

Mind movies

Mind movies are a way to access students' prior knowledge. The teacher prepares a script to provide a vivid description of a situation which is presented to the students while they close their eyes and listen. Then the teacher asks them to imagine what continues to happen – a mind movie – in silence.

This activity very much starts 'where students are at'. It can be a pretty high risk strategy for some groups because students must be persuaded to take it seriously, so you need to know the class and be able to anticipate any problems. But it is quick and if it does not work, you can cut your losses and move on! The activity emphasises the importance of visual memory in geography and it has possibilities as a revision technique.

Some hints on managing mind movies

- Setting the scene is important.
- The text is very important. So too is the way in which you present this to the students to create a dramatic atmosphere.
- You need to get the students calm – you may turn down lights or close blinds to reduce distraction. Make the most of the silence – give them time for their imagination to whirr.
- The subsequent discussion is very important. You might want to start by getting students to work in pairs to tell each other what they "saw" and compare the two accounts.
- This should lead on to whole class discussion, or a writing activity.

Reference

- Leat, D. (1998) *Thinking through geography*. London: Chris Kington Publishing

Case studies to illustrate some mind movies

- Leat's examples are: Kobe earthquake, down and out in Sunderland

Trainee teacher activity

Look at the suggested script on the *Food aid* page of the online CPD course [Food security](#). Does this have potential as a mind movie?