

# 01 Defining the Graphic Novel Copied from: The Graphic Novel, Copied on: 11/15/23

Content Area: **ELA**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Semester**  
Length: **2 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## **General Overview, Course Description or Course Philosophy**

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This course will examine the literary elements that make up a graphic novel, i.e., word choice, illustrations, layout, author's craft and choice. Students will hone in on their reading skills to explore the various meanings of text and enhance their overall literacy skills of multimodal texts. The multidimensional aspects of graphic novels require readers to practice multiple ways of meaning making. Students will analyze what is both directly and indirectly stated or portrayed in the text. The goal will be that students come in contact with various genres of graphic novels, i.e., fiction, non-fiction, remakes, manga and personal narratives and refine their analytical skills.

## **OBJECTIVES, ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS, ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**

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This unit will serve to build investment in visual storytelling and establish the value of graphic stories. This opening unit will also help students uncover the elements of comics and allow them to discover the tools and devices specific to the medium. Finally, students will learn about and engage in slow looking, committing closure, and resisting closure in order to begin to grasp how words and pictures join forces to tell compelling stories and communicate complexity.

## **CONTENT AREA STANDARDS**

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RL.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details and provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9-10.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

SL.9-10.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.\

C. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

W.9-10.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

D. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

LA.W.9-10.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
LA.RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details and provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RL.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
LA.SL.9-10.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

## **RELATED STANDARDS (Technology, 21st Century Life & Careers, ELA Companion Standards are Required)**

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CS.9-10.2.4	Collaborating Around Computing
TECH.9.4.12.CI.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).
TECH.9.4.12.CI.3	Investigate new challenges and opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and transition (e.g., 2.1.12.PGD.1).
TECH.9.4.12.CT.1	Identify problem-solving strategies used in the development of an innovative product or practice (e.g., 1.1.12acc.C1b, 2.2.12.PF.3).
TECH.9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).
TECH.9.4.12.TL.1	Assess digital tools based on features such as accessibility options, capacities, and utility for accomplishing a specified task (e.g., W.11-12.6.).

## **STUDENT LEARNING TARGETS**

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Refer to the 'Declarative Knowledge' and 'Procedural Knowledge' sections.

### **Declarative Knowledge**

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Students will understand:

- what makes a text worthy of study.
- what distinguishes "high" from "low" art.
- the role active and curious readers play in disrupting seemingly fixed categories.
- that words and images work together to express ideas.
- how authors and illustrators shape meaning.
- the proper terminology, tools, and devices used in the medium of graphic novels.
- the difference between closure and resisting closure and the benefits of each.

### **Procedural Knowledge**

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Students will be able to:

- cite strong text evidence to make relevant connections and support their analysis.
- determine the theme and central ideas of panels and excerpts after practicing slow-looking in preparation for each upcoming unit.
- determine the meaning and use of graphic novel words, phrases, and images in order to analyze the impact of the various combinations.
- practice using precise words and images in order to convey vivid experiences, pictures, and messages.
- propel conversation by posing and responding to a variety of questions during class discussion.
- read panels in an intentional order.
- decode symbols.
- interpret visual metaphors.
- evaluate what is not shown as much as what is shown.
- analyze the tension between what the words say and what the pictures show.
- evaluate how text and pictures work interdependently to communicate more than what either could do alone.
- identify and analyze the use of graphic novel tools and devices.
- communicate the use of such devices with proper industry terminology.
- create and explore with their own use of graphic novel devices and tools.
- examine structure and subtext.
- perform slow looking activities, shift perspectives, and look again.
- practice the acts of committing closure and resisting closure and assess the value of each.
- examine structure and subtext.

## **EVIDENCE OF LEARNING**

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Refer to the 'Formative Assessments' and 'Summative Assessments' sections.

### **Alternate Assessments**

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- Image Creation
- Illustrating a Script
- Teacher/Student Conferences
- Group Presentations
- Top-Down Webs

### **Formative Assessments**

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**Inherent Impulses:** Build off of student prior knowledge of visual media by inviting them to analyze what is around them (advertisements, logos on shirts, artistic designs of apps, etc.)

**Teaser Text:** Using a compelling one page excerpt have students independently consider what is happening and how do you know? Scan the complete page like a Where's Waldo text? Next, discuss as a class using the "Yes, and..." tenet. Consider color, location of item, facial expression, sizes, shapes...). Finally, the students will write and reflect on how their first impressions developed upon a closer look and group discussion.

**KWL Chart**

**Terminology Practice:** Have students identify and come up with their own names for devices while looking at a series of panels before providing a list so as to promote thoughtfulness, analysis, and creativity, thereby avoiding finding items on a checklist. This provides autonomy and avoids a simple "hunt and find" activity. Next, provide the list and proper industry terminology.

**Own Text:** Students write their own text on top of a comic or graphic novel page with all captions and speech removed. Peers may draw similar conclusions or interpret the narrative in imaginatively different ways. There is value in both experiences.

**Isolate the Elements:** Isolate three panels for devices and techniques such as size of panel, speech bubbles,

facial expressions and discuss what each offers to the story.

Isolate and Create: Create an image example using one element and point out additional examples of this device in other texts and media. Consider the restriction of certain mediums (can't bleed in an Instagram post).

Drawing from a Script: To help students notice and recognize what is involved in the architecture of a seemingly simple task, have the students draw a panel or panels based on a script alone. Compare and contrast. What is left out? How can this be improved? Discuss the importance of the devices used and the choices made as well as the impact on the audience. (Inverse: Script from Drawing)

Pairing slow looking with close reading using the ten by two strategy.

Multiple Interpretation Activities: Just the word/Just the picture, Collaborative Comics, Telestrations, Five Card Nancy, Co-constructed Closure, Group Annotation, Alternative Scene and Endings.

Talking Heads: Students describe a panel in which only a shoulders up close up is presented. Students must then draw on memory, experience, knowledge of surrounding context and experience to complete the picture of who this person is, where they are, what they're up to, what motivates them, and how they feel. Students can even draw beyond the frame. This will reinforce the value of multiple interpretations and resisting closure.

Slow Looking Exercises: Look and List, Suggested categories to guide the eye and then remove them, Zoom In, Shift Perspective, Describe, Use the Senses.

Close Reading Journaling

## **Summative Assessments**

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Many of the assignments and activities listed in the Formative Assessments section can be used as a Summative Assessment. To do so, provide additional time and scaffolding.

Please note that this unit is an introductory one intended to highlight the world of graphic novels and provide a foundation for the medium, which will most likely be foreign to many within an academic context. For this reason, flexible Summatives are encouraged while the students get their footing.

## **RESOURCES (Instructional, Supplemental, Intervention Materials)**

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Hacking Graphic Novels by Shveta Miller (Chapters 1-3)

The Graphic Novel Classroom by Maureen Bakis (Chapter One)

Teaser Texts

Caption-less Comic strips and graphic novel pages.

Graphic Novel Terminology List

Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud (Class Set)

The Best American Comics Anthologies edited by Bill Kartalopoulos

The Dark Matter of Mona Starr by Laura Lee Gulledge

I am Alfonso Jones by Tony Medina

The Faithful Spy by John Hendrix

Illegal by Colfer and Donkin

\*Strip Panel Youtube (I have to check)

\*Scott McCloud Ted Talk (I have to check)

\*"My Number" (I have to check)

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS**

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Audio/visual media analysis

Google

Educational tech applications

Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Visual Language

## **ACCOMMODATIONS & MODIFICATIONS FOR SUBGROUPS**

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See link to Accommodations & Modifications document in course folder.