

Getting Graphic:
*The value of graphic
novels in
literacy instruction.*

Part I:
The "what & why?"

Presented by:
Wes Young

Familiarity with the type

- Who here has had an experience, personal or otherwise, with comics and/or GNs?
- What comes to mind when you think of “comics” or “graphic novels”.
- Playing against type.



Nonfiction in the form

Subjects include:

- Biography
- Historical events and eras
- War and conflict
- Medicine
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Geography and culture
- Family

What we call the human experience!

Why Graphic Novels?

- A way to engage reluctant and struggling readers
- Addresses three of the four learning types (making lessons kinesthetic is up to you 😊)
- Accessibility and cost
- Depth of subjects and relatability to everyone
- Rich tradition outdating prose form

Plus, graphic novels are cool, but not too cool for school ;)



QUESTIONS or:
“I’m not sold yet, tell me more!”



???

Part II: *The "who?"*



Basic Literacy (ABE)

- Adaptable to any level, even those with below a first grade reading level.
- Intimidation and the struggling reader...
- Tiers 1, 2 & 3 vocabulary development.
- Creating good habits.



English as a second language (ESL)

In addition to ABE skills...

- Teaching points in cultures, personal histories and experiences.
- Biographies and relatability.
- Grammar exposure and natural language.
- Progression



High school equivalency(HSE): Social Studies

In addition to ABE & ESL skills...

- History and Geography focus in context.
- Map reading and timelines.
- (requires the most extra effort for the tutor/teacher)



High school equivalency(HSE): Language Arts

In addition to ABE & ESL skills...

- Comprehension, challenge and applicability.
- Writing prompts, writing prompts, and writing prompts.
- Academic vocabulary development.
- Any number of possible lessons paths.



QUESTIONS or:

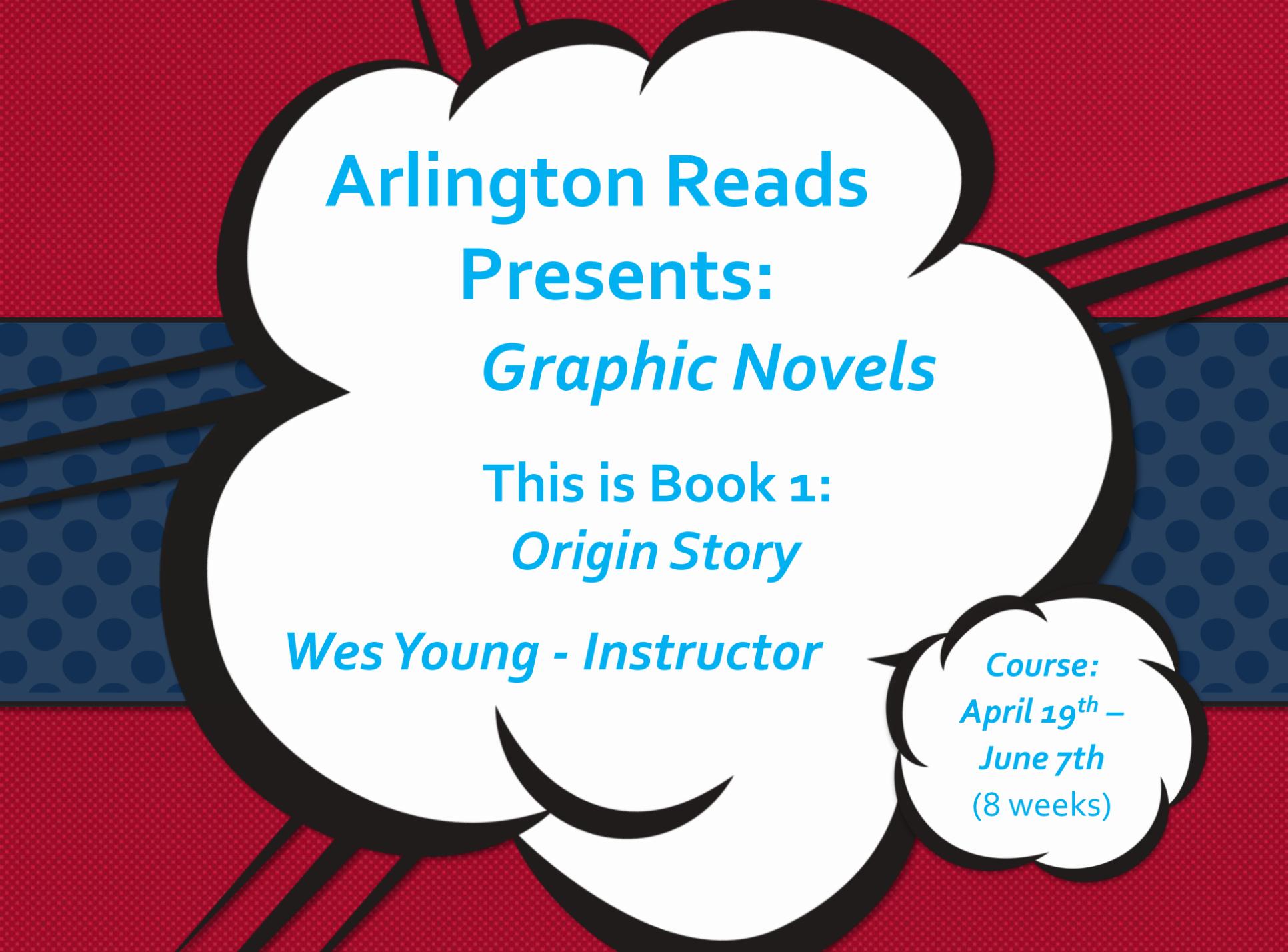
“I see many trees and/or a blurry forest.”



