

How to Use *What Is Visual Literacy?* in Your Inservice Programs

What is Visual Literacy? is an absorbing and thought-provoking program that any teacher can mine for ideas that are applicable throughout the curriculum. The program may be used by one viewer as a self-study introduction, or it can be the starting point of an excellent inservice workshop for a group.

You don't need to have read Steve's book *I See What You Mean: Children at Work with Visual Literacy* (Stenhouse 1995). This video is an introduction to the subject—a stimulus to develop your awareness of visual texts and to show you some ways teaching visual literacy that can be incorporated into classroom work. The three points that follow are suggestions to get you started. Once you begin thinking about visual literacy, your own ideas and teaching experiences will take over; it's a fascinating subject for students and teachers alike.

Following these notes we have included a booklist compiled by noted children's literature authority Susan Hepler. The titles she selected are fine examples of how visual texts can be used to convey information. Whether you're teaching language arts, social studies, science or health, you'll find nonfiction books that are appropriate.

After You Have Watched the Video...

1. Review the main kinds of visual texts discussed in the program. There are examples on the accompanying lesson planning sheet, and you'll find more in Steve's book *I See What You Mean*.

There are many occasions when a visual text conveys more information than words-only text, regardless of the subject. Consider the times when you have used a graph, a map, or a flow chart to illustrate an idea or present information. Ask the teachers in your group to share their experiences using visual texts; for example, "I used a time line when we were growing sunflowers in the classroom. This is what we did..."

2. Help teachers match the best visual text to their students' purpose by asking such questions as:

"If a student wants to explain how to make a paper airplane, which kind of visual text would he or she use?"

"If a student is summarizing an encyclopedia entry about where fossils have been found, what would be the best visual text for the job?"

3. Hand out the Lesson Plan worksheet (see next page). First, ask the teachers to list the curriculum topics they will be teaching next week. Then consider the purpose of the written texts students will compose. For example, is it to explain a process, to summarize an extract or an article, to describe a sequence of events, show relationships among different items.

Remind teachers of the range of possible visual texts shown at the foot of the worksheet. Further examples are shown in the chart on page 16 of *I See What You Mean*.

Ask teachers to select two or three appropriate visual texts for each topic on their worksheet.

Lesson plan

(How could you use visual texts in your classroom next week?)

Purpose	Theme/topic/ unit of work	Visual text(s)
1		
2		
3		

↓

For example




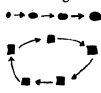


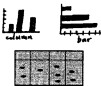
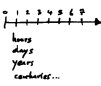

to describe ...
to explain ...
to instruct ...
to recount events
to generalise about ...
to persuade the reader
to organise our ideas
to decide
to solve a problem
to plan our actions
to summarise ideas
to give examples of ...
to show how ...

↓

For example

dinosaurs
silkworms
food groups
human body
transport
planets
healthy foods
weather
useful plants
people long ago
my neighbourhood
growing up
our government
the media
people who help us
keeping fit
recycling ...

↓

<p>picture glossary</p> 	<p>scale diagram</p> 	<p>cross section</p> 
<p>flow diagram</p> 	<p>tree diagram</p> 	<p>web diagram</p> 
<p>tables ... graphs</p> 	<p>time line</p> 	<p>map</p> 

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Photocopy this Lesson Plan at 200% to fit on an 8 1/2 x 11" sheet.

Frequently Asked Questions About Visual Literacy

1. *What is the difference between reading fiction and reading informational texts?*

The purposes of reading are as various as those of writing. Some texts—stories or poems, for instance—should be read straight through; other types of text—maps or graphs—can be scanned or browsed. In the “Reading Information” section of *I See What You Mean* (pages 7-12) you’ll find many points with which you can launch a discussion of these differences.

2. *How should I modify my teaching practice to take account of visual literacy?*

Helping children understand how to read visual texts calls for different teaching strategies. Steve offers some suggestions for teaching about information texts and developing design awareness on pages 18 and 142 of *I See What You Mean*.

3. *Where do I fit visual literacy into my existing curriculum schedule?*

Teachers need not be concerned that visual literacy is an “add-on” to what they are already teaching. It’s part of learning in any of the content areas and is a tool for integrating literacy into the curriculum. For example:

- In science, ask students to record their observations in a graph or a table.
- In social studies, ask students to illustrate or expand on a topic in their essays with a map or a cross section.

