for

English Language Learners

Instruction & Activity Book

Language Patterns and Vocabulary
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Introduction

Imagine arriving in a new country where many things are unfamiliar to you—the climate, the food, the clothing, the landscape, and especially the language. You go to school and sit in a classroom that looks different from any you have known before. Your teacher and your fellow students speak to you, but you don’t understand a word they say. Your days are filled with a bewildering array of new experiences.

This is the daily challenge faced by thousands of children who have recently arrived in this country and are in the process of acquiring English. They come from a wide variety of cultures, languages, and circumstances. Some had solid school experiences to build upon. Others lacked educational opportunities in their home countries. But all of these children need consistent, meaningful instruction in English as a pathway toward academic success.

The Language Patterns and Vocabulary for English Language Learners Kit helps provide that instruction by offering forty lessons organized around ten themes that are immediately useful to newcomer students. Themes such as school, family, food, and clothing help children acquire important vocabulary for day-to-day communication. Other themes pave the way for content-area learning by introducing concepts such as time, money, transportation, and communities.

Each lesson provides an instructional path for multimodal language learning. For English Language Learners to acquire new vocabulary, they must use the words over and over in meaningful ways that include listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Each lesson of the Language Patterns and Vocabulary for English Language Learners Kit provides a rich context for learning, remembering, and expanding new vocabulary. Within each lesson, the teacher will:

- build oral language related to the theme
- introduce essential language patterns
- teach additional language skills
- lead theme-related independent or shared writing activities
- provide practice opportunities for listening, speaking, reading, and writing the new vocabulary and language patterns
- assess learning
- make connections with home and family

Language Patterns and Vocabulary for English Language Learners Kit Components

The following components support the instructional plan.

The Theme Cards support key vocabulary and concepts with labeled illustrations and photographs. They introduce lesson-related language patterns and provide a strong visual context for listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities.

The Instruction & Activity Book lessons provide step-by-step instruction that smoothly coordinates the use of all the Language Patterns and Vocabulary Kit components.

The Language Patterns and Vocabulary Kit Word Rods are whole-word, color-coded manipulatives that teachers and children can use to build and practice essential language patterns.

The Vocabulary-Building Dialogue Cards provide speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities with the Language Patterns and Vocabulary Kit Word Rods that allow children to practice new language patterns and expand their vocabularies.

Customizing Instruction for Different Needs

The Language Patterns and Vocabulary for English Language Learners Kit is designed for use in a variety of learning environments.

- Activities can be used flexibly with individuals, partners, or small groups.
- Lessons can be led by a classroom teacher, an ESL specialist, a paraprofessional, or a tutor.
- Each lesson can be covered in one day or spread over several days for additional practice and reinforcement.
- While the themes and language patterns have been developed according to a sequence, children can come in at any point and participate. You can also customize instruction by selecting themes and determining your own sequence of instruction.

Keep the following in mind as you prepare and implement the lesson plans in the Language Patterns and Vocabulary for English Language Learners Kit:

- Children who are already literate in their home language will be able to develop literacy in English more quickly if connections are made between their home language literacy and English literacy skills. Encourage more writing from children who are already writing in their home language, especially if the alphabetic system is the same or very similar to English. Make the grammar instruction more explicit.
- For children who are pre-literate, emphasize the oral language and shared writing activities. Let them practice copying text. Combine language instruction with literacy activities such as those found in the Beginning Phonics for English Language Learners Kit.
- Establish a strong link with home and family through the Home Connection activities. Keep in mind that although your students’ parents may speak little or no English, they have a wealth of knowledge to share with their children. Children will have a deeper understanding of concepts if they are reinforced in both languages, at school and at home.
The following resources offer helpful ideas and professional development to teachers of English Language Learners.

Books

Periodicals
Bilingual Research Journal, published three times a year by the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE). An online version is available at www.nabee.org.

Professional Resources

The Essential Teacher and TESOL Quarterly both published four times a year by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Online versions are available at www.tesol.org.

Organizations
Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE). University of California, Santa Cruz. www.crede.ucsc.edu

• Draw upon children’s background knowledge when discussing concepts. When talking about food, for example, encourage children to talk about the foods they eat at home. Help children make connections between what they already know and the concepts you introduce in the lessons.
• Learn everything you can about your students’ home cultures. Make use of available resources to provide home-language support for students.
• Tailor these lessons to meet the individual needs of your students. If things are moving too fast, slow down...