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Part III: *The "how?"*





Arlington Reads
Presents:
Graphic Novels

This is Book 1:
Origin Story

Wes Young - Instructor

Course:
April 19th –
June 7th
(8 weeks)

Saving the Day!

- There are **many purposes** for this class and **many subjects** addressed.
- This is an **adult** education class, and materials may include **adult** language and **adult** themes.
- Foes will be vanquished and **fun** will be had!



The mission...

There will be discussions on culture & history.

There will be studies of vocabulary, writing assignments and even homework!

You will be required to think, possibly in unique or different ways.

This class is as much about you and your experiences as it is about the novel we study.

ALERT! Did I mention that this is an educational class?! Even so, it will be different and it will be fun!

QUESTIONS or:
“I’ve made a terrible mistake!”



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What is a
graphic novel?

"Sequential Art."

vs.

"Juxtaposed pictorial and other images
in deliberate sequence, intended to
convey information and/or produce an
aesthetic response in the viewer."

History dates back to the
1000s. A manuscript
discovered by Cortes in 1519
dates back to 1049.



Comic Books

- Single issues (serialized)
- Around 20 pages long
- Started in 1933 (U.S.)
- Exclusively fiction

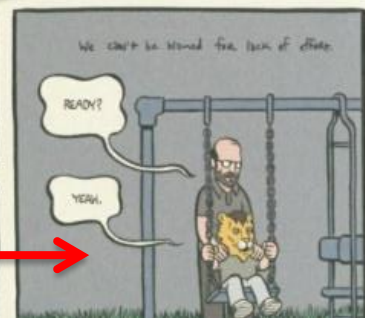
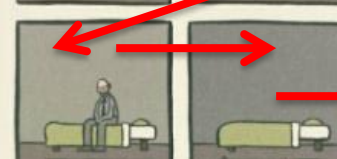
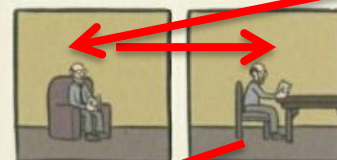
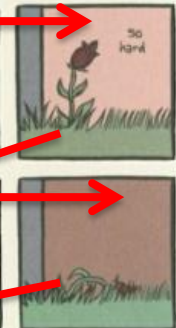
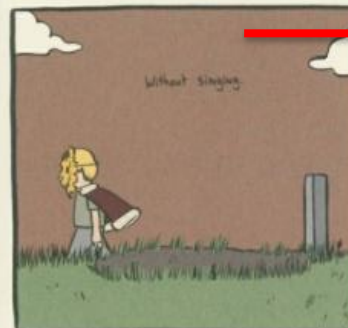
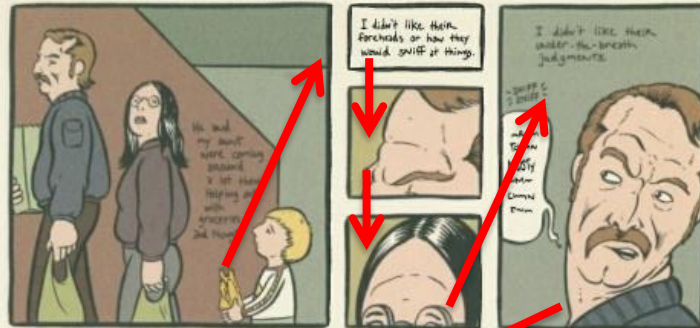
Not to be confused with comic strips, which are found in newspapers and magazines

Graphic Novels

- Stand-alone or collected serialized works
- 50 – 1000+ pages long
- Origins in the 1960s

