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Comics Sometimes The goals presented in headings come from the English/Language Arts section of the NC Standard Course of Study, and the activities organize around topics described in parentheses.

Comics



Comprehending text, making connections, creating oral, written and visual texts, expressing individual perspectives and responding to literary genre (icebreakers)

Have students select someone from the comic pages who is like them in some way and explain why. Ask them to cut out the individuals they choose and paste each person on an index card, construction paper or other paper, for sharing. They should write the reasons for choosing the character on the index cards or paper and share their choices with one or more students. They should look for others who made the same choice and determine whether the reasons were similar or different.

You can encourage other connections by having them find a comic strip that shows an activity they enjoy and/or a job they'd like when they get older. Use the student activity sheet titled **ARE YOU in the COMICS?**

Poll the class and determine if any characters were popular choices and if gender, age, race, personality, character and/or specific events in that comic affected their choices. Based on the poll, have students create graphs to show the popular choices.

Have students identify comics that are popular because of their similarities to real life. Ask: Which incidents happened to you or to people you know? Does any character learn a lesson? Does the lesson apply to you or others you know? Create a display on lessons learned from comics.

Similarly, have students use a Venn diagram to compare two strips that are similar in some way and follow up with questions that help students make connections: Do you find two comics based on life in high schools? Do any things that happen in the comics happen in your school? Do you find two comics that focus on family life or relationships among friends? Do any things that happen in those comics happen to your family or friends?

Ask students to pretend they are chosen or doomed to become a comic strip character. Have them decide which one they would like to become and write a paper describing why they chose that particular character. Consider having them read aloud what they've written, without naming the character and asking other students to guess the character.

Have students respond to their reading of comics by completing open-ended sentences, such as: I liked, I disliked, I learned, I laughed at, I puzzled over and I was disturbed by.

Often friends and family members will read comics together. One person will read aloud a humorous or interesting comic to someone else. Have students read the comics with someone else in the class and respond to this statement:

Reading the comics with a classmate or friend can be...

If students need support to respond, offer some words: delightful, special, useful, bold, helpful, inspiring, tedious, annoying or fun. As part of their sharing, have students choose passages that show emotions or mood, use interesting language or language that is somewhat difficult to understand, show or tell about an important character, show tension or climax and/or reminds them of something in their lives.

The student sheet **READER RESPONSE** supports this activity.

Comprehending text, using informational material (getting acquainted with comics and the newspaper)

Before reading the comics, students need to know how to locate them in their newspapers. Have students check the index on the front page of their newspaper and find the section and page where the newspaper places its comics. Over several days, have them do the same and ask whether the comics move around or stay in the same place (anchored feature). They should pull out the correct section and turn to the page to demonstrate their ability to locate the comics. To make the task of locating comics easier the first time, pull out and distribute the specific section that contains the comics and provide students with the page number.

Comprehending text, making connections, expressing individual perspective and responding to literary genre (getting acquainted with comics)

Emphasize that background knowledge affects anyone's ability to understand what he/she reads. Ask students to identify comics that they understand well and others that they do not understand. Ask: Do you lack background knowledge necessary to interpret the strip? Is the knowledge about jobs and careers? Is the knowledge you lack based on lifestyle? Does your lack of understanding have to do with the language used in the strip?

Over a period of time, have students read a strip that is difficult to understand and ask if their understanding of that strip improves. They should talk about the comic with other students and note how those discussions contribute to their understanding of the story.

Comprehending text, making connections, creating oral, written and visual texts, expressing individual perspectives, responding to literary genre (getting acquainted with comics)

Cut apart several three-frame comic strips and/or cut apart the longer Sunday comics. In choosing which to cut up, consider the difficulty of the story for the students in your class. Pass out the individual frames, so that each student has a frame or section of the Sunday comics and then have students move around the room, looking for other students who have frames or sections from the same comic. Then as a group, students should arrange the frames to tell the story. Ask whether anyone found the comic difficult to sequence and why that was the case. Ask if the frames can be ordered in different ways to tell other stories.

Students can share their stories with other groups or the entire class. They can check their work by referring to a copy of the comic strip that you save and provide at the end of the activity. Or you can write the order on the back for students to refer to. They should also share any stories that result from putting the frames in a different order.

While in their groups, students can introduce themselves or you can use this same grouping of three to five students for subsequent activities, assigning students to work together on other tasks.

Comprehending text, making connections, creating oral, written and visual texts, expressing individual perspectives, using informational material and using argument (getting acquainted with comics)

Start by asking students questions to determine whether they are familiar with comics: Do you read comics? Do other people whom you know read the comics? Have students conduct surveys to find out if and why they read comics and then ask their friends and family if they read them and why.

