



WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO CANADA'S ARROW?

Written by Joan Dixon

TEXT TYPE: Non-fiction: Description—Report
GUIDED READING LEVEL: W/X



SUMMARY: In the 1950s, Canada was well on its way to creating the world's fastest and most sophisticated jet fighter, the *Avro Arrow*, when the project was scrapped and all evidence of it was destroyed. This non-fiction report examines the history of the *Arrow* in order to determine what happened to this project.

TEXT FEATURES

- italics
- bolded words
- enlarged text
- bulleted list
- acronyms
- headings/subheadings

VISUAL LITERACY

- chart with statistics
- illustrated diagram
- black and white/colour photographs
- captions
- sketches
- text boxes

TEXT SUPPORTS

- some unfamiliar words and terms explained within text
- photographs with captions
- headings/subheadings

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- historical context (Cold War, Soviet Union, communism)
- technical vocabulary ('preliminary simulator,' 'aeronautics,' 'altitude')

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- inferring

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- evaluating
- synthesizing

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Formulate-Share-Listen-Create strategy
- discussing with a partner
- discussing with a group
- Three-Step Interview strategy (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: using textual definitions to work out word meanings
- language predictability: using dictionaries to solve word meanings

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- make inferences using background knowledge and text clues
- use visual literacy information to aid in comprehension
- recognize the differences between fiction and non-fiction
- provide thoughts and opinions on text and questions posed
- ask questions while reading

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Inferring Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

BEFORE READING

Evaluating

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Have students look at the back and front cover of the text. Ask, *Based on the book's title and cover, what kind of book do you think this is: fiction or non-fiction? What would you expect to find in a non-fiction text?* In pairs, have students Formulate-Share-Listen-Create (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*) their answer to the second question and then ask each pair to share their new answer with the entire group.

Introduce supports and challenges

- Direct students to page 4 and ask them to read the first paragraph. Lead a brief discussion on the Cold War. Afterwards, ask students, *How might these tense times have contributed to the development of new military technologies?*

Evaluating and Making Connections: Text to World

TEACHING TIP:

You may choose to show students a map of the former Soviet Union so that they may see its size and/or a map of all the republics that were part of the former Soviet Union.

Visual Literacy Features

- Ask students to look through the text for visual literacy features. Point out the captions attached to the photos of the aircrafts on pages 4 and 5 and ask students why the author includes this feature. Remind students that captions, text boxes, and diagrams contain added information that will support their comprehension of the text.

Language Predictability

- Tell students that they may encounter words or technical terms in the text that they might have trouble understanding. Explain that they should read on to see if the author has defined the term in the paragraph or as part of a visual literacy feature. Explain to students that if they are still not clear on the term they might wish to consult a dictionary or a thesaurus. If they feel they have a good understanding of the term, students should put a sticky note on the page so they can go back and double-check the word when they have finished reading.

Set a purpose for reading

Inferring

- Ask students what they know about inferring. Have students share their thoughts with the group. Remind them that they make inferences while reading when they use their background knowledge and text clues to figure out something that the author doesn't explicitly state. Tell students that questioning and inferring work together to help them understand a text better. Have students create a two-column chart with the following headings in their reader's notebook: 'I wonder' (Questions) and 'I think' (Inferences). This activity can be found in 'Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement,' second edition, by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis. Explain to students that they are to write any questions or inferences

that come to mind in their respective columns as they are reading, to determine what they think happened to the *Arrow* based on evidence from the text and their own background knowledge.

TEACHING TIP:

Let students know that they can change an inference, add to a question, or write down an answer to a question. They may wish to leave some space under each question or inference so they can do this. Accordingly, students should leave ample space on the sides of both columns so they can write beside each question or inference.

Provide for early finishers

- Have early finishers review their charts to see if there is anything else they would like to add to either column.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Choose individual students to read a portion of the text aloud to you. Assist with word solving, comprehension, and vocabulary. Offer prompts to help students solve problems while they are reading, e.g., *If the design of the Arrow was so revolutionary, who would gain from it being cancelled?*

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Inferring Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Ask students to share any inferences or questions from their charts that were not answered with the rest of the group. As a group, students might be able to offer their own insight into the inferences and questions others share.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Did students have difficulties understanding some of the technical terms related to the principles of flight? Were the diagram and chart helpful, or were they challenging for students? Your observations will help you work out other challenges students experienced. Discuss and clarify words that they had difficulty with or an ongoing comprehension issue.

Inferring

ESL NOTE:

List difficult terms on a white board or on chart paper. Ask a leader to read the word while the group echoes it back. Give students definitions or explanations of words and ask them to select the corresponding word from the list.

Note successful strategy use

- Ask a student to share what they did when they realized comprehension had broken down or when they had difficulty with a technical term. Explain a successful strategy you observed, e.g., *I really liked how Esteban looked up the word ‘thrust’ on-line when he felt it was hurting his ability to understand the rest of the paragraph and the diagram on page 9.*

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Evaluating

- Have students answer the following in paragraph form: *Do you believe there was a conspiracy to cancel the Arrow project? Explain why or why not.* You may choose to brainstorm with students or have them brainstorm with a partner before they write. Encourage students to write from the perspective of someone involved at the time (e.g., Prime Minister Diefenbaker, an Avro employee, a news reporter). Afterwards, ask participants if using the inferences, questions, and answers in their reader’s notebook chart or their brainstorming notes helped them during the writing process and, if so, how?

Artistic

Inferring

- Students can create a comic strip depicting why they think the *Arrow* project was cancelled (e.g., Diefenbaker speaking to another member of parliament about terminating the project, or telling a colleague in secret why he is cancelling it).

Oral/dramatic

Inferring and Synthesizing

- In groups of three, students can participate in a Three-Step Interview activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*). Pose the following question to groups: *Why was the Arrow project cancelled?* Alternatively, you may ask your own question. One student in the group will conduct the interview, posing the main question and follow-ups to a second group member. Students being interviewed may choose to answer in character (as Diefenbaker, a member of the opposition party at that time, an employee of Avro, an historian, and so on). The third member of the group will take notes and summarize the position of the person interviewed. Students should be given the opportunity to assume all three roles.