

Business English Fitness

Skill levels 8 - 11

Complete program: 2 units

Evaluation version: Unit 1
Tracks work for two students.

Windows 9x/NT/2000
5 MB RAM, 13 MB hard disk space

The program helps students recognize serious problems that commonly trouble writers in the workplace. Topics include sentence structure, logic, grammatical relationship, passive voice, and punctuation. The program contains 24 grammar concepts and 264 questions.

Designed for business users at varying levels of writing proficiency. The program can be used as well by students studying for high school proficiency exams and by adult users.

Users learn to recognize serious problems that commonly trouble writers in the workplace. Topics include sentence structure, logic, grammatical relationship, and punctuation. It is a self-paced, improvement and management program that helps students sharpen their grammar skills and lets teachers monitor their students' independent learning. After an assessment, students work on specific concepts or learn in a mixed practice format. They receive help and contextual feedback. Students are able to track their progress and print results. Student scores are kept in a management system that allows teachers to view and print reports.

The program provides practice at two levels of difficulty with twelve skills per unit. The student is asked to find the error among several highlighted choices. If the sentence is correct, the student selects 'No Error.' Unit 1 texts provide two highlighted words or phrases per sentence; Unit 2, three highlighted words or phrases. A list of all skills in the program appears at the end of this document.

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.

There are several program features the teacher may customize for the students. See the TPM section of this guide for information.

1. Hide/Show Sound
2. Hide/Show Graphics
3. Set the number of correct answers needed to pass each part
4. Set the number of texts presented for each part

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: Presents all skills in the same order in which they are listed in the program guide. The student will find out what to work on. He will be given two texts for each skill in this unit. To pass a skill, he must make correct choices for both 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 seven correct choices in a round. The student is given a maximum of ten 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 seven 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 ten randomly selected questions from several skill areas. To pass the Workout, the student must make five 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 three texts for each skill. To pass a skill, the student must make at least two 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.

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.

HOME VERSION

A Home version of the program provides additional flexibility. It is appropriate for:

- Teachers who wish to assign independent work for students
- Teachers who teach distance learning programs
- Self-motivated people interested in improving their skills
- Home school settings

The Home version has the same scope, sequence, and printing features as the School versions. It tracks and bookmarks the work of two students, but it does not permit user entry into the teacher record management system.

To facilitate distance learning, each time a student completes a round, a progress report is automatically saved as a file that may be e-mailed to an instructor. This progress-to-date file has an MPR extension

and contains the same information a student gets when he prints from the summary screen. Student access to this file is through the Progress Reports folder in the Start menu of the Home version.

Students may purchase Home versions of the software directly from Merit.

HOME VERSION PROGRESS REPORT VIEWER

The School versions do not generate MPR files but they contain a Viewer program. When you double-click the Home version MPR progress-to-date file on a system that has a School version of the program installed, the file will open in a password-protected Viewer program. Type the password in the password box and press OK. You will be alerted if the file has been altered. If it is unaltered, you may view or print it out from the Viewer program.

The progress-to-date file can also be opened with the Windows system Notepad or Wordpad programs, but these programs will not notify you if the file has been altered.

EVALUATION VERSION NOTE

The Evaluation version of the software includes the Viewer program and, for convenience, automatically saves the MPR progress-to-date file at the end of each round. MPR files can be accessed through the Progress Reports folder in the Start menu.

LOGGING ON AND CLASS MANAGEMENT

We suggest that teachers set up their class codes before the students log on to the program for the first time. Type the password in the password box and press OK. For more information about class management see The Teacher Program Manager manual. It can be printed out from the Software Documentation section of the Merit Software Installation CD.

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 they are logging on for the first time, students 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). To learn about these advanced functions, see the Teacher Program Manager manual. It can be printed out from the Software Documentation section of the Merit Software Installation CD.

BUSINESS ENGLISH FITNESS

UNIT 1

1. Agreement of subject and verb in number and person
2. Parallel structure
3. The comma in dates and addresses
4. Word confusion: less, fewer; amount, number
5. Shifts in person
6. Sentence fragments

7. Possessive pronouns/contractions: it's, its; your, you're
8. Comma fault
9. Agreement of subject and verb, with intervening phrases
10. Dangling modifiers
11. Word confusion: who's, whose
12. Misplaced modifiers: adverbs

UNIT 2

1. Parallel structure, II
2. The comma, to set off parenthetical expressions
3. Agreement of subject and verb, with indefinite pronouns
4. Word confusion: among, between; effect, affect
5. Sentence fragments: phrases and dependent clauses
6. Possessive pronouns/contractions: theirs, there's; their, they're
7. Superfluous words
8. Comma fault, II
9. Misused terms: different from, plan to, try to
10. Misplaced modifiers: phrases and dependent clauses
11. Who, whom
12. Dangling modifiers, II

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