

MAUS
Art Spiegelman

Post-Modern Focus:
Bildungsroman
Künstlerroman
Meta-Fiction

Maus Webquest Assignment

English teacher group

The job of the English teachers will be to evaluate *Maus* as a work of literature worthy of study in high school English or interdisciplinary classes. The following questions and resources will help you to focus on specific literary aspects of *Maus*. Your group can decide how you want to divide the questions. For each question, arguments and supporting facts should be recorded in the decision-making guide. You may make as many copies of the guide as you need to record all of your notes. One member of the group should be assigned to compile all arguments and supporting facts onto one easy-to-read copy of the guide. The group should feel free to discuss their findings, and all arguments should be supported with examples from the book or with critical analyses from the resources listed here. Be sure to document all sources used and use proper format when quoting sources.

- Exemplary works of literature have common characteristics like universal themes, well-drawn characters, and unique styles. Are there universal themes and well-drawn characters in *Maus*? Find some examples of universal themes in the book. Map some character traits of the main characters. Are the characters flat, or do they have complexity? Find some examples of Spiegelman's unique style? What techniques does he use to tell his story? Are there multiple plots, and if so, how does the author weave them together? Are there things about *Maus* that make it more than just a simple story?
- Browse through the following websites to see what various critics have said about the quality of *Maus* and the techniques Spiegelman uses in his work.
- <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/maus.htm>
- <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/thomas/Holocaust/thomas/maus.html>
- <http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/bassr/218/projects/oliver/MausbyAO.htm>
- <http://www.northern.edu/hastingw/maus.htm>
- <http://books.historywiz.org/moreinfo/maus.htm>
- An opinion on whether or not comics and graphic novels should be used in the classroom may be found at <http://rosswhite.com/archives/000810.php>
- Use the following print resources in your school or public library to find out what the critics have to say about *Maus* and the graphic novel as literature.

Social studies teacher group

The job of the social studies teachers will be to evaluate Maus for its historical accuracy. Art Spiegelman tells the story of his father and mother's experiences in Poland just as World War II was beginning and describes the German persecution of the Polish Jews both in the towns and cities of Poland and in the concentration camps. The following questions and resources will help you to focus on specific historic aspects of Maus. Your group can decide how you want to divide the questions. For each question, arguments and supporting facts should be recorded in the decision-making guide. You may make as many copies of the guide as you need to record all of your notes. One member of the group should be assigned to compile all arguments and supporting facts onto one easy-to-read copy of the guide. The group should feel free to discuss their findings, and all arguments should be supported with examples from the book and facts from resources. You may use any additional reliable resources you like to research the accuracy of Mr. Spiegelman's story. Be sure to document all sources used and use proper format when quoting sources.

- How do Vladek's descriptions of events and conditions in Poland compare with those at these sites? Make a list of some specific events and places in the book, and then try to document them.
- History of Poland (1939-1945)
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Poland_\(1939-1945\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Poland_(1939-1945))
- World War II Atrocities in Poland
- [http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/World War II atrocities in Poland](http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/World+War+II+atrocities+in+Poland)
- A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust. See especially the timeline with many pictures.
- <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust/>
- Look at some of the maps and diagrams Spiegelman includes in the book and read about Vladek's description of the concentration camps where he was held. Compare them with the maps and pictures in these sites.
- Holocaust Maps
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/holomaptoc.html>
- Jewish Virtual Library
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/aupictoc.html>
- At the Voice/Vision Holocaust Oral History Archive <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/interviews.html> you can hear the oral interviews and see the written interview transcripts of Holocaust survivors. Read/listen especially to the following survivors who lived in Poland and experienced many of the same events as the Spiegelmans: Irving Altus, Henry Dorfman, Manya Feldman, Lily Fenster, Erna Gorman, Jack Gun, Ruth Kent, Marvin Koziowski, Henry Krystal. Do Spiegelman's stories have similar content? Give some examples.

