

## MAKEBELIEFS COMIX LESSON PLANS

### SECTION 1: LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION LESSON PLANS

#### HELPING STUDENTS UNDERSTAND LITERATURE AND WRITING

##### ACTIVITY 1: COMICS CONFERENCE PRIMERS

Crafted by **James Bucky Carter**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English Education, University of Texas at El Paso

**Rationale:** Many teachers, especially those using elements of the workshop approach, like to conference with their students to check in with them regarding their writing, reading, or progress. But, sometimes a student comes to a conference "cold," not sure what to say or talk about. This activity gives the student an opportunity to anticipate the conference while creating an artifact that can assist the teacher in addressing student concerns.

**From the literature:** "Writing workshop is time for students to draft and for me to confer with individuals or small groups of writers. Giving feedback during the process of the piece has been shown ... as necessary to growth in writing" (Penny Kettle in *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice and Clarity in High School Writing*, p.85)

##### Students will:

- Consider the topics s/he wants to discuss with the teacher in a conference
- Consider how s/he might like the teacher to respond
- Craft a multi-paneled, hypothetical conversation between the student and teacher using the MakeBeliefsComix maker
- Share the comic with the teacher at the beginning of the conference

##### Procedures:

- Teacher may desire to model the making and use of the Comic Conference Primer before asking students to create them.
- Students create their own Comics Conference Primer
- Teacher begins conference with student with pleasant conversation and asks to read the Comics Conference Primer
- Teacher and student begin conversation, using the Comics Conference Primer as a prompt.
- Students can be prompted to use the Comics Conference Primers to elicit feedback in peer conferences as well.

**Example:** [https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix\\_id=14463815C72965](https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix_id=14463815C72965)

##### ACTIVITY 2: "IF X WAS Y"

Crafted by **James Bucky Carter**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English Education, University of Texas at El Paso

**Rationale:** Character analysis is an important part of learning about literature and life. This activity asks students to choose a character from the Diverse Cast of Characters on the Create Comix page of MakeBeliefsComix (<https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/>), identify the character as a person from a text they are reading, and then to explain why they chose to match the two figures.

**From the literature:** "Students assess, or assay, characters by regarding them like family members, next-door neighbors, classmates or other people they know." (Joseph O'Beirne Milner and Lucy Floyd Morcock Milner in *Bridging English*, 4th edition, p. 146)

##### Students will:

- Identify a character using the Diverse Cast of Characters that they feel could represent a character in a text they've been reading
- Explain why they made this choice.
- Compare, contrast, and ask questions of students' choices.

### Procedures:

- Teacher should model the activity by choosing a character from a text that is known to the class and creating his/her own If X was Y comic.
- Students choose the character from the Diverse Cast of Characters and match it with a character from the main text they are reading.
- Within the comic, students offer explanation of why they paired up the two characters.
- Students share their comics with peers in pairs, then small groups, then as a whole class (if desired), with the teacher using guided questioning techniques to assist students in comparing and contrasting student artifacts.

Example:

[https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix\\_id=1995557010C72974](https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix_id=1995557010C72974)

### ACTIVITY 3: "SOMEBODY/WANTED/ BUT/SO" 4-PANEL SUMMARIZER AND MOTIVATION MARKER

Crafted by James Bucky Carter, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English Education, University of Texas at El Paso

**Rationale:** The abilities to summarize key events in a story and to consider characters' motivations are important to character analysis and gateways to comprehension. Some readers may need help with these tasks, however. Writing "Somebody/Wanted/But/So" sentences helps students focus their attention and can help teachers evaluate how well they understand basic plot and character motivations.

**From the literature:** "Summarizing a short story or a novel appears to be too overwhelming for many students ... Somebody/Wanted/But/So ... offers students a framework as they create their summaries ... As students choose names for the *Somebody* column, they are really looking at characters and trying to decide which are the main characters. In the *Wanted* column, they look at events of the plot and immediately talk about main ideas and details. In the *But* column, they are examining conflict. With the *So* column, they are looking at resolutions [or results!]" — Kylene Beers in *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do* (p.145)

### Students will:

- Use MakeBeliefsComix creator to craft a "Somebody/Wanted/But/So" 4-Panel Summarizer and Motivation Marker
- Share their finished product with peers

### Procedures:

- Teacher introduces Somebody/Wanted/But/So as a summarizing strategy and as one that help analyze character motivations.
- Teacher models the strategy using a text known to the class, crafting a sentence or two that follows the "Somebody/Wanted/But/So" pattern. Example: "The grasshopper wanted to play all day, but he did not gather food for the winter. So, the grasshopper was starving when winter came."
- Teacher will transfer the sentence onto a four-panel grid, with each word placed in its own panel: Panel 1: *Somebody*; Panel 2: *Wanted*; Panel 3: *But*; Panel 4: *So*.
- Images and words are added to address each part of the "Somebody/Wanted/But/So" prompt.
- Teacher models how to save and/or print the finished comics
- Students are instructed to do the same.
- Students share their comics at the appropriate times.

Example: [https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix\\_id=351983652C72968](https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix_id=351983652C72968)

#### ACTIVITY 4: LOGOGRAPHICS FOR NONFICTION NOTE-TAKING

Crafted by **James Bucky Carter**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English Education, University of Texas at El Paso

**Rationale:** Many states are integrating the Common Core Standards, which suggest to teachers that they need to pay more attention to nonfiction texts. Since classrooms are often fiction-centric, students may need additional help applying skills of analysis to non-fiction texts. As well, many students are assisted by integrating visual note-taking skills into their repertoire of strategies.

**From the literature:** "A logograph is a visual symbol ... Logographic cues are designed to offer readers with a high-utility message in a minimum amount of space. Readers can design their own logographs to insert into texts as they read to become "signposts" that show them the direction the text is taking ... Students should design their own logographs so that the picture has some meaning for them." &mdash; Kyleene Beers in *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, p.130)

#### Students will:

- Assign coded meanings to images from the MakeBeliefsComix maker
- Make multiple copies of each "code image"
- Apply the image to annotate a piece of nonfiction via cutting and pasting the image onto the text
- Alternative: students could draw the logographic images instead of cutting and pasting. This activity is designed to work best with a paper copies that do not need to be preserved.
- Practice using logographics to annotate texts.

#### Procedures:

- Teacher introduces or reviews elements of analysis for nonfiction
- Teacher introduces logographics as a form on note-taking and analysis.
- Teacher creates images and assigns them to certain elements on which s/he wants to focus. One might decide to use a "Who/What/When/Where/How" model or to focus on character, tone, setting, etc. (See Example)
- Teacher illustrates how MakeBeliefsComix features can be used to facilitate assigning images logographic significance.
- Teacher uses images from MakeBeliefsComix to annotate a short nonfiction selection.
- Teacher asks students to visit MakeBeliefsComix to choose their own images for specified elements of nonfiction.
- Students make keys for their logographic choices to help the teacher know what image suggests what note.
- Students apply their logographics by annotating a nonfiction text.

**Example:** [https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix\\_id=41030267C761631](https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/?comix_id=41030267C761631)

*\* This example assumes the teacher wants students to look for important people, dates, opinions, and relationships in a text. Every time a student identifies one of these things, the corresponding image should be drawn or pasted next to it in the text's margins*

