

Grade level: 9th-12th Grade**Subject:** Language Arts**Rationale:**

Students will examine the use of theme in the Manga Classics adaptation of Jane Austin's *Sense and Sensibility*. 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 *Sense and Sensibility* 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 *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austin. 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 Austin’s *Sense and Sensibility*. 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). Once these sketches are completed. They are to share and explain them to their group mates and then each group will chose 2-4 sketches to report to the class as a whole.

Activity #2 – Sense vs. Sensibility: Compare and Contrast

The novel’s title is also a declaration of the largest theme, the dichotomy between logic and emotion (“sense” versus “sensibility”) with the two main characters of Elinor and Marianne representing each of these philosophies respectively. The Manga Classics adaptation of the novel uses specific imagery to illustrate this polarity. Have students write up two bulleted lists. The first should be a list of examples that illustrate the idea of “sense” – consider cognitive thought, logic, or analysis as keywords to help guide student thinking here. The second should be a list of examples that illustrate the idea of “sensibility” – consider emotion, nature, or passion as keywords to help guide student thinking here. You can have the students share their results in a number of ways including post-its on the board or a carousel activity.

Activity #3 – Post-reading Textual Evidence

Once students have their lists, put them back into their groups and have them work their way through the text and find images that are specific to some of the examples they listed in Activity #2 (above). Have them find pages or panels that illustrate the concepts of sense and sensibility and the derivations of those that they listed. When they have done so, have each group choose one strong example of each to report out to the class. Some modeling examples include:

- Page 26 – The “goodness and sense” of Elinor (sense)
- Page 41 – Marianne and the emotion of nature (sensibility)
- Page 61 – The dangers of the natural world (sensibility)
- Page 123 – The dizzying nature of thought (sense)

Activity #4 – Theme Identification

Select specific points in the novel where the artwork illustrated the theme of the complexity of love(it must have both sense and sensibility in order to flower) in a particularly compelling manner. For example:

- Page 21 – The flowered border representing the courtship of Edward and Elinor
- Page 53 – Marianne’s beauty overwhelming Colonel Brandon

Page 74 – Willoughby’s untrustworthy nature as illustrated by his face being half covered by his hair

Page 107 – “Parental ambition versus personal will”

Page 154 – Letters and heartbreak

Page 172 – The anger in the black eyes of Brandon

Page 193 – The sensibility of Marianne’s outburst

Page 203 – The dichotomy of the brothers Edward and Robert

Page 231 – A return to nature and the passion of heartbreak

Page 262 – Marianne finds her “sense” as she tempers her emotions

Page 288 – Nature blows in... along with 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 theme of emotion versus logic and how both are needed for a successful loving connection. Elinor starts the novel as the epitome of sense while her sister Marianne is the opposite – all sensibility. It is not until each sister relinquishes their single-minded approach to love that they find it themselves. When Elinor starts to allow her emotions to guide her, she is able to trust Edward. Likewise, when Marianne finally stops to consider her actions and think about the consequences and possible outcomes, she sees Brandon as a viable suitor.

Have students refer to the Manga Classics text and choose a passage (8-10 pages) where this change is made in one or both of these characters. Have them write a short essay exploring how the images in the book help to bring their choices, and the ultimate consequences to life.

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