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## READING A: The Case for Increased Rigor in Adult English Language Instruction

(Adapted from Betsy Parrish’s LINCESL Pro Issue Brief: *Meeting the Language Needs of Today’s Adult English Learner*, AIR 20015, available at [https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ELL\\_Increasing\\_Rigor\\_508.pdf](https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ELL_Increasing_Rigor_508.pdf).)

### Language strategies for accessing complex written and oral texts.

Adult ELLs need proficiency in document and informational literacy, and they need to be able to read a variety of text types, media, and formats, such as charts, graphs or web pages (Parrish & Johnson, 2010; Wrigley, 2007). Skilled readers use a variety of strategies to access these complex written texts. Some are bottom-up strategies, such as decoding words, and many are top-down strategies, such as drawing on expectations and making assumptions, using visual cues to aid comprehension, and drawing on prior knowledge (Burt, Peyton, & Van Duzer, 2005). When following complex instructions at work or listening to lectures, skilled listeners listen selectively for particular words or phrases, monitor their comprehension, and determine what listening strategies are best suited for a particular situation (Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, 2008). ELLs need explicit practice with these reading and listening strategies to develop more automatic use of them at work, school, and in their communities. The following table presents a number of language strategies for accessing complex oral and written texts; these strategies need to be developed at all levels of instruction.

Strategy	Description
Drawing on prior knowledge	Make use of background knowledge to understand new information.
Drawing on expectations and assumptions	Draw on previous experience with similar texts.
Using context clues	Look at pictures, titles, subheadings, and captions in a reading; take note of facial expressions, body language, or other visual supports
Drawing inferences	Interpret and make inferences; make logical connections between
Summarizing and synthesizing information	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas; draw on information from multiple sources, oral and
Analyzing relationships between sets of ideas	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of written or oral language.

From Parrish, B. (2015) *Meeting the Language Needs of Today’s Adult English Learner*. AIR: Washington, D.C. p.4 available at [https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ELL\\_Increasing\\_Rigor\\_508.pdf](https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ELL_Increasing_Rigor_508.pdf).)

- **Work with your partner. Check your understanding of the reading.**
- **Prepare to report what you learned to your “home team.”**

1. Star the sentence in the reading that provides the rationale for teaching language strategies.
2. Highlight the examples the author gives of bottom up and top down strategies. According to the passage, how are those strategies used?
3. Are the strategies listed in the chart for reading, for listening, or both? How do you know?
4. Recall the six language strategies from the chart (or state them in your own words.) Which one would be easiest to teach to all levels of learners? Why?