



# Scholastic *ReadAbout*

*ReadAbout* is a supplemental reading program that uses adaptive technology to focus on the three key components of reading achievement in the upper elementary grades; comprehension skills and strategies, vocabulary, and content-area knowledge. Students using *ReadAbout* receive direct instruction and practice in the comprehension skills and strategies crucial to extracting meaning from nonfiction texts. *ReadAbout* presents a rigorous yet motivating approach to vocabulary instruction, in which students learn grade appropriate academic and content-area words. Throughout the program, students build background knowledge in the content areas. Background knowledge helps students create mental models to facilitate cross-curricular academic success.

*ReadAbout* motivates students in Grades 3-8 to master reading skills and academic vocabulary, using 100% leveled nonfiction content. *ReadAbout* capitalizes on:

- The best thinking in gaming theory to motivate and challenge kids with high-interest reading choices;
- Engaging video clips, corrective feedback, and a unique digital reward system;
- State-of-the-art software that adapts the reading instruction for every student, whether the student requires intervention, instruction, or enrichment;
- A range of software-based assessments and software-generated reports that can be used to monitor students' progress, modify instruction, and evaluate program effectiveness; and
- Professional development designed to expand teachers' knowledge of research on such topics as vocabulary instruction, anchored instruction, and nonfiction reading

The *ReadAbout* software differentiates instruction for every student and collects data for continuous assessment and further data-driven instruction in the classroom. Using *ReadAbout* reports, teachers can prescribe additional instruction and practice for individuals and small groups in comprehension skills and vocabulary. Student print materials include leveled reading cards that are directly linked to each of the 70 topics in the software. The cards are designed to promote transference of skills by building upon students' newly acquired comprehension skills, vocabulary, and content-area knowledge.

## **Instructional Content**

The program bases content on a student's reading level, skills need, grade level, and interest levels. All topics are nonfiction, and they align to standards in English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Research informs the vocabulary sequence and comprehension instruction. Personalized software, independent reading cards, and teacher-directed lessons differentiate instruction for optimal learning.

## **Vocabulary**

- Software provides direct instruction of high-utility and content-rich "Smart Words," which are pretaught to students before they read the passages.
- During reading, software supports enable students to hear a word read aloud and to receive a contextual meaning for many of the words in the program.
- In order to foster a love of words, *ReadAbout* gives students time to explore, interact, sort, and play with their collection of "Smart Words."
- *ReadAbout* provides teacher-directed instruction, modeling, and practice of six key vocabulary strategies, such as using multiple-meaning words and idioms.
- Students experience multiple exposures to words in online passages and printed materials giving them many opportunities for mastery.

## Comprehension

- Before reading, children watch a brief, high-interest video that builds background knowledge about the text they will be reading.
- Students also receive a “Skill Brief,” which activates students’ prior knowledge and shows how the skill is used in real-world contexts.
- During reading, students build content-area knowledge in the areas of science, social studies, and life experiences.
- Direct instruction teaches students ten nonfiction comprehension skills, including fact/opinion, inference, compare/contrast, problem/solution, and author’s purpose.
- Instruction includes seven comprehension strategies—visualizing, setting a purpose, monitoring, summarizing, questioning, rereading, and repairing.
- Each reading passage is formatted in one of seven real-world text types, such as newspaper, textbook, and Web site, to help teach text features.
- Students practice skills online and during independent reading of *SmartFiles* printed passages, which are related to the software topics.

## Writing

- Using the 6+1 Trait® Writing lessons, available in the Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM), teachers present specific writing traits such as word choice, conventions, ideas, and voice.
- Scaffolded writing prompts appear on each interactive “Knowledge Card,” allowing students to apply the knowledge they gained in reading and express their personal opinions.
- “Write About It” prompts and exercises from printed SmartFiles give students writing practice in expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative formats.
- The software’s “Text Type Tutor” provides students with instructional support as they learn about and practice writing in seven different text types. Supplemental text type lessons are available in SAM.

## Instructional Design

*ReadAbout* has a clear instructional path. The program begins by assessing students’ reading levels, skill abilities, and interests. The program presents three reading topics that reflect each student’s individual needs. Every topic addresses reading achievement by providing anchored instruction, scaffolded reading, informative assessment, and personalized practice.

Students are appropriately placed in *ReadAbout* through the *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI), which assesses each student’s independent reading level. Teachers can also manually place students in *ReadAbout*.

The steps in the *ReadAbout* instructional sequence are:

- a. Anchored Instruction—*ReadAbout* prepares students to learn by anchoring instruction and building mental models. Before students begin reading, the program pre-teaches vocabulary, frontloads comprehension instruction, and builds background knowledge through content-related videos.
- b. Scaffolded Reading—*ReadAbout* customizes instruction by delivering content and instruction based on student performance. Every reading passage is formatted in one of seven real-world text structures to help teach text features. The program provides explicit instruction in skills and strategies and provides multiple exposures to high-utility vocabulary.
- c. Informative Assessment—*ReadAbout* assesses students on vocabulary and comprehension performance. Targeted corrective feedback provides further instruction when difficulty arises, along with the opportunity to try again. Each keystroke is recorded and not only informs the adaptive algorithm, but also provides extensive reporting. Teachers and administrators can access student and cohort data in the *ReadAbout* reports.

