

# Lesson Plan for Maus Novel

## Study Unit Lesson 3

- 1 **Lesson Title:** Symbolism and Visual Metaphors in Maus
- 2 **Grade/Age Level:**  
Grades 7-9
- 3 **Subject Area:**  
Language Arts and History (cross-curricular)
- 4 **Time allotted for the lesson:** One 150 min. class period and another 20 min. at a later time to debrief and review the content
- 5 **Short description of lesson:**  
In this lesson, the learners learn about the role symbolism and other types of figurative language can play in the in literature. They learn how authors use these devices to bring extra meaning and depth to their work. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* is a graphic novel that relies heavily on the use of visual metaphors to deliver its message. Students will learn how visual metaphors and symbolism work in this lesson. They will also be asked to identify and analyze examples of each from the novel, and then produce their own visual metaphors for some vocabulary words.
- 6 **Standards met in this lesson:** Happy Kids Middle School Program does not follow any state or national standards. Instead, it has its own set of benchmarks set for its students. Below are those that are covered by this lesson.
  - Identifies and describes a variety of literary elements such as plot, setting, characters, problem, solution, and conflict in a story
  - Can read and understand grade-level appropriate material
  - Identifies and retells the main ideas and details of reading selections
  - Connects reading selections to self, other texts, and the world
  - Independently develops original ideas and writing appropriate for assigned tasks
  - Uses correct capitalization, punctuation, and grammar
  - Writing is organized in a logical, easy-to-follow manner
  - Uses various strategies to improve vocabulary
- 7 **Instructional Objectives (Each instructional objective [learning outcome] for this lesson):**

- Students will learn to identify and explain literary symbols and their meanings.
- Students will analyze literary symbols and justify their analysis.
- Students will identify and analyze visual metaphors and justify their analysis.
- Students will develop their own visual metaphors and justify their designs.

## 8 Instructional Procedures

- **Lesson Set:** This lesson should be set up during a novel discussion during class time. While the lesson may be completed by students independently without even attending class, it would be most effective if the teacher can, while having students engaged in conversation, steer a discussion towards the question, “Why does Art Spiegelman use animals to represent different nationalities in *Maus*?” This should get students thinking about the idea that there is more to this book than just what they see and read. Students should then be shown [this graphic](#) and discuss the relationships.
- **Techniques and activities:**
  - 1 After viewing the main unit image, student should navigate to the [Symbolism in Maus](#) webpage and read through the content.
  - 2 After finishing the reading, students should proceed to the [assignment page for Lesson 3](#), read all instructions, and begin work on the Visual Metaphor worksheet.
  - 3 Students complete the [Visual Metaphor worksheet](#) and then upload to the [Assignment Drop Box](#) folder.
  - 4 Students then work on and complete the [Symbolism Charts](#) assignment for Lesson Three and upload their completed work to the [Assignment Drop Box](#).
  - 5 Finally, students choose four vocabulary words from the vocabulary word list to make pictowords. Pictoword examples can be found on the [Lesson 3 Assignment page](#).
  - 6 Completed Pictowords can be completed either using graphics design software or on paper. Completed work to be handed into the teacher.
- **Lesson Closure:** After all students have finished and uploaded their worksheets, the teacher should mark each document and provide feedback for mistakes. Worksheets and pictowords are then returned. If time allows, students should be allowed to share their pictoword designs while the class gives them feedback on their visual metaphors.

9 **Adaptations for special learners:** Students in the Happy Kids Middle School Program are all ESL students. To accommodate their language ability, all lesson materials and content will be made available online via the unit website. This website will include links to tools like translation services English dictionaries to help students through the content.

10 **Supplemental Activities:** [Lesson 4](#) of this unit serves as an extension activity for this lesson. Students are asked to create their own visual metaphors and literary symbols, justifying their designs and choices in an essay. The teacher can also assign additional pictowords for remedial instruction during or after this lesson.

- 11 **Assessment/Evaluation:** During this lesson, students will be assessed based on their performance on the three assignments from this lesson: Visual Metaphor worksheet, Symbolism Chart, and two pictowords. Happy Kids does not give grades to students. All assessment is informal. Therefore, the teacher will be required to mark each assignment and return it to the student with feedback on how to improve his responses. The teacher should also, following the marking of a student's assignments, record in the Teacher's Observation Book whether the student has or has not demonstrated an understanding or mastery of the concepts covered in this lesson.
- The Visual Metaphor worksheet is worth 20 pts. A student should score over 15 pts. to demonstrate proficiency in the concept. Students scoring below this mark should be required to go back, revise their responses, and resubmit the worksheet.
  - The Symbol Charts are worth 5 pts each. A student should score a 3 or better on each to demonstrate proficiency in the concept. Students scoring below this mark should be required to go back, revise their responses, and resubmit the worksheet.
  - Each pictoword is worth 5 pts. A student should score a 3 or better on each to demonstrate proficiency in the concept. Students scoring below this mark should be required to go back, revise their responses, and resubmit their image.

12 **Learner Products:**

- Four pictowords
- A completed Visual Metaphors worksheet
- Two completed Symbol Charts

*\* Note for learners: This lesson plan template is adapted from the model that is recommended in the book *Preparing to Use Technology: A Practical Guide for Technology Integration*.*