

Lianna Salva

Unit: Persepolis

Grades: 9 and 10

Lesson: How to read graphic novels

***NOTE:** Many of the concepts and activities of this lesson can be used to teach other comics and graphic novels, like *Maus*, *Fahrenheit 451* or *American Born Chinese*. Be sure to check with the media specialist/librarian for more resources.

Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9-10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Inquiry Questions:

1. What is the difference between a comic and a graphic novel?
2. What are the advantages of telling a story in graphic novel form? What are the disadvantages?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify and define terms and concepts used in graphic novels.
2. Understand the advantages of visual storytelling and apply them to *Persepolis*.

Accommodation:

Many readers may be reluctant to start reading a graphic novel, however studies have shown that graphic novels and comics in the classroom give struggling readers a different approach to learning about characterization and plot development. Reading comics and graphic novels also help students with their writing ability, both in planning and constructing. ELA students benefit from a visual aspect of the book. Some of the sections will be paired with watching clips from the 2007 film version in English with French or English subtitles.

Materials and Resources:

Before teaching this lesson, listen to the [NCTE Introduction to Graphic Novels podcast](#). Also be sure to visit readwritethink.org, NCTE and the many news stories pertaining to comics and graphic novels in the classroom.

Persepolis Parts 1 and 2, Graphic Novel Terms and Concepts sheet, projector or smart board, sample comic strips (online image), computer

Procedure:

1. Show students one to three samples of a comic strip on a projector or smart board. Good examples are Peanuts or Archie. Make sure the samples have variety in form and content. Ask students their initial thoughts on the comic (can be discussed in class or as a writing warm up).
2. Give each student a copy of the Graphic Novel Terms and Concepts sheet. With the examples on the projection screen or smart board, go through each term and concept showing how they relate to the comic strip.
3. Discuss the differences between comics and graphic novels:
 - a. Comics – Can be read as strips or books; treated like short stories or TV episodes
 - b. Graphic novel – A whole and complete story; treated like novels or films
4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of telling a story in graphic novel form. Skimming through *Persepolis*, what challenges do students foresee? Answer any questions that may arise.
5. Begin reading *Persepolis Part 1: The Story of a Childhood* section one as a class.