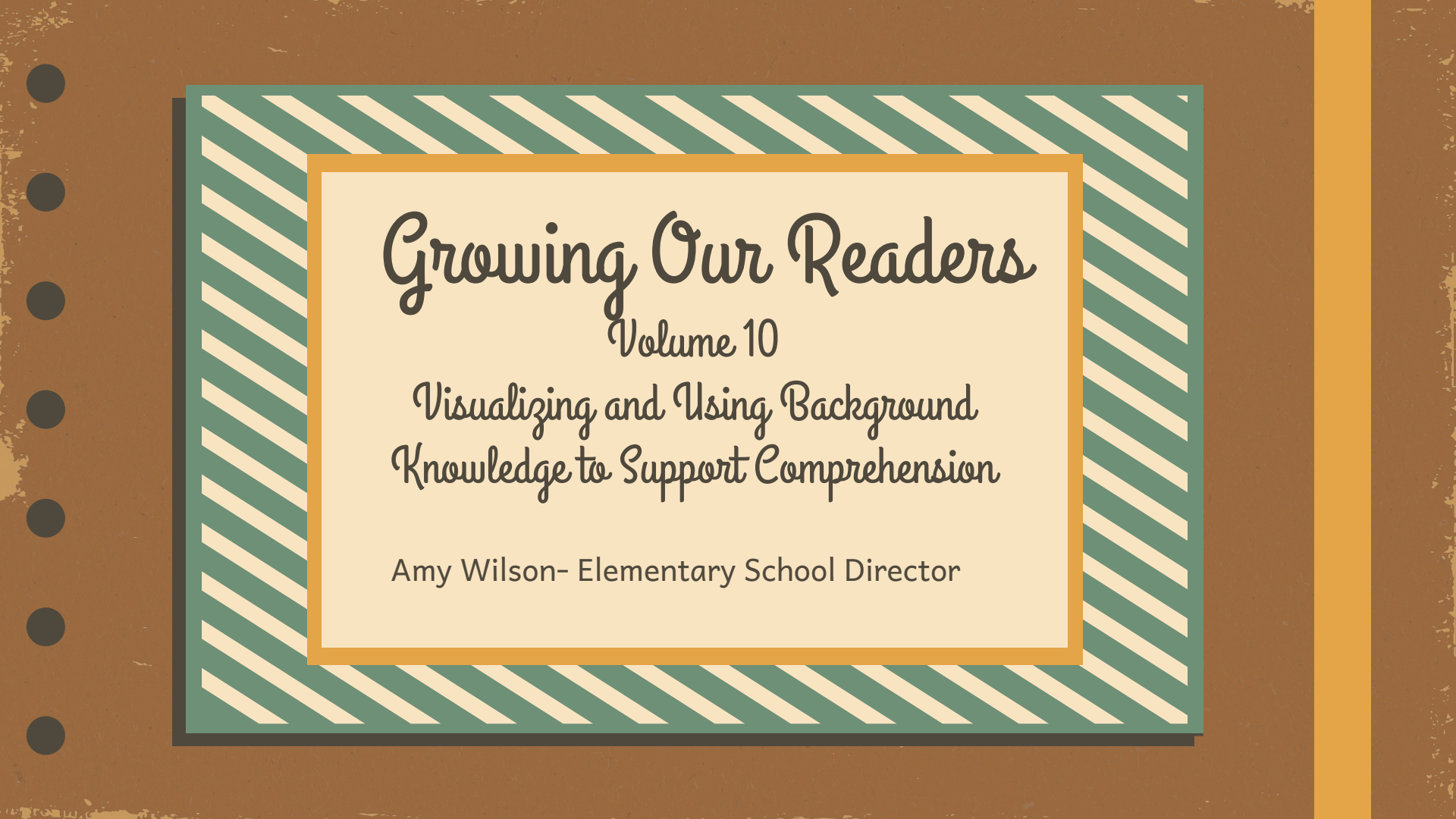




Growing Our Readers

Volume 10

Visualizing and Using Background
Knowledge to Support Comprehension

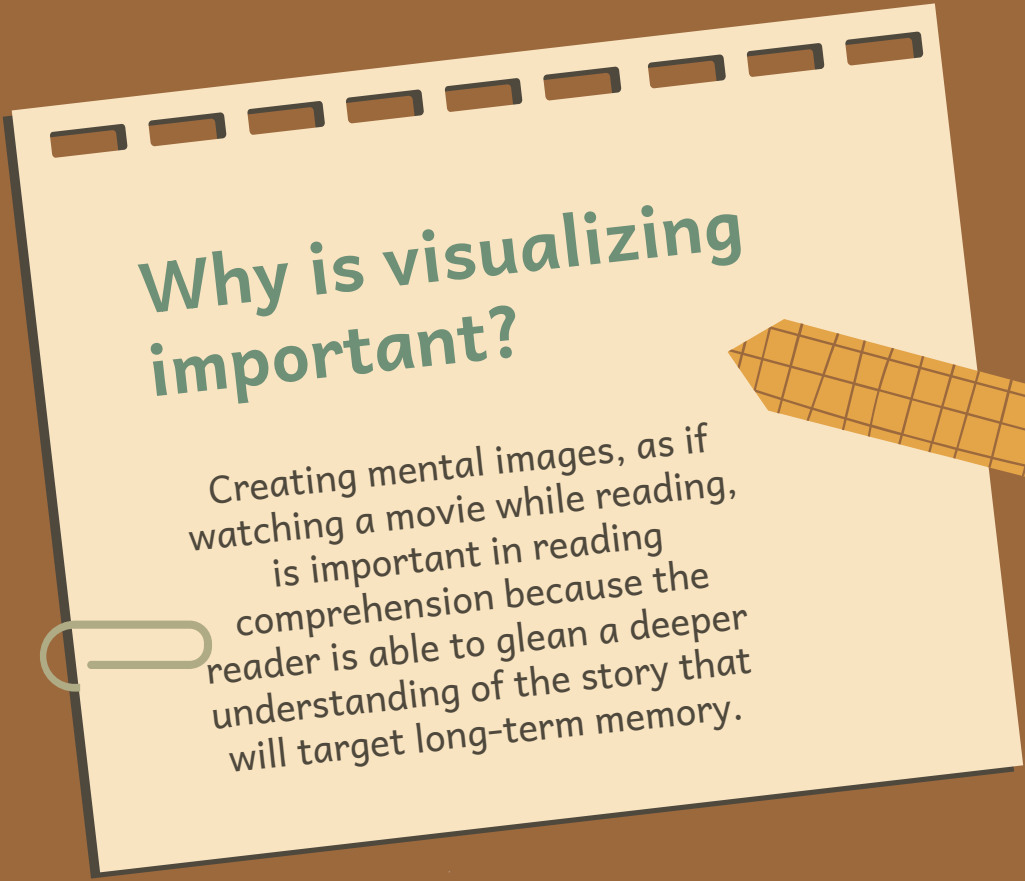
Amy Wilson- Elementary School Director

What is visualization?

Visualization is a strategy that encourages readers to create images of scenes, characters, events and concepts from a book.

Students imagine what the characters might see, hear, taste or smell.





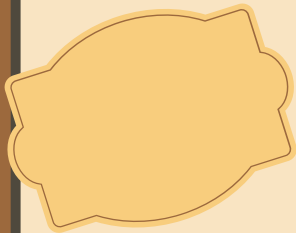
Why is visualizing important?

Creating mental images, as if watching a movie while reading, is important in reading comprehension because the reader is able to glean a deeper understanding of the story that will target long-term memory.



