



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume II: The Art of Biography

Visualizing Biography: Engaging Your Students' Creative Potential through Graphic Novels

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.02.01
by Jonathan R. Aubin

This unit uses the art of comics and graphic novels to teach the basic elements of biography and comic illustration. The unit employs a variety of drawing and writing exercises in the service of realizing students' potential as artists, writers, and readers. Students will work at these increasingly sophisticated drawing and cartooning exercises, culminating in the creation of their very own eight-page (autobio) graphic novel. Lessons teaching the role and responsibility of the biographer are imbedded within the curriculum. The unit uses several exemplars of autobiographical comics and instructional readings to explain the elements and theory behind effective comics as well as to show a variety of artistic styles and techniques. In addition to daily in-class readings, discussions, and drawing exercises, students will read at least one book-length graphic novel over the course of the unit.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grades 6-12)

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