

# ultimate Guide to Keyboarding: Middle School



by Ask a Tech Teacher

**ULTIMATE GUIDE TO  
KEYBOARDING IN THE  
CLASSROOM**

*Middle School*

*by Ask a Tech Teacher*©

# Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School

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*Second Edition 2014*

*Part of the Structured Learning Technology for the Classroom series*

*Visit the companion website <http://askatechteacher.com> for more K-8 keyboarding resources*

*To receive free tech tips, email [admin@structuredlearning.net](mailto:admin@structuredlearning.net) with message “Subscribe to Weekly Tips”*

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## Table of Contents

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### Introduction

- [Overview of Keyboarding](#)
- [Who Needs This Book](#)
- [Big Idea of This Book](#)
- [How to Use This Book](#)
- [Equipment Needs](#)
- [What Goes Well With Curriculum](#)
- [Assessments](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Body/Hand Position](#)
- [Why Learn Keyboarding](#)
- [Common Core Alignment](#)
- [Finger Exercises](#)
- [Problem-solving and Keyboarding](#)
- [Templates](#)
- [Looking for Student Workbooks](#)
- [Looking for Student Video Course](#)

### Middle School

- [Overview](#)
- *Month 1*
  - [Week One](#)
  - [Week Two](#)
  - [Week Three](#)
  - [Week Four](#)
- *Month 2*
  - [Week One](#)
  - [Week Two](#)
  - [Week Three](#)
  - [Week Four](#)
- *Month 3*
  - [Week One](#)
  - [Week Two](#)
  - [Week Three](#)
  - [Week Four](#)
- [Month 4](#)
- [Month 5](#)
- [Month 6](#)
- [Month 7](#)
- [Month 8](#)
- [Month 9](#)
- [Checklist](#)

---

---

## **Table of Figures**

---

---

Figure 1—How you use keyboarding .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 2--Layout of each lesson .....	9
Figure 3--Important keys .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 4--Blank keyboards (2) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 5--Parts of the computer .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 6--Keyboard homework verification .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 7--Keyboard homework--self-assessment .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 8--Team Challenge--keyboarding .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 9--Keyboarding position .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 10--Keyboarding posture .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 11a-11d--Keyboarding hand positions .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 12a and 12b--Mouse hand position .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 13--Problem solving issues .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 14--Problem-solving--hardware issues .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 15--How to log in .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 16--Program disappeared .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 17--Common shortcuts .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 18--Website parts .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 19--Blank important keys template.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 20--Blank keyboard template.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 21--Team Challenge sample.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 22--Hardware quiz template .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 23a-c--Avatars: Voki, image, QR code .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 24a and 24b—Blog post and Tweet .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 25a-c—Comments to social media .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 26—1000 words.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 27—How to write an ebook.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 28a-c--Posters in Canva, Muzy.....	20
Figure 29a—Fake chat; Figure 29b—Fake newspaper.....	21
Figure 30a and 30b—Comic creators—two samples.....	23
Figure 31—Comic creator II.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 32--Trouble-shooting Computer Problems .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 33—Scientific method .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 34—Click image to start 5 minute timer on YT .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 35a—ASCII Art; Figure 35b-c—ASCII Art before and after .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 36a and 36b—ASCII Art—Lincoln before and after .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 37—Keyboarding in note-taking II.....	26
Figure 38a and 38b—Keyboarding in Evernote and Notability .....	26
Figure 39--Poster on keyboarding' .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 40--Sample Certificate of Achievement .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## Introduction

You may think it impossible to find a keyboarding curriculum that creates accomplished typists from the skimpy amount of time you can devote to keyboarding. You do what you can, but wonder if it's making a difference. Every year, you promise it will go better and then it doesn't. You don't want to give up--research tells us children who learn keyboarding improve academically. It should be an essential skill.

But mid-way through every year, you think of giving up. You have friends who hunt-and-peck as adults and do fine. Does it even matter if students learn to touch type?

**Yes, it does.**

Don't take my word for it—observe the tech focus by nationally-recognized education standards like Common Core and ISTE.

There is a way to teach keyboarding that works. It requires a plan, faithfully executed, with your eye relentlessly on the goal.

In *The Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom*, we share a curriculum that has succeeded with thousands of students. You'll get directions on what to do, how and when, using mostly free resources.

