

OTF Connects presents...

# Nurturing Visual Literacy in all Learners

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# 21st Century Learners: What's new and what's the same?

- ⦿ 24/7 presence of technology in their lives
- ⦿ highly collaborative
- ⦿ easy access to information
- ⦿ boundless sources of information
- ⦿ wide circle of contacts (in some cases across the world)
- ⦿ construction of new knowledge and representations blurs issues of copyright and plagiarism
- ⦿ visual learners but not visually literate



# Why does this matter?

“... the skills students need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not new.... What’s actually new is the extent to which changes in our economy and the world mean that our collective and individual success depends on having such skills... If these skills were indeed new, then perhaps we would need a radical overhaul of how we think about content and curriculum. But if the issue is, instead, that schools must be more deliberate about teaching critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving to all students, then the remedies are more obvious, although still intensely challenging.

from Andrew Rotherham and Daniel Willingham “*21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*” *Not New, But a Worthy Challenge* in American Educator, Spring 2010

# Central Goals of 21st Century Learning

**Schools need to provide the tools for students to become:**

- critical thinkers
- creative thinkers
- collaborative thinkers
- communicators (via multiple mediums)
- global thinkers
- digitally literate
- self-directed learners



**Community of visually  
connected thinkers**



**Invitations to engage in  
critical, creative and  
collaborative inquiry**

**Transcendent  
Intellectual Tools**

**Background  
Knowledge**

**Criteria for  
Judgment**

**Critical Thinking  
Vocabulary**

**Thinking  
Strategies**

**Habits of  
Mind**



# So what is visual literacy?

**Visual literacy, defined as "the ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through visible actions or images (as pictures)." Miriam-Webster Dictionary**

"Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication."

John Debes, 1969

# Who is “He?”

## Criteria for a plausible answer:

- \* consistent with the sensory experiences created by the video  
(what is seen, felt, heard...)
- \* consistent with evidence in the song
- \* consistent with what is known about the content of the song (war, conflict, religion, etc)



Concert privé

W©



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHNK5Sxshec>



# The Spaghetti Crisis

More convincing as a video than an article?



[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVo\\_wkxH9dU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVo_wkxH9dU)



# Can we enjoy S'Winter where we live?



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bELHxJoYPdM>



# Why is visual literacy important in the 21st century?

*Visual images, like all representations, "are never innocent or neutral reflections of reality...they represent for us: that is, they offer not a mirror of the world but an interpretation of it." In this way, students must be made critically literate: they require knowledge and understanding of how visual texts are produced and composed and how viewers will "relate to and interrogate" such representations of the world around them.*

