

*Reviewed by Tiffany Patella*

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# ROSETTA STONE PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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When one decides to learn a foreign language, many options are available to become proficient in the language. One of the most familiar and widely used exercises for language learning, especially in schools, is memorization of vocabulary lists and conjugated verbs. As a language learner myself, I know how intimidating and futile this method can be for students to attain language proficiency. Developers of the *Rosetta Stone* program took these shortcomings into consideration when they developed their program and software.

The *Rosetta Stone* language learning program consists of two levels, each on its own CD-ROM. Each level has about eight units, and each unit has 11-12 lessons. Each lesson uses skills necessary to learn the language in a certain combination at first, gradually becoming more advanced. The acquisition of skills is arranged in the following order: listening and reading; listening; reading; speaking; and writing. Several different settings allow the student to adapt the program to his or her own learning style and abilities. These settings include delay, time, and test functions, as well as the ability to preview lessons and

have the lesson guided, if the student is not familiar with the material. The test function after each phase is especially helpful; it records the student's score, time, and lesson completion. This setting assists in keeping track of progress and allows the student to remember where he or she left off when the program was last in use.

The settings and the lesson arrangement are useful elements of the program, but they are not the highlight. The factor that sets the *Rosetta Stone* program apart from other language learning programs is the method of delivery. The main principle of the *Rosetta Stone* is not to have the student memorizing long lists of vocabulary or ineffective charts of verb conjugations. *Rosetta Stone* seeks to teach language the way that most people learn their mother language, through the natural environment. This feat is achieved through seeing and hearing words, sentences, phrases, etc., and learning to associate the words and sentences that are heard, seen, and written with the picture of that object and/or action.

At the start of the program, the student will become familiar with nouns. The screen will show

four pictures of objects, for example: a man, woman, boy, and girl. When the program indicates the *man*, the picture will be highlighted, the word man will appear on the top of the screen, and a native English speaker will say the word *man*. After the student is acquainted with these objects, the program will move on to actions. The pictures will then show objects doing something, for example: *The man is jumping*. The same indications will follow throughout the lesson. Later, the student will be asked to identify the picture that shows what the speaker is saying, or indicate what is written on the screen, or type what is shown in the picture. The different combinations of listening, reading, speaking, and writing the language reinforces the new vocabulary and allows the student to own the new language knowledge.

As a second language learner, I appreciate knowing the conjugations of verbs. However, as a computer teacher, I highly recommend this program as a more natural approach to language learning through technology. The *Rosetta Stone* program encompasses all of the skills necessary for a student to learn the English language in a way that parallels native language acquisition. The program is an easy to use, comprehensive guide for students to attempt the English language.

## The Author

**Tiffany Patella** teaches at Bennett Elementary School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida as a computer teacher for grades PK-5. Bennett Elementary is a Title I inner city school where much of the population speaks English as a second language. She is currently working on her M.Ed. in Social Foundation of Multicultural Education.