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**The Potential of Graphic Novels in the EFL
Classroom**

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ABSTRACT

This master's dissertation explores the pedagogical potential of the graphic novel *On a Sunbeam* by Tillie Walden as a teaching resource in the EFL classroom for 4th year of ESO students. The didactic unit presented adopts a multimodal and task-based approach to foster students' communicative competence, visual literacy, intercultural awareness, and creative thinking. Rooted in the educational framework established by the LOMLOE and BOCYL curricula, the proposal responds to current priorities such as learner autonomy, meaningful input, and inclusive methodologies that support varied learning styles. The unit combines collaborative reading, language reflection, color interpretation, and the creation and presentation of an original comic storyboard. Emphasis is placed on the integration of image and text, encouraging students to interpret visual narratives and produce their own multimodal content. Ultimately, the project demonstrates how graphic novels can enrich language learning by connecting linguistic development with visual communication and narrative creativity.

Key words: EFL classroom , Graphic novels, multimodal learning, *On a Sunbeam*, visual literacy, students engagement, task-based learning.

RESUMEN

Este Trabajo de Fin de Máster explora el potencial pedagógico de la novela gráfica *On a Sunbeam*, de Tillie Walden, como recurso didáctico en el aula de inglés para estudiantes de 4º de ESO. La unidad didáctica presentada adopta un enfoque multimodal y basado en tareas, con el objetivo de fomentar la competencia comunicativa del alumnado, la alfabetización visual, la conciencia intercultural y el pensamiento creativo. Anclada en el marco educativo establecido por la LOMLOE y el currículo autonómico del BOCYL, la propuesta responde a prioridades actuales como la autonomía del estudiante, el input significativo y la atención a la diversidad de estilos de aprendizaje. La unidad combina la lectura colaborativa, reflexión lingüística, análisis del color y creación y la presentación de una historia visual. En definitiva, el proyecto muestra cómo la novela gráfica puede enriquecer el aprendizaje de lenguas al conectar el desarrollo lingüístico con la comunicación visual y la creatividad narrativa.

Palabras clave: Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE), novela gráfica, aprendizaje multimodal, *On a Sunbeam*, alfabetización visual, motivación del alumnado, aprendizaje basado en tareas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	6
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
2.1. The role of literature and culture in language learning	8
2.2. History and definition of Comics and Graphic Novels	9
2.3. Theoretical approaches to multimodality in graphic novels	12
2.4. Pedagogical potential of graphic novels in the EFL classroom	13
2.5. The EFL/E2L classroom in LOMLOE	16
3. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL	19
3.1. Introduction to the didactic proposal	19
3.2. Context and Temporization	20
3.3. Objectives of the Proposal	21
3.4. Curricular Alignment and Legal Framework	21
3.5. Methodology.....	23
3.6. Sessions and Activities	24
3.7. Assessment.....	34
4. CONCLUSION.....	41
WORKS CITED	42
APPENDICES.....	45

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in how language education can adapt to the changing realities of communication, learning, and student engagement. Today's classrooms are no longer limited to printed texts or traditional grammar exercises. As young people grow up surrounded by screens, visual storytelling, and diverse forms of media, educators are challenged to rethink how they teach language in ways that feel both meaningful and relevant to students' lives. One response to this shift has been the gradual introduction of multimodal texts, such as graphic novels, into the curriculum. These texts, which combine visual and written language, open new possibilities for comprehension, creativity, and critical thinking—especially when used in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

This project explores the use of the graphic novel *On a Sunbeam*, by American author Tillie Walden, as the basis for a didactic unit aimed at students in the fourth year of *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* (ESO). The novel, which blends science fiction with emotional storytelling, offers a rich narrative that touches on identity, memory, teamwork, and belonging. Its structure relies heavily on visual elements and shifts in color to guide the reader through time and space, making it an excellent resource for developing both language and interpretive skills. The story's non-linear timeline and inclusive cast of characters, including a queer protagonist, also create opportunities for meaningful classroom conversations around diversity and emotional awareness.

Despite the growing popularity of graphic novels in popular culture and their increasing presence in language arts programs, their use in EFL contexts—especially in secondary education—remains limited. Many textbooks still focus on linear reading passages and isolated grammar practice, often failing to connect with students' interests or lived experiences. This didactic unit aims to address that gap by using a visually engaging and thematically rich literary text to promote language development in a way that feels accessible and authentic to teenage learners.

The proposal is also grounded in the principles outlined in current educational legislation, including Real Decreto 217/2022 and Decreto 39/2022 for Castilla y León. These documents emphasize the importance of developing communicative competence, promoting inclusive education, and integrating cross-curricular values such as emotional literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding. The teaching unit presented

here aligns with those goals by encouraging students to engage with literature not only as a language-learning tool, but as a medium for self-expression and reflection.

This TFM is structured in four main sections. Following this introduction, the theoretical framework presents key concepts related to literature in language teaching, multimodal literacy, and the educational potential of graphic novels. The third section is dedicated to the didactic proposal itself, including the unit's objectives, methodology, detailed activities, assessment criteria, and rubrics. Finally, the project concludes with a reflection on its possible classroom application and broader relevance within today's educational landscape.

The motivation behind this project comes from a personal interest in how storytelling, especially in graphic form, can foster deeper connections between language and learning. It is hoped that this unit not only supports language development, but also encourages students to think critically, express themselves creatively, and engage with literature in a format that speaks to their reality.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purpose of contextualizing the making of this proposal unit, I will be giving context to the history of graphic novels and their use in the ESL classroom, analyzing the benefits they could contribute to the learning process, and why they should be used more frequently.

2.1. The role of literature and culture in language learning

When studying a language, it seems nearly impossible not to encounter aspects that are inherently linked to the culture associated with that language. Culture is generally referred to as the integrated system of values, beliefs, customs, language, art, rituals, traditions, and social institutions that characterize a particular group or society. It encompasses the shared ways of life and patterns of behavior that are transmitted across generations and evolve over time within specific historical and social contexts. (Cambridge University Press Dictionary, n.d.; Oxford Advanced American Dictionary, n.d.; American Psychological Association Dictionary, 2023). In particular, one of the main approaches to culture done in language teaching is through literature, as this medium assists in both linguistic and intercultural aspects.

Culture and literature are inextricably linked and have a mutually reinforcing influence (Hesaraki, 2014). Some experts affirm that literature reflects society's ideas, sentiments, and values and acts as a vehicle for passing down cultural ideals from one generation to the next (Hesaraki, 2014). However, others such as Lazar (1993) disagree with such a general idea, and he suggests that what is commonly seen as "good literature" only exhibits a particular perspective during a concrete period of time, and therefore the focus should be shifted towards pieces that represent "popular culture", as they might bring greater interest (p. 16). Even so, there is a contextualization of culture within literature, and when dealing with literary texts inside a classroom it is imperative that educators guide and indicate learners on how to interpret information, develop and apply their critical thinking abilities, with the objective of expanding their emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993, p.19). In contemporary language teaching, this understanding of literature has expanded to encompass multimodal forms such as comics and graphic novels, which combine verbal and visual elements to convey culturally rich narratives.

It is for this reason that literature should be one of the main elements included in the process of learning a language, as it benefits the learners in enhancing their grammatical and intercultural abilities (Mart, 2018). Moreover, it fosters the creative process by broadening imagination and exposing readers to diverse perspectives, thereby improving their ability to articulate original ideas through words and images (Dio & Estremera, 2023). In addition, when reading a literary piece, the reader must use different senses in order to properly construct meaning (Altun, 2018) and use of large parts of the brain, which undoubtedly shows the level of neurocognitive and emotional processing (Jacobs, 2015) that is used in the action of reading, not just literature, but even simple words. What is more is that these benefits learners acquire when reading, although mostly similar, could have variations depending on the category of the literary work. Dr. Benzoukh (2017) explains that while short stories can make reading easier due to being simpler and enhance worldviews, poetry helps students “become familiar with the suprasegmental aspects of the target language, such as stress, pitch and intonation” (p. 250).

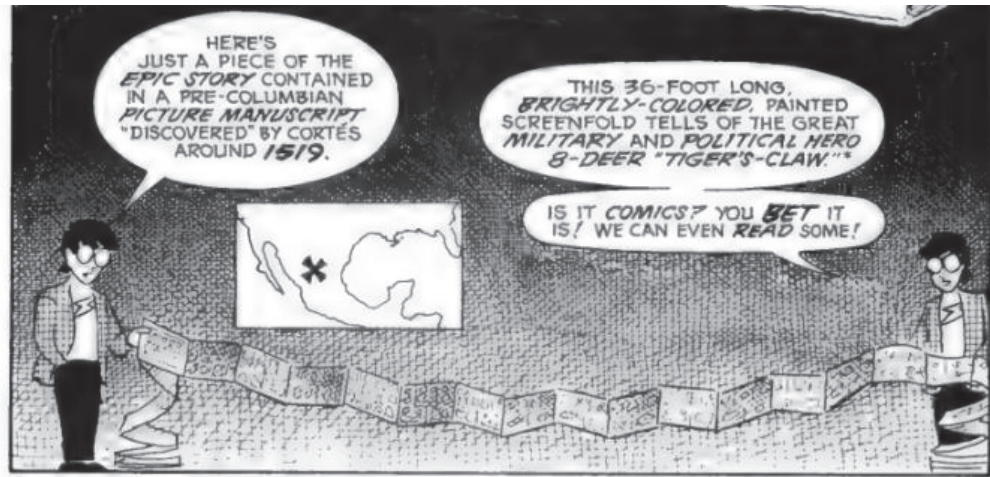
However, there are two literary genres that add additional cognitive complexity to the reading process: comics and graphic novels. These types of literary mediums require the reader to engage cognitive processes that surpass conventional approaches to understanding printed texts, by entailing a multimodality that involves linguistic, visual and spatial resources (Jimenez & Meyer, 2016, p. 427). Consequently, for the purpose of this master's dissertation, in the next sections the value of graphic novels as multimodal tools has been analyzed and evaluated for their potential as a language learning resource to use in the EFL classroom.

2.2. History and definition of Comics and Graphic Novels

To better understand the potential of graphic novels, it is essential to first examine their origin and conceptual foundations as a literary medium. The term “comic” and “graphic novel” were a controversial topic since their creation, as not only was the comic seen as distasteful and childish for many years, but the differentiation of a comic and a graphic novel as separate things created quite the debate. The comic came first and therefore is commonly used as an umbrella term in the western world, and it envelops all the different genres and styles within the medium (Mortimore, 2009, p. 63). McCloud

(1993) defined comics as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence” (p. 9) and suggested (see Figure 1) that said definition could be similarly used to describe many ancient arts such as pictorial Egyptian hieroglyphics or Mexican codex, therefore implying that the concept of what it is known as comic now, has existed for centuries:

Figure 1. McCloud's introduction to the history of comics



Note. Adapted from *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (p. 10), by S. McCloud, 1993, Kitchen Sink Press. Copyright 1993 by Scott McCloud.

He also theorized about how comics' transitions between panels assist the medium into developing storytelling and promoted the idea that visual art in comics can add and subtract information as it pleases, therefore, authors should be mindful of finding balance between the information they transmit through panels. Not only that, but the author suggests that “as closure between panels becomes more intense, reader interpretation becomes far more elastic” (p. 86), hence, comics (and graphic novels) encourage the reader to imagine and interpret an entire story relying only on the visual sense, creating a dance between what is seen and what is not that is exclusive to this literary medium:

Comic is a mono-sensory medium. It relies on only one of the senses to convey a world of experience... Within these panels, we can only convey information visually. But between panels, none of our senses are required at all. Which is why all of our senses are engaged! (p. 89).

Other authors such as Hatfield developed the theory of word-image to reveal the significance between the visual and verbal components in comics, emphasizing that their interaction produces meaning that neither element could convey alone. Mortimore quotes Hatfield (2009, p. 133) in what the comic represents, simplifying it into a symbiosis of the word/image dichotomy, and develops the idea that comics consider both form and

functionality, therefore engaging the reader in a pleasant experience (p. 65). Comics are a mixture of both words and images, and do not focus on only one, they are “their own thing: a medium with its own devices, its own innovators, its own cliches, its own genres and traps and liberties” (Wolk, 2007, p.14).

On the other hand, the origin of the term “graphic novel” is often attributed to Eisner and his work *A Contract With God*, as he narrates in his symposium at the 2002 University of Florida Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels:

I completed the book, *A Contract With God*, and I called the president of Bantam Books (...) this was a very busy guy who didn't have much time to speak to you. So I called him and said, “There's something I want to show you, something I think is very interesting.” He said “Yeah, well, what is it?” A little man in my head popped up and said, “For Christ's sake stupid, don't tell him it's a comic. He'll hang up on you.” So, I said, “It's a graphic novel.” He said, “Wow! That sounds interesting. Come on up. (paragraphs 13-14)

Moreover, Eisner (1985) defined the graphic novel as “sequential art, the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea” (p. 5). Since then, the debate over whether graphic novels are simply a “fancier” version of comics or a distinct medium in their own right has persisted within the comic industry. Mortimore (2009) suggests that the term graphic novel is often employed to distance the form from the perceived triviality of comics, in an effort to change the view of the medium and make it more respectable. Regardless of that being a fundamental truth for everyone or not, the graphic novel is mostly defined as a longer and more ample version of the comic, opening the possibility of creating longer and more meaningful stories, to the point of being able to be compared to prose (Yildirim, 2013, Başal et al. , 2016, Hecke, 2011, Smith 2005). These extended narratives encompass a variety of genres ranging from horror, sci-fi, adventure and fantasy to autobiographies, fiction, history and more. In addition, the images that accompany said narration also vary in style, as each author has their own art style, making graphic novels stand out in their uniqueness and individuality.

