

Teaching Graphic Novels in the Secondary Classroom

Our goals for today:

- Understand the value of graphic novels (AKA Comics)
- See how the BC Curriculum can be addressed through this medium
- Examples of teachable novels currently in Surrey's LRS Catalogue



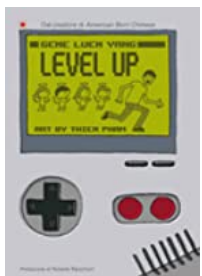
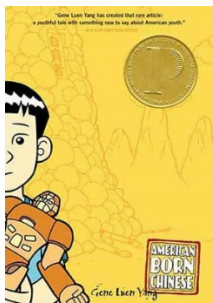
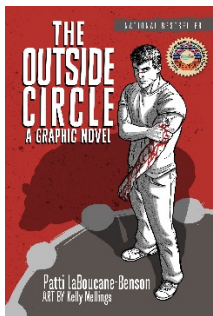
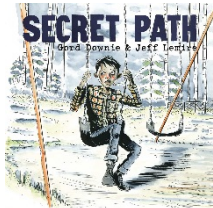
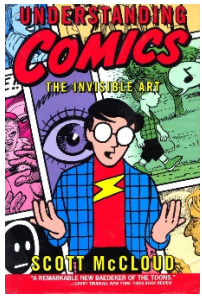
A well-structured text on the art of comics and their structural aspects. A great way to learn about graphic novels – teacher and student.

This text covers:

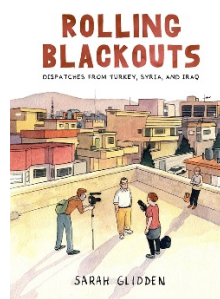
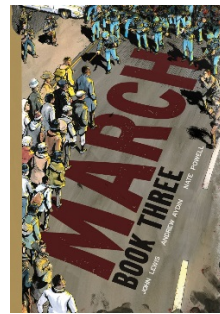
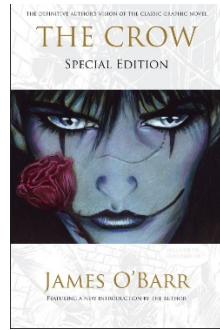
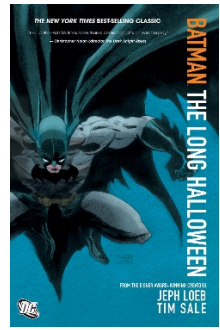
- The structure and vocabulary of comics
- The history of comics (from Egyptian hieroglyphics to now)
- The brain science behind why we love comics

Understanding Comics: by Scott McCloud





Teaching Graphic Novels Texts:	
Teaching Graphic Novels: Practical Strategies for the Secondary ELA Classroom	
In Graphic Detail: Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom	
Understanding Comics: The invisible art	A well-structured text on the art of comics and their structural aspects. A great way to learn about graphic novels – teacher and student.
Indigenous Perspectives Texts:	
Lost Innocence	
Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story	
Betty: Helen Betty Osborne Story	
The Secret Path	Images only, and Gord Downie’s song lyrics. A moving story about Chanie Wenjack’s death escaping a Residential School.
The Outside Circle	A story of a young First Nations man struggling with family, crime, prison and eventually cultural identity and healing.
Moonshot: Vol 1, Vol 2	Graphic short story collections. A mix of traditional (or adapted) stories and original narratives from Indigenous authors.
A Blanket of Butterflies	
Sovereign Traces	Graphic short story collection. A variety of genres and styles that dig into the challenges of the modern Indigenous experience.
This Place: 150 years retold	Collection of historical short stories, in various styles, about 150 years of Canadian Indigenous experience.
Junior Texts (grades 8-10):	
<i>A generalization – some of these could be used at higher levels... based on context and purpose</i>	
American Born Chinese	Easy visuals. This story addresses Chinese stereotypes and the struggles of a boy dealing with feeling American, not Chinese, based on societal expectations.
Anya’s Ghost	
Arrival, The	No words, intentionally, to highlight the struggles of new immigrants. Beautiful images, strong themes of acceptance, belonging, and struggle putting the reader in the shoes of a man in a strange new world.
Boxers and Saints	A two-book series following characters on either side of the Boxer revolution in China. Brings in elements of religion and classical Chinese tales.
In Real Life (<i>approval in progress</i>)	A young girl gets into online gaming and ends up building confidence, and developing a friendship that teaches her about economics, poverty, and allyship.
Level Up	Easy visuals. Includes a great analogy of life being a video game – opportunity to deepen analysis is there. The protagonist struggles between his own dreams and fulfilling the expectations of his father... and is haunted by little ghosts (think Pacman) because of it.
Hot Comb (<i>NEW! Feb 2021</i>)	A series of short graphic stories, Hot Comb offers a poignant glimpse into Black women's lives as they come of age



