

# **Birmingham EAL Conference**

Reading for Comprehension with English as an Additional  
Language Learners in Secondary Schools

Mary Maybank

# Aims

- To become aware of the needs of EAL learners when reading
- To ensure that EAL learners develop improved comprehension skills
- To develop a bank of strategies to support improvement in reading for comprehension across the curriculum
- To develop ways to encourage critical reading with EAL Learners

# Vocabulary development

- **Breadth** of vocabulary – the number of words that have some level of meaning for that person
- **Depth** of vocabulary – the richness of knowledge that a person has for the words that they know.

# One approach to the teaching of vocabulary – the work of Isabel Beck et al

Two aspects:

- Introduction to vocabulary
- Multiple encounters to promote rich and sustained knowledge

“Reading an unfamiliar word is insufficient - we need multiple encounters with unfamiliar words in order to “learn” a new word” (de Beck)

- direct teaching of vocabulary
- arranging frequent encounters with new words (at least six exposures to new word)
- encouraging pupils’ ***deep and active processing*** of words and meanings in a range of contexts for effective vocabulary development and improved reading comprehension

# EAL Learners

**New to English**

**Advanced bilingual learners**

- Consolidating English
- Developing English
- Emerging English
- Beginning English
- Beginning (non literate)

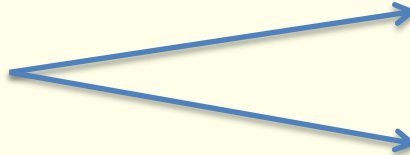
Increasing Vocabulary



5000 high frequency words



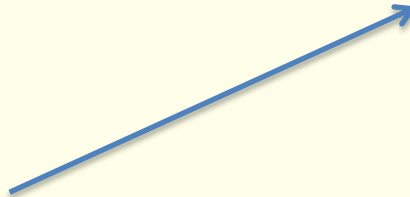
Academic Word List



2000 high frequency words



1000 high frequency words



300 high frequency words

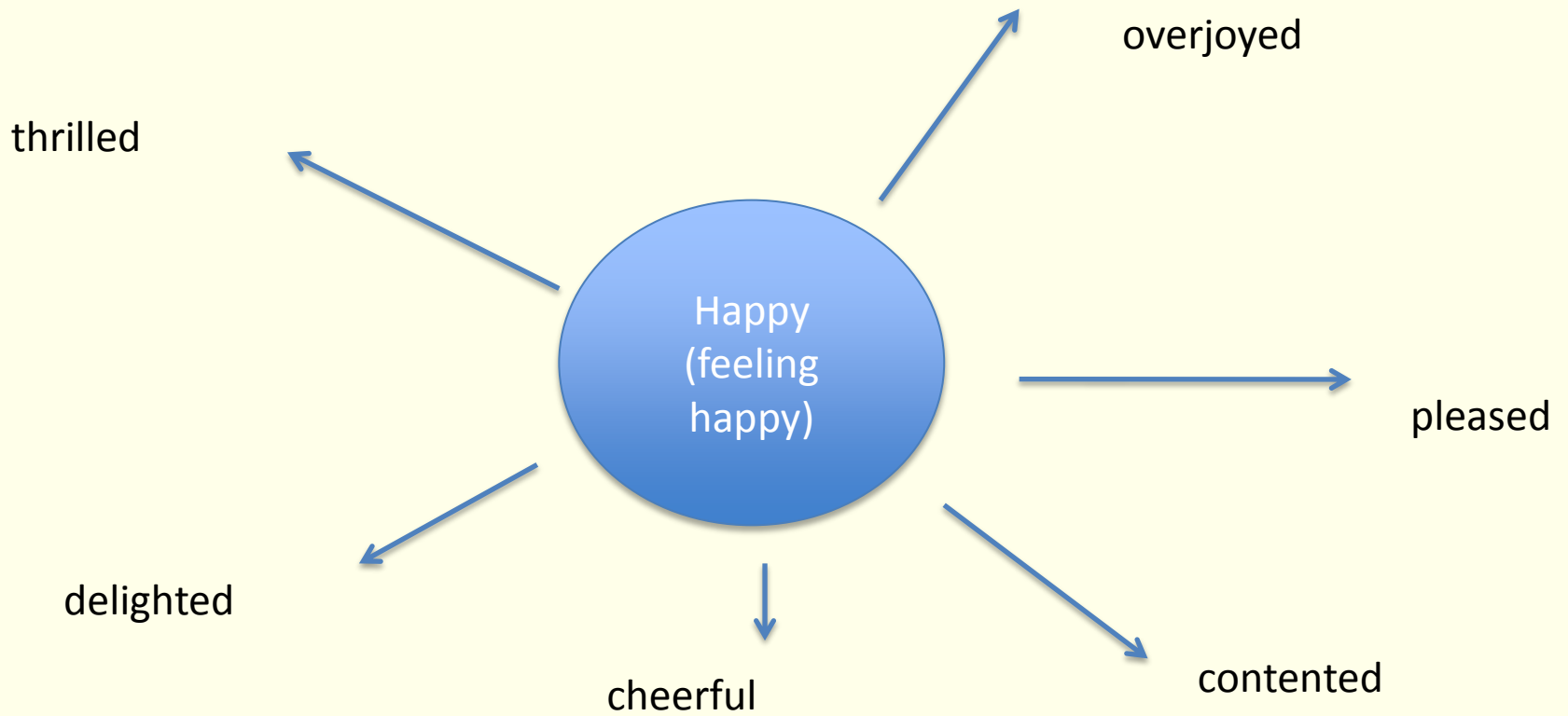


# Need development of metaphorical/figurative/idiomatic language

- Synonyms
- Collocations
- Phrasal verbs
- Idiom
- clines



# Synonyms



# Collocations

bang on time  
dead on time  
early 12th century  
free time  
from dawn till dusk  
great deal of time  
late 20th century  
make time for  
next few days  
past few weeks  
right on time  
run out of time

annual turnover  
bear in mind  
break off negotiations  
cease trading  
chair a meeting  
close a deal  
close a meeting  
come to the point  
dismiss an offer  
draw a conclusion  
draw your attention to  
launch a new product

# Phrasal Verbs – add informality to writing

Phrasal verbs combine with adverbs or prepositions to make a completely new meaning

**Look forward to** (anticipate – not look in front)

**Turn up** (to arrive at – not to turn up trousers)

**Put up with** (tolerate)

**Gone off** (meat)

*Very good explanation in “Guided Writing for EAL Learners”*

## Use of Phrasal Verbs

*Phrasal verbs combine with adverbs or prepositions to make a completely new meaning. For example:*

Look forward to (anticipate)

Turn up (arrive)

Put up with (tolerate)

Gone off (become rotten)

Split up (separated)

Giving way (collapsing)

Caving in (collapsing)

Put up with (tolerate)

Dropped off (went to sleep)

Give up (finally agree)

Rustle up (prepare quickly)

Hang on (wait)

Blow up (explode, become angry)

Bring up (mention)

Break off (stop talking, stop a relationship)

Pick up (collect)

Look out for (be on guard against, pay attention)

Turn out (arrive)

Pick on (criticise)

Turn up (increase)

# Commonly Used Idiom

## **A hot potato**

Speak of an issue which many people are talking about and which is usually disputed

## **A penny for your thoughts**

A way of asking what someone is thinking

## **Actions speak louder than words**

People's intentions can be judged better by what they do than what they say.