In small groups or as a class, have them collect their results and create a chart, graph or other visual display to show the reasons that comics make for popular reading.

Extend the activity for students who read comics or whose families read and talk about comics. Encourage evaluation by asking questions such as: Has your newspaper ever removed one of your favorite comics? How did you react? Is there a comic that you dislike? Why do you dislike it? What would happen if newspapers stopped publishing comics? Argue the question: Should newspapers publish comic strips? Or, stage a debate with a classmate who does not agree with you on your choice of comics or your thinking about the value of comic strips in a newspaper.

Ask students to identify the names of one or more strips and explain why they think the cartoonist chose that name: What is the basis for the name? Is it appropriate? What do the words or phrases mean or refer to? Students should read the cartoon over several days and come up with other appropriate names for the comic.

As part of your effort to help students get acquainted with comics, conduct a search and find activity or scavenger hunt. They should cut and paste examples. Use the student sheet **GETTING ACQUAINTED with COMICS.**



Comic

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Comprehending text, responding to literary genre (getting acquainted with comics)



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Comprehending text, making connections, creating oral, written and individual texts, using informational material, responding to literary genre, using critical thinking skills and creating criteria to evaluate text and multimedia (getting acquainted with comics)

Using different colored pens or highlighters, have students mark the names of the comics, the cartoonists and any syndicates mentioned on the page. Explain that cartoonists often start by producing comics for local publication and then move toward syndication. Syndicates promote and sell the comics to individual newspapers. Generally, an editor selects the cartoons published in a particular newspaper.

After students become familiar with the comics in their local newspapers, provide copies of different newspapers, so that students gain exposure to different comics. Then have them assume the role of the editor and ask: If you had space in your community newspaper for five comics, which would you choose? If you could publish ten, which ten would you include? Why? Did the make up of your community affect your choices? Have them cut out the comics that they choose and lay out a comics page, placing the comics in the order they'd appear if they were the editor in charge.

After allowing students to read and discuss comics over a period of time, have them select comics that they think will continue to be popular for some time. They should explain their selections. Follow up by asking which comics are likely to be eliminated and have them explain why. Use the student guide, COMIC REVIEW.

Comprehending text, making connections, creating oral, written and individual texts, using informational material, applying grammar and language usage and responding to literary genre (getting acquainted with comics, word study)

> Ask students to identify gag or single-frame comics. How many do they find? Have them identify the strips with three or more frames? How many do they find? Ask them to choose and read one of each type (single and multiple frames) that is familiar or looks interesting. They can read the comics on their own or with others who make the same choices, or the whole class can choose the two comics to read. After reading, they should answer the questions: How are they different? Are both humorous? Do both tell stories? What advantage does one type have over the other? Offer a Venn diagram for making comparisons.

> Extend your teaching about gags, multiple frame comics and the stories they tell by applying the RAFT outline recommended by Santa in 1988. Use the organizer ROLE of the writer, AUDIENCE, FORMAT, TOPIC (RAFT).

> Define and direct students to find examples of words and phrases related to a study of cartooning: An action strip deals with adventure and suspect rather than humor or human interest.

An adventure strip involves a hero or group of heroes, often in exotic settings.

An animal strip features animals as main characters.

A balloon is the enclosed white space drawn from the lips of comic characters to indicate a character's spoken words or thoughts. Thoughts are signified with bubbles and words, with lines. A cartoon or gag comic is single frame, self-explanatory, with no continuity, accompanied by a caption or short text.

A comic strip offers a sequence of frames, displayed vertically or horizontally. Stories may be told in a single sequence or comics may tell stories that continue day to day and build on each other.

A family strip focuses on family life and the interactions of family members.

Syndicates handle the business involved in distribution of individual comics to subscribing newspapers and other publications.

Have students create a scrapbook, poster or other visual display.

Comprehending text, responding to literary genre (plot and setting)

Use comics to teach and reinforce summarizing. Provide the questions: Who is the main character in today's comic? What is that character doing in the first, second and third frame? When and where do the actions take place? Why does the character act as he/she does? Based on the answers to the questions, have students write a headline for the strip or write a sentence summarizing the story. To become familiar with any on-going story, ask students to write headlines that summarize their favorite strip cartoon each day for a week

Ask students to make predictions about what will happen next in a continuing story, compare theirs with other students and check the next days' newspapers to find out if their predictions match the story.



