

## Aurasma (app)

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**As** the use of technology applications (“tech apps”) becomes a common instructional tool, language teachers must sift through an abundance of resources. Ideally, technology should provide students with the tools to become autonomous creators rather than endless consumers. One effective way to facilitate language acquisition is with tech apps that assist in creating digital experiences. Such activity encourages language learners to simultaneously improve digital and traditional literacy while becoming 21st-century authors.

Aurasma, an augmented reality application, creates an enhanced Quick Response (QR) code with increased personalization and provides access to an interactive community, Aurasma Studio. A QR code stores information in the form of a 2D image that when scanned with a smart device provides access to the requested information. Students and key stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and administrators can scan a personalized 2D image and immediately access a video or audio recording.

This free application works with a variety of mobile devices (iOS and Android) to make unique QR-like codes, called Auras, out of original images. After scanning these original images, the application links to a student-created video. From there, in order to create the finalized Auras, students and teachers use Aurasma Studio to upload and edit the image and video. The studio offers access to all users’ Auras and includes privacy or sharing functions, a feature that provides access to additional information and a larger audience, which can increase student motivation across the four language modalities—listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

Aurasma differentiates itself from other augmented-reality applications, such as Layar and Augment, by allowing users to create and share original content. The application couples with other digital technology practices like capturing images and filming video while offering an easy upload interface that consolidates the files into one digital footprint. Using this capability, students and teachers can facilitate sharing content and language within their classrooms, school communities, and the online community.

Aurasma assists in language acquisition and adds another dimension to instruction. The application incorporates all four language modalities into instruction; within one cycle, students create Auras from their writing or research, present it in a video, and share it with peers and other members of the school community. Students can also use Aurasma Studio to locate videos on similar topics through the Hashtag function.

Another distinguishable feature of Aurasma is the large audience one Aura can reach. Students can scan others’ Auras to learn about a specific topic from student experts or to watch and listen to a published writing piece. Parents can scan bulletin boards or newsletters for an immediate digital experience. Administrators can listen to student presentations without entering the classroom. Finally, students can connect with Aura creators from around the globe via Aurasma Studio. As a result, language instruction is enhanced and students have increased opportunities to write and speak for multiple authentic audiences.

Aurasma further supports language acquisition when incorporated in common instructional practices like comprehensible input, building background knowledge, translanguaging strategies, and increasing student interaction. One successful practice could be third-grade language learners creating Auras that

define vocabulary on a word wall so that second graders could learn the words, thus deepening vocabulary instruction, building background knowledge, and encouraging student mentoring. Another instructional use could be a student recording of a familiar reading in their home language to share with peers, thus increasing comprehensible input and translanguaging. Teachers can include Auras in parent newsletters to provide parents with access to student presentations or performances, which may increase parent engagement. Overall, Aurasma is a versatile technology tool that can enhance K–12 or higher education language classrooms in multiple ways.

Though Aurasma is free and available across multiple platforms (PC and Mac as well as iOS and Android), it does require access to multiple pieces of technology. Digital or mobile cameras are necessary for taking images and videos in order to create Auras on a computer. In addition, smartphones and tablets are necessary for students and key stakeholders to access Auras from peers and teachers. Nevertheless, even for those not tech savvy, Aurasma is sure to transform the way information is created and consumed in the classroom and beyond.

Aurasma (version 5.1.2) Available from Aurasma, <https://www.aurasma.com/>

For a gallery of student work, go to <https://eslatps1x.wordpress.com/2015/07/13/aurasma-a-how-to-with-exemplars/>



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