

# Read Me for *The Learning Ladder Series*

To move around this file press Page Up and Page Down, or click in the vertical scroll bar. You can print this file by selecting the Print command from the File menu.

**Please note: This title must install the QuickTime version supplied with the product; this will not affect your existing versions of QuickTime**

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 About Dorling Kindersley**

DK Multimedia titles are available wherever CD-ROMs are sold. New titles will be available on a regular basis. For more information, contact us at DK Multimedia, 9 Henrietta Street, London, WC2E 8PS.

You may also visit us on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.dk.com>

## **1.2 About this Read Me file**

The information in this file is designed to address most of the problems you may encounter when using any multimedia title. If you are having problems with *The Learning Ladder Series*, please take a look at the items listed in the table of contents to see if your particular problem is addressed. If you are still having problems, please call our Technical Support number with:

- details of the problem,
- any error messages that were produced,
- the full specification of your computer.

If possible, you should be beside your machine when you telephone.

The numbers in New York, USA are:

Telephone: 1-800 DKMM 575  
Fax: 212 213 5240  
E-mail: [DKMM@phantom.com](mailto:DKMM@phantom.com)

The numbers in London, United Kingdom are:

Telephone: 0870 0100 350  
Fax: 0171 753 7343  
E-mail: [DKMM@DKMM.CO.UK](mailto:DKMM@DKMM.CO.UK)

More help on making the best use of all the features within *The Learning Ladder Series* is available once you have started the product. Click on the help me icon on the navigation bar. (you will also find a reminder of some of the main points in this document).

## 2. CD-ROM problems

### 2.1 Care of compact discs

Contrary to early reports, compact discs (CDs) are very easily damaged if treated carelessly. Such damage has a much greater effect on the digital data of a CD-ROM than on the information of a music CD. A dirty or damaged CD-ROM is quite likely to malfunction. With CD-ROM drives becoming ever faster and more disc-sensitive, this is an increasing problem.

The surface of the disc can quickly gather dirt and is very easily scratched. To protect the data from scratches, finger-prints, dust particles, and smears, do not touch the readout side (unlabelled side) of the disc or place it face down on a hard surface.

Should the CD become dirty, clean it with a soft cloth lightly moistened with CD cleaning fluid or ethyl alcohol, working from the centre to the edge. Do not use any type of solvent, such as benzine, lacquer thinner, anti-static agents or LP record cleaners as they may damage the surface.

Never leave the disc in a place subject to direct sunlight, high temperature or high humidity. Recommended storage conditions are:

- Temperature: 10°C to 50°C (50°F to 122°F)
- Humidity: 10% to 80%

### 2.2 Problems with CD-ROM drives

If *The Learning Ladder Series* has problems finding the data files it needs from its CD-ROM, you will see an error message saying that the file, animation (ani) or wav can't be found. Alternatively, you may simply find that the screen goes blue, with white text and you will get an error message saying that there is an error reading drive D. To find what has caused the problem, do the following:

1. Check that *The Learning Ladder Series* CD has been correctly inserted into the CD-ROM drive.
2. Check that *The Learning Ladder Series* is looking in the right place for the CD-ROM Drive. If, for example, the drive letter has changed as a result of a system change, such as adding or removing a RAM disk or another device, then *The Learning Ladder Series* will fail to find its CD-ROM drive.
3. If you have an external CD-ROM drive, ensure that it is plugged in, turned on, and

connected to your computer. You may need to check the documentation that came with the drive.

4. Verify that your CD-ROM drive is MPC-compatible and double-speed or faster.

If you have problems with The *Learning Ladder Series* CD vibrating, or making a strange noise in the drive then you should contact DK Technical Support using the telephone number given at the beginning of this file.

If you get an error message saying that there is a problem reading the disc, then you should try cleaning the disc and try again. Make sure that you restart the product.

## **3. Setup and Uninstall notes**

### **3.1 Minimum system requirements**

In order to run *The Learning Ladder Series* you will require a multimedia computer with the following minimum requirements:

A multimedia PC, with 486DX/33MHz or higher microprocessor, 8Mb, MPC-compatible double-speed CD-ROM drive and 16-bit sound card, mouse, SVGA 256 colour display, loudspeakers or headphones, and Microsoft® Windows® 95/98.

