LANGUAGE ARTS

PATTERNS OF PRACTICE

Gail E. Tompkins

NINTH EDITION

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Gail E. Tompkins

California State University, Fresno, Emerita

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About the Author

I'm a teacher. I began my career as a first grade teacher in northern Virginia in the 1970s. I remember one child who cried as the first day of school was ending. When I tried to comfort him, he sobbed accusingly, "I came to first grade to learn to read and write, and you forgot to teach me." I've never forgotten that child's comment and what it taught me: Teachers must understand their students and meet their expectations.

My first few years of teaching left me with more questions than answers, and I wanted to become a more effective teacher, so I started taking graduate courses. In time I earned a master's degree and then a doctorate in Language Arts, both from Virginia Tech. Through my graduate studies, I learned a lot of answers, but more importantly, I learned to keep asking questions.

Then I began teaching at the university level. I taught at Miami University in Ohio, then at the University of Oklahoma, and finally at California State University, Fresno. I've taught preservice teachers and practicing teachers working on master's degrees, and I've directed doctoral dissertations. I've received awards for my teaching, including the Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching at California State University, Fresno, and I was inducted into the California Reading Association's Reading Hall of Fame. Through the years, my students have taught me as much as I've taught them, and I'm grateful to all of them for what I've learned.

I've been writing college textbooks for more than 30 years, and I think of the books I write as teaching, too. I'll be teaching you as you read this text. When I write a book, I try to anticipate some of the questions you might ask and provide that information so that you'll become an effective teacher. I've written other books published by Pearson Education, including *Literacy for the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach,* 6e (2014), *Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product,* 6e, (2012), *50 Literacy Strategies: Step-by-Step,* 4e (2013), and two grade-band specific versions of my core literacy text, *Literacy in the Early Grades: A Successful Start for PreK–4 Readers and Writers* (2015) and *Literacy in the Middle Grades: Teaching Reading and Writing to Fourth Through Eighth Graders* (2010).

When I'm not writing, I like to make quilts. Piecing together a quilt is a lot like planning effective language arts instruction, but instead of cloth, teachers use the patterns of practice and other instructional procedures to design instruction for the diverse students in 21st-century classrooms. That's why I always like to use a quilt on the cover of *Language Arts.*

Gail E. Tompkins

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Preface

I've written *Language Arts: Patterns of Practice* to provide you with the knowledge and procedures to confidently teach kindergarten through eighth grade students to communicate effectively using oral, written, and visual language. With this ninth edition, I ensure not only that you have the necessary background knowledge to understand how to teach all six language arts—listening, talking, reading, writing, viewing, and visually representing—but also that you see how the six language arts can be interactively taught through four patterns of practice—literature focus units, literature circles, reading and writing workshop, and thematic units. Teaching today in our culturally diverse, technologically changing classrooms is daunting, even for experienced teachers. However, in this text, I present a bank of language arts strategies for bridging the communication needs of English learners, and I describe tools that encourage you to teach language arts in an online environment. Even as *Language Arts: Patterns of Practice* is now offered as an eText, I have continued this text's time-tested focus on modeling the most effective and practical methods to prepare you for teaching language arts in K–8 classrooms.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

I focus my revisions to meet the needs of teachers and students in contemporary classrooms, and this ninth edition is no exception. These descriptions highlight the changes in this edition:

Book Organization. As I began this revision, I decided to make the organization of the book clearer. This edition has three distinct groups of chapters to clarify the expectancies of today's language arts instruction and assessment, especially in conjunction with standards alignment.

- **Part 1** New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom
- **Part 2** The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing
- **Part 3** Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards

Instruction–Assessment Cycle. Accountability is still in the forefront of expectations for effective teaching. Chapter 2 discusses the critical role of assessment in teaching and introduces the cyclical nature of planning for instruction that meets students' needs, monitoring student progress, evaluating student achievement, and reflecting on students' learning and teachers' instructional methods.

Interactive Pearson eText*. This is the first edition of *Language Arts* designed as an interactive Pearson eText. I provide you with point-of-use videos and the opportunity to assess your learning as you read each section of a chapter. Look for the photos in the margins and the clickable icon to watch the videos. Look for Check Your Understanding to find the curved arrow and launch self-assessment questions.

* Please note that eText enhancements are available only in the Pearson eText, and not other third-party eTexts such as *CourseSmart* or *Kindle*.

Step-by-Step Feature. These tried-and-true, easy-to-replicate instructional procedures now include pop-up examples of classroom teachers using each Step-by-Step procedure to meet the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. New to this edition are detailed descriptions in each chapter of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. The feature identifies grade-specific Standards as well as examples of how teachers apply the Standards. You can use this feature to build lessons and align them with the Standards; this will help ensure that your students meet the target goals for your lessons.

The Digital Classroom. I have revised the digital features of this text and compiled them in The Digital Classroom. This section will guide your use of digital tools in your language arts classroom.