Senior Texts (grades 10-12):	
American Vampire Volume 1	Often bloody and violent. A 50's period piece, looking at the clash between old world and new, using vampires as a metaphor for social change.
Angel Catbird (Vol 1)	Margaret Atwood wrote a graphic novel. It's strange and that makes it awesome.
Attack, The	A soul-searching journey as a man tries to come to grips with his wife's death as a potential suicide bomber.
Batman: The Dark Knight Returns	Classic Batman story. Batman comes out of retirement to fix Gotham. Great look at media, leadership, and the idea of a hero.
Batman: The Long Halloween	Batman, Dent, and Gordon investigate a serial killer. All the big super-villains are in this one, and Two-Face is "created" in this canonical Batman story. Themes of good vs evil, light and dark, justice and law, are explored.
Batman: Year One	
Crow, The	A violent and graphic story of loss and revenge. For mature students with parent approval. This one is hard to read at times but is considered one of the best graphic novels ever created.
Fables: Legends in Exile	A fun, murder mystery look at what might happen if fairy tale characters had their own society hidden in ours; what would modern day fairy tales do?
Locke and Key (Vol 1) Welcome to Lovecraft	A fantastical horror story. Follows the Locke family as they return to their traditional home in the wake of the murder of their father. Grief meets tragedy as past haunts the present (literally). Recommended for gr. 11-12.
March: Book One	<p><u>March</u> (volumes 1-3) is the auto-biography of John Lewis – former US Congressman and participant in the major Civil Rights struggles of the 50s and 60s. Vol1: Childhood and school segregation. Vol2: The March on Washington. Vol3: Selma and the Voting Rights Act. The entire series is bookended by Obama's inauguration day through Lewis's eyes.</p>
March: Book Two	
March: Book Three	
Maus (complete Vol. 1 and 2)	A story of the Holocaust – allegorical as the Nazis are cats and the Jewish populace are mice.
Palestine	
Persepolis	An autobiography of a young girl growing up in Iran during the revolution and after – dealing with cultural changes in her country and their effect on her.
Pop Gun War: Gift	
Pride of Baghdad	
Rolling Blackouts	A memoir of a cartoonist who travels with a group of journalists and a former soldier to interview Iraqi refugees in Turkey and Syria.
Sandman Volume 1: Preludes and Nocturnes	Follows the journey of Morpheus, God of dreams, as he tries to reclaim his objects of power after being captured and imprisoned for decades. Even gods have identity crises! Can be violent and graphic in places.
Sculptor, The	
The Silence of our Friends (<i>approval in progress</i>)	Set in Houston, 1968, the story explores a friendship between an African American professor and protest organizer and a white news reporter. Exploring the importance of allyship and an active pursuit of justice.
Skim	



Through the Woods	A collection of five short stories – all reminiscent of classic fairy tales; all a bit dark and creepy, but in different styles.
V for Vendetta	An examination of a totalitarian Britain and one vigilante’s plot to free the people from their slavery.
Watchmen	Award winning and amazing this is a story of vigilante crime fighters in a society that doesn’t want them anymore dealing with their inability to save their society from themselves (and also a murderer apparently picking them off one at a time). Characters allow an exploration of philosophy and psychology.
Y: The Last Man (Book 1)	A virus kills all the men on earth but one. A look at what might happen to society if there were no men. (<i>NOTE: clearly written by men, with the male gaze; good opportunity to discuss what this means</i>)
Zahra’s Paradise	A young man and his mother search for his brother, who has been missing since attending protests in Iran in 2009. Corruption and social issues of the setting are explored.