## **Add insult to injury**

To further a loss with mockery or indignity; to worsen an unfavorable situation.

## **An arm and a leg**

Very expensive or costly. A large amount of money.

## **At the drop of a hat**

Meaning: without any hesitation; instantly.

## **Back to the drawing board**

When an attempt fails and it's time to start all over.

## **Ball is in your court**

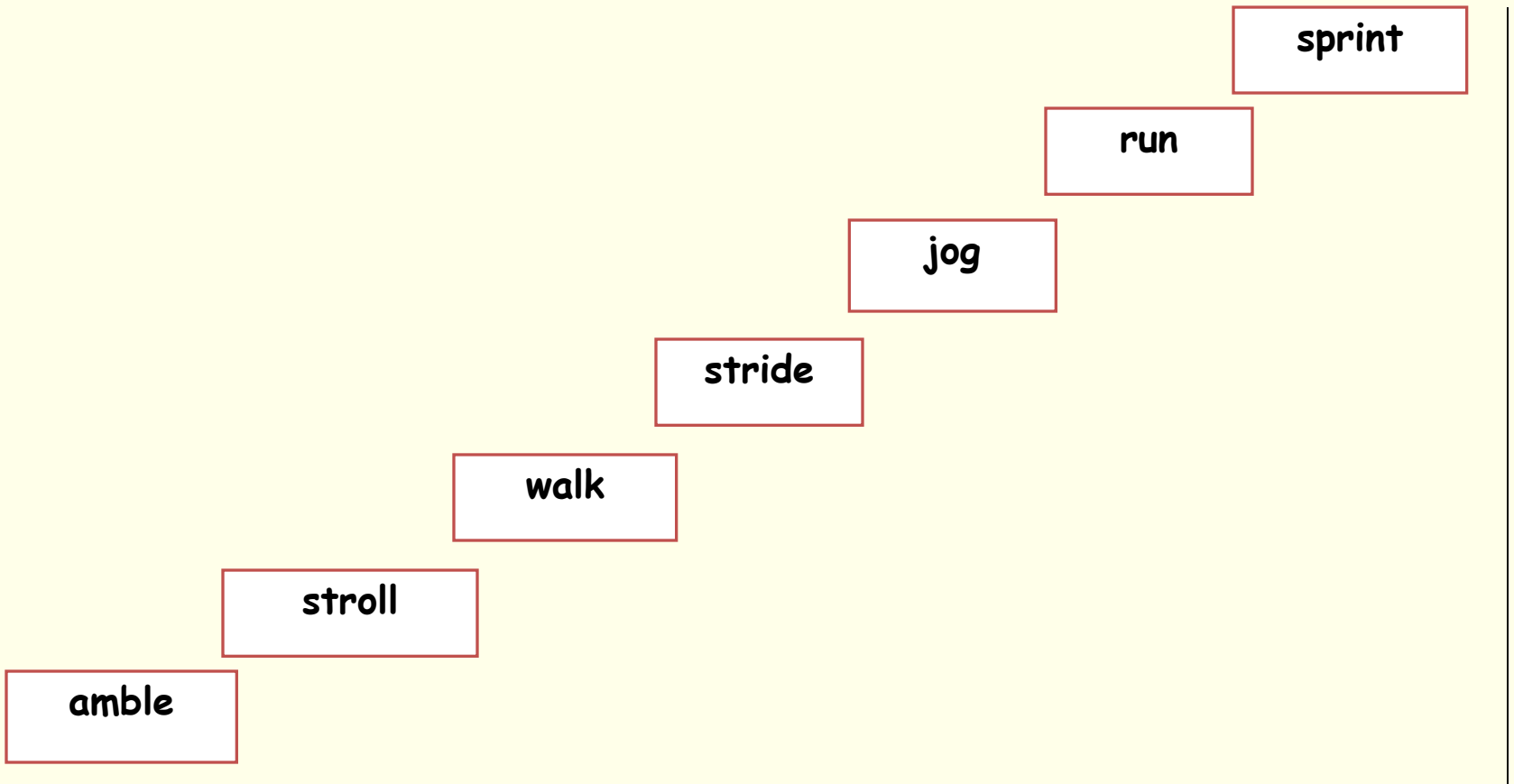
It is up to you to make the next decision or step

