



## QuickReads Print & QuickReads Technology Edition for Special Education Students

### **1. Are the reading materials designed for special education students? If so, in what ways?**

Research-based and classroom validated, *QuickReads* is a supplemental program designed to improve student's fluency, comprehension, and background knowledge. Program research demonstrated that students, at all achievement levels, made gains with the program, however, the program does provide specific benefits for special education students.

*QuickReads* is a most appropriate tool for students receiving services in special education. The benefits of using *QuickReads* with students with disabilities are, at minimum:

- increased word per minute fluency rate which allows students to focus on comprehension
- improved before, during and after reading strategies by using the simple 3 step classroom routine daily
- increased background knowledge in areas where students may have missed science and social studies content due to low reading levels
- increased vocabulary by building meaning within the context of science and social studies passages
- increased motivation by engagement in content that is rich, engaging and age-appropriate
- increased encouragement of student improvement as they record and graph their fluency scores daily
- increased confidence by building both reading success and content knowledge

The biggest obstacle to proficient reading for many U.S. fourth graders is the fluency, or speed, with which they read. Studies show that even the students in the lowest percentiles can recognize most words ... eventually. The problem lies in the length of time that it takes them to recognize even common words. Struggling readers devote their energies to recognizing words, thus forgetting the content of what they are reading.

In *QuickReads*, 98 percent of the words are a combination of high-frequency words and words with a grade-appropriate set of phonic/syllabic patterns. Text that is deliberately constructed using this 98 percent match contrasts with current textbook and intervention programs in which 10 to 15 percent of the words typically fall outside the grade-level curriculum. Special education students can read *QuickReads* passages with more confidence and success because they are not encountering and stumbling on a large number of hard words that exceed the grade-level curriculum.

The remaining two percent of the words in *QuickReads* are taken from the vocabulary of social studies and science—words such as *evaporation*, *communication*, and *symbols*. Such complex words are always repeated in *QuickReads*, allowing students to fluently read a word that was difficult when it was first encountered. Reading words that appear multiple times in text not only provides students with the opportunity to more quickly recognize that word but it also provides the opportunity to confirm the word meaning.

In addition, to help special education students read with meaning, *QuickReads* applies a consistent comprehension strategy. Before students read, they predict content based on the passage title and scan the text for new vocabulary. They read the passage for the first time, clarify confusing points, and review the author's ideas. Then, they note some points to remember on a graphic organizer. During the second read, they listen to a fluent reading of the passage to help them model fluent reading behavior. After the third read, students assess their reading speed, identify the passage's main idea, and summarize the text. Once they read all five passages on a topic, students build background knowledge in science and social studies by answering questions designed to elicit connections. Called Connect Your Ideas, these questions conclude the review section for each topic.

Learning to make meaning from informational text increases both reading fluency and content knowledge. Fluent readers gain background knowledge that their struggling peers including special education students do not simply because they read more. In so doing, fluent readers are exposed to more new words and ideas. Thus, students who are not fluent continue to fall further behind their fluent peers.

To address this widening achievement gap, *QuickReads* presents nonfiction information that students might encounter in science and social studies textbooks. In this way, students experience success with reading and gain background knowledge that will be useful in future reading in these important content areas.

Traditionally, programs for struggling readers and special education students have consisted of a variety of unrelated topics—a passage on an unusual insect might follow a passage on an unusual tourist attraction. In contrast, the classroom-validated *QuickReads* approach features multiple passages clustered around a small number of topics in the critical domains of social studies and science. This structure allows special education students to explore a topic in depth and build a body of knowledge that they can use when they read their content-area texts.

There are additional benefits for special education students when using the technology edition of the *QuickReads* program along with the print edition. *QuickReads Technology Edition* is a multi-sensory software program that combines advanced technology and educational science to help students become confident readers and to improve their reading fluency. *QuickReads Technology Edition* works by analyzing students' voices as they read aloud and by interacting with them according to their individual needs. As students read, the software creates a record of what, how much, and how well they have read, making it easy to assess each student's progress and determine which skills to teach next.

Students have the opportunity to practice their oral reading in a completely supported environment that:

- Provides instant intervention to prompt pronunciation and correct errors.
- Fosters development of oral reading skills through self-paced practice.
- Helps students model correct pronunciation and phrasing.
- Motivates students to read independently and monitor their own progress with instant feedback.
- Assesses and records student progress on such measures as accuracy, comprehension and reading rate, enabling teachers to track each student's progress quickly and easily.
- Offers a range of accessibility features that can support students with disabilities (see below)

With *QuickReads Technology Edition*, students are presented with instant feedback—both visual and auditory—on their completed reading, what words they need to practice and what they sound like as readers. The content is presented in a considerate way, with no distracters on the screen, where the emphasis is placed on the high-interest content of *QuickReads*.

