

Grade level: 9th-12th Grade

Subject: Language Arts

Rationale:

Students will examine the use of theme in the Manga Classics adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Students will be asked to focus on specific illustrations in the novel and consider how the artist creates meaning with the visual medium of a graphic novel.

Instructional Duration: 3-4 hours

Objectives:

Students will:

- ✓ Read the graphic novel *Jane Eyre* and consider it as a visual adaptation of a classic piece of literature.
- ✓ Use images from the novel to answer specific essential questions.
- ✓ Understand the concept of theme as it pertains to a graphic novel adaptation of a classic text

Front-loaded information / understanding:

Theme - Students should be able to define and identify one or more themes from the original text. This lesson will translate that concept for the graphic novel medium.

Imagery - Students should be able to define and identify imagery in the original text. This lesson will translate that concept for the graphic novel medium.

Symbolism – Students should be able to define and identify one or more symbol from the original text. This lesson will translate that concept for the graphic novel medium.

Manga – Many students have not been exposed to this type of reading. Prior to assigning any reading in the Manga Classic Text, instructors should cover the “How to read manga” section at the beginning of the book with their students to ensure understanding.

Instructional Strategies:

NOTE: The lessons contained below assume that students are reading the Manga Classic adaptation after having already been exposed to all or some part of the original text. If you are using the graphic novel adaptation as an alternative to reading the original novel, the lessons can still be utilized with modifications.

Students should have read the original novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. Have them share with the class what they know about the text itself. Specific attention should be paid

to how students visualize some of the more crucial moments of the text including, but not limited to, character appearance, conflict, thematic elements, and symbolism.

Activity #1 – Answering Essential Questions (Pre-Reading)

Students should be asked to recall their experiences reading Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Instruct them to think about what parts of the novel stood out to them and why. Students should then be broken into groups of 3-4 and asked to consider how they themselves would adapt the text to a visual medium. In doing so, they will answer the following essential questions:

- ✓ *What is one major theme of the novel?*
- ✓ *Which 3 scenes from the novel serve to best illustrate one of these themes?*
- ✓ *Why did you choose each of these scenes?*
- ✓ *How would you utilize visual imagery to make these scenes come to life?*

Students will then be asked to provide three sketches (one for each scene selected). These sketches do not need to be elaborate but should stage the scene in some way (position of characters, background, and objects). Sketches should include some sort of caption that contains specific guiding information that explains how the images shape understanding of the text (2-3 sentences).

Activity #2 – Pre-reading Lit Circle

Have students remain in their small groups. You can assign roles to each student (Discussion Leader, Scribe, Questioner, Analyzer, etc...) and provide a graphic organizer with specific goals/questions to answer. Have each group share their scenes with one another and choose one from each student that they feel is most effective and successful. Together, have them create an image of Jane, taking into considering how the text describes her. Optionally, you can also have them answer specific guided questions including (but not limited to):

- ✓ *How do your sketches provide a unique interpretation of the text?*
- ✓ *How does the text itself use imagery to paint pictures in the reader's mind?*
- ✓ *How does the text describe Jane (point to specific passages)?*

Have students convene as a class and each group share their sketches and findings.

Activity #3 – Post-reading Lit Circle Scavenger Hunt

Once students have completed reading the Manga Classics *Jane Eyre*, put them back into their Lit Circles. Again, have students choose from a list of required group roles. Have them look back at the reading and identify page in the text that they feel meet the following criteria:

1. An image of Jane in which her "plainness" is most pronounced

2. An image that foreshadows an event in the book
3. An image that embodies the theme of loneliness
4. An image of one of the characters being kind to Jane
5. An image of one of the characters being cruel to Jane
6. An image of Rochester where he appears unlikeable
7. An image of Jane standing by her convictions
8. An image that exemplifies the theme of religion
9. An image of one of the elements
10. An image that represents one of the major symbols of the text

Students should compile their images and present them to the class as a whole.

Activity #4 – Theme Identification

Select specific points in the novel where the artwork illustrated a theme in a particularly compelling manner. For example:

Page 28-30 – Jane’s rebellion and regret

Page 37 – Jane’s temper and temperance

Page 53 – The image of the fireplace and what it represents

Page 64 – Jane as a teacher

Page 96 – Rochester’s inconsistency

Page 116-117 – The fire burning in Rochester’s bed

Page 156-161 – Rochester’s deceit as a gypsy woman

Page 173 – The religious imagery of the crucifix

Page 214 – Rochester’s shameful secret (Bertha)

Page 275 – The marriage proposal

Page 278 – The refusal of love = the denial of God (according to St. John)

Page 300 – Jane’s ultimate devotion to Rochester – true love

Or any others where you feel the artwork creates a visual representation of the themes of the novel that you find particularly compelling. Have students answer the following question about the image with a short essay:

What elements of the artwork bring a strong understanding of a major theme of the novel on the page that text alone could not?

Final Assessment:

The novel explores the themes of loyalty, temperance, and making the proper decision despite one’s own desires or potential for suffering. Jane is steadfast in her choices even though she knows that she will be unhappy when she makes some of them. She always does what is right. Have students refer to the Manga Classics text and choose a passage (8-10 pages) where Jane demonstrates this resolve. Have them write a short essay exploring how the images in the book help to bring these choices, and the ultimate consequences to life.

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