Many benefits

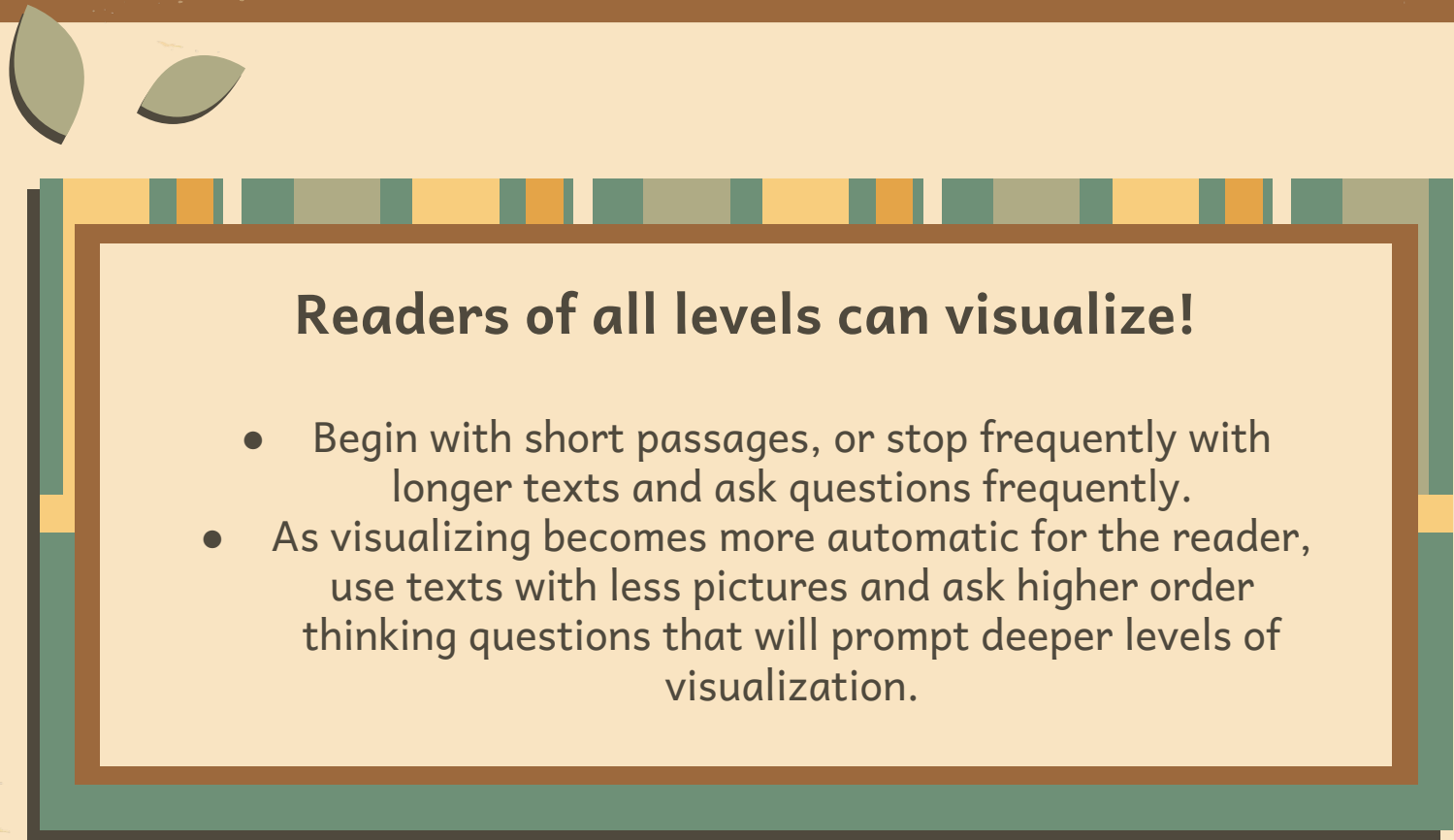
- Imagining these sensations with our 5 senses keeps the attention on reading.
- When you visualize, you draw in experiences that you have already had which helps to connect to the story.
- You also draw in information you have learned and is part of your background knowledge.
- Making these connections in your brain helps to build a better, more in-depth memory of what you read.
- When you need to recall information at a later date, the sensory images that you created and attached to other images in your mind will help.





