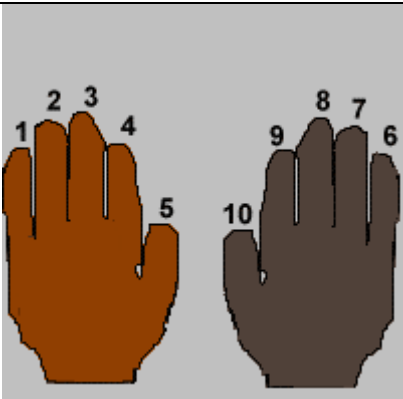



III. Overture: Introduction, Overture, and Overview of the English Language

The Two Hands Approach begins with a presentation called *The Twelve Turns of the English Language*, which is called an *overture*. As an **overture**, it suggests the importance of sound and the musical rhythms that underlie language.

The overture also functions as an *introduction and an overview* of the English language. As an **introduction**, the Twelve Turns of the English language provides an initial identification and acquaintance with the elements of English., and as an **overview**, it affords an aerial survey of the English language as a whole.

THE TWELVE TURNS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

	
Twelve Turns of the English Language	
5 Skills (Unconscious)	5 Tasks (Conscious)
1 Listening	6 Vocabulary
2 Speaking	7 Basic English (a) Usage speaking (b) Grammar ↓ (c) Mechanics writing (i) pronunciation sound (ii) spelling ↓ (iii) punctuation sight
3 Thinking	8 Sentences
4 Writing	9 Paragraphs
5 Reading	10 Essays
Left hand: Long paper	Right hand: Book
Clap!	
	

The Twelve Turns of the English Language are not polarities, but consist of five interdependent skills and five tasks which must be successively, continuously, and

interactively developed, plus two crowning achievements that signify the final goal and desired outcomes of all language instruction.

These *turns* can be looked at as sequential and proprietary (*it's your turn*), as in the fleeting ownership of someone engaged in a conversation, or it can be looked at as circular, rotational, winding, coiling, as in the subtle yet irrefutable connections that exist between successive phases of any process. These twelve turns involve a linear progression down each of the columns (see chart), yet have a returning arc back to the top, keeping one always in constant awareness of each of the parts separately and yet of the whole that informs the parts.

FIVE SKILLS

(1) Listening – From amid the tumult of sounds that fill our waking and sleeping ears, we pick out sets of significant sounds. The sounds are words, and they have significance. MacNeil (1988) points out that our human aural conditioning goes back to the “*remotest origins of our species*”, and that the “*aural pathways to the brain – to say nothing of the heart – must be very sophisticated.*” He emphatically maintains that we need to restore the importance of listening in our society. He says that “*even for the literate adult undervaluing the importance of the sound of the language shrivels the language sense....Words heard clearly form the earliest layers because children live in the oral tradition.*” As children, we revel in the sound of words newly learned. As older learners of additional languages, we may *revel*, or we may occasionally *revile* – depending upon the degree of mastery of those sounds, the phonetic inventory, of the target language.

The word *revile* comes from the Old French word, *viler*, which meant *to humiliate*. As an intransitive verb, *revile* means “*to use abusive language*”. Certainly, a major reason for the use of abusive language by various sectors of society is because they feel humiliated, and they lack the resources to express this frustration or inadequacy, and therefore resort to the most expedient and least laborious of means, the limited use (sometimes unlimited use) of the widening set of coarse and vulgar language noticeably slowly percolating through all levels of the society and the media. A child who is surrounded by such language learns to relish and delight in a very limited set of words, words which do not uplift or *accentuate the positive* (as songwriter Johnny Mercer once wrote), but instead resonate, connote, and denote marginal words lacking beauty and depth, and respect for self and others.

You have to listen before you can speak.

(2) Speaking – In speaking, we undertake the initial construction and expression of life in connected words, deployed first to hear ourselves think and hold our thoughts in mind, and second to communicate with others. Everyone observes that children talk out loud to themselves constantly, as if to ground and root themselves in the sounds and permanence of words from their own mute silence and lack of communicative ability. **We must talk to ourselves for a long time out loud before we can know and understand ourselves, and talk out loud to others much longer to communicate with them.** Speaking is a long process of trial and error where many failures precede success. You have to speak a long time in a language before you can think in it.

You have to speak frequently before you can stop speech by thought and reconfigure it to become structurally coherent and connected.

