



## **An Introduction to *Visualization***

**Visualization** is a creative thinking strategy which promotes insight, enhances creativity, expands imagination, and strengthens problem-solving skills. Visualization increases comprehension of both spoken and written words, and can help students plan experiences before embarking on them. Visualization is the conscious act of forming mental images and pictures of something that is not actually present.

A wide variety of professional people including athletes, musicians, performers, inventors, and business people use this technique to reach goals and improve performance.

Once this thinking strategy has been introduced, teachers are encouraged to reference it often during guided reading activities.

### **ACTIVITY** (time required: 30-60 minutes)

1. Ask students to raise their hands if they have read a good book recently, then ask how many of them are able to get a “picture in your mind” or “movie in your mind” while reading. Ask how many people just read their books but don’t “see” images while reading.
2. Explain that some people are very visual learners. Seeing the “movie in your mind” while reading or listening comes naturally. Other people have different learning styles and VISUALIZATION does not come as easily.
3. Explain that the class will practice visualization by going on an imaginary journey. Remind students that some of them might not get a “picture in their minds” right away, but they should not give up. Visualization takes practice, just like everything else!
4. Turn off the classroom lights, and encourage students to close their eyes or find a comfortable position at their desks.
5. Use a soft voice to read the following:
  - a. Quietly, breathe in and hold. Then breathe out very slowly. Listen to the quiet in the room. Breathe in again. Hold. Breathe out.
  - b. Imagine you are in your room at home, and you are having a very stressful day. You open the door to your closet and you notice a small door in the back.
  - c. You turn the handle, and you walk inside your secret room.
  - d. Here you can clear your mind and do your best thinking. You look around. All your favorite things are in this room.
  - e. What do you see? Imagine the furniture. Is there a chair? A hammock? A big beanbag? Or maybe there is no furniture. Are you outside, taking shade under a tree?
  - f. What do you hear? What sounds comfort you, and make you happy to be in this place?

- g. What do you smell? Can you smell Mom's fresh baked cookies? Or is it the fragrance of flowers and fresh air that you smell?
  - h. What do you taste? You have your favorite foods in your secret room. You have the foods that help you do your best thinking.
  - i. What do you feel? What is the temperature like? It is cool like a winter day, or warm like summer at the beach? You are feeling better now and able to do your best thinking. What are you thinking about?
  - j. You hear someone call your name and you realize it's time to leave your secret room. Take one last look around and think about all that you see, and all that you feel. Think about why you like this secret room, and how this room helps you do your best thinking.
  - k. You open the door and step out. Take a deep breath and walk back into your room.
  - l. Now it's time to come back to school. When we come back, you must remain very, very quiet. Open your eyes.
6. Provide students with some quiet time to express what they have experienced, either by writing or creating a picture of their Thinking Room.
7. Share and discuss how everyone's imagination allowed them to see things differently. Students were prompted with the same words, but they all saw different things based on their individual preferences and past experiences.

***Note:** A great resource for visualization is **Mindscape: Mix & Match Imagery Exercises** by Mary Thalgott & Miriam Furst, and published in 1988. It is available through Dandy Lion Publications ([www.dandylionbooks.com](http://www.dandylionbooks.com)).*