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USING GRAPHIC NOVELS:

Popular Culture and Social Studies Interact

Graphic novels represent a significant segment of the literary market for adolescents and young adults. These stories may resemble comic books, but on closer inspection, they often address controversial issues using complex story lines. Some graphic novels that are well-known to Western audiences include *Watchmen*, which examines how superheroes live in a society that has turned against them; *Maus*, which uses anthropomorphic characters to tell the story of a Holocaust survivor; *From Hell*, which presents one explanation for the actions of historical serial killer Jack the Ripper; and *Road to Perdition*, which was made into a motion picture by the same name.

What Are Graphic Novels?

Graphic novels, as they are known in Western countries, are inspired by Japanese *manga* (comics) and *anime* (animation). *Anime* style is most commonly recognizable in its use of large-eyed characters with oversized heads, and it has become increasingly recognized as a distinct art form by Western audiences.

Use of the *manga* genre in Japan is far more widespread than in Western countries and dates back to the early part of the twentieth century. Japanese *manga*, rendered in black and white and printed on newsprint, are read by children and adults and include many topics, although science fiction *mechas* (robots) dominate the field. The topics of these works are surprisingly similar to the Western young adult fiction. A large portion of the market is *shojo*, comic books designed to appeal to girls. A popular *shojo* character that appears in America is the *Sailor Moon* series, featuring a resourceful Japanese schoolgirl. *Shonen manga* is designed primarily for boys and usually consists of action stories. Teachers may recognize *shonen manga* in *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and other such cards collected and traded.
by many American youth. Many manga are published in serial form and together can be as many as 750 pages in length. One of the first manga for Western consumption was *The Four Immigrants Manga: A Japanese Experience in San Francisco, 1904–1924* (Kiyama, 1999), first published in 1931. It is not in the anime style of today’s novels, but offers a poignant portrayal of the challenges facing Asian immigrants at the time.

**Why Do Graphic Novels Appeal to Students?**

Part of the appeal of graphic novels lies in their “underground” (and therefore forbidden) reputation. Another part of the appeal of manga and anime lies in sophisticated story lines and the development of complex characters (Izawa, 2002). Unlike American comic books that feature a superhero with fixed and exaggerated attributes, many of these Japanese stories include a subtext of universal themes about ethical and moral dilemmas. These gekiga (literary novels) are ambitious in their scope and intricacy and are becoming more available with English translations. Unlike the broad range of genres available in Japan, however, the stream of manga and anime reaching Western shores is not so diverse. The bulk of manga and anime in America is often skewed toward violent and sexually graphic titles (called *hentai*, or “perverse”), which does not reflect the wide range of quality available.

Graphic novels continue to develop and diversify (Frey & Fisher, 2004). More recently, interactive graphic novels told in serial form are appearing on the Internet. Readers have a variety of options when they visit each month to view the next installment, including engaging in role-playing games, creating new characters to interact with those developed by the author, and visiting an extensive catalog for background information. Most of these Web-based graphic novels have decidedly adult content, although users are likely to be the Web-savvy adolescents who know how to find these sites. A unique subset of these graphic novels and manga is a style of writing called *fanfiction*, where readers create and post their own alternative versions of stories featuring their favorite characters (e.g., Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003).
Why Use Graphic Novels in Social Studies?

Graphic novels are amazingly diverse, both in terms of their content and usefulness. For example, Gorman (2002) notes that graphic novels are exactly what teens are looking for—they are motivating, engaging, challenging, and interesting. Schwartz (2002b, 2004) believes that graphic novels are engaging because they allow for teachers to enter the youth culture, and students are encouraged to bring their “out of school” experiences into the classroom. Called “multiple literacies,” the idea is that educators must bridge the gap between students’ school literacy and the ways in which they use reading and writing outside of school.

Graphic novels have also been used effectively with students with disabilities, students who struggle with reading, and English learners (e.g., Cary, 2004; Frey & Fisher, 2004; Schwartz, 2002a). One of the theories behind the use of graphic novels for struggling adolescents focuses on the fact that the graphic novel presents complex ideas that are interesting and engaging for adolescents, while reducing the text or reading demands. As a result, all students can thoughtfully discuss the content at hand. As Weiner (2003) noted,

Graphic novels have found their way into the classroom, as teachers are realizing their usefulness as literacy tools. After a study of graphic novels, researchers concluded that the average graphic novel introduced readers to twice as many words as the average children’s book. This realization has reinforced the idea that the comics format is a good way to impart information. (p. 61)

Conclusions

While there remains controversy about graphic novels—especially from people who worry that graphic novels will end traditional reading—our experiences with adolescents, as well as a number of current research studies, suggest that graphic novels are an important adjunct in our instruction. Graphic novels are viable options for students with disabilities, struggling readers, and English learners, but they are more powerful than that. Graphic novels are motivating and engaging for all students.
They allow us to differentiate our instruction and provide universal access to the curriculum. We hope you’ll find the graphic novels in this book useful as you engage your students in the study of history and social studies.