4. *How do I assess visual literacy?*

Visual literacy is assessed like any other aspect of literacy. Indeed, with children who have difficulties dealing with words-only text, an awareness of their visual literacy should give you an accurate measure of their abilities. In your assessment, you should look for visual texts that are clear, memorable, accessible, and concise.

In *I See What You Mean* Steve discusses over a dozen kinds of visual texts; at the start of each section the boxed chart includes “Outcomes” to give you ways to evaluate how effectively a child uses a specific kind of text (see pages 21, 31, 39, etc.).

5. *I have some questions for Steve Moline. How can I reach him?*

Steve welcomes your ideas and questions. You can e-mail him at:

cocka2@pnc.com.au

Children's Literature That Illustrates Points in Steve Moline's I See What You Mean

Compiled by Susan Hepler

Many books for children make use of visual texts—maps, diagrams, graphs, tables, cutaways—to substantiate and echo verbal texts. The following titles are readily available in most North American libraries. Each title has more than one possibility for showing readers how pictures convey meaning. The “Let’s Read and Find Out” series published by HarperCollins and Joanna Cole’s and Bruce Degen’s “The Magic School Bus” series are especially valuable examples that show children the ways in which maps, tables, graphs and the like can quickly impart information. Many children’s informational book authors and illustrators, such as David Macaulay, Gail Gibbons, Nancy Winslow Parker, Doug Florian, Betsy and Giulio Maestro, and Aliki often include many examples of visual texts or meaning-bearing pictures that Steve Moline discusses in *I See What You Mean*.

(Note: If the book has unnumbered pages, count from the first page of text for the approximate location of the example cited. Also, look in the book’s reference section for other examples of visual texts not mentioned below.)

Chapter 3 Simple Diagrams

Monarch Butterfly, p. 19, others throughout (picture glossary of parts of a butterfly)

A Chef, p. 29 (picture glossary of herbs, p. 12; chef’s utensils, p. 29)

Bats: Nightfliers, p. 6 (picture glossary/structure diagram of a bat wing parts)

Wild and Woolly Mammoths, p. 13 (picture glossary of mammoth diet)

Bugs, p. 37, other pictures throughout (picture glossary, scale)

Exploring the Titanic, p. 35 (scale drawing of distance between salvage ship and sunken Titanic)

The Magic School Bus in the Time of the Dinosaurs, pp. 22, 29 (scale drawings of actual size of dinosaur tooth)

David Macaulay's architecture series, throughout (diagrams, cross sections, bird's-eye views, floor plans)

Chapter 4 Analytic Diagram

Exploring the Titanic, pp. 12–13 (cross section with key)

Locks, Crocs, & Skeeters: The Story of the Panama Canal, pp. 28–29 (cross section of a lock-and-lake system)

Egg to Chick, p. 30 (cutaway and cross section of egg interior)

What Happens to a Hamburger?, p. 23 (cross section of digestive system)

Where Does Garbage Go?, p. 15 (cross section of landfill)

The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth, pp. 28–29 (cross section of earth interior); others throughout

“First Discovery Books” series, (plastic overlays peel back to reveal inner workings)

Look Inside Cross-Sections: Planes, throughout (bird's-eye view, cutaways, and peel back overlays)

See Through History: The Aztecs, throughout (bird's-eye view, cutaways)

Stephen Biesty's “Cross-Section” series, throughout (cross sections, bird's-eye view, cutaways)

“What's Inside” series, throughout (peeled back views of interiors of planes, insects, cars, sea creatures, etc.)

Chapter 5 Synthetic Diagram

Corn Is Maize, throughout (flow diagrams, process diagrams)

A Chef, pp. 15–16 (eight-cell steps to making blueberry pie)

- Wild Weather: Tornadoes!*, p. 15 (flow diagram of tornado)
- Build It with Boxes*, pp. 20–21, and throughout (“Make an Origami Box” how-to sequence)
- Where Does Garbage Go?*, pp. 18–25 (flow diagrams for recycling paper, glass, cans, and garbage)
- The Magic School Bus Inside a Hurricane*, p. 27 (flow diagram of hurricane travel paths)
- The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth*, p. 15 (tree diagram of soil composition)
- From Pictures to Words: A Book About Making a Book*, pp. 16–17 (book dummy, flow chart for a story)
- What Happens to a Hamburger?*, pp. 25–27 (flow diagram of digestion)
- The Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*, pp. 34–35 (flow diagram of water supply system)
- D’Aulaire’s Book of Greek Myths*, frontispiece (tree diagram of Greek gods)