Literacy Modules. These modules provide additional learning opportunities on essential language arts topics. Each module is built around a single practical and applied learning outcome. In this new edition, you'll find:

- The module "Formative Assessment" in Chapter 2.
- The module "Guided Reading" in Chapter 8.
- The module "Nonfiction Structures and Features" in Chapter 9.
- The module "Writing Workshop" in Chapter 12.

PATTERNS OF PRACTICE

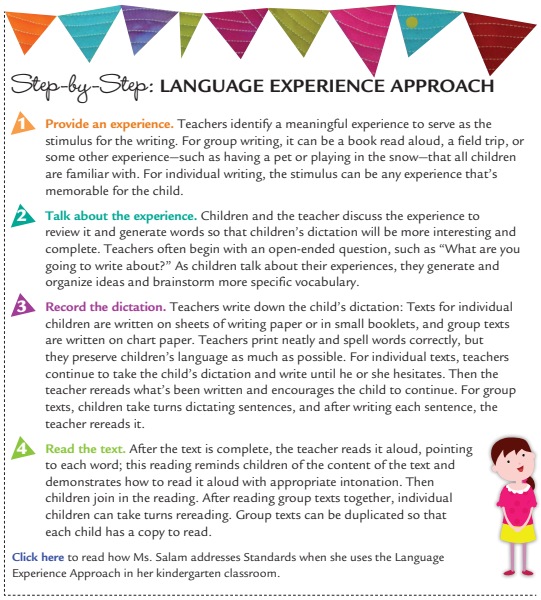
The text begins with the necessary background information for understanding how students learn, for developing a community of learners in your classroom, and for studying the research and theories that serve as a foundation for 21st-century language arts instruction. I describe the instructional approaches best suited to the meaningful, functional, and genuine teaching of language arts—literature focus units, literature circles, reading and writing workshop, and thematic units—modeling instruction and pinpointing the strategies and skills you'll be expected to teach. I guide you in ways to get to know your students and discover what they'll need to learn to succeed.

In each chapter, I discuss the foundational ideas that underpin the topic, and then I show you the methods, tools, and procedures that will prepare you to effectively teach your students. As you move through the text, you'll see how the six language arts and instructional methodologies—patterns of practice—fit together like the pieces of a carefully constructed quilt, crafted and organized to form one complete picture.

Engaging You in Instructional Methods

Vignettes begin every chapter with a snapshot of authentic instruction. They describe how individual teachers use the specific instructional approaches to develop students' language arts competencies. The vignettes set the tone for each chapter, illustrating chapter concepts as they're played out in a successful language arts classroom. Often, assessment questions at the end of the chapter will ask you to review the vignette so you can examine more closely how teachers facilitate students' learning through their instruction.

Authentic Samples of student work pepper every chapter, modeling the kinds of interaction and response you can expect from students in your own classroom.



Step-by-Step: LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

1. **Provide an experience.** Teachers identify a meaningful experience to serve as the stimulus for the writing. For group writing, it can be a book read aloud, a field trip, or some other experience—such as having a pet or playing in the snow—that all children are familiar with. For individual writing, the stimulus can be any experience that's memorable for the child.
2. **Talk about the experience.** Children and the teacher discuss the experience to review it and generate words so that children's dictation will be more interesting and complete. Teachers often begin with an open-ended question, such as "What are you going to write about?" As children talk about their experiences, they generate and organize ideas and brainstorm more specific vocabulary.
3. **Record the dictation.** Teachers write down the child's dictation: Texts for individual children are written on sheets of writing paper or in small booklets, and group texts are written on chart paper. Teachers print neatly and spell words correctly, but they preserve children's language as much as possible. For individual texts, teachers continue to take the child's dictation and write until he or she hesitates. Then the teacher rereads what's been written and encourages the child to continue. For group texts, children take turns dictating sentences, and after writing each sentence, the teacher rereads it.
4. **Read the text.** After the text is complete, the teacher reads it aloud, pointing to each word; this reading reminds children of the content of the text and demonstrates how to read it aloud with appropriate intonation. Then children join in the reading. After reading group texts together, individual children can take turns rereading. Group texts can be duplicated so that each child has a copy to read.

Click here to read how Ms. Salam addresses Standards when she uses the Language Experience Approach in her kindergarten classroom.

Minilessons throughout the text present detailed directions for preparing and carrying out specific instructional strategies and procedures. The steps in each minilesson serve as a model, providing a practical tool to use in your classroom.

Step-by-Step Features present detailed directions for using shared reading, interactive writing, and other instructional procedures. Teachers say that this is their favorite feature because each one offers a clear and precise map for classroom use. New to this edition: The Step-by-Step features now include clickable classroom examples, illustrating how experienced teachers use the instructional procedure and how the procedure aligns to Common Core State Standards.

