

REV IT UP!

Marie Bou K12

Keyboarding and Supplemental Curriculum

Introducing Typing Skills
at Different Ages



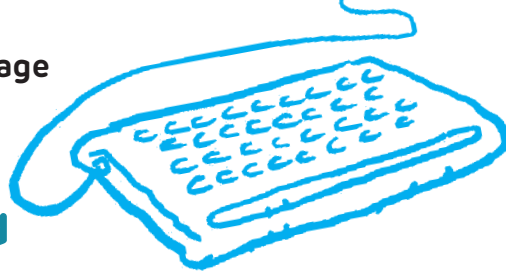
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Introducing Typing Skills at Different Ages

By Marie Bou K-12: **Engaging web apps for growing minds**

Depending on the requirements of your school or district, formal keyboarding or typing instruction may begin as early as 5 years of age or be reserved for 10 year olds and up. Since many students spend time using keyboards in a word processing program, typing efficiently is an important tool in effective digital communication. Here are some suggestions for setting young students up for success before formal typing instruction.

5-8 years of age



My pretend keyboard

Your youngest students may come to you with “touch screen” skills or even experience with smartphones, which do not always translate into familiarity with the QWERTY keyboard of a laptop or desktop computer.

Start with a paper mock-up of the kind of keyboard you will be using. Macintosh, Chromebook, and PC keyboards are not all alike, so get a pretend keyboard that is as close to the one the students will use the most.

Starting with a paper or laminated keyboard layout, have the students identify the location of letters in their first name. Don't discuss capital letters yet. A few students will have special characters such as accents or apostrophes. For now tell them that you'll show them a trick later (on the real keyboard) for making those marks. [Be sure to find out how to make them...often it's a combination of the Option Key and a letter.]

Explain that the letters are ALWAYS in the same place and that once they know where the keys are they should expect them to be in the same position every time. If the keys are labeled in capital letters, help students distinguish between the letter L and the capital I.

Let them have fun by giving them simple words or abbreviations to “type”. They will be hunting and pecking. That's okay to start.

Make sure you throw in some zingers using letters such as z, q, and x.

Taking care of our keyboards

Explain to students that keyboards and other computer hardware are tools for exploring and communicating but not toys. Remind them that the equipment must be kept clean, free of liquids, not dropped, and not banged upon or otherwise misused.

Show the students how to approach the computer with “good computer manners”, which means sitting properly, keeping hands off the keyboard, mouse or track pads, and being quiet and attentive to directions.

Let them practice putting the equipment in place to be used (opening the laptop or placing the external keyboard in position). Then have them practice putting equipment away. Do this several times, using key words (e.g. “ready position”, “work position”, “stowed”, “end-of-class position” or whatever works, as long as you are consistent). If necessary, practice coming into the computer work space, opening computers, sitting patiently, closing and stowing, putting away any pencils or other gear, and lining up. It is well worth the time to establish routines on how the equipment is to be handled, and to create key words to trigger the proper behavior. Use these routines and key words every time students use computers, even for games.

Real keys



These exercises can be more than one lesson depending on available time and the stamina of your students. Using the actual equipment, have students open a word processing document such as Apple Pages or Microsoft Word. If you can, use a template that sets the font to something larger than the usual default; this will make the text easy to read.

Refer to, or have available, the paper/laminated keyboards from an earlier lesson. Reinforce that the key layout is basically the same. Put aside the model keyboards and show your students the proper position for sitting and typing. Reinforce from the beginning the proper back posture and 90-degree arm position. Don't allow students to slouch or lean on an elbow while typing.

Instruct students that, when anyone gets stuck, they may point to or describe the location of a key, but may not touch another student's keys.

Introduce the Backspace (Delete on a Macintosh) Key and explain how it backs up and erases letters. Have them type "aaaaaa" and then backspace/delete all of the letters. They can have fun typing random letters and backspacing over them.

Have students type their first names and some key words from a display or from a sample paper. Give them enough words that they get to experience how the word processor pushes words to the next line automatically when the typist runs out of space. Don't stress capitals at this point, but if students know how to capitalize, allow them to do so.

Introduce the Space Bar and explain that, though their teachers may want them to leave large spaces between words when they are writing by hand, on a computer the letters are so neat that only ONE space is needed between words.

Introduce the Enter (Return on a Macintosh) Key in order to start a new line.

For an added challenge, ask students to see how far they can get typing the entire alphabet before you call a halt. Don't stress accuracy or speed. Students do not need to finish before moving on to the next challenge. Try not to make the speedy youngsters wait for a long time for the slower ones. Just call a halt and move on to the next activity.

This may be a good time to introduce the Caps Lock Key, which often has a green button-light to show that it is activated.

Challenge students to type their name or other words that begin with a capital letter. There will be errors when turning Caps Lock on and off, however, younger typists may not be ready for the two-handed challenge of holding down the Shift Key and typing with the opposite hand.

Mouse exercises



If your computers use a mouse, determine who is left-handed and ask if they would be more comfortable using the mouse in their left hand (not all lefties switch hands for mousing).

If practical, you might want to do these exercises with the computers turned off at first.

Right from the beginning stress proper hand position on the mouse. Mice that have two buttons, have a scroll wheel, or side buttons require different hand positions. Watch for the tendency of inexperienced "mousers" to rotate the mouse side to side instead of keeping it oriented directly ahead and moving the entire mouse from side to side.

When new users overreach with their mouse (and run out of space to maneuver) they need to be taught to lift the mouse off of the surface, relocate it on the table or pad, and continue.