Note: We are secondary teachers, therefore we did not include books designed for elementary students. We also have not included graphic adaptations of novels. All texts here are original works designed specifically as graphic novels. If you are interested – check out some approved graphic versions of classic texts (Frankenstein, Beowulf, The Odyssey, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet... to name a few). The LRS catalogue includes texts such as these and many are good visual adaptations.

Please note: if you are going to use a graphic version of a classic text, it is more beneficial to your students to approach it as a graphic study in addition to the content of the text itself. While students better understand the action by seeing it in front of them, the visual elements are chosen with purpose. This provides another avenue through which students can analyze text and demonstrate their understanding of it. Graphic novels used solely as a supplementary texts lose out on a lot of the really fun, juicy discussions that can come out of visual analysis.

We are not promoting graphic novels as a replacement for traditional text, classic or otherwise. However, we feel quite strongly that they present another opportunity to engage with literature.

LITERARY STUDIES 11

Ministry of Education Description: Literary Studies 11 allows students to delve more deeply into literature. Students can explore specific themes, periods, authors, or areas of the world through literary works (fiction and non-fiction) in a variety of media.

Literary Studies 11: Graphic Novels

Ministry of Education BIG IDEAS for the English curriculum

The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world.

People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives.

Texts are socially, culturally, geographically, and historically constructed.

Language shapes ideas and influences others.

Questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged citizens.

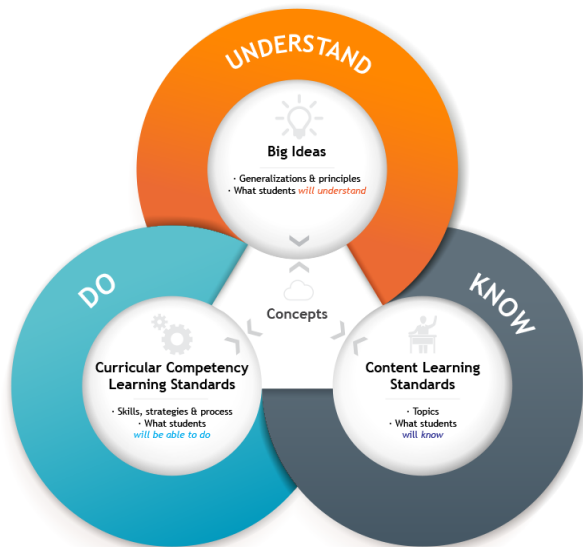
This course is designed to delve into a specific (focused) form of literature. Different themes, literary elements, visual art styles, and aspects of our world today will be explored through graphic novels.



Curriculum Model

All areas of learning are based on a “Know-Do-Understand” model to support a concept-based competency-driven approach to learning.

Three elements, the Content (Know), Curricular Competencies (Do), and Big Ideas (Understand) all work together to support deeper learning.



Content (Know)

The content learning standards — the “Know” of the know-do-understand model of learning — detail the essential topics and knowledge at each grade level.

Curricular Competencies (Do)

The curricular competencies are the skills, strategies, and processes that students develop over time. They reflect the “do” in the know-do-understand model of learning. While curricular competencies are more subject-specific, they are connected to the core competencies.

Big Ideas (Understand)

The big ideas consist of generalizations and principles and the key concepts important in an area of learning. They reflect the “understand” component of the know-do-understand model of learning.

The big ideas represent what students will understand at the completion of the curriculum for their grade. They are intended to endure beyond a single grade and contribute to future understanding.

Assessments for this course will be designed around the expectations stated above and the Ministry of Educations specifications that all English students show evidence they can:

- 1) Comprehend and connect (reading, listening, viewing)**
- 2) Create and communicate (writing, speaking, representing)**

Keep this paper and remember THIS:

young_michelle@surreyschools.ca

My email address... if you need help, are absent, or you or your parents need to contact me THIS is the way to do it.

Through the Woods, by Emily Carroll



To this point in the course you have learned about the technical aspects of creating and analyzing a comic. We have looked at two stories, and used that knowledge in reading, discussing, and analyzing them. Now you are going to show me what you have learned.

The text, Through the Woods, is a collection of short stories, all comics. You are going to pick one of them to work with on this task.

To complete the task you are going to design lessons for the story ... if you were a teacher, what would you want your students to take away from their experience with the story?

