

Analyzing Visual Text

Summary

Students individually consider a visual text and draw conclusions based on what they see. They write about their conclusions and explain the evidence used to make that determination.

Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 1](#)

Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Writing Standard 10](#)

Time Frame

1 class periods of 30 minutes each

Group Size

Individual

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

Materials

A visual text such as the following: graph, political cartoon, photograph, or illustration. Thought-provoking visuals are the most helpful.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to analyze a visual text. Students will be able to develop and support a claim about the visual text based on evidence found in the text.

Instructional Procedures

Choose a visual text or texts (graph, political cartoon, photograph, illustration, etc.) that relate(s) to a topic that will be introduced in class.

Give each student one visual text to consider.

Have students consider the text and write for 3-10 minutes. They should answer the following questions: What conclusion do you draw from this text? What evidence points to that conclusion? Use the following to help structure your response:

Describe

- Focus on specific details.
- Imagine you are writing to someone who has never seen this visual text.

Analyze

- Record initial reaction.
- Identify important details.
- Consider context and history of image.
- Consider the medium (photo, political cartoon, etc.) -- compare/contrast to other visual texts.
- Reconsider first impressions: reinforce or challenge them.

Interpret

- Present a specific claim about image.
- What is the significance or meaning of the image as YOU understand it.
- Interpretation moves beyond stating the obvious.

Students then discuss their responses either in small groups or as a class.

This is a good way to get students to consider a topic before having it introduced in class.

Students use visual evidence to draw conclusions, and use writing to explain that evidence.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Simpler texts can be used for struggling students, and more complex texts could be given to gifted/accelerated students.

Extensions

This can be extended to introduce argumentation and/or an inquiry project.

Different students could be given different visual texts that present different sides of an issue.

Once each student has written about his/her text, the class can discuss the issue based on what they have seen to that point.

Students could then see multiple texts and draw conclusions that synthesize the information from all texts.

Additional, non-visual, texts could be added to the process at this point.

Assessment Plan

Informal assessment/participation grade works well for this activity. Ensuring that students have completed and understood all three aspects (describe, analyze, interpret) is the most important concept.

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