



# Guide to Best Classroom Practice



# Typing Tournament Guide to Best Classroom Practice

## How to get the most from Typing Tournament

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### Great news

The use of Typing Tournament rapidly boosts students' typing speeds with many seeing at least a threefold increase.

As I visit classes using Typing Tournament I am struck by the sheer enthusiasm with which teachers and children are adopting it and how rapidly even the youngest students increase their typing speeds.

### Strong support brings better outcomes but the result in some classes is compromised

Unfortunately, in some cases students are not receiving the classroom support that they need to become touch typists, using the right fingers on the right keys. When this happens students simply reinforce their bad typing habits and do not learn to type without looking at the keyboard.

### A better way

Where students are encouraged to correctly use the touch typing principles built into Typing Tournament Online, they are able to make even more remarkable gains and master the art of typing without looking at the keyboard.

This guide to best practice is designed to give you, the classroom teacher the tools and background you need to fully harness the power of Typing Tournament for your class. It is based on countless visits to classrooms and feedback from many of our wonderful clients on the phone and by email.

Kind regards



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## Challenge 1 – Finding time to teach typing in a crowded curriculum

Many teachers find that fitting just one more thing into the crowded school programme is difficult. In the case of teaching typing skills a little work upfront quickly pays off. Once students are able to type they can get through their other work requiring keyboard input more rapidly. The time invested in Typing Tournament will be more than balanced by the savings in other areas.

### How do schools implement Typing Tournament?

A little practice regularly is the best approach. With Typing Tournament, each student has their own account that tracks their progress word by word. This means that class sessions can be any length that suits your situation. Here are a few of the common strategies teachers use:

- Keep sessions short and regular
  - Many teachers use the first 10 - 15 minutes of the lesson for typing practice
  - They find that this settles the students and is the kind of activity that easily accommodates late-comers or students having difficulty signing into the system
  - Once the typing session is finished the whole class is ready to move onto the next activity together
- The first 10-15 minutes of ICT and specialist lessons
  - ICT lesson in the computer lab
  - Literacy lessons
  - Creative writing
  - Business studies
- Regular in-class typing sessions
  - Use laptops one-on-one if there are sufficient
  - Start the day or return from morning tea or lunch to 10 minutes of typing
  - Regular typing lesson in weekly timetable
  - Use in small groups for rotations
- A concentrated focus period
  - 15 minutes a day for say 2 weeks with follow-up lessons at longer intervals
  - A focus on Typing Tournament for a term followed by a term off
- Activity rotations in class
  - Language arts/English
  - ICT

- Non class use
  - Lunch time voluntary activity in the library
  - After school care
- Homework
  - Use Typing Tournament as a homework activity
  - Print and send home the Typing Tournament “Home Use” letters from the Teacher Management section
  - Use the Typing Tournament reports to see when a student last used the system

## Challenge 2 – Developing a whole school approach

Typing is a key life skill that should be acquired and developed longitudinally. Typing Tournament has been built to help teachers achieve the relevant keyboarding curriculum outcomes across all years of schooling.

- The teaching of typing skills, like handwriting, is a process and needs to be introduced early to every student with ongoing practice, exposure and increasing expectations year by year
- Used systematically across a school Typing Tournament is an adaptable, expandable tool that transitions students from the rudiments of typing right through to typing speeds exceeding 100 words per minute!
- Typing Tournament can be implemented as a whole school strategy or class by class and is commonly used from Year 2 through to Year 12
- Ideally students should be well engaged in the process by Year 3
- Some schools start with one class or year level and as they progress through their schooling the typing programme expands with them
- Other schools start all grades at once with an emphasis on training the teachers to use the programme effectively in their classrooms
- In many cases the ICT teachers uses it with a range of classes and builds out from there to other classes and teachers
- Regularity and repetition are key when learning a kinesthetic skill like typing and like all such skills the time taken to learn them varies greatly with the individual
- Our current estimate is that students take approximately 20 hours of focused, regular use to achieve functional 10 finger typing. Younger students take longer.
- Schools that invest in a long term typing strategy can expect the majority of students to achieve touch typing speeds in excess of 40 words per minute with some students exceeding 100 words per minute

## **Challenge 3 – Breaking bad habits and substituting good habits**

Most students come to Typing Tournament with well-established poor typing habits. Children as young as 2 regularly interact with iPads and as they grow the approach taken becomes second nature. Unfortunately, these early exposures ingrain poor typing habits that can be very difficult to break.

