

Comics and Graphic Novels Lesson Plan

Section I: Introduction for Comics Lesson Plan

- **Setting:** School Library
- **Instructional Space:** Grade School Library Classroom
- **Audience:** 5th grade classes, all ability levels
- **Time:** 3- twenty minute sessions
- **General Topic:** Comics and Graphic Novels
 - The purpose of these lessons is to increase student's knowledge and literacy skills concerning comics and graphic novels. Over the sixty total minutes each student will demonstrate their understanding of the history of comics, the process of reading a comic, and develop their own comic strip. Students will be able to work on the project during library time, in the classroom, and at home.

Section II: Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to outline the history of comic books and graphic novels in order to gain an understanding of why this form of literature developed.
- Students will be able to summarize the storyline of a paneled comic book in order to demonstrate comprehension of the process of following text and pictures in comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels.
- Students will be able to breakdown the components and analyze how comics are composed for literature in order to develop their own comic strip.

Section III: Assessment Plan

- **Outcome Assessed:**
 - Students will be able to breakdown the components and analyze how comics are composed for literature in order to develop their own comic strip.
- **Assessment Plan:**
 - Students will use the provided five paneled paper to create a comic strip or comic book based on a recent life event of the student's choice.
 - Assessment will be done using the comic strip/book created by the student during the last session, classroom time, and at home.
 - A rubric will be used to determine the level of student understanding.

Section IV: Session Outlines

Session 1

- **Before Session:** (5 minutes)
 - Turn on Smart Board and laptop
 - Bring up “History of Comics” Powerpoint presentation
- **Introduction to Lesson:** (2 minutes)
 - Ask if students have ever heard of a comic strip or comic book
 - Ask if students know what the first comic book was and when it was created
 - Ask if students know any comic book characters
- **Start “History of Comics” Interactive Powerpoint presentation** (15 minutes)
 - Highlights students will discover during interactive slideshow:
 - *The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck* first comic prototype in 1842
 - *Superman* created by Siegel and Schuster in 1938 considered first true comic book- starting the Golden Age of Comic Books
 - The argument over the quality of comics as reading material
 - *Marvel* and *DC Comics* were the two big names in comic books and remain so today
 - Creation of Graphic Novels with *The Silver Surfer* by Stan Lee in 1978
 - Stan Lee- one of the best known comic book creators
 - Questions to ask during presentation:
 - Why do you think comics were created?
 - Why do you think parents and teachers felt that comic books were inappropriate for young people to read?
- **Wrap Up:** (3 minutes)
 - Review with Smart Board Timeline Activity: students help to put the main timeline events in order
 - Additional questions?

Session 2

- **Before Session:** (5 minutes)
 - Turn on Smart Board and laptop
 - Bring up “How to Read a Comic” Powerpoint presentation
- **Introduction to Lesson:** (2 minutes)
 - Remind students of last sessions “History of Comics”
 - Ask if students have ever read a comic book
 - Ask if students found it a challenge to read the comic book
 - What did they find challenging about it?
- **Start “How to Read a Comic” Interactive Powerpoint presentation:** (12 minutes)
 - Highlights students will discover during interactive slideshow:
 - Terminology: panels, gutters, word balloon, splash page, inking, lettering, bleed, crosshatch, speed lines, silhouette
 - How to read the panels left to right
 - How to read the pictures as well as the words
 - How to read the word balloons and word balloon types
 - Common symbols and emoticons
 - Questions to ask during presentation:
 - Why does it matter that we read comic panels correctly?
 - How can readers understand the emotions being felt by the characters?
 - How does the use of symbols and emoticons aid the reader?
- **Play “What is happening?”:** (4 minutes)
 - Show slides with single paneled comics and have kids determine what is happening and what the characters are feeling
 - Show a page of a paneled comic book and have students demonstrate how to read it and what is happening at this point in the storyline
- **Wrap Up:** (2 minutes)
 - Additional Questions?