From, An introduction to the grammar of visual design

*Community of  
Thinkers*

**TC<sup>2</sup> Model of  
Critical Thinking**

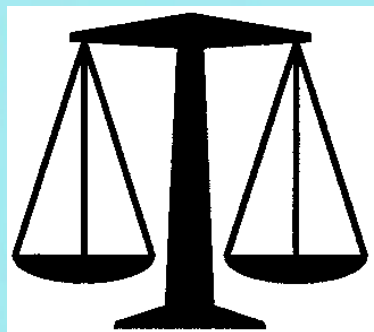
*Critical  
Challenges*

**How do we empower our students with the ability to do this?**

*Teach and Assess the  
Intellectual  
Tools*



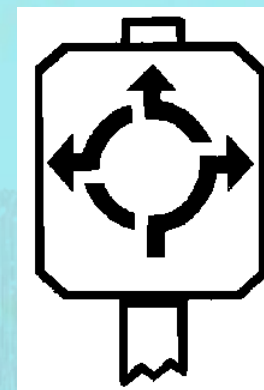
**Background  
Knowledge**



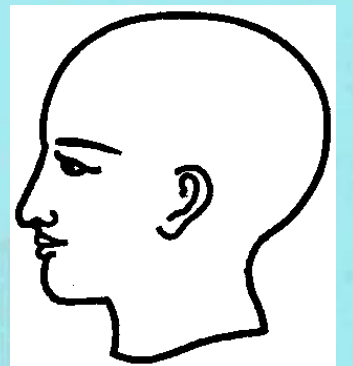
**Criteria for  
Judgment**



**Critical Thinking  
Vocabulary**



**Thinking Strategies**



**Habits of Mind**



# Some strategies for nurturing visual literacy:

1. Explaining the image
2. Interrogating the Visual
3. M.A.C.E.
4. Look for distortions
5. Decipher the artist's views

# EXPLAINING THE IMAGE



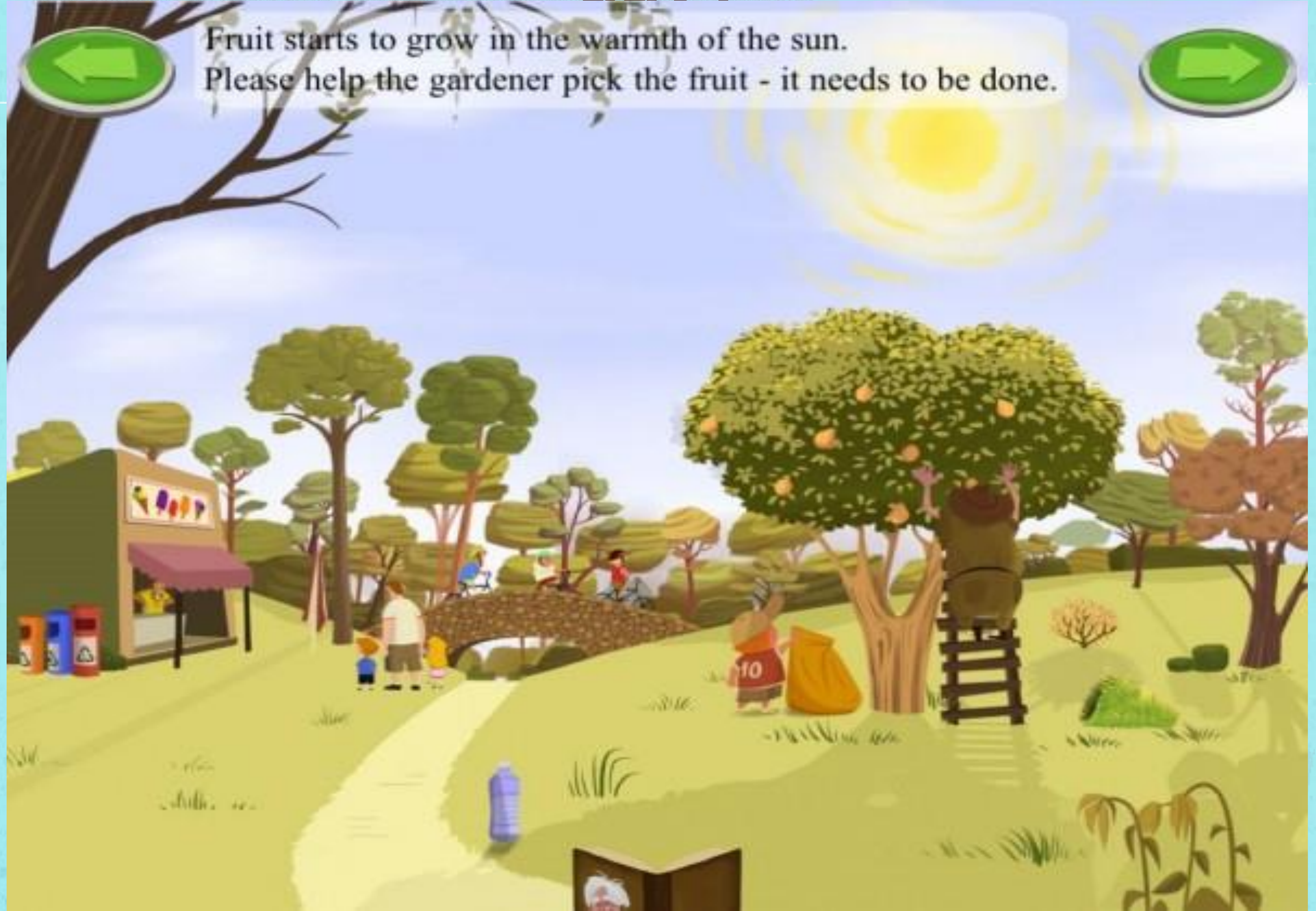
## Explaining the image

	Observations	Possible inferences
<b>WHO</b> is in the image?	Two men are dressed in casual clothing that is common among Moslems. They are posing with a large motorized weapon. They have no side arms and no secondary weapons are visible. One of the men is wearing a prayer cap.	The two men are likely members of some type of informal army or militia because an organized military unit would wear uniforms. The man standing might be the leader. They are not likely to be members of a radical Islamic group.
<b>WHAT</b> are the people doing?	They have little camouflage or protective cover. They look as if they are situated at the edge of a road that has a view of a large area. One of the men appears to be using a communications device.	They could be setting up their large weapon and ammunition along a road checkpoint or lookout spot. They seem to be monitoring the situation rather than preparing to fire their weapon.
<b>WHERE</b> does the image take place?	There are no buildings in sight. The land appears to be semi-arid plains with mountains in the background. Their location seems to be slightly higher than the surrounding ground.	They could be on a ridge along the edge of a rural road in a Middle Eastern country such as Afghanistan or Pakistan.
<b>WHEN</b> did the action in the image take place?	The clothing appears to be contemporary dress for Islamic men: fitted shirts and modern textiles. The weapons also appear to be contemporary. The fields appear to be still green and not yet burned by hot summer weather.	Late spring or early summer; within the last 20 years or so.



