



Using Picture Clues to Predict What Happens Next

GRADE	SUBJECT	DURATION	DATE
2	English Language Arts	45 min	2026-07-05

LESSON FOCUS

Topic: Making predictions from picture clues

Learning Goal: Using Picture Clues to Predict What Happens Next: Students use illustrations to predict what happens next in a story and explain their thinking.

Lesson Overview

0-8 min	Engage: Teacher shows a picture of a character holding an open umbrella indoors while looking out a window, and students turn and talk to name the pattern of clues that tell us what the weather is like and what the character is about to do.	8 min
8-18 min	Explore: Students look at a new illustration of a dog eyeing a plate of cookies on a high counter, working in pairs to search for and point out three specific visual clues that hint at the dog's next move.	10 min
18-28 min	Explain: Teacher models how to turn visual clues into a strong prediction, demonstrating how to use the sentence frame 'I think the dog will jump because I see his ears are up and his eyes are on the cookies' before showing how to avoid wild guesses.	10 min
28-40 min	Apply: Students look at a fresh illustration from a new storybook, write down their prediction on a sticky note using the modeled sentence frame, and swap notes with a partner to compare which clues they used.	12 min
40-45 min	Reflect: Students share how their predictions changed or stayed the same after the teacher reveals the actual next page of the story, discussing how paying attention to small details makes them better readers.	5 min

KEY CONCEPTS

- Illustrations in a story carry visual information that works alongside the text to help readers understand the plot.
- Predictions are educated guesses about what will happen next, based on evidence we can see and what we already know.
- Good readers constantly update their thinking as they find new visual clues in a book.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Observe details in illustrations to identify clues about characters, setting, and action.
- Listen actively to a peer's ideas and compare different predictions about the same image.
- Communicate ideas clearly to a partner using evidence from a picture to support a prediction.
- Connect visual clues to personal experiences or prior knowledge to make sense of a story's direction.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify and describe specific visual clues in a picture, such as facial expressions, objects, and weather.
- Formulate a logical prediction about what will happen next in a narrative sequence using a picture clue.
- Explain the reasoning behind a prediction by completing the sentence frame: 'I think... because I see...'
- Compare predictions with a partner and discuss how different clues can lead to different ideas.

CORE CONTENT

- The definition of a prediction as a thoughtful guess about the future of a story.
- The difference between guessing wildly and using visual clues to make an informed prediction.
- Visual elements in illustrations, including character expressions, body language, and setting details.
- Sentence starters that help explain thinking, such as 'I notice...' and 'This makes me think...'
- The concept of revising a prediction when new pictures or information are revealed.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- How do artists use pictures to tell us what might happen next in a story?
- Why do different readers sometimes make different predictions about the same picture?
- How does looking closely at picture clues help us understand a story better?

SUMMATIVE TASKS

The 'What Happens Next?' Picture Clue Sheet: Students look at a printed illustration of a character facing a clear situation (for example, a child holding a leash looking at an open gate with dog paw prints leading away). On their response sheet, students circle two visual clues in the picture (such as the open gate and the empty leash) and write a two-sentence prediction using the sentence frame: 'I think [prediction] because I see [clue 1] and [clue 2].'

The Prediction Flip-Book: Students receive a folded paper booklet. On the front cover, they look at a story illustration (such as a character looking up at dark, heavy clouds while holding a picnic basket). Students draw what they predict will happen next on the inside page. On the back cover, they write a short explanation describing how their drawing connects to the clues on the front cover, specifically naming at least one character expression or setting detail.

FORMATIVE CHECKS

- Clue-Hunting Partner Walk: While students work in pairs to look at a picture book, the teacher circulates with a clipboard checklist to observe and record whether students can point to and name at least two specific visual details (like a character's facial expression or an object in the background) before they share their predictions aloud.
- I Notice / I Think Sticky Note Stop: During the interactive read-aloud, the teacher pauses on a cliffhanger illustration. Students write one visual clue they notice on a yellow sticky note and one prediction on a blue sticky note, then place them on a class anchor chart. The teacher reviews these mid-lesson to check if students are connecting their predictions directly to visual evidence rather than making random guesses.
- Predictor's Conference: While students work on their independent drawing activity, the teacher conducts quick individual conferences, asking: 'Show me the clue in this picture that made you think that would happen.' The teacher notes on a rubric if the student points to a specific visual element (facial expression, setting, or object) or if they need prompting to find a clue.
- Thumbs-Up Clue Check Exit Ticket: At the end of the mini-lesson, the teacher displays a picture of a character holding an umbrella looking at a single raindrop. The teacher reads three predictions aloud. Students hold up one, two, or three fingers to show which prediction is best supported by the picture clues, allowing the teacher to quickly scan the room for whole-class understanding before moving to independent work.

SUCCESS CRITERIA (PROFICIENCY SCALE)**BEG**

I can point to a detail in a picture and share a guess about what might happen next with help from a teacher or partner.

DEV

I can find a specific visual clue, like a character's face or an object, and make a prediction that matches what is happening in the picture.

PRO

I can explain my prediction clearly using the sentence frame 'I think... because I see...' to connect my guess to a specific visual clue.

