

21st Century Skills

Why teach keyboarding? Because computing is a way of life today. Not only in school or in the workforce, but as a means for communicating with others, sharing ideas, and expressing thoughts. The keyboard is the primary means of interfacing with a computer. Keyboarding is therefore an essential, 21st Century skill that students must develop in order to use computers effectively and efficiently.

Even very young children are actively involved with using technology and computers on a regular basis. Research shows that keyboarding is and should be taught to students at an earlier age, before bad habits form. This early introduction reduces bad habit development and provides additional benefits that include improvements in spelling, writing, and reading comprehension. Student writing develops faster through word processing because it facilitates the review and revision process. Efficient keyboarding skills allow students to emphasize concept development instead of focusing on key location. Students who become efficient keyboarders “compose better, are prouder of their work, produce documents with a neater appearance, and have better motivation,” (Nieman, 1996).

Language arts skills are further developed by the lessons and activities in *Type to Learn 4*, which reinforce phonics, grammar, vocabulary, proper usage of punctuation, sight words, frequently misspelled words, and other elements of written language. Cross-curricular activity payoffs provide grade-appropriate incidental learning in the areas of: science, literature, social studies, and other general knowledge topics.

Mastering keyboarding involves learning technique (physical positioning and movement), ergonomics (safe and comfortable keyboard interaction), and key location. Learning key location requires a sequential introduction of the keys along with a great deal of repetition and reinforcement to develop the kinesthetic memory traces leading to keyboarding automaticity. Efficiency is expanded if keyboarders type short letter clusters and words as single units instead of groups of individual letters (e.g., er, ing, the, my). *Type to Learn 4* calls these clusters Quick-Blends and Quick-Words.

With *Type to Learn 4: Agents of Information*, using the keyboard will become as natural to your students as writing with pen and paper. Its research-based, interactive learning environment will engage all K-12 keyboarding learners.