

The Wizard of Earthsea Guided Imagery Strategy

Purpose of Strategy: Objective: Students will use visual imagination to help them intimately “see” and “feel” a setting. Using Guided Imagery will help students practice visualizing a scene in their head when given little description. They will add the important details that will then give the scene a personal connection.

This activity can be used either as a pre-reading strategy or a during-reading strategy. If it is used for pre-reading, the guided scene could focus on various mountain scenes, or a place where the student feels safe. If it is used for a during-reading activity, the guided scenes can focus on one of the various places Ged encounters, such as, the Island of Roke with its apprentice-mage skiffs, the frozen wasteland of Osskil and its hidden treasure, or the island of the dragons.

Context: *The Wizard of Earthsea* has many different scenes that are crucial to the understanding of the story, and the author, Ursula K. Le Guin, uses sparse, but meaningful descriptions that a careless reader could miss (*They walked in silence and the silence of winter lay heavy on the land* p. 105). This experience can help students explore the world of The Reaches while creating vivid pictures in their mind.

Directions to Students: see handout; remember to read slowly and to pause between phrases so that students may imagine freely.

Time: The teacher portion of the guided imagery can take up to ten minutes, which includes time to relax and then describing the scene. The written portion of the experience can be as short as ten minutes, or as long as twenty minutes. If students feel like they didn’t get everything written, they may take it home to finish the assignment.

Assessment: After the Guided Imagery experience has taken place, students will free-write a page detailing their experience they have just imagined. Their audience may be either the class as short story readers, or to an intimate friend, or simply their personal portfolio. As this may be an intimate experience for some, reading aloud to other class members is cautioned. The teacher may call for those papers, or may conduct a personal interview asking for student to explain what he/she saw.



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Directions to Students:

(Have lights on low, or off, depending on classroom. Have “relaxing” or soft music playing in background or just the sound of rushing water. The CD, *Evening Angels*, by Kurt Bestor, is a good choice to take students on a journey, or use *The Ultimate Relaxing Album*, various classical artists.)

Have a blank piece of paper in front of you.

Take a few moments to slowly breathe in and out...just focus on your breathing... with each breathe make it slower and a little more relaxed... make you mind blank...try not to think about anything, just breathe...

Now, close your eyes...

Listen to the music and tell your body to relax... beginning with your toes and working up to your head, with each breath you release, have your groups of muscles relax...

Now, imagine you are walking... this is not an ordinary walk, but one of great need...you need to find help, but you don't know where to go...you look around and you see a vast prairie land...it is winter and there is silence everywhere...as you continue walking, the wind makes a noise that is almost human...

You look once more at your surroundings and you think you see a tower...your goal is to get to that tower before sundown...think about what you will say to whomever is there...what is your errand...

Finally, you are in the tower...whom did you meet...the place seems cold, despite all the fires you see...you look at everything carefully, because you aren't sure if the place is safe or not...

After being fed, you are led to a room to stay the night before speaking with the lord of the tower...the room is small for the size of the tower... you lay your head down and the fatigue of walking for so long in the cold and the stress of finding help leaves you weary...

You find yourself dreaming...you are back in the schoolroom and it is the present...

Tell your muscles to move.

Now, write about your experience. You may either make it into a story, or a personal narrative, or write like it is a part of your journal. Be as descriptive as you can, remembering all of the details you saw in your mind's eye.