ADV

I can use multiple picture clues (like the setting and a character's expression) to make a prediction, and explain how my prediction changes when a new picture clue is revealed.

MATERIALS

- Butterfly Chase Prediction Sticky Notes
- Picture book with strong visual narrative and cliffhangers
- Yellow and blue sticky notes
- What Happens Next? Picture Clue Sheet
- Class anchor chart paper

STAGE 3 Learning Experiences & Instruction

THE GREY PAINT BRUSH

A painter is working on a bright sunny park scene, but then they mix a giant blob of dark grey paint. They hold their wet brush directly over the bright blue sky.

What is about to change on the painter's paper?

THE SLIPPERY BANANA PEEL

In a cartoon, a character drops a slippery banana peel on the sidewalk. Another character walks toward it while looking up at a flying bird.

What is going to happen when their foot reaches the peel?

ENGAGE**Connecting Clues to Actions**

8 min

GROUPING

Whole class

STUDENT ROLE

Students compare the hook scenarios to notice how small details tell us what will happen next.

Teacher displays the hook illustrations of the painter and the cartoon character. Students turn and talk to point out the exact objects or movements that gave away the ending before it happened. The teacher records these clues on a simple chart to show how details lead to smart guesses.

EXPLORE**The Cookie Thief Hunt**

10 min

GROUPING

Partner pairs

STUDENT ROLE

Students search for and point out visual clues in a new illustration.

Partners look at an illustration of a dog staring up at a plate of cookies on a high counter. Students work together to find and circle three specific visual details, like the dog's tense back legs or his focused eyes. Each pair shares one clue they found with the neighboring pair to compare their findings.

EXPLAIN**Modeling the Prediction Frame**

10 min

GROUPING Whole class**STRATEGY** Students listen to the model and practice using the sentence frame with a partner.

Teacher models how to connect the dog clues to a clear prediction using a think-aloud. The teacher writes the sentence frame 'I think... because I see...' on the board and fills it in using the dog's body language. Students practice reading the completed sentence aloud to a partner to hear how the clue supports the guess.

I DO

5 min

Teacher models the core idea of using picture clues by thinking aloud about a character holding an open umbrella indoors. The teacher points to the umbrella and the window, explaining how these specific details lead to a smart prediction about the weather and the character's next move, rather than making a wild guess.

WE DO

10 min

Teacher guides the class to look at the dog and cookie illustration, prompting students to identify clues together. The teacher writes student-suggested clues on the board and helps the class co-create a prediction using the 'I think... because I see...' sentence frame.

YOU DO

12 min

Students work independently to look at the butterfly illustration, write their prediction on a sticky note using the sentence frame, and swap with a partner to compare clues. The teacher circulates to check that students are linking their predictions directly to visual evidence.

Recommended Worksheets: Context Clue Detective – Grades 1-2**Recommended Worksheets: Main Idea & Details – Grades 1-2****Recommended Worksheets: Word Ladders – Grade 2****APPLY****Sticky Note Predictions**

12 min

GROUPING Individual, then pairs**AUDIENCE** Students write their own prediction on a sticky note and swap with a partner to compare clues.

Students look at a new illustration of a character holding a net near a bush with a fluttering butterfly. Each student writes a prediction on a sticky note using the modeled sentence frame to explain their thinking. Students swap sticky notes with a partner to compare which visual clues they used to make their guess.

REFLECT**Reflect****GROUPING** Individual**STUDENT ROLE** Reflective learner

- How did looking closely at the character's face or body language help you make a better prediction?
- What is the difference between making a wild guess and making a prediction with picture clues?
- How did your partner's prediction help you see a clue in the picture that you missed at first?

These reflection prompts support post-teaching revisions. Add notes for yourself, leave feedback, or remix this plan in CARL for future use.

LEARNING SUPPORTS

- Provide high-contrast versions of all illustrations and verbally describe the key visual elements for students with visual impairments.
- Use illustrations that reflect diverse home environments, communities, and characters to ensure all students see familiar contexts.
- Encourage students to identify and name the emotions of characters in the illustrations, building empathy and social awareness.
- Practice active listening and respectful turn-taking during partner sharing and clue comparisons.
- Use predictable, calm transitions between activities and ensure all illustrations depict safe, non-threatening scenarios.
- Allow students to share their ideas in pairs before speaking to the whole class to lower performance anxiety.
- Visual anchor charts with illustrated examples of 'clues' and 'predictions'.
- ELL supports generated for Ukrainian (ELP 2: Developing).

COMMUNICATE & REFLECT ON LEARNING

Student Self-Assessment & Reflection

- How did looking closely at the character's face or body language help you make a better prediction?
- What is the difference between making a wild guess and making a prediction with picture clues?
- How did your partner's prediction help you see a clue in the picture that you missed at first?

STAGE 4 Reflect & Revise

01 Which parts of the lesson helped students most clearly understand the central concept?

02 Which part of the lesson needs to be revised, clarified, or scaffolded differently before teaching it again?

03 What did students say, do, or produce that revealed how they experienced the lesson and where they still need support?

● **These reflection prompts support post-teaching revisions.**

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