

# **Imagine That!**

## **Stories**

*Visualizing*  
*and*  
*Verbalizing*  
For Language Comprehension and Thinking

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## Introduction:

The mysterious, the unusual, the unexplained...Imagery is the medium through which language that describes our diverse world is revealed in all its detail and complexity.

The *Imagine That!* series provides nonfiction stories with which to practice building imagery for oral and written language comprehension. These challenging, high-imagery stories introduce true and unusual topics for students to visualize, including natural disasters, legends, unique animals, odd plants, mysteries, fascinating phenomena, and people of great achievement. Each story is presented in language appropriate to the grade level, and the content is sure to capture the interest of students and instructors alike.

The mysteries of the world are waiting. Let's fly.

Nanci Bell  
2007

## How to Use *Imagine That! Stories*:

The *Imagine That! Stories* can be used with any program of instruction to develop imagery for language comprehension, and they can also be used specifically with the *Visualizing and Verbalizing*<sup>®</sup> (V/V<sup>®</sup>) program. These stories give students practice visualizing the big picture, the gestalt, and should be used when doing the steps that develop concept imagery as a base for critical thinking.

While the stories have been arranged in sections that align with specific steps of V/V, all *Imagine That! Stories* can be used with any of the following V/V steps:

- Sentence by Sentence
- Sentence by Sentence with Higher Order Thinking (HOT)
- Multiple Sentence with HOT
- Whole Paragraph with HOT
- Paragraph by Paragraph with HOT
- Whole Page with HOT

## Tips:

### ● Story Arrangement

Although all the stories in this volume are written at a fifth-grade reading level, within each section, stories have been sequentially ordered to increase in conceptual difficulty.

### ● Illustrations

Illustrations have been provided for stories that contain unfamiliar subjects. These images can be presented to the students before the paragraph is read, to help them build their own imagery.

### ● Topic Sentences

You will often find that the first sentence of a paragraph introduces a general topic to be imaged, and the rest of the paragraph goes on to describe detailed imagery for the topic. For example, in the story "Survival by Monkey," the first line reads "The soldier Cyril Jones survived in a jungle for twelve days with the help of a wild monkey." While the sentence contains much concrete detail that can be imaged, such as the soldier, the jungle, and the wild monkey, the sentence also contains some abstract concepts. This sentence does not tell us how the monkey helped Cyril Jones, or how this soldier survived his ordeal. When working with students, it is appropriate to have them leave that portion of their image indistinct. You may explain to the students that the rest of the paragraph will fill in the blanks in their imagery.

### ● Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Questions

The stories are followed by main idea, inference, conclusion, evaluation, and prediction questions. The order of these HOT questions is such that they stimulate students' thinking first about the gestalt and then about the details of the story. In some questions, key words are italicized to indicate emphasis. Also, contrast questions are included to stimulate and guide the students' critical reasoning. Finally, in some instances, the HOT questions introduce additional information, from which the students can extend their thinking about the story.

## 5 Scaly Escape Artist

When cornered, a horned lizard might save himself by shooting blood from his eyes. If a coyote sniffs out the sand-colored lizard under a bush, the lizard will first hold still, trying to escape notice. But should the coyote try to bite, the lizard will squirt blood from the corners of his eyes. He aims the blood at the coyote's face and jaws. Then as the coyote shakes the foul-tasting blood out of her mouth, the lizard can run off to hide.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

How do you think shooting blood might *save* the horned lizard?

Why do you think the lizard just holds still at first? Why not squirt blood right away?

Why do you think the lizard aims the blood at the coyote's face and jaws?

What do you think would happen after the coyote shakes the blood out of her mouth?



## 35 The First Marathon

Legend has it that the first marathon was run by a single soldier after a great battle in ancient Greece. In the battle, a small army from the Greek city of Athens fought to keep a larger Persian army from invading. The Greeks marched for many miles to cut off the Persians near the town of Marathon. The soldiers from Athens fought bravely and drove off the other troops. Then the leader of the Greek army picked his best runner to send the news home. The runner took off at a sprint on the long road back to Athens, winding through fields, hills, and valleys. After hours of hard running, he reached the city and shouted the good news, but then fell down dead. To honor the young man's long run, the city held a new footrace called the marathon.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think people would want to honor the young man?

Why do you think the runner died when he reached Athens?

Do you think the runner might have already been tired when he started the run? Why or why not?

Why do you think the Greek army's leader picked his *best* runner?

What might have happened if he had picked a worse runner?

Do you think the people of Athens were glad to hear the news? Why or why not?

Marathons today are about twenty-six miles long. Why do you think this distance was chosen?

## 38 Desert Survivor

The huge saguaro cactus thrives in the Arizona desert by storing its own water. Plants in this dry land might only get a few rainstorms each year. So the saguaro soaks up to a ton of water into its ridged trunk, which swells and widens as it fills. The cactus's thick, waxy skin keeps the water sealed inside. This cactus uses up water very slowly. The trunk grows for at least fifty years before sprouting an arm-like shoot. Other desert plants grow and die quickly, but the saguaro can live hundreds of years and tower sixty feet high.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Do you think it is surprising to hear that the saguaro cactus lives for hundreds of years?

Why or why not?

Why do you think it is important for the cactus's trunk to be able to swell with water?

What do you think would happen if the cactus had *thin* skin, like the skin of a leaf?

What do you think would happen if the cactus grew too fast?

A cactus has shallow roots that spread out a long way from the trunk. Why might this be important for a desert plant?



## 50 The Cardiff Giant

In 1868, George Hull thought up a clever trick that would make him some money. He traveled hundreds of miles from his home to a rock quarry. He bought a stone block and paid three stonecutters to carve it into the shape of a dead giant. Then he swore them to secrecy. Hull shipped the boxed giant to his cousin's farm in Cardiff, New York. In the middle of the night, Hull, his cousin Will Newell, and Newell's son buried the giant on the farm. When Hull left, he told Newell to leave the giant there for a year.

One year later, Hull wrote a letter to Newell, telling him the next step of the trick. Newell followed his directions and hired some men to dig a well on his land. As they dug, they "discovered" the buried giant. The men went home to tell their friends and news of the find quickly spread. Soon wagonloads of people started showing up to see the "Cardiff Giant." Some said it was a real giant and others said it was an ancient statue of one. Newell let them argue while he charged each person fifty cents to see it.

Ten days later, Hull sold the stone giant for more than thirty-seven thousand dollars, sharing the money with Newell. The new owners took it to a big city and charged people one dollar each to see it. When a scientist paid to see the giant, he pointed out fresh chisel marks on it. He declared the giant a fake. At that time Hull talked to news reporters and told them the whole story. But people still paid to see the giant, even after they knew the truth about the hoax. To this day, the Cardiff Giant is displayed in a museum in Cooperstown, New York.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Hull's trick has been called a great hoax. From what you pictured, what do you think "hoax" means?

Do you think George Hull was pleased with the results of his hoax? Why or why not?

Why do you think someone might want to buy the giant?

Where do you think the chisel marks came from? How would they show that the giant was a fake?