



Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts
How to Read Wake Lesson Guide



Lesson Title:

How to Read Wake: A Guide to Understanding Graphic Narratives

Inquiry Questions:

How can understanding the literary and technical elements used by graphic narrative creators deepen our appreciation of a graphic narrative?

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Standards Alignment:

Common Core Standards for Literacy and Speaking & Listening, Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, and how the characters are introduced and developed).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

English Language Arts Standard 10: Range, Quality, & Complexity >> Range of Text Types for 6-12

Students in grades 6-12 apply the Reading standards to the following range of text types, with texts selected from a broad range of cultures and periods.

Literature			Informational Text
Stories	Dramas	Poetry	Literary Nonfiction and Historical, Scientific, and Technical Texts
Includes the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels	Includes one-act and multi-act plays, both in written form and on film	Includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics	Includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience

Overview of lesson:

Prior to reading graphic multimodal texts (graphic novels, graphic narratives, etc.), a teacher should consider explicitly teaching students *how* to read graphic and/or nontraditional texts. As you would introduce the historical context of *Wake*, present this mini-lesson to students and allow them to practice identifying these elements and how they contribute to the text's overall structure and meaning. Learning about these elements and their function also supports students in the creation of their own graphic narratives.

Materials:

- [How to Read *Wake* Google Slides presentation](#)
- [How to Read *Wake* guided notes \(distribute to students\)](#)
- [How to Read *Wake* Panels for Notes \(distribute to students\)](#)
- [Reading *Wake* Panel Analysis Graphic Organizer \(distribute to students\)](#)

Reading Graphic Novels:

- Typically, graphic narratives in English are read left to right. Changes to this pattern can be made. NOTE: Readers may take various approaches when reading a graphic text:
 - Some will look at images and words simultaneously, moving from panel to panel
 - Some will read all of the text and then look at the images
 - Some will look at the images and then the text
 - Some will do a combination
- Creators of graphic narratives make many decisions regarding what's shown in the panels:
 - What are you seeing in each panel?
 - What are you not seeing? What is hidden or not shown?





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- What is the camera angle or perspective? What is the effect?
- What do you notice about the distance from the subject of the panel?
- How are sound effects used?
- Why does the creator make these decisions? How do these decisions help the creator communicate the desired message?
- In traditional prose, important details are in the textual descriptions. In graphic texts, we can find details about characters, setting, plot, etc. in the text and images.
 - What do the images tell us about the characters, the place, the time?
 - What details do we learn from the text? Keep in mind, there are different types of text (speech bubbles, thought bubbles, narration, etc.)
 - Considering what is learned from the images and the text, what is being communicated? Are the text and images providing the same or conflicting information?

Procedures:

Distribute guided notes and panels for notes to students. As you present, students will document on the guided notes and annotate the panels.

Hook/ Provocation:

Slide 2: Students respond to the quick-write prompt: How does reading a book differ from looking at an image or watching a film? How are these activities similar?

Give students a few minutes to think about and write a brief response to the prompt. Allow them to share and discuss responses.

Slide 3: Begin explaining to students how reading graphic narratives will differ from reading more traditional texts. Engage students in a conversation about reading graphic novels—whether they read them, what they do and do not like about reading graphic novels, etc.

Technical Elements of Graphic Narratives (Slide 4 - 17):

Slide 5: List of technical elements of graphic narratives alongside a panel to preview from *Wake*. The following slides guide students through an examination of how these elements impact how a story is told.

Slide 6 - 7: Layout, panel, frame, and gutter. Annotated panel from *Wake*.

Slide 8: Perspective and Time. Pop-up question: How does the perspective in this image help you connect to the subject? Students discuss.

Slide 9 - 10: Transitions and Gutters. 6 Types of Panel-to-Panel Transitions

- **Moment-to-Moment:** Show basic movements occurring. Very little has changed in the panels, very little information needs to be filled in, and we don't need to use our imaginations much.





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- **Action-to-Action** (most common transition): A single subject progressing through a specific movement. We see step-by-step what is happening to a subject.
- **Subject-to-Subject**: We stay with one scene or idea, but we switch to different subjects, maybe going from one character to another. We use our imaginations more to fill in what is happening between the two subjects.
- **Scene-to-Scene**: A significant amount of time and space is crossed. We use our imaginations quite a bit to fill in the large gaps in time and/or space.
- **Aspect-to-Aspect**: We stay in the same scene, but we are shown a different aspect of it. There is a shift in what we are looking at within the scene (i.e., a close-up).
- **Non-Sequitur**: There is no logical relationship between the images, the panels don't go together, but our minds still try to connect them. Our imaginations still try to make a story out of the images and determine what happens in the gutter.
- There is a link to [read more](#) about gutters and transitions.

Slide 11: Annotate a Panel– Have students respond to the questions and annotate the panel from *Wake*. After students have had a few minutes to practice analyzing and annotating the panel, share and discuss responses. Clarify where needed.

Slide 12 -13: Foreground, midground, and background. Annotation focuses on these topics and identifying details.

Slide 14 - 15: Faces: portrait vs. iconic, facial expressions, open blank. Practice annotation.

Slide 16: Shading and Color. Discussion: How does the creator use shading and color to tell a story in this panel? Practice annotation.

Slide 17: Text Elements – speech balloons, sound effects, thought balloons, captions, and narration. Have students review the panels they've annotated and look for text elements.

Slide 18: Return to the quick-write prompt and have students refine their initial response.

Slide 19: Panel analysis questions:

- What are you seeing in each panel?
- What are you *not* seeing?
- How are transitions between time, space, or ideas depicted?
- What about the perspective, i.e. "camera angle"? Close-up or long shots? Worm's-eye or bird's-eye view?
- What is in the foreground, midground, and background?
- Do some images have more graphic weight than others? What do you notice about the color and shading?
- How do the creators show motion and sound?
- Why do you think the creators made these choices?





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Slide 20: For more information, students can watch the video lectures by John Gallagher on Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*

Slide 21 Have students summarize their three big takeaways from the presentation. After they have had a few moments, share this slide to supplement student takeaways.

Assessments:

Informal Assessment: Observe and monitor students' engagement and interaction. Students should complete the guided notes and annotation panels, which will be useful for reference as they complete the reading and activities.

As students read *Wake*, have them routinely analyze panels for each chapter using the Reading *Wake* Panel Analysis Graphic Organizer.

Bibliography:

A Guide to Using Graphic Novels to Teach Difficult Subjects. (2022, January 14). CORP-MAT1 (TEACH). <https://teach.com/resources/graphic-novels-in-the-classroom/>

Graphic Novels in the Classroom: A Teacher Roundtable | Cult of Pedagogy. (2016, October 9). Cult of Pedagogy. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teaching-graphic-novels/>

John Gallagher's Tips for Writing Content. (2022). [YouTube Video]. In YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/user/zpower10k>

Miller, A. (2012, January 11). Using Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom. Edutopia; George Lucas Educational Foundation. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/graphic-novels-comics-andrew-miller>



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