- Have students follow the continuing story in comics and graph the story as it progresses. Introduce literary terms, such as plot, action and climax. Ask guestions such as: Is there an action point? Is there conflict and resulting action? Was there or is there likely to be a climax? Is the main or other character transformed, made better or worse? Provide the student guide **BEGINNING** to **END**.
- Direct students to focus on the setting in comics. Have them determine where most of the action takes place in one or more comics and decide how important those places are to each strip. Based on what they learn, have students classify comics as ones in which setting is key, is somewhat important and is not so important to the story.

Comprehending text, creating oral, written and visual text, responding to literary genre (characters)

Have younger students create a cartoon alphabet book that features all of the recurring characters in comics that run in your newspaper. They should write the name and cut out the drawing for as many letters as they can.

> When they are reading comics, they can refer back to their alphabet book and continue to add to it. They can also add things that interest them about the different characters.

Have students estimate the ages of various comic strip personalities and compare their guesses and ask them the bases for their estimates. Ask if they find characters who are near their ages.

> Have students focus on the behavior of one familiar comic character who is a child or young person. Ask: When relating to adults, is his or her behavior realistic or exaggerated? If the character were a girl instead of a boy or a boy instead of a girl, how might the portrayal be different? Explain your answer.

> Have them change a comic by turning a child shown in comics into an adult character, draw a picture of him or her as a grown up and create a story line.

> Comprehending to text, making connections, creating oral, written and visual texts, expressing individual perspectives, responding to literary genre (characters) Animals feature prominently in comics. Have students collect comics which have animals as the main characters. Ask: Do you prefer comics that involve animals? Do the animals act like humans? Why do you think cartoonists choose to use animals? Discuss personifi-

cation as it relates to the use of animals and objects in comics.

Ask students if they own animals and can think of humorous occurrences that involved their pets. Write those on charts for the class to consider and then have them create different stories that could be told in comics. Have them choose one of the stories to tell through a comic they create alone or with another student. Emphasize that the drawings don't need to be perfect.

Comprehending text, creating oral, written and visual texts, responding to literary genre (characters)

Provide a list of words that describe physical appearance, personality and character. Have students contribute to that list. First have them apply the words to a favorite comic character and then have them read a comic about a less familiar character and draw from that list to describe him or her. They should write a character sketch about him or her, using specific incidents in the comics to support their choice of words.

Use the drawing provided on the student worksheet COMIC CHARACTER to describe a character of your choice. Extend the activity by cutting out from your newspaper items to dress your character and/or food, shelter and other items that interest your character.

Ask students to find cartoons that show the characters experiencing some strong emotion. Then they should tell what the emotion is and explain what happened to elicit that emotion from the character. The character may be kind, honest, cruel, dishonest, greedy, jealous, happy, sad, angry, fearful, worried, playful or joyful. They should follow the character and situation over several days: Is the emotional response typical? Does it lead to positive or negative consequences? How does it affect other characters? How do the other characters respond? They should respond to the questions in writing.

Comic:



Comics

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By reading a comic over a period of time, students can decide if one character seems to predominate. Over a period of time, have them focus on how the main character interacts with others in the comic. Provide the **RELATIONSHIPS in COMICS** sheet for them to record what they learn about the interactions.

Ask students to choose another character to replace the main character and rewrite what happens from that person's perspective.

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Have students note the clothing worn by comic characters and look for characters who always wear the same clothing. Ask: Why does character wear the same clothes? How would changing the clothing affect the strips?

Follow up with similar questions that point out that some characters change while others stay the same (continuity and change). Ask which characters change and grow and which stay the same age and how changing or staying the same affects the strip. Ask which characters stay in the same jobs and how leaving the job would change the story told in the strip. Extend the activity by changing something in a strip and writing new dialogue or a complete story line.

Comprehending text, making connections, creating oral, written and visual texts, responding to literary genre (characters)

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Ask students if comic characters can be grouped as heroes or anti-heroes. Have them look for examples of each and determine if those classifications fit or if they are too extreme or strong: Do any comics feature characters that consistently make poor choices? Are those characters true "anti-heroes?" Do any consistently make sound choices? Are those characters true "heroes?" Do characters make some good and some bad choices? They should explain what they mean by a hero and anti-hero and why they think characters fall into and outside the categories and compare their thinking with classmates.

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Have student select one comic character to nominate as character of the year. Then ask them to write a citation that explains their choice. Students may involve each other in role play by having one give and the other receive the citation. The person would act "in character" when he or she accepted the citation.