Holocaust survivor group

The idea of telling the story of the Holocaust and other serious life experiences like depression and suicide in a comic book/graphic novel format might be offensive to some readers -- particularly those who have experienced them personally. In addition to the comic-style format, Mr. Spiegelman also uses humor in his story and often pokes fun at his father. As a Holocaust survivor or a relative of a Holocaust survivor, how would you feel about having the Holocaust presented in your community's high school in this format? Your group should also address the issues of stereotyping national groups by representing them as animals. Do you think this device would be a reason not to recommend *Maus* as a required book in the classroom? Your group can decide how you want to divide the questions. For each question, arguments and supporting facts should be recorded in the decision-making guide. You may make as many copies of the guide as you need to record all of your notes. One member of the group should be assigned to compile all arguments and supporting facts onto one easy-to-read copy of the guide. The group should feel free to discuss their findings, and all arguments should be supported with examples from the book and facts from resources.

- Probably the best source for answers to these questions is to interview a Holocaust survivor. Your teacher or librarian may be able to help you contact someone in the community who would be willing to answer some questions after he or she has had time to look over the book. Perhaps there are students in your class who have grandparents or great-grandparents who experienced the Holocaust. You could ask for their opinion, too.
- Look in *Maus* for Vladek and Mala's opinions on these topics.
- There are a few articles available that deal with these topics. Try to answer the questions above using these websites. You may also use other websites and articles.
- Art Spiegelman's *Maus* <http://www.northern.edu/hastingw/maus.htm>
- *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (Random House)
<http://randomhouse.com/acmart/teacherguides/maus.html>
- Read the "Sidelights" section of the article on Art Spiegelman in Contemporary Authors. You can get to Contemporary Authors via the Power Library on your school's computer network or through the Bucks County Library's web site at <http://www.buckslib.org>. Choose Power Library, then Contemporary Authors, then search "Spiegelman, Art."
- Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Different Type of Holocaust Literature*
<http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/bassr/218/projects/oliver/MausbyAO.htm>

Art teacher group

Part of the appeal of *Maus* is its graphic format. Many students will like the book because of the pictures. But if the book is to be used as required reading, the art must be of excellent quality, and it should be an integral part of the message of the book. You will need to look at the various artistic devices that Art Spiegelman uses in *Maus* and try to come to some conclusion about how well the artist succeeds in using art to tell his story. Your group can decide how you want to divide the questions. For each question, arguments and supporting facts should be recorded in the decision-making guide. You may make as many copies of the guide as you need to record all of your notes. One member of the group should be assigned to compile all arguments and supporting facts onto one easy-to-read copy of the guide. The group should feel free to discuss their findings, and all arguments should be supported with examples from the book and facts from resources.

- Before you begin your research, take some time to look carefully at the art in *Maus*. You might want to do this as a group. Be sure to record what you find so that you can use it to support your arguments.
- Look at the figure drawing and the artist's use of perspective.
- Look at the panel-to-panel transitions and how Spiegelman shows the passage of time using pictures rather than words.
- Do the drawings enhance the story or detract from it? Do they actually take the place of words in some cases?
- Can you find some examples of the artist using different styles to represent different themes and moods?
- Are the pictures logical as they relate to the story?
- Can you find some visual symbols or interesting devices that enhance the narrative?
- You will find a great deal of information on comic art and graphic novels at the National Association of Comics Art Educators web site <http://www.teachingcomics.org/studyguide.php>. Look especially at the sections on "Basic Comics Terminology," "Critique Talking Points," and then look closely at the huge amount of information on the "Exercises" page at <http://www.teachingcomics.org/exercises.php>.
- You might want to interview an art teacher from your school to find out what he or she thinks about Spiegelman as an artist and about the graphic novel genre in literature.

- **Graphic novels** are bound books, fiction and non-fiction, which are created in the comic form.
- For the purpose of clarification, comic books are single-issue magazines that may or may not contain a complete story between its covers.



think globally.