## **Barking up the wrong tree**

Looking in the wrong place. Accusing the wrong person

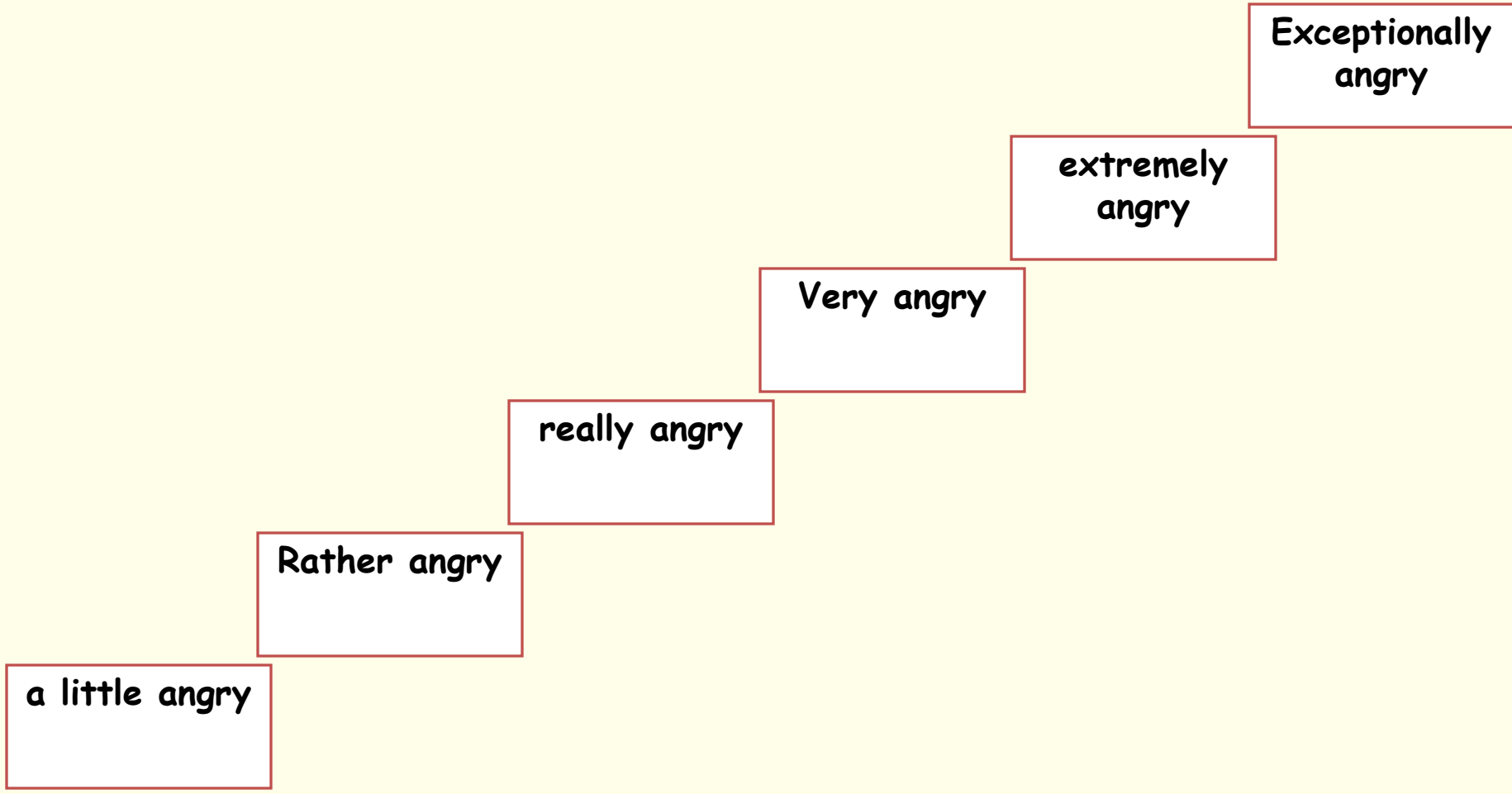
# Clines

Clines



# Clines

clines - verbs



Children will understand what they  
read if they know the words



# What do you know when you know a word?

## Receptive Knowledge

- Aural word recognition (spoken form)
- Orthographic word recognition (written)
- Recognising parts (morphology)
- Particular meaning
- Understanding of concept
- Knowing related words
- Identification of correct word use
- Recognition of typical collocations

## Productive Knowledge

- Able to say the word (correct pronunciation)
- Able to write the word (with correct spelling)
- Derivation of word from correct word parts
- Production of target word to express meaning
- Production of word in different contexts
- Synonyms
- Commonly occurring words (with target)
- Able to decide whether to use it

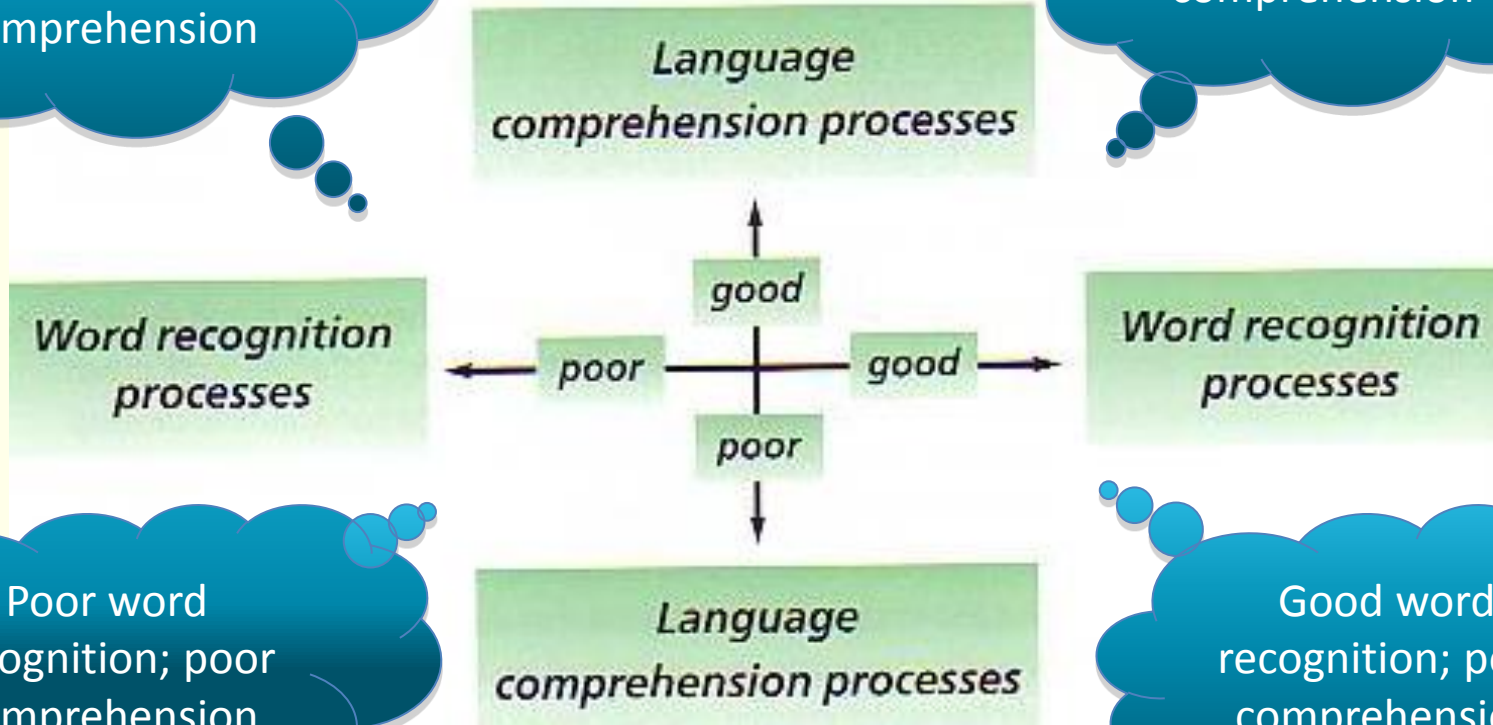
“The ability to read is fundamental to learning, and the earlier the child acquires this skill, the greater will be his or her capacity for learning.”

Pauline Gibbons 1991

# The simple view of reading

Poor word recognition; good comprehension

Good word recognition; good comprehension



Poor word recognition; poor comprehension

Good word recognition; poor comprehension

# Teaching Reading Comprehension is not...

- Reading the text
- Talking to the children about the text while they listen
- Getting them to sit with a pen or a pencil to answer the comprehension questions
- Going over more and more test papers

# Read the following text and answer the questions in full sentences

A krinklejup was parling a tristlebin. A barjam stipped.  
The barjam gruppued 'Minto' to the krinklejup. The  
krinklejup ziskied zoelly.

