



Clicker5 in the Classroom

Using Clicker5 effectively does not mean that you need to spend time learning how to use the program until you are an expert. It does require some thought about what benefits you hope to provide to your students and how to make them available to them in the classroom. So, how can Clicker5 help students when there are only one or two computers in the classroom?

Take four steps to ensure that your students have the opportunity to use Clicker5 on a regular basis.

1. Have a Clicker5 word bank that provides words students can use to write

- Choose words for the word bank: all words needed to compose sentences, more challenging words you want students to incorporate into writing, or key concepts.
- Learn how to 1) create and save a Clicker5 *word bank*, and 2) use the *talking word processor* in Clicker5: [HIAT video tutorials and printable quick guides on how using word banks in Clicker5](#).
- Turn off “Instant Pictures” in cells before creating your grids and just focus on words to start:
File>Settings>Picture and Sound Libraries>uncheck both boxes under Instant Pictures
- Create your Clicker5 word bank and save in a location where students can open and save (e.g. using “hand-out”/“hand-in” folders)

Remember, focus on just the basic skills you need to create and use a word bank and how to use the talking word processor in Clicker5. You can learn the rest later after you see how your students respond to Clicker5.

2. Demonstrate using the word bank in Clicker5 to your students

- Using a group presentation tool (e.g. TV, LCD projector, Promethean board), model the way you want the students to use the word bank to help them write
- How to use both the keyboard to write and clicking on the words in the bank to send to the word processing document
- How to use editing tools in the word processor document to edit writing – reading text aloud, using talking spell-checker (tip: make misspelled words underlined as you type by choosing “Options” from top toolbar > “User Preferences” > “Writing” tab > change “Underline misspelled words” to “Always”)
- How to use the right mouse button to click on a word in the bank to have it read aloud before sending it to the document
- How to print and save a document

Remember, Clicker5 is a teaching tool, not a teaching replacement. When using it with a whole group, it can be a powerful way of modeling composition and self-editing strategies for students.

3. Give students at least one period in the computer lab

- Use a simple assignment so students can focus on the new skill of using word banks and you can focus on observing them
- Allow students to experiment with the features you modeled as a group so that they can understand what works best for them to compose and edit their writing
- Observe students carefully to see how they benefit from using word banks and the talking word processor in Clicker5

As with all new things, students need to get their hands on Clicker5 and experiment before they can be expected to use it responsibly and meaningfully. Give them that time. Help them see what works best for them by allowing them to experiment with the different options. Make explicit the connection between writing more on their own and the tools available in Clicker5.

4. Provide opportunities for students to independently use Clicker5 word banks as an alternative to writing with paper and pencil

- Use available class computers as a station for students to use as a writing center during independent work
- Print copies of the word bank for students to use when writing off the computer
- Offer choices for using computer, portable word processors or paper pencil depending on student learning preferences and needs
- Use printed copies or a computer to reinforce the use of the Clicker5 word bank and talking word processor during directed small groups to compose and self-edit writing
- Allow students to go to the classroom computers, media center or a computer lab when they need to use the features of Clicker5 to support their composition and self-editing

Now that your students understand why they are using Clicker5, you need to give them a chance to use it. This cannot happen during class if the expectation is that all students are doing the same thing at the same time. You may need to make some changes in the way that you deliver instruction to all students. If you are only offering paper and pencil for writing and scribing for selected students, you will benefit only some of your students. Others will get bored having to wait for help. Some will decide they cannot write on their own. Providing students with options for how they write is more likely to give each student the opportunity to compose and share what they know independently.

Other tips

- Collaborate with your teammates to create a word bank for a grade level lesson.
- Learn which of your students most benefit from using Clicker5
 - When you provide opportunities to use the Clicker5 tools to write on the computer, who still has problems?
 - Who needs the opportunity to have their writing read aloud to them?
 - Who needs to have the word bank words read aloud before they can select them?
 - Who needs more support than the words provided in the bank even with the text read aloud?
- If students need to use word banks to write, consider printing and sending home grids with writing they produce to show parents what students used and to practice writing at home
- Students who need to have their writing read aloud at home can download [Natural Reader](#) for free
- Quick Guides and video help are at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/hiat/tech_quick_guides