

Receptive Language

The importance of strong receptive language skills is not always recognized by clients, caregivers or, sometimes even speech-language pathologists. When a client experiences a receptive aphasia, the starting point of therapy should address this impairment in comprehension.

It's often difficult to define receptive language to clients and their caregivers. I've found that using words like "understanding" or "comprehension" to describe receptive language functions, seems to convey a clearer meaning of your therapy focus to others. Because receptive language is not visible like expressive communication, family members or caregivers may become confused regarding the SLP's remediation tactics. It's your obligation to educate these individuals and assure them that expressive communication will also be remediated, but that receptive language skills simply cannot be ignored.

The activities in this section provide a wide range of stimulus items designed to increase receptive language in the aphasic client. It is vital to begin these therapy approaches at a level appropriate for the client and to continue with that level from activity to activity. Eventually, the client should reach a plateau where skill levels stabilize and further improvement is unlikely. Work closely with other disciplines (PT, OT, RN, Activities, etc.) to discover what receptive language difficulties are most frustrating for the client and staff members.

I've tried to devise user-friendly activities that require little or no preparation for the clinician. You will also note that the number of stimulus items for most activities is large. Most of your clients will need to practice a skill over and over before proficiency is gained. We all become bored using the same items over and over. Enjoy the variety.

As a therapist, I've been in your shoes. I've used other receptive language workbooks that seemed to just miss the mark. I hope that using these receptive language activities will provide clients with steady success and clinicians with the opportunity to watch that incredible transformation.

Goal: The client will increase auditory comprehension to 90% accuracy for complex paragraphs.

Instructions: Read a paragraph to the client. Ask him to answer the questions that follow. There are ten questions—five context questions and five yes/no questions. Some questions may be easier or more appropriate for the client's comprehension level, so choose accordingly. Explain that the activity gets harder as it progresses. Try not to let the client read the paragraph himself since this is mainly a receptive language activity.

- Compensatory Strategies:**
- Read the paragraphs expressively. Vocally emphasize key words.
 - Break up the paragraphs into sentences if necessary.
 - Repeat the paragraph until the client understands it.
 - Choose questions that match the client's level of verbal output. For example, a client with limited verbal output can answer yes/no questions by nodding or shaking his head.

Activity: Read each paragraph and have the client answer the questions that follow.

1. This was the hottest summer Ada had ever experienced. The temperature had climbed to over 90° for the last 20 days. Ada's husband, Harold, noticed that it had become more difficult to cool the second floor of their home. Harold asked his neighbor and the neighbor suggested Harold use a garden hose to clean out the coils of the air conditioner. Harold followed the suggestion and felt a difference in 24 hours. Within three days, the cooling ability of the air conditioner was back to normal.
 - a. What was Harold's wife's name?
 - b. What was Harold's problem?
 - c. How high did the temperature get?
 - d. Whom did Harold speak to about the problem?
 - e. What did the neighbor suggest that Harold do?
 - f. Was the wife named Alice?
 - g. Did Harold call a repair person to fix the problem?
 - h. Did the temperature climb above 100°?
 - i. Did Harold use a garden hose to clean the coils?
 - j. Was everything back to normal in two days?

8. Where do you see zebras?
 - a. hospital
 - b. zoo
 - c. your backyard

9. Where would you go to see an art exhibit?
 - a. museum
 - b. department store
 - c. courtroom

10. Where do you put water to make it solid?
 - a. oven
 - b. cabinet
 - c. freezer

11. Where would you go to buy a wrench? _____
12. Where would you like to go on vacation? _____
13. Where is the weather usually very cold? _____

14. Where can you buy a diamond bracelet? _____
15. Where do you get a car loan? _____
16. Where would you like to go on your birthday? _____

17. Where should you keep poisonous chemicals? _____

18. Where can you get your prescriptions filled? _____
19. Where can you get a tan? _____
20. Where can you buy a book? _____

Building Sentences without Cueing

expressive
language

Goal: The client will increase verbal expression to 90% accuracy for sentence formulation without cueing.

Instructions: Tell the client you'll *verbally* give him a word and that he must add words until he makes a sentence. Explain that his sentence can be about anything, as long as it makes sense. Use the word list from the previous activity for your target words.

- Compensatory Strategies:**
- You can play a variation of this activity. You come up with one word, then the client comes up with one. Then you come up with another one, then he does, etc.
 - Experiment with three word sentences and build up to longer ones if the client is able.
 - Do not provide further cueing. The client should be striving for a maximum level of independence at this point in therapy.

Activity: Verbally give the client a word from the previous activity's list and have him make up his own sentence.