Sincerely,

Douglas Fisher & Nancy Frey

REFERENCES


Teaching Strategies for Graphic Novels

As we have noted, graphic novels are an excellent adjunct text. While they cannot and should not replace reading or the core, standards-based textbook, they can be effectively used to build students' background knowledge, to motivate students, to provide a different access route to the content, and to allow students to check and review their work.

Ideas for using graphic novels in the classroom include the following:

1. Previewing Content. In advance of the text reading, you can use a graphic novel as a way to activate background and prior knowledge. For example, you may display a graphic novel on the overhead projector and discuss it with the class. Using a teacher think-aloud, in which you share your thinking about the graphic novel with the class, you might provide students with advance information that they will read later in the book. Alternatively, you may display the graphic novel and invite students, in pairs or groups, to share their thinking with one another. Regardless of the approach, the goal is to activate students' interest and background knowledge in advance of the reading.

2. Narrative Writing. Ask students to read one of the graphic novels, paying careful attention to the details and imagery used. Then ask each student to write their own summary of the story being told in this novel. Graphic novels without much character dialogue can also be used to encourage students to create their own possible dialogue, based on what they know of the content thus far and what they see in the story line. Not only does this engage students in thinking about the content, it also provides you with some assessment information. Based on the dialogue that the students create, you'll understand what they already know, what they misunderstand, and what they do not yet know.

3. Summarizing Information. A third possible use for graphic novels involves writing summaries. Like oral retellings of readings, written summaries require that students consider the main ideas in a piece of text and use their own words to recap what they know (Frey, Fisher, & Hernandez, 2003). Students can discuss the graphic novel and the text they've read with a small group, and then create their own summaries. Alternatively, students could summarize the text and then create a compare-and-contrast graphic organizer, in which they note the differences between their summary of the text and the way that the author/illustrator of the graphic novel summarized the text (e.g., Fisher & Frey, 2004).
4. Review. In addition to serving as fodder for written summaries, graphic novels can be used for review of content. While there are many reasons to review content—such as preparing for a test—graphic novels are especially useful for providing students with a review of past chapters. You can use a graphic novel from a previous chapter to review the major events in time or place, so that students can situate the new information they are reading.

5. Analysis. Graphic novels often have a thematic strand that illustrates a specific point about the content being studied. This may take the form of irony, humor, or a more direct and formal approach to a historical event. In the analysis approach, students read the graphic novel from the point of view of trying to understand the main point the author is trying to convey. This approach is particularly useful after students have covered the content in the main textbook. Encouraging students to pose questions about the text will help to uncover the main points.

For example:
• Why did the author choose this topic?
• What does this graphic novel tell me about the people we have studied? Does it relate ideas about their society, culture, religion, government, military, economy, or other aspects?
• Is the tone of the story humorous or serious?
• Do I like the people being presented?
• Does the author portray the characters in a positive or negative way?
• What conclusions do these ideas suggest?

Have students write a few sentences answering these questions. Then have them summarize what they believe is the main point of the graphic novel.

6. Visualizing. Have your students skim over the chapter you are working on, or just a particular section of that chapter. The student should then pick one person, one event, or one concept from their reading and create their own graphic representation about it. Students could use a comic book style to illustrate their topic. Their work could be funny, sad, serious, or any other tone that they wish. They can use text and dialogue or let the pictures alone tell the story. Another option would be to use other forms of multimedia for their topic. Students could take pictures, make a computer slide-show presentation, make a video, or create a song or some sort of musical piece to represent their topic.

These are just some of the many uses of graphic novels. As you introduce them into your class, you may discover more ways to use them to engage your students in a new method of learning while exercising the multiple literacies that your students already possess. We welcome you to the world of learning through graphic novels!


The following pages contain additional information about each individual graphic novel. You will find summaries, background information, or discussion questions to help you guide your students’ understanding of each graphic novel.

Chapter 1

Empress Theodora’s life began as a lower-class citizen. She was an actress, which at the time was considered a lowly occupation. She would eventually marry Justinian, after his uncle, the emperor, changed the law that forbade nobles from marrying actresses. As empress, Theodora had considerable influence in the Byzantine Empire. For example, she played a role in choosing government officials, and she helped grant more property rights to Byzantine women.

