What is Read English on the Web?

Read English on the Web is a website designed to help the adult indigenous people of the Northern Territory begin to learn to read English. The course employs animations, text with audio, specialized word processing software with audio capabilities, and an Internet Toolbar to help learners acquire English reading and language skills.

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I) Overview of Read English on the Web (REOW): An online curriculum for Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory

The following is an overview of the REOW program designed for Indigenous learners. REOW provides a fully interactive online curriculum for low level literacy learners in Indigenous communities (levels Pre CSWE and CSWE 1). The online curriculum includes numerous activities intended to introduce learners to the use of the computer, develop literacy skills and promote reading.

Components of the curriculum include:

Or as viewed on the Read English on the Web homepage:
Learning activities include drag and drop, matching, grouping and regrouping, sentence completion, fill-in the blank, and scrambling and unscrambling sentences. All activities will come with the assistance of the screen reader. All text is accompanied by a screen reader using the voice of an Indigenous reader. Visual representations, diagrams and drawings accompany much of the text.

With a facilitator’s assistance, a learner will be able to utilize the REOW Word Processor and Internet Toolbar.
Texts were deliberately selected to supplement the content covered in the pre CSWE course and CSWE1. Content was designed to meet the National Reading Standards. Readability and interests of learners are prime considerations.

The assessment component of the course is still being investigated and will be considered in the next phase of development. The emphasis of the course is on encouraging learners to participate and learn with the aid of technology -- the emphasis is not on “testing”. The learners for whom this program is designed are functionally illiterate or operate at very low levels of literacy.

Overview of the components of REOW

Home (see Homepage graphic page 3 above)

On the Homepage there is a movie which is accessed by clicking ‘Start.’ The movie introduces the learner to the learning components and techniques used in the REOW program. In addition to the ‘Start’ movie, the homepage has a left-hand navigation bar, so learners may move through the course at their choosing.

Activities

In this section there are 10 menu items with specific themes. The themes are:

The Alphabet
Calendar
Numbers
Sight Words
Forms
Posters
Maps
Signs
Famous Indigenous People
Unscrambling Sentences

Under each theme are activities that ask the learner to interact with them and learn about the theme. When the learner clicks the theme they will either see a submenu from which to select an activity or be taken directly into the activity.

Learn about Computers
In this section learners are introduced to the fundamentals of using a computer. Activities include:

**The Mouse and How to Use It**  
**Dragging and Dropping – Practice with the Mouse**  
**Parts of the Computer**  
**The Keyboard**  
**Opening and Closing Programs**

**Find Something to Read**

In this section learners find supplementary readings that complement the themes used in the activities section. The texts are designed to be read with a screen reader. Some readings may be downloaded and printed to serve as pencil and paper
practice activities, for example, **Forms (see menu below)**. The texts cover a range of genres and draw from community stories, topics of interest, and course content.

Process of determining readings

Creating content for REOW was a long and arduous task. It occurred in a number of stages and principally two criteria were addressed: one, suitability of the texts regarding the interest of Indigenous learners and two, the appropriateness of texts to
support learners acquire the necessary skills and knowledge needed to operate in a literate society on a daily basis.

The process involved the following:

- Initial collection – texts were collected from BIITE faculty, CDU faculty, the internet and the NT Library.
- A committee comprised of CDU and BIITE faculty, Indigenous learners and teachers was formed to cull the collection.
- Additional texts were then negotiated with Northern Territory writers.
- The committee identified 14 texts to be developed further.
- A CDU website was established and a write-board was created to allow for joint editing and construction of texts.
- An outside expert in adult literacy with indigenous learners contributed to the texts by offering editorial advice and writing.
- Texts were closely reviewed, edited and rewritten over a twelve month period.

**Connections to CSWE**

Designed for learners enrolled in courses - Preliminary Spoken and Written English and Certificate I in Spoken and Written English - REOW content supports CSWE outcomes. An Overview of the courses and the learning outcomes follows.

| Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English | Certificate I in Spoken and Written English |
Develops skills for learners who:
- have no or low levels of formal education
- have no or very limited literacy skills in English
- may not have literacy skills in L1

Develops skills for learners who have:
- just started learning English
- had minimal exposure to English

Primarily, REOW focuses on three skills areas:

**Reading skills** – Reading skills are locating and understanding meanings in texts such as reading information texts, procedural texts and narratives, comprehension, understanding letter sound relationships, and building knowledge of sight words.