To teach students what it means to build consensus, have students choose one character, join a group and have that group choose one from among the several chosen by individual members. Then have the class choose from among those chosen by the groups. Then students should write the citation, explaining the criteria used to select the winner and have a mock ceremony to present the award. Have someone play the part of the character accepting the award who can convey the major traits of the character as represented in the strip.

Another way to pay tribute to a character would be to have students write obituaries for the characters.

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Comprehending text, making connections, responding to literary genre (characters)
Ask students to analyze the comics in terms of the characters' careers or jobs: What occupations do they find? Which are most prevalent? In what strips do the characters have no visible means of support?

Have them focus on one person and/or job and ask: Based on what you learn from the comics, what qualities do you think are required for a good coach, doctor, teacher, soldier, business person or detective?

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Have students analyze the comic strips in terms of the roles played by men and women: Are there more men or women or is the ratio fairly even? What kind of jobs do the women have? What kind of jobs do the men have? What activities do men perform in home settings? What about the women in home settings? What conclusions can you draw from your analysis?

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Define and discuss stereotyping as a positive or negative set of beliefs and expectations, applied to a group of people or institutions and their patterns of thought and action. Ask students to screen the comics for stereotyping: Do you find stereotyping? Is it negative or positive? Do you find it objectionable? Why? Which examples are intentional and part of the humor in the strip? Do you think any reflect the cartoonists' attitudes?

Comprehending text, making connections, responding to literary genre, using critical thinking skills and creating criteria to evaluate text and multimedia (purposes and appeals)

To help students understand better the purpose of cartoons, have students classify comics as: Makes me laugh (entertain) and Sends a message (inform). Ask: Do you need additional categories? What types of messages do individual comics convey? See the student worksheet, The **PURPOSE of COMICS**.

Select other classifications, such as Especially for Children, Continued Tomorrow and People of Few Words.

Have students classify comics according to their appeal to different age groups: elementary, middle and high school, young adults, middle aged and older adults. Then they should poll their classmates, brothers, sisters and adult friends and compare the results of their poll with their original grouping. Ask: Did your first classifications match up with what you learned through the poll? Are those interviewed drawn to comics that reflect their own experiences? Did any comics appeal to all readers? If so, why do you think that is true?

Have students select several cartoons that use the different elements of humor and explain their choices:

Things that are unexpected

Things that show our weaknesses in a humorous way

Things from which we feel detached

Things to which we feel superior

To make analyzing humor more challenging, follow-up by defining satire as using humor, sometimes sarcasm, to expose or comment on human faults or peculiarities. Ask if individuals or institutions are intentionally or unintentionally satirized in different comics. Because of the difficulty in interpreting satire, offer examples from comics you find and have students work together to identify others. Have them explain the tone and content of the comics they identify. Extend the activity by having students focus on their tone of voice as they read aloud the comics. Students may also recognize the use of satire in other media.

Applying enabling strategies, responding to literary genre, applying conventions of grammar and language usage (terms and word study)

Ask students to identify a comic that uses at least one word that is unfamiliar: Can you figure out the word from the way it is used in the comic? Can you think of another word that is similar?

Have students post the strip that includes the word on a word wall, or have them collect and save the strips and write definitions for their own dictionaries.

The graphic organizer titled **INTERESTING WORDS and PHRASES** supports the following activities that require students to find and define unfamiliar words and phrases and explain puns, slang, jargon and figurative language used in comics.

Define onomatopoeia as "sound words" such as buzz, hiss and zoom. When teaching about the use of sound words, have students look for examples in the comics and discuss what their use adds to the stories.

Explain that an idiom such as "pie in the sky" may not be readily understood. Ask students to look for idioms in the dialogues of comics and figure out why the characters use those expressions.

Also, use comics to reinforce teaching about jargon, slang and dialect. Have students pay attention to any informal, nonstandard vocabulary, coined and/or shortened forms of words, determine what they mean in the context of the strip and other settings. Ask who is likely to use those forms and where those are likely to be used and heard. Have them note any strips in which those forms are used regularly.

Ask how important the jargon, dialect, etc. is to the success of the comic. Have them replace the informal speech with standard English, read the original and revised dialogue aloud and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of formal and informal ways of speaking.



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Comics

Humorists often use word plays or puns or make up new meanings for familiar words. Ask students to find examples of word plays in comics and then try creating some of their own.

Do some comics rely more on word play? Ask students to judge comics by their clever use of words versus their reliance on drawings or visuals: Which strips depend more on words? Which rely more on visuals?

Because they are considered high interest material, have comics available in your classroom for reinforcing grammar and language conventions. Have students highlight or circle nouns, verbs and other parts of speech, complete and incomplete sentences, words with prefixes and suffixes, compound words, words with one, two and three syllables, proper and common nouns and other categories.