Chapter 2

This graphic novel shows the meaning of the five critical and basic components of the Islamic faith. In this story, a young Muslim boy named Nazar explains how he practices his faith by recalling his personal observations of the Five Pillars of Islam. Through his interactions with Matt, who is Catholic, we see similarities that exist between two of the largest faiths in the world.

Chapter 3

This graphic novel illustrates the silent trade in Ghana. Ghana became a powerful center for trade due to its control of a vast number of gold mines in West Africa. The country experienced extensive trade with some European nations and Muslim merchants. From the Muslim merchants, the Ghanaians received salt. This was highly desirable for Ghana, because the salt could be used to flavor food, preserve food, and for individuals to replace their bodies’ salt, which had been lost in the hot desert sun.

There are historical records of differences in the silent trade. For example, the ancient Phoenicians were also known to trade with Ghana. Their variation of the silent trade involved lighting fires instead of banging on a drum.
Chapter 4

In China during the Tang dynasty, thousands of young men took a series of civil service exams, in hopes of attaining well-paid government jobs. These exams were extremely difficult, as students had to begin studying for the exams at the age of four. When it came time for the students to take the first of three final exams, they were sent to testing sites, where they had to provide their own food and beds. Due to the extreme pressure on students to pass these tests, mental breakdowns were not uncommon.

While Chinese students would begin taking these final exams in their twenties, this graphic novel illustrates the students as younger adolescents. This is to help your students better identify with what the characters are experiencing. Your students have undoubtedly felt pressure to do an assignment or to prepare for a test. Ask your students if they have ever felt major pressure to prepare for an exam. Perhaps they have procrastinated in the past, much like one of the characters in the story. What did they learn from their experience with procrastinating? Did they continue to procrastinate afterward?

Chapter 5

In elements of popular culture, we sometimes see the glorification of war and violence. This was also true in medieval Japan, as importance was placed on courage and bravery in battle. Lost in all of the glory and rhetoric of war are the human elements of fear and uncertainty. This graphic novel illustrates a young samurai who has not yet experienced battle. When conflict arises, he is initially unsure if he can be an effective soldier. On the final page of the graphic novel, we see him push aside his fears and march toward the battlefield.

Ask your students to pretend they are a soldier from World War II or a more recent conflict. Have them keep a short journal or write letters back home, explaining their experiences and emotions. Students may include sketches of what they see around them. In their writings, their mood may change as the war progresses. For example, they may be excited at first and then realize that where they are is scary and dangerous. Have the students share their journal or letters with the rest of the class.

Chapter 6

The bubonic plague—known commonly as the Black Death—swept through Europe and Asia in the mid-1300s. The disease killed between 40 and 60 million people in China and as many as 38 million people in Europe—nearly half of each area’s population. The sickness was spread from community to community by a virus that was carried via fleas on infected rats and humans. This graphic novel traces the progression of the disease, starting with a traveler who is bitten by a flea, only to unwittingly spread the disease throughout a European town.

Starting on page 41, you see an image of a skeletal figure driving the cart of dead bodies. This is a nod to many pieces of art made during and after the
Black Death. There were many paintings that depicted skeletons or the Grim Reaper riding across Europe, adding the bodies of the dead to their wagons.

On page 42 of this graphic novel, you see children playing the game “Ring Around the Rosie.” It is common folklore that this nursery rhyme was attributed to the Black Death. The “ring around the rosie” referred to the blemishes that would appear on the infected skin; the “pocket full of posies” was a reference to people leaving flowers in their pockets to avoid the smell of all of the dead bodies; and the final lines (“ashes, ashes” and “we all fall down”) refer to everyone dying from the disease. Historians disagree on whether or not this song originated with the bubonic plague. They argue that it is an innocent children’s song, and people have assigned this nursery rhyme to the plague after the fact. Recent research indicates that the nursery rhyme may have originated much later on, perhaps as late as the 1600s.

Chapter 7

As Europe emerged from its medieval past during the Renaissance period, the city of Venice, Italy, was one of the richest and most cultured cities in Europe. Venice was home to great art, and it was a well-located center for trade. This graphic novel, designed as a typical travel brochure, describes the beauty, culture, and variety of sights and sounds of Venice.

Have students create their own travel brochures. They can be made for a city during the Renaissance, some other historical city, or for a contemporary location. Students should illustrate points of interest in the city, as well as historical events for prospective travelers (when applicable).

Chapter 8

Martin Luther was born and raised as a Catholic in a small German town. He was well educated, and he began studying law in 1505 at the age of 22. That same year, he had a change of heart. As Luther was walking home during a storm, a lightning bolt struck the ground nearby. Startled by the shock, he cried, “Help, St. Anne! I’ll become a monk!” He entered the local monastery and began preparations to become a priest.