### Big Idea of This Book

Two criteria consistently mentioned in keyboarding research:

1. *Keyboarding instruction is most effective when spread out over several years and designed to build on prior knowledge. (Robinson 1992)*
2. *Once skills are taught, use them, reinforce and refine them (Adams, 1984; Wronkovich, 1998).*

What's that mean? 1) expect age-appropriate skills, 2) break practice up into bite-size pieces, 3) vary lessons, 4) infuse keyboarding into all classes.

That's it. We'll show you how.

### Overview of the Keyboarding Journey

The overarching objective of keyboarding is to **facilitate communication**. That means 1) students must type fast enough to exceed the speed of their handwriting, and second, they must keep up with their thoughts. Follow this two-book curriculum and the former will occur around fourth grade, the latter in Middle School (Volume II of this curriculum).

### Overview of K-8 Keyboarding

- K-1 Introduce mouse skills, key placement, posture*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Work on, key placement, posture, two-hand position*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforce basics. Work on accuracy and technique*
- 4-5 Reinforce basics; continue accuracy, technique. Begin speed*
- MS Touch typing*

# Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School

Here's an overview of K-5 keyboarding:

<i>K-1</i>	<i>Introduce mouse skills, keyboarding, key placement, posture</i>
<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>Work on keyboarding, key placement, posture, two-hand position</i>
<i>3<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Reinforce basics. Work on accuracy and technique</i>
<i>4-5</i>	<i>Continue accuracy, technique. Begin work on speed</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Touch typing</i>

Lessons include lots of variety so you don't get bored. Here's a rundown of activities from kindergarten through eighth grade:

-  *digital citizenship*
-  *finger exercises*
-  *homework (grades 3-8)*
-  *keyboarding software*
-  *keyboarding websites*
-  *problem solving*
-  *progress—metric*
-  *projects*
-  *quiz--blank keyboard (grades 3-8)*
-  *shortkeys*
-  *students meet grade expectations*

Look for the symbol in each section to see which activities are covered.

## Why Learn Keyboarding

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## Common Core Alignment

As you read the Common Core standards, you realize technology is blended throughout as a tool students use to prepare for college and career. For example, read these from Common Core (truncated for easy reading):

- *Expect students to demonstrate sufficient command of **keyboarding** to type a minimum of one page [two by fifth grade, three by sixth] in a single sitting*
- *Expect students to **evaluate different media** (e.g., print or digital ...)*
- *Expect students to **gather relevant information** from print and digital sources*
- *Expect students to **integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media***
- *Expect students to **interpret information** presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., ... Web pages)*
- *Expect students make **strategic use of digital media***
- *Expect students to use **glossaries or dictionaries, both print and digital ...***
- *Expect students to use information from **illustrations and words in print or digital text***
- *Expect students to use a **variety of media** in communicating ideas*
- *Expect students to **use technology** and digital media strategically and capably*
- *Expect students to **use text features and search tools** to locate information*

Common Core standards are progressive—students transfer knowledge from one grade to the next where they show evidence of learning by using. Every grade builds on earlier skills to achieve the Standards:

- **Kindergarten:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.6 ... explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.*
- **First grade:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.6 ...use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.*
- **Second grade:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.6 ...use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.*
- **Third grade:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.6 ... use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.*
- **Fourth grade:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.6 With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing*
- **Fifth grade:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.6 With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing*
- **Sixth-Eighth grade:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6-8.6 Use tech to produce and publish*

## How to Use This Book

This curriculum is part of the K-8 Keyboard system your school has selected to prepare students for keyboarding needs in an education environment. Each lesson is one-two pages (rarely longer) and takes 15 to 30 minutes, with an equal amount of home practice (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade only).

Here's how to decode each lesson (see Figure 2):

# Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School

Figure 1--Layout of each lesson

The screenshot shows a lesson layout for 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE: MONTH 9 WEEK ONE. The layout is organized into several sections:

- 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE: MONTH 9 WEEK ONE:** The top header, highlighted with a red box and callout 1.
- Vocabulary:** A section with a red box and callout 2. It includes a 'Date' field and a list of terms: Hypothesis, Scientific method.
- Homework:** A section with a red box and callout 3. It contains the instruction: 'Type 15 minutes, three times a week, on a progressive typing program, online or software. When keys are memorized, ...'
- Materials:** A section with a red box and callout 4. It lists: 'Keyboarding program', 'Speed quiz (or TypingTest.com)', and 'Team challenge questions'.
- Steps:** A section with a red box and callout 6. It is titled 'Steps' and includes a 'Typical keyboarding lesson:' section with a list of steps: 'Make sure workspace is arranged properly' and 'Follow good habits for posture and hand position'.
- Icons:** A row of icons representing activities, highlighted with a red box and callout 5. The icons include a keyboard, a person at a computer, a cloud with 'ONLINE', a clapperboard, a hand, and a person at a computer.

