PARAGRAPH PUNCH
Skill levels 6 - 10

Trial version: REASONS (Level 1)

Complete program:
REASONS (Level 1), DETAILS (Level 2), EXAMPLE (Level 3),
CAUSE AND EFFECTS (Level 4), SEQUENCE (Level 5)

Windows 95
4 MB RAM, 4 MB hard disk space

Objectives
This Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) writing program helps students with reading levels of five and up to write effective paragraphs. It teaches five different ways to develop a paragraph: through reasons, details, example, cause and effects, and sequence. A step-by-step approach emphasizes content and organization.

Program Overview
To use Paragraph Punch, students need to be able to write basic sentences on a word processor. The program guides the student through each step in writing a complete paragraph. Help messages are provided throughout. Students are encouraged by the program's graphic rewards, as well as by seeing their work develop and progress. Students may transfer their finished paragraphs to a commercial word processing program. Teachers may write a comment to the student which will be saved until the student sees it.

Saving and Exiting Before Completing Paragraph
When the student exits, the program saves the student's work and allows him / her to return to it at another time. The program will quickly scroll the student's work and stop at the place s/he left off. Students who return to Publishing can go back to Editing.

This version of Paragraph Punch permits entry of only two student names. When a third name is entered, the first one will be deleted. The School version permits entry of as many names as disk space allows. When disk space is filled, the name that was entered first will be deleted.

Operating Overview
The student progresses through the program by typing in input boxes and by clicking on buttons or typing keyboard shortcuts to select actions. At several points during the program the student is shown his work wrap style in the paragraph draft box. This is for viewing only. The student edits the work by selecting from the notepads.

INTRODUCTION: Introduces a specific type of paragraph - one that presents reasons, details, example, cause and effects, or sequence to support the topic of the paragraph.

TOPIC: Students are given several themes and are asked to choose one as the focus of their paragraph. The computer then prompts them to enter the name of their own specific subject, which will be the topic of their paragraph.

PRE-WRITING: A Pre-Writing Notepad appears on the screen. Using words or phrases, not sentences,

students put their ideas about the theme they have chosen into the Pre-Writing Notepad. The computer provides a series of questions to help stimulate the student's thoughts. Depending on the topic, the student is given three to six pre-writing prompts. The student responds by typing words or phrases in separate input boxes. Then the CAI program proceeds to the next section. The student does not have to use all the words or phrases listed.

WRITING - TOPIC SENTENCE: The computer provides a sample topic sentence, plus an incomplete topic sentence for students to finish as an exercise. Students then write an original topic sentence to introduce their paragraph.

WRITING - BODY: The Pre-Writing Notepad reappears at the beginning of this section. Students choose a word or phrase from the Pre-Writing notepad and use it in a sentence. They must continue to choose words or phrases to write at least as many sentences as there are Pre-Writing prompts. Students may access a Pre-Writing prompt as many times as they wish. The sentences are entered into the Writing Notepad. Students are also encouraged to write additional sentences to expand their paragraph. Students have the opportunity to refer to the Pre-Writing Notepad throughout the Writing - Body section.

ORGANIZING: In the first step of this section, the Writing Notepad with the student's sentences appears on the left half of the screen. A Paragraph Notepad with the student's topic sentence is on the right half of the screen. Students transfer sentences from the Writing Notepad and arrange them in the Paragraph Notepad, deciding which sentences to use and in which order. All the sentences do not have to be used, but at least three must be chosen for the computer to proceed.

In the second step of the Organizing section students see their work for the first time in paragraph form in the Paragraph Draft box. Complete sentences now appear in wrap style. After seeing their work, students are encouraged to add transitional words here to help the sentences flow smoothly from one thought to the next.

WRITING - CONCLUSION: The computer provides a sample concluding sentence, plus an incomplete concluding sentence for students to finish as an exercise. Students then write an original concluding sentence to end their paragraph.

EDITING: In Editing - Overview, the Paragraph Draft appears for review with the paragraph as a whole unit for the first time. The computer asks the students to check their work and gives prompts to guide them in the use of the appropriate editing buttons to Add, Edit, Remove, or Move sentences. Subsections of Editing - Style, Sentence Structure, and Grammar - are designed to help students improve their paragraph. There are specific suggestions for improving style, correcting sentence structure, and reviewing basic grammar.

Students may go back to the start of the Editing - Overview section by selecting the Review button.

PROOFREADING: This is the student's chance to review the technical details before Publishing. Students are reminded about pitfalls in basic punctuation and spelling.

PUBLISHING: This is the student's last chance to review the paragraph before publishing. The Publishing Menu options are:

Review: Review the editing sections again.

Print: Name and date appear at the beginning of the printout.

Save: It creates a file in a word processor format with the default name of the file with the student's name and class code. We suggest that additional characters be added so that existing paragraphs are not overwritten. If you wish students to save their paragraphs to a floppy disk, they should insert the drive letter followed by a colon before the file name. Sample: A:DORIS (class 6B)2.doc.

Word Processor: Moves the paragraph to the word processor that was selected in the Teacher Program Manager (TPM) Configure CAI Menu. (The default word processor is Wordpad. To change this setting, press Control G when you are in the TPM program and type the complete path of your word processor program.)

New Topic: This button is enabled after the current paragraph is saved.

Teacher Program Manager (TPM)

The Teacher Program Manager (TPM) does not have an icon on your Start menu.

After installation you must start a CAI program to create its .MAV file (Merit AV record file).   All .MAV files will be kept according to the way you configure your setup; see LOCATION OF RECORD FILES below.

To access the Merit AV record files, use Find on the Start menu.

Search for *.MAV to get a listing of all .MAV files on your system.

To open the Teacher Program Manager, double-click the .MAV file record file for the CAI program you want to see. This will automatically open the TPM.

You can also double-click the TPM.EXE icon (default install is C:\Meritav\TPM) and navigate to the program level you wish to see.

Type MERIT in the password box and press OK.

TPM MENU BAR

The TPM program adjusts to give access to the features of each Merit CAI program. The Menu Bar lists everything available in the TPM for the currently selected level. Press the question mark icon to access the online Help file for details about the functions of the TPM.

Student's record file keeps track of the student's name, class code, date last played, total rounds, and progress. Teachers may write a comment to the student which will be saved until the student sees it.

Configurations for the CAI program may be set by pressing Control G when you are in the TPM. You can set options for sound and graphics. You may also select a word processor to which you can move completed paragraphs. The default word processor is Wordpad. In addition, you may allow the file import option. Once enabled, files may be imported by right clicking at the CAI title screen.

Configurations tech tip for setting the same configurations for each level of a CAI program:
Set them on one level.
Open that level's folder in an Explorer window and copy the game.ini file.
Paste this game.ini file to each CAI program level that you wish to have the same configurations.

Other items in the TPM facilitate the teacher's use of student records. These include zoom, hiding fields, and selection of individual records to print or delete. A Help file for all TPM features may be accessed from the Menu Bar.

LOCATION OF RECORD FILES

The first time a Merit Audio Visual Windows 95 program is played on a machine, a dialog box appears where path options can be selected. Record file set-up Help will guide your selection. Your selection will become the default configuration for all Merit AV Windows 95 programs that you subsequently install to your machine. Changes can be made by using a text editor to edit the meritav.ini file in the Windows directory or by deleting the meritav.ini file and resetting the location of the record files in the dialog box when you next sign in to a Merit AV Windows 95 program.