

# Introduction

Repetition is a key factor in reading instruction, and repetition is also necessary for successful language acquisition. One hurdle children with language learning disorders must overcome is a lack of interest in practicing skills that require repetition for effective learning. Varying exposures to essential language acquisition skills, as well as varying the means of repetition, is a valuable way to learn difficult language skills.

One difference between successful and unsuccessful reading and language achievement is that practicing in isolation is not a helpful means to learn language. Normally developing children learn language only through repeated exposure to and practice with language in different contexts. The same is true with children with language learning difficulties.

The varied activities in this book are meant to promote the skills necessary to communicate effectively in the classroom. Too often, children with language difficulties simply give up when faced with a challenging task. Kids with communication deficits often simply remain quiet when asked to explain their knowledge, even when that knowledge exists. For some children, language is a wonderful tool that can open countless doors, while for others, it stands as a frustrating wall between themselves and the rest of the world. The activities in this book are meant to chip away at that wall.

## How to Use this Book

Each chapter begins with a short introduction that includes these elements:

- **Types of Activities:** an overview of the activities included in the chapter and additional instructions for their use
- **IEP Goals and Objectives:** sample IEP goals to guide your instruction and aid accountability
- **Statements to Motivate:** brief statements to share with your students in order to help them understand the importance of the skill and the rationale for practicing it

*101 Language Activities* is organized by language goal areas with similar activities divided into separate chapters. While some minimal explanations are included on many of the worksheets, the instructions required for a language impaired student to understand the concepts tend to be effective when presented orally with individualized modifications.

The activities in this book are not meant to be used exclusively. They are most beneficial when used as supplementary material to increase understanding and for repetition after the instructor has introduced the target concept through other means.

### Vocabulary and the Curriculum

Vocabulary words from the curriculum have been integrated into each activity. The words included in *101 Language Activities* are intended to be representative of words that students throughout the United States should know. For kids who are specifically working on vocabulary, these words may be a starting point. For example, an instructor can try to discuss the word *government* with a fifth-grader and quickly ascertain that student's level of knowledge with this fourth-grade curriculum word. If the student is able to associate words such as *vote* or *leaders* with *government*, then it's not necessary to work on that word. If, however, the student has no clue what *government* is, targeted practice with that word is necessary. Activities such as the ones in this book will provide another situation in which the student can talk about specific vocabulary and associated words. Students with language learning difficulties often need additional practice using and understanding vocabulary expected to be mastered at much younger grades.

Because the acquisition and successful use of separate language skills are so interdependent on other skills, it is often beneficial to address an area even when it is not a direct target of daily practice. Research has consistently shown that retention of material is greatly improved when the timing of stimulus presentations are spread out rather than presented at one time. This phenomenon, known as the spacing effect, "has been observed in virtually every experimental learning paradigm, and with all sorts of traditional research materials" (Dempster & Farris, 1990, p. 97).

### Tips for Using the Activities

Some of the activities in this book are competitive. Competition is a great motivator, but it is often necessary to manipulate activities so that weaker participants don't feel bad about losing and stronger participants don't lose track of the purpose of the activity. One good way to do this is to stop the activity just before either person has had a chance to actually win.

Often children will dispute an answer. This is good — as long as the argument is reasonable and not excessive. It means that the student is developing important skills in critical thinking and persuasion. If the student can make a valid point and offer support for that point, then credit should be given.

Many of the activities are intended to be challenging. Students often will not be able to dive right in and be successful without prior preparation. It is generally effective to quickly discuss some of the concepts ahead of time so students will have a greater chance of success with an activity. Encourage your students to use good thinking skills, along with trial and error, to complete these activities

Have fun!

# Adjectives — Introduction

## Types of Activities

- **Describe It** (pages 7-9)  
These activities help students explore the breadth and limitation of certain adjectives. Assist students who may have difficulty with this activity to see that certain words can be used to describe more than one thing. The matching activity on page 9 may be particularly challenging, because there is really only one way that all the words can be used once. Encourage discussion about this activity, as many students will have their own opinions about these adjectives and their uses.
- **Your Best Language** (pages 10-11)  
These activities challenge your students to provide two adjectives to describe each item. The goal of these activities is to use accurate, specific language.
- **Pie Charts** (pages 12-15)  
In the first two pie charts, students are challenged to match one adjective with a noun. In the final two charts, students choose two adjectives for each noun. Remind students that each adjective can only be used once. Encourage them to scrutinize their choices and use trial and error to complete the activity.
- **Grid Activities** (pages 16-17)  
These grids are set up as game boards. Have students use tokens and a die to move around the board. When a student lands on a word, challenge him to name an object that the adjective describes. To increase the difficulty, have players name two or more items each adjective describes. Use this versatile format in any way that works best for you and your students.

## IEP Goals and Objectives:

- The student will identify adjectives, when provided multiple choices and foils, that can accurately describe curriculum content words with 90% accuracy.
- The student will use appropriate adjectives to describe vocabulary words with 90% accuracy.
- The student will include correct adjectives when defining curriculum-relevant vocabulary words with 80% accuracy.
- The student will use grade- and age-appropriate adjectives in sentences with 80% accuracy.

## Statements to Motivate

- The more adjectives you know, the better your verbal and written language will be.
- Using adjectives correctly helps people know exactly what you are writing and talking about.
- Adjectives help your writing and speaking to be more colorful, interesting, and precise.