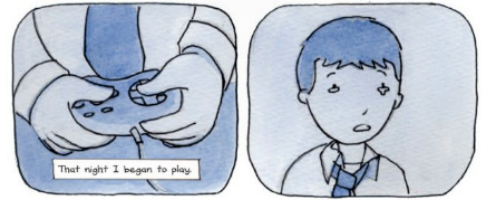
You will be responsible for completing the following:

- 1) Lesson outline
- 2) A worksheet/instructions for your “students”
 - a. Make this an “answer Key” copy – filled in with the right answers
- 3) The handout / explanation of the final assessment
 - a. You do not have to DO your final assessment, but you have to make it clear to me what the expectations are.
 - i. A student hand out of the assignments expectations AND
 - ii. A written description of what you expect students to provide, and how it will show their learning OR
 - iii. A marking rubric that shows what you’re looking for

Level Up

Think about the way the story uses video games as an analogy for life.

What event prompts the end of one “level” and the start of the next?



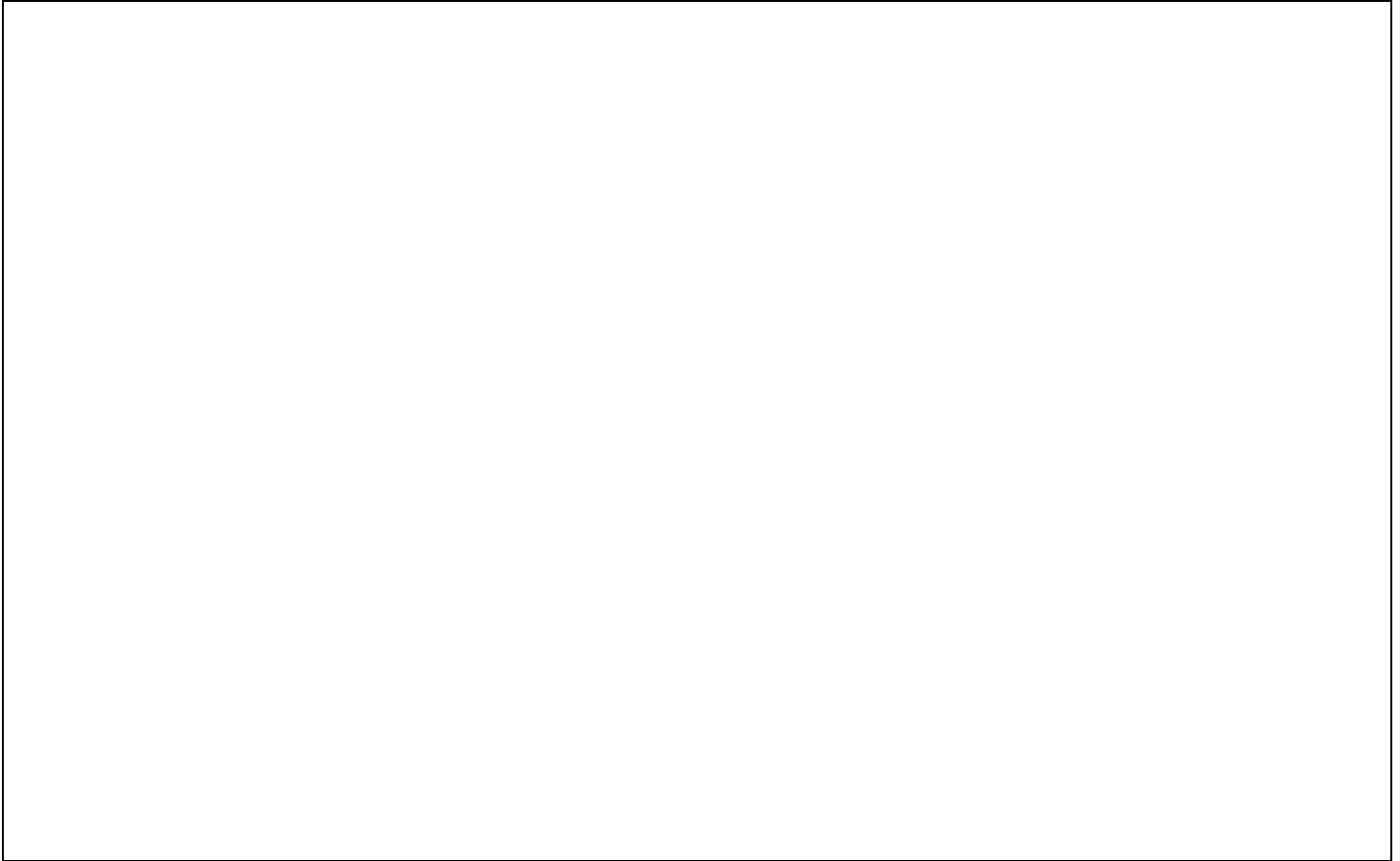
Level one ends:	
Level two ends:	
Level three ends:	
Game over leads to “play again?”	