(3) Thinking –We must learn to think in the target language. We begin to piece the words together. Thinking is perception of structure and order. Thinking is visual and architectural, and can be powerfully represented by all kinds of maps, charts, and models worthy of imitation. We sometimes create new words or phrases, jumping quickly, perhaps, to a conclusion on the structure of the language long before we are formally taught about the language. In our new language mindfulness, we start to relate to people and things and events. Word by word and phrase by phrase, the vernacular is heard, perceived, recognized, connected, and absorbed. Elated in the joy of recognition, we store, keep, and upon a not-too-distant occasion in the future, we usher the language out from its new habitat in our mind, duplicate it, and launch it with full confidence and optimism, pondering the success or failure of the operation, pending the sign or response that the intended connection was made with the receiver. Then, does our repertoire of reusable and recyclable resources develop, enlarge, and consolidate. Ideas are put into the most basic of sentences or fragments thereof, and the mind becomes accustomed to the new, strange, and wonderful land where thoughts are clearly expressed in suitable forms in language. **Thinking is structural and visual. You have to think in the language a long time before you can break speech apart, and then reconfigure it in the coherent, clear, and meaningful manner required by writing.**

(4) Writing – Someone drew before someone wrote. Someone wrote before someone read. We had symbols before we had words and literature. Paleolithic art tells us we were artists before we were writers. But then at about the time of the Sumerians, the symbols became the words. Initial writing was used to record mercantile transactions, but later developed into a higher level of complexity and capability by means of which we could record and convey thoughts and information. Some people maintain that writing is more complex than speech, but as Brown (1994) says:

...that would be difficult to demonstrate. Writing and speech represent different modes of complexity, and the most salient difference is in the nature of clauses. Spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by more coordinate conjunctions while writing has longer clauses and more subordination.

Written language is rooted in and derived from spoken language, but is more structural and hierarchical in its determination of different levels of complexity and subordination. Writing also clarifies and reinforces the usage of many of the most common sentence forms. It permits the assurance that someone far away can understand our thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Family or social records, religious scripture written on papyrus or mulberry paper or directly on palm leaves, business receipts made with impressions on wet clay, memories scratched on bones or treated animal hides, typeset or diaries written with quill pens have been with us since the times of the **Mahabharata**, the **New Testament**, and Sumerian clay tablets.

Even in this age of keyboards, taking pencil or pen in hand is still an act of supreme importance, and one that should never be lost or eliminated from the curriculum. With the ever-threatening possibility of hard drive failure or operating system freeze, hand-written copies acquire an even greater strategic importance for the survival of the spoken and the scripted word. The paper mode, like one's hands, is independent of technology and is therefore more in a timeframe of its own. **This system needs no other basic hardware than pencil and paper.**

But not only is a piece of paper in a timeframe of its own, so is the writer. Preferring solitude and places far from maddening crowds, the writer attunes her or his mind to silence, resets the background music to something unobtrusive, picaresque, or pastoral. One draws away from the dimensioned world, the dymaxion grid, and prepares for comprehensible intake from the unconscious. One slips from the cocoon of ego and self and time, shedding it like someone gracefully disrobing, whereupon the self flies freely to another level of consciousness, somewhere at the interface of the unconscious and the conscious, of self and the Greater Self, being and the Greater Being.

This *ex-stasis* (ecstasy) is a wonderful moment, an irreproducible interval of pleasure, a moment of real bliss. It is love; the moment is full of great portent, great potential, great power. Words surface from the unconscious, display themselves in their conspicuous and awesome and rare beauty, and we – as writer and judge – surmise and select and use them one at a time, or in small groups. For those not selected, we let them of their own accord slip silently back from whence they came, drifting down from our stage of consciousness whilst yet others clamor for fame and publicity – to be the next one, to be the next one to be remembered forever. The bevy, the array, those waiting in the wings – such strikingly suitable and beautiful candidates they are – but if they cannot appear now, they know their time will come, at the right place and the right time with the writer who has the right poise and the right keenness of mind. Time flies by, as the student-writer’s mind – somewhere in that unknown untapped dimension – draws from that Infinite source, catching all the fallen stars, meteoric and rising stars, and putting them on paper, or in a pocket, perhaps, for later use. It is a moment of forgetfulness of self, a remembrance of the true nature of being human. It is with words that we are drawn out from the realms of ordinariness and dreariness. Writing is a setting down, for now and for posterity, the results of that momentary brush with the Infinite, with newly mined or minted words that are written with consummate skill.