Mouse exercises (continued)



Vocabulary to define for this lesson (to find more terminology, search for “parts of a Windows/Chromebook/Mac desktop”):

- mouse
- mouse button/scroll wheel
- desktop
- dock (Mac), shelf (Chromebook) or task bar (Windows)
- click
- double click
- click and drag
- drag and drop
- icon
- folder
- window
- window close button
- window scroll bar

Explain the concept of the click and the double click. (They may be able to actually hear the mouse click.) Give students the chance to click on an icon.

Give students the chance to click and drag an icon on the screen (some screen icons may be locked in place but they can still try).

Double clicking is a very specific skill. The computer reads clicking twice with a long interval as two single clicks. It interprets two clicks that are not precisely in the same place as click and drag. Have students practice opening an icon to a window, closing the window and reopening. Some students will get this very quickly, while others will need your hand to demonstrate the proper position, steadiness and speed for a successful double click.

Once the class has learned the basics, you can send them to a wonderful mouse training site from the Palm Beach County Library called Mousing Around: Mousercise, found at: <http://www.pbclibrary.org/mousing/mousercise.htm>

If students are readers, they will be able to do these exercises independently. For non-readers, you will have to read the instructions, model what to do, then walk around to monitor what students are doing. Tip: you can skip to any of the 41

pages by substituting the page number for the m1.htm at the end of each URL. To go directly to page 15 change the ending to m15.htm. There is a certificate on m99.htm that uses the entries from m41.htm to populate the name fields.

Most students take more than one session to complete the exercises, and a few of the tasks are confusing for young students, so just guide them through it. Some will like it so much they will want to start it again!

Ages 8-10

Continuing lessons

Whenever your elementary computer users sit down at the device, remind them of the stages of being a quality user:



- Good computer manners (hands off the equipment and wait quietly for directions).
- Careful handling of equipment (including gentle treatment, no liquids).
- Proper posture and arm/hand position.
- Reinforcing the location of familiar keys.
- Reinforcing the location and jobs of special keys (Caps Lock, Space, Backspace/Delete, Enter/Return).
- Inserting one space between words.

At a later date you may want to introduce more “grown-up” typing tricks. These are suited to students in their second year of using a keyboard.

- Right hand / right side, left hand / left side of the keyboard.
- Using the left or right thumb to use the Space Bar.
- Holding down the Shift Key with the opposite hand while typing a capital letter.

Readiness for formal typing training



Beginning as early as is practical or mandated in your school, it's time to transition your typists from "hunt-and-peck" (or two-fingered) typing to using all fingers on each hand.

Depending on the age of your students you may want to present the following reasons for touch typing:

- It's the way most adults type.
- Once you get trained correctly, it's much faster (but at first it's going to be slower).
- There are many cool games that test your typing speed and touch typing is the way to win.
- It speeds up the time you spend typing assignments.
- It allows you to look at what you're typing and catch your mistakes a lot sooner.
- Fewer mistakes make you look very smart when you are posting online.

Back to my keyboard

Bring out paper copies of the stylized keyboard for your device(s). Explain that, in touch typing, every finger is like a player on a soccer or football team; each finger has its assignments.

Introduce (or reintroduce) the term Home Row. On a computer keyboard there may be small dots or indentations that indicate the F and J keys. The G and H keys are uncovered. Give students the chance to rest their fingers on the paper keyboard's Home Row. Reinforce posture and arm/hand position.

Optional exercise: if you have paper keyboards to spare, give each student one, along with a ruler and pencil. Have them line the ruler up to the left of the G, Y, H, and N keys diagonally to the left. Draw a line with the ruler. Then do the same to the left of S, T, G, and B. Similarly instruct them, carefully, to keep drawing diagonals between keys to show how the fingers should line up.

Using light-colored pencil, or different color highlighters, the students can color the zones for the index fingers, middle fingers, ring fingers and pinkies. Note the huge area covered by the index and ring fingers.

Students will find the "official" fingering quite awkward and may argue that they like their way better. It's going to be your job to "sell" the new system as superior, more grown up and a challenge they can master.

Even without formal instruction in finger-letter assignments, students should be able to grasp that reaching over with the wrong finger, to conveniently strike a key, is going "out of bounds". For students who need more concrete reinforcement, consider putting clear tape on their eight fingers and coloring the tape with a corresponding colored Sharpie.



When NOT to teach typing

When students have a significant amount of typing to do in a short period of time (let's say during a creative writing or research unit) it's best to remind them of computer manners, proper care of equipment, posture and hand position but stop short of requiring two-handed typing if the object of that lesson is to get words on "paper".

Gradually encourage busy typists to use both hands while typing even if their fingers are not on the correct keys. This helps students realize that letters they use often, such as a, d, e, r, and t are on the left-hand side and i, o, l, n, and p are on the right. Specialization comes later during formal typing instruction.



FUN WITH TYPING GAMES

There are many online games geared toward budding typists to sharpen their skills. It's important to find games that are slow to moderately paced, require the use of the keyboard, and display the QWERTY layout.

Find an online word game, such as a hangman or "shoot the letters" game that accepts input from the keyboard (rather than clicking on letters on the screen). It helps if there is a super-basic level that concentrates on the Home Row.

http://www.abcya.com/kids_typing_game.htm (on the easy mode) is a home row key shooter.

http://www.abcya.com/keyboarding_practice.htm is a primary key finding game suitable for ages 5-6.

<http://topwordgames.com/meaning-fall> is a hangman type-game that uses all of the letters in the alphabet.



Illustration of Marie Bou holding a sign that reads:

Let Marie Bou guide **YOU** to the right keyboarding program!

- Select the program that meets your needs
- Explore our teaching guide, videos, tips and lesson plans
- Benefit from our experience, and pedagogical and technical support

Illustration of a woman pointing to the sign.

Illustration of a character labeled "KEYBOARD MAESTRO" pointing to the sign.

Illustration of a clock and a document labeled "100%".

Signature: Peter H. Reynolds

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