*QuickReads Technology Edition* has been reviewed by CAST to ensure the program is accessible to students with a variety of disabilities, including low vision, in compliance with Section 508. As Section 508 applies to teachers as well as students, all material has been made accessible to every audience of the program, for example:

- the text is accessible to screen readers that are built for the use of people with low vision. These readers enlarge the text to a size that is readable for each individual.
- the materials do not use color alone to signal distinctions, making it accessible to people who are color-blind.
- the screen colors can be changed, making it accessible to people with different kinds of color-processing impairments.
- no items flash, making it accessible to people with epilepsy.
- all commands can be accessed from a keyboard, making it accessible to people who cannot use a mouse.
- the Teacher Resource materials are available in the accessible-html format, allowing teachers to use adaptive technology to read them.

**2. Is there research indicating outcomes for special education students? For example, as a result of completing the program, what gains do special education students make? Please bring copies of the research.**

To date, the effects of the *QuickReads* intervention have been examined in two studies. These studies consisted of 1,000 students, half of whom received the intervention and half of whom served as a control group.

The intervention and control groups had similar achievement levels at the beginning of the study. Although the two studies were conducted in different parts of the country, both were conducted in schools in which most of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. The groups consisted of students in grades two, three, and four. Fifteen percent of the students were English Language Learners.

Teachers led their classes in the *QuickReads* lessons. In some cases, classes were divided into small groups; in others, instruction was carried out in a whole-class setting. Lessons were 15 minutes in length and were included as part of the language arts/reading period. Thus, *QuickReads* functioned as part of the regularly scheduled reading instruction time. In no context was *QuickReads* substituted for science or social studies instruction.

Teachers were guided in using the passages regularly and in a three-step instructional routine of repeated reading and comprehension review. This is the same instructional routine currently found in the *QuickReads* program.

The first study occurred over a nine-week quarter in the spring. Teachers guided their students in reading one of the five passages in a topic such as Hurricanes or Ancient Egypt on each day of a week. When a lesson was missed because of a special school event, students read two passages the following day. A tenth topic was used for an extended reading session. That is, all five passages in a topic were read consecutively, and students wrote summaries of the topic as a whole. In the second study, a topic such as Hurricanes or Ancient Egypt was covered during a two-week period.

### **The Results**

In both studies, the *QuickReads* group performed significantly better than the control group.

**Field Study #1** In the first field study, students' reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension were assessed by having them read a passage in one minute.

Over the nine-week period that *QuickReads* was used, students gained one word per week in their reading speed. This gain was consistent for students in all levels of achievement. In addition, the gain in reading speed was not made at the expense of either accuracy or comprehension. Accuracy levels were relatively high for all students on the pre- and posttests—at a level that has typically been classified as students' independent reading level. While the outcomes for comprehension were not statistically significant, students in the *QuickReads* group demonstrated higher comprehension levels than did students in the control group.

**Field Study #2** In the second study, the intervention was assessed through students' performance on a silent reading test similar to the one used for the state-mandated assessment. On this assessment, students read extended passages (500–800 words). Their comprehension was checked with extended responses and multiple-choice items.

A score of 8 of 14 had been identified as the level required for grade-level performance. The *QuickReads* group had an average of 8, while the control group had an average of 7. This difference was statistically significant. The presence of a higher average score in the *QuickReads* group meant that a higher percentage of students attained the cut-off score of 8 in the intervention than in the control group: 58 percent versus 51 percent.

In both studies, the combination of the sets of passages and the consistent use of an instructional routine was proved to produce robust, positive effects on the fluency and comprehension of all students, regardless of their native language or initial achievement level.

**3. For which grade levels is the program designed? Are these interest levels or reading levels?**

The *QuickReads* program, levels A-E, is designed for students reading at an early 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Level F for students reading at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level will be available in the summer of 2005. Because of the engaging nonfiction topics and passages, the program is appropriate for older, struggling readers, and the interest level can range from 6-12.

**4. Are there programs that are prerequisite for this one? If so, what are the necessary skills or programs?**

*QuickReads* is a supplemental program supporting the areas of fluency and comprehension. Ninety-eight percent of the text is a combination of high-frequency words and words with a grade-appropriate set of phonics/syllabic patterns. Therefore, students using *QuickReads* must have some familiarity with these words.

In addition, while there is no pre-requisite, per se, for beginning *QuickReads*, Level A, students would need to be able to recognize the on-grade level words for first grade. Many schools have found that using *Ready Readers*, also authored by Dr. Elfieda Heibert and co-authors Rosanne Englebretson and Connie Juel provide the basic early phonics skills necessary for decoding the most basic first grade words.

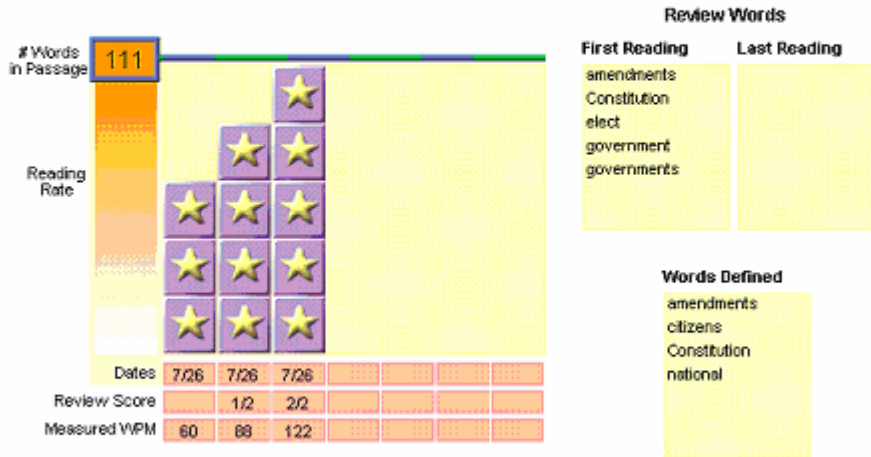
**5. Are there assessments built into the program? If so, please describe. Is there a placement test for the program?**