This unique combination of verbal and visual storytelling has inspired numerous theoretical approaches to understanding how graphic novels create meaning. Among the most influential are word-image theories and multimodality frameworks, which will be explored in the following section.

2.3. Theoretical approaches to multimodality in graphic novels

Word-image theories provide a valuable framework for analyzing how readers engage with the multimodal nature of graphic novels. Far from being simple combinations of text and image, these works require the integration of different modes to construct meaning, a process that activates distinct cognitive and interpretive strategies.

Non-visual (meaning, without images) literary works involve, as mentioned before, different cognitive activities in order to understand its whole meaning. Comics and graphic novels extend these activities to make the reader integrate “linguistic, visual, and spatial resources to co-create the story” (Jimenez & Meyer, 2016). The multimodal literacy offered by graphic novels is analyzed in various perspectives, but two of the most significant theoretical models are the semiotic systems and the expanded four resources model developed by Serafini (2012), both of which are examined by Jiménez and Meyer (2016).

In their study, Jiménez and Meyer (2016) first introduce the semiotic approach. They paraphrase Chandler (2017), stating that “in its simplest form, semiotic resources are communicated and interpreted in historical and sociocultural contexts. As such, semiotic resources gain their meaning through interactions with cultural contexts” (p. 426). Therefore, it can be said that graphic novels transmit meaning through three semiotic systems: linguistic (letters, words, vocabulary), visual (images, color, font), and spatial (position, layout, panel, direction) (p. 427). Furthermore, Meyer and Jiménez emphasize in another study that “graphic novels require the reader to make meaning from the structures of sequential art, including visual, spatial, and linguistic cues; they are a form of multimodal text” (2017, p. 154).

Complementing the semiotic model of four resources first introduced by Freebody and Luke (1999), Serafini’s (2012) expanded model (EFRM) shifts the traditional role of the reader to that of a “reader-viewer, attending to the visual images, structures, and designs of multimodal texts along with printed text” (p. 153). In this model, the reader engages in four key functions: navigator (paying attention to grammar, visual design, and structures), interpreter (actively constructing meaning by engaging with text and image), designer (deciding how to read and interpret the multimodal text), and interrogator (critically analyzing sociocultural aspects) (p. 153). Understanding these models not only clarifies the interpretive demands of reading graphic novels but also highlights the literacy

skills students develop through this process, particularly as they learn to decode meaning across linguistic, visual, and spatial modes.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that the interaction between these modes is governed by different logics. As Kress (2003) notes, “visual images are governed by the logic of spatiality, organized arrangements and simultaneity”, while written language follows a temporal, sequential logic (cited in Serafini, 2012, p. 153). As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) observe, the visual grammar of images conveys particular perspectives on experience and social interaction, contributing actively to the construction of meaning within the text. In this sense, images are not merely complementary to the linguistic dimension, but an essential component of the multimodal narrative.

Understanding word-image theories and the role of multimodality is therefore essential for appreciating how graphic novels engage readers cognitively and interpretively. Such approach aligns with the broader shift toward multiliteracies (Freebody and Luke, 1990), which emphasize the need for learners to engage with multiple modes of meaning-making in increasingly multimodal and digital environments. This conceptual foundation provides the necessary framework for exploring their potential applications in the EFL classroom, which will be analyzed in the following section.

2.4. Pedagogical potential of graphic novels in the EFL classroom

One of the objectives of this master’s dissertation is to analyze the benefits of using graphic novels in the EFL classroom. This section will explore the pedagogical potential of graphic novels, particularly in developing communicative competences, intercultural awareness and learner motivation. This focus aligns with one of the key objectives outlined in the BOCYL framework, which will be explored in the next section: the promotion of communicative competence through exposure to a variety of text types. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of engaging students in reading, interpreting and producing diverse forms of discourse, ranging from traditional narrative texts to more contemporary and visually rich formats, in line with 21st century literacy demands.

When considering the benefits of using graphic novels in a language classroom, we must focus on our students’ abilities and needs. Burmak (2008) claims that it is necessary for students to read and interpret both words and pictures, and adds: “To be

visually literate, they must learn to ‘read’ (consume/interpret) and ‘write’ (produce/use) visually rich communications. They must be able to move gracefully and fluently between text and images, between literal and figurative worlds” (p. 5). This idea is reinforced by Weiner and Syma (2013), who argue that “the combination of images with text in order for students to understand and interpret the world is probably the most important aspect of teaching literacy in the 21st century” (p. 5). Graphic novels offer precisely this combination, requiring students to decode meaning across multiple semiotic systems (seen in section 2.3), reflecting how they interact with texts in both digital and real-world contexts. In this regard, multimodal texts serve as powerful pedagogical tools, blending visual, linguistic and spatial elements (Jiménez & Meyer, 2016, p. 427), and enabling learners to process language in more dynamic, contextualized, and engaging ways. The dual processing of both written text and images supports comprehension, by providing contextual cues that enhance vocabulary acquisition (Erten & Karakaş, 2007), inferencing skills, and understanding of narrative structures. In many cases, it has been proven to be most effective: “In general, multimodal learning has been shown to be more effective than traditional, unimodal learning. Adding visuals to verbal (text and/or auditory) learning can result in significant gains in basic and higher-order learning” (Fadel, 2008, p. 14).

Another cornerstone of the curriculum is intercultural competence, which is essential for forming global citizens capable of understanding, respecting, and engaging with cultural diversity. In line with this, the BOCYL stresses that FL teaching must not be limited to linguistic structures, but should also foster empathy, critical awareness, and openness to different worldviews. Within this framework, graphic novels offer a particularly valuable resource, as their narratives often delve into experiences shaped by migration, identity conflict, historical trauma, or cultural hybridity; contexts that can help invite students to confront unfamiliar realities and reflect on their own assumptions and learned stereotypes. Mortimore (2009) affirms that “literature was only effective for my students if it had the ability to ask them the difficult questions and penetrate into their lives in profound ways” (p. 92), and quotes Hooks’ talk on cultural criticism and how media is able to “take control of our imaginations to guide our perceptions of social reality” (p. 93). Works such as *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi or *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang serve as entry points for exploring complex questions about belonging, representation, and cultural negotiation, while also providing a narrative structure that is accessible and emotionally engaging. Furthermore, the different ways of portraying

representations and contextual information can be used in an interdisciplinary way, as graphic novels are closely connected to art, and in other cases, to other subjects such as history and ethics (*Maus* by Art Spiegelman, 1986) or science (*The Stuff of Life: A Guide to Genetics and DNA* by Mark Schultz, 1955). Issa developed the idea that “comics are powerful modes of expression enabling teachers and students to express empathy and explore others’ cultures and history through vivid compositions of image and text” (p. 311), proving that graphic novels can offer a multimodal and interdisciplinary approach to the EFL class that engages students in the language learning process.

As Hecke (2011) suggests, the use of graphic novels in the classroom can lead to research-based activities focused on different cultures, encouraging students to develop intercultural skills and reflect critically on stereotypes and cultural differences, “By changing their perspectives, students can attain socio-cultural knowledge, develop respect, learn to understand divergent opinions or habits” (p. 655). Likewise, Wilson (qtd. in Issa, 2017) underlines the capacity of comics to foster empathy and historical understanding through their integration of image and text. These works do more than transmit cultural content, they engage learners on both emotional and cognitive levels, making intercultural learning more meaningful and personally relevant. In this sense, graphic novels respond directly to LOMLOE’s emphasis on inclusive education and democratic coexistence, turning literary experiences into opportunities for dialogue, civic awareness, and ethical reflection.

Beyond their cultural relevance, graphic novels play a significant role in supporting language and literacy development in the EFL classroom. Their hybrid nature enables learners to engage with a language in context, which enhances both comprehension and long-term retention. As Başal et al. (2016) note, the combination of text and images in graphic novels provide contextual support that enhances vocabulary learning, particularly with idioms, phrasal verbs, and informal expressions. Because these lexical items often pose challenges for EFL learners, encountering them within a visual narrative allows students to infer meaning more easily and retain new vocabulary more effectively. Similarly, Öz and Efecioglu (2015) point out that graphic novels reduce cognitive overload, making them particularly accessible for low-proficiency learners who benefit from visual reinforcement during reading. Krashen’s (1989) Input Hypothesis supports this notion, proposing that comprehensible input leads to natural language acquisition. In addition to supporting receptive skills, these types of text promote essential

reading strategies such as prediction, inference, sequencing, and synthesis (Calo, 2010; Mortimore, 2009). In this way, graphic novels scaffold reading comprehension and provide exposure to more authentic, diverse linguistic input than traditional textbook materials alone.

2.5. The EFL/E2L classroom in LOMLOE

According to the Real Decreto 39/2022 (BOCYL), high school students are expected to reach certain competencies in different areas, putting some of the emphasis on the communicative and cultural aspects, as shown in Article 7th:

According to article 11.1 of the Real Decreto 217/2022, of the 29th of march, the key competences are the following: a) Linguistic communication competence, b) Plurilingual competence, (...), h) Awareness and cultural expression competence. Competence and stage objectives are closely related. It is understood that full control of each of them (key competences) contributes to the achievement of the objectives, and vice versa (p. 48858)¹.

Said abilities and competences are the main objectives of the FL subject, as described in the document as having the ultimate goal of “acquiring the basic communicative competence in a foreign language, as well as the development and enrichment of the intercultural awareness of the alumni” (p. 49246). It is also explained that “the communication between different languages is necessary in the development of a democratic culture in this global, intercultural and plurilingual reality that keeps growing” (p. 49245). In this way, it seems like communication and language acquisition play a big role in the intellectual and mature growth of high school students, as it helps them cultivate empathy and curiosity for other social and cultural experiences, as well as fostering respect, tolerance and solidarity (p. 49246).

If we focus on the specific competences of the curriculum of the subject, which, in simple terms, is the content that must be applied in our class, we can notice on the first point “1. Understand and interpret the general meaning and most significant details of clear texts” that there is a lack of specification on the type of texts (literary or non-literary) that should be used in class, which begs the question, which texts should we be using in class? If we continue reading the description of this point, we will reach a statement similar to what a multimodal literary work implies: “interpretation of forms of

¹ All the translations of the official documents (BOCYL and BOE) were made by me.

representation (writing, images, graphs, tables, diagrams, sounds, gestures, etc.), as well as contextual information (linguistic elements)” (p. 49252). Therefore, we can assume that graphic novels, which are multimodal literary pieces, can (and arguably should) be incorporated in the EFL classroom.

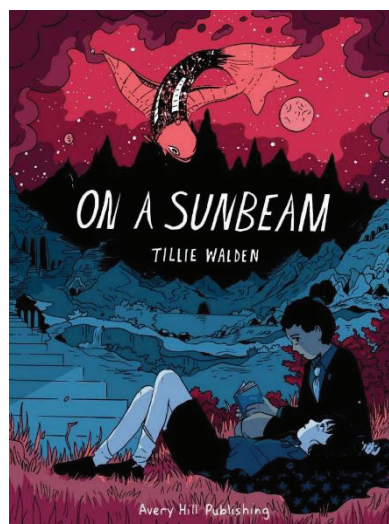
Both the BOCYL and the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) show the importance of a communicative approach to the teaching of a foreign language. The CEFR explains the three components that are most important to this approach, starting with the linguistic competence. This competence is related to the grammatical knowledge of a language as a system, and it considers reaching quality of said lingual knowledge, cognitive organization, and the way information is archived and accessed (p. 13). Another fundamental factor of the communicative approach is sociolinguistic competence, understood as the ability to comprehend and use social conventions belonging to the (or one of the) cultures of the spoken language, even if by accident. Finally, the last element is the pragmatic competence, which is related to the functionality of linguistic resources, identification of the different types of texts, coherence... (p. 14). The various aspects that compose the communicative approach promote the use of the language as a means to achieve a significative and real exchange between people, and this can be achieved through multimodal literature.

From an educational standpoint, the multimodal approach that graphic novels offer resonates with BOCYL’s emphasis on incorporating authentic and meaningful materials, digital and visual literacy and tasks that develop both comprehension and expression. As Carter (cited in Burger, 2018) notes, graphic novels provide “effective learning opportunities over a wide range of subjects and benefit various student populations, from hesitant reader to gifted students”. These texts invite active engagement, stimulate motivation, and offer linguistic input embedded in narrative and social contexts.

In conclusion, the integration of graphic novels in the EFL classroom may present a powerful and multifaceted contribution to foreign language education. Their integration in the EFL classroom aligns closely with the objectives established by the CEFR and the BOCYL curriculum, promoting not only linguistic competence but also intercultural awareness and understanding, emotional engagement and critical literacy. By combining accessibility with intellectual and affective depth, graphic novels support learners across diverse proficiency levels and learning profiles, they foster vocabulary development, reading comprehension and metacognitive strategies, while also creating space for

empathy, reflection and inclusive dialogue. Ultimately, these texts represent a pedagogical tool capable of bridging curricular demands with student interests, making language learning both meaningful and motivating. This theoretical foundation supports the analysis that follows, which seeks to present a didactic proposal that uses the graphic novel *On a Sunbeam* by Tillie Walden (Figure 2), in order to study the benefits and possibilities that graphic novels can offer to the EFL classroom.

