**General receptive language classroom adjustments**

**What is receptive language?**

Receptive language refers to the ability to understand and process spoken language at a sound, word, sentence, and discourse (conversational) level.

**How to support students with receptive language difficulties**

The following classroom adjustments may benefit students with receptive language difficulties. These strategies can be used in any classroom to support **all** students that are having difficulty understanding spoken language, regardless of whether they have a diagnosis or not.

These adjustments can also be used in smaller, targeted group activities to help students who require additional support.

**ADJUSTMENTS**

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| 1 | Consider the listening environment:Lights On with solid fillTips* + Where possible, seat your student away from distractions or close to the teacher to optimise their attention.
	+ Gain your student’s attention before presenting verbal information or instructions. This does not mean insisting on eye contact, which may be hard for some students.
	+ Reconsider expectations around ‘whole body listening’, as many children move to support their listening. Wobble cushions and fidget toys may help.
	+ Use visual supports to help with understanding. For example:
		- * [Visual schedules](https://autismhub.education.qld.gov.au/resources/functional-behaviour-assessment-tool/help/visual-schedule) to help students follow routines and instructions.
			* [Concept maps](https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept_maps) to support classroom vocabulary and content understanding.
			* [Picture sequences](https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/developing-sequencing-concepts.pdf) to help sequencing of ideas and story structure in written tasks.
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| 2 | Use visual example of completed work to model and aid understanding:Lights On with solid fill**Tips*** + Use explicit, concise and concrete language.
	+ Limit the number of steps or requests made. Present one instruction and wait for the student to complete that instruction before presenting another one. For example, the instruction ‘Get your green reading folder and put it on your desk. Then get your reader and come back to the floor and sit in your reading group’, can be broken down into smaller steps presented one at a time: **1.** Get your green reading folder. **2**. Put it on your desk. **3.** Get your reader. **4.** Sit on the floor in your reading group.
	+ Provide instructions in the order they are expected to happen. For example, ‘Finish yesterday’s work **and then** start the new set of questions’ rather than‘Start the new set of questions **after** you finish yesterday’s work’.
	+ Use visual supports to assist understanding. For example, writing down the steps or key words, using gestures to match the task.
	+ Model rehearsal techniques by repeating instructions using key words (e.g., Get your **maths book**, **pencil** and **eraser**).
	+ Help your student focus their attention by highlighting important information. For example, ‘Okay, you need to listen to this’ or ‘I’m going to tell you important information now’.
	+ Be aware of words with multiple meanings. These can create the most confusion for students with language difficulties. For example, ‘orange’ is both a colourand fruit.
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| 3 | Allow your student additional time to process information or instructions.  |
| 4 | Encourage your student to use rehearsal techniques to help retain and recall information.Strategies such as listening for the number of parts in an instruction, repeating an instruction before carrying out the steps. |
| 5 | Check that your student has understood key concepts and instructions after presenting them.Lights On with solid fill**Tips*** + Do this in a way that does not draw attention to them or make them stand out from their peers.
	+ Ask them to tell you in their own words what they know or need to do, rather than repeating back what you have said or asking Yes or No questions.
	+ Ask them to demonstrate what they have understood.
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| 6 | Consider providing your student with notes, rather than expecting them to copy from the board or take notes while you are talking. Additional tasks can be taxing for students with language difficulties. Providing notes allows them to focus on listening. Lights On with solid fill**Tips**Allow the student to:* take a photo of the whiteboard
* record the teacher speaking
* use speech to text software.
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| 7 | Encourage your student to seek clarification if they are unsure about what they need to do. Students with language difficulties will benefit from being explicitly taught this skill with appropriate scaffolds (e.g., visual supports) as well as by observing peers and adults requesting clarification. |
| 8 | Where possible, introduce new topics/concepts ahead of time so that your student is familiar with the language before it is presented. Alternatively, allocate time at the start of a new lesson to focus on the required vocabulary. Lights On with solid fill**Tips*** + Use picture books, diagrams and other visuals as a focus for discussion about the target words.
	+ Select and explicitly teach words that are essential to understanding theunit and support students to explain the meanings in their own words.
	+ Teach new words in context to the students’ experiences, connecting the new word to background knowledge.
	+ Talk about words in terms of:
		- * the category they fall into
			* the function they perform
			* a description of the word (e.g., colour, taste, touch, size, meaning etc.)
			* synonyms for the word
			* opposites of the word
			* what the word starts with
			* what other words may be associated with the word.

**Note:** The above strategies help understanding and more effective storage and retrieval of the word for future use.* + Provide examples and explicitly teach the word in context. Identify how the word can and cannot be used in a sentence to refine the student’s understanding.
	+ Support understanding of vocabulary using topic webs or semantic maps.
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**IMPORTANT NOTE**

**REFER TO TABLES ON FOLLOWING PAGES** to see which of the above adjustments can be applied to signs of language difficulties as indicated in the corresponding checklists.

[Language for Learning Primary Checklist](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/learningneeds/Language_for_Learning_Primary_Checklist.DOCX)

[Language for Learning Secondary Checklist](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/learningneeds/Language_for_Learning_Secondary_Checklist.DOCX)

Use the results under the headings in checklists to identify which areas require additional support and match these to the corresponding adjustments.

**Linking adjustments to results from receptive language checklist – Primary level**

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| --- | --- |
| ADJUSTMENTS | SIGNS OF LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY |
| **Behaviour** | **Verbal memory / Sequencing** | **Comprehension** | **Expressive language / Story telling** | **Word retrieval / Vocabulary** | **Social Communication / Pragmatics** | **Saying complex words** | **Sound awareness** |
| 1. Listening environment
 | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Adapt language
 |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Give time
 |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Rehearsal techniques
 | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Check for understanding
 | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Provide notes
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Encourage seeking clarification
 | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |
| 1. Introducing new topics
 |  |  |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |

**Linking adjustments to results from receptive language checklist – Secondary level**

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| --- | --- |
| ADJUSTMENTS | SIGNS OF LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY |
| **Academic and literate language** | **Behaviour** **Processing auditory information** | **Behaviour****Disguising learning problems** | **Behaviour** **Planning** | **Behaviour****Social skills** | **Speaking and listening****Language comprehension** | **Speaking and listening****Vocabulary** | **Speaking and listening****Language expression** | **Speaking and listening****Text level language** |
| 1. Listening environment
 |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Adapt language
 |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |
| 1. Give time
 |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |
| 1. Rehearsal techniques
 |  |  |  |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |
| 1. Check for understanding
 |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |
| 1. Provide notes
 | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Encourage seeking clarification
 |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |
| 1. Introducing new topics
 | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |  |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill |  |  |