Lesson Plan – Reading
Buzz! Whiz! Bang! Using Comic Books to Teach Onomatopoeia

Overview
In this lesson, the teacher should begin with an introduction to onomatopoeia, describing words that imitate the natural sound associated with an action or object. Students will view several comic strips as a class and will be guided in identifying examples of onomatopoeia. They will then discuss the purpose of onomatopoeia and its effect in a story before the teacher asks the students to work individually to find examples of onomatopoeia in more comics.

Optional Extension: Students can work individually or in pairs to create their own comic books that include onomatopoeic language. After presenting their comics to the class, students can discuss the use of onomatopoeia and its effectiveness in each comic strip.

Objective
Students will
• Increase their knowledge of literary terms and how they are used in everyday writing by defining onomatopoeia using comic strips or books
• Demonstrate comprehension of onomatopoeia by locating onomatopoetic words in comic books
• Explore the effect onomatopoeia has in comic books and other narratives through a class discussion
• (Optional Extension) Apply their knowledge of onomatopoeia and the structure and narrative form of comics to create their own comic strips containing onomatopoetic words

Resources

• Online Resources:
  o Archie Comics
  o The Official Peanuts Website
  o Garfield and Friends Official Site
  o Comic Creator - The Comic Creator invites students to compose their own comic strips for a variety of contexts (prewriting, pre- and post-reading activities, response to literature, and so on).

• Other resources:
  o Copies of comic books or strips from newspapers
  o LCD or overhead projector
  o Computers/iPads
  o Chart paper and markers (optional)
  o Comic Strip Planning Sheet (optional)
  o Comic Strip Rubric (optional)
Preparation

1. This lesson assumes that students have previous experience with the structure of comic books and comic strips. If students need to build their background knowledge about comics, consider completing introductory lessons into the world of comics prior to teaching this lesson. Combining these lessons can create a mini-unit of literary investigations using comic books or strips.

2. Choose some sample comic strips to share with the students that contain multiple examples of onomatopoeia. You will want one or two to use as examples with the class and then a variety of examples for students to explore on their own. Online resources for comic strips include Archie Comics, Garfield and Friends Official Site and The Official Peanuts Website.

3. Arrange to use an LCD projector to share the comic strips with the class. Print copies of the comics that students will explore independently.

4. Make sure that students have permission to use the Internet, following your school policy. If needed, reserve a session in your school's computer lab.

5. FOR OPTIONAL EXTENSION: Familiarize yourself with the Comic Creator and bookmark it on your classroom or lab computers. This online tool allows students to create a comic strip using a set of characters and props. Students have the ability to write their own captions.

6. FOR OPTIONAL EXTENSION: Make copies of the Comic Strip Planning Sheet and the Comic Strip Rubric for each student. Students will use the planning sheet to draft and revise their work before actually creating and printing their comic panels on the Comic Creator. Introduction of the Comic Strip Planning Sheet provides an excellent mini-lesson for reviewing the literary elements of character, setting, and plot.

Lesson

1. Show the sample comics you have chosen to the class using the transparencies or LCD projector. Tell students that you will read the comics aloud and that as you do so, they should listen for words that imitate the natural sound associated with an action or an object, for example “bang.”

2. When you are finished, ask students to tell you what words like this they heard. Highlight these words by writing them on chart paper or using a marker on the transparency.

3. Explain that words like this are examples of onomatopoeia. Write onomatopoeia on a piece of chart paper or the board so that students can see how it is spelled.

4. Reread the comic with the whole class, instructing students to read the onomatopoeic words using sound effects and emphasis. For example, have them read a word like boom loudly, with emphasis placed on the rounded vowel sounds created by the double /oo/.

5. Have students write the word onomatopoeia in their personal dictionaries with this basic definition: words that make the sound of the action or object. If any of the words you located in the sample comics are unfamiliar to students, they should add these as well. The definition of onomatopoeia could also head a word wall made from the chart paper list. This word wall should be posted where students can easily see it, especially if you opt to do the extension and have the students work on their own comic strips later in the lesson.
6. Talk about why writers of comic strips would use onomatopoeia and what function these words serve in a narrative. Questions for discussion include:

- What effect does using onomatopoeia have in a story?
- Why are comic strips a good place to find examples of these kinds of words?
- What kinds of synonyms can you find for these words? (i.e., “shut loudly and with force” instead of “slam”) How does it change the story if you substitute the synonym?

7. Pass out copies of the sample comic strips you have printed for students to use in locating onomatopoeias. Allow time for students to find the onomatopoeias and to share the humor and story of the comics with each other.

8. Close the lesson by discussing new or unusual onomatopoeias students found in their comics; add these to the class word wall and have students add them to their personal dictionaries.

**Extension**

To help develop reading fluency, assign roles and make copies of the comics with the respective parts of the dialogue highlighted. Have students practice reading the different parts out loud. Present the comic panels on an overhead projector while students read the parts dramatically for the whole class.

Optional Extension: Organize a comic book convention for students to read and critique fellow students’ comics.

