

## **Tips for Using Picture Books in the Classroom (Pre K and Elementary)**

### **1. Include visual literacy in literacy education.**

- Encourage children to use illustrations to decode meaning from text
- Encourage children to form mental images when reading text
- Help children to describe, compare, and value both visual and written communication

### **2. Begin teaching children visual literacy skills even before they can read.**

- Start with the literal and concrete then move to more abstract concepts
- Challenge children to think about what they see in an illustration
- Encourage children to reflect on illustrations such as how the illustration helps them understand what is happening or predict what will happen next

### **3. Use illustrations in children's picture books to teach aesthetics.**

- Teach children the traditional design components of line, color, and shape
- Have children evaluate illustrations for strength, mood, and feeling
- Children practice expressing their opinion by describing why they like or don't like particular illustrations

### **4. Have children compare the book's illustrations to the text.**

- Ask children to identify the setting and atmosphere through the text and illustration
- Ask children to describe the characters using both text and illustration
- Encourage children to study the validity of the content depicted in illustrations

### **5. Have children compare the mental images they generate in reading a book to the book's illustrations.**

- Encourage children to imagine what the main characters in a book would look and act like and then compare their thoughts to what is in the books drawings
- Challenge children to analyze if the illustrations in a book accurately reflect what the author had in mind
- Have children generate their own book illustrations and see how they compare to the ones in the book

### **6. Have children work in pairs to analyze book illustrations.**

- Encourage one child to read the text as the other child examines the illustrations
- Have the children compare and contrast how their own mental images of the story compare with each other's' well as the book's images

**7. Read picture books to children of all ages.**

- Read a wordless picture book to children of all ages and invite the children to help tell the story
- Read a picture book to older children in which the drawings support the story and analyze how the text and illustration work together
- Read a postmodern picture book in which illustration and text have unique roles. Explore with children how this contributes to reading comprehension.

**8. Use picture books to teach reading comprehension.**

- Discuss with children how visual literacy contributes to their understanding of a story
- Have children analyze how illustrations present new meaning to what is offered in the text
- Have children analyze how illustrations reinforce and extend the same content that is presented in a book's text

**9. Emphasize the cognitive nature of art.**

- Encourage children to use art to both think and feel
- Help children see the relationship between a book's meaning and its art

**10. Involve children in being book illustrators.**

- Have children write a book without illustrations and then have them write the same story, including illustrations
- Have children develop a traditional storybook in which the text and illustrations are mutually supportive
- Encourage children to try writing and illustrating a postmodern picture book.

**Source:** Reading Is Fundamental

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