

**Title:** Using Manga to decipher non-fiction texts (Grades 11-12 However, this lesson could be easily altered for lower grades by changing the texts being studied.)

**Introduction/Summary:** Manga, Japanese comics, are pervasive in the culture of Japan. Since gaining popularity shortly after World War II, manga has quickly moved from the genre of purely entertainment to the more practical and instructional. Shortly before his death in 1989, Osamu Tezuka (known as the god of manga for originating & popularizing the genre) commented that, “now we are living in the age of comics as air” (Gravett 10).

Manga is so popular in Japan that the government and corporations have commissioned Manga artists to create informational manga--pieces that explain current legislation or even instruction manuals.

In this lesson, students will be illustrating nonfiction texts in the manga style.

**Duration of Lessons:** 2-3 class periods or 1-2 blocks if you offer in-class work time

**Connection to standards/common core:**

English and Language Arts, Grades Eleven and Twelve (Ohio)

CCSS.ELA – Reading Informational Text, **Key Ideas and Details** - 2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA – Reading Informational Text, **Key Ideas and Details** - 4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA – Reading Informational Text, **Key Ideas and Details** - 6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

CCSS.ELA – Reading Informational Text, **Key Ideas and Details** - 9. Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

**Guiding questions/essential questions:** What are the essential messages at work within the nonfiction text? How can we simplify non-fiction texts to offer an illustrative example of the message while still maintaining the integrity of the work?

**Learning Objectives:** Student will analyze the language and messages of nonfiction texts to draw instructional manga representations of the documents.

**Materials:**

- a) Copies of the text being studied--these could range from The Bill of Rights, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights to longer texts such Dr. King's Letter from the Birmingham City Jail.
- b) Story board models <http://www.printablepaper.net/category/storyboard> is one of many sources
- c) Various art supplies

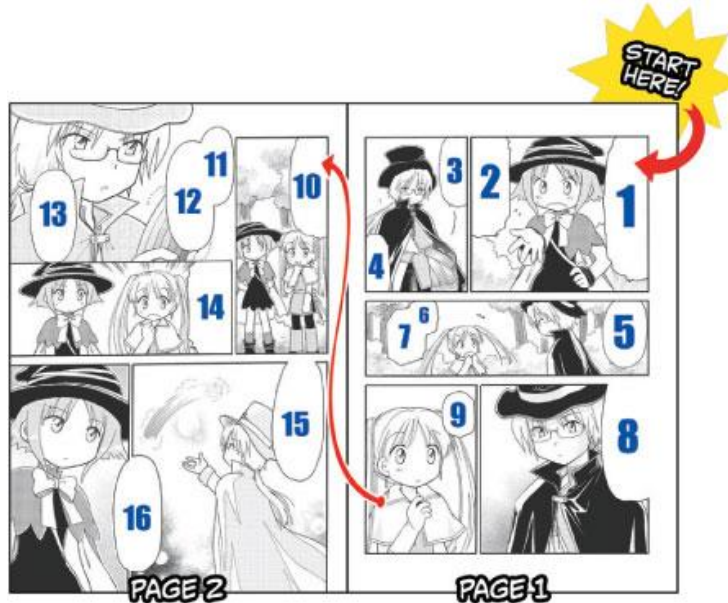
**Pre-Assessment: Informal questioning:** Ask the students how familiar they are with Manga. What makes Manga distinctive from other styles of graphic texts? Many students will probably be able to offer at least some recognition of the style; they may be most familiar with manga in its animated form--anime. So having them think of the shows that they probably watched when they were younger may spark responses (ie. *Pokemon, Dragon Ball Z, etc.*)

**Introduction:** Some of the Distinguishing Features Manga: Depending upon the students' familiarity with manga from the previous conversation, you may need to offer some general distinguishing features of this style. Please see examples at the end of the lesson.