Figure 2. *Book cover of the graphic novel On a Sunbeam by Tillie Walden*



Note. Sourced from Comic Book News UK, 2019

3. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

3.1. Introduction to the didactic proposal

This didactic proposal introduces the first chapter of the graphic novel *On a Sunbeam* by young American author Tillie Walden for use in the EFL classroom. The aim of the proposal is to explore the possibilities that graphic novels can offer to the language learning process, from improving students' communicative competence to fostering their intercultural awareness and self-expression. This unit is designed in accordance with the objectives outlined in the current BOCYL curriculum for E.S.O, particularly those related to linguistic competence, intercultural understanding and learner motivation.

On a Sunbeam is an award-winning science fiction graphic novel, first published as a webcomic between 2016 and 2017, and officially released in 2018 by First Second Books. The story follows Mia, a young queer girl who joins the crew of the *Aktis*, in a fictional setting where humans have colonized outer space and travel via fish-like spaceships through a variety of asteroids, planets, and floating buildings. The story is non-linear, as there are jumps between past and present timelines with clearly indicated flashbacks. It explores many themes that are particularly relevant to teenage readers, including (queer-centered) love stories, bullying, academic struggles, and challenges in family and friendship dynamics.

The multimodality characteristic of graphic novels is clearly evident in this story, as dialogue is the primary textual mode and the emphasis on images and words varies on each page, with some containing extended character conversations, while others are entirely visual. Moreover, the grammar and vocabulary used in this first chapter of the novel specifically are not overly complex and can be applied to a fourth year ESO class, which is the target group chosen for this didactic proposal. On the other hand, the artistic style may appeal to students through its cartoon-like characters, scenic backgrounds, and the symbolic use of color to highlight emotional shifts and scene transitions, such as flashbacks. It is important to note that the panels' structure is that common to most comics and graphic novels, where the page is usually divided into different panels that are read from left to right, starting from the top, so most students that are familiar with comics would not have much problem reading it. Lastly, although the graphic novel as a whole offers a complete story with many valuable topics, this proposal focuses on the first

chapter which provides an insight into the main themes and characters of the story, creating a solid base for future development.

To summarize, one of the main goals of this proposal is to contribute to current educational needs by offering a proposal that can increase student engagement and encourage language use in meaningful contexts. Graphic novels provide an accessible yet sophisticated tool for exploring identity, emotions, and communication—areas that benefit both learners and educators. By incorporating visual storytelling, group work, and creative tasks, the unit also strengthens classroom cohesion and offers a model that can be adapted to diverse educational settings.

3.2. Context and Temporization

The didactic unit proposed was designed for a group of fourth year of *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* (4º ESO) students, within any public-school setting in Castilla y León. It is structured to take place in a classroom environment equipped with standard teaching resources, including access to digital tools such as a computer, projector or digital board and internet connection; it is also required that the school has a computer room and allows students to bring mobile devices to class for learning purposes. Additionally, the proposal has been created with the intention of being adaptable to a variety of educational contexts, allowing for flexibility according to the specific characteristics and socioeconomic background of the school and target group, by allowing the families to choose between buying the novel, or to print the first chapter on their own, as it can be downloaded for free on-line. It is important to note that this unit incorporates topics that support inclusivity, emotional development, and gender identity awareness, in alignment with the cross-curricular themes emphasized in the LOMLOE:

The fourth competence area, which is more cross-curricular and dedicated to emotional education, focuses on developing sensibility and emotional awareness, and the management of emotions within the framework of reflection on values and ethical, civic, and ecosocial issues. (BOE, p. 41646)

In addition, the proposal consists of seven sessions, each lasting approximately fifty minutes, to be carried over the course of three to four weeks, depending on the scheduling possibilities of the English department, and access to computers. The distribution of sessions allows time for reading discussions, creative productions, and

reflective evaluation. Lastly, is it meant to be implemented in any semester, and timing can be adapted as needed to avoid interfering with exam period.

3.3. Objectives of the Proposal

The general aim of this didactic unit is to integrate a multimodal literary text into the English language classroom in a way that enhances students' communicative competence, critical thinking, and engagement with themes of identity, diversity, and emotional expression.

More specifically, the proposal seeks to develop students' ability to interpret and analyze multimodal texts by focusing on the interaction between language and image, as exemplified in the graphic novels *On a Sunbeam* (CE1, CE5). It also aims to improve both spoken and written communication through interactive group discussions and oral productions (CE2, CE3). Another key objective is to raise awareness of informal and colloquial language, encouraging learners to recognize variation in tone and register and to reflect on how language use shapes context and perspective (CE3, CE6).

In addition, the unit is designed to promote empathy and emotional awareness by inviting students to explore color symbolism and interpretation, character dynamics, and personal experiences within the story (CE5, CE6). Creativity and collaborative learning are encouraged through activities such as storyboarding, visual creation and narrative development in groups (CE2, CE4). The proposal also places emphasis on fostering respect for diversity by exposing students to queer characters and narratives (CE5, CE6). Finally, it aims to cultivate learner autonomy by giving students space to generate original interpretations and creative continuations of the story (CE4, CE6).

3.4. Curricular Alignment and Legal Framework

Reference to LOMLOE and BOCYL, key competences, relevant contents evaluation criteria, learning standards, cross-cutting themes

This didactic proposal is aligned with the current educational framework established by the *Real Decreto 217/2022, de 29 de Marco, por el que se establece la ordenación y las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*, which defines the minimum requirement for *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* (ESO)

nationwide. This legal text, published in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (BOE), defines a competence-based model focused on meaningful learning, personal development, and emotional well-being. It is further developed in the autonomous region of Castilla y León through the *DECRETO 39/2022, de 29 de septiembre, por el que se establece la ordenación y el currículo de la educación secundaria obligatoria en la Comunidad de Castilla y León*, which adapts these principles to the regional context and curriculum.

Within the foreign language area, both documents emphasize the importance of communicative competence, intercultural reflection, and the use of authentic materials. The curriculum encourages the integration of emotionally and culturally relevant texts that promote student motivation, creativity, and social awareness.

This didactic proposal contributes to the development of several key competencies as outlined in the national and regional curricula:

- CCL: Linguistic communication.
- CD: Digital competence.
- CPSAA: Personal, social, and learning to learn competence.
- CEC: Citizenship competence.
- CCEC: Cultural awareness and expression.

In particular, it addresses the specific competences for the foreign language subject established in the Decreto 39/2022 for fourth year of ESO:

- CE1: Comprehend oral, written, and multimodal texts.
- CE2: Produce coherent oral and written texts in diverse communicative situations.
- CE3: Interact appropriately in conversations and classroom exchanges.
- CE4: Mediate between texts and speakers using linguistic and cognitive strategies.
- CE5: Appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity through exposure to varied texts.
- CE6: Reflect on language use and personal learning strategies.

These competences are addressed throughout the unit via activities that involves reading, visual interpretation, oral presentation, storytelling, and collaborative tasks using digital tools such as Mentimeter. The proposal also responds to cross-curricular priorities

set out in the Real Decreto 217/2022, including emotional education, ethical reflection, and respect for diversity. As noted in Section 3.2, the national curriculum highlights the importance of helping students develop emotional awareness and values-based reflection across all subjects. While the unit does not directly teach inclusion as a core content area, the use of *On a Sunbeam* introduces diverse characters and relationships, creating opportunities for discussion around identity, representation, and empathy. These moments are not assessed explicitly, but could be expected, and serve to foster a respectful and socially conscious classroom environment.

3.5. Methodology

The methodology behind this didactic unit is based on a communicative, task-based approach that views language as a social and functional tool. In this framework, learners engage with the target language in meaningful contexts, using it to explore ideas, express emotions, and collaborate with others. The proposal prioritizes real communication and personal involvement over mechanical accuracy or decontextualized grammar.

This proposal draws on the principles of Task-Based Language (TBLT), in which students learn by doing. Throughout the sessions, learners are guided through tasks that integrate reading, listening, speaking, writing, and visual interpretation. Each activity is designed to support not only linguistic development, but also cognitive and creative skills. The progression from receptive to productive tasks culminates in a final presentation, reinforcing the process-based nature of language learning.

Theoretical support comes primarily from Stephen Krashen, whose Input Hypothesis supports the use of authentic, comprehensible materials that engage learners emotionally and cognitively. The graphic novel *On a Sunbeam* serves as the central text for this purpose: its accessible language, visual support, and relatable themes make it a rich and motivating input source. Additionally, the unit reflects principles of multimodal literacy, drawing on the work of Frank Serafini and Jiménez & Meyer, who emphasize the need to teach students how to interpret meaning across multiple modes: image, text, layout, and color.

Activities are structured around cooperative learning formats, including pair and group work, whole-class discussions, and collaborative creative projects. Students are

encouraged to take an active role in interpreting the story, creating their own narratives, and reflecting on language use. Digital tools such as Mentimeter and Canva are incorporated to increase engagement and promote digital competence, in line with curricular recommendations.

The teacher's role in this methodology is that of a facilitator and guide, who supports students in using the language for real expression, encourages curiosity and critical thinking, and creates a respectful, inclusive classroom environment. Students are positioned as active participants, responsible for generating meaning, making decisions, and expressing their ideas both linguistically and visually.

This approach fosters language acquisition, creativity, and learner autonomy, while making space for emotional and cultural engagement, all of which contribute to a more holistic and motivating learning experience.

3.6. Sessions and Activities

This didactic proposal is composed of seven sessions, each with two activities that work on different aspects of the graphic novel. The first session functions as an introduction to graphic novels as a literary tool that can be used in the EFL classroom, while the second session deals with the content of the chosen novel. The third and fourth session have the objective of dealing with content related to text and image separately. Finally, in the fifth, sixth and seventh session, the students will apply the previously acquired information to create and present a continuation to the first chapter of the novel.

The following chart provides a view of the didactic proposal as a whole before descriptions of all the activities are presented. All the detailed charts of the didactic unit, sessions and activities can be found in the Appendices, as well as the materials for each activity.

	Activity 1	Activity 2
Session 1	Introductory survey: About Graphic Novels	What are Graphic Novels?
Session 2	Reading – Predicting the Story	Reading & Discussion

Session 3	Understanding Informal Language	Speech Swap
Session 4	Visual Thinking Routines	Analyzing color
Session 5	What Happens Next?	Storyboard Visual
Session 6	Finishing the storyboard	How do you present it?
Session 7	Presentation	Final Thoughts

SESSION 1

In this session, pre-reading and self-reflective activities are conducted. Students are introduced to the concept of graphic novels and will be asked to activate their prior knowledge and opinions through a survey and a guided presentation.

Activity 1: Introductory survey: About Graphic Novels

This initial activity serves as a diagnostic and affective introduction to the unit. Students complete a short-written survey in which they reflect on their past exposure to comics and graphic novels, their reading habits, and their thoughts on using such texts in the classroom. The goal is to activate prior knowledge and engage learners by connecting the new content to their existing interests. Methodologically, it draws from affective-humanistic approaches and learner-centered practices by emphasizing emotional response, autonomy, and reflective thinking. The teacher will have surveys printed out and explain that there are no correct answers, only honest opinions. This activity fosters initial self-awareness and sets the tone for open dialogue in later sessions.

Activity 2: What are Graphic Novels?

This activity provides students with the conceptual foundations needed to engage with graphic novels in an educational setting. Through a visually supported teacher presentation, learners are introduced to the definition, features, and diversity of graphic novels, including common genres and educational value. The session emphasizes student curiosity and interaction through questions like “Do you think graphic novels can help you learn?” And by showing the cover of *On a Sunbeam* for open discussion.

Methodologically, this task aligns with visual literacy and the communicative approach, fostering meaning-making through multimodal input and guided participation. The teacher will show a clear and engaging visual presentation and encourage spontaneous contributions and reactions to the images shown.

SESSION 2

For this session, students will work in pairs to make predictions about the graphic novel by analyzing the first three pages of the book. Afterward, they will collaboratively read the full first chapter and discuss key narrative elements. The purpose of this session is for students to develop reading strategies through image-based conjecture and group discussion.

Activity 1: Before Reading — Predicting the Story

This activity introduces students to the graphic novel's visual narrative through a prediction task using only the images from the first three pages, with all dialogue removed. Students will work in pairs to interpret visual cues and discuss what the story might be about, activating their interpretive skills and creative thinking. After the discussion, each pair submits two keywords via Mentimeter that summarize their hypothesis that will be revised later in the session.

The main objective is to develop visual literacy, narrative inference, and oral communication in an engaging and collaborative way. The task aligns with Task-Based Learning, as it encourages the competition of a meaningful communicative objective, and with the communicative approach, as students must interact, negotiate meaning, and express hypothesis. It also supports multimodal and inquiry-based learning, as students rely on images to build narrative understanding. The teacher should prepare digital access to the dialogue-free pages, introduce guiding questions, and manage the Mentimeter response tool to collect group input.

Activity 2: Reading & Discussion

In this activity, students read the full first chapter of *On a Sunbeam* in small groups of 3 to 4 people. Each student takes the role of a character and reads the dialogue aloud, transforming the experience into a collaborative, dramatized reading. Once finished, they respond to four guiding questions written on the board.