**Listening skills** – Listening skills are receptive oral language skills in interpersonal and transactional texts involving following instructions, answering questions, and listening for details.

**Numeracy skills** – Numeracy skills are demonstrating understanding and abilities in the areas of numbers.

**REOW caters to learners in BAND A, Slow pace. Learners display the following characteristics:**
- limited learning experience in formal settings
- low levels of formal education
- low levels of literacy in first language

**REOW specifically addresses the following Employability skills for Preliminary Spoken and Written English (CPSWE)**

1) Communication
Demonstrate recognition of alphabet
Demonstrate recognition of numbers
Copy alphabet
Copy numbers
Recognize common visual symbols
Recognize common signs with text
Read blocks of personally relevant numbers, e.g. Medicare number, telephone number, mobile phone number, flat/street number, Centrelink number, and date of birth.
Write date and personally relevant numerical information correctly and completely in appropriate space
Demonstrate understanding of written personal details
Complete a simplified form
Write personal details
Demonstrate understanding of simple words
Demonstrate understanding of simple sentences
Demonstrate understanding of simple instructions in the learning context
Respond to simple classroom instructions

2) Learning

Participate in a formal learning environment
Participate in a range of learning activities
Participate in assessment
Use learning resources effectively and responsibly

3) Technology

Use the keyboard to identify letters
**REOW supports the following CSWE learning strategies:**

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**CSWE Outcomes**

| CPSWE E Foundation numeracy skills |          |          |         |             |       |         |      |       |                          |                      |
| E1 Read aloud personally relevant numbers | .       |          |         |             |       |         |      |       |                          |                      |
| CPSWE F Foundation reading and writing skills for giving personal information |          |          |         |             |       |         |      |       |                          |                      |
| F1 Write personal details | .       |          |         |             |       |         |      |       |                          |                      |
| F2 Complete a simplified form | .       |          |         |             |       |         |      |       |                          |                      |
II) System Requirement

Minimum Hardware Requirements

1) Operating System: Windows XP Home or Professional

2) Processor Speed: PC with 300 megahertz or higher processor clock speed recommended

3) Memory: 128 megabytes (MB) of RAM or higher recommended

4) Hard Disk Space: 150 MB of available hard disk space

5) Screen Resolution: 1024x768 minimum resolution recommended

6) Internet Connection: High-speed internet connection recommended for best performance

Minimum Software Requirements

1) Download the most recent version of Adobe Flash Player

2) Visit http://www.adobe.com

3) Click the Get Adobe Flash Player

4) Follow the download and install instructions from Adobe.
III) Software: Getting Started with the Word Processor and the Internet Browser Toolbar

Instructions for first time use of the REOW software:

The software available in Read English on the Web is branded the LearningLine Browser Toolbar and Word Processor. As you read how to get started with the word processor and browser toolbar below or view the animation in the Word Processor section of REOW for the download and installation of the REOW software applications, you will see references to LearningLine and LLine.

The REOW Software has two parts:

1) A word processor - The word processor is a computer application that lets the learner create and edit documents. The REOW word processor will also allow the learner to have documents created or pasted into it read to them.

2) A browser toolbar - The browser toolbar allows the learner to search (surf) the Web, and when they locate something of interest to highlight text on the Webpage and have it read to them.

Using the Browser Toolbar

The REOW Browser Toolbar installs along with the Word Processor. When you open your browser after installing the REOW software you will see the browser toolbar (LLine Bar).
Turning the Browser Toolbar on and off:

- Click: View - Toolbars - REOW Toolbar
- If you have trouble seeing the toolbar, make sure your toolbars are **not** locked under View –Toolbars - Lock Toolbars.

