

Visualizing Strategies: Reading Is Seeing

Use visualizing when:

- The text is difficult, in particular because it is abstract or hard to follow.
- You are struggling to see how the information or text is organized.
- The material is vague or foreign; lack of exposure or knowledge makes it hard to imagine what you are reading (e.g., ancient texts like Homer's *The Odyssey*).
- You want an alternative way to make sense of and respond to what you read, particularly using your spatial, visual abilities.

Draw the Text	<p>Using the actual words from the text as your guidelines, translate the text into a drawing to help you see what it looks like and what is happening.</p> <p>Example: In Homer's <i>The Odyssey</i>, he describes the hall in which the suitors gather; yet it is so foreign to our experience. Draw the hall in precise detail, using each sentence in the section as a checklist of what to include, how to arrange it, and what it looks like.</p>
Sensory Notes	<p>Create a page with columns for the different senses (e.g., sounds, smells, etc.). As you read, write down any sensory details the text includes. When you have finished reading the selection, use those details to write a description of the scene that will show you understand what you read and help you see what it looks like and thus better visualize what you read. You can also use this list of details to analyze the author's style.</p> <p>Example: In <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>, Dickens uses abundant sensory details to help readers see and sense what the London of his era was like and how its people lived and looked.</p>
Visual Explanation	<p>Use some sort of symbolic means of representing movement and connections. One possibility is to envision those complex diagrams football coaches draw to show who is going where and doing what on a given football play.</p> <p>Example: In <i>Julius Caesar</i>, Cassius is left standing alone at the end of Act One. Throughout the act, however, he is everywhere, talking to everyone. Using a set of dots somewhat like billiard balls that have an initial for each character in them (e.g., © for Cassius), show how Cassius moves through the act; then explain what it means that he stands alone at the end of the first act.</p>
Perform the Text	<p>Whether role playing a scene or creating a tableau to represent a moment, create a physical visible performance that corresponds with the text.</p> <p>Example: When reading <i>Lord of the Flies</i>, place everyone in formation to show the different dynamics in the opening scene as Jack enters, blinded by the sun, and towers over Ralph who is impressed by the boy "who knows his own mind."</p>
Compare the Text	<p>Comparing what you do not understand to what you do understand helps to create a visual sense of comparison.</p> <p>Example: Thus if you say, "Gatsby is like a grown-up Holden Caulfield," you might better understand the text.</p>
Recast the Text	<p>Recasting a written text into a movie script or even a poem can sometimes help you better understand it by thinking about it and working with it in a different, more visual genre.</p> <p>Example: Describe the battle scenes from Homer's <i>The Odyssey</i> as Spielberg would the opening scene for <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> of D-Day in WW II.</p>

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