The objective of this activity is to develop oral fluency, collaborative reading, and narrative comprehension, while introducing students to multimodal interpretation. It combines Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with visual literacy, as students interpret both the language and the visual features of the text. The role-based reading engages students in authentic interaction, while the follow-up discussion promotes critical thinking and interpretive skills. The task ends with a comparison to the students' earlier predictions, reinforcing reflection and meta cognitive awareness.

The teacher must organize the groups, distribute the chapter, monitor pronunciation and engagement, and lead the group discussion by collecting answers and helping students connect their interpretations to visual element and dialogue tone

SESSION 3

In this session, students will analyze a selection of informal phrases from the text to understand the use of colloquial English. They will rewrite these expressions using a more formal register and reflect on how tone affects communication. The goal is to raise awareness of register, pragmatics, and perception.

Activity 1: Understanding Informal Language

This activity focuses on identifying and interpreting informal, colloquial, and spoken English structures as they appear in authentic dialogue. Students are given a selection of phrases from the chapter containing contractions, idioms, and relaxed register. First, they locate the phrases in the novel and analyze their context using guided questions about who says them, when, and under what emotional tone. After a brief class discussion, students rewrite the phrases into formal English, then reflect on whether the tone and meaning of the dialogue changes when the register is shifted.

This activity's main objective is to raise awareness of tone, register, and pragmatic meaning in everyday English. It supports the development of communicative competence (especially sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills), and draws on the Communicative Approach, as students must interpret real-world language in context. It also introduces elements of contrastive grammar and language reflection, aligned with Krashen's Input Hypothesis.

The teacher will provide a projected document with short quotes, facilitate the first analysis with examples, and guide group discussions. Students should be encouraged to

notice how grammar, contractions, and vocabulary shape the social tone of communication.

Activity 2: Speech Swap

In this follow-up activity, students apply their acquired knowledge on tone and register and select 1 to 2 pages of dialogue from the chapter, to later rewrite the speech in the opposite register. After rewriting, they will reflect on how the change of language affects the characters' personalities, relationships, and the tone of the interaction. This leads into a short class discussion guided by questions such as: Does the dialogue still make sense? Would the characters act the same way? Would their appearance or attitude also change?

The primary objective is to encourage students to reflect on how language shapes meaning, identity, and social context. The task develops pragmatic competence, critical thinking, and grammatical awareness, and is strongly aligned with the Task-Based Learning approach, as learners complete a real-world communicative task that requires both linguistic reformulation and creative judgement. It also draws on communicative and sociolinguistic pedagogy, inviting learners to explore how register and tone reflect the speaker's background intention, and relationship with others.

The teacher should assist students in identifying appropriate pages to work from, review possible formal equivalents (modal verbs, full forms, formal connectors), and help guide the discussion after the writing phase. This activity also supports collaborative learning and peer interaction.

SESSION 4

Students will explore the visual language of the novel by participating in a visual thinking routine focused on color. They will analyze selected pages and later work with new scenes to suggest their own color interpretations. The session aims to promote visual literacy and symbolic interpretation through individual and group tasks.

Activity 1: Visual Thinking Routines

This activity introduces students to a structured method for interpreting visual narratives through the use of a "See-Think-Wonder" visual thinking routine. Working in groups, students analyze selected pages from *On a Sunbeam* that emphasize the use of color. Each group is assigned one image for each category: what they see, what they think

is happening, and what they wonder about the image. Later, students share their responses, and the teacher collects and organizes key ideas on the board.

The main objective is to develop visual literacy, emotional inferences, and observational detail, while encouraging personal interpretation through structured prompts. This activity is rooted in visual literacy pedagogy (as discussed by Serafini and Kress & van Leeuwen) and is also informed by inquiry-based learning and cooperative learning, as it relies on group dialogue and open-ended interpretation. Additionally, it aligns with multimodal learning, as students are required to extract meaning not from text, but from layout, color, expression, and composition.

The teacher should prepare five selected pages in advance and clearly explain each step of the “See-Think-Wonder” technique. Prompting with guiding questions and modeling an example will ensure students are able to differentiate between description, inference, and curiosity. Students should be reminded to work collaboratively but write individually, supporting both group discussion and personal interpretation

Activity 2: Analyzing color

This activity builds on the previous visual thinking task by asking students to engage in creative interpretation and emotional analysis of color. Students are shown black-and-white versions of scenes from chapters they haven’t read and are asked to choose colors for each one, justifying their decisions based on the mood, emotions, and narrative cues they perceive. After sharing their choices, the original-colored versions are revealed, prompting group discussion on the author’s visual decisions. Each group then reflects on the symbolic use of color and whether they would make different creative choices.

The main objectives are to foster emotional awareness, symbolic thinking, and narrative interpretation through visual means. The task draws from visual literacy and critical thinking, encouraging students to explore how color communicates meaning beyond the written word. It is also rooted in multimodal competences, as it combines image analysis, individual interpretation, and group dialogue.

The teacher will have several color-removed images from the novel and ensure each group receives a different one. After the initial individual work, students must participate in group reflection using prepared guiding questions. The teacher should

facilitate a class-wide discussion to synthesize interpretations and emphasize the author's visual storytelling strategies.

SESSION 5

In this session, students will work in groups to create a continuation of the story from the point where the present timeline in the first chapter ends. After agreeing on a general storyline, they will sketch out a visual storyboard of their idea. The session encourages collaborative narrative planning and introduces students to basic storyboard conventions.

Activity 1: What Happens Next?

In this activity, students collaboratively imagine a continuation of *On a Sunbeam*, starting from the end of the present timeline on the first chapter. Working in groups of three to four people, the students will brainstorm the next phase of the plot, considering what the crew encounters on the first planet, what challenges they might face, and how the characters' relationships or environment could evolve. They are encouraged to include new events or characters while maintaining coherence it's the original story. Guiding questions will be provided to help structure their ideas, along with prompts related to setting, problem-solving, and mood.

The main goal is to foster narrative production, collaborative creativity, and interpretive continuity with the source material. This activity directly follows a Task-Based Learning framework, as students complete a meaningful communicative task with a real outcome: developing a narrative sequence. It also integrates elements of the communicative approach, such as group interaction, negotiation of meaning, and shared responsibility are central. Furthermore, it supports learner autonomy and builds intertextual awareness, since students must stay true to the novel's tone and world-building.

The teacher should ensure each group has access to the original chapter for reference, guide them with open-ended but structured prompts, and encourage all students to contribute ideas. This task sets the foundation for the visual storyboard activity that follows

Activity 2: Storyboard Visual

In this creative production activity, students visually represent the story continuation they developed in the previous task. Each group plans and sketches a short

storyboard composed of three or four vignettes that highlight key scenes of their narrative. The drawing does not need to be highly detailed but must include basic elements: characters, setting, visual cues, color choices, and written context such as speech bubbles or brief narrations. The goal is to present their story as comic creators would when pitching a visual narrative to an editor.

The main objective is to reinforce multimodal production, combining written and visual language in a cohesive narrative sequence. This task promotes project-based learning and is grounded in task-based methodology, as it involves a creative, goal-oriented product based on group collaboration. It also draws from principles of visual literacy and cooperative learning, requiring learners to plan, divide tasks, and coordinate artistic and textual elements to communicate meaning. By emulating the real-world process of storyboard, the activity also connects to authentic learning scenarios.

The teacher should provide examples of storyboards (digital or printed), offer format suggestions (e.g., panel layout, annotation of colors), and remind students that creativity, clarity, and coherence are more important than artistic ability. This storyboard will later be used in the comic assembly and oral presentation.

SESSION 6

Each student will draw one panel of their group's storyboard. These panels will then be assembled to form a complete comic page. Afterward, students will prepare their presentation by organizing content and dividing speaking roles. The aim is to finalize the visual product and structure the oral presentation.

Activity 1: Finishing the comic

In this session, each student creates one (or more) panel from their group's storyboard using a black sheet of paper. Once all group members complete their individual drawings, they collaborate to cut and assemble the panels into a single full-page comic. This page should visually represent the group's narrative continuation from *On a Sunbeam*, integrating all the artistic and textual elements previously planned.

The objective is to support individual responsibility within collaborative creation, while reinforcing multimodal composition and sequencing. This task draws directly from project-based learning and the task-based approach, as students complete an extended creative product with an authentic communicative purpose. It also reflects visual literacy

and the development of text-image integration skills, central to the pedagogical value of graphic novels.

The teacher can provide drawing material if needed, and must ensure students understand their individual contributions, and oversee the final organization of the panels. Assembling the comic collaboratively reinforces teamwork, coherence, and the ability to adapt creative input into a shared visual narrative.

Activity 2: How do you present it?

In this activity, students are given guides on how to prepare an oral presentation of their completed comic page and are given time to start organizing said presentation. The teacher introduces the context playfully by taking the role of an “editor-in-chief” at a publishing house. Each group is tasked with structuring their presentation to explain different aspects of their respective stories.

The main objective is to develop student’s spoken production, organization of ideas, and ability to describe multimodal content. The task draws on communicative language teaching and project-based learning, as it focuses on a realistic scenario that integrates content and language. It also aligns with the task-based learning approach, as learners must prepare and deliver a coherent, purpose-driven oral presentation. Additionally, it promotes learner autonomy and metacognitive reflection, as students evaluate their creative and collaborative decisions.

The teacher should provide guidance on presentation structure, including a checklist or outline for key points to cover. Students should be encouraged to divide speaking roles evenly and use their comic page as a visual aid. Emphasis should be placed on clarity, creativity, and interaction with the audience.

SESSION 7

Groups will present their comic to the class as if pitching them to a publisher. While presenting, classmates will complete a peer-evaluation sheet. In the final part of the session, all students will write a short individual reflection on the unit. The purpose of this session is to develop public speaking skills and encourage critical reflection on the learning experience.

Activity 1: Presentation

In this activity, each group presents their completed comic to the class as if pitching it to a comic book editor, represented by the teacher. Groups explain their story structure, panel organization, color and character choices, and the creative decisions behind the project. The presentation must be shared equally among group members, reinforcing collaborative speaking and responsibility. While one group presents, the rest of the class completes a peer-evaluation form assessing creativity, clarity, and teamwork.

The main objectives are to foster oral communication, multimodal interpretation, and reflective speaking, while simulating a meaningful, real-work communication scenario. This task directly supports communicative competence, particularly spoken fluency and presentation skills, and falls under both task-based learning and project-based learning. It also develops critical thinking and cooperative evaluation, as students must assess their peers constructively.

The teacher should guide transitions between groups, encourage respectful participation, and model active listening. Peer-evaluation rubrics will be prepared in advance, and the tone of the session should be encouraging, with feedback focused on effort, creativity, and expressiveness rather than artistic skill.

Activity 2: Final thoughts

To close the didactic unit, students complete a short-written reflection answering questions about their experience. They are asked to consider what they enjoyed the most, what was most challenging, and whether they believe graphic novels are useful for learning English. This task is completed individually and in English promoting reflection and personal expression. The activity can also be used as a formative evaluation tool for the teacher.

The main objectives are to encourage self-assessment, emotional engagement, and metacognitive awareness. This task draws from affective-humanistic methodology and supports reflective learning, as students evaluate both their own learning process and the didactic sequences as a whole. It also aligns with learner-centered approaches, giving students a space to voice their opinions and assess the relevance of the content and methods used.

The teacher should present the reflection questions clearly, create a calm and open environment, and explain that honest responses will help improve future units. Students

may submit the reflection anonymously if preferred, and the teacher may choose to share general trends the class afterward as a closing dialogue.

3.7. Assessment

Assessment in this didactic unit will be carried out through continuous and formative evaluation, following the principles set by the BOCYL. Rather than relying on a final exam or isolated testing, this unit integrates evaluation organically within the learning process. The goal is to monitor each student's progress in developing linguistic, intercultural, and creative competences through ongoing observation and targeted task outcomes.

Students will be assessed on both individual and group performance, taking into account their participation, collaboration, and engagement with the graphic novel *On a Sunbeam* and the tasks designed around it. Evaluation will be linked to their development across all four communicative skills, as well as their ability to interpret multimodal texts and reflect on language use. While every activity contributes informally to the teacher's understanding of student learning, specific tasks have been identified as key evaluative moment within the unit:

- Session 3, Activity 2: Speech Swap will assess students' understanding of register, tone, and communicative context through the reformulation of informal dialogue into a formal version (or vice versa). This activity provides evidence of their grammatical awareness, vocabulary range, and ability to adapt discourse based on situation.
- Session 4, Activity 1 & 2: Visual Thinking Routines and Analyzing Color will assess their ability to describe, interpret, and question visual scenes through structure observation, as well as color analysis. In Activity 1, learners apply the "see-think-wonder" routine to develop multimodal literacy and express personal interpretations of selected pages from the novel. In Activity 2, they deepen this reflection by assigning colors to new scenes and justifying their choices based on emotional and narrative cues. Together, these tasks promote critical thinking, creativity, and self-expression, while offering insight into both receptive and productive skills. They are closely linked to the development of visual communication strategies and metacognitive reflection.

