

3 Worksheet on Visual Literacy: Describing Pictures

Pictures: “From Riot to Racial Harmony” (p. 23)/ “Going for Goal” (p. 34), from: Michael Mitchell, *Ethnic Diversity in the UK*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2010).

In the oral or written part of the Abitur, you might have to describe pictures. The tips and the exercise on this worksheet will help you get prepared.

(For details on how to describe people, go to the worksheet on “Visual Literacy” for the Viewfinder Topics New York!)

A HOW TO DESCRIBE PICTURES

1 HELPFUL VOCABULARY

These words help you to talk about pictures; some of them are synonyms so that you don’t have to use the same words over and over again when describing what you see.

kinds of pictures:	picture, image, painting, photograph / photo, portrait, landscape painting, illustration
creators:	photographer, painter, artist, visual artist
perspective:	bird's eye view
positioning:	foreground, background in the upper/ lower part; at the top / bottom; in the centre in front of, behind, next to, by on the right(-hand side), on the left(-hand side), in the middle
colours:	light, dark, loud, warm, cool, faded

2 ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS WHEN DESCRIBING A PICTURE

- Where was the picture taken? (It was taken in...)
- When was the picture taken? (It was taken in the year... / on ...)
- What does the picture show/ describe/ mock/ depict/ focus on/ express/ criticise?
- What's the message of the picture?

And when you can't tell?

- I can't tell who/ where/ what/ when...
- I can't see ... but I think it must be...
- I am not sure whether ..., I think, however, that...

B TASKS

1. GOING FOR GOAL

Read the excerpt from the film script of *Bend It Like Beckham* (pp. 34f.), then describe the picture on p. 34. Say why you think that this still was chosen to accompany the text.

2. RACIAL HARMONY

The picture on p. 23 doesn't only show "green spaces between the concrete blocks" (see caption), there's much more to it. Describe the picture and say if the book's editor did a good job in choosing it or not.

(Daniela Pröls)