



# 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.

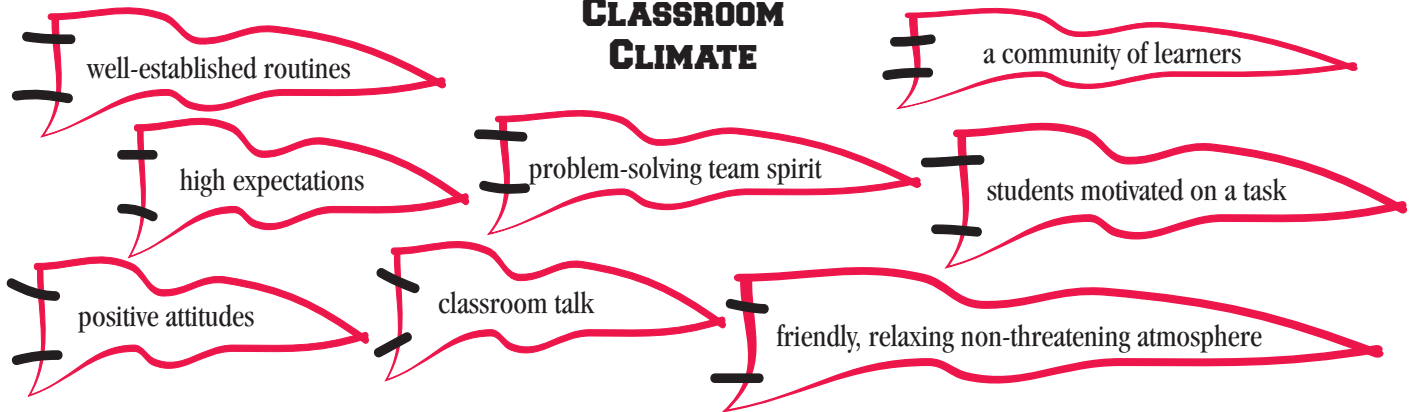
Language texts are many and varied. They can include storytelling, dialogue, conversations, speeches, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, radio, TV, sign language, CD-ROMs, charts, posters, diagrams, photographs, mime and plays.

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

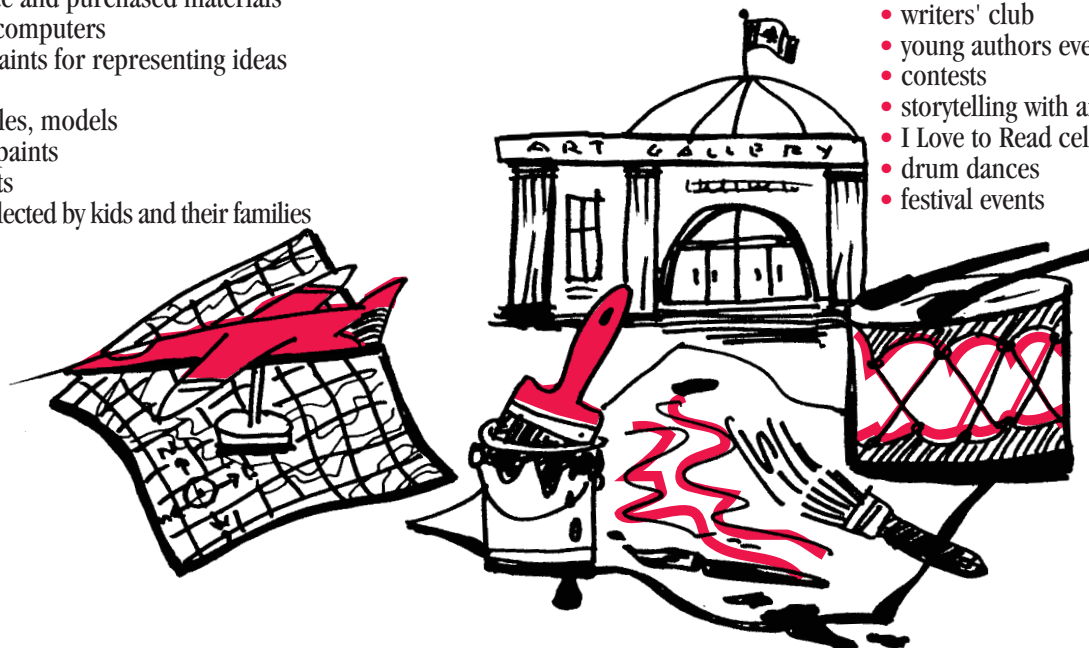
## LEARNING MATERIALS

- 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

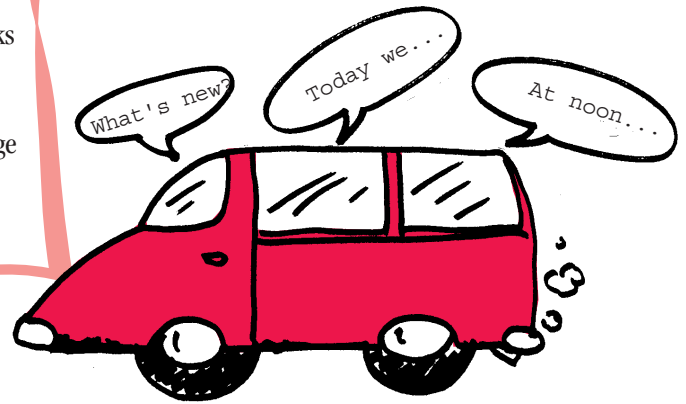
- drama nights
- poetry reading
- media club
- writers' club
- young authors events
- contests
- storytelling with an Aboriginal Elder
- I Love to Read celebrations
- drum dances
- festival events



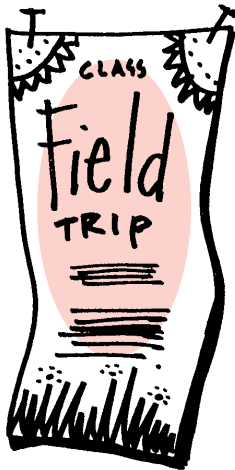
# ELA IS EVERYWHERE

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.

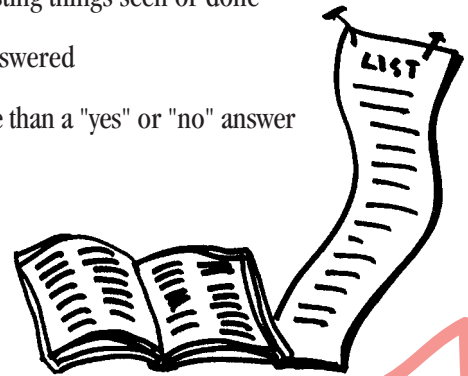
As a parent, you make a difference to your child's development, knowledge and skill in language arts. Everyday activities help develop ability and confidence in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing.



- 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

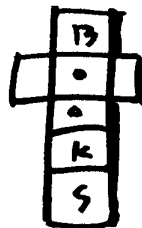
look for pictures of favourite athletes  
write captions for favourite photos  
find the temperature in the city where a relative lives  
search for three words that begin with D  
look for a movie or play to see  
write new dialogue for a cartoon strip

### 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



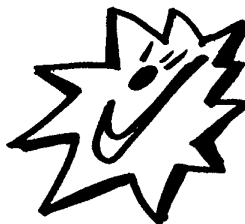
### GAMES

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



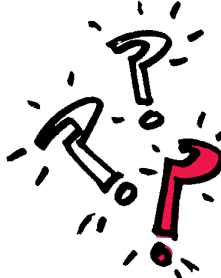
### TV

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

