Using Pictures as Context Cues

Grade Level: Primary (K–2)
Time: 30–40 minutes
Book Connection: Tully's Alpine Adventure
Focus Skill: Using illustrations and visual details to understand unfamiliar words and story meaning

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain how pictures can help them figure out what is happening in a story.
2. Use illustrations to make predictions about words, decoding, and events.
3. Connect picture details with the text to support comprehension.

Materials

- A copy of Tully's Alpine Adventure
- Chart paper and markers
- Sticky notes to cover selected vocabulary words from the story
- Image projection to enlarge illustrations for students
- Student journals or writing paper

Lesson Steps

1. Introduction (5–7 minutes)

- Begin with a short discussion: *"Have you ever looked at a picture to figure out what a story was about before reading it?"*
- Show the cover illustration of the book. Ask students:
  - What do you notice?
  - Who are the characters?
  - Where did the story take place? [perhaps write out generated settings]
- Explain: *"Today we will be detectives. We'll look at pictures to help us understand tricky words and story clues."*

2. Modeling (8–10 minutes)

- Read aloud a page from Tully's Alpine Adventure that contains a new or challenging word (for example: "Alpine," "adventure," "goldendoodle").
- On a projector or computer display, cover some words with a sticky note and only show the illustration
  - What do you see happening in the illustration?
  - What might this word mean?

- Reveal the word. Connect student guesses to the meaning, modeling how the picture supported the context.
- Record on chart paper or board
  - Word | Picture Clue | What We Think It Means

3. Guided Practice (8–10 minutes)

- Select 2–3 more pages with rich illustrations and unfamiliar vocabulary.
- With partners, students discuss what they notice in the pictures and how those clues help them predict the words.
- Each group shares one finding with the class.
- Teacher adds their responses to the chart.

Independent Practice & Closure

4. Independent Practice (8–10 minutes)

- Hand out a response sheet with one illustration from the story.
- Students:
  - Draw or circle details in the picture.
  - Write (or dictate) a sentence about what they think is happening.
  - Try to guess a new word that could go with the picture.

5. Closure (5 minutes)

- Bring students back together and display some of their responses.
- Ask:
  - How did the picture help you understand the story?
  - Why are pictures important in books?
- Reinforce the strategy: *"Pictures give us clues about words and meaning. When you read on your own, use the pictures to help you figure out the story."*

Assessment

- Informal: Teacher observations during guided practice discussions.
- Students will journal showing the ability to connect illustration details to word meaning, by retelling a portion of the book that follows one of the illustrations.