

Speaking, writing, listening and reading are the four language skills. But beware of the once-used terminology which called the productive skills 'active' and the receptive skills 'passive'. There are two conventional ways of dividing the four skills up. The first is into medium, with listening and speaking occurring in the spoken medium, reading and writing in the written medium. You are invited to write the words speaking, listening, reading and writing inside the box below, to indicate how they stand in relation to these divisions: In some approaches to language teaching, the four skills are treated separately. In addition there are processes common to the productive skills, so that techniques for the teaching of speaking can, with modifications, often be used for writing. Understanding your reader, knowing what they are expecting next and anticipating how they will interpret what you write are essential skills for good writing. One might even go so far as to say that teaching good writing involves teaching someone to be a good reader. All this adds up to the fact that although it is sometimes useful to look at the four skills separately, we must not forget ways in which they are similar, and how they interconnect. This use of the terms 'receptive' and 'productive' is probably self-evident. For one thing, our needs analysis is likely to reveal different learner needs for each skill area. There are obvious advantages to doing this.