Luther saw much of the corruption that occurred in the medieval Church and worried about his own salvation. In 1517 he publicly argued that the Catholic Church should reform its actions and return to what he viewed to be the Church’s correct, biblical traditions and doctrines. His movement eventually grew to become the continent-wide Protestant Reformation.

As this graphic novel alludes to, historians disagree on whether or not Luther actually nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the church door in Wittenberg. In 1961 a researcher indicated that Luther may not have done so. The researcher claimed that there are no reliable firsthand accounts of the event. The only accounts of the event appeared after Luther died, and Luther himself never mentioned the event.
Chapter 9

This graphic novel shows a graphic scene of the aftermath of the Spanish defeat of the Aztec in 1521. The text that appears on this page is quoted from an unknown author who was present at the battle. That quote appears in *The Broken Spears*, edited by Miguel Leon-Portilla.

Bernal Díaz accompanied Hernán Cortés on his expedition to Mexico. Upon arrival at Tenochtitlán, he was astonished at the buildings and structures. After the Spanish destroyed the Aztec Empire, Díaz said, “I thought that no land like it would ever be discovered in the whole world. But today all that I then saw is overthrown and destroyed; nothing is left standing.”

Chapter 10

The Strait of Magellan still exists today. The strait continues to be a difficult waterway to navigate, as it is full of islands and rocky cliffs. It is considered a “scenic” waterway, and much of its boat traffic consists of tourists eager to see a historic site.

Chapter 11

During the Enlightenment, writers, authors, aristocrats, and philosophers would meet in clubs and salons. Salons were elegant rooms in the homes of wealthy upper-class people. Invited guests would gather at the salons and converse about politics and new philosophies. These gatherings helped to spread the ideas of the Enlightenment.

In this graphic novel, we portray Thomas Hobbes as an older gentleman, reciting his old theories from *Leviathan*. Apparently, he does this often, as the other members present at the social club have grown tired of him repeating his same old theories. John Locke then enters. He is the young upstart philosopher, trying to make his name by challenging Hobbes. After an initially pleasant exchange, the men start to become aggravated, leading to an outdoor battle of the minds. The two combatants become engaged in a philosophy battle, where each man tries to outwit the other. This scene is reminiscent of “rap battles” that sometimes occur in urban America.

On page 71, the club owner mentions that Descartes “won’t come around anymore” because of Hobbes. Descartes had written the book *Meditations on First Philosophy*, to which Hobbes replied with a lengthy critique. Descartes then wrote a letter to reply to those critiques. Descartes later wrote more critiques on different theories of Descartes. As a result of those new critiques, Descartes refused to have any further contact with Hobbes.
CHAPTER 1

Roman Civilization

THEODORA

RAGS TO REGENT
CONSTANTINOPLE, A.D. 532

THE TAXPAYERS ARE NOT HAPPY.

AAAHH!

AAAHH!

OH GREAT, HERE COMES YOUR BRAIN TRUST.

AAAHH!

O MIGHTY EMPEROR JUSTINIAN! THERE'S RIOTING IN THE STREETS!

O WISE EMPRESS THEODORA! THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK THE PALACE!

WHAT'S ALL THIS NOISE ABOUT?
YOUR ROYAL MAGNIFICENCES MUST FLEE!
QUICKLY!
PACK YOUR CLOTHES!
AND YOUR JEWELS!
BRING A BOOK, MAYBE.
YOU MUST ESCAPE FROM CONSTANTINOPLE!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THERE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE...

WOW, THEY AREN'T EXAGGERATING.
THERE'S A BUNCH OF 'EM OUT THERE.

HOW CAN THAT BE? WHY WOULD ANYONE RIOT AGAINST US? WE'RE GREAT RULERS!
UNDoubtedly.
INDUBITABLY.

WE'VE RETURNED THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO ITS FORMER GLORY!

ART AND ARCHITECTURE FLOURISH UNDER OUR RULE!
WE'VE REWRITTEN A THOUSAND YEARS OF LAWS DRAFTED BY BUMBLING SENATORS SO THAT THEY ACTUALLY MAKE SENSE!
IT SHALL HEREBY BE ILLEGAL TO FEED A HORSE RADISHES...
WHAT ABOUT PONIES?

OH, PONIES MUST HAVE RADISHES.
Theodora: Rags to Regent

And who kicked the barbarian hordes out of old Rome? We did!

What have you all got to complain about, anyway?

Taxes!

