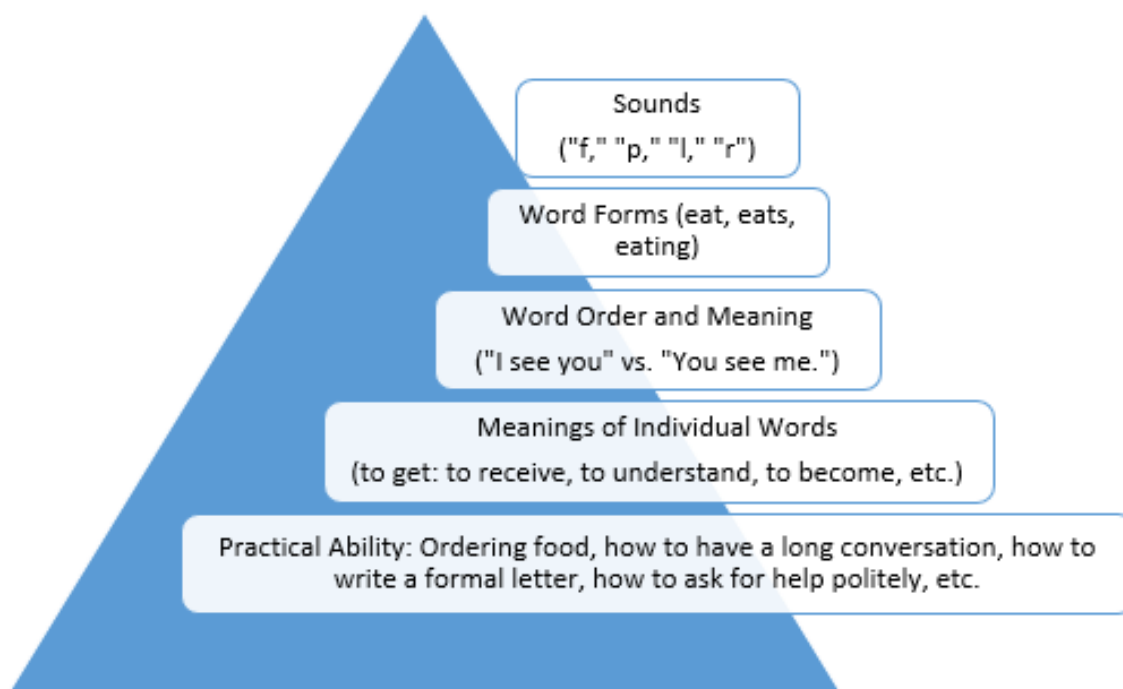


What are the basic parts of a language?

The varying features of a student's native language can either facilitate or impede learning English. Some languages, such as Spanish, have very similar sounds and grammatical features compared to English, while Russian is quite different, and Chinese and Arabic are even more different from English. By definition, a language is a system for communication, and any language can be studied in terms of five main areas:

1. Individual sounds (Phonology/ Phonetics)
2. Individual parts of word forms and how they change grammatically (Morphology)
3. The order of words and how they link together to form phrases and sentences (Syntax)
4. The various definitions of words (Semantics)
5. The practical knowledge/ability to use different phrases appropriately in different kinds of situations/ conversations (Pragmatics/ Discourse)



Application: When planning and teaching a lesson, try to focus on just a few aspects of English at a time, because otherwise it will be overwhelming. In addition, once you get to know your students and learn what their native languages are, it would be a good idea to become familiar with how their languages are similar to or different from English. For example, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic do not use grammatical articles ("an," "a," or "the"), but Spanish does, yet still differently than English does. Once you gain knowledge about common ways that languages differ, you will be better able to predict what might be difficult for your students.