- Session 7, Activity 1: Final Presentation of the storyboard continuation will be evaluated through two complementary tools. Firstly, the teacher will assess students using an analytic rubric based on criteria such as fluency, pronunciation, coherence, creativity, and effective use of visual support. Secondly, a simplified peer evaluation rubric will be used, allowing classmates to give feedback on each group's clarity, storytelling, and engagement. This dual approach promotes student autonomy, reinforces classroom cooperation, and fosters critical reflection on communication practices.

In addition, the final product of the unit, the collaborative comic storyboard, will also be evaluated through an analytic rubric. This will focus on visual coherence, use of language, narrative creativity, and integration of multimodal element (such as color and layout). Rubrics have been chosen over holistic evaluation tools because they allow for transparent, objective, and detailed feedback, helping students understand their strengths and areas for improvement. The rubrics created for the previously mentioned activities can be found in the following pages.

Session 3 Activity 2, Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Speech Swap	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Adaptation of Register (Achievement indicator 2.4.1)	Dialogue is reformulated with full grammatical accuracy, appropriate tone, and register-specific vocabulary.	Mostly appropriate register change, few inaccuracies in formality or vocabulary	Basic attempt to shift register; several informal elements remain	Little or no effort to shift register; original tone unchanged
Grammatical and Lexical Awareness (Achievement indicator 6.3.1)	Demonstrates strong control of structures (modals, connectors, full forms...); precise vocabulary	Shows general control of grammar; uses some formal structures correctly	Uses limited structures; may rely on direct translation or inaccurate vocabulary	Grammatical choices do not reflect register or impede understanding
Reflection on Tone and Meaning (Achievement indicator 4.3.1)	Insightful explanation of how tone and meaning change in the formal version	Identifies tone change and provides basic justification	General statement about changes; little elaboration	No clear explanation or misunderstanding of tone shift
Participation in Discussion (Achievement indicator 3.2.1)	Actively contributes to discussion, listens to peers, and supports groups reflection	Participates respectfully with occasional prompting	Minimal participation or engagement	No meaningful participation or disrupts the group dynamic

Session 4 Activity 1 & 2, Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Visual thinking routines & Analyzing color	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Descriptive Observation (Achievement indicator 2.2.1)	Clearly and precisely describes visual elements (color, setting, characters, layout)	Accurate descriptions with minor omissions.	Basic description; lacks specificity or visual details.	Vague or incomplete description; key elements omitted
Interpretation of Color & Symbolism (Achievement indicator 6.3.1)	Strong insight into emotional/narrative function of colors and symbols; uses reasoning and examples.	Interprets colors with some reflection and particularly justification.	Limited or vague justification of choices; mostly literal or superficial.	No clear interpretation; color choice feels random or unrelated.
Creative Expression (Achievement indicator 5.3.1)	Shows originality and imagination; integrates color and meaning with depth.	Demonstrates some creativity and thoughtful ideas.	Some effort at original thinking, but underdeveloped.	Minimal creativity; repeats common ideas or avoids interpretation.
Clarity of Communication (Achievement indicator 4.2.1)	Expresses ideas fluently and effectively in both oral and written responses.	Mostly clear expression with minor fluency or structure issues.	Meaning is sometimes unclear; needs support to communicate ideas.	Responses are confusing, disorganized, or lack coherence.

Session 7 Activity 1, Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Final Oral Presentation	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Organization and Fluency (Achievement indicator 2.1.1)	Presentation is clear, well-structured, and fluent; all parts covered	Good structured with some minor issues in fluency or transitions	Some disorganization or pauses; most ideas are communicated	Poor structure; lacks clarity and fluency
Pronunciation and Intelligibility (Achievement indicator 1.1.1)	Pronunciation is clear and understandable; very few errors	Mostly clear pronunciation; minor difficulties do not affect understanding	Noticeable pronunciation issues; may cause slight confusion	Pronunciation problems significantly affect comprehension
Use of Visual Support (Achievement indicator 4.2.1)	Effectively integrates the storyboard page into the presentation; references it clearly	Uses the storyboard as a support in some moments	Refers to the visual only briefly or without connection to speech	Barely uses or ignores the visual component during the presentation

Activity 5, 6 and 7 Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Storyboard Content	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Narrative Coherence (Achievement indicator 5.3.1)	The comic has a clear beginning, middle and end; logical and engaging plot	Narrative is mostly coherent; some parts could be more developed	Plot is somewhat clear but lacks detail or flow	Story is confusing or lacks clear sequence
Creativity and Originality (Achievement indicator 5.3.1)	Storyline and visuals are imaginative and engaging; strong personal voice	Shows creativity and effort in design or story elements	Some creative effort; ideas feel conventional or undeveloped	Little originality; follows predictable or unrelated storyline
Visual Communication (Achievement indicator 4.2.1)	Visual elements are well chosen, support the narrative, and show attention to details	Visuals support the story with mostly appropriate use of space and elements	Basic visual design with limited planning or connection to meaning	Images are minimal, unclear, or unrelated to the narrative

Session 7 Activity 1, Peer-Evaluation Table

Evaluation Criteria	Teams	Yes	A bit	Not really
The story was clear and easy to follow.	Team 1			
	Team 2			
The comic was creative and visually interesting.	Team 1			
	Team 2			
The group used their comic well during the presentation.	Team 1			
	Team 2			
Everyone in the group participated.	Team 1			
	Team 2			
I could understand what they said.	Team 1			
	Team 2			
Write one thing you liked about their presentation:				
Write one thing you didn't understand or would change:				

4. CONCLUSION

This didactic proposal set out to explore the potential of integrating the graphic novel *On a Sunbeam* into the secondary English classroom as a vehicle for language development, critical thinking, and personal expression. Through a sequence of interconnected and scaffolded activities, the unit aimed to develop communicative competence, promote learner creativity, and support the interpretation of multimodal texts, all while engaging students with inclusive, emotionally resonant content.

The proposal shows that graphic novels, often undervalued in formal education, offer rich opportunities for language learners to analyze narrative, interpret visual language, and express themselves in both oral and written forms. Beyond linguistic benefits, this unit encourages students to reflect on diversity and human relationships through themes and characters that are often underrepresented in classroom materials. In this way, the project supports the transversal goals of the curriculum, including respect for diversity and emotional education.

From a pedagogical perspective, the unit highlights the value of using authentic, contemporary materials to make language learning meaningful and motivating. It also demonstrates the importance of balancing receptive and productive tasks, individual and collaborative work, and artistic and linguistic expression. The evaluation strategy, based on continuous assessment and analytic rubrics, emphasizes transparency, equity, and students' reflection.

As a future high school teacher, designing this unit has reinforced my belief in the importance of creative methodologies that value the learner as an active participant. It has also shown me the importance of careful scaffolding, inclusive materials, and a supportive classroom atmosphere. While the implementation of this unit would require adaptation to each group's needs and resources, I believe it provides a flexible and innovative model for integration literature and language learning.

Looking forward, similar units could be designed using other graphic novels or visual texts, adapted to different proficiency levels or curricular focuses. Further exploration of student responses to these materials in real classroom settings would also offer valuable insights into their long-term pedagogical potential.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Charts

Charts for all the sessions and activities have been done according to the template offered by the professors at *Universidad de Valladolid*, with which the students of the English specialty at this Master have been working for the majority of the course. These charts follow a specific structure according to the BOCYL and BOE, and are designed to include the following:

- Information of the Didactic Unit
 - School period, course level and duration of the whole unit.
 - Stage objectives
 - Key competences
 - Contents
 - Specific competences
 - Activities per session
 - Attention to diversity
- Information of each session
 - Specific competences
 - Achievement indicators
 - Subject and transversal contents
 - Activities in the session
- Information of the activity
 - Title
 - Type
 - Duration
 - Classroom management
 - Resources
 - Linguistic input

GENERAL CHART OF THE DIDACTIC UNIT

Period: Secondary school			Level: 4° of ESO		Time: 6 sessions of 50 minutes each. 300 minutes in total	
Stage objectives: a, b, c, d, g, h, I, j, k, l						
Key competences CCL, CP, CD, CPSAA, CC, CE, CCEC			Specific competences 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6			
Contents A, B, C						
Activities per session						
<u>Session 1</u>	<u>Session 2</u>	<u>Session 3</u>	<u>Session 4</u>	<u>Session 5</u>	<u>Session 6</u>	<u>Session 7</u>
Activity 1: Introductory survey: About Graphic Novels. Activity 2: What are Graphic Novels?	Activity 1: Reading – Predicting the Story. Activity 2: Reading & Discussion.	Activity 1: Understanding Informal Language. Activity 2: Speech Swap.	Activity 1: Visual Thinking Routines. Activity 2: Analyzing color.	Activity 1: What Happens Next? Activity 2: Story Board Visual.	Activity 1: Finishing the comic. Activity 2: How do you present it?	Activity 1: Presentation. Activity 2: Final Thoughts.
Attention to diversity This didactic unit has been designed with flexibility in mind, ensuring that it can be adapted to meet the diverse need of all students. The activities aim to support equitable participation, engagement, and learning outcomes for students with varied cognitive, linguistic, or social-emotional profiles. Moreover, the unit allows for multiple forms of access to content and expression of learning. Visual and multimodal resources (such as graphic sequences, color analysis, and visual thinking routines) cater to students who benefit from visual support or struggle with extended written or oral tasks, however, there is a possibility to change some of this oral tasks into written tasks for those students who have difficulty with oral expression within the group. Additionally, group-based tasks encourage peer scaffolding and distributed responsibility, allowing students from different level to contribute to the tasks according to their strengths. In the case of students with ADHD or attention-related challenges, activities are structured into manageable steps, with a clear routine and a variety of tasks that alternate between drawing, speaking, and self-reflection. Overall, the unit fosters a classroom climate based on collaboration, creativity, and learner autonomy. By integrating multimodal strategies and open-ended tasks, it accommodates a wide range of learning styles and paces, while promoting participation and inclusion across the classroom.						

SESSION 1

Specific competences	Achievement indicators
1, 2, 3	<u>Activity 1</u> 1.1.1: Students are able to understand the questions in the survey. 2.2.1: Students are able to answer and give their opinions in written form to the questions of the survey. 2.4.1: Students are able to give their opinion and describe their feelings. <u>Activity 2</u> 1.1.2: Students are able to understand the content of the presentation. 3.3.1: Students are able to answer short questions formulated by the teacher and make their own.
Subject contents	Activities
2. Describe people, objects and places. 3. Compare people and objects. 4. Place events in time. 6. Ask and exchange information about everyday issues. 9. Partially express interest and basic emotions. 10. Describe present situations and habits. 11. Narrate past events. 13. Express opinion, possibility, capacity, obligation and prohibition. Transversal contents a) Reading comprehension b) Oral and written expression f) Critical and scientific spirit g) Education in emotion and values	Introductory survey: About Graphic Novels
	What are Graphic Novels?

i) Creativity	
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Activity 1 / Session 1		
Title: “Introductory survey: About Graphic Novels”	Type: Warm-up and introductory activity	Time: 20 minutes
Classroom management: Students are seated and answering the survey sheet individually.	Resources: Copies of the survey (see Appendix 2) for each student.	
<i>Linguistic input</i> “Good morning, everyone! Starting today, we will be starting a new unit, and it’s all about graphic novels. I hope you’ll come to enjoy them as much as I do.” “But before we start, can anyone tell me what a graphic novel is?” Wait for students’ answers. “Great! It seems like some of you know a little already. To learn more, we’re going to begin with a short survey.” Hand out the papers. “The questions are simple and personal, just write what you really think. It’s not a text, so don’t worry about your answers. And remember, please answer in English.”		

Activity 2 / Session 1		
Title: “What are Graphic Novels?”	Type: Development activity	Time: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students are seated and participating in class when the teacher asks questions.	Resources: A Canva Presentation (see Appendix 2) and the board.	

Linguistic input

“Okay, now that we’ve done the survey, let’s talk more about what graphic novels really are. I’ll show you a short presentation and you can ask me questions anytime.”

- Start showing the presentation.

“A graphic novel is like a longer, more complex version of a comic. It has more story, more characters, and usually explores deeper topics. You’ll find all kinds of genres: fiction, science fiction, romance, even horror and fantasy. Can anyone name a graphic novel or comic they know or like?”

- Wait for a few answers.

“Great, now let’s look at some examples. You might recognize some of them.”

- Show the slides and give students time to comment.

“Now think about this: Do you believe graphic novels can help you learn? Not just English, maybe even History or Science?”

- Give them a few seconds to think and encourage responses.

“Finally, look at this image. What do you notice? Try to describe what’s happening. What stands out? Look at the background, the colors, and how the image is organized, can you tell what kind of mood or action it shows?”

- Collect a few answers.

“This is the novel we’ll be working with during the next classes, it’s called *On a Sunbeam* by Tillie Walden.”

SESSION 2

Specific competences

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Achievement indicators

Activity 1

1.1.3: Students are able to extract and analyze information from pages of graphic novels that have no written words.

1.3.1: Students are able to identify and interpret nonverbal language presented in the pages shown.

2.1.1: Students are able to describe and narrate the information they extracted from the story shown on the pages.

2.4.2: Students are able to express their opinion and thoughts on the information they gathered from the text.

3.2.1: Students are able to maintain a conversation and debate with their classmates about the story.

