

Teaching Notes

The goal of RL.3.7 is for students to be able to explain the way an illustration contributes to the words conveyed in a story. Students should be able to understand that illustrations can help create the mood, emphasize a character's traits, or help describe aspects of the setting or a particular event.

Activities

1. As you are reading a picture book aloud to the students, stop and discuss each picture. Take a vote: Does the picture on this page help tell the story? Why or why not? Ask students what they would draw differently if they were the illustrator.
2. Many times, illustrations add details that are not found in the words of a story. Hand out paper copies of different pages of books, or show the pages on a SMART Board or projector. Have students circle any added details the illustrations give that are not found in the words of the story. Are there any details that the illustrations miss?

Writing Prompts

1. Read a storybook aloud to the class, but do not show the students the illustrations or cover art. As you read, encourage students to picture the setting, characters, and mood of the story. After completing the book, allow students to draw an illustration that would fit nicely in the book. On a separate piece of paper, have students describe their illustrations. Why did they choose that specific event? What influenced their choice of colors? What season is it, and what is the setting? Then, after students have completed their illustrations and explanations, reread the book and share the book's illustrations with the class. Are any similar?
2. Work backward! Show students a detailed illustration. Then, have them write a story using the illustration as inspiration.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.3.7:

What Is It Like to Be an Illustrator? There are some great videos on children's book illustrators and what it is like. Take students behind the scenes to see the process of illustrating picture books.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGz1Kgru5AI>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56YI_5_OUqs
- <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/teaching-illustrators>
- <http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/1944132/what-words-and-illustrations-convey>

Deeper Questions

- **“Reading Through the Arts”:** This online resource has ten excellent questions to ask students about illustrations while reading. This will enhance their knowledge about the illustrations and the story.

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/supporting-individual-needs/reading-through-the-arts.aspx>

- **“Illustrations, Text, and the Child Reader”**: For further reading, Zhihui Fang writes an excellent article regarding the purpose of pictures in storybooks:
http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1280&context=reading_horizons

Lesson Plan Ideas

- **Harriet Tubman Exercise**: This lesson uses the book *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* by Faith Ringgold to discuss and evaluate artwork depicting Harriet Tubman.
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Harriet_Tubman_An_Informative_and_Impressionistic_Look.aspx#Overview
- **Wordless Picture Books**: In this lesson, students examine two wordless picture books (*Zoom* by Istvan Banyai and *Tuesday* by David Wiesner). This lesson shows just how important illustrations can be in a story—in fact, they can be the *only* portion of the story!
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/applying-question-answer-relationships-370.html?tab=1#tabs>
- **Dear Mrs. LaRue**: In this online lesson, students examine the book *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School* by Mark Teague to answer questions about the importance of the illustrations.
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/dear-mrs-larue-discussion-guide>