

Imagine That! Stories

Visualizing
and
Verbalizing®

For Language Comprehension and Thinking



Sample Stories

A Nanci Bell Book

HELPFUL ADVICE

These are *Imagine That!* stories that can be used with the Visualizing and Verbalizing® program or any program of instruction to develop imagery for language comprehension. Although these stories have been written at a second to fourth grade level, you can use them with other grade levels as you feel is appropriate. The stories are in order by the original book and level they appeared in. Each story features a main idea or topic to be imaged, and then provides detailed imagery for the topic. While sentences or paragraphs may contain much concrete detail that can be imaged, others contain abstract concepts.

It is recommended that you start with vocabulary to help students both with decoding and with imaging new words and concepts. While reading the story, be sure to ask imagery questions to elicit detailed imagery from the student.

Once you have completed each story, move on to the higher order thinking (HOT) questions. These are main idea, inference, conclusion, evaluation, and prediction questions. The order of the HOT questions is such that they stimulate students' thinking first about the gestalt, and then about the details of the story. Some questions may include contrast or introduce additional information from which the students can extend their thinking about the story. It is not necessary to ask every question, but be sure you ask enough that your student has the gestalt of the story.

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1 Guide Dog for a Dog

Ellie was a small brown and white dog who could not see. So Leo, a huge black dog, became her friend and guide. The big dog lay down with her, played with her, and led her through the yard to food. Leo even kept other dogs from getting too close to his friend.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think Leo became Ellie's friend?

Why do you think it would help Ellie to have Leo as a guide?

Why do you think Leo kept other dogs from getting too close to Ellie?

Do you think it would be dangerous for Ellie to be in the yard without Leo?

2. Rainbow Rose

A florist picks up a white rose with a long stem. She cuts the end of the stem into six sections. Then she pours six small jars of dye: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. She props up the rose so that one piece of the stem is in each jar of dye. In the next few days, the rose stem pulls the dye up into the petals. Some turn red, some blue, and so on. Soon the rose has all the colors of the rainbow, and the florist puts it in a vase in her shop.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the florist starts with a white rose? Why not a red one?

Why do you think she cuts the stem into six sections?

Why do you think she uses six different colors of dye?

Why do you think the florist puts the rose in a vase in her shop?

Would you want to make a rainbow-colored rose? Why or why not?

3. Homing Pigeon

In the past, when soldiers marched off to war, they took a homing pigeon with them. There were no phones at this time. Troops far from home had to send written notes. When the troops ran low on food, they tied a note to the bird's leg. These birds could always find their way back to home base. When the bird got to base, someone read the note and sent food to the troops. They also sent the pigeon back to them, to wait for his next mission.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think it was important for the soldiers to have pigeons to carry notes?

Why do you think troops used homing pigeons? Why not some other bird?

Why do you think the troops tied the note to the bird's leg?

How do you think the food was sent to the troops?

Why do you think they sent the pigeon back to the troops?

What do you think the pigeon's next mission might be?

4. The Milk Carton Boat Race

A team of men and women plan to make a milk carton boat for a race. For months, they had gathered up and saved empty milk cartons. Now they have a huge pile. They wash the cartons with water. Some cartons they cut open at the seams and flatten. When they have enough cartons, they draw up plans for their boat.

The team begins to build their boat. First they glue and staple each carton closed. Then they glue and tape the cartons together, one by one. They fit hundreds of cartons into place, to make a big boat with a flat top. They use flat plywood to make a platform where they will sit.

Once the boat is built, the team decorates it. They use the flattened milk cartons to make a small cabin. They roll up some cartons and fit them together to make a mast. They hang a cloth sail on the mast. Then they paste pictures of cows on the boat's sides, and paint on the name *Dolly*.

Now the boat is ready to sail in a race. The team hauls their boat to the lake where the race will be. They test the boat with a short trip on the water. Then they steer the boat to the dock. The dock is the starting line of the race, and there are many boats of all of shapes and sizes. The team on *Dolly* is excited and ready to win.

At the sound of a bell, all the boat teams push off the dock. They paddle as quick as they can across the water. Some boats sink right away. Others race ahead of *Dolly*. Then the team stretches out the sail and catches a breeze. Suddenly they zoom into the lead!