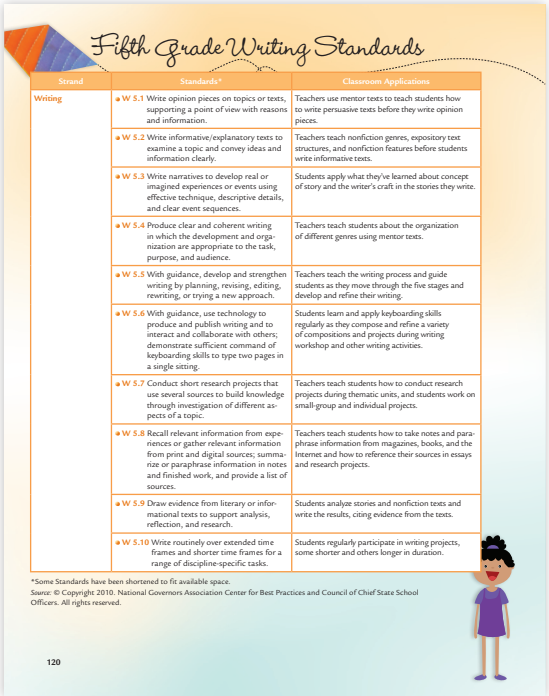
Literacy Modules are a new innovative feature. These modules identify learning outcomes; present information about procedures, strategies, and skills; provide opportunities to apply your understanding of these concepts; and end with assessments to check your understanding. The ***Learn*** section of each module presents essential information about the concept offered to help you meet the module's learning outcome. The ***Apply*** section consists of exercises in which you practice applying this concept in a classroom context. The ***Assess*** section provides a test to measure your understanding of the material presented in the module, as well as evaluate your ability to use this material in an instructional setting. Look for in Chapters 2, 8, 9, and 12, which will link you to a Pearson eLearning module.

Classroom Videos are presented with still photographs in each chapter. Clickable play buttons launch video segments that provide models of classroom practice.

Preparing You to Teach Diverse Learners

Differentiated Instruction features describe ways to adapt instruction in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms so you can meet the needs of all of your students.

Engaging English Learners sections lay out the specific instructional needs of learners whose first language isn't English. In-depth guidance allows you to plan for and adapt instruction, engage English learners, and ensure that they have the tools they need to be successful in learning and communicating in English.



Fifth Grade Writing Standards

Strand	Standards*	Classroom Applications
Writing	W 5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.	Teachers use mentor texts to teach students how to write persuasive texts before they write opinion pieces.
	W 5.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.	Teachers teach nonfiction genres, expository text structures, and nonfiction features before students write informative texts.
	W 5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.	Students apply what they've learned about concept of story and the writer's craft in the stories they write.
	W 5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.	Teachers teach students about the organization of different genres using mentor texts.
	W 5.5 With guidance, develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	Teachers teach the writing process and guide students as they move through the five stages and develop and refine their writing.
	W 5.6 With guidance, use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type two pages in a single sitting.	Students learn and apply keyboarding skills regularly as they compose and refine a variety of compositions and projects during writing workshop and other writing activities.
	W 5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.	Teachers teach students how to conduct research projects during thematic units, and students work on small-group and individual projects.
	W 5.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.	Teachers teach students how to take notes and paraphrase information from magazines, books, and the Internet and how to reference their sources in essays and research projects.
	W 5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Students analyze stories and nonfiction texts and write the results, citing evidence from the texts.
	W 5.10 Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks.	Students regularly participate in writing projects, some shorter and others longer in duration.

*Some Standards have been shortened to fit available space.

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Spotlight Features pop up from margin note icons. These features examine current issues related to chapter topics and demonstrate how to meet the developmental needs of young children or middle school students.

Providing You Tools to Take Into Practice

Common Core State Standards tables pinpoint instructional goals for K–8 students. As you begin teaching, you'll be held accountable for meeting specific grade-level college and career readiness Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Pay particular attention to the information under Classroom Applications: You'll notice the close connection between chapter content and the Standards.

Patterns of Practice features illustrate how the teaching of various chapter concepts—oral language, written language, visual language, vocabulary, stories, nonfiction, poetry, and so on—fit into the four patterns of practice: literature focus units, literature circles, reading and writing workshop, and thematic units.

Booklist features present mentor texts to use in your teaching. Language arts teachers rely on good books to shape students' learning, and the Booklists provide both new and time-tested favorites on a variety of topics for kindergarten through eighth grade.

The Digital Classroom sections outline ways to use technology tools to improve your instruction and to develop 21st-century learners.

