

# THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH (LEA)

## ADVANTAGES OF LEA:

LEA utilizes learners' experiences.

LEA utilizes learners' own language.

LEA capitalizes on the learners' interests.

LEA is non-threatening.

LEA is motivational.

## STEPS FOR USING LEA:

The learner copies the sentence onto paper.

The learner practices reading the sentence(s) several times.

The learner reads the sentence(s) aloud with assistance.

The instructor and the learner read the sentence(s) together.

The instructor prints (types, if possible) the sentence(s) on paper in the learner's own language (manuscript — upper and lower case).

From the conversation, the instructor selects one or more sentences to be used for instruction.

The instructor has a conversation with the student.

*Adapted from ABS Instructor Training Manual © 1992  
Whitfield, Parker & Childress*

# TEACHING READING TO THE BEGINNING READER: LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH (LEA) AND VISUAL-AUDITORY-KINESTHETIC-TACTILE (VAKT)

The following suggestions are for students who have demonstrated some difficulty learning to read. The student should be able to listen to a short story and retell significant parts. The student should speak in sentences which average at least five words. The student should demonstrate an interest in looking at books and/or learning to read.

LEA :

**Step 1:** Talk to the student. Choose one idea (key sentence) that the student talks about which seems to be important to him/her.

**Step 2:** Instructor/tutor prints or types the key sentence on card or envelope. The words should be in lower case letters.

My dog is sick.
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**Step 3:** The instructor/tutor reads the sentence several times, and then points to each word as it is read aloud.

**Step 4:** Instructor/tutor types the sentence again on a 3 x 5 card. The instructor/tutor cuts the words apart.

My	dog	is	sick.
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**Step 5:** The instructor/tutor matches and says each word.

**Step 6:** The instructor/tutor mixes up the words.

My dog is sick.

**Step 7:** The instructor/tutor places and says each word except the last word. Let the student place and say the last word.


My dog is sick.			
My	dog	is	sick.

**Step 8:** Continue to mix up the words. The instructor/tutor should allow the student to add more words each time until he or she is putting the whole sentence together.

**Step 9:** Take away the sentence card or envelope. Mix the words up. The instructor/tutor should place and say the first word or two then let the student finish the sentence. Repeat this process until the student seems to recognize the words instantly.

My	dog	is	sick.
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**Step 10:** Let the student draw a picture on the card or envelope. If the student forgets the sentence the picture may help the student with recall.

My dog is sick.	
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## VAKT

**Step 11:** On the other side of the card or envelope the instructor/tutor should print in large letters a key word from the sentence. Choose the name of an object or a word the student often confuses.



**Step 12:** Teacher traces the word and says the word while tracing. Do NOT spell the word.

**Step 13:** Let the student trace and say the word. Help the student trace the letters correctly.

**Step 14:** Have the student mix up the words, put together the sentence and read the sentence again and again until the student is confident. Review the words in the sentence several times each day.

Caution!!! Be sure one sentence is mastered before going to another. Go very slow. Give honest praise for small gains. Some students will need 50 to 100 experiences before words are instantly recognized.

## LEA SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Here are some variations on LEA that can be used to teach skills, during the lesson, using the same sentences:

- The learner practices using context clues with unfamiliar words.
- The learner circles words as the instructor calls the words aloud.
- The instructor mixes the words up and the learner recombines the words into the original sentences.
- The learner works on sight word development, using words typed on flash-cards.
- The learner writes new sentences with the words.

(The instructor places a copy of the completed lesson in the student portfolio, and keeps the instantly recognized words in a word bank for the student.)

## USING LEA WITH A GROUP

- Select an experience which is familiar to all students, such as a field trip or a film that the class has seen together, or read an interesting selection to the group.
- Have individuals share the experience from their point of view.
- The instructor records (prints) the story on chart paper as the students compose it.
- Have each individual in the group(s) “read” the part he/she shared. Encourage students to work on one or more of the sentences they want to learn.

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## OTHER ALTERNATIVES FOR GROUP LEA

Select a language experience story by an adult beginning reader to read to the class as an example. Give the students some background about who wrote the story and how/why it was written. Then, read the story aloud to the class.

Encourage discussion by evaluating the story with questions such as:

- Do you think this event could happen here?
- What would you have done had you been this person?
- Has a similar experience ever happened to you?

The group and the instructor can choose one person’s experience from the discussion to use as a subject for a new story, or the group can compile a story from their mutual experiences. (At this point, if there are more than 5 people, it would be best to divide into small groups.)

At the next class the instructor can use a typed copy of the story (or a “newspaper” of the stories) as a reading text for individuals or the whole class. The instructor can also use the story or stories for skill development.