# What season, day of week, time of day?

Fruit starts to grow in the warmth of the sun.  
Please help the gardener pick the fruit - it needs to be done.



# INTERROGATING THE VISUAL



## Interrogating a Photograph

	Directly Observable (What I can see in the photograph)	Inferences (Conclusions I can draw)	Insights into the issue or event provided by the photograph
<b>Attending to detail:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you see in the photograph?</li><li>• What do you see in the foreground? Background?</li><li>• What are the people doing in the photograph?</li></ul>			
<b>Geographic data:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What natural objects do you see?</li><li>• What was the weather like on the day the photograph was taken?</li><li>• Where was the photograph taken?</li></ul>			
<b>Historical data:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>what</u> can you learn about the people in the photograph?</li><li>• What questions would you ask the photographer about the lives of the people in the photograph?</li></ul>			





**Attending to detail:**

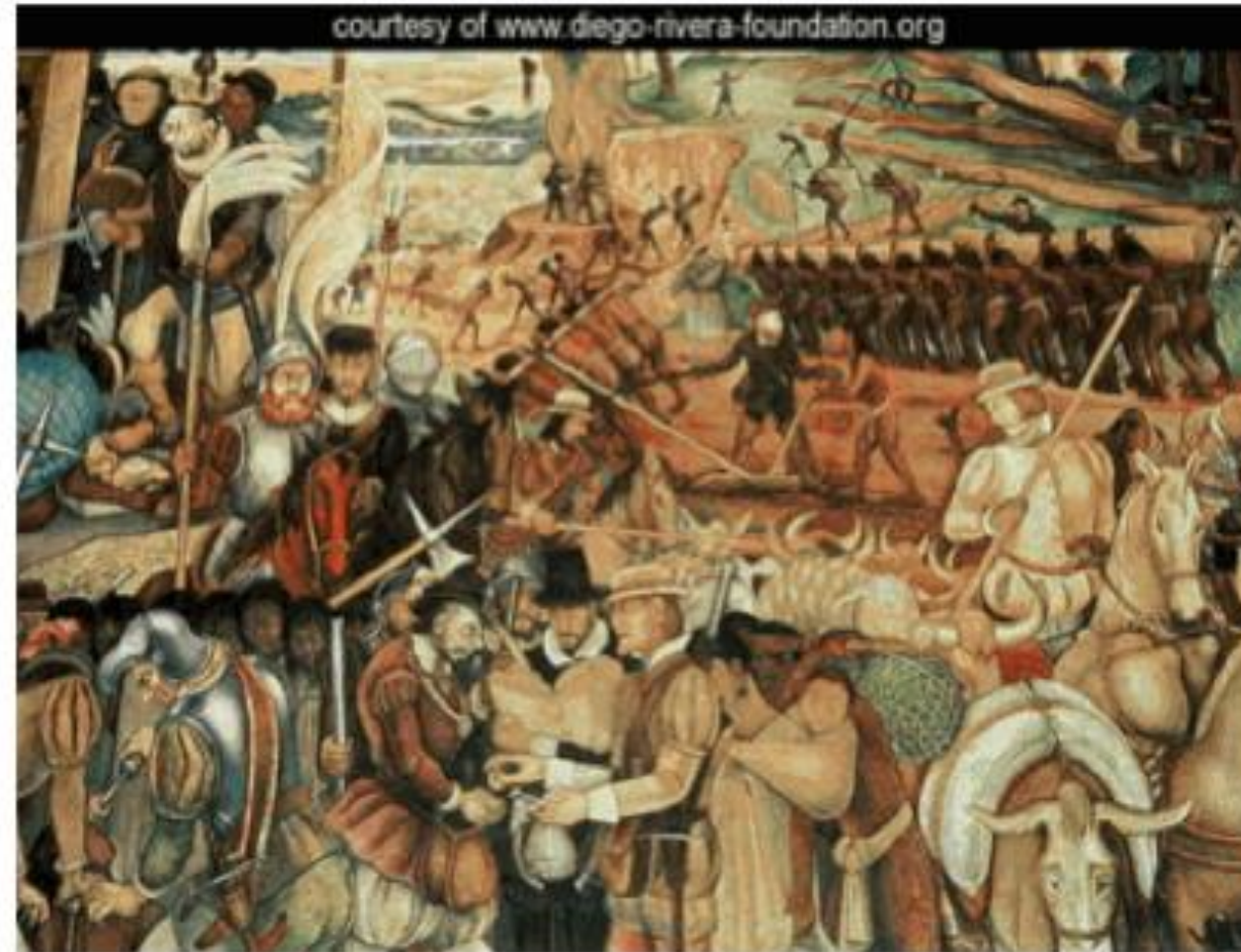
- \* describe the people you see in the painting - what are they doing?
- \* describe the setting - what objects do you see?