3.3.2: Students are able to express their opinions and thoughts

	correctly during an intervention, correcting themselves if necessary. <u>Activity 2</u> 1.1.4: Students are able to understand the text from the first chapter of the graphic novel. 1.1.5: Students are able to understand the questions the teacher writes on the board. 1.2.1: Students are able to understand the images and the context they see without needing written text. 3.2.2: Students are able to respect the turn of the members of their group and classmates and respectfully ask questions. 3.3.3: Students are able to talk between their group and work correctly together to answer the questions. 4.2.1: Students are able to properly use different resources (verbal, non-verbal or visual) to express their answers. 4.3.1: Students are able to explain and summarize the most important information of the story. 5.1.1: Students are able to identify and connect the similarities between the expressions in the dialogues to their similar in Spanish. 6.1.1: Students are respectful towards the characters in the story who are black and/or part of the LGBTQ+ community. They also respect that all the main characters are women or non-binary.
Subject content 1. Greet, say goodbye, and introduce someone and themselves. 2. Describe people, objects and places. 3. Compare people and objects. 4. Place events in time.	Activities Before Reading – Predicting the Story

5. Place objects, people and places in space. 6. Ask and exchange information about everyday issues. 7. Give and ask for instructions and orders. 8. Offer, accept, and reject help, propositions and suggestions. 9. Partially express interest and basic emotions. 10. Describe present situations and habits. 11. Narrate past events. 12. Express future situations. 13. Express opinion, possibility, capacity, obligation and prohibition. Transversal contents a) Reading comprehension b) Oral and written expression k) Gender equality n) Cooperation	Reading & Discussion
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Activity 1 / Session 2		
Title: “Before Reading – Predicting the Story”	Type: Introductory activity	Time: 10 minutes
Classroom management: Students will be seated in pairs.	Resources: The digital board to show the images3 and a board for the teacher to write.	

Linguistic input

“Before getting into today’s main task, which is reading the first chapter of the novel, I want to discuss with you about what the story is about. To do so, we’re going to look at the first three pages of the graphic novel on the board, without any dialogue. The speech bubbles are empty, so you have to focus just on the images.”

“I want you to work in pairs and talk about what you think is happening in these pages. Who do you think these characters are? Where are they? What might the story be about? Look carefully at the details in the pictures.”

“You’ll have about ten minutes to discuss with your partner. After that, I’ll ask each pair to choose two important words or ideas that represent your theory about the story. You’ll send your answers through Mentimeter, just two words per pair. These could be emotions, actions, settings or topics.”

“We’ll keep your answers and look at them again after you read the full chapter. Ready?”

Activity 2 / Session 2

Title: “Reading & Discussion”	Type: Development activity	Time: 40 minutes
Classroom management: The students will organize the tables to sit in groups of 3 to 4 people.		Resources: Physical copies of the novel.

Linguistic input

“Now I want you to get into groups of three or four. I want everyone to get their copy of the graphic novel and open it on the first chapter. You’ll read it together, but not silently. Each person in your group will read one speech bubble out loud, one after the other, like you’re performing the dialogue. That way, everyone gets to hear how the characters speak and how the story sounds. If it’s easier, you can establish characters, and each member of the group will read that character’s lines. Remember, only read the first chapter.”

- Let them read for about thirty minutes while monitoring them.

“Now that we’ve finished reading, I want you to discuss these four questions together. I’ll write them on the board too:

When and where? Where does the story happen? Is it in the future? In space?

Who? Who is the main character? What do you know about the ship crew?

What? What is the crew’s job or mission?

How? Did anything stand out about how the characters speak? What about the drawings?”

“You’ll have a few minutes to talk about these in your group. Remember to speak in English.”

- After group time, ask the students about their answers for a bit.
- “And finally, do you remember your predictions from earlier? How close do you think you were to the real story?”

SESSION 3

Specific competences	Achievement indicators
1, 2, 3, 4, 6	<u>Activity 1</u> 1.1.6: Students are able to locate informal phrases in the dialogue and understand their context. 2.2.2: Students are able to write formal equivalents of colloquial expressions. 3.3.5: Students are able to discuss meaning and tone with classmates respecting turns. 6.2.1: Students reflect on how tone and register affect the message conversations. <u>Activity 2</u> 2.4.3: Students are able to reformulate informal sentences using appropriate formal register. 3.2.3: Students are able to participate in class discussions expressing their ideas and opinions respectfully. 4.3.2: Students are able to summarize how changes in register affect character perception and meaning. 6.3.1: Students are able to reflect on the appropriateness of language in different communicative contexts.
Subject content 1. Greet, say goodbye, and introduce someone and themselves. 2. Describe people, objects and places. 3. Compare people and objects. 4. Place events in time. 5. Place objects, people and places in	Activities
	Understanding Informal Language

space. 6. Ask and exchange information about everyday issues. 7. Give and ask for instructions and orders. 8. Offer, accept, and reject help, propositions and suggestions. 9. Partially express interest and basic emotions. 10. Describe present situations and habits. 11. Narrate past events. 12. Express future situations. 13. Express opinion, possibility, capacity, obligation and prohibition. Transversal contents a) Reading comprehension b) Oral and written expression c) Audiovisual communication e) Entrepreneurship g) Education in emotion and values h) Education for peace and non-violence i) Creativity k) Gender equality l) Education in aesthetic m) Mutual respect n) Cooperation	Speech Swap
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Activity 1 / Session 3		
Title: “Understanding Informal Language”	Type: Introductory and developing activity	Time: 20-25 minutes

Classroom management: Students will get into groups of 3 to 4 people for the first part of the activity and then work individually for the second part.	Resources: A digital document with the selected quotes ⁴ and enough copies of the novel for each group.
<i>Linguistic input</i> “Alright, now we’re going to look at how the characters speak in this chapter. You probably noticed that they don’t use very formal English a lot of the time. Today we’ll focus on some of the informal phrases they use. You remember our previous class on formal language, right? That is going to be important today.” “I’m going to show you some quotes from the story on the digital board. Your first task is to find where these phrases appear in the chapter. Look at the pages and check who says them, what’s happening in that moment, and how the characters relate to each other.” • Show the students the selected quotes and give time to find and discuss them.” “Okay, now let’s talk about them for a little bit: What do you think some of these phrases mean? Why do the characters speak like that? Do they sound friendly, relaxed, angry, sarcastic? Let’s see what you think.” • Facilitate group and class discussion. “Now, for the next part: I want you to choose as many of these quotes as you like and rewrite them using formal English, individually. Remember what we have seen about contractions.” • Give them 10 minutes or so to work individually. • “Let’s hear some of your versions. Does the tone change when you use formal English? Does the meaning feel different? Would the characters seem different if they spoke this way? Why?	

Activity 2 / Session 3			
Title: “Speech Swap”		Type: Development activity	Time: 20 minutes
Classroom management: Students can work in pairs or individually		Resources: Copies of the first chapter of the novel for each group.	

Linguistic input

“Now we’re going to do a fun activity called Speech Swap. I want you to choose one or two pages from the chapter, pages where there’s a conversation between characters.”

“First, look at how the characters speak. Is the language formal or informal? What kind of relationship do the characters have? Then, rewrite that conversation, but this time, change the style. If it’s informal, make it formal. If it’s already formal, make it more relaxed or casual.”

“You can work in pairs. Remember, think about vocabulary, grammar, contractions and tone. For example, if the character says “wanna”, how could you make that sound more formal? Could you use “would like to?” Try to change not just the words, but also how the sentence sounds. One tip is that some of the ways you can create a formal text is by including modal verbs for politeness such as “could”, “would like”, “need to”, evade contractions, use relative clauses or passive voice... We have seen those aspects previously in class, but feel free to ask me if you don’t remember them.”

- After ten minutes of writing.

“Now, let’s talk. Do your new dialogues feel strange or natural? Do you think the characters would still act the same way if they spoke like this? Would their clothes, personality, or situation change too?”

SESSION 4

Specific competences

1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Achievement indicators

Activity 1

1.1.2: Students are able to understand the content of the presentation.

1.2.1: Students are able to understand the images and scenes in the presentation without needing written text.

2.2.3: Students are able to create and write short sentences using the verbs “see”, “think”, and “wonder”.

2.4.4: Students are able to use the correct vocabulary for the context.

2.4.1: Students are able to give their opinion and describe their feelings.

3.2.2: Students are able to respect the turn of the members of their group and classmates and respectfully ask questions.

3.3.1: Students are able to talk between their group and work correctly together to answer the questions.

10. Describe present situations and habits. 11. Narrate past events. 12. Express future situations. 13. Express opinion, possibility, capacity, obligation and prohibition. Transversal contents a) Reading comprehension b) Oral and written expression g) Education in emotion and values i) Creativity k) Gender equality l) Education in aesthetic m) Mutual respect	Analyzing color
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Activity 1 / Session 4		
Title: “Visual thinking routines”	Type: Introductory and development activity	Time: 15-20 minutes
Classroom management: Students will get into groups of 3 to 4 people.		Resources: A Canva presentation (see Appendix 2) and extra copies of the necessary pages just in case. The students will need sheets of paper and the teacher a board to write on.
<i>Linguistic input</i> “Today we will do something a little different. We will be working with the importance of color in art, and specifically this novel. As you have probably noticed, the author uses the same color for most scenes, but there are some special cases in which another color is used to emphasize something. Firstly, I want you to get in groups of three to four people. I’ll be evaluating this activity, so try to do your best and present your ideas clearly.” Once groups are formed, start the Canva presentation. “In order to analyze the use of color, we will do something called a visual thinking routine “called See, Think, Wonder”. What this does is help us analyze an image in three simple steps.” “You start by observing the image for a few seconds, and just describe exactly what you see, not what you		

think you are seeing. So, if your image has a bunch of trees, don't talk about how it could be a forest, just describe it as a bunch of trees. It's useful to use the verb "see", so, something like "I see a bunch of trees in a mountain. After that, you can start thinking about what you are seeing in a more general way, so now you would write "I think in the image there is a forest". Think about what you see in the image that gives you those thoughts. And after that, you will end up wondering about what you are seeing, "Do people live in that forest? Are they going to explore it?" This applies to characters too, you can start wondering about what that character is doing in that situation."

"Each group will receive an image from the chapter we read in the last session. You'll talk about it in your group, but each person must write their own answers. So, a couple of sentences for what you see, for what you think and for what you wonder. Don't copy your group mates, everyone should write something personal, but you are free to discuss it."

- After assigning images and giving about ten minutes for the first two images, repeat with the next three. "Once you've finished, I'll ask you to read one of your sentences aloud. I'll write the keywords of your answers on the board under each category. Let's see how many different ideas we can collect"

Activity 2 / Session 4

Title: "Analyzing color"

Type: Development and closing activity

Time: 20 minutes

Classroom management: Students can stay seated in groups but will work individually.

Resources: Canva presentation "The Importance of Color" (see Appendix 2).

Linguistic input

"Now we're going to take the color analysis one step further. This time, I'm going to show you some new scenes from other parts of the novel, ones you haven't seen yet. But here's the twist: they'll be in black and white. Your task is to imagine how these scenes could be colored. You'll each work individually to decide what colors you would use, and then write a short explanation: Why those colors? What feelings or ideas do they represent?"

You'll have about ten minutes for this first part. You can ask your group for help if you're unsure, but everyone should write their own choices and reasons."

- After ten minutes

"Now let's share your ideas with the class. Who would like to describe the colors they chose and why?"

- Guide the discussion to explore emotional meaning and symbolism.

“Next, I’m going to show you the same images, but this time with the original colors the author used. In your groups, talk about these questions:

Why do you think these colors were chosen?

What emotions or message do they express?

Would you change them? Why or why not?”

“You’ll have about five or so minutes to talk. Then one person from each group will share your main ideas with the class”

SESSION 5

Specific competences	Achievement indicators
2, 3, 4, 6	<u>Activity 1</u> 2.4.1: Students are able to give their opinion and describe their feelings. 3.2.2: Students are able to respect the turn of the members of their group and classmates and respectfully ask questions. 3.3.3: Students are able to talk between their group and work correctly together to create the story. <u>Activity 2</u> 3.3.4: Students are able to talk between their group and work together to decide who draws each scene. 4.2.1: Students are able to properly use visual resources (drawings) to present their story. 4.3.1: Students are able to summarize the story they decided upon for their vignettes. 6.3.1: Students are able to appreciate why certain colors are used to represent emotions in the novel and use it for their story.
Subject content 1. Greet, say goodbye, and introduce someone and themselves. 2. Describe people, objects and places. 3. Compare people and objects. 4. Place events in time.	Activities What Happens Next?

5. Place objects, people and places in space. 6. Ask and exchange information about everyday issues. 7. Give and ask for instructions and orders. 8. Offer, accept, and reject help, propositions and suggestions. 9. Partially express interest and basic emotions. 10. Describe present situations and habits. 11. Narrate past events. 12. Express future situations. 13. Express opinion, possibility, capacity, obligation and prohibition. Transversal contents a) Reading comprehension b) Oral and written expression c) Audiovisual communication e) Entrepreneurship g) Education in emotion and values h) Education for peace and non-violence i) Creativity k) Gender equality l) Education in aesthetic m) Mutual respect n) Cooperation	Storyboard Visual
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Activity 1 / Session 5		
Title: "What Happens Next?"	Type: Introductory and development activity	Time: 15 minutes

Classroom management: Students will get into groups of 3 to 4 people.	Resources: A sheet of paper and a board for the teacher to write.
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Linguistic input

“Good morning, everyone! Today you’re going to use your imagination. We are going to put together the knowledge on graphic novels we’ve acquired on the previous classes to create your own story. You’re going to continue the story from On a Sunbeam, starting from the end of the present timeline on the first chapter, that’s page 11. You’ll work in groups of three to four people. About the story, you can invent new events, and even new characters if you want, but you have to keep Mia in the story, since she’s the main character.

