



IMPORTING NAMES AND OTHER STUDENT PERSONAL DATA

MarkBook has the ability to import student names and other personal data from a delimited text file. This will save typing time and improve accuracy. Importing from a Text File

If you have a comma-delimited or tab-delimited text file of student names (first and last names plus any other available items such as student number, gender, Home Form, birth date, etc.), MarkBook has the capability of importing your students plus their significant personal data from that file. Text files are given various extensions: .txt, .hdr, .asc, .csv, .dat and others. These are also known as ASCII files.

"Text" or "ASCII" is a universal file structure that almost any computer can generate and read. MarkBook is set up to create each of your classes from an external text/ASCII file provided that it has been set up as a series of records with each line (a record) containing data for one student. If each student record contains appropriate data, MarkBook will hunt through a very lengthy list of many students to select only those individuals who meet one or more criteria for building each class.

The text file can be comma delimited (as in the following example), or tab delimited, and may look like this in a word processor:

```
Last,First,Gender,Number,HF,DOB
Adams,John,M,12347,7A,860423
Bat,Barry,M,34691,7C,861123
Jones,Keith,M,76239,7A,861001
MacDonald,Melinda,F,7C,860214
Turkstra,Melanie,F,7B,860311
etc.
```

The above example file has each student (a record) on a single line of text with each data item (a field) separated by commas. In this sample, the field order is Last Name, First Name, Gender, Student Number, Home Form, Date of Birth. This sample also has a "Header" - a first line with a title for each field. Text files with headers are sometimes given the extension .hdr.

Field Order

MarkBook does not require a specific order for the fields. In fact, MarkBook's only requirements for importing from a text file are two fields: First Name and Last Name. All other fields and their order is optional. Import from a file on a diskette, or from a suitable file on your hard drive or network. Obviously, the file must exist and be accessible before you can import the students in a specific class. Also, the more fields present in the file, the more likely that it will be useful for you.

Ideally, you will have a text file available for each class that you plan to import into MarkBook. If not, MarkBook allows you to



sort through a larger file to find only those students in your class based on one or more fields in each record. If you have a central computer system, chances are that the persons in charge will have the capability to build a text file generation routine (aka a "menu pick") to extract suitable files for each of your classes. The best single-class file to build would contain fields for last name, first name, home forms, gender, program, student number, date of birth, home telephone number, a parent work number, E-mail address, and any other significant items as text in a Miscellaneous field. See the fields in the first image following. You will type in the Code Name plus any optional/missing fields, at your discretion, later.

In the absence of a suitable text file, you will have to do some lobbying to get one! Your district's mainframe is likely the source and the persons who run it are the ones whom you must convince. Your IT managers and technicians may be able to create these files as well. Don't be afraid to ask! For some examples, see section 4-7. The more teachers using MarkBook, the more likely you will get what you need!

Step 1: Set Up A Class:

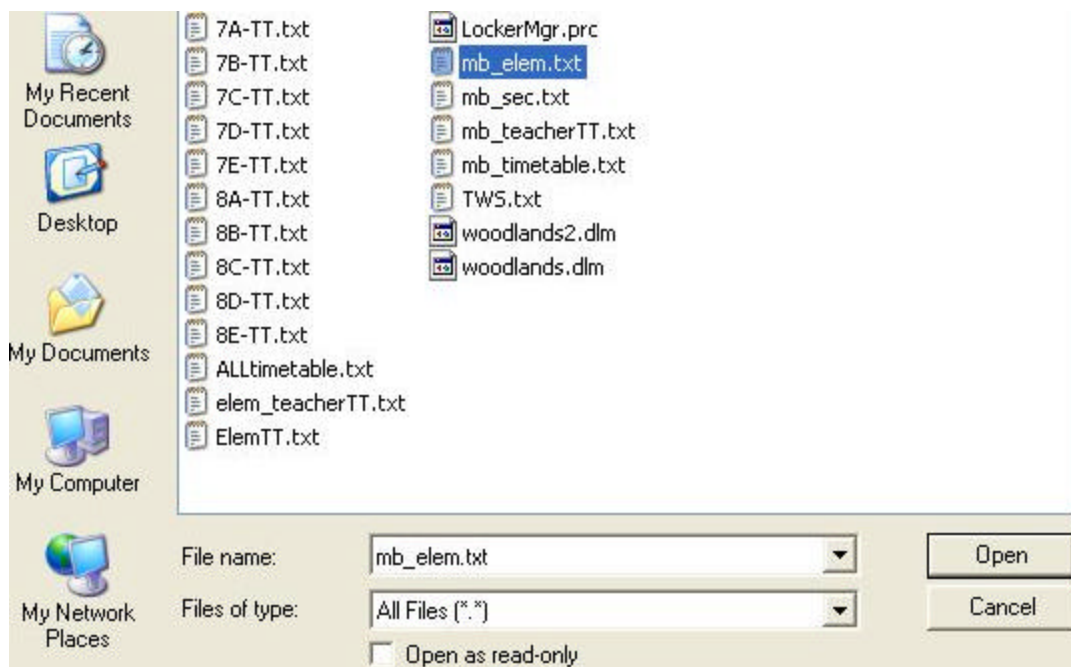
Set up a class using MarkBook's New Class functions as described in the class description, section 2-1. Name the new class and you will get to this frame when it comes time to add names.

Note that there are no students in the class yet. The only specification is 7B. Normally, you would start typing data into these blank student data fields. However, if you have a suitable text file available, click on the Import Students button at the center right. This will move you to the next screen with an Open an Import File dialogue box as in the next image.

Step 2: Locate The Text File:

In this example, the source text file is put on the c: drive.

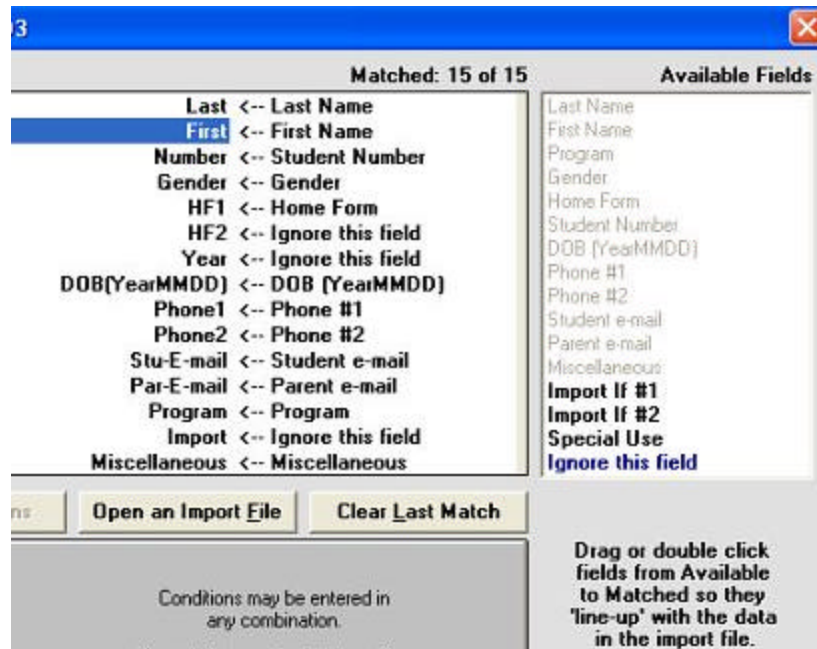
Select the appropriate drive and folder and click on the name of the file, mb_elem.txt in this example. One click on the file name highlights it in blue and adds it to the File name: window as shown.



Once the name of the source file is in the File name: window, click on Open. This Open an Import File dialogue box will disappear exposing MarkBook's Import Students screen behind as in the next image.

Step 3: Matching Fields

The selected file will appear as in the following example. The first record shows in the centre white window with all of its fields listed vertically. This import text file has a "header" meaning each field is named/titled in the first record - see the example header text file at the beginning of this section. There are 15 fields in each record in this sample file.