**Sociological data:**

- \* what position in society do the people in the painting occupy?
- \* What is the relationship between the people in the painting?

**Geographic data:**

- \* what do you see in the foreground? Background?
- \* where do you think this painting is set?



**Historical data:**

- \* what can you learn about the people in the painting?
- \* What questions would you ask the painter about the lives of the people in the painting?

**Artist's perspective and purpose:**

- \* why do you think the artist chose to portray the characters and subject matter as they did?
- \* Do you think the artist had a positive or negative feeling about the characters and subject matter?

**Aesthetic qualities:**

- \* how is light and shading used in the painting? What is the purpose of their use?
- \* What are some ways the artist has made the painting visually appealing?



[illegible]



# M.A.C.E.

## *Criteria for an Impactful Advertisement*

- ☒ *Memorable message -*
- ☒ *Appropriate to intended audience*
- ☒ *Clear message - not confusing or too subtle*
- ☒ *Emotional appeal*

*Memorable*

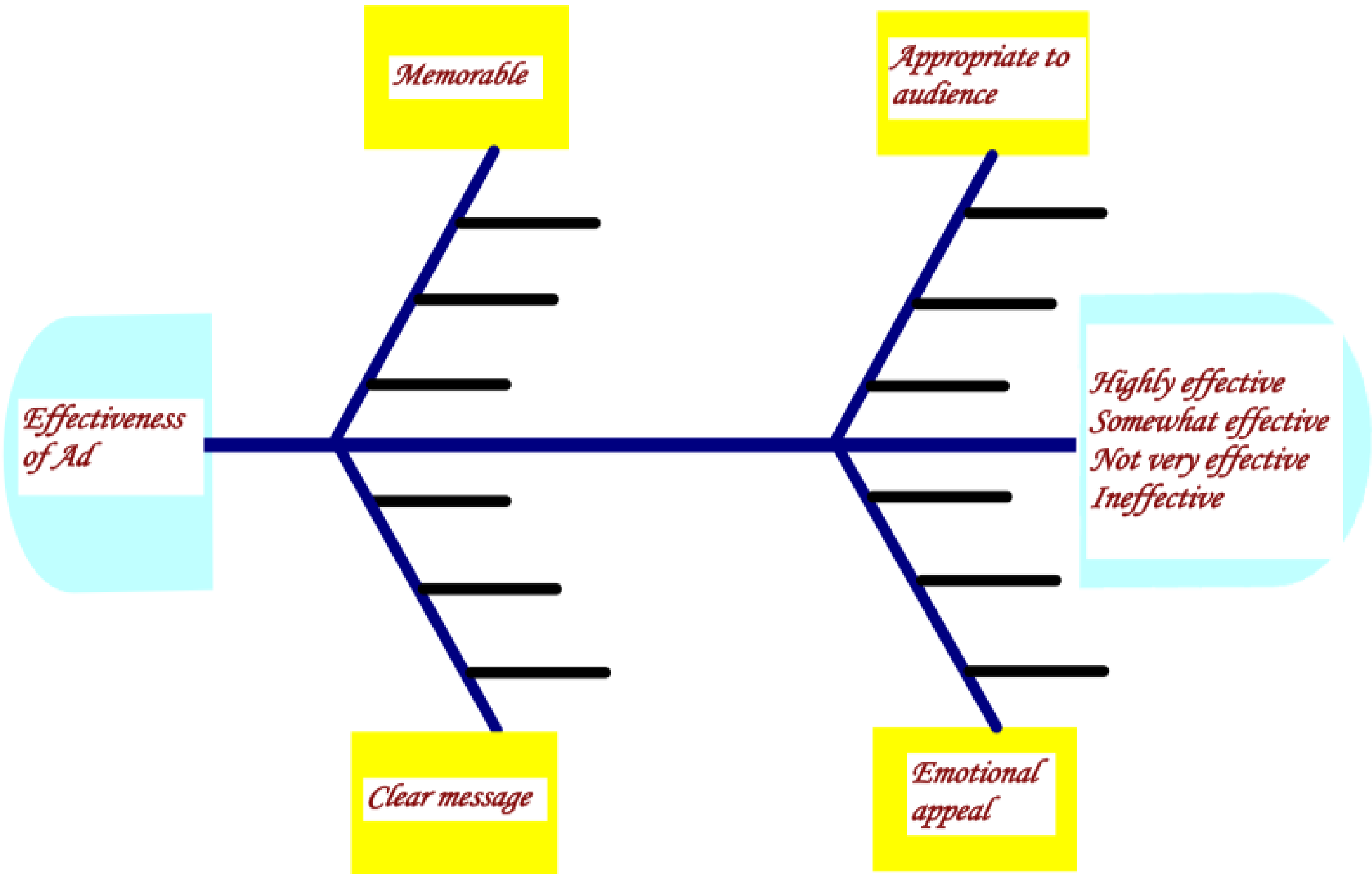
*Appropriate to  
audience*

*Effectiveness  
of Ad*

*Highly effective  
Somewhat effective  
Not very effective  
Ineffective*

*Clear message*

*Emotional  
appeal*





- *Memorable message*
- *Appropriate to intended audience*
- *Clear message - not confusing or too subtle*
- *Emotional appeal*

*M*

*A*

*C*

*E*





- *Memorable message*
- *Appropriate to intended audience*
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# Are there other criteria we might consider?



☐ fat?

☐ fit?

Does true beauty only squeeze into size 8? Join the beauty debate.

[campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk](http://campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk)  | Dove



☐ wrinkled?

☐ wonderful?

Will society ever accept 'old' can be beautiful? Join the beauty debate.

[campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk](http://campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk)  | Dove







EVERY DAY COUNTS FOR TOTAL FAIRNESS

NEW! Total Fairness Cream



01	02	03	04	05	06	7	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	31
M	T	W	T	F	S		M	T	W	T	F	S		M	T	W	T	F	S		M	T	W	T	F	S		W

**multivitamin**

Everyday Counts for Total Fairness!