Booklist PREDICTABLE BOOKS

Repetitive Sentences	Florian, D. (2000). *A pig is big.* New York: Greenwillow. Guarino, D. (2006). *Is your mama a llama?* New York: Scholastic. Hoberman, M. A. (2001). *"It's simple," said Simon.* New York: Knopf. Martin, B., Jr. (2010). *Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?* New York: Holt. Westcott, N. B. (2003). *The lady with the alligator purse.* Boston: Little, Brown.
Cumulative Sentences	Brett, J. (2004). *The umbrella.* New York: Putnam. Egielski, R. (1997). *The gingerbread boy.* New York: HarperCollins. Pinkney, J. (2006). *The little red hen.* New York: Dial Books. Taback, S. (1997). *There was an old lady who swallowed a fly.* New York: Viking. West, C. (1996). *"I don't care!" said the bear.* Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.
Rhyme and Rhythm	Harris, P. (2006). *The night pirates.* New York: Scholastic. Lies, B. (2006). *Bats at the beach.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Martin, B., Jr., & Archambault, J. (2009). *Chicka chicka boom boom.* New York: Beach Lane Books. Raffi. (1999). *Down by the bay.* New York: Crown.
Sequential Patterns	Carle, E. (1984). *The very busy spider.* New York: Philomel. Kraus, R. (1995). *Come out and play, little mouse.* New York: HarperCollins. Numeroff, L. (2002). *If you take a mouse to school.* New York: HarperCollins. Wadsworth, O. A. (2002). *Over in the meadow.* New York: North-South Books. Wood, A., & Wood, D. (2010). *The napping house.* Boston: Harcourt.

INSTRUCTOR'S SUPPLEMENTS

The Instructor's Resource Center at **http://www.pearsonhighered.com** houses the print and media resources available in downloadable, digital formats ready for instructors to use.

These digital resources are available for *Language Arts: Patterns of Practice,* 9e:

- Chapter-by-chapter materials, including learning outcomes, suggested readings, discussion questions, and in-class activities, and guidance on how to use the chapter-opening vignettes meaningfully in your instruction.
- A test bank of chapter-by-chapter multiple choice and short answer essay questions.
- PowerPoint presentations specifically written to support discussions of each chapter.

To access these items online, go to **http://www.pearsonhighered.com** and click on the Instructor option; you'll find the Instructor Resource Center option in the top of the navigation bar, where you'll be able to log in or complete a one-time registration with a user name and password. If you have any questions regarding this process or the materials available online, please contact your local Pearson sales representative.

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Gail E. Tompkins

CHAPTER

1

Learning and the Language Arts

PLAN: Preview the Learning Outcomes

1.1 Describe how children learn, the strategies they use to regulate learning, and the role of social interaction on learning.

1.2 Distinguish among the four cueing systems and explain their implications for teaching language arts.

1.3 Name five characteristics of communities of learners where students develop communicative competence using the six language arts.

First Graders Apply the Six Language Arts The first graders in Mrs. McNeal's classroom are rereading their collaborative retelling of Maurice Sendak's classic story, *Where the Wild Things Are* (2013). It's written on large charts, one for the beginning, one for the middle, and one for the end:

> **Beginning:** Max wore his wolf suit and made mischief. His mother called him a wild thing. He went to bed without any supper!
>
> **Middle:** Max went to his bedroom and it turned into a forest. He got into his boat and sailed to where the wild things live.
>
> **End:** Max wanted to go home to his Mom because she loved him. His supper was there for him and it was still hot!

Mrs. McNeal used interactive writing for the retelling so that all of the words were spelled correctly, and the children could easily reread it. Check the figure Children's Retelling of the "Middle" of the Story; the boxes around some letters and words represent the correction tape

How do teachers incorporate the six language arts in their teaching?

Listening, talking, reading, writing, viewing, and visually representing are the six language arts; two of the language arts are oral, two are written, and two are visual. Effective teachers integrate instruction and incorporate opportunities in their language arts programs for students to use all six modes every day. As you read this vignette about first graders participating in writing workshop, notice that Mrs. McNeal provides opportunities for her students to use all six language arts.

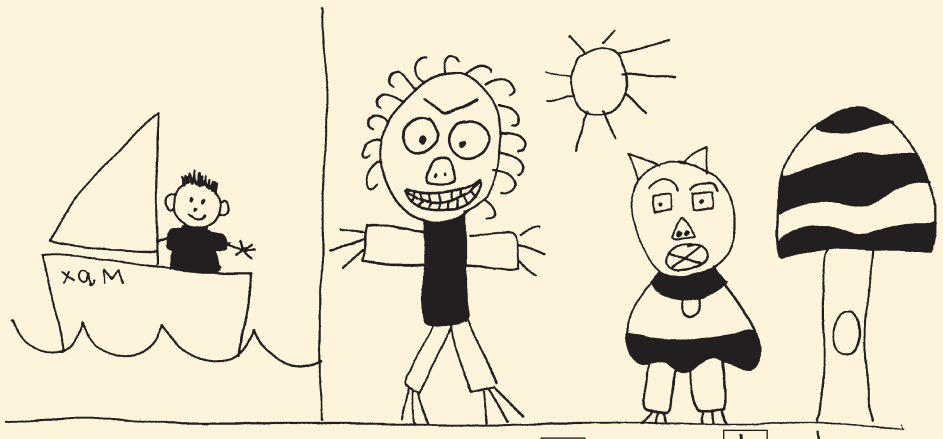
that Mrs. McNeal used to correct spelling errors and poorly formed letters.