1. **Grade, month and week**—identifies grade level, month (nine months), week (first three months)
2. **Vocabulary**—new domain-specific vocabulary introduced in lesson
3. **Homework**—homework students are expected to complete in the time frame—only applies to grades 3-8. In K-2, this section is for Trouble Shooting
4. **Materials**—identifies what programs, software, web tools, paper items teacher will want prepared for lesson
5. **Activities**—row of icons representing activities included in this lesson. What each icon represents is included under 'Overview of the Keyboarding Journey'
6. **Steps**—steps required for lesson

**Building student competence and confidence with technology should be part of instruction.**

--PARCC Model Content Framework for ELA/Literacy

Here are tips to get the most out of this curriculum:

- Lessons are device-neutral. It doesn't matter if you're a Mac or PC school or use laptops, desktops, tablets, or Chromebooks. Yes, you might have to make adjustments—but, you're a techie. No worries.
- Topics that relate to keyboarding at all grade levels are included in the beginning portion.
- All teachers share responsibility for student keyboarding. Good keyboarding habits are reinforced by everyone—including parents. Be sure others on the grade-level team understand the elements of keyboarding taught best by project-based learning.
- Every time students use the computer, remind them to set up their workspace correctly and have good posture (see pictures under *Body/Hand Position*).
- Go through lessons in the order presented.

## Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School

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- Several times a month, do finger exercises to remind students that all of their fingers are strong and functional (see detail under *Finger Exercises*).
- Review digital citizenship best practices every time students go online. Make using the internet safely a habit, just as students are careful in their physical neighborhood.
- Expect students to always try to solve techie problems themselves before requesting assistance. The older students are, the more this will happen if you let it. For example, hardware issues (i.e., headphones don't work, monitor doesn't work) can often be solved by kindergarteners once you've provided the tools for analyzing problems.
- Use keyboarding domain-specific vocabulary—especially words in the section, *Vocabulary*, as you teach. There is a lot of vocabulary in the early years and not so much later.
- Lessons use free software and web-based tools where possible. If you can't access one, email [info@structuredlearning.net](mailto:info@structuredlearning.net) and a curriculum specialist will help you develop a work-around.
- Because each monthly and weekly group of activities may take place over multiple time periods, lessons include an underscore (\_\_\_\_) in front of parts. Check off (in the manner allowed by your digital reader) what you complete and proceed from there next time.
- As students finish each activity and/or skill, check it off on **Ready to Move On** at the month-end and the checklist at year-end. Don't go to a new month or year until all is completed.
- At every opportunity, use keyboarding in class projects. These will be assessed by class teacher.
- Students work at their own pace. They aren't pressured to keep up or forced to slow down. If they finish the year early, offer alternatives (fun keyboarding sites, do homework during keyboarding time, play Minecraft—you pick).
- You'll find a lot of links in this ebook, but know this: **Links die**. If a link doesn't work, try a different one (usually there are options) or contact [Zeke.Rowe@StructuredLearning.net](mailto:Zeke.Rowe@StructuredLearning.net). He'll help.
- Every effort has been made to provide a written-out link to online resources for those using the print book. If you come across a link that you can't access, here's what to do:
  - *Google the name. Some of them will pop up right away*
  - *See if we've provided the link in another part of the book*
  - *Contact Zeke at Structured Learning--[zeke.rowe@structuredlearning.net](mailto:zeke.rowe@structuredlearning.net). You can even do this first. He'll find it—no worries.*

***Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards, retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades...***

*--(from Common Core)*

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## **Assessments**

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A complete list of yearly assessments, alphabetized

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### About the Publisher

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**Structured Learning** is the premier provider of technology resources to the education community including curricula, how-to guides, survival kits, theme-based lesson plans, Common Core materials, webinars, seminars, mentoring, coaching, posters, professional development, and one-of-a-kind online help—all to fulfill the tech demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Materials are classroom-tested, teacher-approved with easy-to-understand directions supported by online materials, websites, blogs, and wikis. Whether you are a new teacher wanting to do it right or a veteran educator looking for updated materials, [Structured Learning](#) and its team of technology teachers is here to assist.