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of the story?

Why do you think the team had gathered and saved milk cartons for so long?

Why do you think they glued and stapled each carton closed?

Why do you think they used so many cartons to make their boat?

Why do you think they pasted cow pictures on the boat?

Why do you think the team was excited and ready to win the race?

What do you think will happen next?

Would you want to make a milk carton boat and race in it? Why or why not?

5. Gondolas

Instead of driving a car, a tourist in Venice rides in a long, thin boat called a gondola. Narrow canals flow through the town in place of roads. A man stands at the back of a gondola and rows down a canal with one long oar. The tourist sits in the gondola and gazes at the old buildings. Another man in the boat plays the guitar and sings while they float through the town.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the tourist rides in a gondola to tour the city?

Why do you think the man stands while he rows the gondola? Why not sit down?

Why do you think the oar is long?

What do you think would happen if the man dropped his oar into the water?

Why do you think the other man plays the guitar and sings?



6. Jumping Frog Jubilee

Every spring, a town in California hosts a frog-jumping contest. Thousands of people bring bullfrogs to a fair. To help his frog win, one man dips his frog in a bucket of warm water. He also stretches out his frog's legs. In the contest, the people take turns putting their frogs down on a round green pad on the ground. When the person lets go, the frog leaps forward three times. A judge measures the total length of the frog's three hops. The frog who jumps the farthest wins the contest.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of the story?

Why do you think the man stretches the frog's legs?

Why do you think the man places his frog on the round green pad?

Why do you think so many people bring frogs to compete in this contest?

Do you think the frogs train before the contest? Why or why not?

7. Pippa's Chocolate Eggs

A cockatoo named Pippa tried to hatch a bowl of chocolate eggs. For weeks, she sat on the eggs and kept them warm. If someone came near them, the bird squawked and flapped her wings. One man came too close, and she bit his earlobe. Pippa only left the eggs for a few minutes each day to eat. Each time the bird left, her owner took one egg away, and she did not seem to notice. He was worried she would be upset if the eggs melted beneath her.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think Pippa sat on the chocolate eggs?

Why do you think Pippa squawked and flapped her wings?

Why do you think the eggs might melt?

Why do you think the bird might get upset if the eggs melted?

Why do you think the owner took the eggs away *one at a time*?

Why not all at once?



8. The Trash Artist

On Mount Everest, climbers used to throw their trash on the steep icy trail. Each climber would carry a heavy backpack filled with food and large canisters of oxygen. As the climber hiked up the path, he put the valve attached to the canister in his mouth and inhaled the oxygen. When the canister was empty, the climber tossed it in the snow to lighten his pack. Soon, piles of canisters lined the trail. Some called the mountain “the world’s highest junkyard.”

An artist named Jeff Clapp gathered the canisters from Mount Everest. Jeff saw a TV show about climbers leaving their trash on the peak. He flew to Nepal to collect all the junk. A group of people went up the mountain with him. By the end of the trek, they had picked up more than a hundred oxygen canisters. Jeff put all the canisters in boxes and mailed them home.

Back home, Jeff makes his art by turning the canisters into bells. He shaves off the outer painted layer of a canister with a knife to reveal the dull gray metal beneath. Then he puts the canister in a machine that spins it around. While the canister spins, Jeff chisels ridges into the metal. Next he saws off the canister’s bottom and hangs a round block of wood inside to complete the bell. Finally he buffs the bell with a soft cloth until it is silver and shiny. Jeff enjoys making lovely bells out of trash from Mount Everest.

From what you pictured...

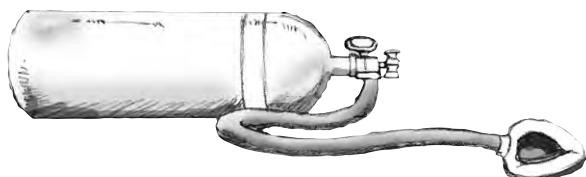
What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think a climber would want to lighten his pack?

Why do you think some people call Mount Everest “the world’s highest junkyard”?

Why do you think Jeff wanted to pick up trash on Everest?

Do you think many people buy Jeff’s art? Why or why not?