Japmeet holds the pointer and leads the class to reread the "beginning" chart, moving the pointer from word to word as the children read aloud. Next, Henry leads the rereading of the "middle" chart, and Noelle follows with the "end" chart. As they finish reading, the children clap because they're proud of their retelling of a favorite story.

Mrs. McNeal's students are learning about stories; they know that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. They can pick out the three parts in stories that the teacher reads aloud, and they try to include all three parts in the stories they write.

The first graders participate in a 60-minute writing workshop each day, beginning with a 15-minute word work lesson that involves reading and writing high-frequency words. The first graders sit on the floor in front of the word wall, a bulletin-board display with 20 sheets of construction paper on which the letters are printed in alphabetical order and word cards with high-frequency words are posted according to beginning

Children's Retelling of the "Middle" of the Story



Max went to his bedroom and it turned into a forest. He got into his boat and sailed to where the wild things live.

letter. Currently, 52 words are posted on the word wall, and several new words are added each week.

The lesson begins with a quick review of the words. First, Hanna holds the pointer and leads the children in reading the words. Next, Mrs. McNeal passes out small whiteboards, pens, and erasers, and they play a word game: The teacher gives phonological, semantic, and syntactic clues about a word on the word wall, and the first graders identify the word. Mrs. McNeal says, "I'm thinking of a word with three letters. It begins with /y/ and it fits in this sentence: '_____ are my friend.' What's the word?" The children identify *you* and write it on their whiteboards. They hold up their boards so Mrs. McNeal can check their work. Then they erase their boards, and the game continues.

Next, Mrs. McNeal teaches a 15-minute minilesson on a writing concept, such as adding details, writing titles, or using punctuation marks correctly. Today, she reviews the three parts of a story. She asks Sachit to read his draft aloud. He reads:

> I love school. I have lots of friends. One is Yaman. He is a good friend to me. We play with Alex. We play basketball. We are good friends. I can't get a ball in the hoop.

The children pick out the beginning and middle sections of the story but notice that Sachit's story needs an ending. After several children suggest possible endings, Sachit decides to use Yaman's suggestion and finishes his story this way: But I still play basketball anyway.

A 25-minute writing period follows. On most days, children write stories independently, but sometimes they work together to write collaborative compositions, as they did to retell *Where the Wild Things Are*. Today, some children are beginning new stories. They sit knee-to-knee with a classmate and plan their stories by telling them aloud. Some children work on stories they began the previous day, and others meet with Mrs. McNeal to share their writings; they read their stories to the teacher and talk about them, checking that they make sense and have a beginning, a middle, and an end. If the story is ready to be published, Mrs. McNeal word processes it, leaving space at the top for an illustration and correcting spelling and other mechanical errors so that the children can read it.

For the last 5 minutes of the workshop, children share their newly published compositions. Noelle reads aloud her story, "Bella's Birthday":

> It was Bella's birthday last week. She's my big sister. She got an American Girl doll and I gave her a soccer outfit for her doll. We had a pizza party and Mom baked a yummy cake with 10 candles on top. Bella's birthday was awesome!

Afterward, the children clap and offer compliments. Sarah says, "I'm glad you added the part about Bella being your sister," and other classmates tell her that they like her story because it reminds them of their siblings' birthdays. Mrs. McNeal ceremonially hangs Noelle's story in a special section of the bulletin board at eye level for everyone to reread.

Today, teachers face new challenges and opportunities. The students who come to your classroom may speak a different language at school than they speak at home, and they're growing up in varied family structures: Many live in two-parent families, but others live with single parents or grandparents, in blended families, or with two moms or dads. Far too many children are growing up in poverty, some with parents in prison and siblings in gangs. Still others are homeless. Sadly, some have lost sight of the American dream, believing that a college education or a successful career is out of reach. The way you teach language arts must address not only your beliefs about how children learn but also the language and culture of the students you teach.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1886–1980) radically changed our understanding of how children learn with his constructivist framework (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000). He described learning as the modification of children's cognitive structures as they interact with and adapt to their environment. He believed that children construct their own knowledge from their experiences. Related to Piaget's theory is the information-processing theory (Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 2001), which focuses on how learners use cognitive processes to think about what and how they're learning.

The Process of Learning

Children's knowledge is not just a collection of isolated bits of information; it's organized in the brain, and this organization becomes increasingly integrated as their knowledge grows (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). The organization of knowledge is the cognitive structure, and knowledge is arranged in category systems called *schemata*, and a single category is a **schema**. Within the schemata are three components: categories of knowledge, features or rules for determining what constitutes a category and what's included in each one, and a network of interrelationships among the categories.

