

Heritage Learners

Wayside Publishing recognizes that students in North American classrooms come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, and that a growing number of them are heritage learners—students who may have varying levels of exposure to the target language and/or its cultures in their homes or communities. Our Explorer contains resources that will help meet the needs of heritage learners.

Engaging Heritage Learners:

Heritage Learners...

1. grow up in homes or communities where the target language is spoken
2. may speak the target language or only understand it
3. may never have studied the language in school



Effective Strategies for Engaging Heritage Learners :

Vocabulary Development

Provide rich exposure to the target language, and develop vocabulary through comprehensible input. Encourage heritage learners to expand their vocabulary by seeking out online resources such as magazines or films that interest them.

Literacy Development

Expand the bilingual range of heritage learners by providing engaging text, audio, and visual materials from a variety of contexts. Heritage learners may struggle with reading and writing; open-ended writing tasks allow them to express themselves at their level. Provide specific feedback and support to help them improve.

Cooperative Learning

Provide learners with opportunities to use the target language in meaningful, purposeful, and interesting ways to build self-esteem and confidence in their academic and social skills.

Culturally Relevant Instruction

Include references to students' bicultural world, and acknowledge their bilingual abilities. Bilingual and heritage students often get negative messages about their language ability and cultural identity, so stay positive; validate and include in your curriculum examples of the language varieties used in heritage communities.