

The Four Basic Language Skills

One definition of “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.”

Another way to describe language is in terms of the four basic language skills: 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.

When we learn our native language we learn these skills to communicate. Firstly we learn to listen then to speak, to read and finally to write. These are called the four language skills (LSRW)

People generally learn these four skills in the following order:

1. **Listening:** When people are learning a new language they first hear it spoken.
2. **Speaking:** Eventually, they try to repeat what they hear.
3. **Reading:** Later, they see the spoken language depicted symbolically in print.
4. **Writing:** Finally, they reproduce these symbols on paper

