threw salt all over the flames, they died down and the kitchen was safe.

What information is NOT given in the paragraph?


☒ Baking soda can be used to smother a grease fire.

☐ The box of salt was located in the cupboard.

☐ Salt caused the flames to die down.

★ Yes, that's right.

Continue



Following each round, the student sees a summary screen showing his/her progress and achievement in that round.

Sample Summary Screen

Reading Comprehension Booster Unit 1

Tryout Score: 82%

Skill	Tryout Score Details
Vocabulary	● ● ● ● ● ● ● x ✓
Sequence	★ x
Inference	★ ★ ✓
Main Idea	★ ★ ✓
Interpretation	★ x

Section Menu Show Questions missed report

Section Details

TRYOUT: The program presents three passages to test the student's reading comprehension skills. The student answers nine vocabulary questions and two questions for each of the other skills within the program. When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how the student did. The student gets a star or bullet for each correct answer and a check for skills in which the student has answered all questions correctly. A Questions Missed Report gives details for questions answer incorrectly.

Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1: Tryout

1 of 3

Read the passage and click Continue when done.

Continue

One hot summer day, Shameka decided to drive from the city to an ocean beach. She asked her neighbor, Lee, if she wanted to come, too. Leena quickly consented. Leena was glad to accompany Shameka because she enjoyed spending time with her. Leena thought she would like to walk on the sand and swim in the ocean. There had been many hot days in the city and the girls were delighted to escape the heat. So, Shameka and Leena packed their bags, put them in their car, and drove to the beach.

Info

TRYOUT

You will have a chance to try out your reading skills on 3 texts. This will help you find out what to practice later on.

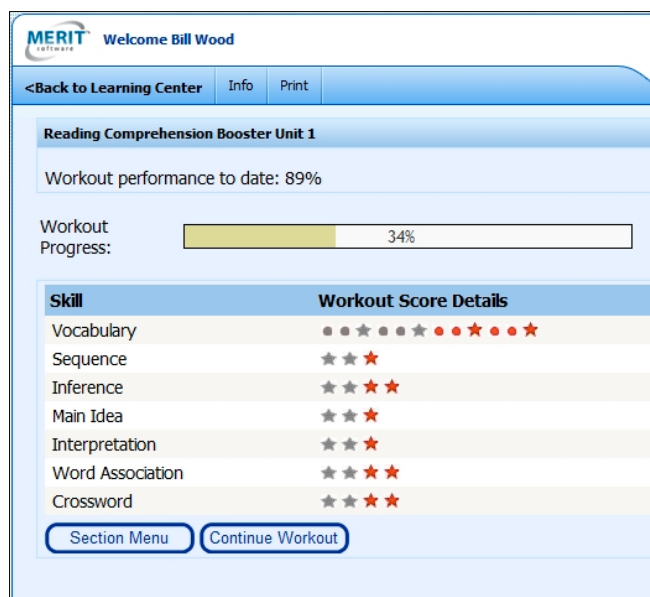
The summary screen at the end will show you how well you did.

Close

The student is awarded stars for skill questions answered correctly on the first try. The student needs to collect 10 stars for each skill in order to complete the Workout. The student can play as many rounds as needed to collect the stars. Note: Three Vocabulary questions answered correctly earn one star. Each Main Idea, Sequence, Interpretation, and Inference question answered correctly earns one star.

At the end of each Workout round a summary screen will show how the student did. The student gets a star or a bullet for each correct answer. Red indicates correct answers for the current round. Gray indicates correct answers for preceding rounds.

When the student has collected 10 stars in a skill area, the student gets a check indicating the skill has been passed. When the student has gotten checks in all skill areas, the Workout has been completed.



Sample Skill Question

MERIT
SOFTWARE

Welcome Bill Wood

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Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1: Workout

1 of 2

One day, a fire started in Marcia's kitchen. She was heating oil in a frying pan and suddenly hot flames jumped from the stove. First, she tried to drown the fire with water, but it only spread the flaming oil. It was very frightening! Then, Marcia remembered that she had seen her mother extinguish a grease fire with salt. Marcia ran to the cupboard, grabbed a box of salt, and headed back towards the fire. After she threw salt all over the flames, they died down and the kitchen was safe.

What information is NOT given in the paragraph?

- ☐ Baking soda can be used to smother a grease fire.
- ☒ The box of salt was located in the cupboard.
- ☐ Salt caused the flames to die down.

Not correct.
The paragraph states that Marcia ran to the cupboard and grabbed a box of salt.

Close

Sample Matching Activity

MERIT SOFTWARE Welcome Bill Wood salemstu10

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Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1: Workout

1 of 2

Continue without solving

One day, a fire started in Marcia's kitchen. She was heating oil in a frying pan and suddenly hot flames jumped from the stove. First, she tried to drown the fire with water, but it only spread the flaming oil. It was very frightening! Then, Marcia remembered that she had seen her mother extinguish a grease fire with salt. Marcia ran to the cupboard, grabbed a box of salt, and headed back towards the fire. After she threw salt all over the flames, they died down and the kitchen was safe.