Session 3

- **Before Session:** (10 minutes)
 - Make copies of comic template, rubric, and handout (one per student)
 - Sharpen pencils (one per student)
 - Turn on Smart Board and laptop
 - Bring up “Creating a Comic” Powerpoint presentation
- **Introduction to Lesson:** (2 minutes)
 - Remind students of last sessions “How to Read a Comic”
 - Have students list a good story they have read or heard lately
 - What made that story stand out?
 - Ask students to turn to a person by them and have them display emotions such as happiness, sadness, and anger
- **Start “Creating a Comic” Interactive Powerpoint presentation:** (8 minutes)
 - Highlights students will discover during interactive slideshow:
 - Having a story, plot, conflict, etc
 - Point of view
 - Developing your characters
 - Using color and facial expressions to convey feelings
 - Developing dialogue and narration
 - Questions to ask during presentation:
 - Why is having a plot important?
 - Do we always use words to let others know how we feel? Can you tell when someone is angry? How about feeling sick? Feeling happy?
- **Start Final Project:** (8 minutes)
 - Give verbal directions of Comic Creation Project
 - Have students think of a story from their life experiences to use as plot of comic book or strip
 - Pass out rubric and handout- highlight the important components of the project and expectations found on rubric
 - Pass out paneled paper and show how students may turn it in different directions in order to change panel layout
 - Give additional paneled paper to classroom teacher for student use
 - Inform students they will be given time in the classroom and at home to complete project over the next week
- **Wrap Up:** (2 minutes)
 - Additional Questions?

Section V: Discussion

A. Information Literacy:

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner

The following are the standards that apply to the Comics Lesson Plan for 5th grade.

| Category | Standards Met | Project Example |
|---|--|--|
| 1: Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge | 1.1.2 Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning. | Using a story from their life as the basis for their comic book or comic strip. Many of the questions asked during presentations require students to form an opinion from prior knowledge and information taught. |
| | 1.1.6 Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning. | Lessons are presented verbally and visually in Powerpoint/Smartboard interactive slides. |
| | 1.2.3 Demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats. | Creating a comic book/strip shows creativity in a new format. |
| | 1.4.1 Monitor own information-seeking processes for effectiveness and progress, and adapt as necessary. | Most of the final project will require student to monitor their progress on their own at home. |
| 2: Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge | 2.1.2 Organize knowledge so that it is useful. | Student will need to organize their personal story and project components in order to create a useful storyline. |
| | 2.1.6 Use the writing process, media and visual literacy, and technology skills to create products that express new understandings. | Student will write and create a comic book/strip (product) to express their understanding of this new genre. |
| | 2.2.4 Demonstrate personal productivity by completing products to express learning. | Student will complete a comic book/strip to express learning the components of this medium. |
| 3: Share | 3.1.3 Use writing and speaking skills | Student will use writing skills to create |

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| knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society | to communicate new understandings effectively | the comic book/strip. |
| 4: Pursue personal and aesthetic growth | 4.1.3 Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres | Student will learn and develop new ideas about the medium of comics and graphic novels. |
| | 4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience. | Student will connect their new knowledge to previous experiences in their life. |
| | 4.1.8 Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning. | Student will create an artistic comic book/strip to show learning of this type of literature. |
| | 4.3.2 Recognize that resources are created for a variety of purposes. | Student will learn about why comic books and graphic novels were created and that they have multiple uses. |

B. Critical Thinking

The three lessons incorporate critical thinking in the following way:

- Students will have to break down all the components of what they have learned about comics in order to analyze how comics are composed. This will require critical thinking by having the students take all the pieces of a comic they have studied in the three sessions and put them together into their own creative work.
- Students will use critical thinking while composing their storyline. They will have to decide on an appropriate plot in order to organize their personal experience into a cohesive story.
- Students will use critical thinking in order to connect their new knowledge about comics to previous experiences in their life. EX: “I can tell how artists use body language and facial expressions to convey emotions the same way that I can tell what my friends are feeling.”
- Students will have to monitor their progress while working on their own. This allows them to use critical thinking about their personal, school, and home schedule in order to complete the final project on time.
- Several of the questions asked during the presentations will require students to think critically about comics as a source of literature. EX: “Why do you think comics were created?” and “Why do you think parents and teachers felt that comic books were inappropriate for young people to read?” ask the students to think “outside the box” to form their own opinion based on information taught.

