



THE READING HOUSE



The Do-It-Yourself Language Arts Lesson

The best way to learn is through on-the-job training!

Supplies: Storybook or Chapter Book

Do an Internet search for a lesson plan on any language skill and your search will return hundreds of thousands of results. The resources at our fingertips are monumental and invaluable to our mission of teaching children all that they need to know. However, all of those resources can also distort the important goal of teaching children to read in meaningful and purposeful ways that promote retention, comprehension, and the ability to read independently.

As a parent, you may have been tasked with helping your child to practice a new language skill as follow-up to classroom learning or if your child is struggling to understand. As a teacher, that new language skill must be shown to 30+ different learners, all at different levels of readiness. It can seem like a daunting task, but it needn't be. Actually, the secret to success in this endeavor is so simple that it is often overlooked.

The most applicable way to teach and reinforce language skills is to use the story your child or student is currently reading. The text is current, age appropriate, and relevant to him, so whatever skill you focus on will have meaning. And the language skill you need to teach? I can almost guarantee that actual examples will exist throughout the text so that your learner will always be able to directly relate your lesson to his reading.

Here is a small sampling of the more general language arts skills:

- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Abbreviations
- Plural nouns
- Possessives
- Word endings -ed, -ing, -s, -er, -est
- Contractions
- Compound words



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- Prefixes and suffixes
- Context clues
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Root words
- Synonyms
- Antonyms
- Homonyms
- Main ideas and details
- Answering various types of questions: literal, interpretive, inferential
- Conclusions
- Predictions
- Inferences
- Story elements: setting, characters, plot, problem, solution
- Fact and opinion
- Personification
- Idioms
- Similes and metaphors
- Personification
- ABC Order
- Dictionary and glossary skills
- Thesaurus
- Syllabication
- Table of contents and indexes
- Complete and incomplete sentences

Now, for the do-it-yourself (DIY) part. Follow the process below when crafting a language arts lesson for your learner.

1. FOCUS. Identify the language skill that needs to be taught. **Let's take the example of contractions.**



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2. EXPLAIN. Determine how you will explain the rules and conventions associated with that skill. Remember ... keep it simple! **Things get smaller when they contact. Contracting is the opposite of expanding. When you blow a balloon up it expands, but when you let the air out, it contracts. Contractions are words that are made smaller by taking letters out.**
3. EXAMPLE. Prepare some examples. **See list below.**

Contraction	Original
aren't	are not
can't	cannot
couldn't	could not
didn't	did not
doesn't	does not
don't	do not
haven't	have not
he'd	he had, he would
he's	he is, he has
I'd	I had, I would
I'll	I will, I shall
I'm	I am
I've	I have
isn't	is not
it's	it is, it has
let's	let us
she'll	she will, she shall
she's	she is, she has
shouldn't	should not
that's	that is, that has
there's	there is, there has
they'll	they will, they shall
they're	they are
we're	we are
we've	we have
weren't	were not
what'll	what will, what shall
what's	what is, what has
where's	where is, where has



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who's	who is, who has
won't	will not
wouldn't	would not
you'll	you will, you shall
you're	you are
you've	you have

4. RELATE. Talk about the examples and how we use them in real life speech and reading. **Find examples of contractions as you and your child read together. In the classroom, put students in pairs and have them read some of their book to each other. They can identify the contractions together.**

5. CREATE. This is when you get to be creative. Think of an active way your learner can interact with this concept. Can you use index cards and an egg carton to make a game? Can you play contraction hangman? Can several students work together to write out as many contractions as they can in one minute? How many can they write in two minutes? Can a learner be given 8 contractions and challenged to use them in a silly story? The possibilities are endless.