This list may include the following:

- Graphics--characters communicate in speech bubbles but the art of the bubble will dictate the tone of the words. A smooth line has a different tone than a rigid line.
- Characters are often depicted with a distinct look. Manga characters almost always have large eyes, almond-shaped faces, and small mouths. The way a manga character dresses and accessorizes represents who and what they are. For example, if the character is of a spiritual nature, then they might wear a cloak or a piece of cloth that floats to represent the spiritual plane. This represents who they are. For Magna warrior characters, accessories are what define the character. Swords, spears and other weapons represent what they are. These details are important and should not be ignored.
- Manga characters usually show over exaggerated emotions. When a character cries, it usually pours out in buckets. Characters are often depicted with sweat for anxiety or stress, tears for anger or sadness, or saliva for hunger.
- Panels are fluid on the page. There is a range in number and size, reflecting an influence from the cinema. For example, perhaps 3 panels show one scene at varying levels of detail/close-ups. The panel size, shape, and arrangement is meant for expressive effect (may be dependent on the genre).
  - "With manga, the Japanese have demonstrated the same facility as with the automobile or the computer chip. They have taken the fundamentals of American comics, the relationships between picture, frame and word, and by fusing them with their own traditional love for popular art that entertains, have 'Japanized' them into a storytelling vehicle with its own distinctive form. ... The Japanese have liberated the medium's language from the confining formats and genres of the daily newspaper strip or the 32-page American comic book, and expanded its potential to embrace long, free-form narratives on almost every subject" (Gravitt 10).

- Traditional Japanese manga reads right to left and from up to down. Many students may read ‘flipped’ manga--one that has been manipulated for English readers; however, some readers prefer the unflipped style because the graphics can be altered slightly in the flipping. With these, the bubbles are read in reverse order, which can be difficult for some readers to follow.



**Setting the Rules:**

1. As the classroom teacher, I recommend that you set the rules/stipulations for this assignment. You can decide if students will work with a partner, how many panels you would like to see on the page (a range allows for more creative freedom), and how you would like panels to appear on the page (the traditional unflipped or the flipped ordering).
2. If using a longer text, I recommend a small chunk of text for each group. However, with something like the Bill of Rights or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, you could assign each pair one article to illustrate.

**Lesson Activities:**

1. After assigning students the text to illustrate, offer them a variety of storyboard templates from which to choose. There are a variety of websites that offer these. For example, [www.printablepaper.net/category/storyboard](http://www.printablepaper.net/category/storyboard) offers all sorts of options that you could print on cardstock and students could use as templates for their own design varieties.
2. Students will need to consider how to translate this text into visual art. This will require analysis of the language and tapping into their creativity. Will they create a character to ‘act out’ the piece or will this be more symbolic? Manga artists are quite skilled. Encourage students who may fear artistic inadequacy to try something more simple. After all, some of the most iconic comic characters are often simple shapes.

3. The actual text needs to be included within the panels. Students need to consider carefully which words to highlight with the images in each panel. How will they break the text up within the panels on the page AND where will the text be placed in the images--will it be in a speech bubble or at the top or bottom?
4. You should allow at least some classroom time for students to plan out their manga and (depending upon the class) work on their manga together. Again, depending upon the text and the student, scaffolding and brainstorming may be necessary.

**Post Assessment:** After students illustrate their assigned texts, they should share their manga with the class via a document camera so that students can see the details. As students share, they should share how and why they highlighted the ideas and text. How does this representation adequately display the central message of the passage? Manga could be assessed for neatness, completeness, meeting the teacher's stipulations, and capturing the essence of the non-fiction text.

**Extending the lesson:** Truly, this type of lesson could be extended to a variety of texts, including short fiction or poetry. For the non-fiction texts, students could create class bulletin board or book of manga. Imagine the Preamble on display or all of The Gettysburg Address...the options are really limitless.

**Sources:**

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"KARATE SHOUKOUSHI KOHINATA MINORU Manga." *mangafox.me* 2016. Web. 23 Feb. 2016.

"Manga: Sakura and Ichiro: New Year's Shrine Visit." *Kids Web Japan*. Web Japan, n.d. Web. 23 Feb. 2016.

Schodt, Frederik L. *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*. Berkeley, California: Stone Bridge, 1996. Print.

On the next page, please find an example of a popular manga character and an example of fluid panels from a child's manga. There is also an example of how to read unflipped panels.

Lesson plan is available on: <http://u.osu.edu/manga/lesson-plans/>

**Lesson plan written by:** Jamie Foley, chair, English Department, Columbus Alternative High School, Columbus, Ohio

### New Year's Shrine Visit

