

Signal Words highlighted in yellow

Ms. Pryzbylkowski

Bluebells—Language Arts

3/29/10

Work Cut Out for a Cartoon

You know *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and *Bone*; they're in the school library, bookstore, and on student book shelves. Everywhere you look there's another one of your students with the new *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or picking *Dragon Ball Z* as their choice book. In fact, about 45% of middle school students in the United States have read a graphic novel in their lives (so your students aren't alone). You spot them in pupil's hands while school's in session, but you may not



want to see them in hands during the summer—especially on summer reading lists. The question of putting graphic novels on summer reading lists is most likely to come to mind—especially to those of you who create the lists. Many teachers fuss over the idea even though these specific novels may be on certain students' reading level, can be fun to read for the pupil, and can also instill the joy of reading in reluctant readers' minds. Be open to what your students are reading, and eager to learn more about the books. Obviously, graphic novels aren't just a handful of manga and comics, they're actually novels. Who knows, you might even consider reading one yourself.

To Kill a Mockingbird and *Moby Dick*—great books, that most of us have read in our lives. They may be great American literature, but will all of your students be able to read these books, understand them, and write a two-page double-spaced report on it? Not every student is ready for that particular assignment; that's why graphic novels would be a better choice. They're

Comment [jap1]: Attention Grabber: Background Information/Anecdote to grabber the TEACHER audience

Comment [jap2]: Thesis with position and a hint of the counterargument

Comment [jap3]: Elaboration of counterargument that is found after this.

Signal Words highlighted in yellow

not pre-school books, but simply more on certain students' reading levels. However, some of you may feel that graphic novels aren't "true literature," but a bundle of few-worded foolish comics that were meant for fourth graders. Well these "foolish comics" have plenty of words and were shown to enhance *seventh grade* readers' comprehension skills with their illustrations, or "foolish comics," Scholastic noted. You want all your students to have good comprehension skills for the future, why not help them? Fortunately, not only do graphic novels improve student comprehension skills, but they're fun to read.

Comment [jap4]: COUNTERARGUMENT

Comment [jap5]: Transition sentence #1 leading reader into Argument #2, Paragraph #3

Since you're a reading teacher, your job is to help students enjoy reading. Children are to choose a book (most of the time from a list) that's on their reading level and interests them. More often than not, students are to write a report concerning the book. If students didn't enjoy the book, how do you expect them to A) actually read the entire novel, B) write a full report on the novel, or C) eagerly await the next book they'll read? Many boys are attracted to graphic novels and most enjoy them. The humorous comics, action, and scenarios are characteristics of graphic novels that appeal to many male audiences. If these novels interest more than 40 percent of middle school boys wouldn't you put them on summer reading lists so more of your male students are picking up a book and reading? You should want all your students to read for pleasure, whether male or female, and not feel like they're getting teeth pulled. Other than entertaining to read, they can instill the joy of reading in reluctant readers' minds.



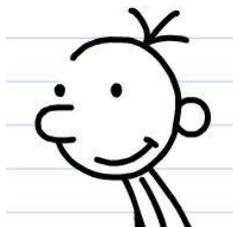
Comment [jap6]: Transition Sentence #2 that leads reader into Argument 3, Paragraph 4

Another goal, or what should be the goal of every reading teacher, is to have all your students reading frequently and enjoying it. You'll always remember the day when one of your students, who in the beginning of the year wouldn't even look at a book, has a new novel in his hands every other week. That's every reading teacher's dream—to get the reluctant readers to

Signal Words highlighted in yellow

love reading. **If only** there were certain types of books that would draw your reluctant readers in and not let them go. I'll give you a hint: it starts with a g and ends in novels. **It's that simple**— put at least one of these novels on the summer reading list and that reluctant reader will be on their hundredth book by the end of the summer. If you want more proof you can ask your local librarian and he or she'll tell you that kids have been checking them out like free candy. All over the United States kids are catching the graphic novel bug and checking the books out. To catch a fish, you need some bait; to catch a reluctant reader, you need a graphic novel.

A few of you still may be convinced that graphic novels aren't true literature even though this essay stated three hard-core reasons: they are more on certain students' reading levels, can be fun to read for pupils, and can instill the joy of reading in reluctant readers' minds. Students need books they enjoy and are excited to



read. This essay isn't suggesting that *Moby Dick*'s not exciting to read, **but** most likely a handful of your students don't appreciate those books as you may. Pupils are going to have to face great American literature sometime in their academic lives; your job is to make sure you've prepared them. Students should strive for excellence in your class because that's your job. They're *your* students, in *your* hands; prepare them for the future and let Greg Heffley (main character of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series) handle the rest.

Comment [jap7]: Thesis repeated
Counterargument repeated/elaborated upon

Comment [jap8]: Call-to-Action