Comprehending text, creating oral, written and visual texts, responding to literary genre (poetry and drama)

Remove or have students remove the dialogue line from a comic strip, and replace it with their own. Ask if they can find any character who does not speak. If they can identify one, ask students to add words to that gag or comic strip based on their interpretation of the comic.

Pull together or have students select dialogue from the comics and use what is selected to create a "Who Said It?" game. See if students can successfully match the quotation with the comic character. You will want to write the names of the characters on a classroom chart for students to refer to.

Ask students to write an original poem based on the comics. One example would be a biopoem about a character or a limerick that draws on the humor in comics.

Ask students to turn several days' version of a continuing comic strip into a screen play. They should write the dialogue and quotes and indicate the character who speaks. They should also indicate in writing where there are changes in setting. Ask students if they were acting out the play, what they would add to make the play more interesting: What props or costumes? Any music?

Ask students use comics for readers' theater. Choose comics, assign roles. Then have students practice and act out the comics in front of the class. Remind them to change their voices for their characters. They should discuss whether the strips can be interpreted in different ways and act out the play again to show different perspectives. You may want to video tape some of the better actors and use those as examples.

Another approach would be for students to make puppets that represent various cartoon characters and act out their comic scripts. Characters can be taped to Popsicle sticks or fingers to create simple puppets.

Comprehending text, making connections, responding to literary genre (social studies)

Have students to pretend everything they know about American culture comes from reading the comics and follow up with questions: What do you know about the ways people look, feel, think and act? What habits can you identify?

Also ask evaluative questions: Do comics accurately reflect the society we live in? If not, what is lacking? Do comics reflect the multi-ethnic heritage of America?

Have students consider the comics in relation to the rest of the newspaper. Ask them to what extent the comic page reflects the news and feature articles published in the rest of the paper. They should match comics with news or features about the same topics. Ask if what they find indicates that comics deal with real-world people and events and important issues of the day. Ask if the comics deal more with social, political or economic realities.

Students can choose something from the newspaper to rewrite as a comic. That might involve their rewriting a sports or feature story or illustrating a quote by a public figure through the use of a comic strip.

Have students clip any comics that comment or criticize government, and classify them according to their content, such as branches of government (executive, legislative, or judicial) or individuals (government official, citizen, etc.).

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Comics sometimes create controversy when they comment on social problems, politics or religion. Stories told in comics may deal with disease, war, violence, death and dying. For examples, the cartoon Doonesbury offers commentary on the news and often appears on opinion pages. Direct students to find examples of comics that deal with sensitive subjects and clip out the specific examples. Ask them to find relevant news and commentary on those subjects.

Have them either argue for or against publishing comics that deal with controversial subjects and take positions on sensitive issues. Or open up discussion with a question, such as: What is your attitude toward portraying death or violence in a comic? Then have them look at past and current examples and determine if their views change, as a result of their study of comics.

Comprehending text, making connections, responding to literary genre (social studies, math)

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Explain that the Census is taken every ten years in the United States. Through the mail and using census takers, officials count all of the people in the country and obtain important information about individuals, families and groupings. Based on the social and economic data, governments allocate tax money and draw congressional districts.

Ask students to conduct a census based on the comics. Give each student one comic or give groups of students two or three comics. Or, a group of students can count characters in all of the comics. They should identify the comic, the number of characters, males and females, children under 18, younger adults, middle age adults and older adults. Also, have them count animals. They should look for diversity by indicating differences in the racial make up of comics. To aid in their counting, suggest that students use different colored highlighters for different groups and remind them to count each character only once. Provide the chart **COMICS CENSUS**.



Have students draw conclusions about their results: Are comics diverse? Are certain groups over or underrepresented? If comic characters made up a true community, what goods and services would they need? Students should make a list of services required by the community, such as schools, child care, medical services, etc.