Can be works of fiction or non-fiction

How to Read a graphic novel: Panels I - order



How to Read a graphic novel: Text Bubbles I - basics

Narration,
inner thoughts

Standard dialog

Emotion, variation



Exclamation,
extreme emotion

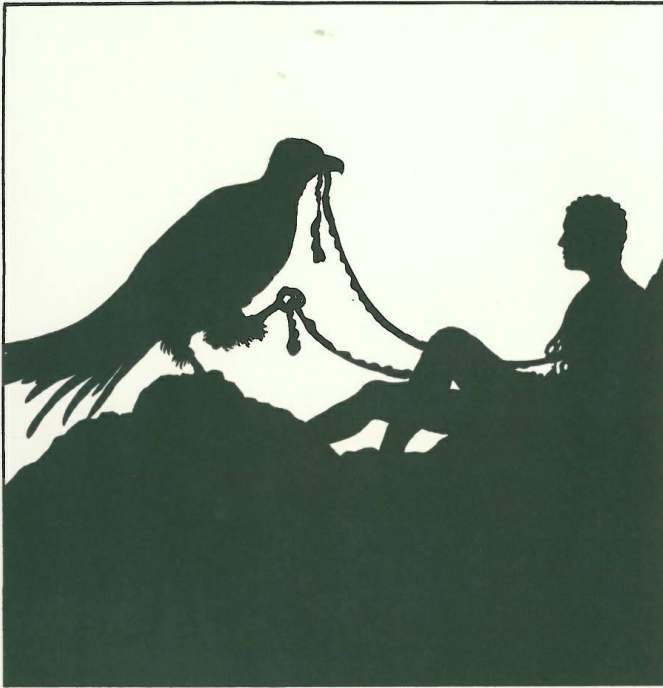
Noise, shouting

How to Read a graphic novel: Text Bubbles II - extension

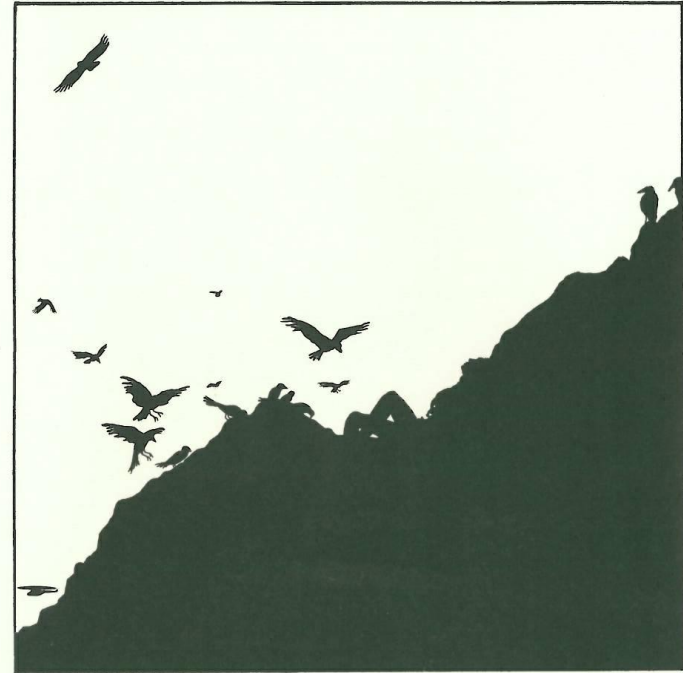
As an expression of the character.



How to Read a graphic novel: Art & Imagery



NOW IT'S MANY THOUSANDS OF YEARS LATER. FOR WHAT IS NOW AN ANCIENT TRANSGRESSION, YOU ARE CHAINED TO A ROCK ON TOP OF A DESOLATE MOUNTAIN IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THERE ARE OCCASIONAL HELICOPTERS, DISTANT EXPLOSIONS. THE EAGLE THAT IS SENT EACH DAY TO DEVOUR YOUR LIVER IS GIVING YOU HIS USUAL UPDATE ON WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD BELOW. IT'S BEEN BAD ALMOST AS LONG AS YOU CAN REMEMBER AND DOESN'T SEEM TO BE GETTING ANY BETTER. THE GIFT OF FIRE HAS SPREAD, EVOLVED, PROLIFERATED. WHEN HE'S DONE GIVING YOU THE NEWS, THE EAGLE TEARS INTO YOUR ABDOMEN. THE PAIN IS UNIMAGINABLE. REPETITION HAS DONE NOTHING TO DULL ITS BITE. AND HE'LL BE BACK AGAIN TOMORROW, AND EVERY DAY INTO THE FUTURE.



STILL, YOU THINK TO YOURSELF, WITH GRITTED TEETH, YOU'D DO THE SAME THING OVER AGAIN. IN THE END, THINGS HAVE NOT TURNED OUT SO WELL, BUT THERE WAS THE LOOK IN THAT NEW CREATURE'S EYE ALL THOSE MANY YEARS AGO. AND AS FOR THE GODS WHO CHAINED YOU HERE, THE GODS ARE FORGOTTEN. AND THAT IS THE SWEETEST REVENGE.