These schemata can be likened to a conceptual filing system in which people organize and store the information derived from their past experiences. Taking this analogy further, information is filed in the brain in "file folders." As children learn, they add new file folders to their filing system, and as they study a topic, its file folder becomes thicker.

Children enlarge existing schemata or construct new ones using two cognitive processes—assimilation and accommodation (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000). **Assimilation** takes place when information is integrated into existing schemata, and **accommodation** occurs when schemata are modified or new schemata are created. Through assimilation, children add new information to their picture of the world; through accommodation, they change that picture to reflect new information.

Learning occurs through the process of **equilibration**. When children encounter something they don't understand, disequilibrium, or cognitive conflict, results. This disequilibrium typically produces confusion and agitation, feelings that impel children to seek equilibrium, a comfortable balance with the environment. In other words, when confronted with new or discrepant information, children are intrinsically motivated to try to make sense of it. If their schemata can assimilate or accommodate the new information, then the disequilibrium caused by the new experience will motivate them to learn. Equilibrium is then regained at a higher developmental level. Here's the three-step process:

1. Equilibrium is disrupted by the introduction of new or discrepant information.
2. Disequilibrium occurs, and the dual processes of assimilation and accommodation function.
3. Equilibrium is attained at a higher developmental level.

The process of equilibration happens again and again during the course of a day. In fact, it's occurring right now as you're reading this chapter. Learning doesn't always occur when we're presented with new information, however: If the new information is too difficult and we can't relate it to what we already know, we don't learn. The new information must be puzzling, challenging, or, in Piaget's words, "moderately novel."

Learning Strategies

We all have skills that we use automatically plus self-regulated strategies for things that we do well—driving defensively, playing volleyball, training a new pet, or maintaining classroom discipline. We unconsciously apply skills we've learned and thoughtfully choose among strategies. The **strategies** are problem-solving mechanisms that involve complex thinking processes. When we're learning how to drive a car, for example, we learn both skills and strategies. Some of the first skills we learn are how to make left turns and parallel park; with practice, these skills become automatic. One of the first strategies we learn is how to pass another car. At first, we have only a small repertoire of strategies, and we don't always use them effectively; that's one reason why we get a learner's permit that requires a more experienced driver to ride along with us. With practice and guidance, we become more successful drivers, able to anticipate driving problems and take defensive actions.

Children develop a variety of learning strategies, including *rehearsal*—repeating information over and over—that they use to remember something. They also learn to use these strategies:

Predicting. Children anticipate what will happen next.

Organizing. Children group information into categories.

Elaborating. Children expand on the information presented.

Monitoring. Children regulate or keep track of their progress.

Information-processing theory suggests that as children grow older, their use of learning strategies improves (Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 2001). As they acquire more effective methods for learning and remembering information, children also become more aware of their own cognitive processes and better able to regulate them. They can reflect on their literacy processes and talk about themselves as readers and writers. For example, third grader Mario reports that "it's mostly after I read a book that I write" (Muhammad, 1993, p. 99), and fifth grader Hobbes reports that "the pictures in my head help me when I write stuff down 'cause then I can get ideas from my pictures" (Cleary, 1993, p. 142).

Children become more realistic about the limitations of their memories and more knowledgeable about which learning strategies are most effective in particular situations. They also become increasingly aware of what they know and don't know. The term **metacognition** refers to this knowledge that children acquire about their own learning processes and to their regulation of these cognitive processes to maximize learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Teachers play an important role in developing children's metacognitive abilities. During large-group activities, teachers introduce and model learning strategies. In small-group lessons, they provide guided practice, talk with children about learning strategies, and ask them to reflect on their own use of these cognitive processes. Teachers also guide children about when to use particular strategies and which ones are more effective with various activities.

Social Contexts of Learning

Cognitive development is enhanced through social interaction. Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) asserted that children learn through socially meaningful interactions and that language is both social and an important facilitator of learning (Vygotsky, 1986, 2006). Experiences are organized and shaped by society, but rather than merely absorbing these experiences, children negotiate and transform them as a dynamic part of culture. They learn to talk through social

interaction and to read and write through interaction with literate children and adults (Dyson, 1997, 2003). The classroom community is essential: Students talk with classmates about books they're reading, and they turn to classmates for feedback about their writing (Zebroski, 1994). This theory is known as **sociolinguistics**.

Through interactions with teachers and collaboration with classmates, students learn things they couldn't on their own (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Teachers guide and support students as they move from their current level of knowledge toward a more advanced level. Vygotsky (2006) described these two levels as the *actual developmental level*, the point at which learners can perform a task independently, and the *level of proximal development*, the point at which learners can perform a task with assistance. Students can do more difficult things in collaboration than they can on their own, which is why teachers are important models and why students often work with partners and in small groups.