Chapter 6 Graphs

- How Do Birds Find Their Way?*, p. 30 (line graph “How High Do Birds Fly?”)
- Where Does Garbage Go?*, p. 17 (pie chart of landfill composition)
- Immigrants*, p. 15 (bar and column graph, immigration in U.S. by country, 1820–1925)
- Wild and Woolly Mammoths*, pp. 14–15 (aspects and epochs of assorted members of mammoth family)
- My Map Book*, pp. 7–8 (rectangular pie chart, “Map of My Day”)

Chapter 7 Time Lines

(Note: Many children’s informational books include in place of time lines a chronology in relation to the book’s content: dates of explorers to the North American continent; dated events in a person’s life, etc. An actual line on which dates are located is rare, especially in young chil-

dren's books. Some flow charts masquerade as time lines but the time units are not precise.)

The United States in the 20th Century: Scholastic Timeline Series, throughout (four-level time line of 1900s with illustrations)

The Magic School Bus in the Time of the Dinosaurs, throughout. (time lines as stacking discs)

Visual Timeline of Transportation, throughout (illustrated time line of vehicular development)

Chapter 8 Maps

As the Crow Flies: A First Book of Maps, whole book (walk through of routes then rendered as bird's-eye view maps)

Looking Down, whole book (ever-closer bird's-eye view; context maps)

My Map Book, whole book (context maps, bird's-eye view, conceptual)

How Do Birds Find Their Way?, pp. 12–13 (migration flow maps with key)

The King's Day: Louis XIV of France, pp. 4–5 (bird's-eye view with key)

Monarch Butterfly, p. 21 (monarch migration flow map)

Exploration and Conquest: The Americas After Columbus, p. 36 (bird's-eye view of Jamestown); voyage maps throughout

Wolves, p. 6 (comparison maps of wolves' domain then and now with key)

In the Woods: Who's Been Here? and *In the Snow: Who's Been Here?*, inside jacket flap (context map of child's journey)

Three Days on the River in a Red Canoe, p. 3 and pp. 8–9 (context map, bird's-eye view)

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- Bats: Nightfliers* by Betsy Maestro, illustrated by Giulio Maestro. Scholastic, 1994. (Gr. 2-6)
- Build It with Boxes* by Joan Irvine, illustrated by Linda Hendry. Morrow, 1993. (Gr. 2-5)
- Bugs* by Nancy Winslow Parker and Joan Richards Wright, illustrated by Nancy Winslow Parker. Greenwillow, 1987. (Gr. 2-5)
- A Chef* by Douglas Florian. Greenwillow, 1992. (Gr. 2-5)
- Corn Is Maize* by Alike. HarperCollins, 1976. (Gr. 2-5)
- D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire. Doubleday, 1962. (Gr. 2-6)
- David Macaulay's "Architecture" series. Houghton Mifflin, various dates. (Gr. 3-8)
- Egg to Chick* by Millicent E. Selsam, illustrated by Barbara Wolff. HarperCollins, 1970. (Gr. K-3)
- Exploring the Titanic* by Robert D. Ballard. Scholastic, 1988. (Gr. 4-8)
- Exploration and Conquest: The Americas After Columbus: 1500-1620* by Betsy and Giulio Maestro. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1994. (Gr. 4-6)
- "First Discovery Books" series. Scholastic, various dates. (Gr. K-4)
- From Pictures to Words: A Book About Making a Book* by Janet Stevens. Holiday House, 1995. (Gr. 2-5)
- How Do Birds Find Their Way?* by Roma Gans, illustrated by Paul Mirocha. HarperCollins, 1996. (Gr. K-3)
- Immigrants* by Martin W. Sandler. HarperCollins, 1995. (Gr. 3-6)
- In the Snow: Who's Been Here?* by Lindsay Barrett George. Greenwillow, 1995. (Gr. K-3)

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1989. (Gr. 2–6)
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(Gr. K–5)
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Nancy Winslow Parker. Greenwillow, 1996. (Gr.
3–6)
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1–5)
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- Three Days on the River in a Red Canoe* by Vera B.
Williams. Greenwillow, 1981. (Gr. 1–4)
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- What Happens to a Hamburger?* by Paul Showers, illustrated by Anne Rockwell. HarperCollins, 1985. (Gr. K-3)
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- Wolves* by Gail Gibbons. Holiday House, 1994. (Gr. K-4)



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