By the time students come to your class they may well also be resistant to learning a new approach that teaches them to use the keyboard as it was originally designed – with the right fingers on the right keys without looking at the keyboard.

### **Getting the students to use the right fingers on the right keys is the biggest challenge**

For students with established poor keyboard habits to learn to type correctly it is important that they retrain their muscle memory and establish good typing habits.

### **Typing Tournament is smart and capable but it cannot replace good teaching practice and supervision**

Typing Tournament senses many attributes of each typist and uses this information to manage each student's progression, however it cannot determine whether the student is using the right fingers on the right keys. It contains many encouragements, tips and guides designed to encourage the use of the right fingers on the right keys but it cannot tell which fingers are being used on which keys.

### **Supervision is critical for success**

Ultimately only a vigilant teacher, teacher aid or other supervision can ensure that students use the right fingers on the right keys. Some teachers use Typing Tournament as an unsupervised activity, often in small group rotations. In this context it is impossible for the teacher to supervise the use of the right fingers on the right keys. There are however strategies that can be implemented to compensate for this lack of direct teacher supervision.

### **Early supervision is crucial**

It is our strong recommendation that the introductory Typing Tournament sessions focus on the development of accuracy and use of the right fingers on the right keys. To achieve this there is no substitute for vigilante supervision and intervention where students are having difficulty. Resist the temptation to let the students type, unsupervised – particularly in the introductory stages of the typing lessons. Time spent being vigilant early on will pay dividends.

- There are many inbuilt encouragements and instructions within Typing Tournament that guide students to use the right fingers on the right keys. These include:
  - The requirement to position the fingers on the home row to start drills and test
  - The animated hands that model the correct finger placement
  - The guided lessons at the start of each of the 16 typing Chapters
- Although these inbuilt encouragements guide students toward the use of the correct fingers on the correct keys, it is important however that teachers complement the process through direct supervision and other strategies.
- Only for exceptional, self-motivated, focused students will these inbuilt encouragements be sufficient

### **Jumping ahead is a common problem**

Many students with poor keyboarding practice can easily pass the entry speed requirements for higher levels. This is part of the necessary design of Typing Tournament however it opens the door for those who really need to go back to basics to skip the early levels. When this happens they tend to progress easily to the middle levels but rarely make it past say Level 8 where the speed requirements start to increase as their technique is too inefficient to achieve the higher speeds without taking their eyes off the screen and looking at the keyboard.

Good teaching practice will see all students engaging in correct typing practice from the earliest levels and then progressing as they pass the speed and accuracy goals for each level in order. Take time to establish a good keyboarding culture and in time speed will follow.

### **Learning to type is like learning to play a musical instrument**

When learning to play a musical instrument you start with simple music and ensure that you are using the right fingers on the right keys or strings. You learn your scales, focus on technique, and gradually progress to harder and harder pieces. Learning to type correctly is just the same. It's easy to play chopsticks on a piano any way you like but you'll never play a symphony this way!

### **Suggested classroom strategies to ensure correct finger placement**

- **Slow down** and take time to ensure that all students use correct posture and finger placement from the beginning.
- **Direct supervision:** Take the time to directly supervise the student's initial use of Typing Tournament to ensure that they are using the right fingers on the right keys. Once correct practice has been established the supervision load will reduce.
- **Insist** on the use of the right fingers on the right keys



