

THE UGLY DUCKLING

A Talking Story Book

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Credits:

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Program by Mike Westerfield

Voices by Peggy K. Smith

Product developed by Patty Westerfield

Welcome to the world of the StoryTeller, where children's stories come to life. Through the power of your personal computer, these animated stories are presented to your child. Not only do you see the story and words, but the computer actually reads the story in a natural, digitally recorded human voice. Various modes lend variety and extend the teaching capabilities of the program.



Pressing Keys: The Easy Choice

The StoryTeller series is designed for pre-readers and beginning readers. We have tested the program with children as young as three years old, putting a lot of thought and effort into making the program operate in a way that a young child could understand. One of the things we found is that very young children often have difficulty understanding complicated controls in computer programs. Especially if they are new to computers, children often have trouble with such seemingly simple operations as moving the mouse and clicking the mouse button. The one thing they can universally do, though, and which they delight in doing, is pressing keys on the keyboard. Not a particular key, mind you, just one of those pretty buttons on that big button-board. We designed the StoryTeller series to take advantage of this trait. While more complex controls are available, pressing a random key will always do something sensible.

Changing Disks

Another issue we faced was that a few minutes of digitally recorded sound and a couple of dozen animated pictures take a lot of disk space. The Ugly Duckling story spans two disks. We wanted to create a system that a child could use, but many computers only have one 3.5 inch disk drive. What we discovered is that 3.5 inch diskettes will only fit in the disk drive if you put them in correctly. With that gentle reminder, very young computer enthusiasts are quite capable of putting in a disk. Getting it out is more difficult; that is why our program ejects the disk currently in the drive when it needs a different disk. You can't make a mistake: if you put in the wrong disk, the program patiently ejects it. In addition, the disk labels are color-coded, and the screen shows a picture of the disk the program needs. Naturally, if you have two disk drives, you can put both of the Ugly Duckling disks in the computer at the same time, and the program will find them.

Auto Mode



Finally, if your child is very bashful about pressing keys, the program will still work. After waiting for one minute for a selection from the title page, the program automatically launches into a store demonstration cycle. The entire story is read, front to back. The program returns to the title page, where it will cycle through again if no selection is made. Please note that you will still need to change disks unless you have two 3.5 inch disk drives.

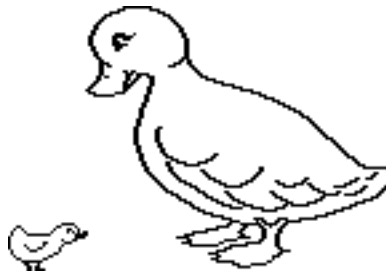
The Choice Page

When the program starts, it displays a title page, then moves on to the choice screen. The choice screen has a total of seven buttons to

choose from. These buttons are divided into two categories: buttons for the child, and parent buttons. The top four buttons are kid buttons. These buttons let you read the story in one of four modes, which we will describe in detail in a moment. The StoryTeller cycles through these buttons, reading the choice to your child. When the proper choice is read (and the proper button highlighted), pressing any key will cause the program to start reading the story.

The bottom three buttons are the parent buttons. They allow you to print the story, print a coloring book version of the story, or quit. These choices are not read by the program, and you cannot choose them from the keyboard. Instead, you must use the mouse to select the button, clicking once the mouse arrow is on the button.

You might also note that you can use the mouse on the child's buttons, too. You don't have to wait for the StoryTeller to make its way to the proper button.



The StoryTeller Reads the Story

The first of the choices your child can pick is to have the StoryTeller read the story. Each animated page will be shown. As the words are read, the words will be highlighted. At any time, before or after a page has been read, pressing a key will advance to the next page. The ESC key is special: it quickly returns to the original choice screen.

Buttons in the Story



Each page of the story has four buttons along the bottom of the screen. These can only be chosen with the mouse. The left and right arrows move to the previous and next page, respectively. While the page is being read, you can press the Stop button, and the StoryTeller

will stop. Pressing the Go button starts the story again. Finally, after the page has been read, you can press the Go button to reread the page.

Learning to Read

Being read to is certainly educational, but it is also passive. The StoryTeller has a more active mode, too. The next two buttons on the Choice Screen, Read & Wait, and Wait & Read, slow things down so the child can think about what is happening. The Read & Wait button highlights a word, reads it, and waits. Pressing any key or the Go button moves to the next word. Encourage your child to repeat the word, pointing out the word that is highlighted. With the idea in hand, your child can use this mode to learn each of the words on the screen.

The next step in learning to read the story is to have the StoryTeller highlight the word, but not read it. After a key is pressed, the word is read aloud. With most children, this mode is best while they sit in your lap. It gives them a chance to show off, or, if they aren't ready to show off, it gives them a bit of motivation to learn the words so they can show off next time.

The last child button, No Sound, just shows the animated pictures. This is definitely a "lap mode." We like to use this mode as a bedtime story, with our daughters occupying a knee while we read the story to

them. The more interest you show in the program, the more interest they will show. We strongly encourage you to spend some time with your child in your lap, reading the story.

Printing the Companion Story Book

If you have an ImageWriter II printer with a color ribbon, you can print a full-color copy of the story. The Print Story button does this. Before choosing this button, be sure that you have the printer turned on, and that you have selected it from the control panel of your normal system disk. (The computer remembers these settings when the power is off, so you only have to choose the printer one time.) This gives your child a paper copy of the book, which is a bit more portable than the computer version.

Printing the Coloring Book

Kids love to color and paint, so we put in a special coloring book button. When you choose this button with any printer that has been selected in the normal way, the StoryTeller prints out a coloring book. Each page of the story is represented, although the pictures have been retouched to make them easier to color. You may be surprised to hear your children reading the story as they color. Ours often "read" their own version, putting in a few side comments of their own. They get especially involved in the story when people are being mean to the ugly ducking in the barnyard.



Hard Disks, Copyrights, and so forth...

Most educational programs are copy protected. We understand why companies do this, but we also don't like it when we buy

programs. Our program is not copy protected. You can, and *should*, make a backup copy. You can also copy the program to a hard disk if you have one by using the finder to drag all of the files and folders except ProDOS and the SYSTEM folder into a folder on your hard disk. Once there, the program will no longer need or ask for the floppy disk, which can be stored for safekeeping.

We also feel that fair use of an educational program extends to the entire classroom. If you have several Apple II computers in the

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same classroom, feel free to use the program on all of the computers at the same time. *If you will be using the programs in two or more classrooms at the same time, please buy a separate copy for each classroom.*

While you can use our program on a network if you follow the guidelines of one copy of the program per classroom, we recommend that you do not. Networks are not as fast as disk drives, and the Ugly Duckling program moves massive amounts of information across the network if used that way. If you make a copy for each computer, you will be much happier with the program.

Please help us continue this policy of making it easy to make legitimate copies of our programs by not giving it away.

More to Come

We are planning several extensions to our series, and would invite your comments. If you can think of ways to make the program better, please let us know. If you have a favorite children's story you would like to see published, we would be happy to hear from you.

Thanks, Hans

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to Hans Christian Anderson, who is of course not available for a personal thanks. He was a master storyteller who not only wrote the original Ugly Ducking story, but many other classic children's stories. You can find many of his stories at your local bookstore or library.

