



# **AARA Reading Strategy**

## **Supporting Top-Down Processes in L2 Reading**

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# Overview

- What is AARA?
- Background
  - Teaching Context
  - Interactive reading models
- AARA Framework
- Your Turn

# AARA?

- A “pre-reading” activity >> strategy
- Ask, Answer, Read and Answer
- Aim: to support lower-level L2 readers in their attempts to relate what they already know to what they are about to read (activate background knowledge).

# Teaching Context

## “An Observation and A Wish”

**Observation** of my lower-level EAP students:

Word-by word approach to reading – an (over?)-reliance on e-translators (smartphones everywhere!)

and

My **wish** to do more reading in class and invest in the process:

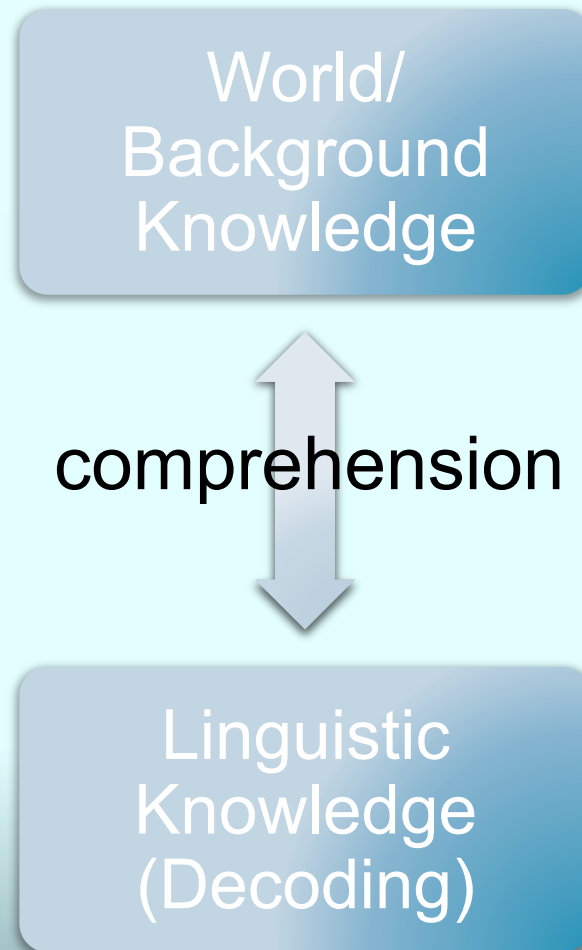
- to help Ss engage more with reading
- break my usual “pre-reading routine”
- find purpose beyond “read this because this is reading class”

# Comprehension of Text

“Comprehension of words, sentences, and discourse could not be simply a matter of applying linguistic knowledge. Every act of comprehension involves one’s knowledge of the world as well.”

-Anderson, R. C., Reynolds, R. E., Schallert, D. L., Goetz, E. T. (1977). Frameworks for Comprehending Discourse. *American Educational Research Journal*, 14, 4, 367-381.

# Interactive Reading Models



# AARA

- Readers:
  - **A**sk (write) own questions based on preview of text-related information (e.g. photo, title, text source, first lines of text)
  - **A**nswer their own questions
  - **R**ead in order to find  
**A**nswers to their questions in the text.

# AAARA

## ASK

Given source, title, picture, few sentences, formulate 5 relevant questions about text (Wh-questions are best).  
Evaluate questions for relevance.

Your Turn 😊



# Headaches



Some little man is inside your head, pounding on your brain with a hammer. Beside him, a rock musician is playing a drum. Your head feels as if it is going to explode. You have a headache, and you think it will never go away.

Doctors say that there are several kinds of headaches...

1. My question:

What's the suggestion if we have a headache?

Your Turn 😊

# Example Questions (Student-Generated )

Evaluate for relevance: According to the information given, can you reasonably expect to find answers to these questions in the text?

1. What's the suggestion if we have a headache?
2. Why do some people never have headache?
3. When people feel headache?
4. Who is she in the picture?
5. Why some little man have headaches?

# AARA

## ANSWER

Invent plausible answers for your questions, specific enough to account for information provided

1. What's the suggestion if we have a headache?  
**My answer:** Have a good rest.
2. Why do some people never have headache?  
**My answer:** I think they have a strong brain.
3. When people feel headache?  
**My answer:** When people get stress.
4. Who is she in the picture? (no answer given)
5. Why some little man have headaches? (no answer given)

# AARA

## READ AND ANSWER

Do a first reading of the full text, with the purpose of finding answers to your own questions.

- many “relevant” questions may not be answered in text; most important that “pre-reading thinking” takes place

# AARA

- alternative to textbook previewing activities (discuss topic, pre-cast questions)
- emphasizes individual reader knowledge; provides individualized **purpose** in reading through learner-generated pre-reading questions
- requires minimal preparation; simple framework is easily remembered (teachers and students)
- potentially engaging because Ss must show accountability by inventing their own questions

Goal = stimulate pre-reading thinking

# More Practice with AARA

lesson

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## Languages and Language Diversity



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Further Comments,  
Questions, Ideas?

Thank you!

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