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### About the Authors

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**Ask a Tech Teacher** is a group of technology teachers who run an award-winning resource blog where they provide free materials, advice, lesson plans, pedagogic conversation, website reviews, and more to all who drop by. The free newsletters and website articles help thousands of teachers, homeschoolers, and those serious about finding the best way to maneuver the minefields of technology in education.

**Jacqui Murray** (editor and lead Ask a Tech Teacher) is the editor of a technology curriculum for K-eighth grade, and creator of dozens of resources for infusing tech into classroom curriculum. She is webmaster for six blogs, an Amazon Vine Voice book reviewer, a columnist for Examiner.com, weekly contributor to TeachHUB, CAEP reviewer, and Editorial Review Board member for Journal for Computing Teachers. Her technology articles have appeared in hundreds of online newspapers and magazines.

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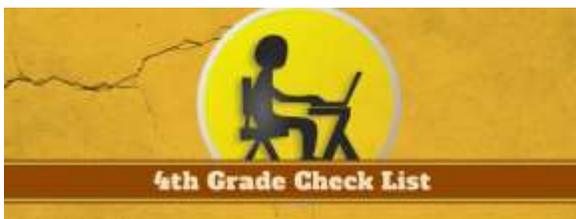
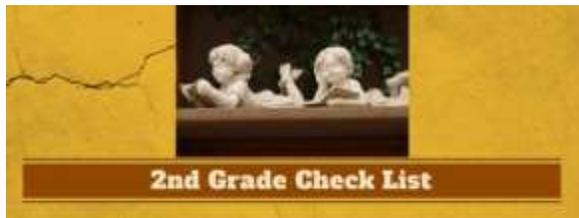
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## **Looking for Student Workbooks**

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[Click here](#)



## Looking for Student Video Course

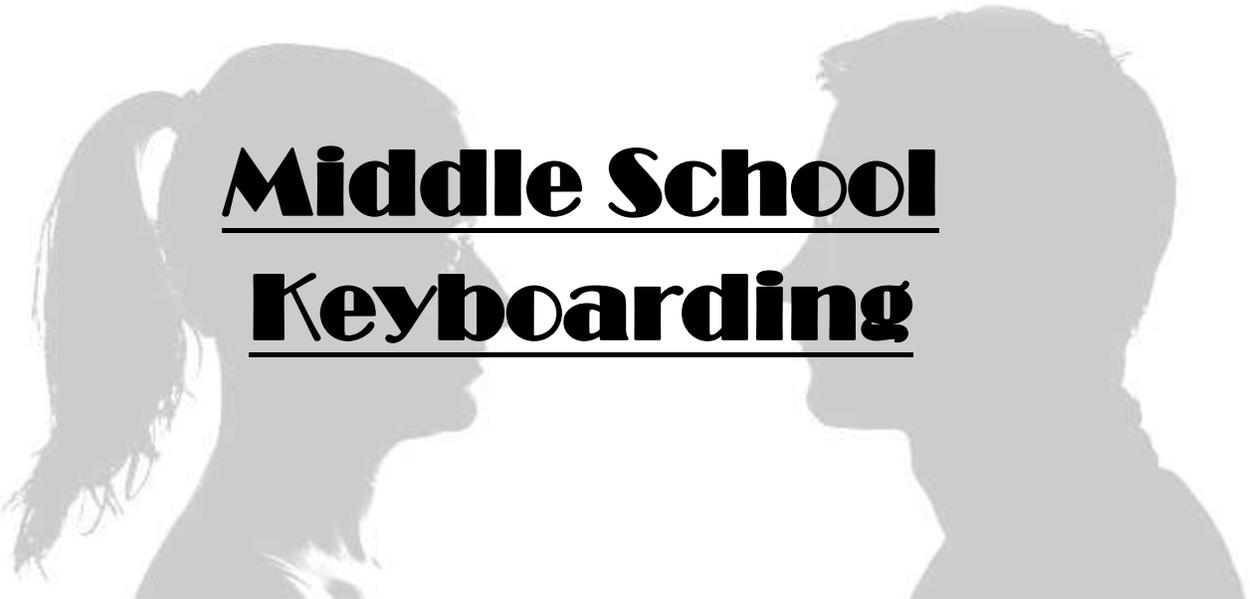
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**Middle School**  
**Keyboarding**