- Manga is the term for Japanese comic.
- Nearly one-third of material published in Japan is manga in form including technical manuals, textbooks, and fiction.

layout terms and concepts:

Frame: lines and borders that contain the panels

Panel: distinct segment of the comic, containing a combination of image and text in endless variety

Gutter: space in between framed panels

Bleed: an image that extends to and/or beyond the edge of the page

text terms and concepts:

Captions: boxes that contain a variety of elements, including scene-setting, description, etc.

Speech balloons: enclose dialogue; vary in size, shape, layout; can alternate to depict a conversation

Special effects lettering: a method of animating text; often highlighting onomatopoeia; reinforces the impact of words

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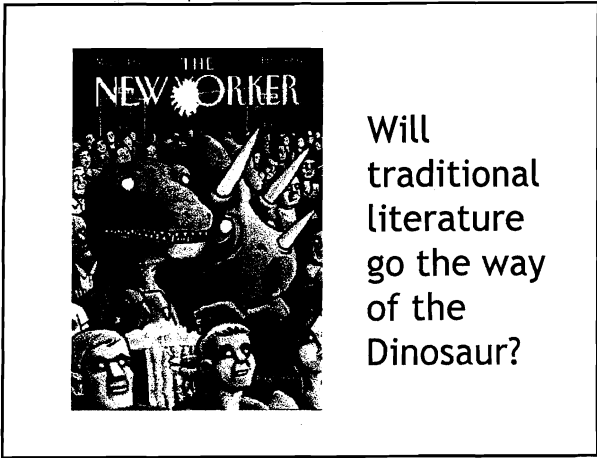
figures terms and concepts:

Faces: range from iconic (could be any one) to particular (specific)

Particular- dramatically rendered against a more detailed backdrop; bright white face stands out and gains graphic weight

Iconic- face is an "open blank" inviting audience projection as opposed to a realistic portrayal that would be tied to factual reality (distanced from audience)

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Will traditional literature go the way of the Dinosaur?



Maus

Speigelman

bio.

- Underground comics
- Started RAW magazine
- Maus I 1991
- Maus II 1992; Pulitzer



Metafiction

Meta-fiction- self-conscious/self-reflexive literature

*Speigelman and his mother





- Narrator calls attention to writing process
- Reader never gets "lost" in story
- Writing is not "real"; constructed

animal fable

graphic novel

epic journey

kunstlerroman

Fragmentation
Post-Modern
 Blending of Genres

bildungsroman

narrative

author as character



Kunstlerroman

Artist's growth;
 journey through
 art

Bildungsroman

"Coming of Age
 story"

plot.

Story of the tenuous relationship between
 graphic artist "Artie" and his father Vladek.

Vladek is a survivor of the Holocaust,
 specifically of the concentration camp,
 Aushwitz.

At times "Artie" depicts his father as
 uncompromising and unsympathetic.

themes.

Second Generation dealing with war

Father / S

Trauma o



characterization.

Spiegelman depicts his characters via animal imagery.

Some of this imagery has been deemed as controversial.

Jews- Mice

Poles- Pigs

Nazis- Cats



These are not my images. I borrowed them from the Germans. . . Ultimately what the book's about is the commonality of human beings. It's crazy to divide things down along nationalistic or racial or religious lines... These metaphors, which are meant to self-destruct in my book – and I think they do self-destruct – still have a residual force and still get people worked up over them.