Comprehending text, making connections, responding to literary genre (other subjects areas)

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When comic strips provide information relevant to different subject areas, use those to reinforce concepts. Consider having students do the following:

Turn characters into numbers or geometric shapes. (math)

Translate the dialogue of your favorite comic strip into the foreign language that you are studying. (foreign language)

Collect examples of career do's and don'ts as reflected by the comics. (career tech)

Collect examples of poor consumer practices as reflected by the comics. (social studies, career tech)

Find examples of good and bad safety habits in the comics. (health)

Create visual displays by cutting and pasting color comic strip characters to make greeting cards, posters, ads and other visuals. (arts education)

Search the comics for allusions to famous artists or works of art. (arts education)

Describe styles as realistic or cartoon, tight or loose in construction. (arts education)

Use a magnifying glass to examine a comic, looking for black dots and lines. (arts education)

As an art project, clip a single frame from the paper and using a ruler divide the strip into squares of 1/4 of an inch. Draw a 4×4 inch square on separate paper and within the square draw 1×1 inch squares. Enlarge the original frame by enlarging each quarter-inch section from the original onto the one-inch squares on the drawing paper, one section at a time. Choose frames that feature bold drawings. (arts education)

Comics

Comprehending text, responding to literary genre (background about cartoons and cartoonists)

Have students count to determine how many comics are produced by men and how many by women and determine how diverse the cartoonists are in terms of race, age and other. Ask: Are comics becoming more or less diverse? Why do you think so?

Consider using comics to simulate a comprehensive study of a piece of literature. Students can find out more about each comic by conducting an Internet search using the name of the comic. If they know the cartoonists' names, students can also search "biography of" (Wikipedia shows up frequently in the searches and links to other sites that may be more authoritative.) Have students use the names of the syndicates in their searches to find out more about what they offer and how they work with different publications. For example, by searching "Funky Winkerbean," students will find the name of the syndicate that distributes the comic, discover that it is drawn by a former high school teacher, has changed its focus over time and shifts back and forth from gag humor to serious treatment of social and political issues. Web sites often offer drawings and describe all of the key characters. Research should help students read and interpret the comics and understand the audience and purpose of the comic.

Encourage students to consult online sources and learn more about the cartoonist and the comics:

When was the comic strip first published? Has it changed over time? Where does the cartoonist live and work? What is the style and/ approach taken by the cartoonist? What sources does the cartoonist rely on? What are his/her working habits? Has the cartoonist received any awards or commendations?

The student guide, **LEARN MORE about a FAVORITE COMIC**, supports this activity. The resources listed at the end of this section on comics provide Web sites that provide background information about comics.

Have students research the various awards that are presented to cartoonists. Determine who presents the awards and on what bases they are presented. Ask them to describe one or more that they consider significant.

Comprehending text, creating oral, written and visual texts, responding to literary genre (culminating activities)

Keep a running list of topics students think would be "cartoon worthy." Students can trade situations with their classmates and develop ideas into comics. To build skills and motivate them to produce their own comic strips, have students consult Web sites and other resources on how to draw cartoons. Provide Web sites such as the three identified as resources at the end of this unit on comics.

Encourage students to create their own comics by having them insert situations or characters from one strip into another and come up with a different time and place and/or dialogue. Or, you may direct them to make up new characters who fit into the strip's story line.

To reinforce teaching about history and literature, have students create comic strips to tell a story from history or literature. Ask them to employ strategies they have learned through their study of comics, such as humor and satire, idioms, slang, jargon and word play.

After having them compare stories told in comics to soap operas and other TV programs and/or movies, ask students to develop a comic strip based on their favorite television shows and movies. Have them think of comics as storyboards.

Have students determine if any contemporary comics use futuristic settings. Then have them draw a comic strip of the future. Brainstorm current problems and possible solutions and the technologies involved.

Comics

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RESOURCES

Parts of this section on comics were drawn and/or adapted from the following:

Cartoon Art Appreciation Week: Classroom Activities Kit. Cartoon Art Museum, 1991.

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. http://www.merriamwebster.org/dictionary

Broadway, Reta. Everybody Loves the Comics. Louisville, Kentucky: The Courier-Journal, 1978.

Using Newspapers in K-8 Classes. Vienna, Virginia: NAA Foundation.

Cooper, Vicki and Carolyn Bradfield. Comics as an Educational Tool. Mobile, Alabama: Berkeley & Small, 1981.

 $Stick\ Figure\ Strategy.\ http://highschool.concord.k12.in.us/aplus_strategies.html$

RESOURCES Web sites

BACKGROUND:

www.ucomics.com/

www.gocomics.com

www.mycomicspage.com

www.doonesbury.com

http://content.uclick.com/comics

www.comic-art.com/history.htm

(This history is provided by a man who sales and collects comics.)

HOW TO DRAW CARTOONS:

http://www.garyharbo.com/activity.html

http://drawsketch.about.com/od/cartooning/

http://www.tooning.com/intro.htm



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Identify a comic character who is like you in some way. Also find a comic strip that shows an activity you enjoy and a job you'd like to have when you get older. Paste the single frames or continuing strips in the space. Share your comics with a classmate.