# Middle School GRADE

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## BIG IDEA

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*Good keyboarding skills make learning easier—projects, internet searches, online tools, web-based forms. Middle School focus: touch typing. You want to type well enough it doesn't interfere with your thoughts.*

### Introduction

Keyboarding is cumulative. What can be effectively learned in one grade depends heavily on earlier training. If hunt 'n peck habits become ingrained, it's difficult to keyboard effectively later.

In Middle School, students know the basics and have good habits. Their focus is touch typing--speed and accuracy. They need to think and type simultaneously. They'll practice 15-30 minutes a week at school, and 60 minutes at home (four sessions of 15 minutes each). As they complete activities, they'll check them off the month- and year-end lists.

You may want to set up a backchannel for Middle Schoolers since much keyboarding learning is done outside the classroom. Encourage them to communicate with each other about their typing lessons, share ideas, and more.

### Terminology

Use keyboarding domain-specific words. Expect students to use and understand them. At the end of each month, students check the list to be sure they got them. There aren't as many as earlier years.

### Posture

Students keyboard with good posture and an organized work station. When they type fast enough to keep up with their thoughts, they can change that.

### Focus on Digital Citizenship

Talk about how students are responsible digital citizen every time they use the internet.

### Focus on Problem Solving

### Best Practices

- *Students learn to type as fast as they need to*
- *Focus on speed and accuracy while remembering proper hand and body position*
- *Work on age-appropriate shortcuts*
- *Cover keys when practicing*

# Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School

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Students are expected to solve common tech problems. There's a list in the introduction.

## Skills learned in Middle School

- *Keyboarding*
- *Problem solving*
- *Digital citizenship*
- *Internet*

## Middle School is a combination of the following keyboard activities:

- *Key memorization*
- *Covered hands during typing practice*
- *Continuous reinforcement of shortcuts*
- *Anecdotal observation by teacher of typing skills—posture, hand position, finger use, etc.*
- *Finger warm-ups*
- *Quarterly quizzes*
- *Yearly (or bi-yearly) keyboard challenge*

## During each weekly lesson, do these:

- *Arrange workspace properly; follow good habits for posture and hand position*
- *Keyboard on assigned keys using preferred typing programs (software or online)*
- *Several times a month: Complete finger exercises*
- *Use keyboarding in class projects*
- *Be good digital citizens when using the internet*
- *Throughout lessons, remind students of shortcuts that accomplish oft-repeated activities*
- *Throughout lessons, remind students to attempt to solve problems before asking for help*
- *Use domain-specific terminology*
- *Keep month- and year-end skills checklist up to date*

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# MIDDLE SCHOOL: MONTH 3 WEEK FOUR

Vocabulary	Homework	Materials
	Type 15 minutes, four times a week, on DanceMat Typing, Lower row, hands covered. The goal: type without looking at hands.	DanceMat Typing TypingTest.com Poster webtool

## Steps

\_\_\_ In a typical keyboarding lesson:

- Make sure workspace is arranged properly; follow good habits for posture
- Several times a month: use keyboarding in class projects
- Several times a month: complete finger exercises
- Every time students use the internet: discuss how to do that safely
- Throughout lessons, remind students to attempt to solve problems before asking for help
- Remind students to keep their eyes on the screen, not on hands
- Complete self-assessment using link provided by teacher. This may connect to Google Apps account (if students have one) or another location

\_\_\_ Keyboard hands covered, 10-15 minutes on [DanceMat Typing](#). Stay on Lower row

\_\_\_ Done? Check speed/accuracy on [TypingTest.com](#).

\_\_\_ Review how to use online sites safely.

\_\_\_ Use an online poster creator like [Canva](#) (requires account)—<http://canva.com>, [Muzy](#)—<http://muzy.com>, [Tackk](#)—<http://tackk.com>--to share a quote or information with classmates. See Figure 28a-c for examples:

\_\_\_ Keep it simple: text overlaid on a nice image. Use good keyboarding habits, and check grammar and spelling before sharing.

