

Subject: Using the ByteSize Reader in the Classroom
To: ByteSize Systems, Inc.
From: Joe Rector, high school English teacher, Karns School, Knoxville, TN
Date: June 17, 2007

I have taught high school English for 30 years. My classes are English III, English III Advanced Placement, and English IV. The junior year of English concentrates on American Literature; senior English looks at English literature and literary analysis. During the second part of the 2006-07 school year, I used the ByteSize Reader and the ByteSize library of free b-books in my classes by connecting a computer to a projector and then projecting entire books on a large screen for students to see.

In my English III and English III AP classes I used several b-book selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. In my English IV College Prep class I used Shakespeare's **Macbeth**. Using the ByteSize Reader I highlighted lines that I felt were important. To some of these lines I added comments about the ideas the authors were presenting. At other times, I added questions to the highlighted sections. All of this was extremely easy to do using the ByteSize Reader.

I observed several things as a result of using the ByteSize Reader:

Students found it easier to focus. Students liked the image of the book on the screen in front of the class, and they liked using the text on the screen instead of each student looking at the textbook. Students paid better attention, they did not get lost and monitoring their attention during the lesson was much easier. Students took notes on highlighted text, kept a running log of lines I marked as important, and noted the meaning of lines discussed in class.

Classroom participation and discussion was better. Discussion using the ByteSize Reader engaged more students and at a higher level. Students took turns reading highlighted portions of the books projected on screen and then gave their individual interpretations of the sections. Students offered answers to study questions I added to the text. Discussions were fantastic in class. Seeing the entire text in front of them and being able to refer to the text sparked intense and sometimes heated discussions when we studied Transcendentalism. Responses to questions were more insightful, but more importantly, students developed their interpretations from what they actually read rather than from other students. Interpretations were more thoughtful and students were much more able to support their ideas from the text we were studying.

The quality of homework was improved. Students wrote better papers because they said the assignment was clearer because they had seen the text associated with the topic – attaching notes directly to the text in the book avoided confusion. When students were given essay topics, they chose lines with which they had most closely identified during class discussion, and the depth of their writing was better.

Test scores were higher. Students had better and more precise notes for the questions on the tests. Studying from the information presented through the ByteSize Reader cut away much extraneous material. Students said they felt better prepared after the material was covered through the ByteSize Reader. Students also said they better understood literary terms when they were highlighted using the ByteSize Reader and then discussed, in context, in class.

Comments from students.

- *It helped to read along with sections that were read by someone else.*
- *I get encouraged when I realize I can understand the material that is highlighted on the screen.*
- *We could follow along with the book easier and it helps everyone in the class stay together.*
- *The material was easier to comprehend because I could see it as we discussed it.*
- *It helped me stay focused on the material and to stay with the teacher.*
- *I liked the ByteSize Reader. I liked how I could follow along better because you could move the mouse to point to the things as you discussed them.*
- *I liked how the font could be made bigger so everyone could see. It's a lot easier to take notes.*
- *This makes understanding literature easier and it makes studying for tests much easier.*
- *I like how important sections can be highlighted and how the teacher's comments can be added.*
- *It helped me stay focused on the material and to stay with the teacher.*

I think the ByteSize Reader is a wonderful new teaching tool. It is easy to learn and easy to use, students like it, it improves classroom focus and participation, and it makes teaching easier.

**To see the ByteSize Reader and our list of b-books go to www.bytesizesystems.com.
Contact ByteSize Systems by sending email to Julie Thenell at j.thenell@bytesizesystems.com.**