



PICTURES AREN'T JUST FOR BEGINNERS

Visuals deepen understanding at every level.



THE IDEA

Images aren't just a support for early language learners. They help all students make sense of new vocabulary, complex ideas and abstract concepts.

A well-chosen image provides context, reduces cognitive load and creates a shared reference point for discussion, reading and writing.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Use real photos, diagrams, infographics or simple drawings.

Ask students what they notice, what they think is happening and what it might be about.

Link the image to key vocabulary.

Use images to support talk, reading and writing.

Keep them purposeful – not just decorative.

Use images across all subjects, at all levels.

THE 3 STEPS

1



CHOOSE

Choose a purposeful image.

Select an image that links to your learning goal. Make sure it is clear and relevant. It could be a real photo, diagram, graph, cartoon or simple drawing.

What can you see?

What do you think is happening?

What might this be about?

2



EXPLORE

Explore and talk about it.

Give students time to look closely. Ask open questions. Elicit and teach key vocabulary. Encourage students to justify their ideas.

I can see ...

I think ... because ...

It might be ...

This could mean ...

3



USE

Use the image to go further.

Link to reading, writing or a practical task. Ask students to explain, predict or solve a problem. Refer back to the image as a shared reference point. Add new vocabulary to a visual word bank.

How does this help us understand ...?

What new words could we use?

Can you explain this in a sentence?



WHY IT WORKS

Visuals make abstract ideas more concrete.

They support vocabulary learning and reduce cognitive load.

They help EAL learners and all students access, retain and apply new knowledge.



EAL UPGRADE

Pre-teach key vocabulary using the image.

Use annotated images or labelled diagrams.

Encourage students to describe the image using full sentences.



TRY IT TOMORROW

Find or create one image for your next lesson.

Plan 3–5 questions (notice, think, wonder).

Use the image to introduce key vocabulary and get a short discussion going.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

"What do you notice?"

"What do you think is happening?"

"How does this help us understand the topic?"

**DUNCAN
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EAL • LANGUAGE • LEARNING