What was the krinkejup doing?

What stipped?

What did the barjam grup?

How did the krinklejp zisk?

## Y4 child (fluent reader)

“I could work out the answers, but it’s not really reading because I just went from here (the questions) to here (the text) –

It didn’t go through my head.”

# What does a fluent reader do?

- Reading is an active process that involves reasoning
- There is interaction between the text and the reader
- Reader uses semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues ('cueing systems')

Goodman 1967

# The semantic system

- The reader needs to share the semantic system of the writer in order to fully understand
- Familiarity with text type is needed – newspaper, narrative ...
- The semantic information comes in the content words – nouns, verbs adjectives. The reader needs to know the ‘field.’ e.g. need to know the meaning of words like rear axel, camshaft, track rod end, re-bore, bleed, charge, top up, drive home, metallic, bald, aerodynamic... to understand a text about motor mechanics.

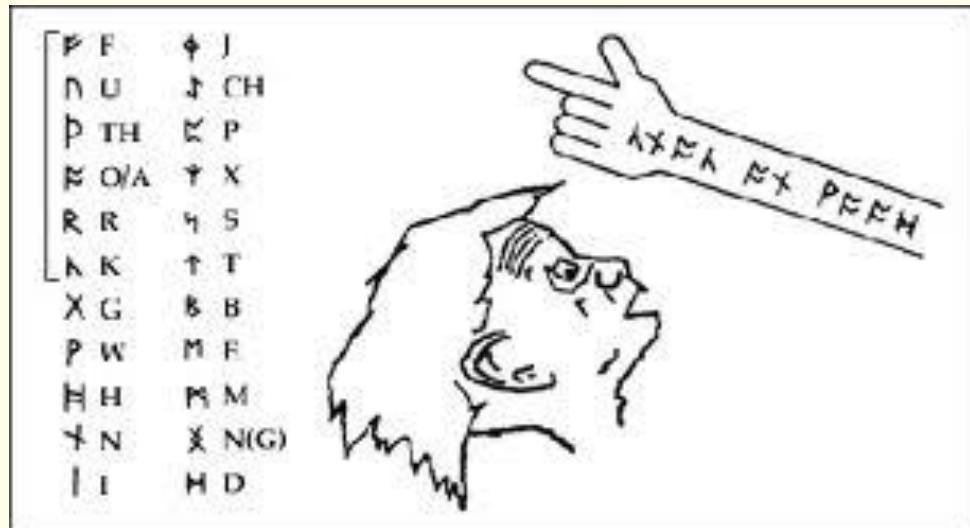


# The syntactic system

- Knowing how the language system works both at sentence level and text level
- At sentence level:”
  - *Mary is a good shringer. She \_\_\_\_\_ every day.*
- Text level: linking sentences and ideas through the use of pronouns, connectives, auxiliary verbs, articles, word endings.
- Word Order is also part of the syntactic system  
*e.g. the big, black, fierce dog – not the black, fierce, big dog.*

# The graphophonic system

- The Representation of spoken language through written symbols.



# EAL Learners

- EAL learners are “usually developing readers with gaps in their cultural and linguistic knowledge of English.”
- A balanced reading program will help children to use all three cueing systems.
- Pauline Gibbons

# Where does the process break down for EAL Learners?

## Activity

Match the skills with the difficulties that may be faced by EAL learners

# Support from the First Language

- Where a child is literate in a first language that literacy should be used
- Must find out if the child can read in another language
- Support from apps that provide spoken first language e.g. Mantra Lingua

# Mantra Lingua

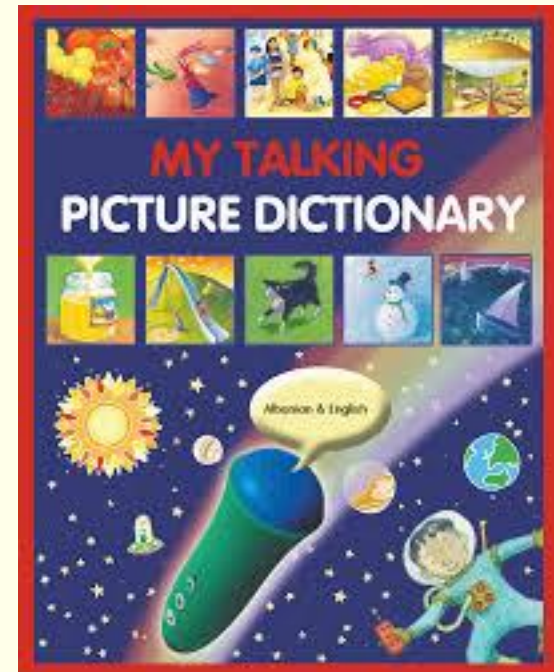


click here to  
listen in Arabic

english word  
highlighted

في يوم من الأيام كان هناك ثلاثة تينوس جالعين يُعرفون بـ 'الأخوة جروف'. كانوا يعيشون على جانب تل شديد الانحدار. أكلت التينوس جروف العشب شديد الخضرة جميعاً. والآن لهم في حاجة للتغذية عن طعام.

Once there were three very **hungry** billy goats called Gruff. They lived on the side of a steep, steep hill. The Billy Goats Gruff had eaten all the green, green grass and needed to find some food.



**Kitaboo Club**

# Early Reading in Secondary School

# Developing Fluency

- Read the same story many times
- Taped reading
- Shadow reading



# Reading for Inference and Deduction

**Reading aloud**

**Walking  
through the text**

**Illustrations**

**probing  
questions**

**Drama Techniques**

Freeze framing

Improvisation

Hot seating

Mime

Thought tracking

# Useful Handouts for Further Reading

- Reading for Inference and Deduction
- Before, During and After Reading
- DARTS (Direct Activities Related to Texts)

# The Reading Cycle

- Activities Before Reading
- During Reading
- After Reading

# Pre- reading activities

Predict from title

Predict from title page

Order pictures (from two to any number) and  
make up a story

# **Picture Activity**

# The Importance of Talk

- Talk – of the right quality – promotes the development of children’s reasoning, conceptual understanding and reading comprehension.
- Many children do not get a rich enough experience of spoken language outside school for this development to be assured.
- Children do not just need experience of speaking and listening in school, they need to be expressly taught the relevant functional skills, how to use talk to construct arguments, jointly solve problems and comprehend texts

*Neil Mercer*

# Collaborative Talk

- Encourages speaking and listening
- Encourages exploratory talk
- Supports access to the curriculum
- Pupils feel more confident
- Language is used for a specific purpose
- Pupils build on each other's thinking

*The lightning spark of thought generated in the solitary mind awakens its likeness in another mind.*