How to Read a graphic novel: Panels II – the space between



QUESTIONS or:

“I was okay at first but now I want to leave...”



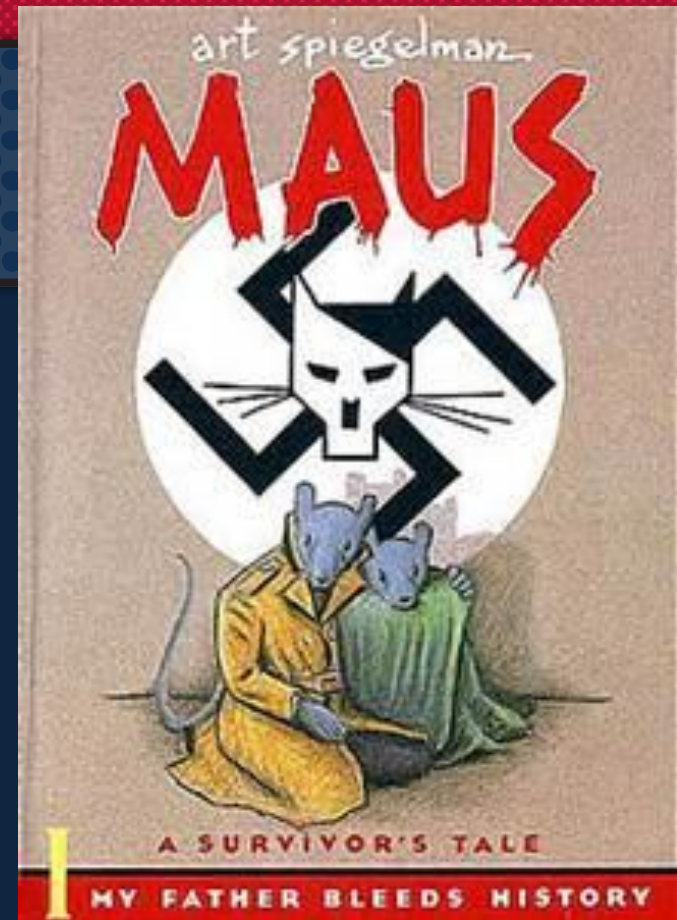
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Maus: A survivor's Tale Book I – My Father Bleeds History

Written and illustrated
by Art Spiegelman and
published in 1991.

Serialized 1980-1986 with
the seeds of the story as
early as 1972.

This is a work of
non-fiction, known
as a biography.



The novel

- About Art's father
- Mid-1930s- Winter 1944
- Deals with everyday life and the changing political climate
- Setting: Poland (past) & New York (present)

Art conducted a series of interviews with his father, many of which he depicts in the story.

History

- WWII 1939-1945
- Adolf Hitler: 1921-1945
- European theatre
- Racism and thought

Many different factors contributed to World War II, this work depicts a biased view.

Important features of *Maus*:

- Characters are anthropomorphic.
- Often considered the first/second GN to bring relevance to the form.
- Is the only GN to win a Pulitzer Prize (1992).
- Is on *Time* magazine's top 100 nonfiction books of all time (7th).
- Themes of Memory, Language, Presentation, Racism, & Guilt.



The main characters...

Present Day.

- Art (Artie) – Author, Illustrator, Son
- Françoise Mouly – Art's wife
- Vladek Spiegelman – Father
- Mala Spiegelman – Vladek's wife (2nd)

1930-1944

- Anja Spiegelman – Vladek's first wife
- Richieu Spiegelman – Vladek & Anja's first child

There are 30 characters in *Maus*, but the rest are secondary or tertiary and show up little.

QUESTIONS or:

“Everything is clear and I’m ready to begin my graphic journey!”



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Part IV: *The "where?"*



Where do I begin, as a teacher wanting to learn more myself?

- *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud
- *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist* by Will Eisner
- Journal articles, available on Google Scholar

While useful, these books only provide a history and foundational blueprint.

The GNs you use will carry the weight of instruction 😊

Where do I begin, as a teacher selecting a graphic novel?

- *Maus, A survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman
- *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi
- *Trinity: The Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb* by Jonathan Fetter-Vorm
- *Marzi* by Marzena Sowa
- *Pyongyang; Shenzhen; Burma Chronicles; Jerusalem* all by Guy Delisle
- Works by Joe Sacco
- *My Friend Dahmer* by Derf Backderf
- *Buddha* (series) by Osamu Tezuka

Where do I find graphic novels on a budget?

Small program, individual, little funding or DIY? Fear not!

- Local public library
- Half Price Books or other used book sellers
- Amazon, Better World Books, Abebooks, Thrift Books





Part V: *Conclusion*

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