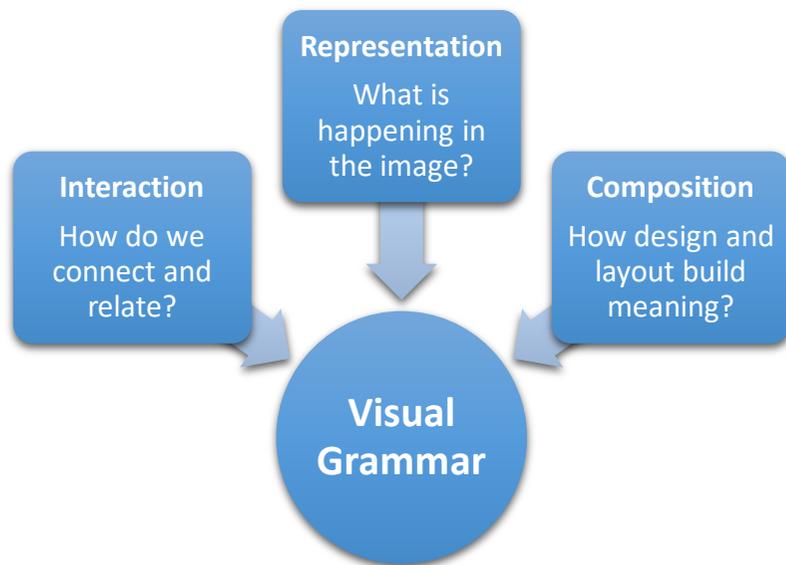


Visual Grammar

Responding to images in picture books

Visual grammar provides a way to describe and communicate features of an image.
Close looking and thinking about the image helps build meaning.



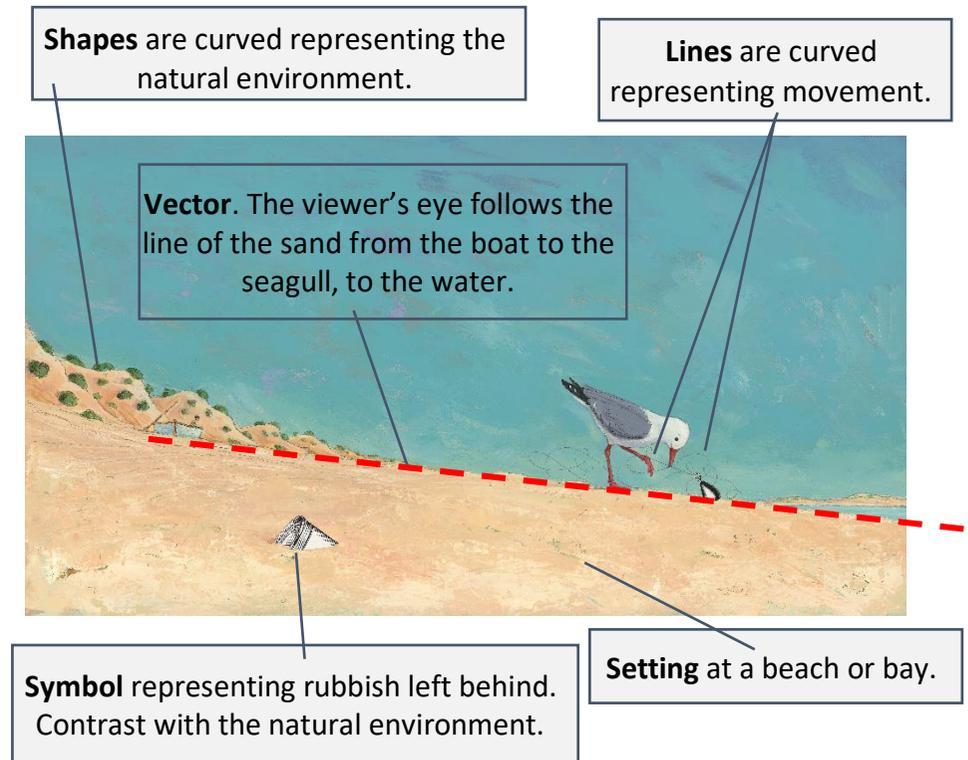
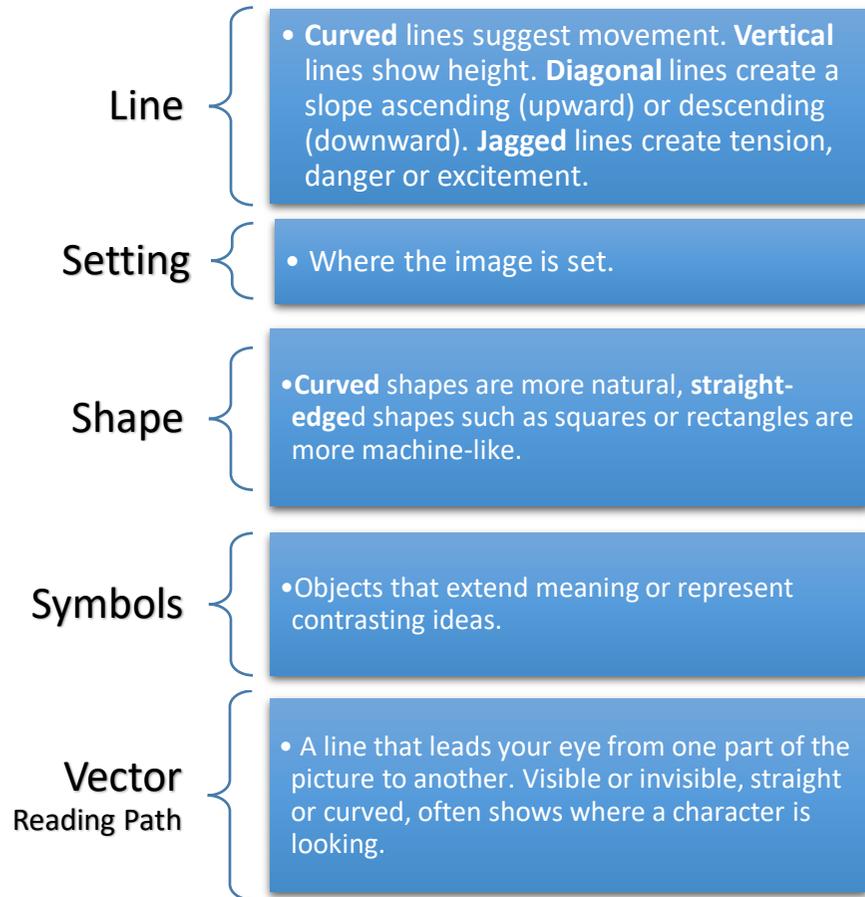
Applying visual grammar terminology will help you will notice how actions and ideas of characters and objects show and express what is happening in the image. You will see how the characters and objects communicate and interact and how the image affects our emotions as we connect and relate. You will learn how features of the design and layout define purpose and build meaning.

