# Visual Imagery

Visual Imagery improves comprehension by encouraging students to use their senses to create visual images that are representative of the content of the text/story. Students use imagery to envision characters, scenes, actions, and events in detail. The process of creating mental images helps students make sense of a wide variety of texts/stories, both fiction and nonfiction.

Individualized

Targeted
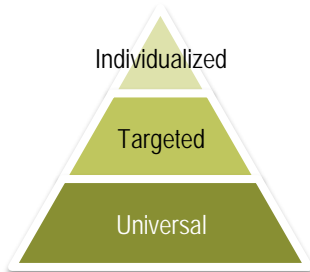
Universal

A teacher's understanding of their students' learning needs helps determine when to provide universal, targeted, or individualized instructional strategies. For some students, universal instructional strategies may be enough to meet their learning needs. For others, more targeted instructional strategies are the starting point for implementing the curriculum. The strategy described is a guideline that teachers can use depending on the learning context.

Why use this strategy in an inclusive learning environment

- Promotes active and personalized engagement with the text/story.
- Provides a structured process to guide students' visualizations or mental images of a text/story.
- Activates prior knowledge and experiences by taking what is to be learned and creating meaningful visual, auditory, or kinesthetic images of the information.

How this strategy could be used in an inclusive learning environment

1. Select a text/story that is rich in visual and other sensory details. Discuss how creating visual images in students' minds can help to better understand and relate to what the author is trying to convey.

2. Provide students with the opportunity to look at the photos or illustrations before reading aloud. Then, as students follow along, pause and reflect after each descriptive section and share the image created.

3. Discuss which words helped to visualize and added to students' understanding of the text/story. Explore descriptions of the setting, characters, or actions, and how these pictures help to understand what's happening in the story.

4. Consider using a wordless book as an alternative, frequently pausing to ask students to visualize and interpret the details they see.

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5. Have students express what they see, hear, taste, smell, and feel, and to identify the words and/or images that helped them, acknowledging and validating differences in the various responses.

Example

Visual Imagery – set the SCENE	
Search for picture words	Read the first 2 or 3 sentences. Look for picture words that help create the scene in your mind.
Create the scene	Start to create a scene in your mind using the picture words. This will help you answer the question "**where**?"
Enter lots of details	Use all the cues in the text and your background knowledge to give the scene more detail. In stories, look for characters and actions.
Name the parts	Put all of the information together. Name the setting, who is there, what is happening, and a few important details or facts.
Evaluate the scene	Check your scene by reading further. If you pictured something wrong make the change to your scene.

Tips for individualized supports

- Pair students or organize them into small groups for visualization work. Use a strategy like Think-Pair-Share to help students become more comfortable developing mental images.

- Have students share their work with a peer or within a small group setting as a transition to sharing with a larger group.

- Use familiar concepts so that students can be supported through the process of creating and refining visual imagery to guide comprehension of the text/story.

- Complete the visual imagery process orally or have students vote on the statements through visuals or physical movement (e.g., selecting images, using voting paddles or hand signals to agree or disagree).

- Students can use a variety of assistive/educational technologies to:
  o organize responses using pictures and/or diagrams;
  o reduce letter-by-letter typing using predictive text software;
  o adjust text size and font colour; and
  o read student writing aloud.

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- Sentence frames can be used to help students summarize:
  - *The main points are _____.*
  - *This is important because _____.*
  - *The paragraph tells me _____ about the main idea.*