



Close Viewing

Use images to spur curiosity, make inferences, and gain information.

* WHY

Our students get and will continue to get much of their information visually. Although textual literacy remains critically important, gleaning information from images is essential in the 21st century. So close viewing is just as important as close reading. This is great news for striving readers, because images offer an accessible entry point into information. The more we use images to build background and curiosity, the more our striving readers will learn and the more confident they will become.

* WHEN

We begin the year using images in a variety of ways—to spur curiosity, make inferences, and gain information. We continue this practice throughout the year to fuel inquiry-based learning, build background for content areas, and continue to encourage curiosity.

* HOW

Intriguing Images. Start the day several times a week by projecting an intriguing image that is likely to excite kids and draw them in. These images abound in newspapers, magazines, online, and so forth. Be on the lookout for them. Put one up on the screen and simply ask kids to turn and talk about what they wonder or what they think. Steph's colleague Anne Goudvis found a photo of a large black bear falling from a tree in downtown Boulder, Colorado, almost looking as though it was flying! Kids were enthralled. Questions cascaded out of them: "Is it real?" "Is it a costume?" "What is happening to it?" It takes only a few minutes, is great fun, and fosters curiosity. Encourage kids to hunt for their own images and bring them in to share with the class.

See Think Wonder (STW). See Think Wonder is a thinking routine for exploring images, objects, and artifacts. It is a process for constructing meaning by viewing, thinking, and wondering. It is more formal and purposeful than simply projecting images. You might use

STW to launch a content unit or a collaborative inquiry. Project an image, a photograph, a piece of art, or share an object, and ask students to do three things:

- Observe it closely—truly **see** the image or object.
- **Think** about and discuss what might be going on, what is happening, what the image is about, and so forth. Encourage them to back up their thinking with evidence from whatever it is they're viewing.
- Share what they **wonder** about the image or object and questions they have.

You can cover all three of these steps in a single lesson or you may find it helpful to cover them in two or three lessons. Once kids have been taught this process, it can become a regular practice for exploring in all content areas. STW provides striving readers with a very accessible entry point because it is all about making meaning through viewing. And, of course, it is a terrific way to fan that curiosity flame. For more information, go to visiblethinkingpz.org.

Close Viewing of Images in Quadrants. Choose an image and divide it into quadrants. Photocopy enough of the quadrant images so that groups of four can each share one. Depending on the size of your class, several groups may each have the same quadrant. Ask group members to view the image closely and discuss, think, and wonder about it. Then project the entire image and have kids discuss it. From there, remove the entire image and ask each group to report on what its members saw in their quadrants. Then project the entire image again and notice the discussion. It is likely to be far deeper and more expansive than discussions that emerge from viewing the entire image alone (Daniels & Steineke, 2011).

Viewing and Inferring From Content-Area Images. Gather and print out images related to an upcoming content unit. For instance, if you are going to be studying the Civil War, you might find images of slave auctions, battles, Ford's Theater, shackles, and so forth. Have kids meet in groups of four and discuss each image, jotting down what they wonder and what they infer on sticky notes labeled with their initials. Pass the images around so kids have lots of opportunities to respond to a wide variety. Then, collect the sticky notes to determine students' background knowledge about the upcoming unit. It is critical, particularly for striving readers, to have a good idea of what they know or don't know before starting a unit. Once you have that information, spend some time building background for kids who need it. This supports striving readers as they begin to read in the content area because the number-one way to make sense of new information is to connect it to what they already know.