

Introduction

From infancy through adulthood, language and reasoning skills play a critical role in success or failure in dealing with life's varied experiences. We all need to think independently and reason logically to solve problems, determine causes of events, and predict outcomes in daily life.

As educators, we witness the significant problems that result when students lack logical thinking and adequate expressive language skills. We observe preschoolers who have trouble answering basic questions or who don't associate simple cause-and-effect relationships. We see students at the elementary and secondary level experience difficulty participating in classroom discussions. They respond with tangential and irrelevant answers. They approach everyday problems without applying logic or appropriate organization. Deficient reasoning skills also affect interpersonal relationships. Students who fail to generalize from previous learning or experience remain at risk in dealing with school and life in general.

We developed this program to teach students specific reasoning and expressive language skills. We have included a variety of formats to help students understand and practice targeted reasoning and expressive language skills.

Each unit in *No-Glamour Language & Reasoning* addresses a specific thinking skill area. The units are sequenced in a hierarchy that reflects normal development of these skills. The question types reflect classroom, textbook, and standardized test formats. Most of the responses are oral in order to give students practice in speaking their thoughts. You may want to alter the response mode to have your students respond in writing to improve their written expression. Writing may also help some students refine their thinking skills during the process of generating and writing their responses.

There is a Pretest/Posttest at the beginning of each unit. We recommend a 90% accuracy rate to consider a unit skill (or an individual task) mastered. An accuracy rate of 60%-89% suggests that training in the skill is appropriate. If a student achieves an accuracy rate below 60% on either a pretest or any of the unit tasks, we suggest reviewing lower-level units or tasks before presenting tasks in the deficient skill area again.

The beginning units of *No-Glamour Language & Reasoning* teach students to organize their thoughts about attributes, the foundations for higher-level thinking skills. Students learn to recognize key characteristics and to associate, compare, and contrast things and ideas. Students receive extensive practice in classifying, comparing, understanding exclusion statements, and sequencing by attribute.

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The later units of this book teach students the thinking and language skills they need to ask and answer questions appropriately. True/false questions teach students to think through questions before responding. Higher-level questions teach students to use effective language to share information, ideas, explanations, and opinions. Learning to ask questions gives students experience in manipulating language to formulate the most appropriate questions to ask in various situations.

The Answer Key lists sample answers where appropriate; answers for oral exercises are printed on the stimuli pages. In many cases, more than one answer may be correct. Accept all reasonable answers as correct, taking advantage of natural opportunities to support the breadth of experience and information your students bring to their learning. Students who have been conditioned to expect only a “right/wrong” judgment for answers may need encouragement to think of more than one “right” answer, or to accept another student’s answer as correct when it differs from their own “correct” answers. Such encouragement may help students take other people’s perspectives more readily.

When a student gives what appears to be an incorrect answer, probe the student to understand what prompted the answer. Use patterns of incorrect answers as valuable diagnostic information about where you need to provide additional specific training. Whenever stimuli encourage independent thinking or analysis, encourage students to develop their own opinions and standards to evaluate ideas.

Some of the worksheets in this book include a question or two at the bottom of the page. Answers to these questions are not provided because they will vary according to personal experiences, values, and opinions.

We hope *No-Glamour Language & Reasoning* helps your students acquire logical thinking skills and apply them to their future experiences. Such application will boost their success in school, social relationships, and everyday problem solving. Their self-confidence will increase as they recognize they can think and reason for themselves and can communicate their thoughts effectively to others.

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