

Reading the illustrations

Choose a page or pages from the suggested texts.

Click on and print the vocabulary for visual literacy from *Ways of viewing and teaching picture books* which is a guide to help answer the following questions:

- **What is happening?**
- **What techniques does the illustrator use to engage the viewer?**
- **How is the image composed?**

Elements of design in picture books supports this activity.

Elements of design in picture books

Line:

- Lines may be thick, thin, whole or broken.
- The direction of the line can convey meaning.
 - Horizontal lines may express rest or peace.
 - Vertical lines may suggest stability.
 - Diagonal lines express action and movement.

Space:

- Space can show isolation or closeness.
- Space may express reality and fantasy.
- Borders which enclose space can give meaning to the story.

Colour:

- Colour can denote setting, theme or mood.
- Children of all ages like colour, but bright colours are often used in books for young children, while black and white is more often found in books for older children.
- Use of black and white may be dictated by cost; it is less expensive than colour.
- Colour is often used in nonfiction books, even those intended for older children.

Shape:

- Shapes can be distinct or vaguely suggested, simple or complex.
- Shapes can fill the page or clutter it; they can give weight to the picture.
- Shapes can suggest character and setting.

Perspective:

- Perspective is the place or angle from which the reader is viewing the picture.
- Changing the perspective or focus can show action.

Texture:

- The picture may seem solid and heavy, light and weightless, or anything in between.
- They may have a 'touchable' feel.

Created by Cath Keane and adapted from *Art in children's books*