### **3.2 How to get started**

1. Insert the disc in the CD-ROM drive.
2. Windows 95/98 users: the Setup program should start automatically. If it does, skip to step 5. If it does not, press **Ctrl + Esc**, then **R**, and go to the next step.
3. In the Command Line box, type `d:\setup` (where **d** is the letter of your CD-ROM drive), then click **OK** or press **Enter**.
4. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen.
5. The Setup program creates a program icon in a DK Multimedia program group.
6. Double-click the icon to start the program.

### **3.3 If Setup fails with an error message**

If the Setup program fails with an error message you should ensure that no other programs are running while you try to install *The Learning Ladder Series*. You can check this by pressing 'Ctrl + Esc' in Windows 3.1/3.11 or by pressing 'Alt + Tab' in Windows 95/98.

### **3.4 Running *The Learning Ladder Series* with Windows 95/98**

#### **3.4.1 Using AutoPlay**

If you are running Windows® 95/98, *The Learning Ladder Series* can take advantage of AutoPlay, which should automatically start the installation procedure when you insert the disc into your CD-ROM drive. *The Learning Ladder Series* should also run automatically when the CD is placed in the CD-ROM drive subsequent to the initial Setup. If the installation procedure does not start automatically, or *The Learning Ladder Series* program does not automatically run when the disc is inserted in the CD-ROM drive, then you can check whether AutoPlay is enabled. To do this:

1. Go to the 'Start' menu and choose 'Settings', then 'Control Panel'.
2. Choose 'System' from the 'Control Panel' to bring up the 'System Properties' window.
3. Choose the 'Devices Manager' tab, and select your particular CD-ROM drive from the CD-ROM device list.
4. Click the 'Settings' tab in this window, and ensure that 'Auto Insert Notification' is checked.

If Auto Insert Notification is checked, and Setup does not start automatically the first time you insert *The Learning Ladder Series* CD in the drive, then you can start the Setup program manually. To do this, go to the 'Task Bar' and click on 'Start', then 'Run'. Type 'D:\SETUP' in the text box (where 'D' is the letter of your CD-ROM drive). Click 'OK' and then follow the instructions that appear on your screen. On subsequent occasions *The Learning Ladder Series* program can also be run from the 'Start' menu by selecting 'Programs', then 'DK Multimedia', and then by clicking on *The Learning Ladder Series*. You should also contact your CD-ROM manufacturer, or system supplier for the latest Windows 95/98 compatible drivers.

### **3.5 Uninstall**

The *Learning Ladder Series* CD-ROM contains an Uninstall program which is automatically installed in the DK Multimedia program group on your computer. If you decide that you no longer wish to have *The Learning Ladder Series* on your computer, you can use Uninstall to remove it. Simply double-click on *The Learning Ladder Series Uninstall* icon then click the 'YES' button. Uninstall does the rest for you.

If you cannot locate the Uninstall icon and are using Windows 95/98, then you can use the 'Add/Remove Programs' wizard. To do this click on the 'Start' menu on the 'Task Bar', then select 'Control Panels'. Double-click on the 'Add/Remove Programs' icon, then select the program you wish to remove from the list. Click on the 'Add/Remove' button and then the 'Yes' button.

## **4. Screen display notes**

### **4.1 Screen resolution and colour settings**

If you have problems reading Windows System dialog boxes, such as the Print dialog

box, due to low colour contrast between text and background, try setting your display to use more than 256 colours. Alternatively, try changing your desktop pattern until you find a suitable one - High Contrast White is recommended. Avoid Black desktop patterns. The Desktop pattern can be changed from your Display control panel.  
**[Check this is true]**

DK Multimedia products have been designed to look their best with a screen resolution of 640 x 480 pixels. All screen images are created in this size, and will completely fill the screen at this resolution. This means that running your screen at a higher resolution (such as 1024 x 768 pixels) will result in a smaller image of *The Learning Ladder Series* being displayed. (It is NOT possible to maximise the product to fill screens with a resolution higher than 640 x 480 pixels.)

