

AP Language and Composition
Summer Assignment 2016-2017

This summer you will read two texts: *Understanding Comics* (Scott McCloud) and a choice graphic novel. The first goal of this assignment is to read engaging books of academic merit that are ripe for closer analysis. I hope you are intrigued by the theories presented in *Understanding Comics* and moved by these noteworthy graphic novels. The second goal is to expand the way you think about texts and how authors make meaning both through images as well as language. Reading the graphic novel through the lens of McCloud's theories should help expose the choices authors employ to make meaning visually and textually.

All the work you do this summer will help prepare you for AP Language and Composition course and test. The concepts of analysis (visual and textual) will be used throughout the course, so take this summer work seriously. Time, effort, and thought put in over the summer will benefit you throughout the year.

Assignment Requirements:

1. Read and annotate *Understanding Comics*.
2. Read and annotate a choice text (from approved list)
3. Complete a focused analysis, connecting concepts from *Understanding Comics* with your choice graphic novel

Deadlines (Choice novel analysis due Monday, August 8 by 11:59:59 PM)

1. Complete the analysis and submit it to turnitin.com. Once you have been assigned your teacher, you can use the following information:

Mr. Pflieger: Class ID--12704732
 Password—gocards1

Ms. Waggoner: Class ID--12704759
 Password—gocards1

Ms. Goodwin: Class ID--12704746
 Password—gocards1

Step 1. Read and annotate *Understanding Comics* (McCloud)

First, read McCloud's theory of comics. Although it is a theory of comics, McCloud makes it playful and engaging. This book provides examples of many of the key moves authors/illustrators use to make meaning. Critical readers see symbols, archetypes, and patterns in texts. They notice the way authors use setting and character to develop ideas. This year, you will read texts (images, advertisement, speeches, clothing, status updates, essays, films, songs, etc.) as arguments in this deeper, complex way. You will apply the skills you develop over the summer to a broader understanding of rhetoric and composition and to who you are as a thinker, reader, and writer. These concepts will help you develop a sophisticated understanding of a range of texts that we will discuss throughout the year. **You should take notes as you read that are attentive to the key ideas in each chapter as well as to the sub-topics. You will APPLY these new ideas to your choice book.**

Be attentive to the key ideas in each chapter as well as to the sub-topics. Some key concepts to consider and apply include **juxtaposition, genre, inter-textuality (texts within the text), iconography, amplification/simplification, abstraction, closure, transitions (i.e., moment-to-moment, action-to-action, subject-to-subject, scene-to-scene, aspect-to-aspect, non-sequitur), time frame, panel (design, pattern, function), line and tone, word balloon, the relationship between language and text (i.e., additive, parallel, montage, interdependent, text-dependent, image-dependent, etc.), idea/purpose, form, idiom, structure, craft, surface, color, etc.** Don't be intimidated by the list; McCloud explains these in *Understanding Comics*.

**** This step must be completed before you are able to complete the rest of the summer assignment.****

Step 2: Read and analyze choice novel

After you've completed *Understanding Comics*, choose one of the following graphic novels to read and thoroughly annotate. Read reviews online and talk to a librarian or the AP teachers to decide which suits your tastes. **Do not choose a book you have previously read.**

As you read, carefully annotate the text, focusing on the ideas learned from reading *Understanding Comics*. See attached annotation guide.

The Complete Persepolis, Marjane Satrapi

American Born Chinese, Gene Yang

Blankets, Craig Thompson*

Watchmen, Alan Moore*

The Complete MAUS, Art Spiegelman

Vietnamerica, GB Tran

Are You My Mother, Alison Bechdel*

***CAUTION: These options contain events, language, and themes that are intended for mature readers. You, in conjunction with your parents or guardians, are responsible for selecting works that are appropriate to your particular tastes, values, and sensibilities.**

Step 3: Write the Focused Analysis

After reading, write a focused analysis on aspects of image, language, and composition in your choice graphic novel based on the concepts elucidated by McCloud in *Understanding Comics*.

Technical Requirements:

- Your response should be 450-550 words (typed, double space, 12-point font)
- Your response should connect at least two ideas or one chapter from *Understanding Comics* to your novel. You can include more than one idea if it is appropriate.
 - For example, one could analyze the panels on pages 23-4 through McCloud's ideas about abstraction, closure, and transitions. Another analysis might look at the panels on pages 77-9 in terms of color, line, and the relationships between image and text. And so on.
- Your response should contain **textual evidence, including page numbers**, from both your choice novel **and** *Understanding Comics* to support ideas.
- A response could focus on the choice novel as a whole, a specific section, a few different sections, a character, a place, or even a specific quote; however, throughout your response, **you MUST pull evidence from all areas of the choice text. It should be clear that you've read the entire book. Endings are especially important in most literature, so you should address the ending in your response.**

Submit your work by **August 8th** using the method described above.