Thomas Carlyle

# Collaborative Learning - Research

*The impact of collaborative approaches on learning is consistently positive ... Approaches which promote talk and interaction between learners tend to result in the best gains.*

Education Endowment Foundation



# Aim High with EAL Learners

- EAL learners need high challenge, high support lessons
- Challenge them with critical reading

# What is critical reading?

- Critical reading involves the **analysis** of text - in terms of **what to look for and how to think about what you find (Influence)**
- It encourages us not only to examine what a text says but also **how the text portrays the subject matter**
- Critical reading cannot be simply taught; it has to be nurtured through dialogue with text and with others around the text, through discursive and exploratory talk

# Poems for Thinking by

- Listen to and then read the poem by Miroslav Holub 'The Door'
- THINK - *What would you like to explore further in this poem?*
- PAIR - *What key questions would you set around this poem?*
- SHARE - *Suggest one ultimate question that could be used for critically analysing the poem?*

Miroslav Holub



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# Developing Cognitively challenging Activities for EAL learners

## Bloom's taxonomy across stages of language acquisition

### LINKING THINKING, LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS, AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Levels of thinking and language functions Level of thinking and academic language move from concrete recall to more complex and more abstract in any undertaking.	Language use across stages of second-language acquisition Moves from simple to complex in grammatical tenses, forms, vocabulary, etc.				
	Preproduction: Nonverbal response.	Early production: One-word response.	Speech emergence: Phrases or short sentences.	Intermediate fluency: Longer and more complex sentences.	Advanced fluency: Near native-like.
<b>EVALUATION</b> Appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, select, support, value, evaluate	Teacher mismatches animal with its environment and asks: Is this the right environment? Find the right environment.	What are the best materials for the duck to build a nest?	What makes a good home for a bear? (Examine settings and evaluate: "A cave makes a good home.")	What would happen if you put a worm in the desert?	Recommend a different environment for a mother duck to raise her ducklings. Defend your choice.
<b>SYNTHESIS</b> Arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up	Point to the animals that live in the soil.	Say the names of the animals that live in the soil.	How could you change a scorpion so it could swim?	What would a clam need to survive in the desert?	How would you protect the wildlife in a forest where hiking was very popular?
<b>ANALYSIS</b> Analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test	Show me an animal that cannot live in the forest.	Name the parts of a fish that help it live in the water.	How are raccoons and squirrels the same? How are they different?	How does a bear use its claws to catch fish? Gather berries?	Why do you think a bear hibernates in winter?
<b>APPLICATION</b> Apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use	Show me what would happen if we put the fish in the desert.	Tell me what would happen if we put a fish in the desert.	How could you change the body of a fish to make it fly?	How would you capture and transport scorpions to a zoo?	How would a deer camouflage itself in the forest in winter? In the desert?
<b>COMPREHENSION</b> Classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate	Show me where a deer lives.	Tell me which animals eat meat.	Why is a toad the color it is?	Explain how a snake catches its prey.	Why do fish need gills to live in the water? How do gills work?
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> Arrange, order, define, duplicate, label, list, name, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce	Where is the raccoon?	What is the name of this animal?	What are the body parts of a turtle?	Give the definition of a mammal.	Tell me everything you know about a clam.

Source: Adapted from *Bloom's Taxonomy*, *Halliday's Language Functions*, and *Krashen's Stages of Language Acquisition*.

Contributors: Mike Gaddis and Cynthia Bjork.

# What are the goals of critical reading?

To recognise purpose of text

- ✓ Basis for choices
- ✓ Content
- ✓ Language

To understand tone and persuasive elements of text

- ✓ Classifying the nature of language choices

To recognise Bias

- ✓ Classifying nature of patterns of choice / of content and language



# EAL learners and critical reading...

- There are 4 issues linked to a social, critical view of reading relevant to EAL learners
- Reading starts before we even look at the page
- Reading is not monolithic
- Reading is social
- Reading is critical analysis

*Catherine Wallace (University of London)*

# EAL learners and critical

- Reading starts before we even look at the page
- EAL Learners have different linguistic and cultural expectations of texts (schemas). This leads to rich and diverse interpretations
- We need to be aware of these schemas and must not assume singular interpretation. Question the text...what constitutes 'rummaging', 'hollow wind' etc

# EAL learners and critical reading...

- Reading is not monolithic
- We read different things in different ways for different purposes. We are influenced in what we choose to read by our favourite genres
- Expose learners to a wide range of texts and genres, read for pleasure; in their first language, other languages and in English

# EAL learners and critical reading...

- Reading is social
- Reading aloud and listening to others read aloud is social and is culturally familiar for many EAL learners (*religious contexts; sacred texts and family settings; letters being read aloud*)
- Using talk around text and listening to text being read aloud are valuable. It supports EAL learners to develop the relationship between written text and sound (sentence to speech)

# EAL learners and critical reading...

- Reading is critical analysis
- All readers are critics and this skill allows us to intellectually interact with text
- We need to support EAL learning in the role of 'critical analysts' of texts across the curriculum; *skills, questions, context, meaning of words etc*

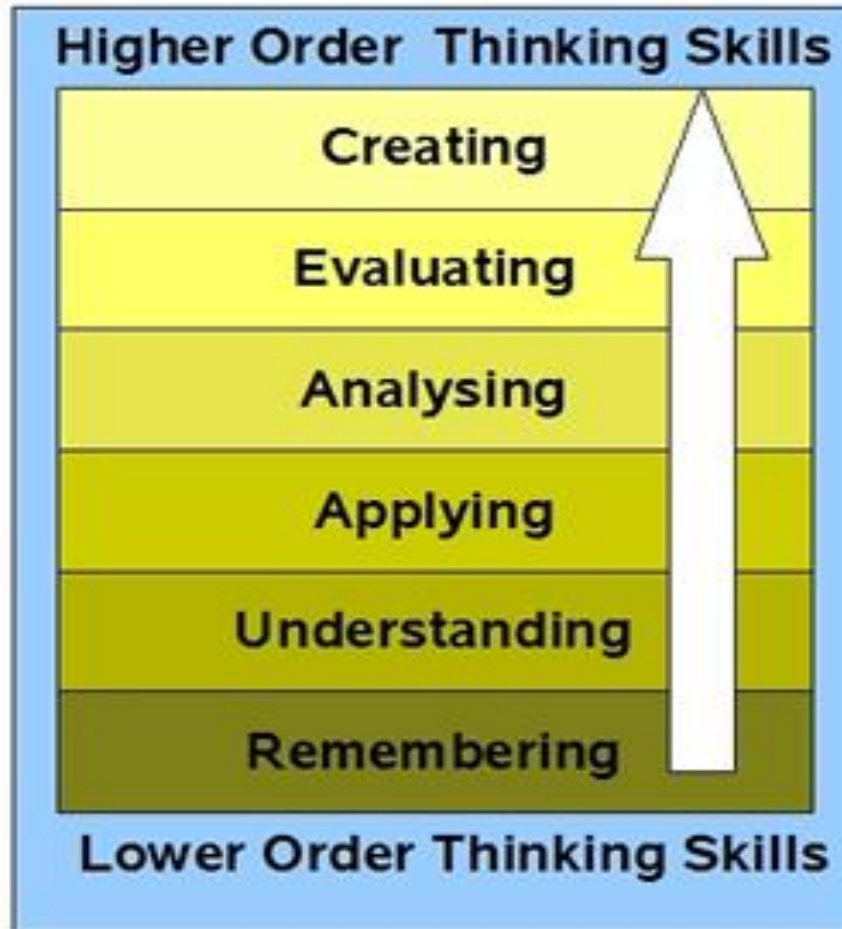
# What is process involved in critical reading?

