

***Dasher* Drills—Instructions**

The *Dasher* computer programs function as "electronic workbooks" with grammar drills. You may complete the exercises at any time in the ITCs (Instructional Technology Centers) or from an Internet connection, and you may do the exercises in any order and redo them as many times as you wish. You will be presented with a question, and you then type in the appropriate answer. The *Dasher* program interprets the answer, praises you if you get it right, but offers help if you don't. *Dasher* puts the correct parts of the answer back up on screen, and it gives cues as to what you must do to correct the answer. When the question has been answered correctly, you may go on to the next one. Correct answers or examples are available at any time.

Dasher may be accessed in any of the ITCs or through the Web at this URL:

<http://virtualdesktop.uiowa.edu>

Instructions for using *Dasher* are below. At present we offer *Dasher* for students of Italian, German, French, and for medical technicians learning Latin terms (*Verba*). There is also a Spanish folder for those who wish to review.

Records of your work are kept on the server, and a printed report of your work will be given to your instructor each week. If you change sections, or if your student ID number is not accepted by the *Dasher* program, please stop by the LMC ITC in Rm. 120 PH to have your name, ID number, and course and section number added to our list so we can make the necessary changes. **To have your work reported, you must use *Dasher* with your ID;** if you click on Anonymous and use the program, no scores will be reported. If you experience a problem with any *Dasher* program, please write down the date, time, location, and a description of the problem (including the textbook, chapter, and exercise) and bring the information to one of the monitors in the Language Media Center, or send it by email to: **rebecca-bohde@uiowa.edu**. You may also email this address to ask about your total time for the semester; include your student ID number with the email-request.

To use the *Dasher* program on campus in one of the ITCs, you will need to log in with your HawkID to connect to the network. Once you are logged in on a PC, go to the Start menu and choose All Programs. *Dasher* is listed alphabetically among the choices. Click and hold on *Dasher*, then slide over to your language and then within your language to the appropriate book, for example *Athena* for Italian or *FGU* for French. Once you've landed on the correct book, let the mouse go and wait for the identification box to pop up. On the Macs in the ITCs, use the Web connection in Safari to access *Dasher* as follows.

To access *Dasher* from the Web, go to **<http://virtualdesktop.uiowa.edu>**. On a Windows machine, use *Internet Explorer*, and on the Mac, use *Safari*. The first time you visit the site, you will be asked to download a Citrix client for either PC or Mac. This usually doesn't take long and installs easily. Then you may sign in on your HawkID and access a number of programs also available in the ITCs on campus. Click once on the Foreign Languages folder, click the *Dasher* folder, then click the language folder, then choose the *Dasher* book you want to use; e.g. Italian students usually open *Athena*. The Citrix client will go through a number of windows; click OK out of them until the Identification box pops up.

Dasher takes several seconds to start, so be patient and do not click a second time. A *Dasher* identification box will pop up; enter your student ID number. Type your number with no spaces or dashes, using the number keys on the top row of the keyboard. If your student ID number is not accepted, please call or stop by the LMC ITC to have your student ID number added to the list. (If you want to use the program without having your work recorded—as an anonymous user—you should select the "Anonymous" button instead of typing your student ID in the window. Any work done anonymously will **not** be reported to your instructor.)

Once you are in the program, you will see the title page, with a table of contents for the *Dasher* book along the right side of the screen. To see the list of exercises for each chapter, you can either double-click on the chapter title, or click once on the right-facing arrow. You can return to the table of Contents any time by clicking the blue and white button in the upper left hand corner of the *Dasher* screen; the exercise you are currently doing will be highlighted. When you open an exercise, you will generally see three boxes, or sometimes two. The top box will be the instructions, telling you how to manipulate the items of this particular exercise and usually giving an example. Below the instruction window is the question window, showing the current item, and below that is the answer window, where you'll type an answer. The bottom part of the screen will show items as you answer them in a transcript of the exercise. Each exercise will have a different number of items; you can see where you are by looking at the tool bar near the top of the *Dasher* window. For example, a box there may say "#3 of 10," and you'll know you're on the third item out of ten total. When you finish all the items of an exercise, a summary box will pop up, giving your "score" and asking if you want to do the next exercise or go to the Table of Contents. Once you click out of that box, the exercise has been registered on the server. Don't worry about the score totals, they can be somewhat skewed because of mistyped words.

If possible, you should work to the end of an exercise before you quit the *Dasher* program. Even though a record of your work is reported each time you use *Dasher*, the program does not keep track for you of which exercises you have completed. Keep a running tally yourself of which exercises you have completed in each session and of how much time you spend on *Dasher*, in case the log file on the server has any problems. You do **not** need to Save or Print your work in *Dasher*; all of your scores are kept in the *Dasher* log on the server.

The exercises may contain audio clips; if so, click on the arrow button on the audio bar to play the audio clip. If there are audio clips, you will need to have headphones to listen; at the LMC headphones may be borrowed at the front desk. Opening the Help menu at the top of the screen will allow you to get the correct answer, an example, general instructions, and instructions on how to type foreign characters. You can enter foreign characters either by clicking on the appropriate box along the top of the *Dasher* window or by using the corresponding key combinations for Mac or PC (we have handouts describing these in the LMC).

When you are finished with your session, go to the File menu and select Quit. You will see another box asking if you really want to quit; click Yes and you will be logged out of *Dasher*. **Please log out of your HawkID when you are finished using any computers in the ITCs, or log out of the Virtual Desktop session, if you use the Web.**