



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2014 Volume I: Picture Writing

Tell Me a Picture: Increasing K-3 Vocabulary through Wordless Picture Books and Artist Prints

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.01.08

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This curriculum unit intended for use by classroom and visual art teachers in the early elementary grades (kindergarten through third grade). It uses textless books and reproductions of artwork to teach and expand students' vocabulary to include both art-room specific vocabulary (colors, shapes, etc.) as well as everyday vocabulary, with a specific focus on prepositions. Many young students struggle in my art class to find the right words to describe objects or points of interest in a piece of art. Often they tell me "it's there," and I have to follow up with "Where's *there*?" in order for the rest of the class and for me to locate the specific object to which they are referring.

Research has shown that using wordless picture books can increase vocabulary, understanding of main idea and sequencing, and many other literacy concepts that are being taught in the classroom. By using these resources in the art room, students will be able to have a more comprehensive knowledge of what they are learning and how and why it is used throughout their curriculum in different subjects. Teaching strategies for this unit include small-group lessons, peer teaching, using manipulatives to understand prepositions, and kinetic reenactments of poses shown in artworks.

(Recommended for Art and Literacy, grades K-3)

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