~Art Spiegelman

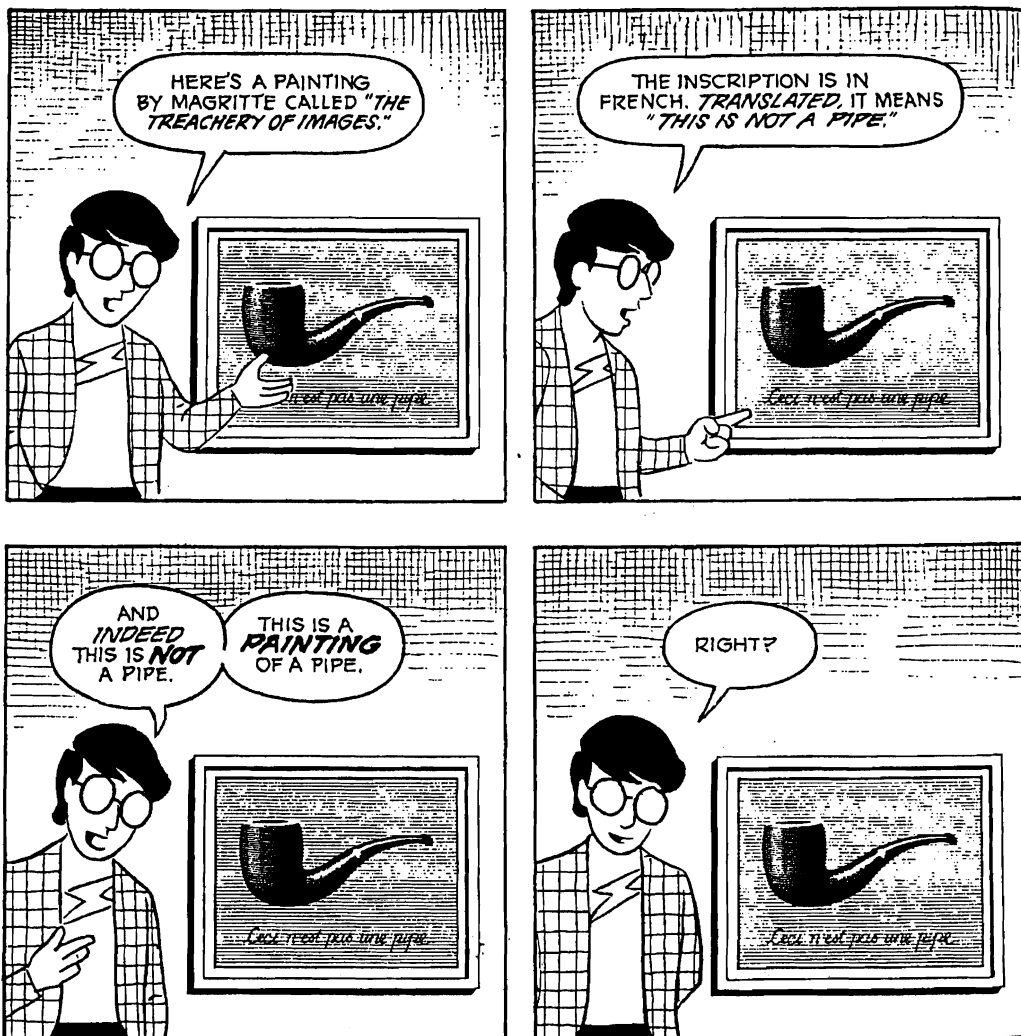
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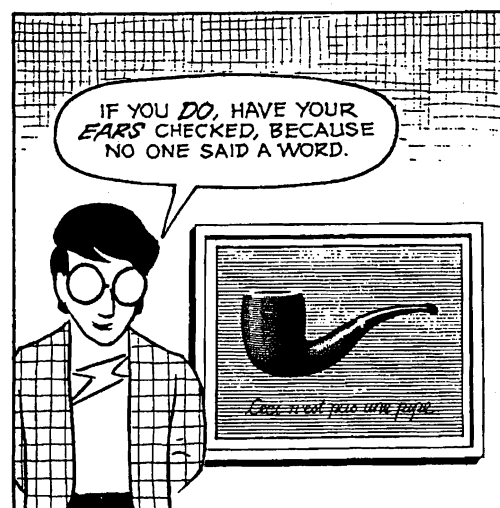
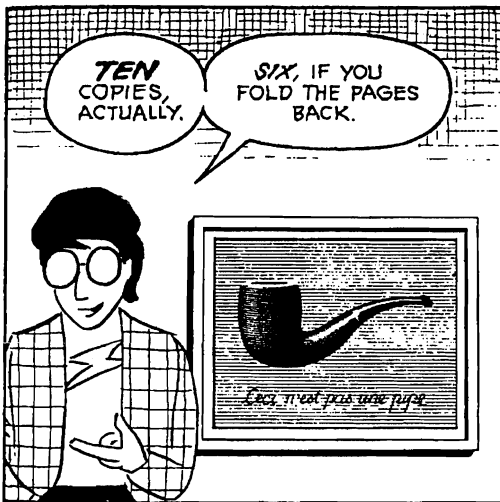
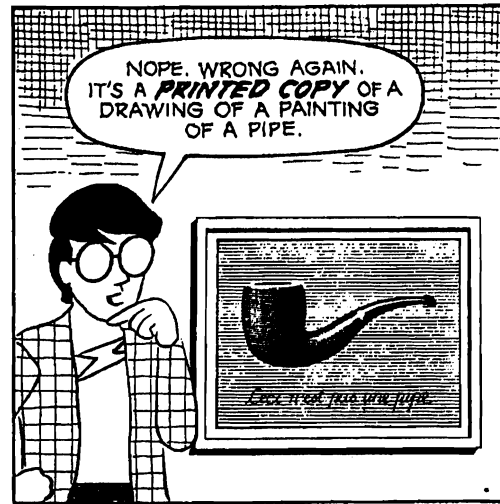
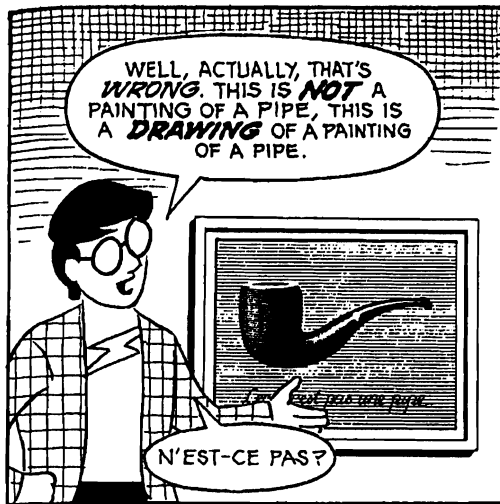