A child's **zone of proximal development** is the range of tasks that the child can perform with guidance from others but can't yet perform independently. According to Vygotsky, children learn best when what they're attempting to learn is within this zone. He believed that children learn little by performing tasks they can already do independently—at their actual developmental level—or by attempting tasks that are too difficult, or beyond their zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner (2004) used the word **scaffold** as a metaphor to describe adults' contributions to children's learning. Scaffolds are support mechanisms that teachers, parents, and others provide to help children successfully perform a task within their zone of proximal development. Teachers serve as scaffolds when they model or demonstrate a procedure, guide children through a task, ask questions, break complex tasks into smaller steps, and supply pieces of information. As students gain knowledge and experience about how to perform a task, teachers gradually withdraw their support so students make the transition from social interaction to internalized, independent functioning.

Implications for Learning Language Arts

How students learn has important implications for how they learn language arts. Contributions from the constructivist, information-processing, and sociolinguistic theories include these ideas:

- Students are active participants in learning.
- Students learn by relating the new information to prior knowledge.
- Students organize their knowledge in schemata.
- Students apply strategies consciously as they learn.
- Students learn through social interactions with classmates and the teacher.
- Teachers provide scaffolds for students.

Think about these implications and how they'll affect your teaching.

MONITOR: Check Your Understanding

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND CULTURE

Language is a complex system for creating meaning through socially shared conventions (Halliday, 2006). Before children enter kindergarten, they learn the language of their community. They understand what community members say to them, and they share their ideas with others

through that language. In an amazingly short period of 3 or 4 years, children master the exceedingly complex system of their native language, which allows them to understand sentences they've never heard before and to create sentences they've never said before. Young children aren't taught how to talk; this knowledge about language develops unconsciously.

The Four Language Systems

Language is organized using four systems, sometimes called **cueing systems**, which together make communication possible:

- The phonological, or sound, system of language
- The syntactic, or structural, system of language
- The semantic, or meaning, system of language
- The pragmatic, or social and cultural use, system of language

The four language systems are summarized in Figure 1–1. Children have an implicit understanding of these systems, and they integrate information simultaneously from them in order to communicate. No one system is more important than any other, even though the phonological system (sometimes called the *visual system*) plays a prominent role when young children are learning to read and write.

The Phonological System. English has approximately 44 speech sounds. Children learn to pronounce these sounds as they learn to talk, and they associate the sounds with letters as they learn to read and write. Sounds are called **phonemes**, and they're represented in print with

FIGURE 1–1 The Language Systems

System	Description	Terms
Phonological System	The sound system of English with approximately 44 sounds	• *Phoneme* (the smallest unit of sound) • *Grapheme* (the written representation of a phoneme using one or more letters) • *Phonological awareness* (knowledge about the sound structure of words, at the phoneme, onset-rime, and syllable levels) • *Phonemic awareness* (the ability to manipulate the sounds in words orally) • *Phonics* (knowledge about phoneme-grapheme correspondences and spelling rules)
Syntactic System	The structural system of English that governs how words are combined into sentences	• *Syntax* (the structure or grammar of a sentence) • *Morpheme* (the smallest meaningful unit of language) • *Free morpheme* (a morpheme that stands alone as a word) • *Bound morpheme* (a morpheme that's attached to a free morpheme)
Semantic System	The meaning system of English that focuses on vocabulary	• *Semantics* (meaning) • *Synonyms* (words with similar meanings) • *Antonyms* (opposites) • *Homophones* (words that sound alike)
Pragmatic System	The system of English that varies according to social and cultural uses	• *Function* (the purpose for which a person uses language) • *Standard English* (the form of English used in textbooks and by TV newscasters) • *Nonstandard English* (other forms of English)

diagonal lines to differentiate them from **graphemes**, or letter combinations. For example, the first letter in *mother* is written *m,* and the phoneme is represented by /m/; the /ō/ phoneme in *soap* is represented by the grapheme *oa*.

The phonological system is important in both oral and written language. Regional and cultural differences exist in the way people pronounce phonemes. For example, John F. Kennedy's speech was typical of Boston. The English spoken in Australia differs from American English, Canadian English, or British English, too. English learners must learn to pronounce English sounds, and those that differ from sounds in their native language are particularly hard to learn. For example, Spanish doesn't have /th/, and Spanish-speaking immigrants have difficulty pronouncing this sound; they often substitute /d/ for /th/ because the sounds are articulated in similar ways (Nathenson-Mejia, 1989). Younger children usually learn to pronounce the difficult sounds more easily than older English learners do.

Children use their knowledge of phonology as they learn to read and write. In a purely phonetic language, there's a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds, and teaching students to sound out words is an easy process. But English isn't a purely phonetic language, because there are 26 letters and 44 sounds and many ways to combine the letters—especially vowels—to spell some of the sounds. Phonics, which describes the phoneme–grapheme correspondences and related spelling rules, is an important part of early literacy instruction, because students use phonics to decode words. They also use their understanding of the phonological system to spell words. Second graders, for example, might spell *school* as SKULE, based on their knowledge of phoneme–grapheme relationships and spelling patterns. As students learn more, their spellings become increasingly sophisticated and finally conventional.