- **Student monitors** – Designate a member of the class to act as a monitor to check on and encourage other members of the class to use the right fingers on the right keys. Rotate monitors throughout the lesson.
- **Adult helper – teacher aid or parent:** Organise a parent or teacher aide to help monitor students and encourage them to use the correct finger placement
- **Typing Buddies** – Pair each student with another and periodically have them observe the other and have them encourage them to use the right fingers on the right keys and to observe correct posture and keeping their eyes on the screen. Change roles from time to time.
- **Whiteboard projection – Finger placement:** Project Chapter 1 (Mountains) to a whiteboard and model the correct practice to the class
- **Whiteboard projection – Correct Posture:** Project the “Posture Info” from the Typing Tournament Main Menu to a whiteboard and discuss and model with the class
- **Whole discussion** – Regularly focus on the need for the use of all 10 fingers. Here are some approaches that have been found to be useful:
  - **10 helpers.** Talk with the class about the need to use all 10 fingers to get the job done. Use the illustration of digging a hole with 10 helpers with shovels. Q. What is the fastest way to get the job done? A. By getting all 10 helpers digging.
  - **Playing a musical instrument:** To play a musical instrument it is important to use the correct fingers and technique. The same is true with typing. Play with the wrong fingers and you will not be able to progress very far but learn correctly and you will be able to make wonderful music. It’s slow to learn at first but the rewards come later. The same is true of learning to type.
- **Modelling**

Students who have observed adults typing correctly are often motivated to type correctly themselves. In the home and school environment good models are often found. In most schools there will be at least one teacher or teacher aid with good skills. Using them as a role model has been shown to have great benefit.

  - For teachers with good typing skills
    - Project the Teacher Edition of Typing Tournament to the class white-board, unlock the map and type in any section of Typing Tournament
    - Model typing on their own computer to the class
    - Use the Typing Tournament speed tests to find the fastest teacher typist in the school and then challenge the students to better their score

- For teachers with poor typing skills
  - Be open about the problem and then start using Typing Tournament alongside the students and then share your progress with them. They will be proud of your achievements and you will learn to type at the same time!
  - Encourage the students to better their progress
  - Encourage students with well-developed typing skills to model to others
- Storytelling and interviews
  - Many adults and older students have stories to tell about the frustration of not being able to type or the positive impact that good typing skills have made in their lives. Some can recount the difference that learning to touch type made once they acquired the skill.
  - Share your own typing story with the class
- Invite others to share their typing story including:
  - The school principal
  - Other teachers
  - Parents or grandparents
  - Older brothers or sisters
  - Involve parents
    - Many parents are willing and able to supervise the introductory stages of the typing tuition. This document is accompanied by a guide for parent to support the teaching of typing in the home.
    - In a homework environment it is often easier for the attention to be given that is difficult to replicate in a classroom
- **Display the [Typing Tips Posters](#)**
  - Typing Tournament features a series of pdf posters designed to jazz up your classroom and help you to focus on teaching the crucial concepts that underpin good typing technique. The posters will assist you in raising students' expectations of the typing speeds that can be achieved and give a sense of context to the acquisition of typing skills.

## Challenge 4 – Keeping students’ eyes on the screen and not the keyboard

To touch type correctly students must focus their eyes on the screen and not the keyboard. The prerequisite to this skill is the establishment of automaticity in the key strokes being typed for each letter and the use of the right fingers on the right keys. Once these primary skills are established the teacher needs to encourage students to focus their eyes on the screen and not the keyboard.

- **Stealth Keyboard** – Once students have demonstrated that they are able to type accurately and have passed the exit tests up to Chapter 4 on the map the teacher substitutes the standard keyboard for one with all or some of the identifying letters on the keyboard removed. The lack of letter symbols encourages students to keep their eyes on the screen and to rely on muscle memory to complete their typing. Keeping keyboards from old computers and then colouring over the letter symbols with black marking pen or small blank stickers are effective ways of masking the letters.
- **Cardboard box shield** – Cut a cardboard box to shape so that it fits over the keyboard obscuring view of the keys but not inhibiting the action of typing
- **Tea towel** – Whilst typing place a tea towel over the hands. This method was commonly used when teaching students to type on manual type writers.
- **Blind fold typing challenge** – Blind fold a member of the class and then ask them to type what is spoken to them and then check to see how accurately they were able to do it. Hold a class competition to find the best blind folded typist.
- **Modelling and storying** – Use the same kinds of approaches as those used for encouraging the students to use the right fingers on the right keys
- See also **Typing Buddies** in the Challenge 3 section