*The Learning Ladder Series* is designed to look its best in high colour modes. We recommend that you use 16-bit colours, or more (if this is supported by your computer). If your display adapter is not optimised for high colour modes we suggest you reduce the amount of colours, but do not use less than 256 colours. Instructions explaining how to change to more than 256 colours are given below for Windows 95/98 users, and also for Windows 3.1/3.11 users with Cirrus Logic and Diamond Stealth display adapter cards. All other users should refer to their display adapter documentation for instructions how to do this.

**Note:** Please write down your display adapter card's settings before you make any changes. That way you will be able to revert to your original settings should you need to.

#### **Windows 95/98 users**

1. From the 'Start' menu, choose 'Settings' and then 'Control Panel'.
2. Double-click on the 'Display' icon. A 'Display Properties' dialog box will appear.
3. Click on the 'Settings' tab.
4. Under 'Colour Palette', choose 'High Colour (16-bit)'. If your display adapter card supports 24-bit colour, then you could select 'True Colour (24-bit)' instead. This should allow better quality images to be displayed. However, should performance be adversely affected, we suggest you revert to 256 colours.

#### **Resetting your original driver for Windows 95/98 users**

1. Start Windows in 'Safe mode'. Do this by holding down the 'F8' key when the 'Starting Windows 95/98' message appears on the screen.
2. Choose 'Safe mode' from the menu.
3. You can now reinstall your original driver.

## **4.2 Images appear in monochrome**

Some colour display adapters may display *The Learning Ladder Series* images in black and white. If this happens, you should upgrade your display driver. Contact the supplier or manufacturer of your display adapter to check that you have the latest

display drivers.

### **4.3 Images are truncated**

Some display drivers are designed to use large fonts. If your system is using one of these, any image in the main window will appear slightly truncated. Windows 95/98 users can do this by selecting 'Settings' from the 'Start' menu, then by double-clicking on the 'Display' icon. Click on the 'Settings' tab, then select a different font size from the 'Font Size' drop-down list.

## **5. Problems with animations**

### **5.1 General problems**

You should try consulting Section 7, Running Out Of Memory Or Running Slowly, for further advice. You should also check that the CD-ROM is free from dust and dirt, see section 2.1, Care of compact discs, for more information.

### **5.2 Solving problems with animation and for Windows 95/98 users**

If you are running *The Learning Ladder Series* under Windows 95/98 and have problems with animations (for example, jumpy animations, or distorted colours), there are three main steps you can try to solve your problems. Try the steps in the order given and stop when your problem is solved:

- 5.2.1 Ensuring your display is using 256 colours or more,
- 5.2.2 Checking your display adapter's acceleration settings,
- 5.2.3 Changing your display adapter driver.

#### **5.2.1 Ensuring your display is using 256 colours or more**

1. From the 'Start' menu, select 'Settings', then 'Control Panel'.
2. Double-click on the 'Display' icon, then click on the 'Settings' tab.
3. Check the 'Colour Palette' setting to make sure that it is set to 256 colours or more.
4. If the setting is less than 256 colours, change it to 256 colours or more.
5. Click the 'Apply' button, then click 'OK'.

If this does not solve your problem, or if the setting is already 256 colours or more, then you should try any other available settings over 256 colours to see if they solve your problem.

#### **5.2.2 Checking your display adapter's acceleration settings**

1. If you have tried all the available 'Colour Palette' settings of 256 colours or more, and none solve your problem, then you should click on the 'My Computer' icon using

the right-hand mouse button, then select 'Properties'.

2. In the 'System Properties' box you should click on the 'Performance' tab.
3. In the 'Advanced Settings' box, click the 'Graphics' button.
4. In the 'Advanced Graphics Settings' box you should move the 'Hardware Acceleration' slide-control down to 'None', then click 'OK'.
5. If this solves your problem you should try slowly increasing the 'Hardware Acceleration' slide-control until you find the point nearest to 'Full' at which your problem still remains solved.
6. If this does not solve your problem you should put the slider back to 'Full', and try the next step.