There are 3 steps of analysis:

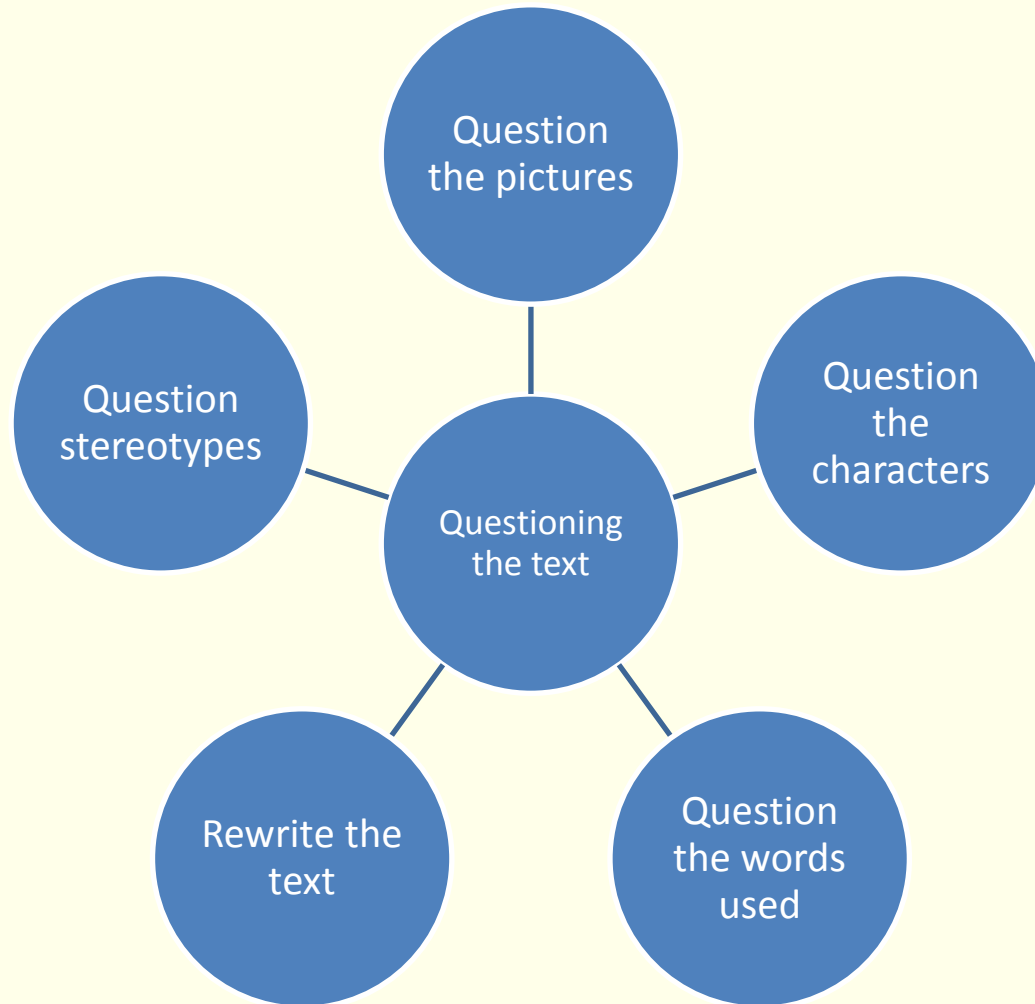
- What does a text say – Restatement (Cognitive)
- What a text does – Description (Semantic)
- What a text means – Interpretation (Interpretive)

# Critical reading and H.O.T. skills...

- Critical reading helps to develop HOT (higher order thinking) skills



# Strategies to support critical reading





# The Power of Emotive Language

Listen to those children  
Listen to those brats!

Soggy cake  
Moist cake

Cramped room

Cosy room

Childlike

Childish

Skinny

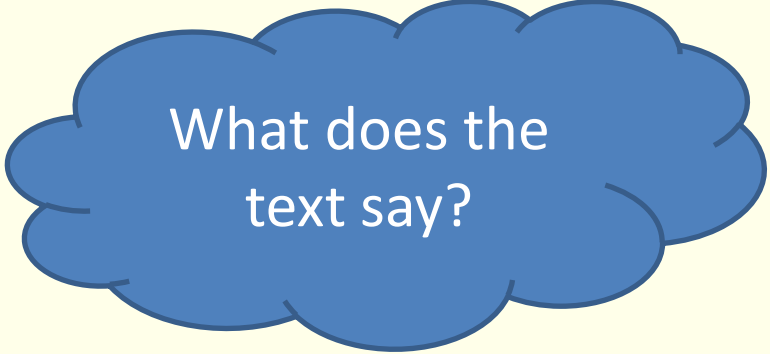
Slim

Miserly, stingy and nitpicking people are not as nice as thrifty,  
economical and meticulous people.

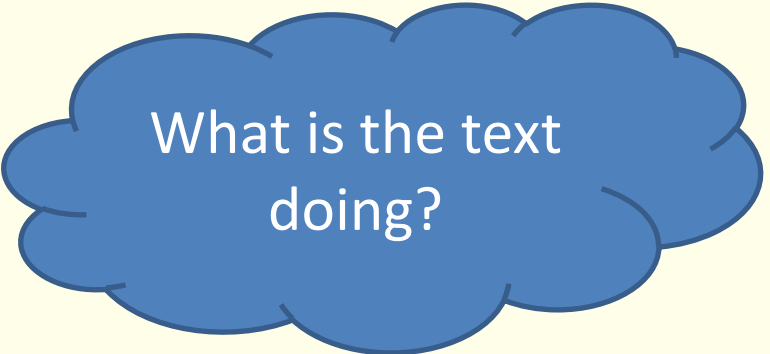
Terrorists move south!  
Freedom fighters move south!

