

LEARNING LINKS



To help children achieve success in English language arts, it is important to create learning links. These are activities designed to help students make connections among real-life experiences, background knowledge and information in books, films, videos and posters.

New information is more meaningful and easier to understand if students connect it to something they already know. Prior knowledge is the beginning of understanding. Building learning links is essential. Help your child make important connections to his/her own life experiences and what he/she has heard, read or viewed.



THE THREE A'S OF ELA



ACTIVATE
what you already know

ACQUIRE
new information,
skills and strategies

APPLY
your learning

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS?

Listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing – these are the language arts.

Viewing and representing are new additions to the English language arts. They are included because so much information now comes to us in visual form, through television, information technology, billboards and photos. Whether viewing visual information or presenting their own information in visual form, students learn skills and strategies that are valuable in an information age.

Although the language arts are sometimes treated as though they are separate, they are really very closely related and seldom occur in isolation. To give you an example, writing may involve students in discussing their ideas with others, listening to their responses, reading for more information, viewing a video and creating a poster.

The language arts, then, are often taught together, not just as separate sets of skills. Students will be immersed in language experiences in English language arts and other subjects since language learning occurs everywhere.

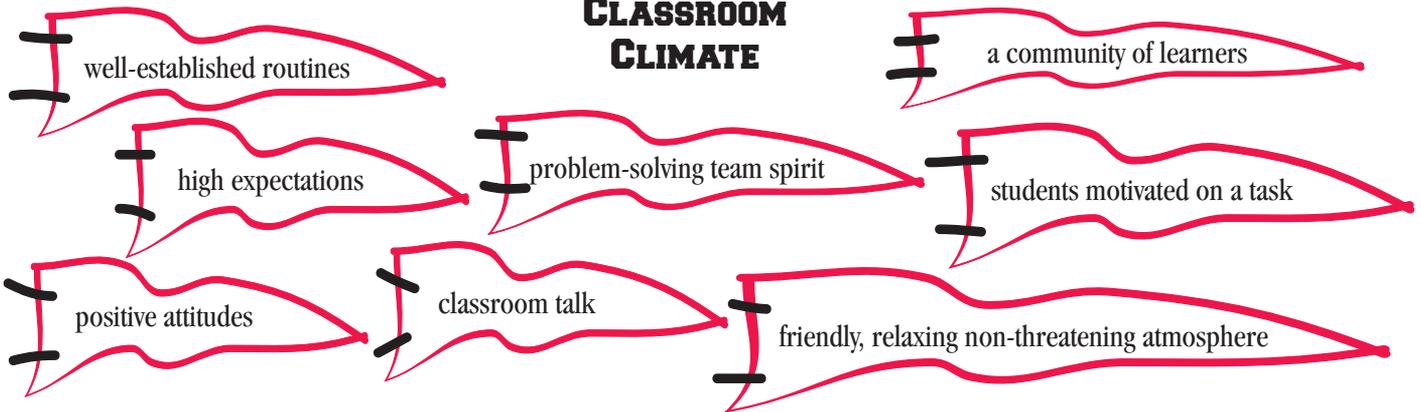
Language texts are many and varied. They can include storytelling, dialogue, conversations, speeches, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, radio, TV, sign language, CD-ROMs, charts, posters, diagrams, photographs, mime and plays.

In class, students learn language, continuing a process that began at birth. They also use language to learn other things and they learn about language.



WHAT MIGHT YOU EXPECT TO SEE IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASS?

CLASSROOM CLIMATE



GROUPINGS

- independent activities
- whole-class instruction
- teacher-directed groups
- self-directed groups
- learning groups with another class
- small co-operative groups
- peer partners
- centre activities

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- students' stories or essays and art on display
- interactive ELA bulletin boards where students are challenged to solve a problem or ask questions
- computers that students use frequently
- a variety of books, newspapers and magazines
- learning centres
- ELA displays in hallways

GOING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

- writers and speakers who come into the classroom
- field trips to theatres, libraries galleries, museums

LEARNING MATERIALS

- books, newspapers, magazines
- organized, accessible storage
- teacher-made and purchased materials
- tapes, CDs, computers
- paper and paints for representing ideas
- letter tiles
- games, puzzles, models
- clay, paper, paints
- found objects
- materials collected by kids and their families

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SPECIAL EVENTS

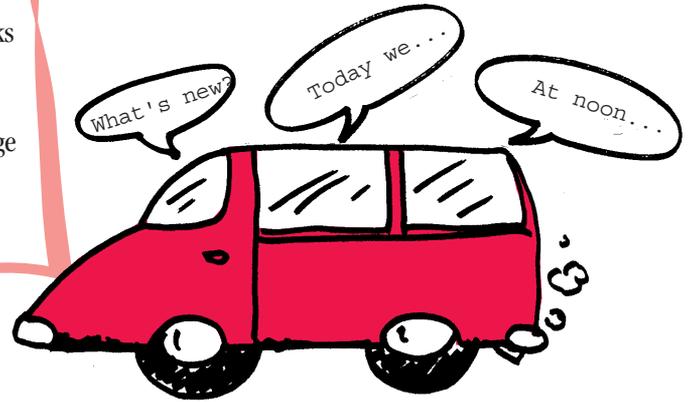
- drama nights
- poetry reading
- media club
- writers' club
- young authors events
- contests
- storytelling with an Aboriginal Elder
- I Love to Read celebrations
- drum dances
- festival events



ELA IS EVERYWHERE

As your child's first teacher of language, you are already experienced in using daily experiences to help your child develop language skills. Talking at meals, reading daily, sharing and discussing favourite books or TV shows, making lists and drawing pictures are all good ways to develop language skills.