The Vocabulary of Comics

Comic books have conventions all their own: a voice balloon inserts speech into a silent medium; a streak suggests velocity; a drop of sweat on the forehead telegraphs fear or pressure. No one explains the seemingly simple but dauntingly complex workings of the comics as well as CHF presenter Scott McCloud. See for yourself in this excerpt from McCloud's *Understanding Comics*.



Source: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (DC Comics, 1999): 24.



Source: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (DC Comics, 1999): 25.

Maus

Exploring Multiple Plot Lines

Directions: Each box contains a different relationship and plot line present in the graphic novel *Maus*. For each, explore the conflicts, relationships, and possible resolutions of these plot lines. Determine how each plot affects Artie and his composition of the graphic novel.

Artie and Vladek	Vladek and the Holocaust
Artie and his writing (or himself)	Vladek and Mala

- What artistic quality (ies) does Art Spiegelman achieve by constantly switching back and forth between multiple plot lines?



MAUS Literature Circles

MAUS, for the purposes of this unit, will be read as a literature circle novel and will be examined as a work of literature, as well as a piece of history. Each group member will be responsible for completing his/her role on the assigned due dates, for participating in group discussions, and for responding to open-ended prompts about the memoir. Despite the literature circle discussions, we will also do a significant analysis of MAUS as a class as well. Refer to the roles below, to the criteria sheet, and to your calendars for specific due dates.*

ROLES

For each discussion, you will need to fulfill one of the following roles.

Discussion Director

- You will frame at least 4 higher-level questions on the night's Lit Circle reading. Please try to involve all members in the discussion. Refer the group to the text whenever possible.
- You will keep the discussion going smoothly and the group is on task as they present all of their roles.