*"Well chosen language does all the work" (Crystal, 2010)*

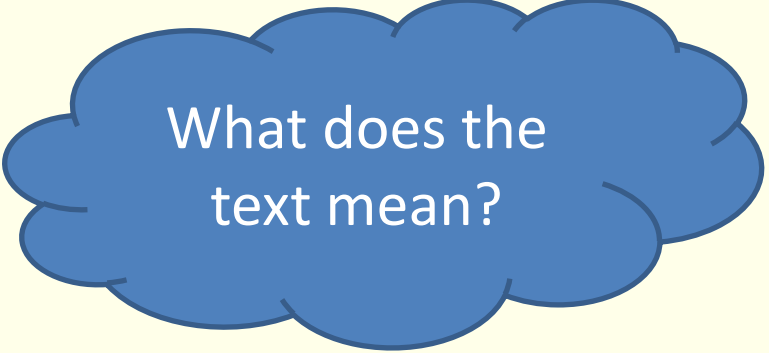
# Critical reading key questions...



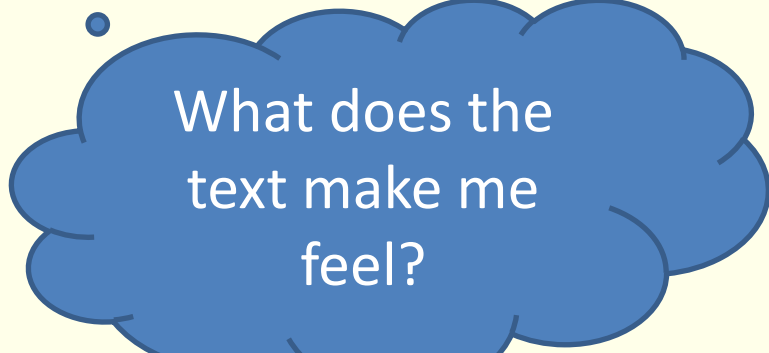
What does the text say?



What is the text doing?



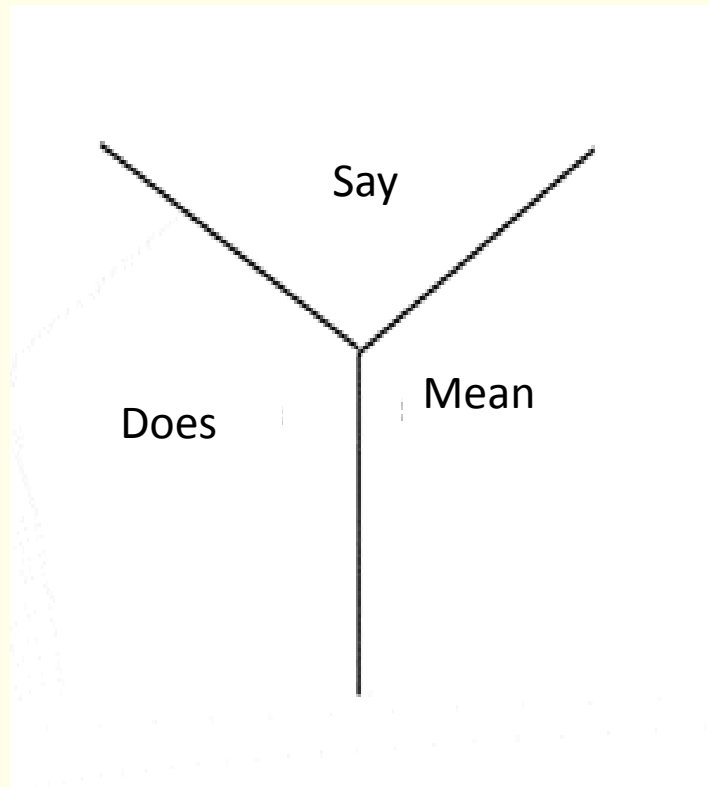
What does the text mean?



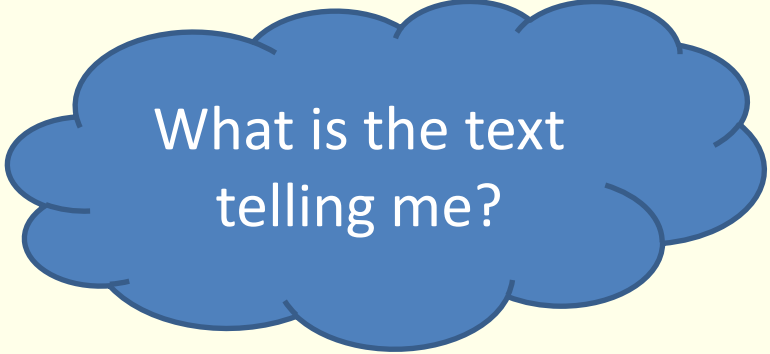
What does the text make me feel?

# Supporting critical reading...

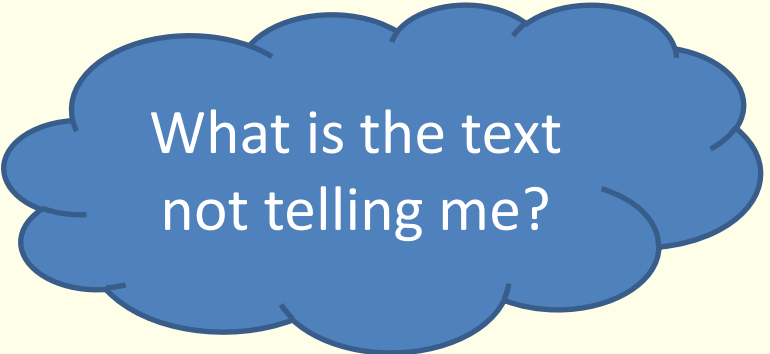
- Thinking tools help to scaffold the process
- Y Chart




# Critical reading key questions...



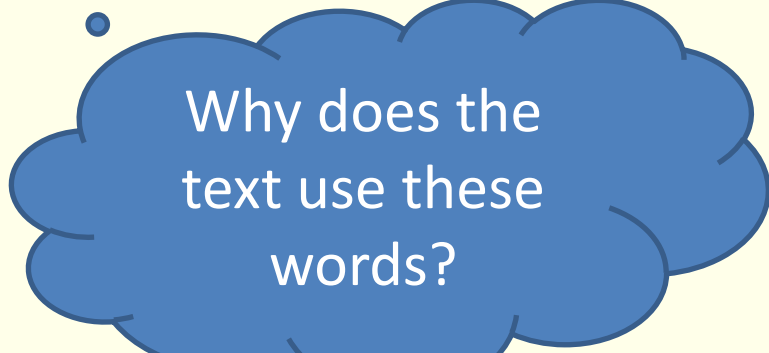
What is the text  
telling me?



What is the text  
not telling me?



