Basic English Fitness Series

For intermediate English language learners

Complete program: 6 units
Basic English Fitness - Set 1 (Units 1, 2, 3) U.S. skill level 3
Basic English Fitness - Set 2 (Units 4, 5, 6) U.S. skill level 4

For details about the skills in each unit, see Content on page 3
For Teaching Suggestions, see page 5

Evaluation versions: Units 2 and 5

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 cope with troublesome points of standard written English grammar, usage, and spelling. Each set contains 36 grammar concepts and 396 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 intermediate English language learners who need help in hearing and using simple, clear English. It is also useful for U.S. third and fourth grade students who need help in using simple, clear English.

Basic English Fitness is self-paced improvement and management software that helps students sharpen their grammar skills through interactive exercises. The program enables students to work independently, and teachers to monitor their progress.

After an assessment, students focus on specific concepts or learn in a mixed-practice format. They receive help and contextual feedback. Students are able to track their own progress and print results. Scores are kept in a management system that allows teachers to view and print reports.

Each lesson is self-directing and self-correcting. Students receive graphic rewards. Following each round on the summary screen is a Print option, which generates a progress-to-date report. Student scores are kept in a management system that allows teachers to view and print reports.

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

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Each unit of the program contains four MAIN MENU parts: Tryout, Warm-up, Workout, and Finals. The program is pre-set with the numbers entered in the parts listed below. Summary screens follow each part of the Main Menu. The Print option shows the student's progress to date, not just the results of an individual round.

TRYOUT: The student will find out what skills to work on. He will be given three texts for each skill in this unit. To pass a skill, he must make correct choices for all three texts. The bar at the bottom of the screen shows how much of the Tryout he has completed.

Summary-Tryout: When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how he did. A check next to a skill lets the student know he has passed. The skills that he passes in this section will also be shown as passed in the Warm-up.

WARM-UP: The student will have a chance to practice one skill per round. Help messages, as well as sound and graphic rewards, are available. To pass, the student must make six correct choices in a round. The student is given a maximum of eight questions per round. Checks on the Warm-up menu show skills that the student has already passed, either in the Tryout or in the Warm-up.

Summary-Warm-up: The student gets a star for each correct answer. When the student gets six stars, he gets a check that lets him know that he has passed. The bar at the bottom of the screen indicates how many skills the student has passed in the Warm-up.

WORKOUT: The student will be challenged to use all skills presented in random order. Help messages, as well as sound and graphic rewards, are available. To complete the Workout, the student needs to play at least six rounds, each containing eight randomly selected questions from several skill areas. To pass the Workout, the student must make six correct choices for each skill. The bar at the bottom of the screen first shows how far along he is in the whole Workout and then continues to show how far along he is in the current round.

Wrap-up (follows the Workout): The Wrap-up, which consists of four questions, does not affect the student's total score, but it gives him a different way to see what he has learned.

Summary-Workout: At the end of each round a summary screen will show how the student did. The student gets a star for each correct answer. Red stars show correct answers for the current round. Gray stars show correct answers for preceding rounds. When the student has five stars in a skill area, he has passed it. When he has gotten five stars in all skill areas, he has finished the Workout. The bar at the bottom of the screen indicates how many skills the student has passed in the Workout.

FINALS: The student is tested on the same skills but with some different texts from those used in the Tryout. He will be given four texts for each skill. To pass a skill, the student must make at least three correct choices. The bar at the bottom of the screen shows how much of the Tryout he has completed.

Summary-Finals: When the student has finished all the questions, a summary screen will show how he did. A check next to a skill lets the student know he has passed.

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.

PROGRAM HELP FEATURES

The program provides three help features. First, the Warm-up, individual skill drill, gives the student the opportunity to focus on a specific skill. A check next to a skill on the Warm-up menu indicates that the student has mastered that skill. Checked skills may be chosen for additional drill. Second, for the Warm-up and the Workout, the sentence appears in its correct form regardless of the student's answer. Third, the computer gives the reason(s) for the correct answer.

