

Grade level: 9th-12th Grade

Subject: Language Arts

Rationale:

Students will examine the use of theme in the Manga Classics adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. 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 *The Jungle Book* 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.

Verse – Students should be able to understand the use of verse in the novel and how it is used to introduce and define characters or emphasize particular events. 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 may have read the original novel *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. 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, verse, and symbolism.

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

Students should be asked to recall their experiences reading Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. 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 Rudyard Kipling Scavenger Hunt

Have students research Rudyard Kipling (Biography.com is a good site to start - <https://www.biography.com/news/the-jungle-book-rudyard-kipling-facts>). Provide them with a document that contains specific questions that they have to research and read to answer about both Kipling and his writing. Each question should have a point value attached based on the complexity and difficulty.

Some sample questions could include (but are not limited to):

1. Where did Kipling grow up?
2. What was his relationship to his family?
3. What inspired him to write *The Jungle Book*?
4. What other works has he written?
5. What kinds of controversies has Kipling been involved in?
6. How do scholars view his work today?

Students can be assessed on the questions they are able/choose to answer and their results can spark initial class discussion on their predictions and expectations from the text.

Activity #3 – Verse Analysis

Break the class into groups and direct students to the pages in the Manga Classics *Jungle Book* where Kipling's verse is included with accompanying imagery. Choose 2-3 passages per group (depending on the number of groups) and ask students to read, annotate, and analyze the use of poetic devices and imagery in each. Encourage them to read critically and connect the verse to the events that occur prior to and after its place in the book. Direct them to draw an overall conclusion and answer the following essential question:

In the verse(s) your team analyzed, what do you feel was the purpose for the passage's inclusion in the book and why do you think Kipling chose to share this particular information in this way?

Students can share their thoughts to the class as a presentation or a simple discussion.

Activity #4 – Theme Identification

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

Mowgli's Story:

Page 8 – Raksha and Shere Khan fighting over dominance and territory

Page 19 – The juxtaposition of eyes expressing the intensity of the struggle between man and beast

Page 38 – Baloo's exploration of the distinction between words and action and the importance of balance between them

Page 65-67 – The chaos of the Monkey Kingdom and the need for law and leadership

Page 82 – Kaa as a manifestation of fear

Page 93-94 – Bagheera and Mowgli reconcile punishment and justice

Page 124 – Mowgli asserting his courage and determination to stand up to Shere Kahn

Page 145 – Mowgli's victory over Shere Kahn and man's dominance over beasts

The White Seal:

Page 159 – Sea Catch's dominance through brute strength and fighting prowess

Page 168 – The violence of mankind

Page 172 – The horror of slaughter (this could spark intense discussion on all types of violence against animals and human beings)

Page 180 – The torturous cries of the gulls

Page 188 – Kotick's realization of his purpose and destiny

Page 192 – Entering the unknown as represented by a swirling portal

Page 206 – Kotick finds his paradise and his risks are met with reward

Page 210 – The battle is won through strength and determination

Rikki Tikki Tavi:

Page 219 – Rikki's vast expressions convey a range of emotion as he begins to learn his new role

Page 228-229 – Rikki learns who his biggest foe is and is solidified in his purpose to protect his family and the garden

Page 232 – The first battle between Rikki and the cobras

Page 249 – Rikki outsmarts and ambushes Nag

Page 262 – The image of Rikki firmly establishes that he has grown into his role

Page 273 – Rikki and his family and the possibility of positive connection between man and beast

Toomai:

Page 282 – Kala Nag saves Little Toomai despite the child having taunted him

Page 295 – The speed of Kala Nag despite his age and weariness

Page 298-299 – The Elephant Dance and Little Toomai’s witnessing of it establishes trust between the boy and the beast

Her Majesty’s Service:

Page 308-309 – War and the service of both man and animal

Page 313 – The battle within the animal ranks

Page 316 – The wisdom of beasts versus the wisdom of animals

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 nature of relationship among beasts and between beasts and man. In the “Mowgli” and “Rikki Tikki Tavi” stories, it brings the idea of man among beasts to the forefront. In the story of the “White Seal,” it puts man and beasts at odds. In the “Toomai” tale, it talks about establishing a trust based on mutual respect that can create a bond between man and beast. In “Her Majesty’s Service,” we see beasts acting as agents of man. Students should choose a theme to trace through multiple stories from the book and, utilizing the text and images from the book as evidence, establish a thesis and write a critical essay which supports their position.

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