



Celebration of the 150th Birth Date of Rabindranath Tagore
Bengali Writer and Nobel Literature Prize Winner in 1913

Suggested Learning Activities for Visual Literacy



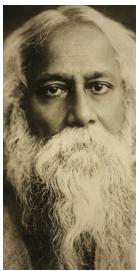
Visual Literacy



Both the Arts curriculum and the Language curriculum point out the need for visual literacy. Students require both instruction and practice in order to be able to apply comprehension strategies to photographs, paintings, diagrams and the variety of visual text forms which permeate all subjects in *The Ontario Curriculum* as well as daily life in the twenty first century. Familiarity with the elements and conventions of visual texts are at the basis of both comprehension, and the ability to create visual texts.

Visual texts make use of the elements of design (line, shape, colour, texture, use of space) to create meaning. Depending on the specific text form some of the elements may be used more than others. Reading a visual text involves working out how these elements have been used individually or in combination to contribute to the meaning of the text. Asking students to rank order the importance of the elements in a text (and of course explain his/her opinion) is one way to begin to have students observe a text closely.

Critical thinking about a text necessitates that students infer the purpose and intended message of the piece and analyze the bias of the producer. Having done that, students can then make judgments about whose voice has been included and whose voice is missing; the student must also work out whose life experience and therefore world view would be so different from the implied world view, that s/he would receive the opposite message (*an oppositional reading of the text*). The principles of Critical Literacy which apply equally to visual literacy would demand that student would in some way respond or create a new text that would include missing voices.



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When looking at a visual text, a few guiding questions might be:



- Which element of design captures most attention from the viewer (how and why?)
- How do the elements of design in the text relate to one another?
- How do these elements support the purpose of the text or the message it communicates?
- What is emphasized/ deemphasized in the image (how and why?)
- What message is communicated by the image (an idea, an emotion, a lesson) and how do you know?
- Who might agree or disagree with the message and how do you know?
- Why did the creator choose this particular text form ... how might it change the message if a different text form were used?