Adapted from Callow, 2013; Forrest, 2017; McDonald, 2018.

Image from *Seagull* by Danny Snell, Working Title Press, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers Australia, 2016. Image reprinted with permission.

Representation

How actions and ideas of characters and objects show and express what is happening in the image.



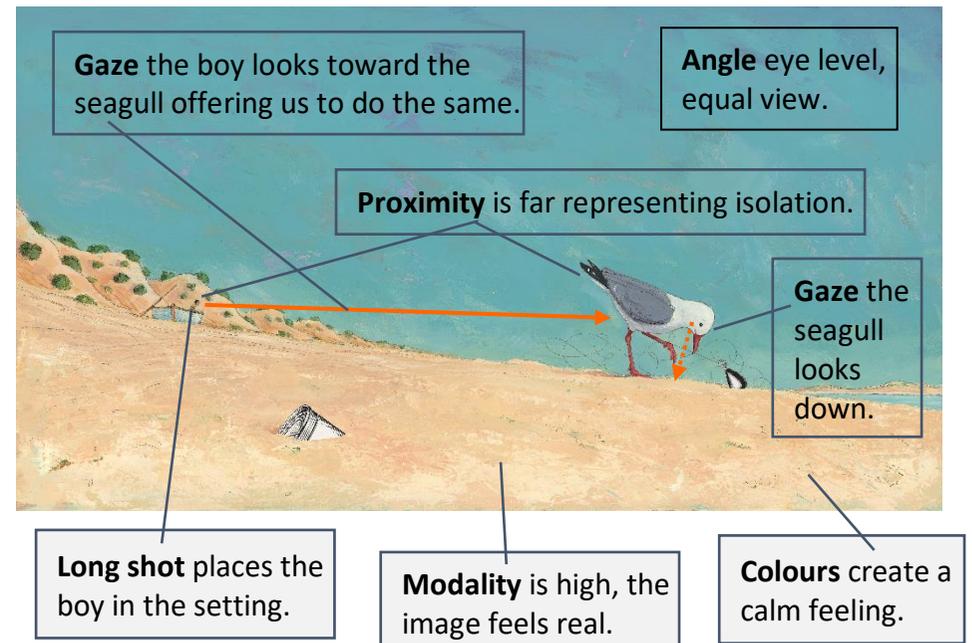
Interacting

How the characters and objects communicate and interact and how the image affects our emotions as we connect and relate.

