

Developing Teaching Learning Material: Language

Teaching at the Right Level

Table of contents

Simple Paragraphs	2
Short Stories	3
Flashcards	4
Picture Calendar	5
Syllable Chart	6

Introduction

Access to appropriate teaching-learning materials is vital to developing children's language skills. The TaRL approach aims to build and strengthen children's foundational language and numeracy skills. This is often done by engaging children in fun and interactive activities. TaRL activities use teaching learning materials (TLM) in an integrated manner, wherein the TLM is utilized and adapted to stimulate listening, speaking, doing, reading, and writing in children.

This note discusses (1) how to develop teaching learning materials (TLM) that foster children's literacy skills and (2) how to adapt them to the local context.

Here are some points to keep in mind when creating TaRL language TLM:

- **Materials should be contextualized:** TaRL interventions are adapted to the local contexts and needs of the program. This means ensuring that the TLM is created in the appropriate languages, and uses information that is relevant to the child's surroundings. For instance, simple paragraphs, short stories, and pictures should use examples of experiences and activities that children are familiar with. The materials should also be considerate of gender, social values, and other context specific-realities.
- **Materials suit the needs and budget of the program:** Diverse country contexts can have different prices for printing and other material-related costs. Keep these costs aligned with the program's budget. If needed, adapt the materials to reduce cost or modify how the resources are distributed. For instance, in low-resource settings, blank papers may be substituted with pieces of cardboard, and, instead of being printed, materials may be created using locally available resources. Based on the program, some materials may be developed by teachers in classrooms and even by children in their notebooks. It is important to note that such modifications must be made keeping in mind the context.
- **Materials are age and level appropriate:** Usually, TaRL interventions target children in grades 3 to 5. This means working with children aged 8 to 12. However, in some contexts, children who are slightly older or younger may also be included in TaRL sessions. Plan the TLM keeping in mind this age range. Do your materials reflect the concerns and familiar surroundings of the children you work with?
- **Materials can be revised periodically:** Developers must bear in mind that material creation is an iterative process, which requires observation of how children interact with materials for future revision. Regularly revise and update your materials. Ensure that the materials are appropriate for TaRL levels when revised.
- **Materials can focus on local language/language of instruction in primary grades:** In most TaRL programs, materials are ideally developed in children's local language or the language of instruction in primary grades. This helps in developing children's abilities to decode and encode. Furthermore, such materials encourage children to engage with the content and develop comprehension skills. However, it is important to note that these materials differ from program to program based on the program's diverse needs.

Who can be involved in the development of the TaRL material?

The TLM developed for TaRL programs is easy to create and use materials accessible in the local context. However, the creation of these materials requires a familiarity with the TaRL approach as the materials are prepared based on specific TaRL-related guidelines. Therefore, it is recommended that individuals familiar with the methodology should be involved in preparing the materials. In certain contexts, children may be asked to copy materials such as simple paragraphs and syllable charts in their notebooks.

Simple Paragraphs (of around 16 to 20 words)

Purpose:

- To demonstrate how to read the text with proper voice modulation, diction, and pronunciation while heeding all the punctuation marks.
- To help children practice listening and reading.
- To help children read the text with comprehension.
- To help children acquire fluency.

Relevant Activities: Simple Paragraph Reading activity and more.

Printing: Create some simple paragraphs of which some can be selected and printed in a small *booklet*.

- This booklet can have 8 pages (A6 size) with 16 simple paragraphs per language.
- In low-resource conditions, developers/instructors can fold two A4 sheets length-wise twice to get A6.

Distribution: Ideally, each child should have a booklet of simple paragraphs.

Guidelines:

- Simple Paragraphs should have four simple sentences that are connected to each other.
- These sentences should be written on separate lines.
- There should be 4 to 5 simple words in each sentence.
- Simple words are those words that are commonly used by children.
- The content/topic of the text should be from the immediate surrounding of the children.

Points to Remember:

- Attempt to write all sentences in the present tense with appropriate verbs and prepositions.
 - Sentences may include simple adjectives but not adverbs (quickly, largely, etc.); possessive nouns (cat's, John's, etc.); contractions (don't, shouldn't, etc.).
- The topics/context of the paragraph should be familiar to the children in the target areas. Developers may use the children's environment as inspiration while creating this material.

Example: Sample simple paragraphs

**This is a hen.
The hen sits in a nest.
The hen lays eggs.
The hen has wings**

**My mother cooks a meal.
She cooks meat and rice.
The food is tasty.
We all eat it together.**

Alternatives:

- When preparing reading materials for older children, ensure that the material developed is age-appropriate. It should reflect their experiences and concerns. (E.g. a paragraph on a football match, mango season, a parent's occupation, etc.)

Short stories (of around 60 to 80 words)

Purpose:

- To demonstrate how to read the text with proper voice modulation, diction, and pronunciation while heeding all the punctuation marks.
- To help children practice listening and reading.
- To acquire fluency.

Relevant Activities: Can be used in foundational reading assessments, and while conducting reading-related activities.

Printing: The short stories can be selected and printed in a small booklet. Print the following:

- A booklet of 10 pages (A5 size) of 20 stories per language can be given to each child.
- In low-resource conditions, developers/instructors can fold five A4 papers lengthwise twice to get an A5-sized sheet of paper.

Distribution: Ideally, each child should have a small booklet with a collection of short stories.

Guidelines:

- Each short story has 8 to 10 sentences with 5 to 8 words in each sentence. It should not be more than 60 to 80 words.
- The text should include simple words used commonly by the children.
- Ensure that the sentences come together to form a meaningful story.
- Each story must have a beginning, a middle/gamechanger, and an end/conclusion.
- Developers may create 2 to 3 questions to assess children's comprehension. One question can be a direct fact retrieval question, while the rest may ask about indirect information.