## **Challenge 5 – Keeping the student results pure and relevant**

### **Recorded results are wrong because:**

- The student has used the wrong fingers on the wrong keys
- Someone else has typed in the student's account

When students commence using Typing Tournament with the wrong fingers on the wrong keys or their results have been interfered with by another typing in their account their results will be become out of kilter with their typing ability. When this happens they will be able to gain access to Levels that are too hard for them. They will also have earned rewards within the system that are not deserved. Their statistics that show up in the class reports will also be skewed. To rectify the situation they need to regress and do the exercises again in the correct order and from the appropriate Level.

### **The solution is to reset the student's results**

If for any reason you need to reset the student's results we have created a powerful inbuilt tool to do just this.

### **How to reset results for a student**

To reset a student's results:

1. Sign in as a teacher
2. Navigate to the class
3. Select the student
4. Click on "View Student History"
5. Under Point 2 select the Activities which you wish to reset
6. Choose "Delete Selected" from the side bar

## Challenge 6 – Maintaining motivation

For many students learning to type is a challenging exercise. As with all poor habits it takes a lot of discipline for a student with bad typing habits to break them. It is a matter of completely rewiring their kinesthetic memory in relation to the keyboard and it is no easy task. The physical coordination required to accurately strike the right keys to represent the 26 letters of the alphabet with capitals, numbers and punctuation is a marvel but one that for many is not easily achieved.

To make the challenge of learning to type more achievable we have built a host of motivators into Typing Tournament including:

- Intrinsic motivators include: instant feedback on words typed, speed tests, lessons, drills and games.
- Extrinsic motivators include: Printed certificates, games, reward movies, collection of tokens and badges and more. Many teachers use a mix of the following to further enhance student motivation:
- Inbuilt [Certificates and reports](#)
  - Typing Tournament generates a wide range of reports and certificates that reward students for effort and affirm their achievements
  - Print and present them in class, for school assembly, send home to parents, for archiving in students' folios
- Inbuilt [Leaderboard](#)
  - The powerful Class Leaderboard tracks every word typed and resets at the start of each week
  - View for your school only, thus allowing competition between classes
  - Filter by state and age group and see the ranking of your class overall
- The quarterly [Typing Challenge](#)
  - Typing Challenges are held quarterly where classes go head-to-head around Australia. Students become highly engaged.
  - Trophies are awarded for 1st, 2nd, 3rd fastest classes by age group in the state
  - Trophies are awarded for 1st, 2nd, 3rd most words typed by age group in the state
  - Printable Achievement Certificates are generated
- Printable certificates
  - There are printable certificates for both speed tests and Level tests
  - Certificates may be printed either by the student or the teacher

- Certificates can be presented in class, at assembly or on any other occasion that builds the profile of Typing in the school and rewards the student
- Teachers have indicated that the printing and awarding of these certificates is highly motivational
- Speed tests
  - The Typing Tournament Speed Test can be taken at any time with the results instantly displayed on-screen upon conclusion and logged in the Reports section. Many teachers use the Speed Test to gain a quick feel for how the students are progressing and give them feedback relative to their own PB.
  - Start each lesson with a Speed Test to give the students instant feedback on their overall progress and to give a dynamic feel to the lesson
  - Conduct a weekly Speed Test to build an individual class leaderboard
  - Conduct a school or grade-wide competition to find the fastest typist
  - Invite members of staff or the parent body to complete speed tests to find the fastest typist in the school community
- Build wall charts
  - Students love to see their progress plotted on wall charts and Typing Tournament provides a wealth of information that can be used to generate such charts. Charts could include:
    - Results from a weekly Speed Test
    - % Accuracy achieved on a weekly Speed Test
    - Levels passed 1 – 16 on the map
    - Badges achieved
- [Typing Tips Posters](#)
  - See previous entry in Challenge 3