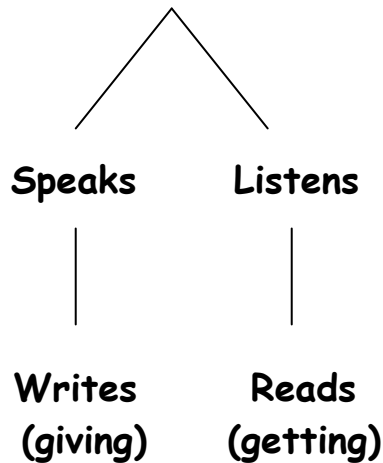


# Teaching Language Arts: A Brief Overview

Communication is a critical human need. We send and receive messages in a hundred different ways. We can communicate through paintings or facial expressions, through secret codes or hieroglyphics, but most often we use spoken and written language to express our thoughts and ideas. Language is a system of conventionalized signs and sounds that allow us to make sense of one another.

When children begin school, they already have a backlog of experiences from which they have conceived many thoughts—thoughts which they have shared with others and which they have received from others. During their earliest years, they have developed listening and speaking skills, both vital to the development of language. They are now ready to begin to learn two additional language skills, reading and writing.

**A child's experiences lead him to think  
and to communicate.**



Parents often approach reading instruction by teaching the mechanics (phonics and comprehension), and hope that their children will develop a love for literature. However, the best process is exactly the opposite:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Recognizing the printed word (phonics)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Comprehension (understanding what they have read)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Child taught to love books

What I experience, I think about.  
What I can think about, I can talk about.  
What I can talk about can be expressed through writing, story telling, painting or some other form.  
What is written can be read.  
The books I read are what the author would say to us.—Anon.

*For the Children's Sake*  
By Susan S. MacAulay

*Honey For a Child's Heart*  
By Gladys Hunt

<b>Language Arts Core Areas</b>	<b>K-2</b>	<b>3-6</b>	<b>JH</b>	<b>HS</b>
Visual Discrimination	λ			
Listening & Speaking	λ			
Decoding and Phonics	λ			
Handwriting	λ			
Written Expression		λ		
Reading Comprehension		λ		
Spelling		λ	λ	
Grammar and Usage (basic concepts)		λ		
Grammar and Usage (advanced concepts)			λ	λ
Vocabulary Development		λ	λ	λ
Study Skills and Information Resources		λ	λ	
Literature Appreciation			λ	λ
Composition			λ	λ
Reference and Study Strategies			λ	λ
Literature and Reading			λ	λ
Refining Listening & Speaking			λ	λ
Research and Expository Writing				λ

## **Subjects Studied in Language Arts**

"All the various subjects studied in Language Arts, such as phonics, grammar, handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, etc., are nothing more than tools for effective reading, listening, writing, and speaking"

—Elijah, p. 88

Elijah Catalog

[www.ElijahCompany.com](http://www.ElijahCompany.com)

Pre-School Resource

*Slow and Steady*

*Get Me Ready*

By June R. Oberlander

## **Reading Readiness:**

"Readiness activities, such as matching and classifying, are supposed to help lay a framework for actual reading skills. Such activities as matching identical shapes help children to recognize and remember letters. Discrimination skills that will help children differentiate between b's and d's are developed by having children identify subtle differences between objects."

### **Examples of readiness skills:**

- Auditory discrimination (understanding what people are saying, distinguishing between different sounds)
- Listening skill (staying tuned in to what someone is saying)
- Visual discrimination (identifying visual similarities and differences)

Cathy Duffy, p. 125.

*Christian Home*

*Educators'*

*Curriculum Manual*

- Directionality (up, down, above, below, right, left)
- Lengthening attention span, fine motor skills (ability to hold and write with a pencil or crayon with relative ease)
- Identifying attributes (e.g., an object is large, the color red, has stripes, etc.)"

### **Phonics** (the association of sounds with letters/symbols):

Elijah, p. 89.  
Elijah Catalog

Elements of Phonics: There are 44 phonemes in the English language. Most phonics programs follow this approach:

1. A child starts with the recognition of all the consonant sounds and short vowel sounds.
2. Then work on short words that follow a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, such as "rap."
3. The next step will be to introduce consonant blends (two or three consonants together): rap becomes trap or scrap.
4. Then the child usually learns the long vowel sounds by adding a silent "e" to the end of a word: scrap becomes scrape.
5. The next steps are learning digraphs (two letters that together make one sound such as th, ch, sh, wh, ui, ay, oe); diphthongs (two vowels that make distinctive sound such as oi, ou); combinations that make their own sound (such as ould, igh, tion); R-controlled words (such as car, fern, nurse).
6. The last step is learning sight words that are not phonetic, like "the" and "one."

**Primary Phonics**  
(Beginner Storybooks)  
Educators Publishing  
Service Catalog  
www.epsbooks.com

**Three R's**  
by Ruth Beechick

"Parent, you may not realize it, but you are an excellent language teacher. You can prove it by the speech of your child." (Based on the natural method.)  
Ruth Beechick

### **Reading Levels:**

**Independent Reading Level-** The difficulty level of reading material at which the student can read with relative ease and independence; in other words, the student can read with little or no help from the instructor. The student should be able to pronounce nearly all the words at this level. You can give your student reading material at this level for pleasure, practice and sustained silent reading.

**This is the level at which a student can read independently, decoding and comprehending with ease.**

**Instructional Reading level-** The level of difficulty of reading at which reading instruction is most effective. The student should know

most of the words, not all. Use this level for instruction, such as oral reading or silent reading when you are around to help him with difficult words."

*How to Teach  
Reading*  
by Edward Fry

**This is the level at which a student needs instruction of concepts, vocabulary and decoding skills, to read.**

**Frustration Reading Level-** If reading instruction is given at too hard a level (that is too many unknown words), then the student's progress is not as rapid and symptoms of nervousness and dislike of reading may occur. Most of the time you should avoid getting your student reading material at his frustration level.

**This is the level at which a student is struggling to read-decoding and comprehending. The student may feel nervous and dislike reading at this level.**

### **Strategies in Teaching Reading**

**Model Reading** - model good reading through reading aloud at a level higher than your child independent reading level

**Share Reading** - read simultaneously out loud with you and your child at a level higher than your child's independent level

**Guide Reading** - give your child a book at his instructional reading level and teach new concepts, vocabulary, themes, and skills to help him read

**Independent Reading** - give books that are at your child's independent reading level to read on his own