

THE
10

Visualize

Build Awareness of the Strategy

Build students' facility for using *Visualizing* as a flexible and versatile comprehension strategy. Visualizing enables us to recall details and understand the text through the images that come to mind as we read. We can use these images to draw conclusions and make unique interpretations. An image by itself can mean very little, but when it is associated with a text it becomes a memory of the text. The complexity of meaning in a text often can only become clear by considering and reconsidering it—one excellent way to do this is by writing about or discussing the images that occur to us while reading.

Noticing how our mental pictures change as we read makes us aware of our changing understanding. For instance, if we are reading about piracy in the 1600's, we might document the images and associations we have prior to reading of pirates as glamorous adventurers. As we read about real pirates, our images change. Now we envision poorly dressed, underfed, beaten-down sailors who fled the difficult life aboard a sanctioned warship to rob on the seas and share in the spoils. Documenting students' changing images while reading is an interesting way of assessing their comprehension.

Talk Through the Strategy

Model the strategy for the selection your students are reading. Use think-alouds and invite discussion as you model what active readers do to build and deepen comprehension. Use sticky notes to tag the text when you become aware of images, marking the text again when the image changes. Keep track of images in a notebook using doodles or brief descriptions.

Include as many of these as apply in your modeling:

1. **Set the stage** for *Visualizing* by asking new essential questions or referring to established ones. Ask questions to generate images while you and your students read and to fill in details—the more details you add, the more deeply you'll understand the text.
2. **Model the strategy** by standing back and reflecting as you read, describing the images that come into your mind. Demonstrate how visualizing can help you shape the text into something of your own by adding to what you read with remembered images from your own life. Use the prompts for *Visualizing* on the Teaching Card.
3. **Review the strategy** showing how to elaborate on the images that come to mind. Invite students to share and expand on the mental pictures you talk about as you read. Call attention to how you adapt images when you read new information. Then reread sections to see how your changed images affect your understanding.

Additional active reading techniques:

- "Freewrite"—write whatever comes into your head as you read or after reading—as a way of capturing mental pictures. Some students may prefer to draw instead.
- Where appropriate, create storyboards with simple descriptions or sketches to create a kind of documentary. This can be particularly helpful for historical text.
- Encourage doodling, using symbols, and drawing icons while reading.
- Include descriptions of hearing, tasting, and smelling that reading evokes.

Independent Practice

Have students work together or independently to *Visualize* images for the book on the Teaching Card in the Read Across Texts section. Have students discuss one another's images. Confirm that varied interpretations can show the same depth of understanding.