VISUALIZING
Thank You, Mr. Falker
By Patricia Polacco

SUMMARY
Thank You, Mr. Falker is a story of Trisha, a little girl who could hardly wait for school to start. Trisha could paint and draw beautiful pictures but when she looked at the words and letters on a page, all she could see was a jumbled mess. Because Trisha could not read, she quickly fell behind in school. Her classmates began to bully her and call her dumb. Before long, Trisha began to believe the mean things her classmates said. Then her family moved to California where she met Mr. Falker. Mr. Falker was Trisha’s fifth grade teacher. He was different from every teacher Trisha had before. He wore striped coats and butterfly ties and he thought that Trisha was brilliant. Mr. Falker realized that Trisha was a smart and talented girl with a very unique problem. Mr. Falker did not call Trisha dumb. Instead her solved her problem and taught her to read.

LINK TO WHAT YOU KNOW
• Think of a time when you felt dumb. Why did you feel dumb?
• Think of a time when you tried to do something but found it difficult. How did you feel?
• What does the word “bully” mean?

Read Thank You, Mr. Falker once from beginning to end.

WHY DO READERS VISUALIZE?

When readers visualize, they use the words to make a movie in their mind. Readers pay attention to all of the describing words that an author uses to make the story come to life. When you read a picture book, the illustrator uses the author’s words to make a picture that matches what’s happening in the story. You can use the pictures to help you check to make sure that your thinking is on the right track. Now it’s your turn to try visualizing.

Important Words to Know and Understand

Miracle
An unusual or wonderful event that is believed to be caused by the power of God

Fireflies
A small flying insect that produces a soft light
Tips for Visualizing

Pay attention to the words that the author uses to describe the way characters in the book move and behave. When you are able to visualize how the characters look and act, you will be able to infer what they’re thinking or feeling. This will help you understand more.

READ

Read the book again and stop on the following pages to practice visualizing.

Page 2: Notice the way the author describes Trisha and her grandfather when he passes on the book so Trisha can learn to read. Which words help you visualize? Point to the words.

Page 10: Notice all of the details on this page. Try to visualize the night sky and the meadow where Trisha lays with her grandmother. What do you see? Which words on the page help you visualize? Point to the words.

Page 20: Notice the description of Mr. Falker. Try to visualize Mr. Falker and Trisha’s experiences in his class. Which words help you visualize? Point to the words.

Page 28: Notice the words the author uses to describe the exercises Trisha does with Mr. Falker after school. Do the pictures in your mind match the ones in the book? How are they the same? How are they different?

THINK

Think about the kinds of words that helped you make a movie in your mind. Were they color words? Were they words that described the way people moved or did things? Did the movie in your mind match some of the pictures in the book?

TALK

Talk to the person who read this book with you. Explain what visualizing is and how readers use visualizing to understand what they read. Talk about the types of words that helped you visualize.

REFLECT

Readers always reflect on what they read. Think about the following:

- What happened in the book?
- What lessons did you learn from the book?
- What kind of thinking did you use to understand the book?
- How did you use visualizing to understand and enjoy Thank You, Mr. Falker?

WRITE

Turn to the Visualizing section of your notebook and write about the work you did while reading Thank You, Mr. Falker.
VISUALIZING

Draw a picture of what you saw in your mind while you were reading on page ________.

Write down some of the words that the author used to help you make this picture in your mind.

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Show your picture to someone. Make sure that you drew all of words that helped you visualize.