

Figure RL 7.2

Analyzing Illustrations

Teach your students to analyze details in illustrations by inviting them to consider how the artist uses shape, space, color, and size. Bang (2000) offers some guidance for analyzing the art in children's literature.

Prompts for Teaching	Technique	Effect
What shapes does the artist use?	Smooth, flat, horizontal shapes	Creates a sense of stability and calm
	Vertical shapes	Creates a sense of excitement and activity
	Diagonal shapes	Creates a sense of motion or tension
	Pointed shapes	Creates a sense of feeling scared
	Rounded shapes or curves	Creates a sense of security and comfort
	Objects at center of page	Draws attention
Where are the different parts of the illustration placed on the page?	Objects at edges and corners	Creates tension
	Top half of picture	Conveys freedom, happiness, triumph
	Bottom half of picture	Conveys a sense of threat, heaviness, sadness, constraint
	Object placed higher on page	Conveys importance
	White or light backgrounds	Creates a sense of safety
	Dark backgrounds	Creates a sense of danger
How does the artist use colors and shading?	Different objects on page with same color	Creates a sense of connection
	Contrasts	
	Larger objects	Draws attention
How does the artist use size?		Conveys strength