You must write frequently and in a variety of grammatical forms and styles to read effectively whatever a writer places on the page.

- (5) Reading** – We decode the symbols. We grasp the word. We understand the meaning. Proper reading is as essential a skill as writing, and is inseparable from that skill. One must write before one can read well. Once you are aware of the structures of the language, you can perceive the form of the discourse, digest the meaning, and grasp the essence of what is written.

Reading aloud is essential for reading well, though the last 500 years of history has terribly neglected and maligned the oral tradition. Reading should not be a silent activity, devoid of the sound, color, and movement of speech. In the library, silent reading is suitable. But somewhere in the learning environs, there should be a space for students to read aloud. Actors learn by reading aloud,.

When you say something out loud and combine it with action or movement or gesture, there is a higher probability that it will be retained, vividly experienced, and appreciated. If we don’t read aloud, we should at least *sub-vocalize*, and listen to our voice. This takes us back to the first skill.

You have to read frequently so that, only by internally detecting the clear forms, the layout, and the resting stops in the written landscape, will you almost imperceptibly be able to detect the writer’s voice and the nuances of his or her language, and the underlying pulse and rhythm of the reading passage itself.

Then does reading become the rich experience that it is, where one finds “the most disinterested and deepest acceptance , the most memorable pathos, the most resilient and inexhaustible humor, joy, suffering, pleasure, and human laughter without letup or end.” (Dowling 2001b).

Interdependence of the Five Skills

The skills are **independent and interdependent**. Focusing on one skill entails aspects of some of the other skills. **To become fluent and literate in the target language, students must be made aware of the different factors involved in the skills and how the skills are interconnected.**

Writing Before Reading

You will notice that we place writing before reading, a departure from the usual way in which the skills are listed. Usually, we read to increase our vocabulary, to understand ideas, to enjoy story narratives, and it is assumed that the framework of the passage being read is self-evident to all readers. To think this way, however, is wrong. We may have chapter titles for books, but rarely do books display clearly for readers the paragraph formations and sentence forms that render the books clear and coherent. It is automatically assumed that students will be able to recognize these noteworthy features (paragraph formation and sentence forms) in the books they read and be able to duplicate them in the essays they write. This is a false assumption, for unless they are taught to recognize and imitate these features themselves, they will fail to understand and appreciate them. *Having seen a building, are we to assume that a person can construct a building or appreciate in any way its structure and beauty, without any training in building techniques or experience in building? To think so is foolish.*

We insist that only by having the direct and personal experience of duplicating the numerous established sentence forms will students ever be able to better absorb and understand the written word. Sentences have recognizable features. Corpus research is trying to program computers to parse and dissect text to its meaningful constituents, and we have trillions of bytes of parsed and analyzed texts, all fully searchable. **Yet, lamentably, prior to the 2HA, no one has devised a system that will teach students to write and read with recognition the essential sentence forms in any type of text whatsoever.**

Another reason for the early emphasis on writing involves **focus**. Writing forces a person to concentrate. Focus is part of the Periphery/Focus polarity. Michael Polyani has emphasized this polarity. Pencil in hand or fingertips on the keyboard - with intensity - one drafts, edits, re-phrases, successively re-drafts until the intended meaning comes clear. **The students must be aware of the constant focus and concentrated attention that writing demands, if their writing is ever to be deeply felt and clearly articulated.**

FIVE TASKS

(6) Vocabulary

The Natural Approach maintains that vocabulary is the heart of language. As such, it is the first and foremost task. The 2HA believes that focused listening to bite-sized repeatedly spoken lexical items is still a useful way to learn a language, both in self-study and even more in social settings where one hears a native speaker.

Slowly, very slowly, a native speaker repeats the words syllable by syllable. At the same time that the native speaker pronounces the vocabulary word slowly, an image of what the word names should be presented to the learner as well as a very large printed rendering of the word in the native script.

Thus, if a foreign language student were to learn the English word “classroom”, the native English speaker would pronounce each of the two syllables of “classroom” very slowly with a pause of 1-2 seconds between each syllable. At the same time, a picture of a “classroom” would be presented to the student. A very enlarged printed version of the word should be placed on the screen or presented via a card to the student (type size should be at least 48pt).

The student should repeat the word aloud slowly, syllable by syllable, and 4 to 5 seconds of silence should elapse before the student hears the next word. Then the next word should be presented in a similar fashion. When 5 words have been presented, the student is asked to repeat them using the fingers of their hands, one word at a time, with proper pronunciation.

