



Spotlight on Imagery

Imagery is language used to create impressions in the minds of readers. Words and phrases that describe what you hear, smell, taste, see, and feel create imagery. These images communicate ideas to readers. These ideas can help create a setting, give life to a character, and provide clues about the theme of a text.

Read this paragraph from a story about a young girl taking a walk in the woods. Pay attention to the highlighted phrases.

The wind feels like **icy fingers brushing against my skin** as I make my way down the narrow path that leads into the woods. The sky is **a low, gray blanket** over the snowcapped treetops. There is **a soft whoosh, whoosh** as I step into the unbroken snow. I am alone, but there is **a woody whisper of a faraway campfire** in the air. A sip of **silky hot chocolate** from my thermos warms my chest, and **the peaceful twittering** of the few forest animals braving the cold with me warms my heart.

The literal language in this paragraph lets you know that the story is set in the woods on a snowy winter day. The figurative language that creates the imagery tells more about the setting, character, and theme.

© Inksplash, LLC. All rights reserved.

Your Turn

Read "The Best Gift." Then complete the

	Imagery	Meaning
Feel	"sandpaper paws scratching at my face"	an uncomfortable feeling
See	"balloons in every color of the rainbow"	a festive scene
Hear	"shouts of the children playing in the sprinkler"	joyful sounds
Taste	"bright lemon frosting and tart raspberries"	delicious food
Smell	"scent of vanilla and cinnamon filled the room"	a comforting smell

Write your own sentence that contains imagery.

(Student answers will vary)



Spotlight on Imagery

Explain that imagery is made up of language that describes what people feel, see, hear, taste, and smell. Tell students that writers use imagery to help readers create mental pictures, or images, in their minds. These images help writers draw their readers in by creating vivid descriptions and also communicate ideas about the setting, characters, and theme of a text.

Emphasize to students that imagery can be created with both literal and figurative language. Read aloud each of the highlighted phrases in the paragraph. Use these questions to guide a discussion about how the imagery affects the meaning of the story.

Ask What does the phrase "icy fingers brushing against my skin" tell you about how the narrator feels? (sample answer: She is cold.)

Ask What does the phrase "a low, gray blanket" tell you about the setting? (sample answer: It is a gray, cloudy day.)

Ask What does the phrase "a soft whoosh, whoosh" tell you about the setting? (sample answer: It is quiet enough for the narrator to hear her boots hit the snow.)

Ask What does the phrase "woody whisper of a" tell you about the setting? (sample answer: The narrator is in a remote area.)

Ask What does the phrase "silky hot chocolate" tell you about how the narrator feels? (sample answer: She finds the hot chocolate comforting.)

Ask What other image does the author use that appeals to the reader's sense of sound? (sample answer: "the peaceful twittering")

Ask **Think about this theme:** Spending time in nature can bring peace and comfort. How do the images in the paragraph support this theme? (sample answers: The narrator is walking in nature. She is cold, but the author uses images that are peaceful to describe the setting.)

Your Turn

Have students read "The Best Gift." Once students have completed the chart, guide them in a discussion about the imagery in the story. Students might have identified different meanings for the images in the story. Emphasize to students that their own experiences will affect how they perceive the meaning of an image, but they can use other clues in the story to confirm the meaning.

Tell students to think of something they ate recently; they can pick something they enjoyed or something they did not like. Have them write a sentence that includes imagery to describe what they ate. Have students read their sentence to a partner and discuss what the imagery in the sentence reveals about how they felt about the food they ate.