



Colour, Symbol, Image (CSI) is a Category 2 Thinking Routine for synthesising and organising ideas. The routine enables children to show understanding in a nonverbal way. They do this by using a colour, symbol and image to represent the big ideas they have identified. In making these choices, children develop their understanding by connecting their ideas to something they already know.


CSI: Colour Symbol Image



Choose a colour that you think best represents the essence of that idea.



Create a symbol that you think best represents the essence of that idea.



Sketch an image that you think best represents the essence of that idea.

purpose This routine asks learners to identify and distill the essence of ideas - taken from their reading, viewing or listening - in nonverbal ways by using a colour, symbol and image to represent the big ideas.

Synthesising & Organising Ideas

CSI is one of my favourite thinking routines and I have used it to deepen thinking in a variety of lessons across the curriculum including Health and Wellbeing, Art and RME. Most commonly though, I use it in literacy to analyse characters during novel studies. CSI encourages children to think more deeply about a character by selecting the Colour, Symbol and Image that best represents the character. Pairing CSI with the thinking routine What Makes You Say That? (WMYST?) helps children to back up their reasoning with evidence.

The examples below are from CSI activities completed with my P4 class during their literacy programme. They focus on characters from the books 'The Sheep Pig' and 'The Magic Carpet Slippers' by Dick King-Smith.