Think about this: What will the crew do on the small planet they arrived at? What problems could they face? And how would they solve them? I’ll give you some guiding questions to help you develop your ideas:

How will the crew start working on the building?

Will they have any problems?

What colors will you use in the scenes, and why?

You don’t have to write the full story now, just think of a general idea. You’ll use this to make a storyboard in the next activity.”

Activity 2 / Session 5			
Title: "Storyboard Visual"		Type: Development activity	Time: 35 minutes
Classroom management: Students will continue in groups.		Resources: The students should bring painting and coloring tools, black piece of paper, scissors, and glue. The teacher should bring some of these supplies just in case.	
<i>Linguistic input</i> “Now that you’ve planned your story, it’s time to make a visual version of it, like a comic sketch. This is called a storyboard. It helps you show your story in pictures, before doing a full comic. With the same groups as before, each of you will draw one scene from your group’s story, on separate pieces of paper. Once you’re done drawing, you’ll cut out your panels, and then, as a group, you’ll work together to organize them in the right order and glue them onto one big sheet to create a complete comic page. Remember,			

each panel must include:

- A drawing that shows what's happening?
- A short line of dialogue or narration.
- Color choices (you can write the names, color them, draw a pattern...)
- Space for characters or speech bubbles if needed.

Think about how your panel connects to the others. Does it come at the beginning, the middle, or the end? Is it bigger than the rest, smaller or the same? Does it have an interesting shape? Some panels aren't rectangular. Talk to your group so the full comic makes sense and the style is consistent.

You'll have the rest of this session and most of the next one to design, draw and assemble your story. Use your time well!"

SESSION 6

Specific competences

2, 3, 4, 6

Achievement indicators

Activity 1

2.2.4: The students are able to write short, coherent texts in visual format (panels), appropriate to the communicative situation.

3.3.6: Students are able to collaborate properly in a group task, respect each other's turns, and contribute actively to the activity.

4.2.3: Students are able to use visual, verbal, and non-verbal resources to express ideas clearly and creatively.

6.3.3: Students are able to reflect on how visual elements such as color, layout, and drawing style contribute to communication.

Activity 2

2.2.5: Students are able to organize a simple, clear oral presentation appropriate to the communicative context.

4.3.3: Students are able to summarize the essential content of their storyboard using visual and verbal support.

6.1.2: Students are able to reflect on their own language production and use feedback from their teammates to improve their final presentation.

Subject content	Activities
1. Greet, say goodbye, and introduce someone and themselves. 2. Describe people, objects and places. 3. Compare people and objects. 4. Place events in time. 5. Place objects, people and places in space. 6. Ask and exchange information about everyday issues. 7. Give and ask for instructions and orders. 8. Offer, accept, and reject help, propositions and suggestions. 9. Partially express interest and basic emotions. 10. Describe present situations and habits.	Finishing the storyboard.
Transversal contents a) Reading comprehension b) Oral and written expression c) Audiovisual communication e) Entrepreneurship g) Education in emotion and values h) Education for peace and non-violence i) Creativity k) Gender equality l) Education in aesthetic m) Mutual respect	How do you present it?

n) Cooperation	
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Activity 1 / Session 6		
Title: “Finishing the storyboard.”	Type: Development activity	Time: 35 minutes
Classroom management: Students will be seated in groups with the same members of last activity.	Resources: The papers they were working with last week.	
<i>Linguistic input</i> “Alright, today we’re going to continue the storyboard your started last session. Remember, each group is creating a short comic scene to show what happens next in the story. You don’t need to be amazing artists. You can use simple drawings or stick figures, but your panels should include: • Dialogue inside speech bubbles. • A short description of the scene. • Notes about which colors you want to use and why. You already have your basic idea, so now it’s time to finish the visuals. Talk with your group, decide who is drawing what, and make sure everyone is helping. I’ll come around to check and answer questions. Try to think carefully about how you use color and space in your panels. What emotion are you trying to show? Is it a peaceful scene? Is it tense or exciting? Let your drawings reflect that.”		

Activity 2 / Session 6		
Title: “How do you present it?”	Type: Development and closing	Time: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students will keep their seating positions from the previous activity.	Resources: Canva presentation (see Appendix 2).	

Linguistic input

“Alright, not that you’ve finished your comic pages, it’s time to prepare your presentations for next class. But this isn’t a normal presentation, you’re going to pretend that I’m the editor-in-chief of a big comic publishing company and your classmates are my secretaries...and you want to work with us to publish your story! Your goal is to convince me and your classmates that your comic is original, creative, and worth reading. I will be evaluating this presentation, and so will your classmates, so prepare it well.”

- Start showing the presentation.

“Here’s exactly what you need to prepare for your presentation. Make sure you talk about each of these points as a group:

Story Summary: Explain what happens in your comic, beginning, middle, and end. Be clear and short. Who are the characters? What’s the main idea of the story?

Panel Order & Layout: Show how you all decided the order of the scenes. Why did you put them in that order? How did you organize the panels on the page?

Image Description: Describe what is happening in each panel. What details are important? What actions, expressions or emotions did you try to show in the drawings?

Use of Color: Explain which colors you used and why. Do the colors show emotion, time, or place?

Creative Process: How did you come up with the idea? Did you all agree? Who drew what? Did you face any difficulties? How did you solve them?

Speaking Role: Each person in the group must speak. You can divide the parts, but everyone should explain something.

You’ll have the rest of this session to organize how your script will look like and can finish it at home. You don’t need to memorize everything, but don’t just improvise everything, plan what you’re going to say. Always use English and speak as clearly as possible. I will send you a rubric to Teams/Moodle on what I will be evaluating. Good luck!”

SESSION 7

Specific competences

1, 2, 4, 5

Achievement indicators

Activity 1

1.1.7: Students are able to understand the questions formulated by the teacher regarding their presentation.

2.1.2: Students are able to express orally the continuation they created in groups.

Title: “Presentation”	Type: Conclusion activity	Time: The duration of the class
Classroom management: Students will be seated in their normal positions and will have to come up to the board when called.		Resources: Their storyboards from the last sessions.
<i>Linguistic input</i> “Alright, today is presentation day! Each group will come up here and present your continuation to the graphic novel as if you’re pitching it to a comic book publisher. And remember, I’m still the editor-in-chief! You’ll present the full comic page you created, and you must explain all the parts you prepared last class. Remember that every person in the group must speak, even if it’s just for one part, as I will be evaluating your oral expression. You don’t need to memorize a script so you can read but look at the audience even if you are just reading. What is important is that you express yourself clearly! Your classmates will be evaluating you on the content of your presentation, so, everyone please be honest. After each group presents, your classmates, and I, can ask questions. I’ll be giving you feedback at the end of the class, as your editor! Good luck everyone.”		

Activity 2 / Session 7		
Title: “Feedback & Final Thoughts”	Type: Closing activity for the unit	Time: The duration of the class
Classroom management: Students will be in their usual sitting positions.		Resources: A board where the teacher will write the questions. Students will need pens and sheets to write their answers.
<i>Linguistic input</i> “While each group presents, the rest of you will be filling out a peer evaluation table. For each group, you’ll write: one thing they did well, one thing they could improve, and a short comment or question you have for them. Try to focus on their speaking, the creativity of the story, and how well they explained their drawings and ideas. Be respectful, this is to help each other improve.” • After all groups have presented. “To end today, I’d like each of you to answer a few quick final reflection questions. This is just for you to share your honest opinion about the project. You’ll write individually. Please answer these questions in English.”		

APPENDIX 2: Materials for the activities

SESSION 1

Activity 1: Introductory survey: About Graphic Novels

Initials: _____ **Class:** _____ **Date:** / /

Introduction to Graphic Novels

- 1. Do you know what a graphic novel or a comic is? What is the most important thing about them?**

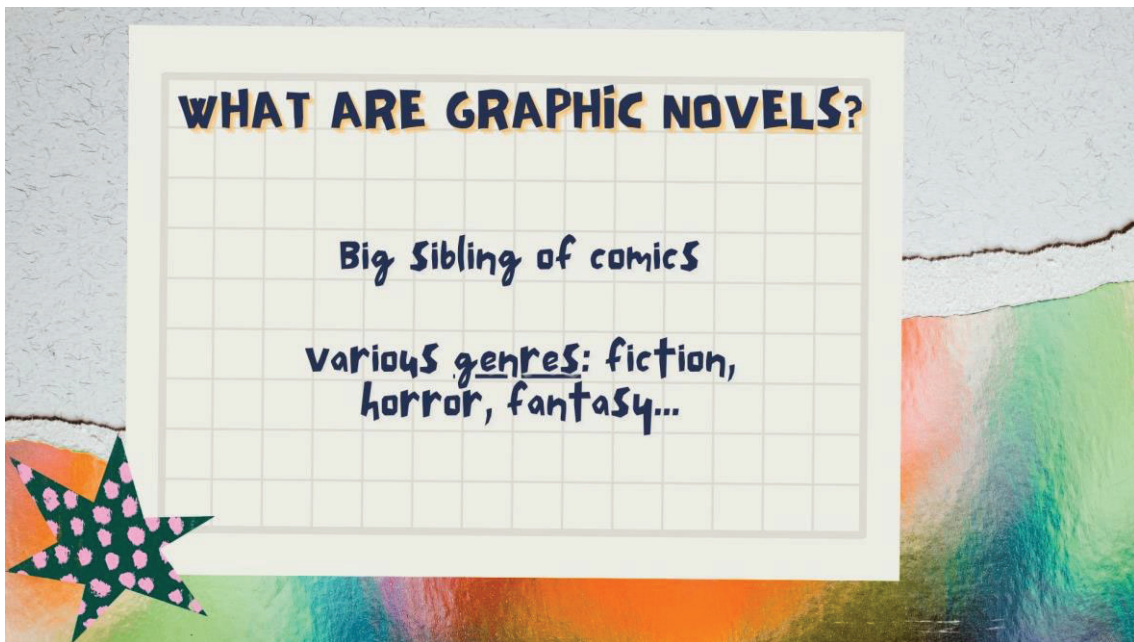
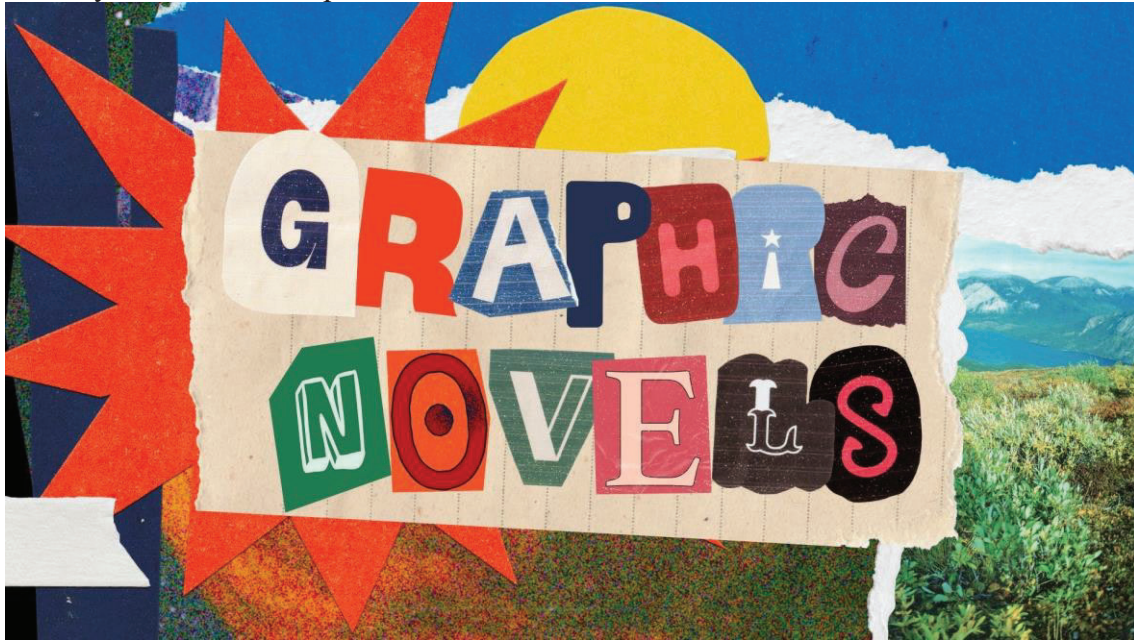
- 2. Have you ever read a graphic novel or do you know any? Give me some examples.**

- 3. What do you feel about them? Do you like them, dislike them, are you unsure...**

4. Do you think graphic novels can help you learn? How?

5. Can graphic novels be used in the class? Why? How do you think they could be used?

Activity 2: What are Graphic Novels?