### **5.2.3 Changing your display adapter driver**

1. From the 'Start' menu, select 'Settings', then 'Control Panel'.
2. Double-click on the 'Display' icon, then click on the 'Settings' tab.
3. Click on the 'Change Display Type' button, then on the 'Change...' button under 'Adapter Type'.
4. Click on 'Show Compatible Devices'.
5. From the list shown, ensure that the driver highlighted is the one to match your display adapter. You can check this with your computer manufacturer or supplier.
6. If the driver is not the correct one, then you should ask your computer manufacturer/supplier to send you one.

In the mean time, or if you already had the correct driver installed, you can try installing the generic SVGA driver.

1. From the 'Start' menu, select 'Settings', then 'Control Panel'.
2. Double-click on the 'Display' icon, then click on the 'Settings' tab.
3. Click on the 'Change Display Type' button, then on the 'Change...' button under 'Adapter Type'.
4. Click on 'Show All Devices'.
5. From the list of manufacturers, choose 'Standard display types'.
6. In the 'Models' list-box, select 'Super VGA', then click 'OK'.

If this does not solve your problem, if you have an S3 card, or other non-Super VGA compatible card, or if Super VGA was already the selected driver, then you should try the Standard display adapter (VGA). To select this, use the same procedure as the Super VGA adapter, but select 'Standard display adapter (VGA)' from the 'Models' list-box.

If either the VGA or SVGA driver solves your problem, this shows that it was the original display adapter driver that you had installed that was causing the problem. However, the Standard (VGA) display adapter does not allow more than 16 colours to be displayed. Since *The Learning Ladder Series* is designed to look its best in 256 colours or more, the long term solution to your problem would be to obtain the most up-to-date version of the drivers for your display adapter, and checking to see if they solve your problem - contact your computer manufacturer or supplier for these.



## 6. Audio problems

### 6.1 No sound output, but the product otherwise runs fine

There are many possible causes of audio problems. For example, your computer can only play one sound at a time, so when another application is playing a sound, *The Learning Ladder Series* cannot do so; you will get an error message in these circumstances. Most applications only prevent other programs from playing a sound when they themselves are doing so, however, some applications, such as certain Screen Savers, remove audio capability from all other Windows applications. If you have such an application, you should turn it off when you are running *The Learning Ladder Series*.

If a sound card is not installed *The Learning Ladder Series* will not run correctly and you will not be able to here sounds. You should check that your computer has a sound card and drivers installed.

You should check that the speaker is hooked up to the jack on your sound card, and not hooked directly to the CD-ROM drive headphone socket.

During Setup, special system software should be installed, and Windows should be restarted afterwards to make this software work. If you haven't already done so, restart Windows now.

If you cannot hear sound in *The Learning Ladder Series*, you can test sound in the following way:

#### **Windows 95/98 users**

1. From the 'Start' menu, select 'Settings', then 'Control Panel'.
2. Double-click on the 'Sounds' icon.
3. Click on any item with a speaker next to it, then click the 'Preview' button.

#### **Windows 3.1/3.11 users**

1. In 'Program Manager', choose 'File', then 'Run'.
2. Type 'chimes.wav' in the text-box, then click 'OK'.

If you can hear sound, there is some other problem with *The Learning Ladder Series*. If you can't hear sound, you may not have the correct sound drivers installed. Check with your sound card manufacturer to see if you have the correct drivers and that there are no hardware conflicts. If your sound card came with your computer, call your computer supplier.

### 6.2 Audio is fuzzy or distorted

There are a number of possible causes of fuzzy or distorted sounds. Problems are often caused by low quality speakers, speakers set to high or maximum volume, or speakers powered by batteries that are failing. You should also be aware that some speakers are not capable of playing low frequency sounds properly. If sound is interrupted, this may be caused by low memory - refer to section 7.

Some sound cards have software that allows you to adjust the volume AND tone of the sound. If this is the case with your sound card, start with these tone controls set in the mid position and your volume level set at 50%. This should give a clear signal with no distortion. Check your sound card manual for the optimum settings.

Powered speakers are best and, if possible, should be placed either side of the screen. You may need to adjust the position of these speakers slightly if the magnets in the speakers are unshielded and cause discoloration and distortion of the image.

If your CD-ROM drive is not MPC-compatible, then the sound may play badly or be interrupted when playing. Check your CD-ROM drive's documentation to ensure that it is a double-speed, or faster, CD-ROM drive. If you do have a double speed CD-ROM drive.