Challenge yourself to earn a Word Association star.

Select a word from the list on the left.


Match it to a word or term on the right that best relates to it. Then click OK.

You get a star when you solve all the matches.

FLAMES	PASTA
FRIGHTENING	HORROR MOVIE
	RUBBER
	FIREPLACE

★ Yes, that's right.
FLAMES are part of fire. You would expect to see flames in a fireplace.

Continue



Sample Crossword Puzzle

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Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1: Workout

2 of 2

Continue without solving

Astronauts are people who travel in space. They have to wear a lot of special gear when they are working outside their spacecraft. It takes them a long time to get dressed in clothing made for astronauts. To keep themselves warm, they put on five layered protective suits made of strong synthetic material. Then, they hook up to a life support system that provides oxygen for breathing and keeps the air pressure and temperature comfortable. They then put on their helmets. Finally, they slip on protective gloves and are ready to work in space.

Complete the puzzle to earn a Crossword Puzzle star.

Click the clue you wish to answer.

Then, type your answer in the input box and click OK.

					T				
					H				
					E				
C	O	M	F	O	R	T	A	B	L
					M				
			S	P	A	C	E		
					L				

Hint THERMAL OK

Across

Where astronauts travel
To be in a state of physical ease

Down

Heat saving

FINALS: The program presents three passages to test the student's reading comprehension skills. The student answers nine vocabulary questions and two questions for each of the other skills within the program. When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how the student did. The student gets a star or bullet for each correct answer and a check for skills in which the student has answered all questions correctly. A Questions Missed Report gives details for questions answered incorrectly.

Reading Comprehension Booster Unit 1

Finals Score: 94%

Skill	Finals Score Details
Vocabulary	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ✓
Sequence	★ x
Inference	★ ★ ✓
Main Idea	★ ★ ✓
Interpretation	★ ★ ✓

Section Menu Show Questions missed report

The student may view the Questions Missed Report to see any questions the student missed on the Finals.

The report includes the passage, the correct answer, and what the student answered.

The Questions Missed Report is also available in the Online Portfolio.

Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1

Page 1 of 1

Work of: Bill Wood
 Program: Reading Comprehension Booster - Unit 1
 Section: Finals
 Date: 2/20/2012

Questions Missed Report

One day Daniel and his son Max were driving home when their car hit a pothole. It took a hard bounce and immediately began to lurch to one side. Daniel pulled over to the side of the road and saw that one of the tires was flat. He opened the trunk to get his tools. Max held the flashlight while Daniel used the jack to lift up the car. He unscrewed the nuts and took off the damaged tire. In its place, he put on the spare tire. He then checked the other tires to make sure they were all right and properly inflated. Daniel put the damaged tire in the trunk and they drove home.

Sequence

Question: Which sentence makes sense to put into the body of the paragraph?
 You selected: You never know when you may have to face an emergency.
 Correct Answer: Max had never seen a tire changed before.

The Online Portfolio shows the student's summary screen for the most recently played section in the unit. To see the student's progress click earlier sections' radio buttons to view their summary screens. The Performance Detail also includes overview information about the unit in the left column.

[illegible]

Reports show student progress and performance through the sections of the program.

Reports are useful for viewing and exporting information about a whole class or information about one student over several classes.

Reading Comprehension
Booster student work can be
tracked with the following
reports:

Performance Summary Report
Work-to-Date Report
Performance Detail Report

Performance Summary Report

Course: Reading Comprehension Booster
Program: Reading Comprehension Booster
Teacher: Brown, Brad

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

[View / Print](#) [Export](#)