Comics

a comic character who is like you in some way

a comic strip that shows an activity you enjoy

a comic strip that shows a job that you'd like as an adult

THINK more!

Have any incidents in comics happened to you or someone you know? Does any character learn a lesson? Does the lesson apply to you or others you know?

Respond to the comics, by completing one or more sentences. Share your responses with a classmate.

reade RESPONSE

- 1. I liked ...
- 2. I disliked...
- 3. I laughed at...
- 4. I loved the way...
- 5. I felt _____ when...
- 6. I predict that...
- 7. I learned...
- 8. I puzzled over...
- 9. I was disturbed by...
- 10. I can't believe...
- 11. This made me think of...
- 12. I rate one comic _____ (1-5) because...
- 13. If I were the cartoonist, I would...



Then choose one or two comics to read aloud and discuss. Did you enjoy reading together? Complete this sentence: Reading the comics with a classmate or friend can be...

THINK more!

4

Share more with your classmate. Highlight and point out passages that show emotions or mood, use interesting or difficult language, show tension or conflict, build toward a climax and/or remind you of something in your life.

Comics

To be	
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getting ACQUAINTED with comics

From the comic pages, cut and paste or write down examples of each:

a gag or one-frame comic	a comic strip that appeals to a child
a comic strip that appeals to adults	a comic strip that takes place in the past
a comic strip about family life	a comic character who is an animal
a comic strip about family me	a comic character who is an animal
a comic that tells a continuing story	a favorite comic strip
a comic character who makes mistakes	a character you choose
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THINK more!

List items you find interesting in today's comics and have another student find those. Talk about what makes them interesting to you and discuss whether the items interest your classmate.

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Use the index on your front page to locate the comics in your newspaper. How many different single frame carteens and somic strips do you have in



gle frame cartoons and comic strips do you have in your newspaper? _____

	comics or cartoons	cartoonists	syndicates
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
	the comics in another newspaper. H		_
	yndicates (if provided) on the back	of this paper.	Truck Control of the

THINK more!

If you were the editor of your local newspaper, based on your reading of the comics in the two (or more) newspapers you reviewed, which ten would you choose and why?

Comics

Use your front page index to locate the comic page in your newspaper. Identify the cartoon-



ist (role of the writer), the targeted audience and topic for comics that are gags, comic strips that tell different stories each day (stand alone) and those comic strips that tell continuing stories.

cartoonist (role)	audience	format	topic
1.		Single frame, gag	
2.		Single frame, gag	
3.		Single frame, gag	
4.		Comic strip, stand alone	
5.		Comic strip, stand alone	
6.		Comic strip, continuing story	
7.		Comic strip, continuing story	
8.		Comic strip, continuing story	

THINK more!

How many of the gags and comics appeal to you and other classmates? How many appeal to grown-ups? Do any appeal to all readers? If so, how does the cartoonist accomplish that? Think of a way to broaden the appeal of one comic strip that appeals only to a narrow audience.

Deepen your discussion of comics. Find photos and stories in the newspaper about the same topics. Talk about the various purposes comics serve, using the activity on The Purpose of Comics.

omics



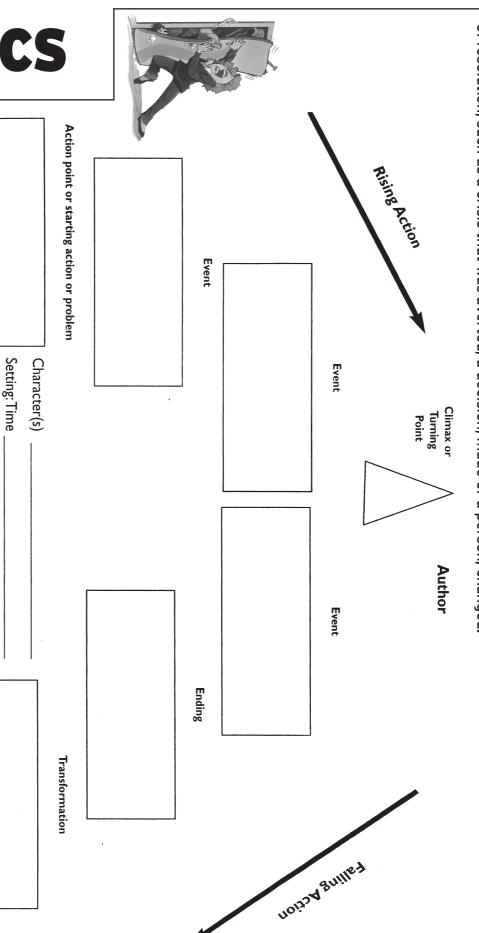
Comics

Place

of resolution, such as a crisis that was averted, a decision, made or a person, changed. Determine if a story line develops with rising and falling action, a turning point and some sort Follow a continuing story in comics. Save the strip over several days and create a comic book.

beginning to END

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Did you have difficulty finding a continuing strip that includes rising and falling action, turning point and ending? Which strip offers resolutions or dramatic endings?

