

Illustrate a Story

Use this activity to practice and assess your learner's comprehension of a story.

Supplies

- story *or* chapter book
- paper
- crayons, markers, *or* pencil

What to Do

Read the storybook or *one* chapter from a chapter book out loud to your learners. If the book you're reading has illustrations, do not show them yet! Initially, tell your children to "draw what they hear." In other words, if they hear you read about a character having red hair and freckles, then they should draw that. If the story mentions a park-like setting with huge trees and a playground, encourage them to draw it. Tell them that it's impossible to draw everything they hear, however they should draw for as long as you read. They can use one sheet of paper (front and back, if needed) and the pictures can be drawn in random locations on the page.

At the end of the book or chapter, ask your learners about their drawings. Have them explain the details in their illustrations and how they relate to the story plot. You will immediately be able to ascertain whether or not your children can comprehend the main ideas of the story. Their discussion of the story based upon their drawings will give you an idea of what reading elements might still need instruction.

After your children have done this activity a couple of times, focus on one element throughout an entire story. For example, spotlight all of the characters and have your youngsters create an illustration of each one. Remind them to pay attention to both the physical description of the characters *and* their behaviors. If the main character plays soccer, tell them to draw that character with a soccer ball.

Illustrate a Story is fun to do with chapter books! Collect the pictures they draw from each chapter, bind them, and review the whole story from start to finish. The hands-on task of ordering their drawings makes their understanding of the sequence of events even more complete.

Finally, a fun way to end this project is to compare your artists' pictures with those of the illustrator. Discuss similarities and differences. How closely do their drawings resemble the illustrator's? Remind them that differences in their drawings do not mean their renditions are wrong. They just have a different perspective.