



LESSON CONTENT TEMPLATE

 <p>Erasmus+</p>	<p>Project funded by: Erasmus+ / Key Action 2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Knowledge Alliances.</p>
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1. Comic Course

Topic 1 _____ Lesson _1

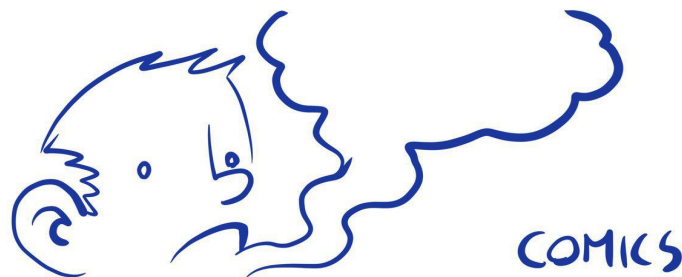
Name: THE WHITE SPACE

Introduction

Comics are a language where images and text meet in a unique form of communication, capable of telling any kind of story. Comics are based on a secret pact with the reader. No author, or group of authors, should ever forget that comics are made for someone else and not just for themselves.

Obectives

In this lesson, we will learn and understand the basic mechanisms that give life to the comics media.



What you see and what you imagine

Comics require active enjoyment, otherwise the images do not come to life.

Some principles of visual perception

The reader obeys the laws of "Visual Perception"; a branch of psychology that studies how the human mind interprets sensory data and gives them

meaning. Specifically from Max Wertheimer's school known as 'Gestalt'. Gestalt theories proved to be highly innovative in that they traced the basis of behaviour to the way reality is perceived, rather than to what it really is; thus the first pillar of Gestalt theory was built on the study of perceptual processes and in an immediate perception of the phenomenal world.

In this case there are two laws involved:

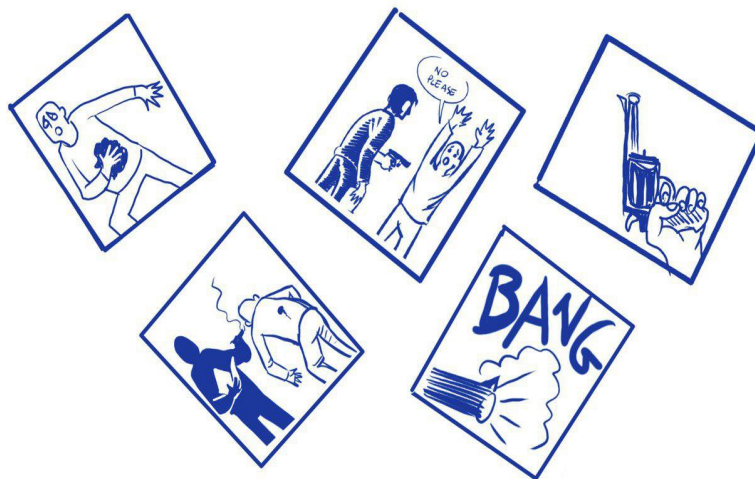
Law of COMMON DESTINY, i.e. the elements of a group that share the same characteristics of movement, rhythm, orientation, are perceived as a unitary whole. This is why we consider the two panels as two moments of the same story.

Law of the PAST EXPERIENCE, the elements of a whole that manage to revive our perceptive experiences of a given object, tend to be grouped together and form a figure. In our case the gun, which we know not necessarily from direct experience, together with a scream, lead us to think that someone must have fired a gun.

The reader completes the story

The reader intervenes by filling in the 'white space', the white line separating one vignette from another. A leap sometimes between two moments very close in time and space, sometimes kilometres or years long.

This is why we have to choose carefully what we represent in the panels, not only because those images, those moments have a narrative function. If the leap is too far forward, the reader risks not understanding our intentions and getting bored and leaving. And without the reader, as we now know, there is no comic strip.



Sequentiality as the foundation of media

This is not a discovery of comics, but it is certainly the most important feature. Unity makes history. Comics are made up of the association of several images, and for this reason a panel alone is not enough; just as a word alone does not make a novel.

The language of comics is sequentiality, framed images that follow the same logic as the reading order of the written word.

If we arrange words in random order on a sheet of paper, the viewer will find his own order for reading them. The most incredible and disparate

sentences will come out. When we arrange them in a row on a horizontal axis, then there is a sentence.

The same thing applies to panels. It's a mistake to believe that just looking at pictures is enough to understand a comic book. The drawings only make sense when observed in a linear sequence. This is why we can consider the strip as the sentence of a comic page.

Cultures and formats

Comics began in US newspapers at the end of the 19th century in the form of strips of a predominantly comic nature. After more than a century, the media has embraced different genres: adventure, science fiction, chronicle, biography. It has explored different formats: the Sunday page of newspapers, comic books, graphic novels and the web, and has spread to different countries around the world.

In the United States, the most common format is the 'free' grid comic book, where the reading order seems seemingly disrupted to create more artistic compositions of the page.

In Europe, France is characterised by a four-strip grid on a large and luxurious format, while Italy has settled on a compact three-strip grid, down to two vignettes for pocket formats. Japan uses Kanji not only from right to left, but also from top to bottom, their written texts have a vertical reading order. But when the language of comics arrived in Japan, the horizontal arrangement of the panels remained intact.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that Comics consists of: pictures, words, cartoons, strips and pages.

In order to understand them we have to arrange them in a sequential order and make the reader feel part of the story.