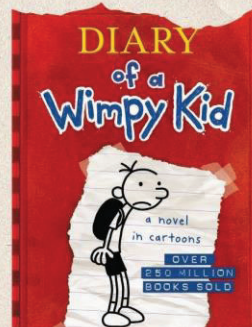
EXAMPLES

Marvel & DC Comics



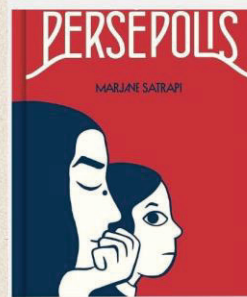
EXAMPLES

Marvel & DC Comics
Diary of a Wimpy Kid



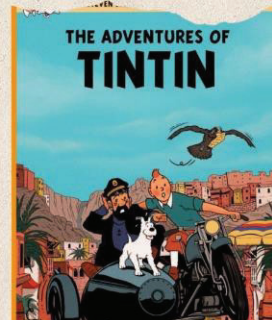
EXAMPLES

Marvel & DC Comics
Diary of a Wimpy Kid
Persepolis



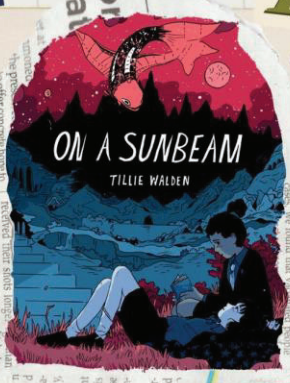
EXAMPLES

Marvel & DC Comics
Diary of a Wimpy Kid
Persepolis
The Adventures of Tintin



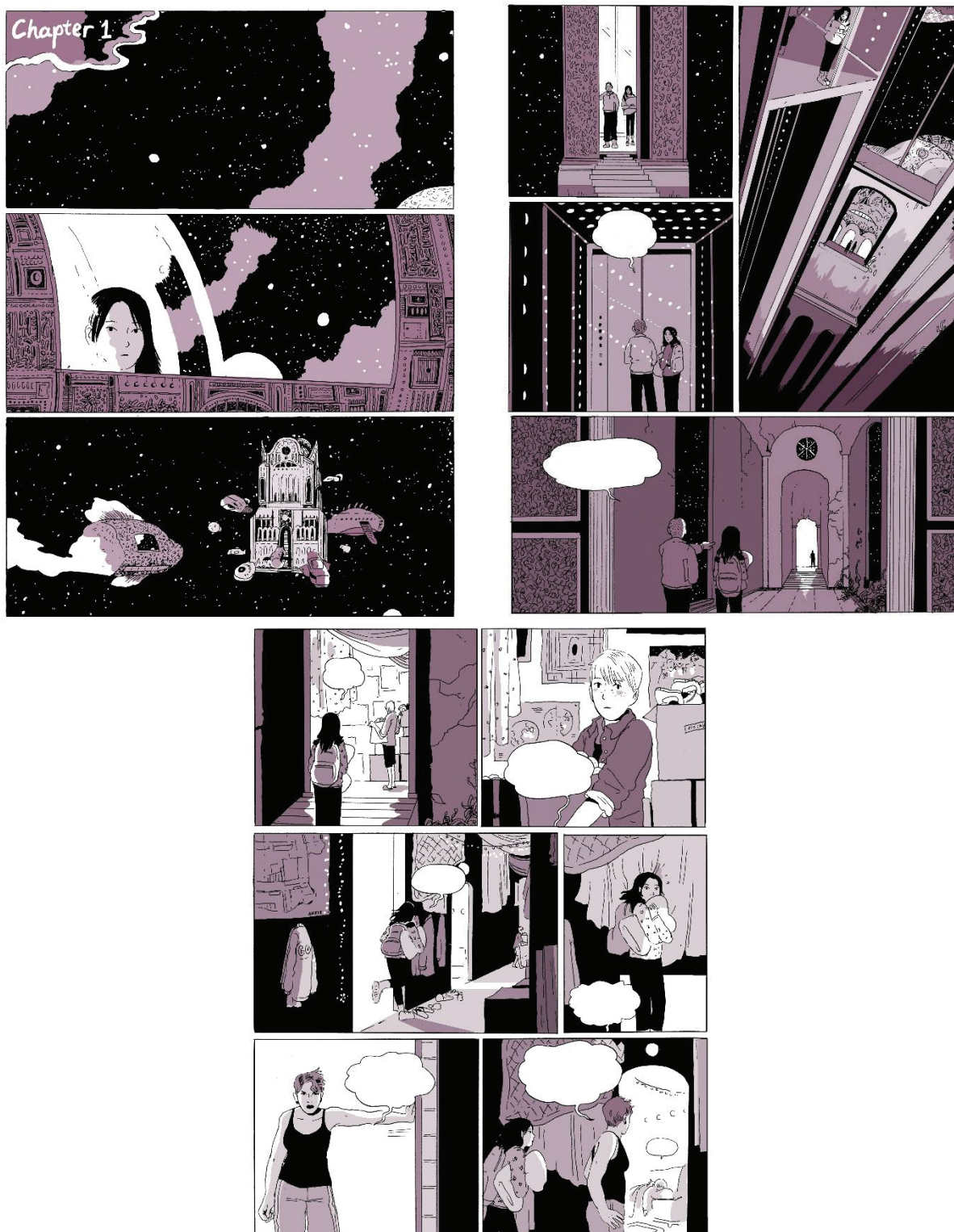
CAN GRAPHIC NOVELS HELP YOU LEARN?

ACTIVITY



SESSION 2

Activity 1: Before Reading – Predicting the Story



SESSION 3

Activity 1: Understanding Informal Language

“What’s up”

“Whatever”

“Cool”

“Never thought I’d be on a team that...”

“I’ve always felt like an outsider cause those 3 are so tight...”

“year-ish”

“Dunno really...” “It’s chill”

“Where (are) you going?”

“It’s an old religious site that’s gonna be a museum”

“Nah”

“And you better change those before class...”

“You wanna come eat with us?”

SESSION 4

Activity 1: The Importance of Color



See

Think

Wonder

Helping questions:

- What do you **see** when looking at this image?
- Do you **think** the feelings of the characters are connected to the colours used? If not, what could be?
- What do you **wonder** about the use of those colours?

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Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Activity 2: Analyzing color



Image 1



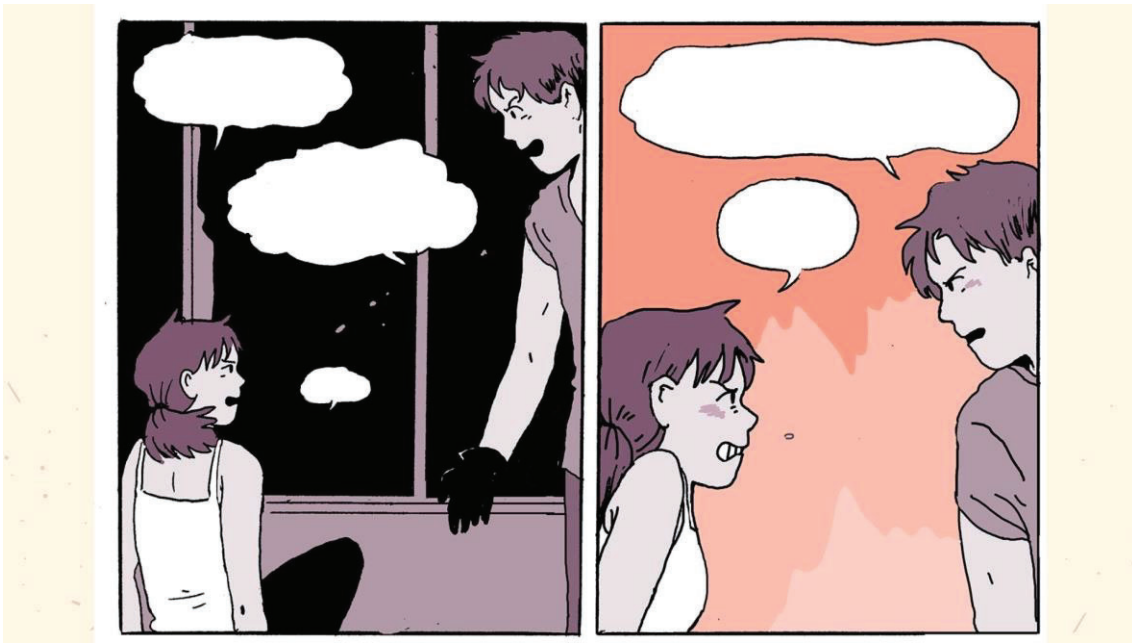


Image 2





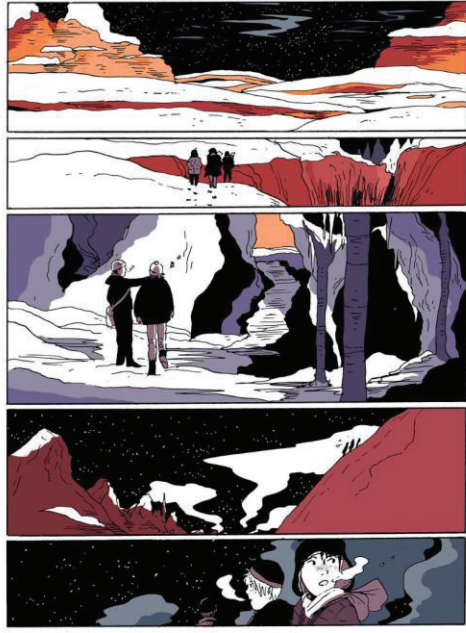
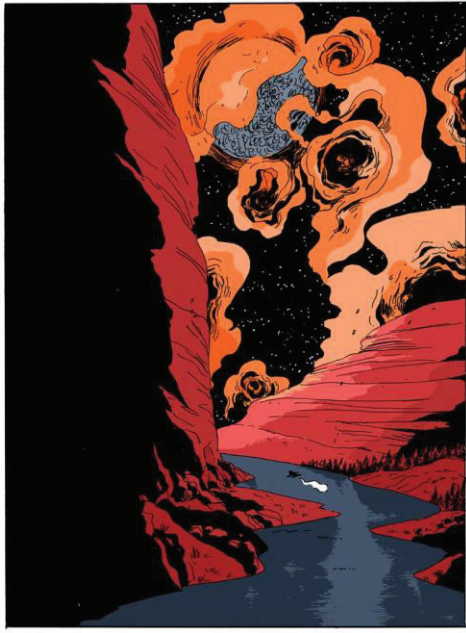
Image 3





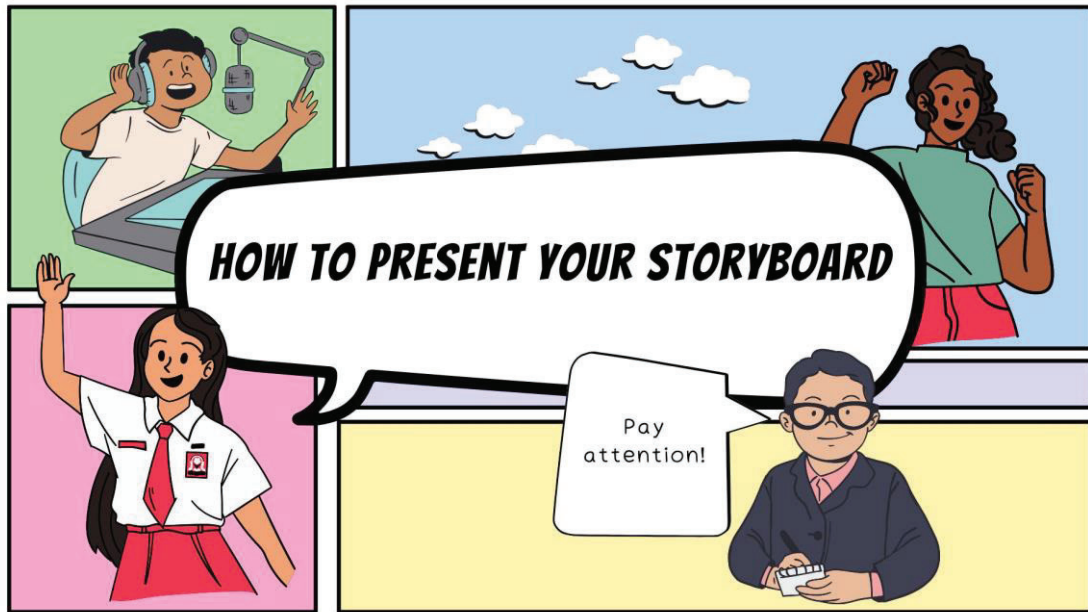
Image 4
and 5





SESSION 6

Activity 2: How do you present it?



PANEL ORDER AND LAYOUT

- How the order was decided
- How it was organized
- Why are they like that?

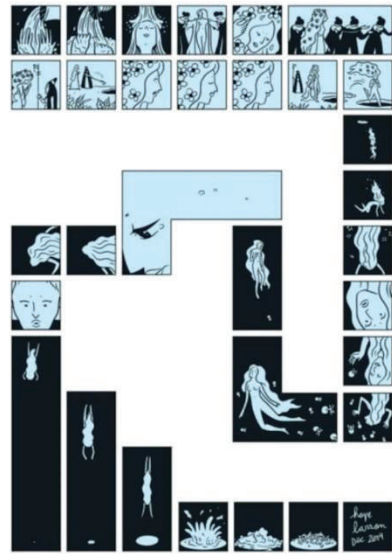


IMAGE DESCRIPTION

- What is happening?
- Which details are important?
- What actions, expressions or emotions are showing?



USE OF COLOR

Which and why

What do they represent or show



CREATIVE PROCESS

- How did you come up with the idea?
- Did you all agree
- Who drew what?
- Did you face difficulties and how did you solve them?

