

LANGUAGE SKILLS

The Four Basic Language Skills

- ▶ Language is “a system of symbols that permit people to communicate or interact. These symbols can include vocal and written forms, gestures, and body language.”
- ▶ Language is generally taught and assessed in terms of ‘four skills’ i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- ▶ In your teaching, you will need to address each of these skills. And, whenever possible, you should utilize activities that integrate all four skills since each reinforces the other.

People generally learn these four skills in the following order:

- ▶ **Listening:** When people are learning a new language they first hear it spoken.
- ▶ **Speaking:** Eventually, they try to repeat what they hear.
- ▶ **Reading:** Later, they see the spoken language depicted symbolically in print.
- ▶ **Writing:** Finally, they reproduce these symbols on paper.
- ▶ In the context of first language acquisition, the four skills are most often acquired in the order of listening first, then speaking, then possibly reading and writing.
- ▶ For this reason, these capabilities are often called **LSRW Skills**.

- ▶ Skills relate to different aspects of using language; such as listening, reading, writing or speaking. Skills are our **ability** to do these things. They are usually divided into two types: **receptive** and **productive**.

(i) Receptive skills (Passive Skill)

Listening and Reading are the receptive skills because learners do not need to produce language, they receive and understand it.

(ii) Productive skills/ Creative Skill (Active Skill)

Speaking and Writing are productive skills because learners are applying these skills in a need to produce language.

- ▶ It is important to consider skills when designing language learning materials. This helps to identify the aims of an activity or lesson.
- ▶ It is generally accepted that receptive skills should come before productive skills; however, it is important to remember that communication is interactive and requires the use of all skills most of the time.
- ▶ These four language skills are sometimes called the "macro-skills". This is in contrast to the "micro-skills", which are things like grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.
- ▶ Language skills are best taught if they are taught in an integrated manner.

LISTENING

- ▶ Listening is the first language skill we acquire in our native language.
- ▶ Listening skills could be enhanced by focusing on making the student listen to the sounds of that particular language.
- ▶ It is a receptive skill or a passive skill, as it requires us to use our ears and our brain to comprehend language.

SPEAKING

- ▶ Is the Second language skill.
- ▶ It is known as productive skill, as it requires us to use our vocal tract.
- ▶ Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others to express our ideas and vice versa.(to know others ideas also)
- ▶ In the earlier stages, students learn vocabulary for basic concept, conversational routines.

READING

- ▶ Third language skill
- ▶ It is known as receptive/passive skill as it requires us to use our eyes and our brain to comprehend.
- ▶ Reading is a learning skill-it helps you to improve all parts of the English language-vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and writing.

WRITING

- ▶ Fourth skill
- ▶ Productive/ active skill as it requires us to use our hands and our brain to produce the written symbols.
- ▶ It help to consolidate their grasp of vocabulary and structure, and complements the other language skills.
- ▶ Writing is relatively difficult among these skills.