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 for mature students. Names added at the Logon Screen.

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.

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 utilize 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

Here are the program features the teacher may customize for the students using the Program options menu in the TPM.

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

CONTENT OF BASIC ENGLISH FITNESS
Basic English Fitness Set 1 (Contains Units 1, 2, and 3)

UNIT 1
1. Regular noun plurals: -s, -es
2. No article with certain nouns
3. This, these
4. Regular noun plurals: -s, -es, -ies
5. That, those
6. Contractions of pronouns and verbs
7. Possessive pronouns: its, your, their
8. Articles: 'a' and 'an' with singular nouns
9. Possessive of singular nouns: 's
10. Prepositions of place: in, on, at
11. Prepositions of time: in, at
12. There is, there's, there are

UNIT 2
1. Contractions of verbs and not
2. Irregular noun plurals: -en
3. Possessive pronouns: mine, hers, ours
4. Possessive pronouns: yours, theirs
5. Tense: simple present and present continuous
6. Simple past tense: to be
7. Indefinite articles with adjectives
8. More irregular noun plurals
9. Loose, lose
10. Correct use of 'at'
11. Many, much
12. Possessive of regular plural nouns

UNIT 3
1. Adverbs of manner
2. Simple past tense of regular verbs
3. Prepositions of time: in, on
4. Regular noun plurals: -f, -fe to -ves
5. Simple past tense of irregular verbs
6. Possessive of nouns ending in -s
7. Articles: a, an
8. Doubling a consonant before -ing or -ed
9. Comparative and superlative of adjectives
10. Terms of quantity and their plurals
11. Try to, not 'try and'
12. Double negatives, with not or n't plus no or nothing

Basic English Fitness Set 2 (Contains Units 4, 5, and 6)
UNIT 4
1. Simple past tense of regular verbs, II
2. Then, than
3. Simple past tense of irregular verbs, II
4. Comparison of adjectives
5. Good, well
6. Double negatives: not, n't, never, plus nobody, no one, nothing
7. A few, a little
8. Nouns used as adjectives, singular form
9. Better, best; worse, worst
10. Past continuous tense
11. Whose, who's
12. Make, do

UNIT 5
1. Simple past tense of irregular verbs, III
2. Double negatives, with alternative corrections
3. Present perfect continuous tense
4. For, since
5. Prepositions of time: in, on
6. Superlative of adjectives
7. Passed, past
8. Agreement of subject and verb in number and person
9. Less, fewer
10. Past participles of regular verbs
11. Almost, most
12. Prepositions of place: in, on, at

UNIT 6
1. Simple past tense of irregular verbs, IV
2. Past participles of irregular verbs
3. Comparisons: more, most; less, least
4. Double negatives, with barely, scarcely, hardly
5. Ordinal numbers
6. Agreement of subject and verb, with intervening phrases
7. Agreement of subject and verb, with collective nouns
8. Verb plus infinitive or gerund
9. Different from, not different than
10. Agreement of personal pronoun and antecedent
11. Confusing word twins
12. Case of pronouns

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS 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.

Start out with Merit's *Tryouts* to see where students need grammar help most.

Discuss problem areas with students.

Supplement Merit with workbooks so students have a chance to practice skills in a variety of contexts.

Return to the software; have students try Merit *Warm-up* and/or *Workout* sections.

Follow up each software session by asking students what new things they have learned. What new questions do they have?

Have students print scores received for completing software *Warm-up* and *Workout* sections. Later, discuss these scores with students. Are they pleased with their progress? What seems easier to them? What needs more practice?

Tell students to imagine they are making up their own incorrect sentences and answers for the Merit program being used. Have them work in pairs to create, write and draw their own skill-related questions and answers.

Relate grammar skills being practiced with the software to material in the classroom.

Suggest students try to find and highlight their own in-class or homework writing mistakes. Ask them to write out improved sentences before starting their next drafts.

Return to the software and let students try Merit's *Finals*, to help prepare for and de-mystify standardized tests.

Follow up software units with written post-tests.

Compare students' software results with gains on 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.

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