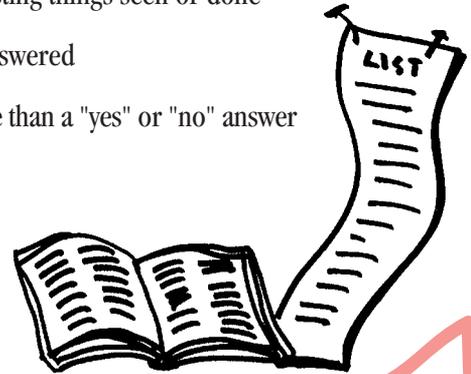
As a parent, you make a difference to your child's development, knowledge and skill in language arts. Everyday activities help develop ability and confidence in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing.



- table and carpool talk
 - about activities and events of the day
 - about books, news, trips and games
 - about information in newspapers, magazines and on the Internet
 - about school excursions



- make a list (together) of the most interesting things seen or done
- make a list of questions needing to be answered
- ask and answer questions calling for more than a "yes" or "no" answer
- express thoughts and feelings
- read aloud from time to time
- substitute talk for radio or TV



You can help your child by letting him know how well you expect him to do in language arts. Be reasonable. Make sure your child knows you believe in her. Be positive. Tell him and others when he does something well or better than before. Also let your child know that mistakes are part of learning, an opportunity to learn and try again.

Language learning involves risk taking. Making errors is a part of the process. Successful learners are not afraid to take risks and sometimes make mistakes.

Mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation are normal in the first drafts of work when your child is beginning to think on paper. Don't focus on these until the composition has been revised and polished. Help your child learn to edit and revise work.



STORY TIME

listen to stories together
predict what will happen next
retell stories to get a sense of the story
and order of events

PLAYTIME

use detail to describe things (a red plaid shirt, the smallest ball, jumping like a deer, walk quickly)
sing songs (another way to use words)
repeat new words, make up new words, stories, rhymes, riddles and skits
keep old clothes for dress-up time and imaginative play

COOKING

follow a recipe
make a shopping list

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

read instructions from a manual
use clues for a scavenger hunt
read music
follow a schedule
work through Internet menus

TELEPHONE BOOK

find the name of someone you know
make up names and find where they would fit
develop a family telephone directory

NOTES, LETTERS AND CARDS

write a thank you for a gift
compose a get-well message
draft a letter to a relative or someone who has moved
make a greeting card or invitation

NEWSPAPER

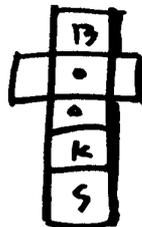
look for pictures of favourite athletes
write captions for favourite photos
find the temperature in the city where a relative lives
search for three words that begin with D
look for a movie or play to see
write new dialogue for a cartoon strip

REFRIGERATOR NEWS

write daily messages to each other
keep track of when school assignments are due
remind the family of upcoming events
list jobs to be done or put entries in a job jar
create riddles and jokes
add shopping reminders
post telephone messages

FAMILY JOURNAL/ALBUM

record interesting family happenings
describe special days, funny events
keep track of visitors
describe holiday trips or weekend excursions
write captions for photographs
read what you have written together



GAMES

I spy
crossword puzzles
magazine puzzles
alphabet game, using billboards
licence plate games
board games



GIFTS

special paper, pencils, crayons, pictures, felt pens, stamps and stamp pads for younger children
interesting stationery, envelopes, diaries, journals, novelty and calligraphy pens for older children
books, magazines addressed specifically to the child, comic books, collector cards



TV

look at new words, ideas, themes
compare a novel adapted for TV to the book
use documentaries, newscasts, wildlife presentations, historic events and science for information
examine commercials; discuss how they make you want to buy



NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES

look at print ads for clothes, shoes, cars and foods
and discuss how they make you want to buy
read the comics--do they offer more than laughs?



COMPUTER PROGRAMS/INTERNET/VIDEO GAMES

what makes information interesting?
should information be entertaining to be interesting?
how does music affect a presentation?
what difference does animation make?
what effect does colour/movement have?
ask if programs stimulate critical and creative thinking

TRIPS

visit craft and antique shops, museums and art galleries
draw what you find there
create a sculpture that could be found there
visit a fair and draw what you saw there
visit a local library or bookstore



DRAMA

watch a play
act out a scene from a movie or play
draw a picture of a character or a scene
mime a story
recreate a story in dance
play charades

