GRAPHIC CONTENT!

“WHAT’S A GRAPHIC NOVEL, AND WHAT’S IT DOING IN MY CLASSROOM?”

BY MATTHEW HOLM
WHAT ARE “GRAPHIC NOVELS,” EXACTLY?
AN INCREDIBLY BRIEF HISTORY OF COMICS

OLDEN DAYS

NOW

[Comic characters illustrations]
ETCHINGS & ENGRAVINGS
JOIN, or DIE.
DER INSPECTOR CHUMPED!

In case of fire, you must jump right into the life net. ACH, no Fritz. Dot der way to jump! Wait, I will show you.

Bah, is it der way to jump? Wait, I will show you.

Hold der life net! I will show you how to do it. I am a smart man, aren't I, teacher?

Yes, Hans. You should be a model for them.

Never will you learn jumping, even here. It's nothing but foolishness always.
COMIC BOOKS
COMIC BOOKS

ACTION COMICS

$1 MILLION
GRAPHIC NOVELS

A CONTRACT WITH GOD
AND OTHER TENEMENT STORIES

A Graphic Novel
By Will Eisner

The Will Eisner Library
GRAPHIC NOVELS
GRAPHIC NOVELS
MODERN GRAPHIC NOVELS FOR KIDS

BABYMOUSE
QUEEN OF THE WORLD!

BABYMOUSE
SURF BABE

BABYMOUSE
CAMP

BABYMOUSE
LOVE
WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT GRAPHIC NOVELS, ANYWAY?
ENTRY LEVEL

- Visual language guides beginning readers
- Inspire reluctant readers
- A “bridge” between picture & chapter books
- Allows a child to feel successful at reading
- Provides a gateway to books and a love of reading
“Comics have always had a unique ability to draw young readers into a story through the drawings. Visual narrative helps kids crack the code that allows literacy to flourish, teaching them how to read from left to right, from top to bottom. Speech balloons facilitate a child’s understanding of written dialogue as a transcription of spoken language. Many of the issues that emerging readers have traditionally struggled with are instantly clarified by comics’ simple and inviting format.” (TOON BOOKS)
“Small children read all the time. Hand any preliterate four-year-old a picture book, and she will tell you exactly what is happening on each page by reading what she sees... Unknowingly, she relies on what educators call “prior knowledge” to interpret pictorial clues that are not necessarily realistic representations of what she sees every day.

...As the concept of letters and sounds having meaning emerges and words are introduced, suddenly the child begins to believe that she actually can’t read, because the squiggles mean nothing; as she gets older, “reading comprehension” means reading words exclusively and means less, if any, emphasis on understanding the nuances of visual images as symbols. An art history elective in high school might revisit visual literacy, or perhaps a computer class on Web design will address the function of white space and organization of nonlinear information, but not every student has such opportunities.

No wonder grownups don’t read comics: they don’t know how.”

(HOLLIS MARGARET RUDIGER)
ENTRY LEVEL

- Visual language guides beginning readers
- Inspire reluctant readers
- A “bridge” between picture & chapter books
- Allows a child to feel successful at reading
- Provides a gateway to books and a love of reading
“A” is for apple.

Adam always eats green apples.
ENTRY LEVEL

• Visual language guides beginning readers
• Inspire reluctant readers
• A “bridge” between picture & chapter books
• Allows a child to feel successful at reading
• Provides a gateway to books and a love of reading
ENTRY LEVEL

- Visual language guides beginning readers
- Inspire reluctant readers
- A “bridge” between picture & chapter books
- Allows a child to feel successful at reading
- Provides a gateway to books and a love of reading
START YOUR ENGINES!

Swoosh!

DRIVERS,
SCREEECH!!

Swoosh!
ENTRY LEVEL

- Visual language guides beginning readers
- Inspire reluctant readers
- A “bridge” between picture & chapter books
- Allows a child to feel successful at reading
- Provides a gateway to books and a love of reading
ENTRY LEVEL

• Visual language guides beginning readers
• Inspire reluctant readers
• A “bridge” between picture & chapter books
• Allows a child to feel successful at reading
• Provides a gateway to books and a love of reading
KEEP KIDS READING!
“[Reading is Fundamental] picked up this category because they found that they can get the kids with Dr. Seuss, but at a certain point they lose them to video games. But this is such a visual medium, it draws them in.”

-Liza Coppola, VP of Manga Publisher, Viz Media
FOR SOME KIDS, READING IS NOT COOL!

“It's not cool to read in a lot of ways when you're a teenager. Many boys stop reading when they reach the age of 13. But with their unique storytelling approach, graphic novels inspire kids to keep coming back, and coming back to the library.”

-Robin Brenner, Librarian
“A lot of teenagers have grown up with a very multi-media society. Having a format that has both images and words is very appealing to them.”

Thanks for teaching me to read, Superman!
“I work as the librarian at the middle school where Gillian is in Grade Five. Gillian's cerebral palsy keeps her mostly confined to her wheelchair.

The week that I handed her a copy of *Babymouse Our Hero* and she saw that the print was large enough for her to read (she can only read using one eye at a time) and not too juvenile (in Grade Five you don't want to be reading baby books anymore!) she was thrilled.

The term 'Cool!' was repeated more than a few times then and there. She doesn't have a very loud way of showing it but the twinkle in her eye and the way she grinned - you could see she was thinking FINALLY! Someone who knows me and writes for me!”

- *Letter from a librarian in British Columbia*
WAIT A MINUTE . . .
AREN'T COMIC BOOKS
EVIL?
WAIT A MINUTE . . . AREN'T NOVELS EVIL?
“A great obstacle to good education is the inordinate passion prevalent for novels, and the time lost in that reading which should be instructively employed. When this poison infects the mind, it destroys its tone and revolts it against wholesome reading.”

(THOMAS JEFFERSON)
That's not REAL reading!

Graphic novels illustrate dialogue and narration more explicitly than do prose novels.
That's not REAL reading!

Graphic novels illustrate dialogue and narration more explicitly than do prose novels.
THAT'S NOT REAL READING!

Graphic novels illustrate dialogue and narration more explicitly than do prose novels.
NOT JUST MEN IN TIGHTS

• “Baby and Me”-about an 11-year-old boy who is forced to become the caretaker of his 2-year-old brother
• “Nana”-follows two girls, both named Nana, trying to make it in Tokyo
• “Crimson Hero”-the ups and downs of a teenage volleyball player whose parents want her to give up her sport of choice and enter the family business

-A sample of Manga series featured in “Shojo Beat Magazine”
I HAVE A CRAZY IDEA...
. . . READING FOR PLEASURE!
HOW DO I PICK APPROPRIATE TITLES?
WILSON'S GRAPHIC NOVELS
CORE COLLECTION

(...no, not THAT Wilson...)
TOON BOOKS
RANDOM HOUSE
WEB SITES

• Diamond Comics Bookshelf
• ComicsintheClassroom.net
• School Library Journal
• Publisher’s Weekly
• No Flying No Tights: Sidekicks
WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

MatthewHolm.net