9. Tiny Tennis Player

When Mia Lines was only four years old, she played tennis with her coach for hours each day. Her tiny hands held a racket that was half as big as she is. Her coach tossed balls across the net, and Mia—whose nickname is “Kangaroo”—bounced around the court chasing them down. She could hit the ball hard from either side of her body. She hit each one back to her coach, working on her aim and power.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Do you think Mia’s talent was unusual for a four year old?

Why or why not?

Why do you think Mia practiced with a coach?

Do you think it was hard for Mia to swing the racket? Explain.

Why do you think Mia’s nickname is “Kangaroo”?



10. Lightning in the Ground

During fierce storms, bolts of lightning sometimes hit bare patches of sandy ground. The bolts are so hot that when one hits, it melts some of the sand into glass. The bolt shoots down into the sand and branches out to the sides. After the lightning strike, the melted sand hardens into tubes of coarse glass that branch down into the sand, like roots. At the surface, there is just a small glass hole in the sand. When a man finds the glass-lined hole, he gently digs the sand from around it. He digs gently until he can pull the root-like glass tube out of the ground.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the bolt melts *some* of the sand into glass and not all of it?

Why do you think the melted sand hardens after the lightning strike?

Do you think it would be difficult to find the glass hole?

Why or why not?

Why do you think the man digs the glass tube out of the ground?

11. Surfers of the Pororoca

A big wave called a pororoca enters the mouth of the huge Amazon River and pushes upstream. The strong, fast wave pulls trees and animals off the shore and drags them up the river. When some surfers see the rare wave, they jump into a speedboat. They chase the wave in the boat, and then race out in front of it. A few brave surfers hop into the water and onto their surfboards to catch the wave. With the river flowing one way and the wave going the other, staying on the boards is tricky. The surfers balance on their boards as best they can. Grinning, they dodge floating branches and even a jaguar that is swept up in the wave.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the surfers chase the pororoca when it passes?

Why do you think the surfers chase the wave in a speedboat?

Why not just swim?

Why do you think the story calls the surfers “brave”?

Why do you think staying on the boards might be tricky?

Would you like to surf a pororoca? Why or why not?

12. The Runner Who Would Not Stop

Cliff Young was a sixty-one year old rancher who ran in one of the longest races in the world, across the Australian Outback. Cliff arrived at the start of the race dressed in overalls and boots. A race official pointed to the sidelines and told him to watch the start of the race from there. Cliff smiled and told the man he was in the race. The man tried to talk Cliff out of running. But at last the man gave Cliff a number to pin to his shirt, which all the racers wore. When the race began, Cliff shuffled along slowly, barely lifting his legs. The other runners, who were all much younger, soon left Cliff far behind.

Although Cliff had never run in a race before, he had been training in his own way for years. On his ranch, Cliff sometimes spent three days at a time herding sheep on foot. Most ranchers round up their sheep on horseback, but Cliff just trotted instead. His sheep grazed on grass over many miles on his huge ranch. He ran all the time while he rounded them all up. Each time he found one of his sheep, he nudged it into the herd until he collected them all. Cliff did not stop to rest until after he led the herd back to its pen.

Although Cliff was far behind the other runners in the race, he kept trotting. The race across the Outback was more than five hundred miles long. It took most runners six or seven days to finish. All of the other runners stopped to sleep for about six hours each day. But Cliff did not know that he was supposed to sleep, so he kept on running. Despite his slow pace, Cliff passed all the other runners as they slept. After more than five days of running without stopping, Cliff crossed the finish line first and smiled at the amazed crowd. A stunned race official said that he set a new race record by more than nine hours.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the race official tried to talk Cliff out of running?

How do you think the younger runners felt when they saw Cliff at the starting line?

Why do you think the other runners left Cliff behind at the beginning of the race?

Why do you think the story said that Cliff had been “training in his own way”?

Why do you think the crowd was amazed to see Cliff at the finish line?

Stories 1-4: Grade 2

Stories 5-8: Grade 3

Stories 9-12: Grade 4

IMAGINE THAT!



THE V/V IMAGINE THAT! BOOKS HAVE NONFICTION STORIES TO DEVELOP IMAGERY FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION.

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