

## Explicit teaching of visualization strategies to Year 3 and 4 students improves their comprehension.

### Teaching Sessions- Visualizing

#### **Session 1:**

- Have students reflect and write about what they do to make sense of what they read.
- Explain purpose of the sessions: *We are going to explore a strategy called visualizing and see if it helps us to understand what we read.*
- Introduce concept of visualizing with
  - a) word cards: *Read this word and make a picture in your mind about it. Then I want you to quickly draw your picture.* Show card for house. Teacher models how to describe the picture she drew. (E.g. *I saw the outside of a brick house. It has a path leading up to the front door and a large tree in the front yard. I can see curtains in the windows.*) Repeat process for the word dog.
  - b) Sentence strips. Explain that when the word is part of a sentence, other words also help us make the picture: *This time the word house is in a sentence and the other words might make us think about a different picture.* Read a sentence strip containing the word house- Everyone in the house was asleep. Teacher models the picture in her mind: *I can see inside the house now. The parents and children are sleeping in their bedrooms. Tell me about your picture.* Allow students to describe pictures and if they are off the track, say: *We need to check we are making our picture so that it matches the words in the sentence. Let's read the sentence again to see if you need to change your picture.* Teacher continues to model the process with the following sentences from the text,  
*The next sentences are from a story, so our pictures have to be like a movie. Let's read each one and see if we can make a picture.* Allow students to draw, to provide support for the description of the next sentence. Have students describe their pictures, and discuss how these relate to the text.

In the kitchen a spark started a small fire.

But nobody knew.

The teacher then asks the students to try to describe their own mind pictures for the following sentences:

Soon the house was on fire.

'Dee-dee-dee-dee-dee' went the alarms on the smoke detectors.

Dudley the dog began to bark.

Sam woke up with a fright.

- Reinforce the strategy: *We have been practising a strategy to help us understand what we read. It is called visualizing.*
- Reflection: *What would you tell the rest of the class about what we have been doing?* Allow each student to discuss the session.

### **Session 2:**

- Recall purpose of sessions. Have students recall strategy to be practised.
- Teacher modeling of strategy:  
Revise some sentences from previous session, with volunteer members of the group describing their pictures. Using more sentence strips based on the same text, the teacher describes the picture in her mind after each sentence.  
Sam rolled out of bed.  
  
He remembered to stay low beneath the smoke.
- Group practice:  
The teacher reminds students: *We need to check that our pictures match the words we have read and change them if they do not match. As someone describes their picture, let's check that it matches what we read.* Have the group discuss whether the picture could match the words in the sentence.
- Individual practice:  
Have students individually draw and describe their pictures for the sentences:
- Introduce the R.I.D.E.R bookmark: *What we have been doing is reading a sentence, making a picture in our minds, describing our picture and checking or evaluating that it matches the words. We have tried to keep the picture in our minds when we read on.* Allow students to discuss words on the bookmark in relation to session activities and invite them to try it with their reading activities.
- Reflection: Have students reflect on how they feel about the session and visualizing strategy.

### **Session 3:**

- Student reflection about their efforts to use the visualizing strategy.
- Revise R.I.D.E.R steps with the bookmarks.
- Group practice of the R.I.D.E.R strategy with sentences written on cards. Reinforce the importance of matching the picture to the words in the sentences, checking and adjusting the picture if necessary, before reading on.
- Discuss how to use R.I.D.E.R strategy in a paragraph of text. Say *I want you to read this paragraph in the book and use your R.I.D.E.R strategy. Read the paragraph and make the picture in your mind. Then draw it.* Allow the students to describe their pictures, checking that the pictures appropriately match the sentences. Involve other students by having them listen to the descriptions and participating in the checking (evaluating) stage.
- Reflection: Have students reflect on how they felt about using the strategy.

#### **Session 4:**

- Review efforts to use R.I.D.E.R since previous session.
- Students individually record what they have learnt in the sessions.
- Group practice of visualizing strategy in a text: Please Stop Barking by Pat Collins  
*When we read, what are we going to do to help us understand the text?*  
Allow students to recall steps in the R.I.D.E.R strategy. Work on the first two sentences as a group, ensuring the pictures match the text and encouraging more detailed pictures by imagining expressions on characters. Have students act out the expressions on faces in their mind pictures to develop descriptive skills.  
*Saturday was an exciting day for the Turbot family. Saturday was the day that Mum was bringing their new puppy home.*
- Individual practice: Students read next two sentences. Draw their pictures and describe them and check themselves if the pictures are matching the text.  
*Hilary Turbot and her dad were about to nail a board onto the kennel. They heard the car drive up the driveway.*  
Teacher provides positive feedback for efforts made.  
Repeat procedure with next two sentences:  
*“They’re here!” shouted Hilary, dropping her Hammer. She ran to the front of the house*
- Linking the sentences: Say ‘*When we read a book, it is like keeping a movie of our pictures.*’ Have students retell what has been read so far, from their own pictures.
- Reflection: Discuss how students feel about their efforts.

#### **Session 5:**

- Have students articulate what they have learnt about visualizing, using the R.I.D.E.R bookmarks as prompts.
- Revise previous session:  
Have students reread the introduction to the book Please Stop Barking, make the picture in their minds and describe their pictures.
- Guided practice: Read on, checking pictures made after each sentence.
- Individual practice: Allow students to read a few sentences, practising the visualizing strategy and drawing their picture. Ask them to explain how their pictures match the text.
- Reflection: Discuss how the visualizing strategy can help with their reading.