Fair & Lovely multivitamin™ gives total fairness in four weeks that rivals the best professional beauty treatments, but without bleach or harmful chemicals that can damage the skin. With the new advanced multivitamin™ FAIRNESS x NOURISHMENT™ formula, the cream is uniquely tailored to skin needs and the environment.



# LOOK FOR DISTORTIONS



## Exposing potential distortions

Forms of distortion	Anticipate the distortions
Misleading or exaggerated impressions	<p>The image is closely cropped. Does it leave out relevant information about the scene?</p> <p>It seems that these nets are off the front of a raft. Perhaps this is not the case?</p> <p>It looks like it might be dangerous. Is it likely that the equipment could tip over or people fall off?</p> <p>The net is large and the beams are heavy so it would seem to be for catching lots of fish. Is this true?</p> <p>It looks as though only three men are working. Are more men needed to operate this equipment?</p> <p>The men seem to pull in the net by hand. Is this the way it works?</p> <p>The caption refers to Chinese nets. Are they actually used in China?</p>
Untypical or non-representative glimpses	<p>Is this a common way of fishing? Or is it the only one of its kind or perhaps it may be used in one region only?</p> <p>Is this the usual size of the equipment or are they generally much bigger or smaller?</p>

# Visual Literacy – A continuous journey

According to development theory and research, children must master visual skills before they can even begin to develop verbal skills. A child looks at the world and is forced to identify objects and make sense of what he or she sees.

Being able to identify and understand these kinds of symbols directly relates to later development of the ability to understand and interpret verbal symbols and cues.

Teaching visual literacy helps kids better interpret art and visual media that they come in contact with.



# Visual Literacy – A continuous journey

Visual literacy allows a deeper interaction with texts of all kinds and introduces the process of critical thinking about representation and meaning. There is evidence that, even for older children, examining and understanding how art and text interact may allow readers to "visualize" while they read - a key to proficiency in and enjoyment of reading. By teaching "educated perception" of artwork (for instance, how certain techniques elicit specific emotions or effects) you can teach children how to be more skeptical and informed viewers of all visual media, including advertising.