Artifact Finder

- You will select one artifact that is significant to character development, thematic development, or the plot line of the assigned reading.
- You will bring in the artifact (or a clip-art depiction of it) to initiate the day's discussion.
- You will then write a paragraph that justifies your selection of that artifact.

Graphic Novel Guru

- You will select one element of graphic novels that is present in the night's reading
- You will determine why Spiegelman included that element in his text; please use appropriate graphic novel jargon
- You will then write a short paragraph that justifies your selection and how it relates to the novel.

Literary Luminary

- You will isolate moments when important events, characters, etc. are presented in the novel.
- You will post-it or write down specific page numbers of these important scenes.
- Write a well-written paragraph in which you analyze the importance of these scenes in relation to other scenes, history, characters and the novel as a whole.

Post-Modern Marvel

- Locate at least three characteristics of a post-modernism from the reading.
- Then find 3 supporting quotations that clearly display these characteristic and record them on lined paper next to the appropriate characteristic.
- Hypothesize about the importance of these characteristics in terms of the graphic novel genre.

Teacher

- Examine the graphic novel as a work of history, literature, and/or art.
- Determine whether the memoir is a work of any of the aforementioned three; or, if it is a combination. Then, explain which characteristics render it one of those disciplines.
- Locate specific examples from the text that support or refute your claim and write them down on a sheet of paper.

Names: _____

Maus Literature Circle Rubric

Category	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Missing
Roles	(10-9)	(8-7)	(6-5)	(4-3)	(2-0)
Each member has four, completed roles					
Roles are substantive and cover issues dealing with themes, character, Post-Modernism, plot, and conflict.					
Post-Modernism Responses					
Members provide three examples of Post-Modern characteristics from the novel					
Examples are explained, supported by textual evidence, and are cited using MLA format					
Responses demonstrate a range of understanding of the use of Post-Modernism and its effects upon writing					
Analytical Responses					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each member has completed a thorough, well-supported analysis of Maus The novel is examined as either a work of literature, social studies, art, or factual depiction of the Holocaust 					
Responses refer back to class discussions, literature circle discussions, other novels, or works of Post-Modern writing.					
Class Participation/Time Management					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilized class work time in a constructive and non-distracting manner; remained on task Folder is neat and contains all required elements 					

Grade: _____ /80

Chapter One: The Sheik

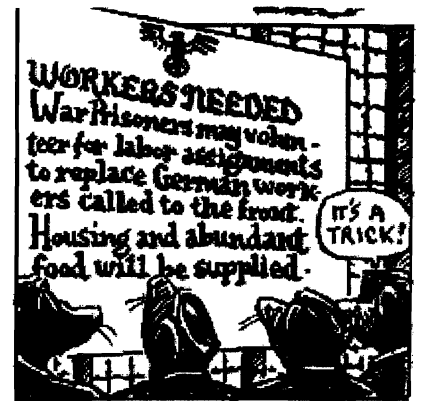
1. This is a graphic memoir. A graphic memoir tells a person's life through text and drawings. Why does Art Spiegelman use mice instead of people to portray the characters in the story? What do the mice represent?
2. On page 11, Spiegelman tells us that his father's second wife Mala was a **survivor** too, like most of his parents' friends. Why does Spiegelman call Mala a survivor? What does he mean?
3. What kind of relationship does Art Spiegelman and his father, Vladek have? Use specific pictures and text to support your answer.
4. Why is the chapter called "**The Sheik**"?
5. Why does Vladek choose Anja over Lucia? What do you think of his choice?
6. Why does Vladek ask Art not to write about Lucia in his book? Why doesn't Art listen to his father? Do you think it is right for Art to break his promise?