- Give each student a copy of the Comic Strip Planning Sheet. Explain that they are to use this handout to help them brainstorm a six-panel comic strip. Talk about how, like a book, a comic strip tells a story and has a plot, characters, and action. For each panel, they should list the landscape and props they will use (chosen from the list on the sheet), the characters present in that panel, the actions that take place, the caption or words the characters speak, and any onomatopoeias they plan to use.
- Give students ample time to work on their planning sheets. Allow students to work individually or in pairs to create their comic strips. Encourage discussion and sharing of ideas of how to use onomatopoeia. Circulate among the students to monitor progress, provide support in writing, and to assess their understanding of onomatopoeia.
- Demonstrate the use of the Comic Creator. Explain that students will begin their own writing project to create a six-panel comic strip with dialogue that includes onomatopoeias. Students should print their work when they complete it.
- Distribute the Comic Strip Rubric and review it. Tell students that they should use the rubric check their comic strips when they have finished their work. Explain that you will use this same rubric when you evaluate their comic strips.
- Ask students to use the Comic Strip Planning Sheets they filled out in Session 2 to complete a comic using the Comic Creator. Circulate among the students to monitor progress and provide support as they work. Collect the printed versions of the comics when students have completed them.
• Share students’ comics with the entire class by projecting them on an overhead or displaying them on a board. Discuss students’ use of onomatopoeia. Questions for discussion include:
  o How does onomatopoeia work in this comic strip? What does it add to the story?
  o How would the comic strip be different without using onomatopoeia?
  o Can you think of any additional ways this student could have used onomatopoeia?

Homework
Ask the students to find a comic of their own that has onomatopoeia and bring it in to the next class and explain why the onomatopoeia makes the comic more impactful.

Assessment/Reflection
Informally assess students’ understanding of onomatopoeia, their ability to locate onomatopoetic words, and their grasp of how and why onomatopoeia is used during the discussion in Session 1 and while you circulate as students are writing their own comics.

Use the Comic Strip Rubric to assess understanding and use of onomatopoeia in the student-created comic strip panels.

Assess students’ abilities to locate onomatopoetic words by giving them another comic strip or book (or some other form of text) and asking them to identify and record the onomatopoeias they find.
Is that buzzing necessary?

Not really.

Good. Then don’t.

Clang!

Clang! Clang!

Gloop gloop gloop gloop gloop.

Squiiirt.

Ketchup.

Mustard.

Plop plop plop plop.

Relish.

Gink gink.

Onions.

Uh oh.

Got a spare wiener on ya?
Look here... you're doing that all wrong. A space gun doesn't go BANG! It goes, BRZAAAP!

Wo, BRZAAAP!

I was born in the wrong century.
Mort Walker's

**beetle bailey**

**CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!**

**KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!**

**WHAT WAS THAT?!!**

**BOOM!**

**CLANG! SMASH!! CLANG!!**

**HURTS MY EARS!**

**WHOOOOEEE!**

**A SIREN!**

**POW! DING DONG**

**IT'S COMING FROM OUR BARRACKS!**

**WHAT'S GOING ON IN HERE?**

**KILLER BET COSMO THAT BEETLE COULD SLEEP THROUGH ANYTHING!**

**HONK!!**
## Comic Strip Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td>Action makes sense from one panel to another</td>
<td>Most of the action makes sense from one panel to another</td>
<td>Some of the action makes sense from one panel to another</td>
<td>Action does not make sense from one panel to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters</strong></td>
<td>Characters are believable in all panels</td>
<td>Characters are believable in most panels</td>
<td>Characters are adequate in some panels</td>
<td>Characters are not believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape and props</strong></td>
<td>Landscape and props relate to the action and characters in all panels</td>
<td>Landscape and props relate to the action and characters in most panels</td>
<td>Landscape and props relate to the action and characters in one panel</td>
<td>Landscape and props are not chosen or do not make sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Captions</strong></td>
<td>Captions are well written and edited for punctuation, grammar, and usage</td>
<td>Captions make sense and are edited for punctuation, grammar, and usage</td>
<td>Captions may or may not always make sense; some are not edited for punctuation, grammar, and usage</td>
<td>Captions don't make sense and are not edited for punctuation, grammar, and usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onomatopoeia</strong></td>
<td>Onomatopoetic words are used correctly in five or six panels</td>
<td>Onomatopoetic words are used in two or three panels</td>
<td>One onomatopoetic word is used</td>
<td>No use of onomatopoeia in the comic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**
COMIC STRIP PLANNING SHEET

For each panel, list the landscape and props (chosen from the list below), the characters, the actions that take place, the caption, and the onomatopoeia you use (if any).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape and Props</th>
<th>Characters Present</th>
<th>Actions that Occur</th>
<th>Caption</th>
<th>Onomatopoeia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel 1</td>
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<td>Panel 2</td>
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<td>Panel 5</td>
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<td>Panel 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Landscape options: horizon line, interior room, lake, mountains, road or river, blank, cave, city

Props: book, rock, castle, chair, cloud, computer, table or bench, house, lightning bolt, crescent moon, notebook, musical notes, pencil, pine tree, radio or CD player, school, spaceship, sun, leafy tree, television