There are 290 students (291 records the first of which is the header) listed in this file. In fact, every student in this school is listed!

Identify the fields on the left Matched list with a title from MarkBook's Available Fields list on the right. Starting with the top left Matched field, drag and drop a field title from the right list to the left. Or, double click on a field title at the right. In this example, field titles from the right have been moved over to the left in matched order. Note that the teacher has elected to ignore the HF2 field since this is a semester 1 class.

The Last Name and First Name fields are mandatory. Each title may be used only once and will go gray once used (see the twelve gray titles in the example). One exception: "Ignore this field" may be used as often as necessary.

Date of Birth Format

The DOB (date of birth) field may appear in any one of several different formats such as American, English, or SI. If DOB is an available field, you must know the format of the text file before attempting to import DOB data. Use the up/down toggle at the center left to scroll through the first few student records to examine them for DOB format. Each record will appear in the left window in place of the field titles visible at present. At the bottom of this screen, in the Format for Importing Birth Dates (DOB) box, select the matching format. MarkBook will change 2-digit years (e.g. 91) to 4-digit years (e.g. 1991) automatically.



Undoing an Error

If an error is made in matching, click on the Clear Last Match button. The last used Available Field will disappear and you can try again. If you click Clear Last Match again, all titles will disappear and you must start over.

To open another import file, click the Open an Import File button and a dialogue box will re-appear as in STEP 2.

If the source file is a single class, click the Import Students button and the student data will move from the source file into your new MarkBook class folder. However, MarkBook can selectively import students from a large file such as this one.

If you are setting up several classes at once, MarkBook will "remember" the source file name, its location, and the matches made as above. This makes it much easier to set up your second and subsequent classes.

If the source text file is not a single class file, you must now establish some criteria for selecting your students from among all students in the file. You can select your class members using a Home Form, a Gender (e.g. a Phys Ed class), a course/section code, etc.

Step 4: Selecting Students Using Home Form And Gender

The teacher's class in the previous example is 7B. In the Import If ... box, 7B has been added to the HOME FORM contains window. Thus, only those individuals in 7B will be selected for this class and all other students will be ignored.

Since the first record was a header, click the Skip it button in the What If box. If your text file does not contain a gender field, you have the option of selecting M or F for all students and then editing after the import, as necessary. If a letter other than M or F is found in the Gender field, MarkBook will use the letter that you specify instead. (see below)

Missing Student Numbers

Similarly, a Student Number field may be missing from the text file. In this case, MarkBook will assign an incrementing number as each student is imported. Edit any imported item using Edit Names, section 42, as necessary. If the Home Form is not specified in the import file, MarkBook will assign the class code as a Home Form for all students.

Once these criteria are indicated, click on Import Students and MarkBook will hunt for all students in the text file who meet the criteria specified - in 7B in this case. A diskette symbol and face appear during the search and you will be returned to the Add Names screen with all selected students added into your new class.

Selecting by Gender

Suppose you want all the males in 7B for a Phys Ed class. In this case, assign title Import If #1 from the Available Fields list to the GENDER field in the MATCHED list. Type 7B beside HOME FORM contains. In the Import If ... box, type M. When you click Import Students, all males in 7B will be selected for your class.

Suppose you want all of the females in two Home Forms, 7B AND 7C. In many co-ed schools, Phys Ed classes are made up with all of the males or all of the females from two Home Forms. Type 7B and 7C in the two HOME FORM contains cells. Assign title Import If #1 from the Available Fields list to the GENDER field in the MATCHED list. Type in F in the first Import if #1 contains cell and click the F button in the What If ...

box. When you click Import Students, all females in those two Home Forms will be imported into one class.

If the source file is a multi-class or whole-school file, hand it to colleagues who will use different criteria, e.g. all students in 4C, to build their classes. Or, copy it to a location where all teachers can find and use it. Many schools copy this source file onto the hard drives of their department computers in the MkBk2001 directory. Others schools put it in a specific network location where all only teachers have password access.