What does the use of this analogy tell us about the choices that Dennis is making, and the significant moments in his life? (PS: if you don't remember what analogy is, you should look that up)

Is this an accurate model for a real life? *explain*

Internal Conflict:

What is Dennis struggling with mentally, or emotionally? Why does he have this struggle?



What visual elements are used in the story to show that we are seeing this world through the protagonist's eyes and things are probably not what they seem like to him? What is the REALITY of this situation?





Graphic Effects in Book Three:

MARCH

While going back and scanning pages 60-70 of the book find and reflect on the following:

Find TWO **visual symbols** and explain the impact of their use when in juxtaposition with the text. *(Give page numbers)*

Find TWO examples of **sound** being illustrated in the section... explain the impact of how it's used. *(Give page numbers)*

Overall, scan the section and note the changes from **light to dark backgrounds**. When do we see this occur? What is the purpose and impact of that choice?

Batman: The Long Halloween Chapter 2: Thanksgiving

Chase the use of colour and shadow through the chapter. Find three points of discussion where colour and light are used effectively to further the story:

<i>Page 1-2 - Batman in shadows, Gordon in light</i>	<i>Gordon is the law - and pure - clean / good Batman is darkness - hidden identity etc.</i>

Batman has two interactions with Solomon Grundy in this chapter. What do they tell us about his character?
(Personality, the type of person he is...etc)



Have you noticed the front picture of each chapter?

Chase the use of colour and shadow through the chapter. Find three points of discussion where colour and light are used effectively to further the story:

Page 1-2 – Batman is shadows, Gordon in light	Gordon is the law – and pure – clean / good Batman is darkness – hidden identity etc.
Page 3 on... Mickey interrogated in spot light – it shrinks, fades, then memory is purple in colour.	Present vs past colour change Fade from present into memory
The holding cell – criminals identified in spot light and with mug shots	
The Roman’s men at dinner “To the Roman” bright and festive – then next page black and white murder	Juxtaposition of bright celebration and murder

Batman has two interactions with Solomon Grundy in this chapter. What do they tell us about his character?
(Personality, the type of person he is...etc)

1) Fight with S Grundy when he’s chasing Mickey – he doesn’t want to fight him – says he’s a “lost soul” of Gotham.

Says he was “forced” to hurt him – tells us he’s reluctant to hurt without cause. Has pity and empathy.

2) He returns to give Grundy a plate for Thanksgiving.

Shows he cares, doesn’t want the innocent “lost soul” to be alone. He himself would have been alone.



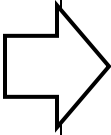
Have you noticed the front picture of each chapter?

English 11 – Macbeth Act 1: Visual Understanding

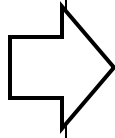
In response to Act 1, we are going to be taking what we've learned about either the **MOOD** of the play or **SPECIFIC CHARACTERS** so far and explain how we know these things **USING VISUAL ELEMENTS FROM ACT 1**.

To properly fill out the chart, you are going to:

1. In the left box, fill in as many visual details about your chosen panel(s) as possible. Colours, actions, clothing, background details, facial expressions, setting, etc. – **EVERYTHING!** (Write the pg number & panel)
2. In the top of the right column, you are going to write a **single sentence** that clearly **identifies** something about the **mood** of the story or something that we've learned about a **character** from this panel.
3. In the bottom of the right column, you are going to explain how the visuals from the first column explain your statement from the previous box. (I.e. You know the mood is happy because everyone's smiling, the colours are bright, it's sunny outside etc.) You should have at least three reasons; point form explanations are fine.

