



Q & A – *Read, Write & Type & Wordy Qwerty Online Editions* from Talking Fingers, Inc.

Q. How much will the *Read, Write & Type & Wordy Qwerty Online Editions* cost and when and where can they be purchased?

A. A Single User Home Subscription for *Read, Write & Type Online* will be \$35 and for *Wordy Qwerty* will be \$25. Substantial discounts will be given to multiple-user and multiple-year subscriptions school or district subscriptions. The subscriptions (or CD editions) can be purchased at: <http://www.talkingfingers.com>.

Q. Where can I go to get a demo of *Read, Write & Type* or *Wordy Qwerty*?

A. Visit <http://www.talkingfingers.com/online-demo/> to try the first eight lessons of *Read, Write & Type* or <http://www.talkingfingers.com/wordy-qwerty-online-demo/> to try the first lesson (with six activities) of *Wordy Qwerty*.

Q. What is the Talking Fingers approach to reading and writing?

A. The **Talking Fingers** approach to reading and writing is based on a simple idea: Text is *speech made visible*. We use our mouths to talk, to make the sounds of words. We use our fingers (with a pencil or keyboard) to represent those sounds on paper.

There are roughly 40 sounds (or phonemes) in English. It takes only 26 letters to stand for those sounds, to make any spoken word *visible*. When children learn to link those sounds with letters, they can use the alphabet code to write any word they can say. Their fingers are “talking”.

Q. What uniquely sets Talking Fingers’ software apart from the hundreds of software reading products available to parents and educators?

A. Unlike many of the early reading programs available online or in CD format, Talking Fingers’ software programs are truly interactive and are based on a speech-to-print methodology. They are NOT point and click programs. By implementing this “writing to read”

approach we enable children to receive constant feedback while using our programs. The computer can't tell if a child is reading a word correctly, but it can tell if a child is constructing or keyboarding a word incorrectly. As children learn to build words, sentences and stories in *Read, Write* and *Type & Wordy Qwerty*, the lovable and engaging narrators of both programs give consistent encouragement and praise and gentle corrective feedback, enabling children to become confident storytellers themselves.

Q. Why does this method work?

A. Reading and writing are normally functions of the left hemisphere of the brain. Studies of the brain show that many children who are dyslexic (struggling to read) are trying to use areas of the right hemisphere of the brain instead of the left. The dyslexics in two studies were taught to segment words into their sounds and use the alphabet code. When their reading improved, researchers could see the brain activation shifted to the left hemisphere.

As children first learn to deal with print, the new pathways they are developing should be laid down in association with well-established left hemisphere functions of speech and comprehension. Writing (building words), is a natural speech-based route to reading. Each word has to be mentally pronounced and then spelled out one sound at a time. As children write, their mouths may be quiet, but their brains and their fingers are "talking." If they can put words on paper themselves, they can more easily read words that other people have put on paper.

Q. What will children get out of *Read, Write & Type* and *Wordy Qwerty*?

A. Researchers report that fluent readers and writers access the words they read and write from a "database" located in the left hemispheres of their brains. This database stores both the sounds and meanings of the words we read and write. Both *Read, Write & Type* and *Wordy Qwerty* help children build and automatically access this invaluable left-brain data. They see, hear and type scores of words, individually, in sentences, and in stories. They store the motor memory of typing, and the sound, sight and meaning of each word in their brains, for future reference.

Read, Write and Type establishes the connection between speech and writing for children by associating each speech sound with a finger stroke or pair of finger strokes on the keyboard. It introduces children to the computer keyboard and teaches them to sound out and type words, sentences and stories. The vocabulary words introduced in *Read, Write & Type* are regularly spelled words that can be phonetically sounded out and spelled.

Wordy Qwerty uses games, songs, rhymes, storytelling and rewards to teach children 20 spelling rules, introduce them to word families, and identify the “outlaw words” (words that do not conform to spelling conventions and must simply be memorized by sight). As they master these concepts, the world of reading and writing widens beyond belief. Children fearlessly and confidently tackle new words because they have learned the rules and strategies that will help them succeed. The skills *Wordy Qwerty* fosters will remain embedded throughout their lifetime.

