

Grade level: 9th-12th Grade

Subject: Language Arts

Rationale:

Students will examine the use of perspective in the Manga Classics adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Students will be asked to consider 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 *Emma* 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 concepts of point of view and perspective as they pertain to a graphic novel adaptation of a classic text

Front-loaded information / understanding:

Point of View & Perspective— Students should be able to explain the point of view of the novel as well as demonstrate an understanding of how a specific perspective can change the reader's understanding and/or interpretation of the text. They will be able to distinguish the difference between these concepts.

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.

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 *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. 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 – Point of View and Perspective Defined

Begin by having students explore the concept of point of view in general. You can accomplish this by having students brainstorm and define the difference between first, second, and third person writing. Explore key words like personal pronouns as a means of establishing point of view. Drive the conversation to define the concepts of limited, omniscient, and objective point of view and how this can manifest itself in literature. Focus specifically on first person limited perspective (as that is the format of this text). Utilize excerpts from texts like *Catcher in the Rye* or *Huckleberry Finn* in order to illustrate this.

Next, take the concept to the next level. Once you have established the nature of first person limited point of view, move on to the concept of perspective. What does it mean to have a perspective? Utilize concepts that they would have opinions on to establish different points of view. These concepts can include (but are not limited to):

- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Food choice (cookies vs. chips, burgers vs. pizza, etc...)
- ✓ Politics
- ✓ Sports team affiliations
- ✓ Taste in music
- ✓ Favorite film genre
- ✓ Aptitude at a specific subject in school

Have students make a list of personal qualities, history, and experiences that they can use to explain how they established their perspective. For example, if they are fans of science fiction films, it may be because their first film as a child was *Star Wars* and it has informed their attitude and preferences ever since.

Activity #2 – Pre-reading Perspective Sketch

Students should be asked to recall their reading *Great Expectations*. Ask your students which among them enjoy drawing or have some aptitude at sketching. Ideally, at least half or more of the class can see themselves this way. If not, tell students that the next activity will involve some drawing and some writing and ask for volunteers to be the “artists.” Once you have a 1:1 ratio of artists to those who don’t want to draw, have them pair off appropriately.

Ask students to identify a moment from the text where Pip’s perspective skewed his narration of the story. This moment should have his attitude, as influenced by his history, clearly influencing he presents the story to the reader. Using the text as a roadmap, have students draw a short minicomic of no more than four panels to recreate that scene. Use a document camera to share each pair’s comic and have them explain their artistic process and choices.

Activity #3 – Post-reading Comparison

Once students have had the opportunity to read the text, have them return to their minicomics from the previous activity and compare how artist Crystal S. Chan’s depiction of their event differs from their own rendition. Use this as an opportunity to talk about the concept of adaptation and how different approaches to a text yield different, but ultimately satisfying results.

Activity #4 – Perspective Identification

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

- Pages 4-5 – The convict’s appearance to Pip as monstrous
- Page 21 – The convict breaks his shackles
- Page 26 – Pip alone in the darkness surrounded by his sister’s accusations
- Page 33 – The convict’s kindness (note appearance change)
- Page 45 – Miss Havisham’s appearance and Pip’s response to it
- Page 90 – Pip’s sister’s silence
- Page 119 – The “new” Pip
- Page 126 – Pip’s isolation (again)
- Page 182 – Magwich’s story. Whose perspective is this?
- Page 221-225 – The horror of Miss Havisham’s death
- Page 237-239 – Orlick’s story
- Page 272 – Estella as envisioned by Pip or Magwich?
- Page 291 – Final vision of Estella

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

How is perspective illustrated through the visual elements of the graphic novel?

Final Assessment:

Students should choose a section from the graphic novel and explore the use of visual imagery as a means of illustrating perspective and connect it with the same scene from the original text. They will write a short compare and contrast essay where they look at how each medium depicts this information and which one they see as most effective. If the instructor chooses, a film or stage production of the story could also be included in this mix.

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