Visual Details	What did you learn about CHARACTER or MOOD?
	
	How do you know you learned this? (<u>EXPLAIN</u> using the <u>VISUALS</u> from the first box)

Visual Details	What did you learn about CHARACTER or MOOD?
How do you know you learned this? (<u>EXPLAIN</u> using the <u>VISUALS</u> from the first box)	



English 11 – Graphic Short Story

A few days ago, I asked you to tell a brief story in graphic form. This is going to become the rough copy for a slightly longer version that clearly demonstrates your understanding of the important parts of graphic story telling (think about all the definitions we've done in the past two chapters, the panelling worksheet, and the shots we looked at) that we've been learning about over the past few days.

You are going to tell the same story on an 11X14" piece of paper, which must include the following:

- 8-12 panels
- At least 3 different shot types
- At least 3 different transition types
- At least 3 different panel sizes or shapes
- At least 2 sound effects
- At least one strong example of the concept of intervals – the passage of time
- At least one bleed
- Use of text and visual together (this could be narration, speech bubbles, etc)

On the back side of each panel, in point form, you need to list the choices you've made (panel, shot, transition, extras like bleed, etc.) and in a brief sentences or two, explain how you think these choices have helped tell the story in that panel.

This does NOT need to be coloured, though if you have time and want to you can. It will not influence my assessment one way or the other if you make this choice.

English 11 – Short Stories/Graphic Novels Essay

Over the past couple of weeks, we've been learning about the potential value in graphic novels as a story telling medium. We have also been putting together a set of vocabulary to be able talk about the visual aspects of graphic novels that help tell a story.

Your job now is to take everything you already know about text based stories, as well as everything that we've learned about techniques in graphic novels, and respond to the following statement in an essay:

To what extent are graphic novels more effective at telling a story than a traditional text story?

Specific Requirements

- You must use at least one short story we've studied and one short graphic story from "Through the Woods". The last piece of evidence you choose can be any of the other pieces of short literature we've read
- You must provide quotes from short stories and specific, descriptive evidence from any graphic texts you choose
- You must regularly use the graphic terminology we've studied (transitions, bleed, gutter, intervals etc)

You will be evaluated on:

- Your understanding of graphic novels as a genre
- Your ability to provide and explain examples to support your point of view
- Writing

FINAL PROJECT: GRAPHIC NOVEL REVIEW

Rationale and end goal: To produce a review of a graphic novel of your choosing and assess whether it would be a good addition to the list of books we read for this course.

We will be going to the library to see the choices available to us there, but if you would like to bring in a book from an outside source (other libraries, book stores, or your friend's book shelf) you are welcome to.

You will be asked to assess the book on three categories:

STORY:	Character, conflict, and theme? How relatable is the issue being explored? How engaging?
WORLD / SETTING:	Is this world a typical contemporary setting? If so: is it accurate? Detailed? Logical? Is this world fantasy? Or futuristic? If so: is it logical? Connected to a larger story arc? (<i>ie: a Batman text fitting with the larger Batman universe</i>) Clearly explained?
ART:	Panel size and shape, transitions, shots, and use of colour? Etc. How iconic? Are the images purposefully iconic or detailed? What effect does the art have on the story-telling? On the reader?

Create a review of the book with the above three categories fully explored. Each section should be detailed and multi-paragraph though many of those paragraphs could be short. For example, in your "story" section you may have a separate paragraph for each of the points: character, conflict, and theme. Some detailed discussion may be required for some of these, but another point could be shorter, and maybe even more of a list than a paragraph.

A good copy of this review, typed, is required by the agreed upon due date as your classmates will get the opportunity to read it on our presentation day.

Presentation day:

You will not be required to speak in front of the class. What you WILL be required to do is create a short summary of the three sections so your classmates can see, with a quick scan, a general sense of the book. You will need to create a five-star rating for the book overall, as well as giving each of the three sections their own rating. This could mean that you could end up with something like the following:

** Story
*** World
***** Art
Overall rating... ***

Your classmates would be able to see at a glance what would be a beautifully drawn piece of art in a mostly interesting place but with a terrible, weak, story and/or wooden unlikeable characters. Details your explanation would make clear, I'm hoping.

(The Star Wars universe, and episodes 1,2, and 3 come to mind as an example of how this rating could be possible)