Figure 2a-c--Posters in Canva, Muzy



## Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School



\_\_\_ Other online poster-making tools:

- [Glogster—posters](http://glogster.com)  
<http://glogster.com>
- [Smore \(school account\)](http://smore.com)  
<http://smore.com>
- [Poster maker—eye chart](http://www.eyechartmaker.com/)  
<http://www.eyechartmaker.com/>
- [Posterini](http://www.posterini.com/)  
<http://www.posterini.com/>
- [Prezi](http://prezi.com)  
<http://prezi.com>

\_\_\_ Next: Use an online ‘fake’ site to generate text chat (Figure 29a using [iFakeText.com](http://FakeText.com)) or a newspaper clipping (Figure 29b using [Fodey.com](http://Fodey.com)) that supports a topic in one of students’ classes. Treat this as an assessment of knowledge on that issue—don’t research, just type from memory:

Figure 3a—Fake chat; Figure 29b—Fake newspaper



\_\_\_ Done? Share a screen shot to student blog, class wiki, or another location accessible to classmates.

\_\_\_ Remind students to use good keyboarding to complete all projects that blend tech with learning.

\_\_\_ Collaborate with grade-level teachers in using this skill authentically in their classroom.



# MIDDLE SCHOOL: MONTH 4 WEEK ONE-FOUR

Vocabulary	Homework	Materials
	<i>Type 15 minutes, four times a week, hands covered, on a progressive keyboard program. The goal: type without looking at hands.</i>	<i>Progressive keyboarding program Comic creator</i>
	    	 

## Steps

\_\_\_ In a typical keyboarding lesson:

- *Make sure workspace is arranged properly; follow good habits for posture*
- *Several times a month: use keyboarding in class projects*
- *Several times a month: complete finger exercises*
- *Every time students use the internet: discuss how to do that safely*
- *Complete self-assessment using link provided by teacher. This may connect to Google Apps account (if students have one) or another location*

\_\_\_ Switch to a progressive program that will track student progress such as [Type to Learn](http://typetolearn.com) or a free online keyboarding program like [Typing Web](http://typingweb.com) (<http://typingweb.com>) or [Typing Club](http://typingclub.com) (<http://typingclub.com>). Continue with this program the rest of the year. Students cover hands while practicing. I provide cloths they use at school and take home if they'd like. It feels hard at first and quickly becomes easier. Focus is speed and accuracy.

\_\_\_ As students type, observe posture, hand position, eye placement. Make suggestions to the class when you see an endemic problem.

\_\_\_ Practice keyboarding with class projects like a story, an essay, a biography, a topical magazine. For example: Create a comic using an online tool like [Powtoon](http://powtoon.com) (Figure 30a— <http://powtoon.com>) or [LearnAlberta](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/elci/index.html?launch=true) (Figure 30b-- <http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/elci/index.html?launch=true>):

Figure 4a and 30b—Comic creators—two samples



**PORTIONS DELETED ON PURPOSE**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL: MONTH 8 WEEK ONE-FOUR

Vocabulary	Homework	Materials
	<i>Type 15 minutes, four times a week, hands covered, on a progressive keyboard program. The goal: type without looking at hands.</i>	<i>Progressive keyboarding program Note-taking tool</i>
		

### Steps

\_\_\_ In a typical keyboarding lesson:

- *Make sure workspace is arranged properly; follow good habits for posture*
- *Several times a month: use keyboarding in class projects*
- *Several times a month: complete finger exercises*
- *Every time students use the internet: discuss how to do that safely*
- *Throughout lessons, remind students to attempt to solve problems before asking for help*
- *Remind students to keep their eyes on the screen, not on hands*
- *Complete self-assessment using link provided by teacher. This may connect to Google Apps account (if students have one) or another location*

\_\_\_ Keyboard, hands covered, on a progressive program such as [Type to Learn](#), [Typing Web](#), or [Typing Club](#). Website addresses are found earlier in this book—or Google. Students cover hands while practicing. Focus on speed and accuracy.

\_\_\_ Use keyboarding to take notes in class. Digital note-taking tools include:

- [Evernote](#)  
<http://evernote.com>
- *Google Apps (Docs or Sheets)*  
*Through your schools GAFE account*
- [Notability](#)—app  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/notability/id360593530?mt=8>
- [NoodleTool](#)  
<http://www.noodletool.com>
- [OneNote](#)  
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/onenote/>

\_\_\_ Any note-taking option is fine—your school may have an account with one. What is important is that while students type notes, they use good keyboarding skills.

