Tools for Thought

targeted ☑
adaptable ●

Primary ○
Intermediate ☑
Middle ☑
Senior ●

Explain the image I

using visual clues to develop informative explanations of images

Learning outcomes

- understand the basic content of an image
- make plausible interpretations about an image
- gather general information about a historical or contemporary situation or place—either to expand existing knowledge or to provide a starting point for inquiry into a new topic

When to use the strategy

- understand or explain what is happening in the images found on the internet or in other sources such as newspapers, magazines, textbooks
- draw plausible inferences from images prior to creating a mindset for reading text
- focus observations on details and write an effective summary
- compare situations in the same location in different time periods
- extend, confirm or question what you already know about a topic

How to use the strategy

Prior knowledge

- understand the difference between an observation and an inference
- draw plausible inferences

Ideas to emphasize

- There is more to an image than first meets the eye.
- 5Ws is an effective strategy for uncovering information.
- Use tentative language for inferences if knowledge is limited (eg. "maybe," "possibly," "perhaps").
- Use other sources of information to confirm the plausibility of the explanation.

Instructional suggestions

- Select an image that creates some mystery about the event depicted.
- Demonstrate the strategy using the video found by searching *Investigating Images* at www.tc2.ca.
- Consider using all or part of *Inference (*Lesson #32) available to subscribers to the **Tools for Thought** collection online and in print in *The Competencies Toolkit* to teach this concept.
- Isolate parts of the image to focus attention on details.

Explain the image I

using visual clues to develop informative explanations of images

Purpose

This strategy helps me gather and analyze the details of an image and develop informative explanations. Explaining what is seen helps improve understanding of a situation or place.

Instructions

- Explain the image carefully and record direct observations.
- Draw plausible inferences (logical, informed conclusions) about each of the 5Ws.
- Take a second look at the image and notice less obvious details and refine your inferences.
- Decide on the most reasonable inferences.
- Combine these into an extended sentence or short paragraph. Remember to use terms like "maybe" or "perhaps" if you have little knowledge of the topic.
- Confirm the plausibility of your explanation using additional sources of information.
- Revise your explanation as needed in light of the new information.

Criteria

Accurate, relevant observations: the evidence accurately describes the relevant details in the image.

Plausible, imaginative inferences: the inferences go beyond the very obvious conclusions and are supported with several pieces of evidence found in the image or based on other known facts.

Detailed, fully developed explanation: the explanation includes suggestions with appropriate detail for each of the 5W questions.

Explain the image

using visual clues to develop informative explanations of images

Name: _____

	Possible prompts	Observations	Possible inferences
WHO is in the image?	• What role or occupation? • What status (rich or poor)? • If several people are shown, are they related to each other?		
WHAT are the people doing?	• What actions? • What objects are used? • What is the focus of the attention?		
WHERE does the image take place?	• In what country or region? • In what setting (rural or urban)? • What is the terrain (flat / mountainous)? • Are there landmarks (nature / human)?		
WHEN does the action take place?	• What time of day? • What time of year? • What year or decade? • What historical period?		
WHY is the action happening?	• What reason might there be for the actions? • Does the broader context suggest a purpose? • What might happen next?		

Summary: Create a summary explanation by combining your most reasonable inferences into an extended sentence or short paragraph.

Criteria

Accurate, relevant observations: the evidence accurately describes the relevant details in the image.

Plausible, imaginative inferences: the inferences go beyond the very obvious conclusions and are supported with several pieces of evidence found in the image or based on other known facts.

Detailed, fully developed explanation: the explanation includes suggestions with appropriate detail for each of the 5W questions.

Assessing the explanation

Accurate, relevant observation

Excellent	Very Good	Competent	Basic	Not Yet Able
Identifies many relevant, accurate details from the image, including several less obvious details.	Identifies many relevant, accurate details from the image, and occasionally recognizes less obvious details.	Identifies a number of relevant and accurate, but obvious, details from the image.	Identifies only a few of the most obvious details from the image, but not all are relevant or accurate.	

Evidence:

Plausible, imaginative inferences

Excellent	Very Good	Competent	Basic	Not Yet Able
Provides many varied and imaginative inferences that are highly plausible.	Provides many plausible and sometimes imaginative inferences.	Provides a number of inferences that are generally plausible, but rather obvious.	Provides a few plausible but obvious inferences.	

Evidence:

Detailed, fully developed explanations

Excellent	Very Good	Competent	Basic	Not Yet Able
Explains the image in rich detail, providing insightful conclusions about each aspect.	Explains the image in some detail, providing conclusions about each aspect.	Explains the most basic aspects of the image, but without much detail.	Explains the image in general terms that cover only some aspects of the image.	

Evidence:

Explain the image

© TC² The Critical Thinking Consortium