Q. Can any child pick up and use *Read, Write & Type* or *Wordy Qwerty*?

A. Most 6 to 10 year olds can use these programs. They’ll do even better with *Wordy Qwerty* if they’ve learned keyboarding, phonemic awareness and basic spelling conventions first, with *Read Write & Type*.

Q. How does the ESL (English as a Second Language) Help work?

A: When parents and teachers sign in and create a new student, they will find an “ESL Index” drop-down menu in the RWT Settings section from which they can choose a Help Language. While playing *Read, Write & Type*, whenever the child does not understand the instructions given, they learn to click on the Yellow Balloon to hear the instructions repeated in their native language. (*Note: ESL Help is not yet available for Wordy Qwerty.*)

Q. Many reading products claim to be “research-based” ... why is that important?

A. It’s important for developers of literacy software to base their products on the latest and most reliable reading and brain research. It is also important to find out whether the tools they

have created really work to help children learn to read, write and spell. This can only be determined via well-designed classroom research, with a variety of children using the product. The most current research in reading has found that, to become successful, fluent readers, children need phonics-based instruction that is systematic and explicit, with ample opportunity for individualized instruction and feedback. For fluency and comprehension, they need to develop strategies that use a knowledge of how words are constructed in English. Talking Fingers has incorporated these principles into its approach of using writing as a route to reading. Moreover, published research by noted reading researcher, Dr. Joseph Torgesen, of Florida State University, showed significant reading improvement with *Read, Write & Type*, when used in small group instruction with children identified as at-risk for reading failure. (Torgesen, J.K; Wagner, R.K.; Rashotte, C.A. Herron, J & Lindamood, P. Computer assisted instruction to prevent early reading difficulties in students at risk for dyslexia: Outcomes from two instructional approaches, *Annals of Dyslexia* 2009)

Read, Write & Type & Wordy Qwerty creator, Dr. Jeannine Herron, Ph.D., has 30 years experience in brain and reading research. Her ten years of research on dyslexia at the University of California San Francisco inspired her to find practical solutions to help children better learn to read and write. Research with both the *Read Write & Type Learning System* and *Wordy Qwerty* has been funded by private foundations as well as the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD),

Q. Can you tell me a little more about the products' creator?

A. Dr. Herron has been involved in children's education since 1955. This mother of two, and grandmother of five, has been teacher, activist, research scientist, adventurer, editor, writer, and educational software developer, and shows no signs of slowing down.

She began her career as an American teacher in the mid-fifties, teaching English, Mathematics, and General Science to middle and high school students in Ramallah, Jordan. Seven years later, she and her husband, and their two small children moved to Mississippi to be active in the civil rights movement. It was there that Jeannine became Co-founder and

Program Director of the first Head Start project in the United States, the Child Development Group of Mississippi, an organization that served over 5,000 children.

Jeannine received her Ph.D. from Tulane University Medical School, and went on to Stanford Research Institute as a neurobiologist and neuropsychologist. In 1974, she moved to UCSF and was awarded a post-doctoral research fellowship from the National Institute of Health (NIH) to investigate the cerebral organization in left-handers. Her first book, Neuropsychology of Left-Handedness, was published by Academic Press in 1980. From 1976 to 1984 she continued at UCSF as research psychologist, contributing to all aspects of a large NIH-funded project studying dyslexia.

In 1982, she founded a non-profit organization for educational research that has produced more than 50 conferences across the U.S. to inform professionals in health, psychology and education about relationships between the brain and learning. She developed and carried out research with two major software programs and an assessment program, funded largely by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). She is still actively involved in lecturing and providing professional development for teachers.

Her experiences with children in Mississippi, her history in the classroom, her research in dyslexia, and her discoveries from teaching her own children to write, fueled her desire to develop practical tools to help children learn to read and write.