

Reading Pictures for Meaning

Where did you learn that - from the words, or from the picture?

TEACHES - COMPLETE STANDARD MATCH

RL.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

Why this is a full match Across all six days, students repeatedly separate what the words say from what the illustrations show, point to visual details as evidence, and explain how pictures add, clarify, or sometimes complicate the text. The culminating covered-words task requires students to state what the illustration establishes, what it cannot establish alone, and what changes after the words are revealed.

Student evidence

- Days 1-3: identifies which information comes from words and which comes from pictures.
- Days 4-6: uses illustration details to support claims and explain multiple defensible readings.
- Final task: compares what can be learned from the illustration alone with what becomes known after hearing the text.

Source

California Department of Education - California Common Core State Standards: ELA/Literacy Verified September 2026. Canonical unit pages follow unchanged.

TumbleTA - Tumbleweed Press Inc.

Regional standards page 1

ELA UNIT PLAN · KINDERGARTEN Reading Pictures for Meaning 6 days · 4 books · 168 min lessons + 30 min final task · 92 min short lessons · Kindergarten

The idea In a picture book, the illustration is not decoration. It can carry information the words never state, show details the words leave out, and sometimes support more than one reading of the same page. A child who can say whether a piece of information came from the words or from the picture is beginning to use both parts of the book as evidence. Four Kindergarten books in which the pictures do real work. The unit begins by separating what the words say from what the pictures show, moves to pictures that add information and shape a reader's view, and finishes with a drawing that can support two different readings. The recurring question is the same every day and is worth keeping word for word: Where did you learn that? It is answerable by a child who cannot decode the text, and it is the entire skill.

The arc

Some things you learn from the words and some from the picture. The picture can add what the words never say. Words and pictures can divide the work: one tells you one thing while the other tells you something else. A picture can provide evidence for a claim. One drawing can be read in two ways, and both readings can use evidence. Evidence can support an answer without settling the question for everyone.

The 6 days

DAY 1

Words and Pictures: Reading the Sweets Separate what the words tell us from what the pictures show us, using one familiar spread at a time.

Why here. First because the difference is easy to see: children can follow the action in the pictures even when they cannot read the words. The goal is simply to establish two sources of information.

From Little Pea by Amy Krouse Rosenthal · A book a child can follow before they can read it 28 min full · 15 min short Makes: A two-row record: what the words say / what the picture shows Teacher move. Read the words aloud. Do not ask children to decode signs or labels independently. If a sign matters, read it to the class and ask whether that information came from the printed words or from the illustration around it.

DAY 2

Words and Pictures: Only the Red Is Coloured Find two things the pictures tell us that the words do not say directly.

Why here. Second because the illustration now adds information rather than merely showing the action. Children still have a clear answer to the source question, but the picture is doing more of the storytelling.

From Red is Best by Kathy Stinson · Illustrations that add a visual pattern the words do not fully state
28 min full · 15 min short Makes: A two-row record: what the words say / what the picture adds

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DAY 3

The Troll and His Toll Booth Describe the Troll and the place where he works, then identify which details came from the words and which came from the pictures.

Why here. Third because the words and pictures now divide the work. The character is carried strongly by the language while the setting is carried strongly by the illustration. Children have to sort several details instead of noticing one obvious difference.

From The Three Silly Billies by Margie Palatini · A character and a setting built through two different sources 33 min full · 17 min short Makes: A labelled picture of the bridge plus a short oral or dictated list of what the Troll does

DAY 4

Words and Pictures: What in the Drawing Supports the Claim? Match one speaker's claim to the part of the drawing that gives that speaker evidence.

Why here. Fourth because the illustration is now being used as evidence, not only as a source of added information. Children still answer the same source question, but now they must point to the exact part of the drawing that supports what a speaker says.

From Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal · A drawing that can provide evidence for a claim 28 min full · 15 min short Makes: A two-column record: what one voice says / what in the picture supports that claim

DAY 5

Two Readings of One Picture Collect the two names the voices give the same drawing and explain what each speaker is looking at.

Why here. Fifth because the drawing never changes, yet both readings can be supported. The class now has to hold two answers at once instead of choosing only one.

From Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal · One drawing, two supported readings 25 min full · 15 min short Makes: A three-row sheet of paired claims plus the picture detail that supports each one
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DAY 6

Key Details: What Each One Points At List the picture details the two voices use as evidence and explain why the same drawing still allows both readings.

Why here. Last because children now separate having evidence from being the only possible answer. The evidence is real, but it does not force every reader to the same conclusion.

From Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal · Several pieces of evidence that can support two readings 26 min full · 15 min short Makes: A four-row evidence sheet: claim / picture detail / other claim / picture detail Words to use WORD OR PHRASE HOW IT IS USED the words / the picture Kept separate all unit. Children point to one source or the other rather than saying only “the book.” say / show The words say; the picture shows. adds Used when the picture gives information the words do not state directly. both Introduced once the class reaches Duck! Rabbit! and can support two readings of the same drawing. evidence A detail you

can point to that helps explain your answer. What to prepare Daily two-row or two-column recording sheets, one per child or pair as appropriate Checkpoint 1 page, one per child Checkpoint 2 page, one per child

Day 6 evidence sheet, one per child or pair

One photocopied spread with the words covered, per pair, for the final task One unlabelled Duck! Rabbit!

drawing for Checkpoint 2 Checkpoints After day 3 · Words or picture Use familiar pages from Red is Best.

Say three statements. For each one, the child says whether the information came from the words or from the picture. ••••• TumbleTA · ELA Unit Plan Page 5 Use these three statements. Red boots make puddles better. Words. Most things around the red object are shown without red colour. Picture. Red mittens make better snowballs. Words. Without a book. No. The child needs the familiar spread or a photocopy of it. Look for. The child identifies a source rather than answering only “the book.” Two of the three correct is secure at this stage. Say to the child. I am going to say three things. Tell me if you learned each one from the words or from the picture.

After day 5 · Two answers, both with a reason Show the Duck! Rabbit! drawing without labels. The child says what they think it is and points to the part that supports the answer. Then ask for the reason somebody who gave the other answer might use. Without a book. Yes. Use one photocopied drawing and no text. Look for. The second reason. A child who can support only their own answer has begun to use evidence but is not yet holding the second reading. Say to the child. What do you think it is? What in the picture makes you say that? Somebody said the other animal. What might they be

looking at? The task at the end Cover the words Each pair gets a familiar photocopied spread from Little Pea, Red is Best, or The Three Silly Billies with the words covered. They make two lists: What we can learn from the picture What we cannot know from the picture alone Then uncover and read the words. Ask three questions: What did the picture already tell us? What did we learn only after hearing the words? Did anything we first thought need to change? Collect. The pair's two lists plus their answers to the three questions after the words are uncovered. Time. One session of about 30 minutes.

Teacher key

Checkpoint 1: Red boots making puddles better comes from the words; most of the non-red surroundings come from the picture; red mittens making better snowballs comes from the words.

Checkpoint 2: Both answers can be supported. The same lines can be read as a duck's bill or a rabbit's ears. The target is not choosing the "right" animal but giving evidence for both readings. Final task: The important evidence is in the cannot know from the picture alone list. A pair that puts nothing there is treating the illustration as the complete story rather than one source of information. 1. 2. 3. • • • • • TumbleTA · ELA Unit Plan Page 6 What a strong answer looks like STRAND WHAT TO SEE Source Says whether a piece of information came from the words or the picture. Evidence Points to the part of the illustration that supports the answer. Adds Notices something the picture communicates that the words do not state directly. Two readings Can state a reason for an answer different from their own. Limits Says something the picture does not tell them.

Keeping the daily evidence Keep each child's response to Where did you learn that? from day 1 and day 5.

The growth to look for is increasing specificity: from "the book" to "the picture, because his hands are empty." What to pass on A child who cannot yet give a reason for the second reading should get more oral practice with pictures that can be seen in two ways. Duck! Rabbit! carries three of the six days. If the class has met it recently, the three lessons still work as a sequence, but keep days 4, 5 and 6 together so the progression from one supported claim to two supported readings remains intact. The books this unit uses The Three Silly Billies by Margie Palatini · 1 lesson Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal · 3 lessons Little