### **6.3 Sound plays too quietly**

Make sure the volume is set to an audible level. Check the sound card itself, the speakers or headphones if they have a volume control, and any software that may have been supplied with your sound card that can change the volume level. If there is a mute button in the audio software or on the speaker, check that this is not activated.

If the sound controls are set to an audible level, then you could try new speakers or headphones to see if they solve the problem.

## **7. Running out of memory or running slowly**

*The Learning Ladder Series* uses your computer's system memory to display pictures. If you find that *The Learning Ladder Series* runs slowly or if you come across out-of-memory errors, the program probably does not have enough memory. Consider doing the following to improve your computer's performance:

1. Windows 95/98 users with no 'CDROM' icon in Device Manager (you can check this by selecting 'Control Panels' from the 'Start' menu, and by double-clicking on the 'System' icon. Select the 'Device Manager' tab and check to see if a 'CDROM' icon appears in the list), should obtain updated CD ROM Drivers from their computer manufacturer (this should be free).
2. Close any unnecessary applications, including any DOS Terminate and Stay Resident programs (TSRs) you may have installed.

3. If the program is still running slowly, or freezes when you try to move to different parts of the program, you can improve its performance by selecting the 'Options' screen from within *The Learning Ladder Series* and turning off 'music' and 'auto-narration'.
4. Check that your computer has at least 8MB of memory. Windows 95/98/NT users should right-click on the My Computer icon and select Properties. Check under the computer section. If you have less than 8MB (minimum 8192Kb) of memory, then you need to install some more.
5. Windows 95/98 users should ensure that there is plenty of available hard disk space to allow the swap file to grow if necessary; at least 60MB is recommended.
6. If you are running in colour modes higher than 256 colours (8-bit), you should set your display to use 256 colours. Refer to 'Screen resolutions and colour settings' in section 4, 'Screen Display Notes', for instructions on changing the colour mode, but select 256 colours.
7. Speed up your hard disk by defragmenting it. There are a number of tools available to carry out this task, including the 'DEFRAG' command found in MS-DOS version 6.0 and later. Or Defrag found in Accessories/ System tools.

## 8. Printing

If you have problems reading the Print dialog box, due to low colour contrast between text and background, try setting your display to use more than 256 colours. Alternatively, try changing your desktop pattern until you find a suitable one - High Contrast White is recommended. Avoid Black desktop patterns. The Desktop pattern can be changed from your Display control panel.

Printing screens from *The Learning Ladder Series* may take several minutes, depending on the type of printer you use. Since screen resolution and printer resolution are often different, the printout may not match the quality you see on the screen.

If you are not happy with the position on the page or the size of your print out, try using the copy function to copy and paste the picture into another application such as a word processor or paint package, before printing.

If you have any problems printing, open the Printers window from 'Settings' on the Start Menu, right-click on the printer in use, and select 'Properties'. Then restore your settings to the default settings.

Some dot-matrix printers may not print pictures properly with the 'Low / Faster' quality setting in the 'Print Setup' dialog box. On these printers change the quality setting in the 'Printer Settings...' dialog box to 'High / Slower'. Users of dot-matrix printers may also find that their print-outs have strange proportions. If this is the case, you should ensure that the dpi option is the same for both horizontal and vertical settings.

Because the pictures can be quite large, you may have difficulty copying or printing in low-memory conditions. In this case, follow the advice in section 7 of this file, and try again.

If any of the following printing problems occur:

- Nothing happens after the 'Printing' message
- Corrupt output
- Blank paper output

When any of these occur the following steps should be taken, in the order given. Stop when your problem is solved.

1. Try printing bitmap pictures from a different application to see if all printing is affected. Also make sure that you have the latest driver - you should contact your printer manufacturer or vendor to check this.
2. Try different modes of printing, for example, different print quality such as draft, fine, line art. The options available will vary depending on the type of printer (check your printer Setup documentation for information on how to do this).

### **Windows 95/98 users**

Use the Printer Wizard to reinstall your printer. Do this by going to the 'Start' menu and selecting 'Settings', then 'Printers'. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen.

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