



Presenting: Static Images

LEVEL 1 2 3 4 5

Paw Thing

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This teacher introduced the term "static image" and asked the students to list different types. Over several sessions, they examined a variety of book covers and posters, with the teacher questioning them:

- Where is the text? Why is it there? Is it easy to read? Is the size appropriate?
- Is the font all upper case? What colour is it? Why did the illustrator choose that colour?
- Do the illustrations reflect the text? Why (or why not)?
- What colours are used in the illustrations, and why?
- What size are the illustrations, and why?
- Is any other information provided? Where is it? Why is it included?

Each student selected an interesting image for guided discussion in sharing groups: Do the images we like have anything in common? Why do they appeal to us?

The class had explored the book *The Paw Thing* by Paul Jennings. The teacher had asked the students to describe the main characters, supporting their opinions with quotations from the book.

Next, they brainstormed the type of static image that would best portray each main character and discussed their ideas. The teacher asked them to prepare a draft image of one of the characters. The class decided to include a rhyme as a verbal feature. The teacher modelled different types of rhymes, and the class decided that their rhymes should be a command or another form of speech. The teacher set criteria:

- Include a dominant image, a border that reflects the story, and speech.
- Consider audience appeal.
- Ensure that the font is clear and legible.
- Use a limited palette of colours.

The students spent one session drafting their images and two sessions working on their published images, getting feedback from a buddy and the teacher. Vicky had a number of good ideas, but had difficulty deciding on one, and on the layout. After discussion with her buddy during the drafting phase, Vicky decided to place the rhyme on the cat. Her buddy suggested that it would look as if the cat is almost holding a sign.

Teacher-student conversations

During drafting:

- Teacher: Okay, you've decided that you want to focus on the cat. I can see that you want it to be in the middle of your page – that's good. Remember, we want it to be clear. Be careful not to make it too busy.
- Vicky: Yes, I might move the mice to the border and then just have a pretty plain background.
- Teacher: Okay. Maybe limit the colours. What colours are you thinking of?
- Vicky: I want the cat to be purple. Just plain purple, with angry eyes and an angry background.
- Teacher: Sounds good. Maybe we can make the background and eyes a little more alive? Could we have some texture? Remember that there are other materials you can use. Coloured pencils sometimes aren't that striking.
- Vicky: What about some collage, like a fire?
- Teacher: Yes, that's it!

When the draft was nearly complete:

- Vicky: I can't decide where to put the words.
- Teacher: Why don't you cut them out and play around with where they look best? Keep in mind that we want them to stand out against the background. Show your buddy your different ideas and see what they think, too. They are your "reader".

INTEGRATING VIEWING AND PRESENTING

Students need many opportunities to explore, view, and discuss a variety of static images, and to be encouraged and guided in practising visual techniques. Throughout their classroom programmes, teachers will find images, illustrations, wordless texts, advertisements, posters, logos, signs, and symbols that can serve as useful models for students.

Teachers can explore elements of static images with more advanced students by analysing features and providing explanations, emphasising balance, composition, perspective, atmosphere, exaggeration, and the way words can anchor illustrations. By questioning students in terms of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom's taxonomy), teachers can encourage them to think more deeply about the choices made and how these elements combine to create impact. Students can then develop their own criteria for success.

This teacher used a novel in shared reading to extract information from and explore verbal features. Book covers and posters provided the viewing pool for visual features.



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Paw Thing

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Vicky towards the next learning step, the teacher could help her to focus on:

Concept

- Use terminology in the planning and explanation of her static image (for example, "line", "perspective", "balance").

Impact

- Use colour, for example, placing greater energy into the cat.
- Make the font more legible.
- Increase the use of texture.
- Think about what medium might be best to match the visual with the verbal features of the image (for example, something more dynamic than coloured pencil).
- Ensure that the background doesn't overpower the central image.
- Convey ideas about relationships more clearly.

REFERENCES

Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals: Handbook I, Cognitive Domain*. New York; Toronto: Longmans, Green.

Jennings, Paul (1989). *The Paw Thing*. Ringwood, Victoria: Puffin.

Ministry of Education (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

CURRICULUM LINKS

English in the New Zealand Curriculum

Achievement objectives

Level 2: Viewing and Presenting Functions

Viewing: Students should respond to meanings and ideas, identifying and describing the verbal and visual features.

Presenting: Students should use verbal and visual features to communicate ideas or stories using layout, drama, video, or still photography.

Levels 1 and 2: Viewing and Presenting Processes

In achieving the objectives of understanding and using visual language:

Exploring Language: Students should understand that communication involves verbal and visual features which have conventionally accepted meanings.

Thinking Critically: Students should show awareness of how words and images can be combined to make meaning.

Processing Information: Students should view and use visual texts to gain and present information, become familiar with and use appropriate terminologies, and write letter and number forms legibly to present ideas.

English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 40–41



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WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Vicky has produced a striking dominant image of the cat, framed by an interesting border. She is able to comment on how the colour, texture, and verbal features contribute to the impact of her image. She identifies the audience she wishes to engage – adults who "will read this book to their children".



Impact

Uses visual and verbal features to convey an idea.

Limits colour choice for impact.

Provides one dominant image.

Attempts to include some texture to create atmosphere.

Includes a rhyming imperative for attention.

Provides a border that gives extra information and creates some mystery.

Student's explanation

I decided on a command for my writing, as that's what Mac is always doing to the cat in the story. Always yelling at it to do this and that. I decided that a rhyme would be good, as you would remember it. I wanted a red, fiery background to make it all look angry, as Mac is angry at the cat and treats it badly. The mice are around the border, as in the story. Mac makes the cat catch mice in the restaurant. The cat doesn't like it. I didn't want too many colours, so I decided on angry and mean colours.

The black lettering is sort of mean and it also stands out. I didn't want too much black anywhere else, though. The cat is the main thing, so it's big and in the middle of the page. I coloured it purple, as it's a mix of angry and scared [red and blue makes purple]. The cat has red glitter eyes. I wanted them to really stand out on its face. They are pop-out angry eyes. I'm aiming at adults, and want them to read this book to their children. I think they will like the rhyme.

Concept

Attempts to explain an idea to be conveyed.

Uses some terminology to plan for and explain the techniques used.



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Paw Thing

Student's original work