Using the Dictionary:

To display the definition of a word on screen, highlight the word for which you want to see and hear a definition, then click the dictionary icon in the toolbar. The dictionary window will open on the left-hand side of the screen and display definitions for the selected word. **Note:** you can't highlight multiple words on a page and have their definitions display; the dictionary can only display definitions for one word at a time.

Using the text-to-speech feature:

There are three buttons for controlling how text is read back to the user: the Speak, Pause/Play, and Stop buttons.

- **Speak:** Highlighting a section of text and then clicking the **Speak** button will read the selected text.
- **Pause and Play:** The **Pause** and **Play** button works like the pause and play buttons on a VCR. Until text is highlighted, the **Pause** button will appear as “gray” in the **LLine Bar**. Once text is highlighted and the **Speak** button is clicked, the **Pause** button will turn blue. Clicking the **Pause** button will halt the reading of the text. To resume listening to the highlighted text click the **Play** button (now where the **Pause** button was located). The reading of the text will resume from the point when pause was clicked.
- **Stop:** Clicking the **Stop** button will end the text selection being read. To read more text highlight new text of interest and click the **Speak** button again.
Options Window:

Displays the text-to-speech options window, where you can select a voice for having text read back to you from a list of voices installed on your computer. You can also adjust the read-back speed of the voice using this window.

Using the Word Processor

The REOW Word Processor (LLine Word Processor) installs along with the REOW Browser Toolbar (LLine Bar). You can launch the word processor two ways:

- Open the REOW Word Processor from the Start Menu: Click Start, click Programs, click LLine Software, and click Learning Line Word Processor.
- Double click the Learning Line Word Processor icon on your computer desktop.

Saving and opening files:

The word processor will save files to a default directory named: "My LearningLine Files." This directory is automatically created during installation. The ‘new document’, ‘open document’, and ‘save document’ buttons work much as they typically would in any software application.

Using the text-to-speech feature:

There are three buttons for controlling how text is read back to the user: the Speak, Pause/Play, and Stop buttons.
• **Speak:** Highlighting a section of text and then clicking the **Speak** button will read the selected text.

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• **Stop:** Clicking the **Stop** button will end the text selection being read. To read more text highlight new text of interest and click the **Speak** button again.

**Using the dictionary:**

There are three ways to get the dictionary to display and read the definition of a word:

- Double click a word in the document to show the word and the definition
- Highlight one word in a document, then click the dictionary icon on the toolbar
- Open the dictionary window by clicking the dictionary icon on the toolbar, then type a word into the dictionary's ‘Search For’ field. Then click the green arrow to display the definition

The dictionary may display multiple definitions for a word. Listen to a definition being read by clicking the speaker icon next to each definition.
Close the dictionary window by clicking the ‘x’ in the upper right corner of the window. Reopen the dictionary at any time by clicking the dictionary icon on the toolbar.

*Using the spell checker:*

The spell checker works much as spell checkers do in other software applications. Clicking the ‘check spelling’ icon (the icon with the ABC and checkmark on it) will open the spell checker. Each word with questionable spelling will appear in a new window, one at a time. The window will display a list of suggested replacement words. Listen to each of the words by clicking them one time with your mouse.

- To replace a misspelled word with one from the list of suggested replacements: click the desired word to use as a replacement and then click the replace button.
- To ignore a list of suggested replacement words: click ignore, the spell checker will move on to the next word.
- To stop the spell checker: click the stop button
- To have a suggested replacement word read: click one time on each word listed in the ‘Suggestions’ box to have it read.

*Text formatting and more:*

The REOW Word Processor also includes the following:

- Insert Date: Insert the current date at the point where the cursor appears.
- Text Formatting: Alter the appearance of text, including color, font, font size, italics, bold, underline, and bullet text.
- Find a Word in Your Document: Search for a word in a document.
• Print and Print Preview: Print a document, or to preview how the document will appear when printed.
• Cut, Copy, Paste, and Undo: Quickly cut, copy, and paste text. Also, allows user to undo last change.
• Options Window: Displays the text-to-speech options window. Select a voice for having text read from a list of voices installed on the computer. Also, adjust the read-back speed of the voice using this window.