



VIEW TEACHING GUIDES

10. VISUAL LITERACY

If your students are learning how to locate and interpret visual information, refer to:

- [Why Does Visual Literacy Matter?](#)
- [Interpreting Images](#)
- [Searching for Images](#)

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Understanding Visual Information

Interpreting visual information is a critical skill students will use beyond their academic careers. Use this discussion to encourage students to ask questions and consider context when interpreting visuals. You will need 3 or 4 images for this discussion.

Begin by asking students to analyze an image of your choosing. Students should be able to answer the following questions:

- What or who is the main subject?
- What is happening in the image?
- What type of image is it?
- What is the image's purpose or intended meaning?
- What emotions does the image evoke?

Next, have the students form small groups to analyze the remaining images for a comparison of their findings with the class. Additional questions for students to consider include:

- How does the image's composition affect its message?
- What else do you need to know to fully understand the image?

Visuals Brainstorming

Use this discussion to help students get accustomed to identifying the need for supporting visual materials in a variety of academic and professional settings. You may want to focus on image use they'll encounter in assignments for your course, as part of their major, or along possible career paths. Begin by selecting a scenario such as:

- *Your office is publishing a consumer report on a new piece of fitness technology.*
- *You are in charge of designing a brochure to advertise initiatives planned by the student government.*
- *You are a lab assistant responsible for designing the final report on the growth of mushrooms in different climates.*

Ask students to brainstorm the types of images that would be appropriate in the given situation. To help students understand the importance of aesthetics, ask them to create mock drafts of a print or digital report in which they set placeholders for header images, in-text graphics, and other visual elements.

ACTIVITY

Image Search

To be an effective communicator using visual information, students first need to develop the skills necessary for locating images. Use this activity to help students locate images for an upcoming assignment and get familiar with image databases or subject-specific collections accessible through your library.

Begin by introducing the purpose of the assignment and the role images will play in it. Once your students are familiar with the assignment, ask them to brainstorm keywords associated with their topic. Using a general image collection like Google, the Library of Congress, or AP Images, students should experiment by entering their search terms and analyzing the results. Encourage students to update their keyword list to broaden or narrow their search as needed. If available, students then can advance to subject-specific image collections to locate the most relevant images for their assignment. Remind students to view images in their original context to fully understand the intended meaning.