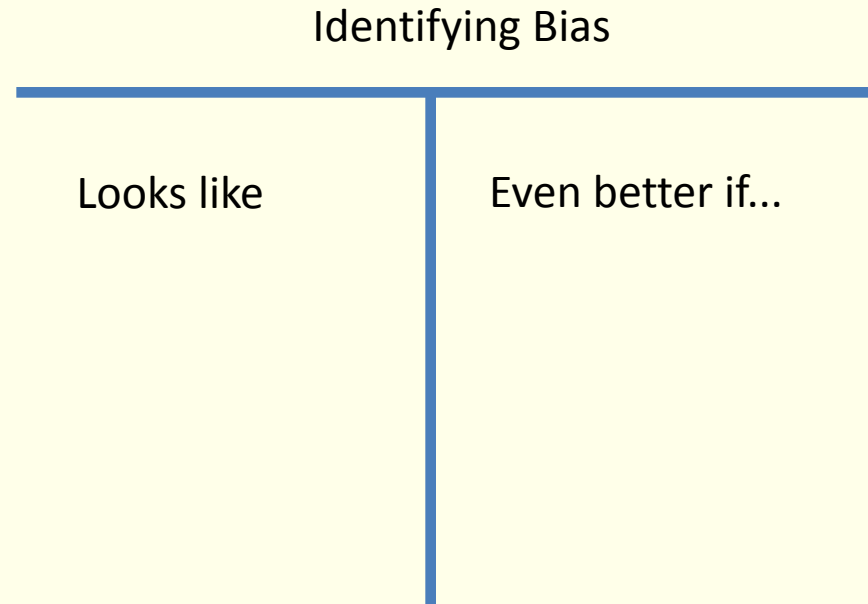
Is there any bias?  
How do you  
know?



Why does the  
text use these  
words?

# Supporting critical reading...

- Thinking tools help to scaffold the process
- T Chart



# Supporting critical reading...

- Learning Role Cards help to scaffold the process

LEARNING ROLE
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CODE BREAKER</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How do I crack this code?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What words are interesting, difficult or tricky? How did you work them out?</li><li>• What words have unusual spelling?</li><li>• What words have the same sound or letter pattern or number of syllables?</li><li>• What words have the same base word or prefix or suffix?</li><li>• What words mean the same (synonyms)?</li><li>• What smaller word can you find in this word to help you work it out?</li><li>• What words are tricky to pronounce?</li><li>• How is this word used in this context?</li><li>• What different reading strategies did you use to decode this text?</li><li>• Are the pictures close ups, mid or long shots?</li><li>• Are the pictures high angle or low angle?</li><li>• Were there any word pictures, eg similes and metaphors? How did you work them out?</li></ul>

LEARNING ROLE
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>USER</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What do I do with this text?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What sort of text is this? (information, story/narrative) How do you know?</li><li>• Is it fact or opinion? How do you know?</li><li>• How can you find information in this text?</li><li>• How did the author start this text? Did it suit its purpose?</li><li>• Who would read a text like this? Why?</li><li>• If you wrote a text like this what words and phrases would you use?</li><li>• How is the language the same/ different from other similar texts you have read?</li><li>• Could the text help solve a real life problem?</li><li>• If you were going to put this text on a web page, how would it be different to the print version?</li><li>• What is the purpose of this text?</li><li>• Could you use these ideas in a poem, story, play, advertisement, report, brochure or poster?</li><li>• How would the language and structure change?</li></ul>

# Supporting critical reading...

## LEARNING ROLE

### EXPERT

*What does this text mean to me?*

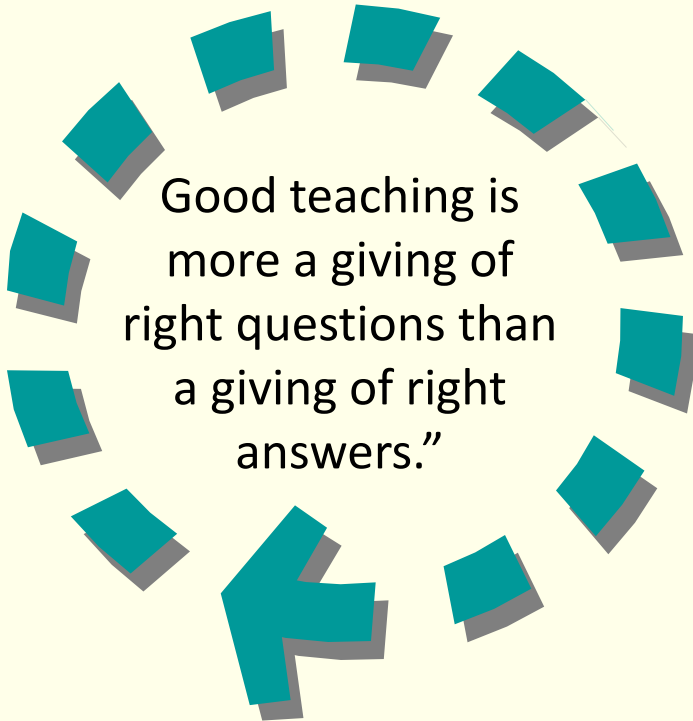
- Does the text remind you of something that has happened to you or to someone else you know?
- What does the title/cover suggest that the text is about?
- What might happen next? What words or phrases give you this idea?
- What are the characters thinking and feeling? How do you know?
- What message is the author presenting?
- What are the main ideas presented?
- What do the pictures (graphs, diagrams, tables, captions, illustrations) tell us?
- Do they fit in with the text and do they provide more information?
- What did you feel as you read this part?
- Describe or draw a picture of a character, event or scene from the text

## LEARNING ROLE

### INVESTIGATOR

*What does this text do to me?*

- Is the text fair?
- What would the text be like if the main characters were girls rather than boys and vice versa? Consider different race and cultural backgrounds too.
- How would the text be different if told from another point of view?
- How would the text be different if told in another time or place, eg 1900 or 2100?
- Why do you think the author chose this title?
- Think about why the author chose particular words and phrases.
- Are there stereotypes in the text?
- Who does the text favour or represent?
- Who does the text reject or silence?
- How does this text claim authority? (consider language, structure and content)
- Who is allowed to speak? Who is quoted?



Good teaching is  
more a giving of  
right questions than  
a giving of right  
answers.”

*Josef Albers*

With thanks to Rena Saggu



The chicken and the egg!  
*“Learning to read and Reading to  
learn.”*

*“While increased language competence  
enhances reading ability, reading certainly  
increases language competence.”*

*Gibbons, 2002*

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- [www.collaboartivelearning.co.uk](http://www.collaboartivelearning.co.uk)
- <http://www.myread.org/organisation.htm>
- [http://www.sac.sa.edu.au/Library/Library/Topics/thinking\\_skills/thinking.html#tools](http://www.sac.sa.edu.au/Library/Library/Topics/thinking_skills/thinking.html#tools)