



LANGUAGE! Live

DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK ALIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

LANGUAGE! Live is a blended program that applies the Structured Literacy approach and teaches all aspects of language to students. It provides explicit, systematic, and cumulative foundational reading skill instruction and emphasizes higher-level comprehension as students progress and develop speed, accuracy, and automaticity while reading more complex text. The strategies are individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods, and include a variety of writing and spelling skill development and practice. The digital Word Training component of *LANGUAGE! Live* complements the direct, explicit, teacher-led Text Training.

LANGUAGE! Live incorporates all the components of instruction and instructional approaches from *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders* (Texas Education Agency, 2014) in the following areas:

DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK

Phonological awareness

“Phonological awareness is the understanding of the internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds. An important aspect of phonological awareness is the ability to segment spoken words into their component phonemes” (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).

LANGUAGE! LIVE

The online Word Training component of *LANGUAGE! Live* explicitly builds foundational skills, including phonological awareness.

Most poor readers and spellers need additional instruction to bolster phonological awareness; therefore, especially in Level 1, each unit contains direct instruction about speech sounds and speech-sound manipulation (segmentation, blending, substitution).

In Level 1, novice learners are shown how each phoneme is articulated as they learn to discriminate confusable phonemes. Distinguishing features such as consonant voicing and vowel jaw opening are explicitly demonstrated to aid students’ speech sound awareness. Phonemes are also associated with picture clues and key words as they are linked with the letters (graphemes) that represent them. The entire system of 25 English consonants and 19 English vowels is gradually taught, resulting in a complete “sound library” that the student can reference at any time.

Phoneme segmentation and blending are practiced both orally (without print) and in connection with phoneme-grapheme mapping.

Key words or guide words serve to support memory for sound-symbol association.

Phoneme blending and segmentation is directly connected to word reading and spelling.

Sound-symbol association

Sound-symbol association is the knowledge of the various speech sounds in any language to the corresponding letter or letter combinations that represent those speech sounds. The mastery of sound-symbol association (alphabetic principle) is the foundation for the ability to read (decode) and spell (encode) (Birsh, 2011, p. 19). “Explicit phonics refers to an organized program in which these sound-symbol correspondences are taught systematically” (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 53).

Phonics instruction is presented online in a web-based environment. Phonics is sequential, beginning with initial sounds, introduction to the English vowel and consonant charts, then progression to syllable awareness/types/syllabication processes. Students progress from initial phonemes/phonics to practice of multisyllable production and analysis.

The Word Training component of *LANGUAGE! Live* provides systematic, cumulative instruction in all of the most frequent phoneme-grapheme (sound-symbol) correspondences, as well as the most common orthographic patterns that characterize English spelling (consonant doubles, consonant digraphs, consonant blends, the Floss Rule, and all common vowel spelling patterns in closed, open, CVC, vowel team, and vowel + r patterns). Compound words and words with inflections (-ed, -ing, -s, -es, -est, -er) are also introduced.

Recognizing that adolescent students who struggle to learn to read need decoding and phonics activities that allow them to learn the skills that they need in a safe environment, *LANGUAGE! Live* has built-in recordings of an “expert” (one of the peers or teachers in instructional Word Training videos) saying sounds, blends, letters, words, and phrases. Students are able to hear these recordings, listen to themselves repeat them, and then compare these sounds, words, sentences, and phrases.

Syllabication

“A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. The six basic types of syllables in the English language include the following: closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel team), and consonant-le (or final stable syllable). Rules for dividing syllables must be directly taught in relation to the word structure” (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).

Reading and spelling multisyllable words is the focus of Word Training in Level 2. Identifying syllables in spoken words, breaking words into syllables and blending syllables together are first practiced as listening and speaking skills. Various practice exercises build students’ ability to recognize, read, and spell multisyllabic words in print, including categorizing syllables by the spelling of the vowel sound; supplying a missing syllable in a written word; combining written syllables to make words; and spelling longer words by syllable dictation. Students practice a “big word reading strategy” in which longer words are parsed into syllables and systematically decoded.

Orthography

Orthography is the written spelling patterns and rules in a given language.

Students must be taught the regularity and irregularity of the orthographic patterns of a language in an explicit and systematic manner. The instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound-symbol knowledge.

LANGUAGE! Live teaches students to appreciate the logic of English orthography from several angles. Regular patterns and apparent irregularities are discussed in terms of the history of English and word origin (etymology), with emphasis on Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Greek-based spellings found in English. Students learn phoneme-grapheme mapping; position-based spelling patterns (-ch, -tch, for example); rules for adding suffixes; allowable letter sequences and conventions; and strategies for remembering unconventional spellings and homophones. Multisyllabic words with Latin derivation are emphasized in the last half of Level 2, for both decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling production).

Morphology

“Morphology is the study of how a base word, prefix, root, suffix (morphemes) combine to form words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a given language” (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).

Morphology instruction focuses on the connection between word form, word derivation, and word meaning. In Level 1 of *LANGUAGE! Live*, inflectional morphemes (or grammatical suffixes) are introduced early for word recognition, spelling, and vocabulary. Prefix spellings and meanings are emphasized in the beginning of Level 2. The spelling and meanings of common suffixes, as well as their role in marking a word’s part of speech, are taught next. Latin roots and large families of related words are the focus from the middle of Level 2 onward. Word analysis and word synthesis, in context and out of context, with decoding and encoding, are included in each word study unit.

