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# Introduction

For the past two decades, the presence of technology has been transforming our personal lives. One basic goal of education has always been to prepare students for adulthood. Educators have identified one of the most essential of these tools as the ability to communicate ideas and knowledge effectively to others.

In this fast moving “Information Age,” educators and students as never before need to deal with a constant stream of new information, ideas, and technology. A significant first step in preparing students to deal with this influx of information is to provide an environment in which they gain the ability to access, process, manage, and convey concepts and ideas effectively and efficiently.

Technology is definitely one of those tools that aid in this efficiency. Beyond enabling students to work faster, technology promotes the development of inquiry based learning. Students develop individual learning styles as they experiment with, practice, and adopt the best methods of employing technology to share their ideas with others.

The *TechTools Resource Kit for Kid Pix* provides opportunities for students to complete a project relevant to a curriculum area. While completing these projects, students also practice technology.

Using *Kid Pix*, or any piece of technology in the classroom, requires a change in teaching styles. In order for students to get the most out of the experience, teachers must endeavor to become the guide on the side. This means allowing students to use technology as a tool to discover and explore their world. This can be a seemingly daunting task. Some familiar refrains include:

- “This takes too much time! I spent hours looking for appropriate Web sites. When students used *Kid Pix*, they spent hours and hardly did any work.”
- “The final projects are nothing more than reiteration of the facts and ‘fluffy’ effects.”
- “I’m not sure how to assess the projects.”
- “It’s too difficult to design my own rubric.”
- “Students aren’t sure how to use *Kid Pix*. I know a little but not enough to answer all their questions. I don’t want to stop my lesson to answer a technical question.”
- “Students can’t find appropriate media (sounds, pictures, or video clips) for their projects.”

The *TechTools Resource Kit for Kid Pix* helps overcome these objections by including everything a teacher needs to effectively and creatively use *Kid Pix* in the classroom.



# Using the Kit

The *TechTools Resource Kit for Kid Pix* was created to give purpose for using *Kid Pix* in your classroom. It teaches you many of the features of *Kid Pix*. Its goal is to help facilitate the teaching of the technical skills by providing curriculum-based projects that require students to combine their critical thinking skills with their technology skills.

## **The *TechTools Resource Kit for Kid Pix* includes:**

**100 How-to Cards:** These cards were designed to help students find answers to specific technical questions that might arise when using the *Kid Pix* software. Each card has instructions for either Windows or Macintosh computers. (See page 6 for more information about these cards.)

**Project Lesson Plans:** The heart of the *TechTools Resource Kit for Kid Pix* is the carefully designed research project challenges. Each challenge places the student in a scenario that involves research, critical thinking, and decision-making. Each project requires students to produce a *Kid Pix* picture. The projects are organized into three sections: Beginner, Intermediate, and Challenging, with many themes from which to choose. Each lesson plan includes:

- **Step-by-step teacher instructions** including objectives, resource needs, student preparation ideas, extension ideas, and other valuable information.
- **Student Activity Pages** that are highly motivating and work as an anticipatory set for the students.
- **Information Collection Grids** that help students organize their research. The collection grid helps students collect relevant information and stay on task during the research process.
- **Rubrics** that clearly define expectations for achieving a quality product. Students can use the rubrics as a guide, making sure they are on target with the expectations of the project.

The instructions on the student activity page itself are designed to be used by students without the need for teacher guided lessons. In some cases, you may wish to pre-select the pages that you want to make immediately available to students. You can also identify others that you wish to use as a whole group activity at some later point.

**CD-ROM:** The CD-ROM contains templates that give students a starting point when creating their projects. Also included is a collection of pictures and clip art that can be used with each project. (See the CD-ROM/Web site section of this notebook for file names and directions for use of the CD-ROM. Extra pictures and clipart have been included on the CD. Use these however you wish.)