Points to Remember:

- Attempt to write with appropriate verbs and prepositions.
 - Sentences may include simple adjectives but not adverbs (quickly, largely, etc.); possessive nouns (cat's, John's, etc.); contractions (don't, shouldn't, etc.).
- The topics/context of the paragraph should be familiar to the children in the target areas. Developers may use the children's environment as inspiration while creating this material.
 - Familiar topics may include discussing a parent/grandparent's occupation, the child's experiences of helping with household chores, etc.

Example: Sample short stories

<p>A big tree stood in a garden. It was alone and lonely. One day a bird came and sat on it. The bird held a seed in its beak. It dropped the seed near the tree. A small plant grew there. Soon there were many more trees. The big tree was happy.</p>	<p>Anna is ten years old. She has a brother. They are both getting ready for school. Anna has had a bath and has combed her hair. Her brother has kept his books in his bag. Their school is far away from the house. Both of them walk to school every day.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What stood in the garden?2. What does 'many' mean?3. Who dropped the seed near the tree?4. Why was the tree happy?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How old was Anna?2. What does 'house' mean?3. Who all are getting ready for school?4. Why do you think they are getting ready for school in time?

Alternatives:

- When preparing reading materials for older children, ensure that the material developed is age-appropriate. These materials should reflect children's experiences and concerns.
- Longer stories can also be written for children. These can be 80-120 words in length.

Note: For both simple paragraphs and longer stories, draw pictures if possible.

Flashcards



Purpose: Letter recognition and making words

Relevant Activities: Can be used in language activities that build letter recognition and strengthen children's skills to make words.

Printing: These flashcards can be printed and cut into small flashcards. In low-resource areas, these flashcards can be drawn by hand as well.

Distribution: These flashcards can be distributed per group. Ideally, each group should get at least one set of flashcards. Alternatively, each set can be shared by two groups.

Guidelines: Make flashcards for each consonant and vowel.

- Cut available paper or cardboard into small squares to create flashcards.
- Write consonants and vowels prominently on the flashcards

Points to Remember:

- Ensure that each set has enough common letters/syllables and vowels to enable children to form words.

Alternatives:

- Use cardboard or thick A4 Size paper to create the flashcards. Other materials may also be used based on the context. Use alternative ways of creating these materials after consulting individuals who have been trained in the TaRL approach.

Picture Calendar/Card

Purpose: To help children to “think,” imagine, and express their thoughts confidently.

Relevant Activities: Can be used in activities such as picture card reading, and activities that encourage children to speak informally or to act out scenarios.

Distribution: Print and distribute a set of picture calendars/cards to each class.

Guidelines:

- Choose or create a picture that is relevant to the children’s context and shows familiar scenes.
- It should be printed in a size that children can hold and pass to one another.
- The objects in the picture should be visible.
- It should not have only one or two human beings.
- Ideally, the picture should be colourful and engaging.



A sample picture card

Points to Remember:

- It should have objects and actions that can help children to talk about it in one word and one sentence.

Alternatives:

If picture cards are not available, ask children to pick something from their surroundings and describe/talk about the object. For example, this object could be a leaf, a stone, a flower, etc.

Syllable Chart

Kiswahili Chati ya Silabi					
Aa	a	e	i	o	u
Bb	ba	be	bi	bo	bu
Dd	da	de	di	do	du
Ff	fa	fe	fi	fo	fu
Gg	ga	ge	gi	go	gu
Hh	ha	he	hi	ho	hu
Jj	ja	je	ji	jo	ju
Kk	ka	ke	ki	ko	ku
Ll	la	le	li	lo	lu
Mm	ma	me	mi	mo	mu
Nn	na	ne	ni	no	nu
Pp	pa	pe	pi	po	pu
Rr	ra	re	ri	ro	ru
Ss	sa	se	si	so	su
Tt	ta	te	ti	to	tu
Vv	va	ve	vi	vo	vu
Ww	wa	we	wi	wo	wu
Yy	ya	ye	yi	yo	yu
Zz	za	ze	zi	zo	zu

Purpose: To help children recognize consonant/ vowels, read syllables, and form words independently.

Relevant Activities: Can be used in language activities that build letter/syllable recognition and strengthen children's skills to make words. The syllable chart also helps children to strengthen their writing skills.

Distribution:

Class Wise: One chart each per class, A3/Calendar Size

Guidelines:

- The syllable chart is created in a local language and is a cart of consonant and vowel
- Write the vowels at the top of the page
- Write the consonants in a column on one side of the page
- Combine the syllables to create syllables strings.
- Reading this chart horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and in a zig-zag pattern gives practice to children and strengthens their recognition and reading skills.

Aa	a	e	i	o	u
Bb	ba	be	bi	bo	bu

Points to Remember:

- Ensure that each set has common letters /syllables.
- Ensure that the letter size is visible to children in the classroom.
- Ensure that children practice reading the syllable chart until they understand and recognize all the consonants/vowels and their blends.

Alternatives:

If printing this chart is not an option, consider the following ways to adapt the materials to your needs and contexts:

- Class Wise: Ideally, the syllable chart should be visible to the whole class.
 - o You can draw it on the wall with paint.
 - o You can draw it on the blackboard as well.
 - o Depending on what is available in the surroundings, you can also make the number chart on flip charts, plastic or paper bags, cardboard boxes, etc.
- Child Wise: Ideally, each child should have a syllable chart. However, there are other ways of creating and distributing the syllable charts for diverse contexts.
 - o Distribute the syllable chart in pairs
 - o Ask the children to draw the syllable chart in their notebooks.