

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn some fun activities to help students increase their keyboarding speed and accuracy.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The techtorial can be used by anyone with a PC or Mac with a word processor. The activities can also be used by those with dedicated word processors -- such as Apple eMates or [AlphaSmart](#).

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IIIa in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

KEYBOARDING CAN BE FUN!

Fast and accurate keyboarding is a critical skill for today's students. A number of software programs can help students learn and practice keyboarding skills, but sometimes kids need a break from the tedium of formal keyboarding exercises. The following activities will add a little fun to your keyboarding practices.

Play Spider!

Ask each student to choose a partner, and then have each pair sit side-by-side at a single computer. Tell students they are going to practice using the keyboard. Point out that keyboard keys will be covered, and they will be expected to use correct keyboarding techniques. Explain that the difference between this practice session and other sessions is that, this time, each pair of students will work together to type a single document.

Have students type a paragraph using each of the techniques below, changing techniques every 5 minutes:

1. The student on the right puts his or her left hand on the left home-row keys (ASDF) and types from that position. The student on the left uses his or her right hand to type from the right home-row position (JKL).
2. The student on the right uses his or her right hand to type from the right home-row position. The student on the left uses his or her left hand to type from the left home-row position.
3. The student on the left uses his or her left hand to type from the right home-row position, and the student on the right uses his or her right hand to type from the left home-row position. (This is tough!)

4. One student dictates a paragraph while the other student types that paragraph with his or her eyes closed. Repeat with students performing opposite tasks.
5. One student dictates a paragraph while the other student types that paragraph with his or her left hand in the right home-row position and his or her right hand in the left home-row position. Repeat with students performing opposite tasks.

This is a silly, yet worthwhile activity for a rainy day or other time when students are a little squirrely. The activity also shows students how important good positioning technique is to fast and accurate typing.

For more information on keyboarding basics, check out the techtorial, [Keys to Keyboarding](#).

Next: Storytelling: Volleyball Style

STORYTELLING: VOLLEYBALL STYLE!

In this silly writing activity, students change places in a volleyball-like rotation.

- Write several silly topics on the chalkboard (a flying goldfish, a magic pencil, a clock that only says "tock," for example).
- Tell students they are going to use a word processing program, such as AppleWorks or Microsoft Word, to type a story. Explain that they should incorporate into their stories as many of the silly topics as possible.
- Have students begin their stories.
- After students have been writing for two minutes, call out "Rotate." Have each student move counterclockwise to his or her neighbor's computer, and continue writing.
- Repeat rotations every two minutes, allowing about 15 minutes for the whole exercise.
- Have each student return to his or her original seat and read the story written there.
- Invite some students to read aloud their stories to their classmates.

This activity improves speed and is highly motivating; students want to type as fast as possible to get in their thoughts. Be careful not to let chaos develop, however, and keep an eye out for inappropriate story entries.

Next: Type that Tune

TYPE THAT TUNE

They don't need to name that tune, as long as they know the lyrics.

- Bring to school a music CD containing a vocal song appropriate for your grade level.
- Play the song on a computer with speakers. (Be sure to check the CD before class. Some new CDs have features that prevent them from being played on computers.)
- Have students type the lyrics as they hear them sung.
- If you can project your computer screen so it's visible to the entire class, do so. Students love seeing their teacher mess up the lyrics too.
- When the song is over, see who typed the most lyrics most accurately.

For a variation on this activity, have a student or a small group of students sing a song while their classmates type the lyrics.

Next: Keyboard Floor Chess

KEYBOARD FLOOR CHESS

This is a great activity for after school or summer technology clubs; it requires a large (about 10 feet by 8 feet) floor area.

Before class:

- Use masking tape to create a large keyboard on the floor. Each key should be about 1 foot square; do not put in keyboard letters.
- Include the Enter key and spacebar in the shapes they appear in on an actual keyboard. Put the “bumps” on keys F and J.
- Use masking tape to number each key (for example, Q could be 1, W could be 2, and so on).
- Make a master keyboard on a piece of paper, so you quickly can see which number corresponds with each letter.

During Class:

- Depending on their abilities, have individual students, or teams of between two and five students, try to type words, sentences, titles of movies, and so on, by jumping or walking from one key to another.
- Make a note of the numbers students land on; check those numbers against the master keyboard to see if the students successfully “typed” what they intended to type.

As a variation on this activity, provide students with number code for a word, sentence, title, and so on, and ask them try to figure out what the code says.

This activity is excellent for motivating students to memorize the keyboard, and for helping them see how the keys relate to one another.

Next: Learn more!

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I learn more about helping students use PowerPoint to create storybooks?

For more information on teaching keyboarding in general, see Keys to Keyboarding, a previous Education World techtorial.