

Which paragraph contains the following information?

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| Teachers aim to teach both word recognition and word meaning. | 1. _____ |
| Pictures in books prevent children from developing creative skills. | 2. _____ |
| Reading methods currently in use go against research findings. | 3. _____ |
| Readers able to ignore pictures are claimed to make greater progress. | 4. _____ |
| The decline of literacy is seen in groups of differing abilities. | 5. _____ |
| Illustrations in books can give misleading information about word meaning. | 6. _____ |

A

Across both Europe and North America, falling literacy standards are of growing concern to many educators and parents alike. For example, nearly a third of British teenagers aged 16 exhibits the reading ability of a 14-year-old or lower. Intellectual development is affected by literacy, making this apparent decline in standards of literacy all the more alarming. Now, researchers are out to discover what may be causing the issue. Socio-economic factors, as well as types of teaching methods being used in the classroom, have been the primary focus of the search thus far. No discoveries have yet been made as to what actually impacts literacy. This may be another unfortunate example of the old cliché, "They can't see the wood for the trees." When picture books are used in the classroom, educators are believed to be upholding a long-established tradition that is universally acceptable. More specifically, within the past 20 years, pictures and images in reading primers are more distracting and noticeable than ever. Meanwhile, language-learning itself has become a weaker point of focus in the classroom. Moreover, no empirical evidence has been shown to support using pictures as educational tools for teaching children to read. In fact, there is actually a growing amount of contrary empirical evidence to this, showing that illustrations do more harm than good. This evidence suggests that using pictures to teach reading is damaging to all aspects in terms of learning to read. In spite of this finding, the first books that many students in western countries receive contain virtually no text.

B

Educators of young readers should strive to help children learn the ability to recognize individual words in the text, and in addition, how to understand each word's meaning. Even if a child has the ability to read aloud, his understanding of words is the true key to literacy. When children who can sound out words and read fluently are unable to comprehend what they are reading, this is sometimes known as "barking at text." On a positive note, it seems that any negative effects of television, video games, or lack of communication at home on the effects of language learning can still be counteracted with plenty of language exposure at school. It's common to see a children's book of over 30 pages contain little more than a few repetitive phrases of text. On the other hand, illustrations in these same books are often creative and elaborate. These pictures may make the text seem dull in comparison, or even dampen the children's ability to use their imagination while reading. In fact, viewing pictures may actively prevent children under nine years old from forming their own mental images, while presenting similar difficulties for older children, as well.

C

As children mature, many will end up rejecting books that don't have pictures, and such a reaction becomes increasingly serious in a culture that is rapidly becoming more visual than ever. Helping children learn to graduate from picture books to text-only books is a tougher task when most children's formative reading experiences are associated with the illustrations themselves. And now, many other sources of entertainment may capture a child's attention. Though lower intelligence is generally associated with lower rates of literacy, some results are revealing that even highly-intelligent children are not immune to the effects of these detrimental factors. Educators have responded to these challenges by further extending their use of picture books, and by simplifying the language-levels they teach, even within secondary education. Recent conferences were held at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge for the purpose of discussing this downward trend in literacy levels among undergraduate students. Beautiful, eye-catching pictures can be used as a motivating factor for children to read. However, this kind of motivation for reading is done best while also listening to stories read aloud. Doing this allows children to use their imaginations along with the story. As their reading skills develop, such an experience allows them to better understand the new language as a whole. The use of pictures alone will not give children enough of an opportunity to hone these creative skills—this may lead to a tragic loss of creativity and imaginative skills in future generations.

D

Academic journals covering research subjects in education, psychology, language learning, and even psycholinguistics have turned out results from experiments that demonstrate the ways in which picture books are problematic for beginning readers. The following is a brief selection of such research: Canadian educator, Dale Willows, found results that were both clear and consistent. In this research, Willows concludes that pictures affect the speed and accuracy of readers. Moreover, when pictures appeared closer to words, reading became even slower and more inaccurate. She claims that when children come across a word which they are familiar with, pictures are unnecessary and distracting. On the other hand, she shows that children who do not know a word will look to the picture to indicate its meaning. In these cases, they may be misled by aspects of the pictures which do not match the unfamiliar word's actual meaning. In another instance, the American psychologist Jay Samuels found that lower-level readers who were presented with no pictures learned more words than those who had pictures. He examined other researchers' work, some of whom had reported problems with the use of pictures, making similar findings of the way children learn words more effectively without pictures. Interestingly enough, he also found that children looking at picture books who seemed to ignore the pictures in favor of pointing to the words themselves were likely to learn more words than the children who pointed at the pictures. Even still, children who are given books with pictures still learned fewer words than the children who had no illustrated stimuli at all.

To live an aware life, the individual must begin with an awareness of self. He must conduct a running examination and periodic reexaminations of the self—in language, the medium of farthest reaches, deepest diving, most complicated windings. ____1____. A diary or journal enables one to examine and evaluate experiences, as well as to come to understand them and their significance—or insignificance. ____2____. There is some (even great) advantage, however, in subjecting ourselves to the discipline of written language, in which the vague and the confusing and the poorly defined give way to the specific, the firm, and the clearly formulated.

For writing is discovery. The language that never leaves our head is like colorful yarn, which endlessly spins out multicolored threads dropping into an emptiness, momentarily compacted, entangled, fascinating, and elusive. ____3____; we catch sight of images that tease us with connections and patterns that too-soon flow on; we hold in momentary view a comprehensive arrangement (insight) that dissolves rapidly and disappears.

Writing that is discovery forces the capturing, the retrieving, the bringing into focus on these stray and random thoughts. ____4____. Indeed, writing is largely a process of choosing among alternatives from the images and thoughts of the endless flow, and this choosing is the matter of making up one's mind, and this making up one's mind becomes in effect the making up of one's self. ____5____.

- A. We have glimpses that seem brilliant but quickly fade
- B. The sorting through might well begin with the ordinary, everyday experience of life
- C. Examining them, we form ideas that are as much about the self as about language
- D. In this way writing that is honest and genuine and serious constitutes the discovery of the self
- E. Most of us do this examination and evaluation in moments of dreaming or in that state of mental wandering just before sleep