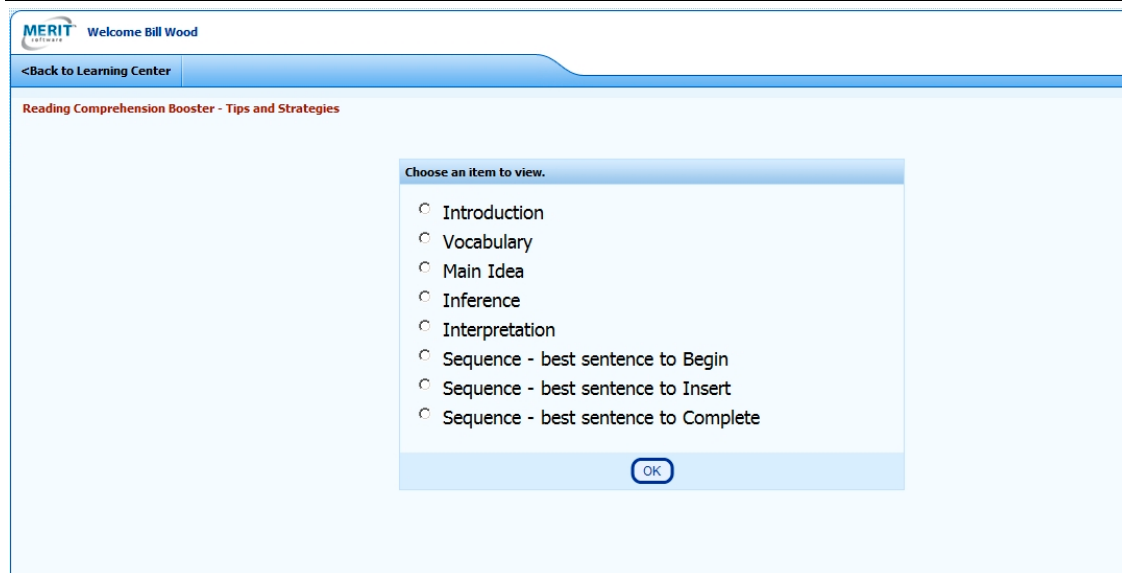
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Program Unit	Section	Performance	% Complete	Date Started	Date Last Played	Time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Block, Karen	All Units				12/26/2011	1/24/2012	03:17:53
<input type="checkbox"/>		Unit 1	All Sections			12/29/2011	1/17/2012	01:33:58
<input type="checkbox"/>			Tryout	75%	Done	12/29/2011	12/29/2011	00:03:03
<input type="checkbox"/>			Workout	92%	100%	12/29/2011	1/17/2012	01:25:28
<input type="checkbox"/>			Finals	100%	Done	1/3/2012	1/3/2012	00:05:27
<input type="checkbox"/>	Besold, Bobbie	All Units				12/26/2011	1/24/2012	03:17:53
<input type="checkbox"/>		Unit 1	All Sections			12/29/2011	1/17/2012	01:33:58
<input type="checkbox"/>			Tryout	67%	Done	12/29/2011	12/29/2011	00:03:03
<input type="checkbox"/>			Workout	82%	100%	12/29/2011	1/17/2012	01:25:28
<input type="checkbox"/>			Finals	92%	Done	1/3/2012	1/3/2012	00:05:27
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood, Bill	All Units				3/5/2012	3/6/2012	00:32:07
<input type="checkbox"/>		Unit 1	All Sections			3/5/2012	3/6/2012	00:32:07
<input type="checkbox"/>			Tryout	65%	Done	3/5/2012	3/5/2012	00:01:21
<input type="checkbox"/>			Workout	83%	90%	3/5/2012	3/6/2012	00:30:46

Tips and Strategies Unit

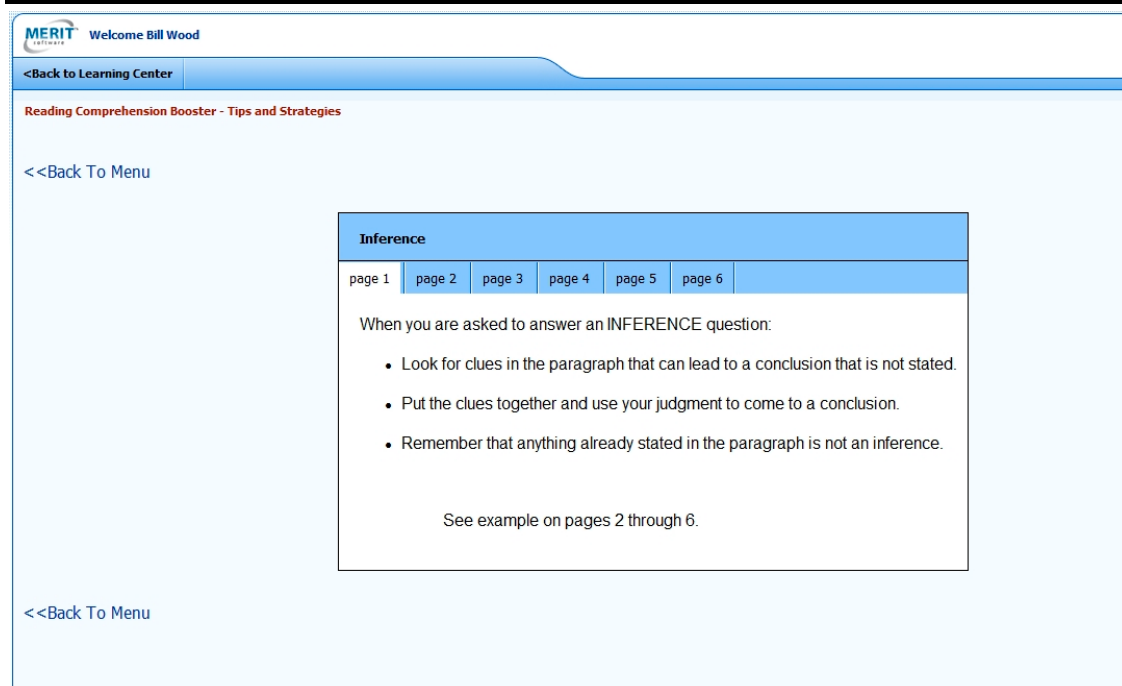
The link to Tips and Strategies appears in the unit column of the Reading Comprehension Booster program in the student's Learning Center. Click the link to access Tips and Strategies.

We recommend teachers review the Tips and Strategies section with their students.

Tips and Strategies Menu



Tips and Strategies Sample



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