

UNDERSTANDING COMICS

How to create a comic strip

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The images, pictures and panels from comic books used in this project are used to provide examples of concepts and techniques and are to be used as a reference. They are property of their authors or publisher houses.

INTRODUCTION:

This unit is for children of third Cycle of Primary Education.

Through it children will learn:

- * The different linguistic codes found in a comic book.
- * Some techniques to design and draw their characters.
- * To create their own original comic strip. In creating their comic strip they will be able to apply all the different aspects they have been learning through the unit.

The material designed is for 12 lessons of 1 hour,

Every lesson has a different name so the main aim of each lesson is clearly defined:

Lesson 1.....Let's start!

Lesson 2.....How to draw comics in 100 different ways.

Lesson 3.....Who's your favourite character in a comic book?

Lesson 4.....Let's draw some faces.

Lesson 5.....Let's create our comic book character!

Lesson 6.....Tadaam! This is my character!

Lesson 7.....Let's move the body!

Lesson 8.....Let's talk!

Lesson 9.....Let's have a look!

Lesson 10.....How does it sound?

Lesson 11.....Let's create our comic strip (Part I)

Lesson 12.....Let's create our comic strip (Part II)

Lessons covering theoretical aspects have been combined with more practical lessons. At the end of some more theoretical lessons there is time so pupils can continue practising techniques introduced previously.

Some of the activities presented / proposed to the children are not completely finished during the lesson but they are invited to continue practising and finishing them at home or during the following lessons. Children are building up their portfolio so there is a sense of work in progress.

An important part of the children's productions is shared with their classmates. Displays are hung on the corridor walls so everybody can see everybody else's works and so they can complete them with ideas throughout the week.

This unit about comic books has a very important linguistic content. Some of the language used through the lessons can be expanded or reinforced at the same time during the language lessons. The following chart shows in a general way the language covered in every lesson so it can be taken into account when planning the syllabus of the language lessons.

Regarding how we plan the lessons, the activities we are going to deal with and the group class a lesson can be developed in two sessions (Regarding how we plan the lessons, the activities we are going to deal with and the group class). We have added some extended activities that can be used or perhaps a specific group wants to go deeper into some specific aspects or features. The planning will also change if we distribute or complement some of the content between the language lessons and the Arts and Crafts lessons.

Lesson 1	Expressing preferences. Likes and dislikes.
Lesson 2	Adjectives describing: size, shape, material...
Lesson 4	Adjectives describing feelings. Parts of the face.
Lessons 5 / 6	Description of people. Adjectives describing physical appearance and personality. Giving personal information: Name, age, nationality, place of birth, date of birth, job, abilities, family and friends...
Lesson 7	Movement verbs. Describing what people are doing: present continuous. Parts of the body. Song: "Head and shoulders"
Lesson 8	Entonation: negative, affirmative and interrogative sentences. Tone: loudly, quietly, in a normal voice. Punctuation marks: exclamation mark, question mark.
Lesson 10	Onomatopoeias. Song: "Old Mac Donald"

This project is linked with another project called “Puntedu” which is being currently developed at some schools in Catalonia. These “puntedu” projects focus on the development of school libraries. One of the aims of “Puntedu” projects is to foster reading for pleasure. There will be a display with the comic books available in the library during the unit so the pupils can borrow them. There will be also comic books in the classroom so they can bring them home or use them as reference.

Assessment:

Assessment is done in different ways:

* Evaluation of the pupil's portfolio.

Portfolio content

Lesson 1	* Bubble map: “Comic Book Genres” Pupils can add some more comic book titles to each genre throughout the unit.
Lesson 1	* “Comic Book readings” (Worksheet 1) Pupils keep track of their readings through the unit.
Lesson 2	* Lettering: different drafts and final productions of drawing the word “comic” using different lettering.
Lesson 4	* Facial expressions: drafts and final productions of drawing different facial expressions.
Lessons 5 /6	* Character profile (worksheet 10)
Lesson 7	* Drafts of people in motion.
Lesson 9	* Storyboard (worksheets 18 and 19 or 20 and 21) Different types of shots. Optional: Title lettering and added balloons.
Lesson 10	* Invented onomatopoeias.
Lessons 11-12	* Comic strips. Comic strips created by the pupils.
	* All through the lesson they can add to their portfolio examples of every single aspect dealt with: examples of shots, examples of angles, examples of balloons, new onomatopoeias...

* Participation during the lessons.

* Oral production during the lessons.

Displays

Lesson 1	<p>* “Comic Book Genres”</p> <p>A display with the bubble map and some examples of comic books titles of every different genre (photocopies of their covers).</p>
Lesson 2	<p>* “100 different ways of drawing the word comic book”</p> <p>A display created by the pupils. As they keep drawing during the lesson, different pupils choose one of their ideas and draw it on the display. This display can be done by only one group or by the different groups doing the comic book unit.</p>
Lesson 4	<p>* “Facial expressions”</p> <p>This display shows different facial expressions and can be used as a reference during the lessons. The teacher can draw the basic facial expressions on it and the pupils can add new facial expressions as they find new ones.</p>
Lesson 7	<p>* “Movement”</p> <p>A display showing how to draw different movements of the body.</p>
Lesson 8	<p>* “Balloons”</p> <p>This display can show different types of balloons: found or created by the pupils. It can also add visual metaphors found by the pupils.</p>
Lesson 10	<p>* “Onomatopoeias”</p> <p>This display can be done in different ways. It can be done as a poster showing different onomatopoeies in different languages without any classification or classifying the onomatopoeias according to the country they belong to. It can include conventional onomatopoeias and those created by the pupils.</p>
Lessons 11-12	<p>* A exhibition can be made with the final comic strips.</p>

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: <i>List of some comics available in Spain classified by genres.</i>	This appendix provides the teachers with some titles currently being published. There are comics in Catalan, Spanish and English. Links to the publishers are provided so other similar titles can be checked.
Appendix 2: <i>A collection of LOGOS with different lettering.</i>	This appendix provides the teachers with a collection of logos that can be cut out in small cards so the pupils can observe different types of lettering.
Appendix 3: <i>Classification of comic book Characters.</i>	This appendix provides the teachers with some possible classifications of comic book characters according to different criteria.
Appendix 4: <i>Facial expressions.</i>	This appendix provides with a list of facial expressions and a simplified way of drawing them.
Appendix 5: <i>Onomatopoeias</i>	This appendix provides a list of onomatopoeias in Catalan, Spanish, English and Japanese so they can be used as a reference to creating comic books and comic strips.
Appendix 6: <i>Comic strips. Comic strips books and authors.</i>	This appendix provides a bunch of assorted comic strips in different languages, with different styles and authors. Some information about every author, web links and a some bibliography is provided.