

Learning Project 6 Reading Reviews

This type of passage is a holdover from the old style GED, which focused on language and the arts.

Inquiry Activity 6-1: Passage Reading Strategy – Imaging

Imaging is a reading strategy learners can use to visualize the people, places, and actions an author describes. Imaging is a metacognitive skill that can be used with any type of reading material. Many reading excerpts are filled with details that the reader must be able to see with his or her mind's eye in order to understand what the author is writing about. Learning how to use imaging when reading will increase the reader's comprehension of highly descriptive writing.

(Note: Italicized portions should be directed to students.)

1. Identifying the Problem (Reading Passage only for Supplemental Practice Test Items #s 28, 29, 30, 31 32, and 33)

Look over the passage and the title. From the title, what do you think the passage is about and what are you being asked to do? (Don't read word for word.)

What are you being asked to read? What will you have to do to be successful on this Activity?

Have you seen passages like this before? Where? When?

Jot down your thoughts or share them with your partner.

WHAT TECHNIQUE IS USED BY THE ARTIST?

Once artists figured out how to construct these standard views, however, it wasn't long before they figured out that certain minor tweaks might take things one step farther: These few tweaks could make a viewer read the distant or imaginary as here and now; could turn a normal picture into trompe l'oeil¹.

You could tweak the imaginary space within your picture to look like it extends the real space that your viewer is standing in. Portray your picture's space as a glimpse through an actual window in the wall, for instance, or as giving access to a niche carved out in it, and viewers will understand that they should take the painted for the real. Five centuries ago, any rich Italian could ask a painter to fresco a ceiling so that it looked domed, or a flat wall so that it looked ornately carved away – or that they registered as such, even if a guest could tell at once that they were seeing paint, not masonry.

It is an almost fatal flaw that this exhibition doesn't even hint at any of this crucial wall painting, the earliest and most important trompe l'oeil of post-Roman Western art. Even a full-scale photographic reproduction mounted on a temporary ceiling would have done the trick, given that most of the originals are permanently stuck in their palazzi.

In 18th-century America, Charles Willson Peale of Philadelphia played a similar trick in his hometown's Independence Hall. In 1795, he mounted a canvas inside the door frame of a closet, and painted it – fairly badly – to look as though the doorway were in fact open, with his two sons stepping through it and up a stairway leading back beyond the wall. He even put a real wooden step on our side of the painting, as an extension of the painted steps that lead away inside it. (In one of their typically delightful grace notes, designers at the National Gallery have reproduced that wooden step to go with their installation of the picture.)

¹ trompe l'oeil: French expression for art that “fools the eye.”



2. Becoming Familiar with the Problem

Scan the passage and ask yourself questions like the following as the first step to understanding the passage.

Preview the Passage: *What do you see? How is the passage organized? What kind of type do you see? What kind of punctuation is used? What is in bold, and what is not? What do these things tell you about how you are supposed to read this passage?*

Activate/Build from Prior Knowledge: *From reading the title, what do you already know about artistic technique? Have you ever drawn or painted before? Where have you seen murals before? Have you ever read a review about art?*

The term *trompe l'oeil* is probably new to most of your learners. However, it is a rare person who has not seen murals, and the idea of murals with faked effects, making people feel as though they can walk through a non-existent door, is not a big stretch. The popular television program *Trading Spaces* often uses some aspects of *trompe l'oeil*. Also, many catalogues and home improvement stores have pictures that look like windows with a wonderful view. This is certainly a version of *trompe l'oeil*.

Consider/Build Interest: *Are you interested in the topic this review is about? Do you often read reviews of exhibitions or performances?*

You may wish to start a discussion with newspaper reviews of movies, television shows, or live performances.

Set a Purpose: *The purpose is to read the passage and imagine these pictures in your mind's eye.*

Imaging is a very strong reading strategy. Many good readers image both characters and setting.

3. Planning, Assigning, and Performing Tasks

Planning: *Determine whether you want to work individually, with a partner, or in a small group.*

Assigning: *Art is meant to be seen. Determine who will start reading and how you will imagine the art being described in the review.*

Doing the Work: *As you read the passage, do the following:*

Clarify:

*Read the passage. Find and mark any words you might not know. See if the passage gives you enough information to **clarify** the meaning of those words. If not, find the meaning by asking someone or looking it up.*

Were there any places in the passage where you did not understand what was going on? How were you able to understand better?

Image:

As you read the passage, stop at various places and describe in your own words what you imagine the picture that is being described might look like. You might take turns making rough pictures of what is being described.

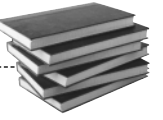
This strategy is similar to **predicting**. Instead of anticipating what might happen, learners are thinking about what things look like.

4. Sharing with Others

Telling other people what you know helps you to understand the material better. So take this opportunity not only to share the knowledge, but also to learn it more completely.

Small Groups: *Compare your **images** with others in the group. Think about each picture you imagined in your own words or in a rough sketch. What information in the text caused you to imagine or draw what you did?*

*Discuss as a group whether keeping in mind the purpose for reading the passage, **imaging** the art described, helped you to read and understand the passage better.*



Whole Class: Report to the class all the different images members of the groups had of the art described in the excerpt.

Take notes on any different **imaging** plans the other groups had.

5. Reflecting, Extending, and Evaluating

Reflecting: Think about how well you understood what you have done.

Here are some questions to start you thinking about the experience you just had. Thinking about what you have experienced is part of the learning process. When the focus is only on the answer, you don't get much time to think about what you learned.

If you were not interested in the passage, what did you do? How does being interested or not interested in the passage affect your reading?

Look back at step 3. If you were telling someone else how you imagined the art being described as you read, what words would you use to tell someone what you do?

Have you ever before thought about **imaging** as you read? Explain.

Extending: Extend what you learned to new situations.

In extending, you are being asked to transfer the information presented in the Practice Test passage to other information or situations.

Where else have you seen examples or read about some of the ideas you found in this passage?

Do you read any reviews? If yes, what kind?

Most people, if they read the newspaper or a popular magazine, read reviews of movies, new television shows, recordings. Reading reviews is also an opportunity to talk about an author's tone or voice, since reviews tend to be by a personality.

Another place that people come upon reviews would be on television, on MTV, and many of the cable stations. The Internet is also a popular medium for review. Many sites allow readers to post their own reviews in response to books, music, or movies.

Evaluating: Assess what you learned and how you learned it.

In this last step, you get a chance to review the methods used to learn. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions; it is your chance to look more closely at your learning style and the opportunity to state how you benefited or didn't benefit from the content and/or the methods presented in this IA.

What did you learn from this Inquiry Activity?

What parts of the activity worked best for you? Explain.

What parts did not work well for you? Explain.

What parts of this Inquiry Activity will you use when taking the GED test? Why?

How did reading this way make you feel?