C. Instructional Design

The three lessons incorporate the best practices of instructional design in the following ways:

Active Learning

- Active participation in interactive slideshow and discussion questions in all three sessions.
- Having students help to put timeline events in order in the first session.
- Playing the “What is Happening” game during the second session.
- Displaying emotions to their partner in the third session.
- Creating an original comic book or comic strip as a final project.

Scaffolding

- The history of comics and literacy skills taught in all three lessons build on each other in a logical and easily understood manner.
 - Students learn the history of comics, then how to read comics, and finally how to create a comic.

Chunk Content

- The information taught is “chunked” into three lessons in order to allow students to more easily process the material.
 - Each lesson contains information on a specific portion of the comics medium (history, how to read, and creation).

D. Differentiated Instruction

The three lessons incorporate differentiated instruction in the following ways:

- Comic book and graphic novel examples used and others that are on the shelf, will vary in reading level and interests to allow for students of all abilities.
- Assessment for the comic book or strip created by the student will be flexible to allow for student’s ability level. (EX: a student with a physical disability will not be expected to color as neatly as those without).
- Students that have an IEP in writing/reading will be given the opportunity to work with their specialist, be paired with another student, and/or given additional time.
- Handout can be used as a checklist for students that have difficulty with assignment completion or staying on task.
- Students will be able to create books of varying lengths allowing students of all levels to complete comics that fit their needs and abilities.
- Using interactive slides with the lecture will help varying learning styles (audio, visual, kinesthetic).

Rubric for Comic Strip/Book Creation Project- 5th grade

| RUBRIC | 4 Points (A) | 3 Points (B) | 2 Points (C) | 1 Point (D) | 0 Points (F) |
|---------------------|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Story Choice | Story is engaging and is an event from the student's life experience . The storyline follows a clear path and is complete. | Story is engaging most of the time and is an event from the student's life experience. The storyline follows a clear path most of the time. | Story is engaging some of the time and is an event from the student's life experience. The storyline follows a clear path some of the time. | Story is not engaging and is not an event from the student's life experience. The storyline does not follow a clear path. | No project turned in for grading. |
| Captions | Captions are related to the scenes and the storyline, and the dialogue is easy to understand . | Captions are related to the scenes and the storyline most of the time, and the dialogue is easy to understand most of the time. | Captions are related to the scenes and the storyline some of the time, and the dialogue is easy to understand some of the time. | Captions are not related to the scenes and the storyline, and the dialogue is not easy to understand. | No project turned in for grading. |
| Characters | The main characters are clearly identified, their dialogue matches their actions, and they have a purpose in the story. | The main characters are identified, their dialogue matches their actions most of the time, and they have a purpose in the story. | There are main characters but they are not clearly identified, their dialogue matches their actions some of the time, and they have little purpose in the story. | The main characters are not clearly identified, their dialogue matches their actions, and they have a purpose in the story. | No project turned in for grading. |

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|---|--|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Images | The pictures are full of color and follow the storyline. | The pictures are mostly colorful and follow the storyline. | The pictures are not colorful and somewhat follow the storyline. | There are no pictures. | No project turned in for grading. |
| Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar | There are no spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors. | There are 1-3 spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors | There are 4-5 spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. | There are more than 5 spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. | No project turned in for grading. |

Example of template used for comic strip/book creation project- 5th grade. There are several different template variations for the students to choose from, plus template varies depending on how it is turned. Please note student templates fill entire page.

