

In-Class Introduction

This lesson is designed to provide students with a one-class introduction to the book. The lesson can be used to start off a class reading of the text, or to encourage them to read it independently.

As a recipient of One Book resources, the Free Library requires that you devote one class period to introducing Persepolis to students, either using this lesson or your own plan.

Note: This lesson is partially adapted from a lesson available on the website www.ReadWriteThink.org. The original lesson is 4 days in length, and a link to the materials is provided in the Online Resources section of this guide.

Procedure:

1. Begin by asking students to respond to the following prompt, either verbally or on paper:

When do we tell a story with pictures, and why?

- In discussion, try to come up with as broad a list of media as possible, and then discuss the difference between reading an image and the printed word.
- Make sure to challenge any claims that images are "simpler" and "easier" to read or create than a novel. (How long does it take to plan and make a comic book? A movie? How long does it take to set up a good photograph?)

2. Distribute Graphic Novel/Comics Terms and Concepts (included in the next pages) to students and review it--or just discuss and write on the board. For this introductory session, focus on the following terms: frame, panel, gutter, graphic weight (tonal difference, patterning, and saturated colors), and text features (captions versus speech balloons).

3. Distribute copies of the book and ask students to open to page 3, which is the first page of the story. Direct their attention to the simple lines that frame each panel. Note that gutters are consistent. At this point, life is safe and predictable with a sense of order echoed by this visual regularity. Tell students to watch for changes in the gutters as the story progresses. At what point do they note changes in the gutters? Why does the artist choose to alter the gutters at this time? What emotions do such gutter changes evoke?



4. Ask students to look carefully at the panels on this page (you might have them number the panels from 1 to 5, starting in the top left corner). How many panels are there? How are the panels the same? How do they differ? Why do they think the author made these choices?
5. Ask students to read the captions on page 3. What does the reader learn from the captions? Direct their attentions to the second panel where the author is sitting with a group of little girls all wearing veils. The caption reveals that we can see only a little bit of the author's arm. What is the significance of this caption to the other captions on this page? What is the author foreshadowing?
6. Ask students to look at the third panel that shows a number of people protesting. Ask students to read the caption and then ask them what they notice about this panel when it is compared with the other panels on the page. Why do they think it is darker? What does the darkness symbolize? What emotion is the author representing here? Is this representation effective? What does it tell them about what will happen in the book?
7. Panels 4 and 5 see the addition of various speech bubbles. Ask students what the reader learns from these bubbles. What do the children have to say about the veils? Why do students think they are saying these things? What do the pictures show students doing with their veils? Why?
8. Give students time to read the rest of the first chapter (to page 9).
9. Now that students have an idea of the complexities present in this graphic form, take a few minutes for them to reflect on the challenges this genre represents. Encourage them to produce a free write that explores any feelings of discomfort or confusion (text-to-self connection), connects this book to a previously read text (text-to-text connection), and links the subject matter to current news and events (text-to-world connection).
10. If students are going to use a Literary Log to track their reading, have them do the first entry now.