- d. Personalized Practice—*ReadAbout* provides students with the opportunity to practice vocabulary through dynamic instructional activities and a personalized collection of vocabulary cards. It also offers further on-level practice with comprehension skills, as well as topic-specific writing activities.
- e. Adaptive Interventions—*ReadAbout* adapts to stay on pace with students by delivering reading passages at a higher or lower level, according to need; delivering vocabulary review as needed; and engaging students in tutorials on comprehension skills. Dynamic scaffolds adjust passage text level based on student performance.

*ReadAbout* is a self-managed program and students use it independently. Students move through the instructional software at their own pace and at their own reading levels. The software monitors student progress and adjust instruction accordingly. Each of the *ReadAbout* 70 topics includes three reading passages. A Student must complete each passage before moving to another topic. On average, a student will complete a single topic in 2-3 weeks.

*ReadAbout* is a supplemental program and is designed to be used as the technology rotation for any core reading program. It is recommended that students use the *ReadAbout* software at least twice per week and SmartFiles once per week. *ReadAbout* allows for flexible implementation; it can be used in a classroom or lab setting, after-school, and extended learning programs.

### **Motivation and Engagement**

The *ReadAbout* technology delivers anchor videos that spark knowledge and interest, immediate feedback on students' responses, and engaging word games, challenges, and sorting activities. Children read high-interest nonfiction. Software supports provide children with a successful learning experience, which encourages and empowers them.

*ReadAbout* motivates students to build vocabulary by awarding stars for successfully completing software instructional segments and practice activities. They can earn one star each after every topic's "Word Introduction," "Word Flash," "Word Challenge," and "Mastery" sections. Students who have excelled in developing vocabulary words in a particular topic receive a Bonus Card and sticker. The Bonus Card contains a unique and dynamic word that is related to the topic.

### **Assessments**

*ReadAbout* continually assesses each student's level of reading performance, and personalizes content, instruction, and supports based on that performance. Assessments points in the program include:

- Quick Check Question—Students answer a multiple-choice question after reading the first page of the passage to ensure comprehension before they continue to read.
- Summarizing Question—Students answer a multiple-choice summarizing question directly after completing a software passage.
- Skill Questions—Students answer three types of assessment questions—multiple choice, highlighting passage text, and graphic organizer—directly after reading a passage.

*ReadAbout* assesses student comprehension throughout the student experience. Skills assessment begins with the Comprehension Quick Check at the beginning of each passage. Assessment continues with multiple-choice, graphic organizer and highlighter questions at the end of each passage. Finally, students are assessed in the Challenge Area at the end of all three passages in the topic. *ReadAbout* assesses vocabulary performance in the Challenge Area and in the Card Collecting Area. The unique adaptive algorithm in *ReadAbout* assesses students' comprehension performance and will personalize the content based on that performance.

### **Home-School Connection**

At the beginning of the grading period, parents receive a letter introducing them to the *ReadAbout* program and suggesting ways to help them encourage their children's reading success. Through another letter, teachers regularly provide parents and caregivers with information about their children's progress. Both of these letters are available in English and Spanish. In addition, students take home reports that summarize the "Smart Words" that they are currently studying in a chosen topic. Students can use the report as a homework study sheet.

- a. The Parent Report I is sent home when students first begin the *ReadAbout* program to provide parents information about the program and to set expectations. This report, also available in Spanish, includes information about the ten comprehension skills focused on and the three content areas explored in *ReadAbout*.
- b. The Parent Report II is sent home with students at regular intervals, such as the end of grading periods or each time the student completes a topic. The report includes basic assessment points and tips to help parents support reading at home. The tips are customized according to whether the student is performing below or on/above level. This report, also available in Spanish, includes the student's initial text level, current text level, text-level growth, and corresponding Performance Range ranking. It also informs parents of the topic on which students are working or have just completed, in addition to the student's scores for content knowledge, comprehension, and vocabulary. Finally the report provides the total words read by the student from the beginning of the program.
- c. The Current Smart Word Report consists of a list of the 15 Smart Words that appear in a topic, divided by the three passages that make up the topic cluster. The report provides the meanings of the Smart Words, as well as a context sentence from the passage. Students and parents can use this report for independent study or for vocabulary and writing activities involving family members.

### **Differentiated Instruction Strategies**

The *ReadAbout* powerful, research-based technology personalizes instruction and makes it easier to manage a mixed-ability classroom. Electronic reports identify students who are struggling and those who are succeeding, so teachers can differentiate small-group instruction as appropriate. *ReadAbout* supports all students' learning.