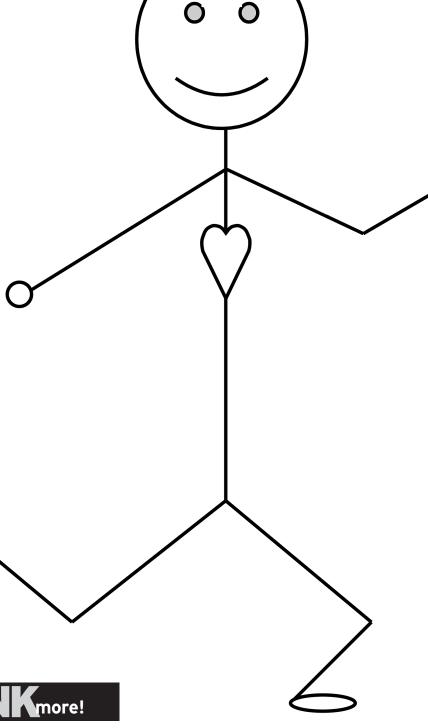
more!



Use the stick figure to describe a comic character of your choice. Connect spoken words to the mouth, ideas to the head, feelings to the heart and actions to the legs.

comic CHARACTER

Comics



From your newspaper, cut out items to dress your character and paste those onto the stick figure. Also, shop the newspaper for food, shelter and other items that interest your character. What do all of the choices you made tell you about the comic person's physical appearance, personality and the personal choices that shape his or her character?

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RELATIONSHIPS n comics

From comics, identify a main character and that person's family members and/or friends. Explain how they feel and act toward each other in the space provided.

family or friend family or friend character family or friend family or friend Copyright 2006, NC Press Foundation. All Rights reserve



Comics

THINK more!

How well do they get along? How can they improve their relationship?

Identify comics that fit these purposes:

PURPOSE of comics

Make me laugh (entertain)	Send a message (inform, argue or evaluate			

1. Choose a humorous comic or a comic meant to entertain. What makes it funny?

2. What message do specific comics convey?

3. Which comics accomplish both, entertain the reader AND send a message?

Comics

Do any comics deal with controversy? Should comics deal with controversial issues? Should certain issues be off limits?

more!

From the comics, choose an unfamiliar word, word play, idiom, slang, jargon or

interesting VORDS or phrases

other interesting language. Clip and paste your choice and then complete the organizer.

Clip and paste **comic**.

Using context and other sources, **define** the word or phrase.

Draw a picture to **illustrate** the word or phrase.

Comics



Any **synonym**?

word or PHRASE

Any **antonym**?

Use the word or phrase in a meaningful **sentence**.

THINK more!

If you chose a pun, slang, jargon or other figurative language, look for other examples in comics, other parts of the newspaper and other reading you do. 33

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Using the comics, conduct a census. Work with other students to make sure your count is accurate.

	an	
older	adults	
middle age	adults	
young	adults	
	18-21	
AGES	under 13 18-21	
CHARACTERS	males females	
# of CHA	males	
COMIC	STRIP	

						 $\overline{}$
animals						
older adults						
middle age adults						
young adults						
18-21						
AGES under 13 18-21						
# of CHARACTERS males females						
# of CHA males						
STRIP						



What services do the residents of your comic community require? Child care? Schools? Medical care? Are comics diverse? Do you think any group is underrepresented or overrepresented?





Do you want to know more about a particular comic and its cartoonist?

learn ORE about a favorite comic

What IS the comic?



Who IS the cartoonist?

What syndicate DISTRIBUTES the comic or cartoon?

Review the following questions. If you want to know more, add to the list. Then use the name of the comic or cartoon, the cartoonist and/or the syndicate to conduct an Internet search and answer the questions:

- 1. When was the comic strip first published? Has it changed over time?
- 2. Where does the cartoonist live and work?
- 3. What is the style and/approach taken by the cartoonist?
- 4. What sources does the cartoonist rely on?
- 5. What are his/her working habits?
- 6. Has the cartoonist received any awards or commendations?

Based on your reading the comic and your research, what is his or her purpose? Who is his or her audience? What do you think motivates the cartoonist? What does he or she hope to accomplish?