Do not consult Sparknotes, Pink Monkey or any other online or print literary analysis tool to assist in your annotations. This work is to be your original thought. Use of any of these sites will be considered plagiarism and will earn you a zero for the project.

AP Language and Composition -- Annotation Guide

Annotation is an important element of close reading, and critical readers use it to effectively interact with a text. In the course, annotation will be an essential skill used throughout the year. While annotating, you can comment on and note a variety of elements in your text: compelling literary devices, particularly beautiful passages, puzzling questions, lines that are particularly important thematically, and ideas with which you agree or disagree. The point is for you to have a conversation with the text, and annotations help this process. It is important that you go beyond simply **summarizing** what you read and get to this level of interaction. **Most importantly, you should use annotation to apply McCloud's ideas about how meaning gets made in comics to a deeper understanding of your choice graphic novel.**

There are myriad methods for marking a text. Here are just a few:

Post-Its: Use post-its to mark key concepts and definitions (McCloud) and your applications of these (choice text). Color coding can help here as well.

Commenting: Note thoughts you have about events in the book, questions you might have, connections you draw, or anything you think is noteworthy. You can use the front and back covers for especially important notes, character lists, vocabulary, etc.

Underlining and/or Highlighting and/or Symbols: Underline or highlight major points, important statements, passages that speak to you. This can be combined with commenting so you know why you underlined the passage. Don't overuse. Different color highlighters can be used to note different elements or trace different themes or characters. *Sometimes this is distracting in a graphic text.* Create symbols to mean specific things. For example, use a "?" to notate something you find confusing. Or you could simply star a passage that you think is particularly important, etc.

Circling, Boxing, Other Shapes: Use shapes like underlining and highlighting. But each shape can be used to notate similar points that connect, such as specific themes, motifs, characters, or literary devices (or the concepts that McCloud outlines in *Understanding Comics*).

Journal notes: Keeping notes of important ideas in a journal, notebook, or google doc is another way to hold key ideas to go back to later.

Students often complain that annotation slows their reading. That's the point! If you hate annotating your first time through, feel free to go back and annotate after you've read a chapter or section. Reading a second time is a good idea anyway. THIS IS A SKILL WE WILL HONE ALL YEAR LONG!!! If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail your teacher throughout the summer.

AP Language and Composition
Choice Text Analysis Rubric

Name _____
Novel _____

_____ **A** Writing at this level demonstrates a complete and perceptive performance of the reading assignment. The response shows remarkable insight, understanding and control while connecting the concepts from *Understanding Comics* to the choice text. The author addresses and fully develops an understanding of challenging and sophisticated concepts. The evidence from both texts is thoughtfully chosen and aptly supports ideas. A tight link between supporting evidence and the author's intent is made. Ideas are communicated in a sophisticated, mature, and precise manner. The response avoids errors in mechanics, spelling, and usage.

_____ **B** Writing at this level demonstrates a complete performance of the reading assignment. The response shows some insight and understanding, while connecting the concepts from *Understanding Comics* to the choice text. The author addresses and develops an understanding of various concepts, but lacks the depth of thinking of an A-level response. The evidence from both texts is used to support ideas, but the links between supporting evidence and the author's intent may be unbalanced or underdeveloped at times. Ideas are communicated clearly. The response mostly avoids errors in mechanics, spelling, and usage.

_____ **C** Writing at this level demonstrates a cursory performance of the reading assignment. The response shows limited insight and understanding, and only loosely connects the concepts from *Understanding Comics* to the choice text. The concepts addressed by the author may be misunderstood or underdeveloped. Limited evidence is used to support ideas, and the links between supporting evidence and the author's intent may be unclear. Ideas are communicated unevenly and may be confusing at times. The response includes errors in mechanics, spelling, and usage.

_____ **D** Writing at this level demonstrates an incomplete performance of the reading assignment. The response shows very limited insight and understanding, and does not connect the concepts from *Understanding Comics* to the choice text. The concepts addressed by the author are misunderstood. Little or no evidence is used to support ideas. Ideas are underdeveloped or are ill conceived. Ideas are confusing at times, and responses are brief, not meeting the minimum requirements. The response includes frequent errors in mechanics, spelling, and usage.

_____ **F** Writing at this level demonstrates an incomplete and insincere performance of the reading assignment. The writer shows little effort to connect the concepts from *Understanding Comics* to the choice text. Minimum requirements of the assignment are not met, or the author plagiarized.