- Angle**
 - **Low angle** the viewer is looking up. **High angle** viewer looking down. **Eye level** an equal view between image and viewer.
- Colour**
 - Creates emotions, or a reaction to a person, place or object.
- Gaze**
 - Where the character is looking. **Demand** the character looks out at the viewer, demanding attention. **Offer** the character encourages the viewer to look around the picture.
- Modality**
 - How real the images feels. High modality relates to an image that feels real and natural, low modality the image is exaggerated and unreal.
- Proximity**
 - Distance between the characters. Close proximity shows trust and respect. Far proximity represents isolation and detachment.

Shot distance

- **Close shot** face or head and shoulders, creates affection or danger. **Mid shot** waist up, has less personal connection. **Long shot** full height of character shows where they are placed in the setting.



Composition

How features of the design and layout define purpose and build meaning.

Framing

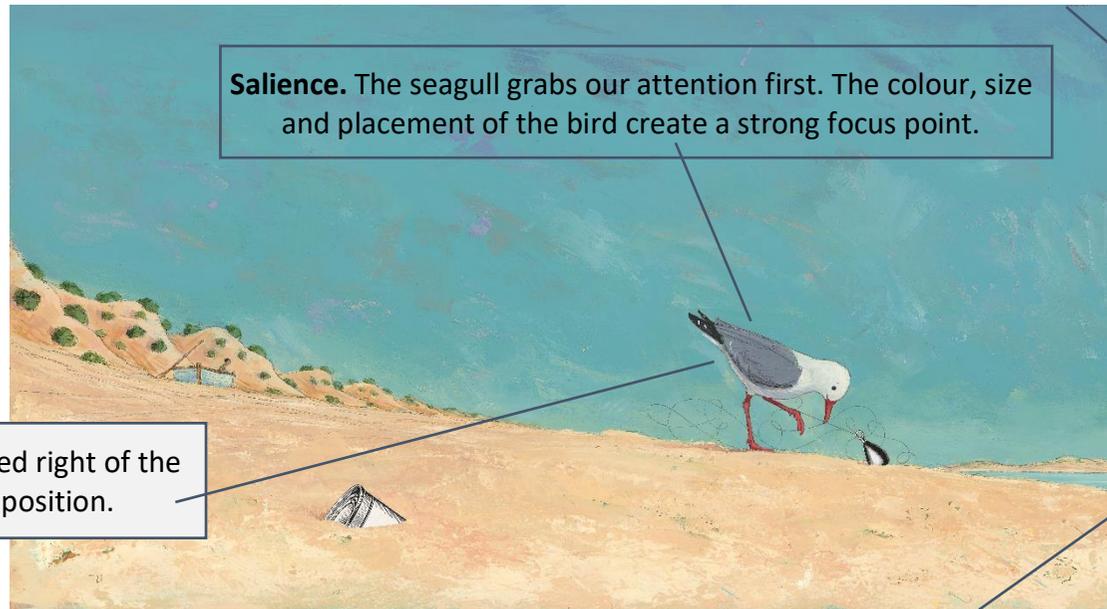
• A frame creates a border that connects or separates the characters or objects and helps sequence information. A frame can be white space, lines, colour or objects in the image.

Layout

• Where the characters or objects are placed. Top or bottom, left or right, or margin. Centre is the most dominate position.

Salience

• What grabs your attention first? Size, sharpness or focus of people or objects, colour, placement of figures or objects in the image have impact salience.



Salience. The seagull grabs our attention first. The colour, size and placement of the bird create a strong focus point.

Frame. The colour of the sky and sand create a frame around the image.

Layout. The seagull is placed right of the centre in a dominate position.

Discussion

1. What do you notice first? Why do you think this is important?
2. Why might the boy be placed so far from the seagull?
3. How do you think the boy feels? What makes you say that?
4. What might the seagull be thinking?
5. How do the colours make you feel?
6. What time of day might it be? How do you know?
7. Why do you think there is rubbish placed in this image?

References

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- Forrest, S. (2017). How does it make me feel? Using visual grammar to interact with picture books. *Literacy Learning in the Middle Years*, 25(1), p.41-52.
- McDonald, L. (2018). *A Literature Companion for Teachers* (2nd Ed.). Primary English Teaching Association Australia PETAA, Newtown, NSW.
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Acknowledgement

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Text from featured page

“Seagull pecked and tugged at the fishing line. But she could only loosen it a little.”