- Far-below-level readers receive extra scaffolding and practice through multiple exposures to words, leveled text, and coaching in the tutorial areas of the program. They benefit from anchored instruction, rereading, repairing, and other strategies that help them improve their comprehension and vocabulary skills.
- Below-level readers receive vocabulary scaffolding through supported words and idioms in the text. *ReadAbout* supplies them with skill-building comprehension strategies, such as setting a purpose, questioning, and summarizing.
- On-level readers gain real-world experience with nonfiction text using the "Text Type Tutor." Supported words provide them with additional opportunities to increase their vocabulary, and they learn strategic comprehension skills.
- Above-level readers experience more challenging levels of text as they progress beyond reading proficiency. Thought-provoking questions inspire students to connect the topic they are studying to their own lives. Motivating activities with challenging words encourage them to move beyond word mastery.

### **Strategies for English-Language Learners**

The *ReadAbout* program includes an extensive array of instructional strategies, tools, and software features that support the language and academic development of English-Language Learners.

#### Personalized Instruction and Practice

- Software continuously adjusts instruction and activities based on students' performance
- Software explicitly teaches critical content-area vocabulary, academic language, and comprehension strategies
- Software automatically alerts teachers to ELL students who are struggling to complete a topic

#### Customizable Software

- Software provides Spanish translations of "Smart Words," vocabulary definitions, captions, anchor video introductions, and topic introductions
- Closed-caption anchor videos help students build mental models prior to reading.
- Software can provide text and voice-over support for all key instruction.
- Virtual narrators can read all passages aloud with phrase-by-phrase highlighting.

#### Targeted Teaching Materials

- Ten differentiated comprehension lessons focus on explicit skill definitions and include signal words integral to using a skill to unlock meaning
- Direct instruction, modeling, and practice are given in six key vocabulary strategies such as using multiple meanings, cognates, and idioms
- Topic Planners include lessons on how to: teach idioms, build background knowledge, and simplify language through cognates
- Teachers can print resources from SAM, such as graphic organizers and reading passages to further differentiate instruction.

#### **Strategies for Special Education students**

*ReadAbout* provides highly motivating, nonfiction, content-area reading program that provides background knowledge, explicit comprehension skills, and direct vocabulary instruction to all students through adaptive technology. The program's powerful technology accommodates students with varying abilities and special needs. Specific program features that support students with special needs include:

- The Software maximizes student learning by pre-teaching or activating prior knowledge to help students build the background and mental models that prepare them to learn.
- The Software acts as a one-to-one tutor for students by varying the level of instructional challenge and support according to the learning needs of individual students.
- The Software provides immediate, corrective feedback during vocabulary activities, and chooses the text level of passages based on student performance.
- Universal access supports, such as closed-captioning for video segments, control of learner input, read aloud option with phrase-by-phrase highlighting, text and voice-overs support for all key instruction, and options for audible text can be adjusted for students instructional needs.
- The Software and print materials provide assessment for IEP development and progress monitoring purposes.
- The Vocabulary Routines offer six strategies to help students decode unfamiliar words and build word knowledge.
- The Differentiated Comprehension Lessons teach the ten comprehension skills to help Special Learners construct meaning from text.
- The Text Type Lessons teach key elements of the seven "real world" text structures that students encounter in the software: nonfiction book, encyclopedia article, letter, journal entry, magazine article, newspaper article, and Web site.

#### **Professional Development**

Scholastic provides one full day of training, included with program purchase that is designed to get teachers started with using *ReadAbout* in their classrooms. Teachers will learn how to effectively use *ReadAbout*, including:

- Examining the research on anchored and differentiated instruction and motivation
- Experiencing the *ReadAbout* software and hands-on practice with the management system
- Creating a program implementation model for using the software and *SmartFile* resources
- Individualizing instruction and monitoring progress with reports.

*ReadAbout* is also supported with teacher enrollments in the *Scholastic RED* course *ReadAbout: Improving Nonfiction Reading Comprehension*. This course is designed for teachers using *ReadAbout* in their classrooms. They will learn more about the research-based strategies for the program and how to use them to motivate and support readers. Teachers will examine resources to build nonfiction reading and writing skills that are essential for success on standardized tests. Teacher enrollments for this online course vary according to the number of student licenses purchased.

An optional Day 2 *ReadAbout* Implementation Training is available for purchase. In this second day of training, teachers become more familiar with the reports, practice analyzing their own data, and examine *ReadAbout* skill-building and writing resources to provide targeted instruction. Teachers will deepen their knowledge of the program, including:

- Exploring *ReadAbout* software secrets
- Using SAM and program settings to individualize instruction
- Analyzing report data to monitor progress and differentiate instruction
- Extending the use of *ReadAbout* resources for vocabulary, comprehension, and nonfiction writing

 For additional information about *ReadAbout*, visit [www.scholastic.com/readabout](http://www.scholastic.com/readabout).