*Quick Reads* provides tools and methods for assessing students' skills before using *QuickReads*, interpreting the results, and using the Instructional Routine accordingly. The assessment in *QuickReads* also helps teachers access student's growth over time.

*QuickReads* provides simple, workable tools for assessing students' skill levels. The same method, with different content, is used **before** using *QuickReads* to determine words correct per minute, accuracy, and the Instructional Routine that best suits a student (Administering Benchmark 1). **After introducing students to *QuickReads*** use Benchmark 2 to measure students' growth in skills.

In addition, *QuickReads* offers two tools by which students can track their own progress. The Reading Log and the Self-Check Graph enable students to feel the thrill of success as they chart their achievement.

If students are working on *QuickReads Technology Edition*, the software assesses and records student progress on such measures as accuracy, comprehension and reading rate, providing students with feedback and enabling teachers to track each student's progress quickly and easily. See the example below:

Scores for: **Andreea Muresanu**Title: **What Is the Constitution?**

Print

Export

Done

## 6. Is there a data management system built into the materials?

*QuickReads Technology Edition* provides a built-in data management system that tracks student fluency progress and comprehension. Progress monitoring reports include:

- o Playback of student's raw reading
- o Vocabulary list to drive instruction
- o Individual Report Cards (for each passage) that show:
  - # of times read, dates read
  - Reading accuracy & rate
  - Comprehension scores
- o Class report cards (per computer), that includes a view of students progress for all the students using a particular machine, as shown below

Title	Accuracy raw	Accuracy percent	Number of Readings	Last Read	Review Score	Reading Rate
<b>Andreea Muresanu</b>						
Becoming an American Citizen	105 / 113	93 %	7	4/15/2004	3 / 4	75
A Land of Opportunity	114 / 114	100 %	2	4/15/2004	2 / 2	144
A Land of Immigrants	108 / 111	97 %	2	3/30/2004	1 / 2	83
The Bill of Rights	110 / 115	95 %	8	3/10/2004	1 / 2	85
What is the Constitution?	107 / 111	96 %	8	3/9/2004	1 / 2	58
We the People	105 / 110	95 %	5	2/24/2004		64
The First Amendment	111 / 115	96 %	2	2/24/2004	2 / 2	83
The Constitution and the Future	105 / 111	94 %	4	2/23/2004	3 / 4	73
<b>Gaby Cimoca</b>						
<b>Liz Kline</b>						
<b>Toto Lloferros</b>						

**7. What level of training is required to teach the program? For example, can a paraeducator teach it? If so, what how many hours of training are necessary? Are there training materials (video) available?**

*QuickReads* print requires minimal training. Both classroom teachers and paraeducators can easily teach the program and implement *QuickReads* into the classroom. The complete instructional routine is comprised of a 3-step routine and can be completed in just 15 minutes a day. This routine contains three steps by which teachers can prepare students for reading, follow a model of fluent reading and check their understanding, as well as assess and record their reading speed. The routine also offers goals and a number of additional teaching options targeted to the specific lesson.

This routine is provided in the form of a simple, 2-sided laminated card, making it easy for any paraeducator or tutor to teach the program. The Teacher's Resource Manual provides additional teaching options for reinforcing vocabulary, building background knowledge, and supporting ESL/ELL needs.

Because of the programs ease-of-use, *QuickReads* print requires minimal training. A self-study in-service guide is available to teachers for training purposes.

*QuickReads Technology Edition* provides a self-paced training CD (available March 2005) to enable teachers to get started quickly and confidently with the program in their classroom. Additionally, an Inservice Guide and an Implementation Checklist, in addition to the Teacher Resource Manual, are also available to help educators implement the program in their schools. Staff development can also be arranged for on-site, hands-on training. For the students, the program comes with a built-in tutorial to show students the features and instructional sequence.

**8. Is this a complete reading program or are supplemental materials needed? If supplemental materials are required, what are they?**

*QuickReads* is a supplemental program addressing specific aspects of reading instruction – fluency and comprehension. It should be included in the reading curriculum as part of a complete reading program, not a stand-alone reading program in itself.

**9. Are the materials appropriate for high school students in terms of content and interest areas?**

The higher levels of the program would appeal to struggling high school students. Because *QuickReads* contains high-interest, nonfiction passages from the science and social studies content areas, students quickly become engaged in the texts. In addition, students have the opportunity to read 5 passages on a particular topic – a unique feature that enables students to develop more in depth background knowledge on a subject.