#### **Session 6:**

- Review of R.I.D.E.R: Have students record what actions they take for each step of the strategy.
- Revise text from previous session. Have students reread and describe their pictures.
- Guided practice: Read on from p9 of the book, Please Stop Barking, checking pictures after two or three sentences and evaluating them against the text.  
Individual practice: Students continue reading a few sentences and make their pictures. After evaluating their pictures, they continue to read text. Discuss what

they see after short passages of text. Say *Now I want you to try the R.I.D.E.R strategy by yourself. You can continue to read the book, and when you have finished up to this page, you will need to describe what has happened. Use the pictures in your mind to help you.*

- Reflection: Discuss: Why is it important to check our pictures against the text?

### **Session 7:**

- Preparing for reading: Ask: *What are you going to do when you are reading today?*
- Revise text covered in previous session. Ask students to reread sections of text and describe their pictures.
- Individual practice: Students continue reading a few sentences and make their pictures. After evaluating their pictures, they continue to read text. Discuss what they see after short passages of text. Have students retell story after reading is complete.
- Ask students to reflect on how they went with their independent reading.

### **Session 8:**

- Preparing for reading: Ask: *What are you going to do to when you are reading today? How will you check your pictures?*
- Guided practice: Introduce short paragraphs from new text: Rosie's House (Susan Reid). Have students read the paragraph and illustrate the picture in their mind. They then describe their picture and evaluate it.
- Individual practice: Students continue reading a few sentences and make their pictures. After evaluating their pictures, they continue to read text to p14. Discuss what they see after short passages of text. Have students retell story up to this point. Texts left in classroom for students to read independently.
- Reflection: *What worked for you today? What do you need to try with your reading until our next session?*

### **Session 9:**

- Discuss strategies used since last session.
- Guided practice with paragraphs from fiction text: Rosie's House
- Independent practice with this text.
- Reflection: Students write how they feel about their visualizing strategies

### **Session 10:**

- Discuss: How can the R.I.D.E.R strategy help us with non-fiction texts?
- Guided practice with paragraphs from fiction text: Rosie's House
- Independent practice with fiction text
- Reflection: What have you learnt? What will you try when you are reading?

Bookmark used to prompt students to use R.I.D.E.R. between sessions.

**Read**



**Imagine**

Make a picture or  
movie in your mind



**Describe**

Tell someone else  
about your picture



**Evaluate**

Check that your picture  
matches what is written  
and change it if  
necessary



**Read on**

## Visualising task: Individual administration

### John Munro

In this task we are going to be reading (or listening to) sentences and then describing the picture that you make in your mind.

Look at the first two sentences. These are part of a story. I will read them and I want you to read them to yourself with me. Then I will think about what the story might say next. I want you to think about what it might say as well.

Teacher reads the two sentences. Then the teacher describes the picture they have made in their mind: *In my mind I see a man wearing work clothes going to live in a strange town. In his bag he has toys he has made and tools for making them. He is looking around the new town. Now you have a go at making your picture. Then describe what your picture has in it.*

*Now you have a go at the second sentence.* The teacher then reads the next sentence to the student (or the student reads the sentence). *Now have a go at making a mind picture of it. Then describe your picture in words. Now listen to the picture I made. It says "He wanted to find a place to live. "I can see the man looking at a house where he could live.*

Now you have a go at the third sentence. The teacher then reads the next sentence to the student (or the student reads the sentence). *Now have a go at making a mind picture of it. Then describe your picture in words.*

Now you have a go at the fourth sentence. The teacher then reads the next sentence to the student (or the student reads the sentence). *Now have a go at making a mind picture of it. Then describe your picture in words. Now listen to how I say it. It says "After he bought a map he looked for a bus. I can see the man buying a map and then looking in the street for a bus stop." Write down what I have said in the space.*

#### Practice items

Sentence read	Teacher	Teacher writes child's response
A toy maker went to live in another city. He wanted to find a place to live.	This person who makes toys moved to a new town.	
	He needed to get a house to stay.	
He needs to get to know the city.	He wants to find out where things are in the town.	
After he bought a map he looked for a bus.	First he got himself a map. Then he searched for a bus stop.	

Introduce the set of target sentences. Give the student the following instructions: Listen to (or read each sentence to yourself). *Make a picture of it in your mind. Then describe your picture in words.*

The young man and his friend rode on the bike.	
They were enjoying themselves.	
The birds were singing in the trees.	
The two friends chatted. They were not paying attention to anything.	
They were supposed to watch where they were going.	
The track became narrow and twisted.	
Suddenly it began to slope down and the bike sped up.	
People in the park watched and gasped as it went faster and faster.	
The two riders weren't smiling and chatting any longer.	
Now they were gripping the bike as tightly as they could, showing fear on their faces.	
People in the park had stopped what they were doing and started to yell, "Stop" or "Be careful".	
All of a sudden the path goes around a sharp curve.	
Ahead they see in the middle of the path, a huge stone.	
The closer they get to it, the more enormous it becomes.	
As they fly towards it, their hearts are beating louder and louder and they try to take avoidance action.	
There is loud thud, the front wheel crumples and the young couple is airborne, flying over the obstacle to the grass on the side of the path.	