Chapter Two: The Honeymoon

1. Why does Ms. Stefanska go to jail? What role did Anja play in Ms. Stefanska's going to jail?
2. On page 31, Vladek says that he left Anja and their new baby to go to Bielsko to run his new factory and find an apartment for them to live in. How does Anja respond? Have you or members of your family ever had to separate in order to start a new job or new life? How did it feel for the people who moved on? How did it feel for the people who were left behind?
3. When do Vladek and Anja realize that the war is coming? How do they know? Use specific pictures and text to support your answer.
4. What happens after Vladek and Anja return from Czechoslovakia? What are they afraid of?
5. Why does Vladek consider taking Anja and Richieu to the town of Sosnowiec? Do they eventually go to Sosnowiec? Where does Vladek go?
6. Why doesn't Vladek tell the doctor in the hospital about his glass eye? What does this say about Vladek's character?

Chapter Three: Prisoner of War

1. On page 43, Vladek tells Art that he must finish the food on his plate during dinner. Why is Vladek so insistent?
2. How does Vladek's father try to keep him out of the army? Was he successful? Do you think Vladek's father made a smart decision? Explain.
3. What does Vladek mean on page 50, when he says, "Well at least I did something." Do you believe that he is justified in feeling this way? Explain.
4. How are the Jewish prisoners of war treated? Do they live under the same conditions as the other prisoners? Explain.
5. The image to the right portrays a sign saying, "Workers Needed." Why is this sign posted? What does Vladek decide to do? Does he plan to work? Explain.
6. How does Vladek survive the work camp? What motivated him?
7. Why doesn't Vladek get off the train in Sosnowiec? How does he end up in the city of Lublin? How does he eventually get to Sosnowiec?
8. What happens to Vladek's father while Vladek was away? How does Vladek's father feel?
9. Why does Vladek throw away Art's coat? What would you have done if you were Art?



Chapter Four: The Noose Tightens

1. By the time Vladek returns to Sosnowiec from the prisoner of war camp, what has happened to the food supply?
2. What happens to the Jewish businesses? How do Jewish people earn enough money to live at this time?
3. What does he mean? Who is he talking about? Do you think his feelings are justified? Explain.
4. How does Vladek's friend, Ilzecki save his son during the war? How does Vladek try to save his son Richieu? What happened?

5. Why do the Germans hang Nahum Cohn and his son? What effect does this hanging have on other people?
6. How does Vladek feel about the hangings? Why does he feel this way?
7. Who are the Jewish police? Why is Art surprised to hear about the Jewish police?
8. Do Anja's grandparents go to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia? What happens? How does Vladek find out?
9. What happens to Vladek's sister Fela? Why does Vladek's father join her? Explain his thinking.
10. On page 93, Mala says that Vladek is more attached to things than people. Why might Mala say this? Do you believe this is true?

Chapter Five: Mouse Holes

1. How does Art respond to his father when Vladek calls to ask for help with fixing the drainpipe?
2. What is "Prisoner on the Hell Planet"? How is this comic different from Maus? How is it similar?
3. What happens to Richieu in the Ghetto in Zawiercie? Why?
4. Why does Vladek build a bunker? Does this bunker help the family survive? Explain.
5. Vladek lets his cousin know that he can pay him for his help. Why? Does it matter?
6. On page 116, Vladek refers to Haskel as a "kombinator." What is a "kombinator"? Why does Vladek call Haskel a "kombinator"? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?



7. Why does Anja's nephew Luke refuse to go to the hidden bunker? Does he make a smart decision? Why or why not?
8. Why does Art Spiegelman portray the paths in the image to the right as a swastika? How does this image express Vladek and Anja's situation?

9. Why does Vladek keep the 14 karat gold cigarette case and lady's powder case from Srodula, Poland?
10. Vladek questions why he ever remarried after Anja's death. Why do you think he married Mala? Do you think Vladek and Mala have a good marriage? Explain.