The Syntactic System. The syntactic system is the structural organization of English. This system is the grammar that regulates how words are combined into sentences; here **grammar** means the rules governing how words are organized into sentences, not the parts of speech or the conventional etiquette of language. Children use the syntactic system as they combine words to form sentences. Word order is important in English, and English speakers must arrange words into a sequence that makes sense. Young Spanish-speaking English learners, for example, learn to say, "This is my red sweater," not "This is my sweater red," the literal translation from Spanish.

Students use their knowledge of the syntactic system as they read. They anticipate that the words they're reading have been strung together into meaningful sentences. When they come to an unfamiliar word, they recognize its role in the sentence. For example, in the sentence "The horses galloped through the gate and out into the field," students may not be able to decode the word *through,* but they can easily substitute a reasonable word or phrase, such as *out of* or *past.* Many of the capitalization and punctuation rules that students learn reflect the syntactic system. Similarly, when they learn about simple, compound, and complex sentences, they're learning about the syntactic system.

Another component of syntax is word forms. Words such as *dog* and *play* are **morphemes**, the smallest meaningful units in language. Word parts that change the meaning of a word are also morphemes. When the plural marker *-s* is added to *dog* to make *dogs,* for instance, or the past-tense marker *-ed* is added to *play* to make *played,* these words now contain two morphemes because the inflectional endings change the meaning. The words *dog* and *play* are **free morphemes** because they stand alone; the endings *-s* and *-ed* are **bound morphemes** because they must be attached to a free morpheme to convey meaning. As children learn to talk, they quickly learn to combine words and word parts, such as adding *-s* to *cookie* to create a plural and adding *-er* to *high* to indicate a comparison. They also learn to combine two or more free morphemes to form compound words such as *birthday, sailboat,* and *grandfather*.

Children also learn to add **affixes** to words. Affixes added at the beginning of a word are **prefixes**, and those added at the end are **suffixes**. Both kinds of affixes are bound morphemes. For example, the prefix *un-* in *unhappy* is a bound morpheme, but *happy* is a free morpheme because it can stand alone.

The Semantic System. The third language system is the semantic, or meaning, system; it focuses on vocabulary. Researchers estimate that children have a vocabulary of 5,000 words by the time they enter school, and they continue to acquire 3,000 words each year (Stahl & Nagy, 2005). Children probably learn 7 to 10 words a day, many of which are learned informally through reading and through social studies, science, and other curricular areas.

At the same time students are learning new words, they're also learning that many words have multiple meanings. Meaning is usually based on the context—the surrounding words. The common word *run,* for instance, has more than 30 meanings! The meaning of *run* in these sentences is tied to the context in which it's used:

Will the mayor run for reelection?
The bus runs between Dallas and Houston.
The advertisement will run for three days.
Did you run in the 50-yard dash?
The plane made a bombing run.
Run to the store and get a loaf of bread for me.
The dogs are out in the run.

Students often don't have the full range of meanings; rather, they learn meanings through a process of refinement.

Students learn other sophisticated concepts about words as well. They learn about shades of meaning—for example, the differences among these *sad* words: *unhappy, crushed, desolate, miserable, disappointed, cheerless, down,* and *grief stricken.* They also learn about synonyms and antonyms, wordplay, and figurative language.

View this video to learn more about the four cueing systems—*phonology, syntax, semantics*, and *pragmatics*. What role does semantics play in language learning?

The Pragmatic System. The fourth language system is **pragmatics**, which deals with the social and cultural aspects of language use. People use language for many purposes, and how they talk or write varies according to purpose and audience. Language use varies among social classes, cultural and ethnic groups, and geographic regions; these varieties are known as **dialects**. School is one cultural community, and the language of school is **Standard English**; this register, or style, is formal—the one used in textbooks, newspapers, and magazines and by TV newscasters. Other forms, including those spoken in inner cities, in Appalachia, and by Mexican Americans in the Southwest, are generally classified as **nonstandard English**; these nonstandard forms are alternatives in which the phonology, syntax, and semantics differ from those of Standard English, but they aren't inferior or substandard. They reflect the communities of the speakers, who communicate as effectively as those who use Standard English in their communities. The goal is for students to add Standard English to their repertoire of language registers, not to replace their home dialect with Standard English. Interestingly, researchers have also found regional differences in how people spell words on Twitter (Eisenstein, O'Connor, Smith, & Xing, 2011). For example, *cool* is spelled *coo* in southern California but *koo* in northern California, and in New York City, *suttin* is shorthand for *something*.

Academic Language

The type of English used for instruction is called **academic language**. It's different from the social or conversational language we speak at home and with friends in two ways. First, academic language is more cognitively demanding and decontextualized than social language in which speakers carry on face-to-face conversations about everyday topics (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Teachers use academic language when they teach language arts and other content areas and when they give directions for completing assignments. It's also the language used in content-area textbooks and on standardized achievement tests.