Syntax

“Syntax is the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar and sentence variation and affects choices regarding mechanics of a given language” (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).

LANGUAGE! Live students learn that word function and arrangement in a sentence create meaning in that sentence. Being able to make meaning in complex texts and produce clearly written compositions starts with being able to decipher complex sentences, so instruction focuses on the rules of grammar to increasing syntax complexity.

They learn how the English language works through concrete instruction and visuals to teach grammar, focusing on:

- Mechanics and usage for speaking, reading, and writing
- Grammatical form—nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.
- Grammatical functions—subject, predicate, direct object, etc.

Syntax (continued)

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- Sentence patterns—simple, compound, complex
- Sentence combining and parts—transitions, phrases, independent and dependent clauses, etc.
- Noun/verb agreement and word tenses
- Text-based analysis and application of grammatical forms and functions
- Metacognitive questions
- Writing conventions
- Editing/revising written work

Students diagram sentences and use sentence dictation to analyze grammar concepts, resulting in a clear understanding of the grammatical structure of a sentence.

LANGUAGE! Live instruction clarifies meaning of punctuation and spelling.

LANGUAGE! Live teaches multiple meaning words and their syntactic contexts so that “readers can move into more sophisticated text-level reading with greater fluency and thus devote more energy to understanding” (Chapel Eberhardt, 2013).

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading. The reader’s skill in reading comprehension depends upon the development of accurate and fluent word recognition, oral language development (especially vocabulary and listening comprehension), background knowledge, use of appropriate strategies to enhance comprehension and repair it if it breaks down, and the reader’s interest in what he or she is reading and motivation to comprehend its meaning (Birsh, 2011, pp. 9 and 368; Snow, 2002).

The Text Training component of *LANGUAGE! Live* places a strong emphasis on comprehension, weaving together—via explicit instruction using graded passages and a logical scope and sequence—the components of reading and writing necessary to address comprehension of complex text. For example, the process of Close Reading is emphasized throughout the program. Introduced early and utilized across all levels, explicit instruction teaches how to locate the topic, main ideas, supporting details, evidence, and examples in text. Close reading is teacher-mediated examination of language, cohesive ties, and ideas implied but not stated in the text. It helps students attend to details they might otherwise miss and builds the expectation that the text should make sense at surface and deeper levels.

Construction of an accurate mental model of the text depends on background knowledge that enables inferences. Therefore, preparing students with background knowledge must precede the first reading of the text.

“Informational Preview Checklist” has students preview the passage and predict what they will learn.

Students mark up text using a color-coding system to identify the underlying text and identify main ideas and supporting detail.

Reading comprehension (continued)

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"Blueprint for Reading" feature teaches students to identify how information is organized within various content-specific informational texts of increasing complexity; this clearly shows the relationship between the topic sentence, main ideas, supporting details, and evidence, examples, and explanations further explaining those details. With student mastery, the instructional focus shifts from modeling to guided practice, corrective feedback, and independent practice/application.

Explicit instruction in determining author/narrator point of view includes locating and evaluating evidence supporting that point of view.

Students do several readings of a "worthwhile" text—one with several layers of meaning or unusual complexity—to grasp its enduring ideas.

Each genre (literary, informational) has unique properties that are directly taught to students.

Comprehension of text rests on comprehension of sentences. Therefore, instruction in sentence structure and how it affects meaning is an essential part of comprehension instruction. Written or constructed responses enhance text comprehension.

Students receive direct instruction in responding to specific prompts and questions.

Graphic organizers assist with note taking and organization of thoughts for writing.

The reading selections in *LANGUAGE! Live* sample literature, biography, informational text in history and science, poetry, drama, and rhetoric. Texts were chosen not only for readability, but for provocative, meaningful subject matter of interest to adolescents. In each unit, themes unify diverse texts, selected to address a range of time periods, voices, points of view, cultures, and styles. The difficulty of text in each unit gradually increases as students gain reading experience and reading proficiency.

Reading fluency

“Reading fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension” (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Teachers can help promote fluency with several interventions that have proven successful in helping students with fluency (e.g., repeated readings, word lists, and choral reading of passages) (Henry, 2010, p. 104).

Fluency activities linked to skills taught are in place throughout Text Training and Word Training. Students practice and improve fluency through word, phrase, and passage reading activities. Students are provided opportunities online and in print to monitor their own fluency growth and rate of improvement.

LANGUAGE! Live applies these principles consistently:

- Word reading accuracy should precede an emphasis on fluency
- Fluency is best practiced at the word, phrase, sentence, and passage levels
- Fluency depends on both word recognition and language comprehension
- Repeated readings with charting, partner reading, phrase reading, and choral reading all facilitate growth in fluency
- An aspect of word meaning is a word’s part of speech or grammatical role; therefore, instruction in grammar and usage supports vocabulary learning and comprehension
- Vocabulary instruction should be text-driven, not separated from meaningful reading

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