

Grammar Fitness Series

Skill levels 6 - 10

Complete program: 6 units
Grammar Fitness - Set 1 (Units 1, 2, 3)
Grammar Fitness for Upper Grades - Set 2 (Units 4, 5, 6)

For details about each unit, see the Content section on page 4
For Teaching Suggestions, see page 6

Evaluation versions: Units 2 and 5
Tracks work for two students.

Windows 9x/NT/2000/XP
8 MB RAM, 64 MB hard disk space
This program requires a minimum screen resolution of 800 by 600 pixels.

The program helps students cope with many troublesome points of grammar, including usage, diction, idioms, grammatical relationships, and punctuation. Each set contains 42 grammar concepts and 462 questions.

Designed for students in grades six and up at different levels of grammar proficiency. The program can also be used by ESL and adult students interested in improving their grammar skills.

Helps students cope with troublesome points of grammar, including usage, diction, idiom, grammatical relationship, and punctuation. This self-paced improvement and management program 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 series provides practice at six units of difficulty with fourteen 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.' Units 1 and 2 texts provide two highlighted words or phrases per sentence; Units 3 and 4, three highlighted words or phrases; Units 5 and 6, three or four 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 the 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

There are two options for adding student names to the record database.

- Teacher controlled – appropriate for most schools. Names added with the TPM Set Up Student Names functions.
- Student controlled – for home users and for mature students. Names added at the Logon Screen.

For more information about class management and adding student names to the database, 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

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). To learn about these advanced functions, see the Teacher Program Manager manual. It can be printed out from a Merit Software CD.

CONTENT OF GRAMMAR FITNESS SERIES

Grammar Fitness, Set 1 (Contains Units 1, 2, and 3)

UNIT 1

1. Possessive pronoun: its, not it's
2. All right, not alright
3. Comparative and superlative of adjectives
4. Making a singular noun possessive, using 's
5. Run-on sentences
6. Too, to, two
7. The comma in dates and addresses
8. Illiterate use of 'of' instead of 'have'
9. Contractions
10. Irregular plurals
11. The period in abbreviations
12. Used to, not use to
13. Wrong use of past participle for past tense
14. Off, not off of

UNIT 2

1. Incorrect use of stood for stayed
2. Possessive of plural nouns not ending in -s
3. Run-on sentences because of comma fault
4. Than, not then
5. Common error in comparison of adjectives
6. Contraction of it is: it's, not its
7. From, not off
8. Double negatives, with not or no
9. Agreement of subject and verb in number and person
10. Loose, lose
11. The comma in a series
12. The question mark
13. Because, not on account of
14. Shifts in tense

UNIT 3

1. Best, worst, not bestest, worstest
2. Agreement of subject and verb after 'There'
3. Kind of, not kind of a
4. The period after an indirect question
5. Plan to, not plan on
6. Parallel structure
7. Confusion of adjectives and adverbs ending in -ly
8. Those or these, not them
9. Possessive form of regular plural nouns
10. The comma with nouns in apposition
11. Possessive pronoun: your, not you're

12. Confusion of beside and besides
13. Agreement of personal pronoun and antecedent
14. Except or except for, not outside of

Grammar Fitness, Set 2 (Contains Units 4, 5, and 6)

UNIT 4

1. Bunch, group
2. Agr. of subject and verb: collective nouns or nouns that look plural
3. Contraction of you are: you're, not your
4. Neither...nor, not 'or'
5. Wrong use of past tense for past participle
6. Past, passed
7. Unnecessary prepositions
8. Case of pronouns
9. The comma to set off transitional words
10. Double negatives, with not, nothing, nobody
11. Try to, not try and
12. Common error in superlative adjectives
13. Possessive pronoun: theirs, not there's
14. Confusion of can and may

UNIT 5

1. Among, between
2. Agreement of indefinite pronoun and antecedent
3. Contraction of there is: there's, not theirs
4. Don't have, not hasn't got, etc.
5. Because or since, not being that
6. Whose, who's
7. Plural of hyphenated words
8. Agreement of subject and verb, with indefinite pronouns
9. Almost, most
10. Parallel structure, II
11. As if, not like
12. The comma between coordinate modifiers
13. Good, well
14. Incomplete comparisons

UNIT 6

1. Adjective-adverb confusion after linking verbs
2. Affect, effect
3. Double negatives, with hardly, scarcely, barely
4. Agreement of subject and verb, with intervening phrases
5. Who, whom
6. Possessive pronoun before gerund
7. Advise, advice
8. Misuse of 'because' for 'that'
9. Disinterested, uninterested
10. The comma with nouns in direct address
11. Different from, not different than
12. Healthy, healthful
13. Agreement of subject and verb, with 'nor' or 'or'

14. No comparative for absolute adjectives

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-texts.

Compare students' software results with gains on standardized test scores.

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