

Computer Software Reviews

Robert Ariew, University of Arizona
— Software Review Editor

Passport

Product Description

Program Title: *Passport*

System Requirements: Apple II+, IIe, or IIc, two disk drives strongly recommended, color (recommended) or monochrome screen.

Publisher: Gessler Educational Software, 55 West 13th St., New York, NY 10011.

Price: \$175.00;

demonstration diskette \$10.00.

Content: Two diskettes, User's Manual, Text Color Commands card.

Author: Doug Simmons.

Audience: Lessons may be designed for any level of instruction.

Summary

Passport is a powerful authoring program that allows a teacher with no programming experience to create lessons with text using various type styles and colors, animation and high resolution graphics, while using the foreign language (complete with diacritics) of his or her choice. Moreover, the program permits multiple answers, rewards and hint messages, scorekeeping, the use of a student's name within the lesson, branching, and some student control. Most of the program's sophisticated lesson creation is menu-driven, but it is essential to read the well-written 36 page user's manual first.

Contents

Passport is an authoring system that permits foreign language teachers to prepare their own materials. *Passport* lessons are generally made up of a sequence of text screens, detail screens, question screens, and a glossary; each lesson may be made up of some or all of the preceding. The teacher uses the *Passport* System Disk to create these screens and to save them to a copyable Student Master Disk.

Text screens are constructed through the CREATE / EDIT A SCREEN option of the main menu. They are used to present lesson material, e.g., to display grammatical rules and illustrations, prose or a poem, a dialogue, etc. These screens can be enhanced through the use of color, different type styles (tall or wide characters, etc.), flashing text, appearing and disappearing text. Text can be written in any one of four

different fonts, including foreign language characters of more than a dozen languages. Text can also be moved, duplicated and saved on an electronic clipboard.

Similar to the text screen, a detail screen may be designed. This type of screen is given as an option to the student. It typically supplements the text screen by providing additional examples, more details to an explanation, exceptions to a rule, etc.

Question screens are at the heart of the *Passport* lesson. The teacher designs these screens to display questions to the student, to enter correct answers (up to four alternate answers may be recognized as correct) and to specify congratulatory messages. The teacher may also specify incorrect answers, generate wrong answer messages, give a hint and an opportunity to try again (modifications to scorekeeping can be made to allow several attempts before altering the final score), or branch the student to another part of the program.

Several branching possibilities exist with *Passport*. For example, a correct answer might continue the lesson in sequence or branch to the next (i. e., more difficult) part of the lesson, while an incorrect answer might display several text screens and put the student into a remedial part of the lesson. Branches can be determined also by percentage of questions answered correctly, or by creating a "branching menu," which allows the student to choose his or her own branch. Finally, the teacher can create an unconditional branch, forcing each and every student to a specific part of the lesson. Branches, of course, may lead to other branches, as well as to other lesson screens. Teacher imagination is required.

Once the screens are designed, the questions written, and the correct and incorrect answers specified, all the materials are accessible to the student through the student command line at the bottom of the screen. From that command line, students may also access the lesson index of screens and the teacher-created glossary of terms and definitions if they are available.

Evaluation

To use the full potential of *Passport* requires experimentation and creativity. By following the short introduction to lesson construction (p. 4 of the user's guide), the reviewer was able to create a short 34-

screen lesson on the French partitive without too much trouble. The lesson included animation, scorekeeping and some simple branching. No graphics were incorporated since they require an additional software package. Students found the lesson acceptable. Although the lesson was planned in advance on a sheet of paper, the process could have been simplified by using 3 x 5 index cards, especially if advanced branching techniques are used. Preparing the first couple of *Passport* lessons is time-consuming, especially for the teacher new to computer-assisted instruction. Nevertheless, *Passport* is recommended to the teacher who is looking for an authoring system that has a lot to offer.

— Lyle R. Polly
Southwest Missouri State University

Lecciones de Español

Product Description

Program Title: *Lecciones de Español*

System Requirements: Apple II+, IIe, IIc, or compatible with 48K of memory and a 5¹/₄" disk drive.

Publisher: CONDUIT, The University of Iowa, Oakdale Campus, Iowa City, IA 52242.

Price: \$110.00.

Content: 2 diskettes that contain 7 lessons, a Teacher's Manual, and a Student Reference Card. Disk 1 contains the first three lessons on the subjunctive; disk 2 contains the fourth lesson on the subjunctive and the lessons on *para vs. por*, *ser vs. estar*, and preterit vs. imperfect.

Author: Robert Phillips.

Audience: Upper beginning and intermediate students of Spanish.

Summary

Lecciones de Español contains seven tutorial lessons that give the student additional help on certain grammar points that may be difficult to master: Spanish subjunctive (four lessons on the uses of the present subjunctive in noun clauses), *ser vs. estar*, imperfect vs. preterit, and *para vs. por*. Because the program is designed as a tutorial, it diagnoses a certain number of student's errors, provides an explanation and goes

