

Visualization

Definition: students create mental images while reading. They can visualize at various levels:

1. Setting/Place
2. Characters/Notable Figures
3. Events

Task Analysis: the reader needs to be metacognitively aware of visualizing as it occurs during reading and be able to create a mental picture using details provided in the text and reader's background knowledge. At the more sophisticated level of visualization, the reader should be able to create multi-sensory images that extend, enrich the text, and enhance comprehension (Keene, Zimmerman, 1997).

Setting/Place

Sometimes authors provide many details that enable students to easily draw what the author is describing. Other times, students may have to fill in the details with their background knowledge.

Visual Representation

Read to students a descriptive passage written at their appropriate listening comprehension level (approximately two years above their reading comprehension level). Ask students to pay close attention to the details about the setting being described in the passage (i.e., a dog pound, a soccer field, a park, etc). Ask students to create a mental image of the scene and then draw it.

Help students transition from drawing pictures to orally expressing those mental images. In order to facilitate verbalization, provide students with the sensory language necessary to express themselves.

Verbal Representation

- Show students various scenes: alley, sunset, beach, forest, supermarket, soccer field, amusement park, school, mall, library, restaurant, place of religious worship, arena, etc.
- Develop appropriate sensory language: for example

	Sight	Sound	Taste	Touch	Smell
Alley	dark cluttered dirty dusty strewn with litter with graffiti with weeds scurrying mice lurking cats dumpsters	horns honking tires squealing gun shots wind howling cats hissing footsteps glass breaking		cold clammy hot damp moist wet chilly rough sharp	rank putrid musty rancid acid stinky moldy mildewed noxious fetid squalid

- Have students use these words to now verbally describe the setting. “I see broken bottles strewn all over the ground. Cats are chasing mice across the rough unpaved ground as the sounds of the busy city street ring out in the background. The rancid odor of trash permeates the air as the cold, dark night closes in. ”
- Once students have generated a variety of sensory words for various settings, have students use those words to describe other settings. For example, the words used to describe an alley might also be those that describe an old abandoned building or a secret passage used by villains.
- It’s important to remember that we can only ask children to orally describe scenes for which they have vocabulary. Taking time to build in that vocabulary is an essential step in this process.

Characters/People

Through visualization students can create a mental representation of the people that they encounter when they read. Visualization of a character requires students to look at both the physical descriptions provided by the author as well as the actions and emotions of the people.

Sometimes authors provide many details that enable students to easily draw what the character looks like. Other times, students may have to fill in the details with their background knowledge.

Visual Representation

Read to students a descriptive passage written at their appropriate listening comprehension level (approximately two years above their reading comprehension level). Ask students to pay close attention to the details about the person’s physical attributes. (i.e. black hair, pointy nose, brown oval eyes, full lips, bald, muscular, portly, etc). Ask students to create a mental image of the character and then draw him/her.

Students can also visualize person’s traits, feelings and emotions through the character’s body language: smiling, frowning, clenching fist, furrowing brow, pursing lips, tapping feet, stomping, etc.

Help students transition from drawing pictures to orally expressing those mental images. In order to facilitate verbalization, provide students with the language necessary to depict physical attributes or body language.

Verbal Representation

- Show students pictures of various people
- Develop appropriate vocabulary

Examples:

Skin color: tan, olive, brown, pale, fair, tawny, dark complexion, freckled

Body shapes: tall, lean, lanky, short, thin, robust, portly, rotund, svelte, muscular, heavy set

Facial features:

- eyes: oval, almond shaped, beady, piercing, wide eyed, round, blue, green, brown, violet
- nose: pointy, flat, narrow, Romanesque, thin, wide, protruding, hooked

- lips: thin, lush, round, pursed, pouty, full, chapped
- hair: thinning, cropped short, curly, long, straight, thick, lustrous, shiny, dull, split ends, unruly, unkempt, oily
- miscellaneous: high cheek bones, cleft chin, mole, wrinkles, dimples, big eared, cauliflower ears, jowly
- face: oval, round, square

Body language:

- posture: slouching, slumped over, round shouldered, rigid, relaxed, stiff, hunchback
- expressive: clenched fist, grinding teeth, smiling, frowning, scowling, grinning, crying, hands on chin, head on desk, wrinkled brow

Events

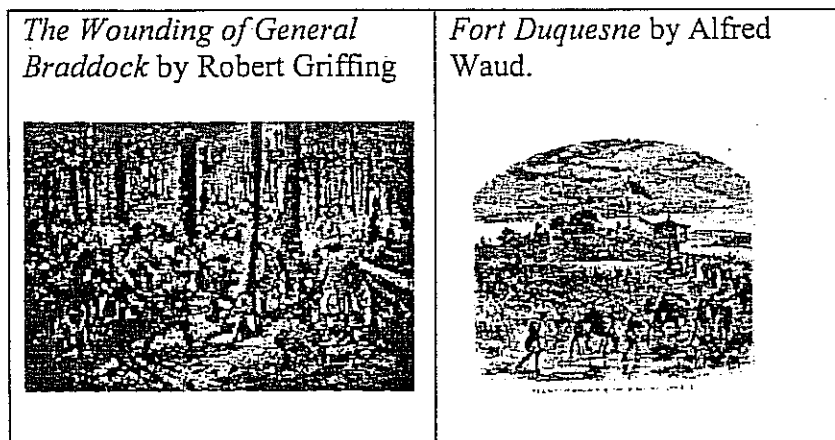
Up to now, students have been asked to visualize a snapshot: a picture of one moment in time of either a place or a character. At the event level, students should be able to visualize a scene as it plays out. They incorporate those snapshot images to envision a short occurrence in the text. Their pictures will change as they read through the text. In essence, they are creating a movie. They are designing the sets, determining the looks of the actors, and choreographing the actors' movements in their minds.

Students need to understand actions and sequence.

Visual Representation

Read to students a passage that requires action such as a soccer game or a battle during the revolutionary war written at their appropriate listening comprehension level (approximately two years above their reading comprehension level). Ask students to pay close attention to the sequence of the events and the action words. Give students a storyboard and have them draw the events of the scene as they elapse. Many non fiction text is organized differently than fiction which is usually chronological. When having students visualize non-fiction initially seek passages that are chronological.

“In April, 1775, Braddock and more than 1,800 British and colonial troops marched to attack the French at Fort Duquesne,” (*Reflections, The United States: Making a New Nation*, 2007, pg. 321).



Verbal Representation

- As you read to students, pause after short sequential events and allow them to express their visualizations.

Help students transition from drawing pictures to orally expressing those mental images. In order to facilitate verbalization, students should have a wide repertoire of verbs. Here students need to use another comprehension strategy: monitor and clarify. Students need to identify verbs that they do not comprehend and hence can't picture. They need to apply fix-up strategies to get that word meaning. Then they can picture the action as it occurs. If you have a lot of struggling readers, pause after reading the passage, allow students to identify words they do not understand, and clarify word meaning. Then, reread the passage and allow students to visualize. For struggling readers and EL learners, pantomime at this level is very effective. In essence the students are acting out the scene they have finished reading. At first the teacher can narrate the scene as the students are performing, and later as the students become more proficient, they can narrate to each other.