

★ Activate & Supply Background Knowledge



# Day 339

## Show The Shark & The Sunflower

A picture can be used to inspire a discussion, build background knowledge, hook students on a new area of content, or encourage the development of questions. A picture of a breaching great white shark, a California migrant family in 1930, or a Fibonacci sunflower can get students talking, thinking, debating, and hypothesizing before a single piece of information is presented. At its most basic, this strategy can involve just showing the picture and asking for reactions. After the initial presentation of a Gettysburg field hospital, for instance, you can ask students to comment on what they see, or you can use guiding questions to encourage them to draw conclusions about the image.

You can also hand this task over to students. Each week you might assign a different student the task of selecting an image related to course content. Or you can get them involved in a more in-depth project such as the #mathphotoaday challenge started by a third-grade class on Twitter.

Using photos as a teaching tool is powerful because most visuals are accessible to most students. In addition, interpreting images is open-ended, and can be made more or less complex depending on the follow-up questions and comments provided by the teacher.

Look for pictures on the following sites:

- ★ *The New York Times* ([learning.blogs.nytimes.com/category/lesson-plans/whats-going-on-in-this-picture](https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/category/lesson-plans/whats-going-on-in-this-picture))
- ★ *National Geographic* ([photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day](https://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day))
- ★ NASA ([apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html](https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html))
- ★ *The Wall Street Journal* ([blogs.wsj.com/photojournal/category/photos-of-the-week](https://blogs.wsj.com/photojournal/category/photos-of-the-week))