Visualizing is a great daily reading comprehension activity that can be done in 15 minutes or less and at any level.

It's an easy reading comprehension activity that children of all ages enjoy, too.

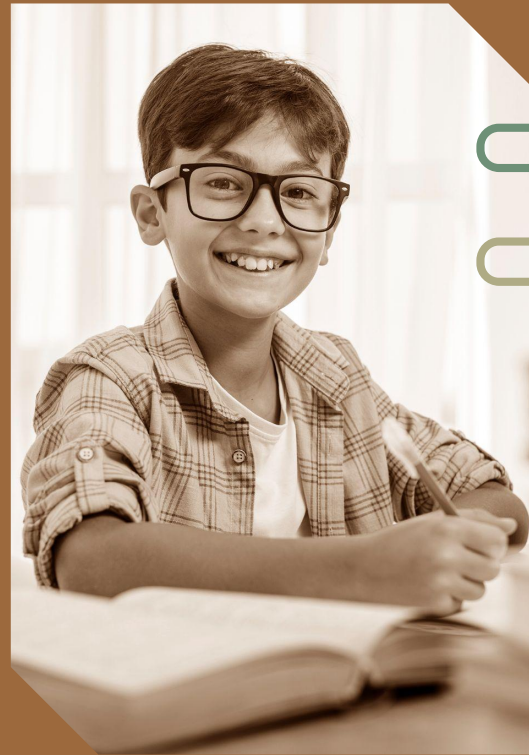


Readers of all levels can visualize!

- Begin with short passages, or stop frequently with longer texts and ask questions frequently.
- As visualizing becomes more automatic for the reader, use texts with less pictures and ask higher order thinking questions that will prompt deeper levels of visualization.

Basic Questions to ask:

1. What did you see/smell/hear as you read?
2. What colors did you see as you read?
3. What shapes did you see?
4. Where do you see the story taking place?
Describe what it looks like.
5. What sounds do you hear?



Deeper Questions



1. Why do you think the character.....?
2. What would you do if you were in the character's situation?
3. Where would you go?
4. How would you respond?
5. What do you think the character will do next?

These questions help the reader make a connection to the characters and better understand them.

Getting Started



01

Have a conversation

Ask your child if their brain makes a movie while they read. Share what your brain does while you read. This could be a good dinnertime conversation.

03

Practice together

This time, you will ask your child to close their eyes and make a movie while you read to them. After a paragraph or two, stop and ask your child to describe in detail what they see. If they are not sure where to start, ask some questions to prompt them. You can add in conversations where you pull out strong nouns, verbs, and adjectives in what you read and how those help you fill in details in your picture.

02

Model

Do a read aloud and model how you visualize what you are reading. As you read, stop now and then and describe what you are seeing in your mind. If you stop too often, it will keep you from enjoying the story so just a couple times during a reading session might be enough.

04

Draw, Act out, Narrate

Some kids will love to draw out what they pictured in their minds. Some kids will like to act out scenes from the movie they make in their mind. Or if you have children that like to talk, they can describe their movie from beginning to end after you finish a chapter or section of the book.

Remember the moments

Other Supports

Picture Books

They provide the pictures to match the text so kids have a starting point to make their own movie.

Graphic Novels

These texts also provide picture support, but appeal to older readers. These texts are a great way to begin visualizing with upper elementary readers.

Short Chapter Books

The books tend to have less pictures and allow for children to make mental pictures and movies to build their comprehension.

Traditional Chapter Books

With very few pictures, students will need to rely on their visualization skills to create meaning of the text.

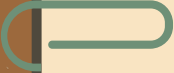
Build Background Knowledge

If children don't have background knowledge about the topic they are reading about, then it is hard to make a picture or movie in their heads. Be sure to build necessary background knowledge before reading.



Watch this Video
For tips to help your
child visualize!

Improve recall and
comprehension with mental
models



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