

Picture This

Photographs have a unique ability to stimulate the imagination, memory and emotions. They can be powerful catalysts for storytelling, writing and reflection about our values and priorities—and changes that we want to bring into our lives.

Since it first appeared in 2007, *Picture This* has found its way into schools, workshops, organisations, communities, prisons and counselling situations. This highly interpretive, versatile tool can open up conversations, storytelling and creative writing about feelings, goals, and points of view. It's also ideal for those who prefer to interact, reflect or learn using visual or tactile approaches.

Building conversational pathways

Picture This, like other card sets published by Innovative Resources, uses visual imagery to create 'conversational prompts'. Such prompts can help steer conversations in the directions suggested by our purpose, passion, curiosity and creativity.

Here are some reflective questions that counsellors and therapists may like to explore with clients using *Picture This*. Always remember that some questions are best asked once a solid, trusting relationship has been established.

- Can you choose a photo that says something about you as a person?
- Which photos would your family, friends or loved ones say typified you or reflected your personality?
- Is there a photo that challenges you or makes you feel uncomfortable?
- If you were in one of the photos, who do you imagine would be behind the camera?
- Are there two photos that describe contrasting parts of yourself—for example, your private self and your public self?
- Are there photos that allude to significant times of change and transition in your life?
- Is there a series of photos that sums up your life journey?
- Is there a photo that you would like your loved ones to associate with their memories of you?



The experience of the photographer

A whole set of questions can be built around imagining the experience of the photographer. These are questions that teachers may find useful for building the interpretative and reflective capacities of students studying English, art and design, photography, or society and culture.

- What is your picture of the photographer—male or female? Young or old? Patient or impetuous? Detached from or emotionally engaged with the subject?
- Why do you think the photographer took this particular photo?
- What do you think the photographer is trying to communicate, if anything?
- What else can you imagine that the photographer saw just outside the frame?

Questions for creative writing

Great wordsmiths create pictures with words. Sometimes pictures can create great wordsmiths. There are many ways in which cards can be chosen as starters for writing. Pick one that resonates for you. Or turn them face down and try picking three at random!

- What is the story behind this card(s)?
- What has just happened?
- What is about to happen?
- Who are the main characters in this story?
- Are they pictured in the photograph or are they out of view?
- Is it full of humour? pathos? tragedy?
- What are the main themes in this story?
- Can you write an imaginary dialogue to go with this scene?
- What music would accompany this scene if it were part of a movie?

Group introductions

For a simple icebreaker, spread the *Picture This* cards on the floor or table. Ask each member of the group to choose a card and introduce themselves by sharing a memory or telling a story inspired by the picture.

PICTURE THIS

75 laminated, full-colour cards, 185 x 140mm,
full-colour polypropylene box, 48-page booklet
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