The next 5 are presented. Students are then asked to repeat the 10 words.

Vocabulary will not only include words, but commonly spoken collocations, idioms, and other phrases or expressions of popular usage. Words are magnets, and words have wings. With some we soar, and with some we sing.¹ The 2HA realizes the importance of vocabulary as the foundation of the language. With the advent of the long-play MD (mini-disc) player that has the ability to store speech digitally in a very compact portable format, there is no doubt that such devices will become available to assist people to build up their foreign and native vocabularies.² Such portability gives the learner the ability to experience and iterate words and phrases while moving or when in settings with varied backdrops.

(7) Basic English – Usage, Grammar, Mechanics

Elements from each of these three must be taught, giving students adequate opportunity for practice and self-expression. Students must be taught that usage governs what to write in terms of what is acceptable at that time. The rules and terms of reference as governed by grammar can never pin or strap down language. Language will wriggle free; new structures and forms will emerge over time. *Usage must be taught – inclusive of idioms, collocations, colloquialisms, and all.*

¹ For a personal children’s poem, entitled *Words Have Wings*, written by one of the authors, please check the Appendix.

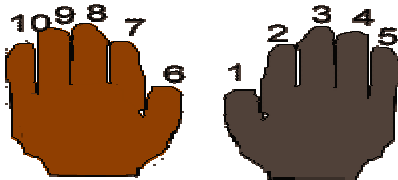
² A Korean company has made a variant of a MD player to be used by language learners. Check out more at <http://www.mepp.com>. It allows for transfer of text from computer to mini-disk.

Grammar must be taught more as the need arises in the stream of events as students unveil their novel creations. The basic foundation of grammar has been stripped down and simplified greatly. The working parts are ten plus two kinds of word that perform only five functions or jobs.

The **mechanics of pronunciation** and **spelling** receive comparative little attention in the 2HA compared to other areas. The sole exception to this is that stress is laid on the pronunciation of any new word, phrase, or sentence such that they are heard clearly and precisely punctuated from the outset. The mechanics of **punctuation**, moreover, will be taught using a new descriptive nomenclature and analogies.

(8) Sentences

As we see later in The Ten Sentence Forms Chart (with an additional one added), **an appreciation of sentence forms is the most important part of this method. The Sentence has a new and different focus in the 2HA. The 2HA looks at the outward appearance of the sentence - the distinguishing traits, the visible markers, and the discernible patterns of it.**



Ten Plus One Basic Sentence Forms	
<i>(first level)</i>	<i>(second level)</i>
1 F (fundamental)	6 CC (coordinating conjunction)
2 S (series)	7 AC (adverbial clause)
3 V (verbals)	8 RN (reference & noun clauses)
4 C (correlatives)	9 PP (power punctuation)
5 R (repetition)	10 BS,MS,ES (interrupting modifier at beginning, middle, end of sentence)
<i>(third level)</i>	
11 ADD (additional)	

Students will acquire the ability to recognize and recreate a multitude of *more than 100 sentence forms* – using an easy-to-recall and logical classification system. The topics in the sentences will reflect the important experiences and events in the actual lives and times of the students and their contemporaries. The 2HA is a constantly renewing resource bank that will never fail to win and to keep the attention of the students.

(9) Paragraphs

Having mastered sentences, students will then be taught and learn the factors involved in the Writing Course, and especially how to develop paragraphs in a cohesive way. They will learn how to vary the sentence length and form to achieve balance, tone, effect, power, and subtlety. Rhetorical devices will be examined and mastered, so that the students will capture and hold the attention and concentration of their readers.

(10) Essays

Students will learn how to distinguish between, how to design and create, short essays in the six to nine traditional rhetorical forms, on freely chosen topics. Although this might seem a prescription for teacher fatigue and early burn-out, it will be shown that by using **a novel footnoting system**, the 2HA completely facilitates the task of checking and correcting the work of the students.

Students must correctly use certain previously taught and specified forms in their essays, and they must footnote these forms properly. Then, the teacher can at a glance find the key sentences in the essay, and quickly determine whether the student has successfully shown mastery of the desired forms or not.

TWO CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

(11) Long Paper

(12) Book

These are what you hope your students will achieve at some point in the future, having been adequately and rigorously instructed by you in all the key aspects of the language.

The system is meant to encourage a deep and lasting love of language. Students, inspired by the awesome potential of language and of their own deeper selves and creativity, will continue to read, appreciate, and produce good writing.