\_\_\_ When done, share notes with classmates.

\_\_\_ See Figure 37a for an example in Evernote, Figure 37b for an example in Notability (for iPads), and Figure 36 for Google Apps:

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Figure 36—Keyboarding in note-taking II

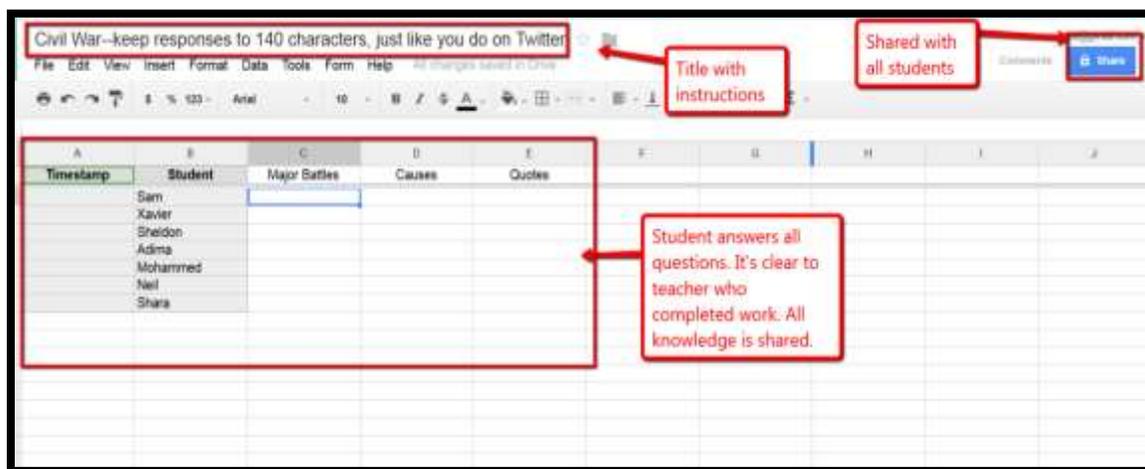


Figure 375a and 37b—Keyboarding in Evernote and Notability



- \_\_\_ Remind students to use good keyboarding to complete projects that blend tech with learning.
- \_\_\_ Collaborate with grade-level teachers in using this skill authentically in their classroom.

## READY TO MOVE ON THIS MONTH

If students are ready for Month 9, here's what they have accomplished:

- \_\_\_ use keyboarding terms daily as you keyboard
- \_\_\_ sit at a computer and arrange workspace correctly
- \_\_\_ When student has a problem, s/he tries to solve it themselves
- \_\_\_ know the parts of a computer and parts of a website
- \_\_\_ are a good digital citizen
- \_\_\_ practiced keyboarding several times
- \_\_\_ did finger exercises several times
- \_\_\_ submitted homework
- \_\_\_ took notes during class using good keyboarding skills
- \_\_\_ updated Middle School checklist

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## Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: Middle School



To graduate to the next keyboarding level, student must have the following skills checked off:

### Posture

- Legs in front, body in front, elbows at sides*
- Chair one hand-width from table*
- Posture straight, body centered, eyes on screen*

### Keyboarding Skills

- Reviewed mouse skills*
- Kept keyboard one inch off edge of table*
- Curled hands over keyboard, pointers on f and j*
- Used proper log-on/log-off procedures*
- Demonstrated proper care and handling of keyboard, mouse*
- Know location of important keys*
- Used right thumb to spacebar*
- Practiced keyboarding*
- Used school software and online sites for keyboarding*
- Practiced finger exercises*
- Learned useful shortcuts (i.e., Ctrl+S, Ctrl+C)*
- Memorized all keys*
- Keyboarded with hands covered*
- Used proper keyboarding skills every time you sat at computer*
- Evaluated handwriting vs. keyboarding speed*
- Participated in Annual Team Challenge—Keyboarding*

### Problem-solving Skills

- Comfortable with 22 problems presented in this ebook*

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[Products that go well with](#)

**Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the**  
**Classroom:**  
**Middle School**

- *Ultimate Guide to Keyboarding in the Classroom: K-5*
- *K-8 Student Workbooks* (digital delivery)
- Keyboarding video course (grades 3-8)
- Keyboarding classroom posters
- Keyboarding pedagogy: Hall of Fame articles

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