

Can You Picture It?: A Writing Activity

Kids often have a difficult time adding detail and description to their stories. Comparing the process of writing to drawing a picture can help kids understand the importance of using detail and description in their story. This activity will help your child "see" how to improve stories.

What You Need:

- A story that your child is currently working on writing
- A blank piece of paper
- Crayons or colored pencils

What You Do:

1. Use a black crayon to draw a large rectangular frame about two inches wide on the perimeter of the blank paper. In the width of the frame, write the following question words, spreading them out so that they look like artsy decorations on the frame: Who? What? Why? How? When? Where? What color? How big?
2. Read your child's story aloud to her. As you read, have her illustrate her story in the blank space in the center of the frame. Tell her she can only draw what she hears you read in the story.
3. When you're finished, discuss the drawing with your child. What's missing in the picture? What details could be added that would make the story in the picture more interesting? If she needs ideas, refer to the question words that you wrote earlier in the width of the frame.
4. As she adds details to her drawing, have her use words to describe the details to you aloud.
5. Then, have her go back to her story, and write these extra details.
6. Finally, turn the completed drawing over, face down, and read your child's improved story aloud to her again. Ask her to picture her story in her head as you read it aloud. Say, "Can you picture it?" Then turn over the picture, and ask her to decide if the picture in her head matches the picture on the paper. If she feels they match each other well, she can trust that she has added ample detail to her story!