Chapter Six: Mouse Trap

1. Why does Art worry about the way he's portraying his father, Vladek in the book? Should Art worry about this? Explain.
2. Is Vladek happy about Art's book? Explain. Why would Vladek compare Art to Walt Disney?
3. How does Janina, the governess react when Vladek and Anja come to her for help? Why?
4. Why does Vladek ride in the official streetcar with the Germans, rather than in the second car with the Poles?
5. Do you think Mrs. Motonowa is justified in throwing out Vladek and Anja? Explain.
6. Why does Vladek consider going to Hungary with Anja?
7. How does Vladek escape from the children who were playing on the street and screaming, "A Jew!!!"
8. Why do the Jews speak in Yiddish in front of the Polish smugglers? Was this a good idea? Explain.
9. What do you think happened to Abraham? Why do you think he sent a letter from Hungary in Yiddish telling Vladek and Mandelbaum that everything was okay and that they should come to Hungary?
10. What happens to Anja's diaries? Why does this upset Art? Why does Art call his father a "murderer"? Explain his response.

Maus Writing Assignment 100 points

Writing situation:

You are a member of an academic department (English, art, or history) at Ridge High School. Your supervisor has suggested that Maus is added to your curriculum. She will give the department an opportunity to decide on Maus's educational validity after you have had a chance to read and research it.

Task:

1. Read *Maus*
2. Annotate to locate reasons for or against the teaching of this book on the given graphic organizer (or on notebook paper should you run out of room)
3. Compile and annotate secondary source material that fortifies your argument
4. Write a letter to your department supervisor explaining your position on whether or not to include *Maus* in your curriculum. Your argument must be supported by both examples from the text and at least 2 secondary sources.

Extension Activity:

On the day your letter is due, you will meet with your department to share your perspectives and to voice your opinions about the inclusion of this piece in your curriculum. You will have the opportunity to vocalize your point of view as well as attempt to convince your colleagues to agree with your position. By the meeting's end, the department will vote on whether or not Maus will be included your department's curriculum.

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	MISSING
CONTENT:					
Thesis is explicit					
Organization is logical					
Analysis is of depth					
Textual support used appropriately and sufficiently					
Secondary source support used appropriately and sufficiently (3 sources minimum)					
Conclusion provides sense of closure					
STYLE:					
Writer's tone is appropriate for the writing objective					
Intended audience is clear					
USAGE:					
Appropriate transitions are utilized					
Sentence structure is varied					
Variation of the verb form "to be"					
Variation of personal pronouns					
MECHANICS:					
Careful spell checking and proofreading is evident					
Punctuation is correct					
Subjects and verbs are in proper agreement					
Works cited page is correct					

MAUS

GRAPHIC NOVEL FINAL PROJECT

Art Spiegelman is the singular author of MAUS, with a dedication "for Anja." For your final project, your group will collectively compose and dedicate a creative graphic novel that illustrates a controversial topic you and your group are interested in.

STEP 1

Formulate groups

STEP 2

Group members will decide on a controversial topic and brainstorm

STEP 3

Groups will delegate responsibility – Group members will compose one page EACH in your group's graphic novel

STEP 4

Each page is REQUIRED to have AT LEAST 4 boxes of comic illustrations and text

STEP 5

Each page is REQUIRED to have narration boxes, speech bubbles, and thought bubbles with a substantial amount of dialogue and explanation for the illustrations (no one-word bubbles)

STEP 6

Each page of the graphic novel is REQUIRED to incorporate elements of Postmodernism, including:

- Blurring of distinctions between literary genres
- Rejection of the distinction between high and low culture

DON'T WORRY IF YOU ARE NOT AN ARTIST. THIS PROJECT IS NOT BEING GRADED ON HOW WELL YOU DRAW, RATHER ON YOUR GROUP'S CREATIVITY, IDEAS, AND EFFORT

MAUS

GRAPHIC NOVEL PROJECT RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1	0
The graphic novel idea is appropriate, well thought-out, and creatively presented.					
Illustrations are creative, neat, detailed and show effort					
The dialogue explains the illustrations well and tells a story based on the original idea					
The graphic novel shows evidence of the two required elements of Post-Modernism					
The graphic novel is at least four pages in length and contains four boxes per page					

TOTAL: _____ / 50