They do seem very determined.

Maybe it would be nice to take a break from all this ruling and lawmaking and stuff.

What? You'd abandon the throne?

Very wise plan, my lord.

A brilliant decision, my liege.

Shall we pack this candelabra for you?

Justinian, you've never been anything other than royalty. You don't know what it's like out there.
I didn’t come from a rich family Justinian... we were poor circus folk! My dad trained the animals, and mom sold meat-on-a-stick.

By the time I was twelve I was working myself. We called it “acting,” but I was little more than a clown.

That bear got top billing... better food... his own dressing room!

Soon he left to work on a solo career, and I had to work with a pig in a wig.

Then mice wearing bowties.

You haven’t said anything all day, squeakers. Cat got your tongue?

It wasn’t getting any better...
Islamic Civilization

the Five Pillars
Hey, you’re the new guy, right? I’ve seen you in Miss Berman’s class.

Yeah, 5th period science! My name’s Nazar. What’s yours?

I’m Matt. What’re you playing?

Space heroes. Do you wanna try it?

Maybe later, thanks. Hey, I hope you don’t mind my asking... what’s that hat you’re wearing?

It’s called a kufi.

Why do you wear it?

Well, it’s what many Muslim males wear on their heads...

Dude, you’re Muslim? I don’t think I’ve ever met a Muslim before. I’ve always wondered what country they--um, I mean you--came from.

Islam is a religion, like Christianity or Judaism. Muslims come from all different kinds of countries.
OH, OKAY. I'M CATHOLIC, SO I KINDA KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. I ACTUALLY JUST HAD MY FIRST COMMUNION...DO MUSLIMS TAKE COMMUNION?

NO, WE HAVE A DIFFERENT SET OF TRADITIONS.

OH, UM, LIKE WHAT?

WELL, THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT TRADITIONS AS MY PARENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME ARE CALLED THE "FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM."

OH, UM, LIKE WHAT?

WELL, THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT TRADITIONS AS MY PARENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME ARE CALLED THE "FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM."

THE FIRST PILLAR IS CALLED "SHAHADA," OR BELIEF. I HAD TO PERFORM THIS RECENTLY IN FRONT OF A GROUP...I WAS TOTALLY NERVOUS!

SHAHADA IS THE ISLAMIC STATEMENT OF FAITH, WHERE ONE PUBLICLY DECLARES:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH AND MUHAMMAD IS HIS PROPHET.

I REMEMBER HOW AN OLDER MAN CAME UP TO ME AFTERWARD AND SAID:

YOU HAVE PERFORMED THE SHAHADA. YOU ARE NOW TRULY A MUSLIM, A FOLLOWER OF ISLAM.

HM. I WONDER IF THAT'S ANYTHING LIKE CONFIRMATION* WITH CATHOLICS...I MEAN, IT'S SOMETHING I DID LAST YEAR AND IT SOUNDS KINDA THE SAME...

*CONFIRMATION IS THE CATHOLIC SACRAMENT OF MATURE CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT.
The Pillar of "Salah," or prayer, asks us to perform prayers five times a day. The times these are to be performed are:

- **Morning**
- **Midday**
- **Halfway between midday and sunset**
- **Sunset**
- **An hour after sunset**

I've seen my father perform these wherever he happened to be; the important thing isn't where you do them, but when.

The Pillar of "Zakah," or charity, comes from the belief that all things belong to Allah...

My dad says that our way of honoring this pillar is to be generous with what we can give to the less fortunate, even if it's a small meal.

In fact, sometimes at the end of the year, my dad gives a portion of our family's income to charitable groups that feed the homeless. This is something lots of Muslims do.

Whenever possible, my family tries to donate some money to charity and support groups.

Yeah, Christians are totally supposed to do that sort of thing, too.
THE PILLAR OF "SIYAM" TELLS US TO FAST DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN.

I'VE SEEN MY FATHER DO IT...I THINK IT'S DIFFICULT, BUT HE ALWAYS LOOKS SO SERENE AND CALM DURING RAMADAN...

THE FASTING PART MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO NOT EAT FOOD, DRINK WATER OR TAKE PART IN ANY OTHER EARTHLY ACTIVITIES DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS THROUGHOUT THIS MONTH...

WOW. THAT DOES SOUND TOUGH. IT KINDA SOUNDS LIKE THE MONTH OF LENT FOR US WHERE WE CAN'T EAT MEAT ON FRIDAYS, AS WELL AS A BUNCH OF OTHER TRADITIONS.

SO THE FIFTH PILLAR IS "HAJJ," OR PILGRIMAGE. IT DESCRIBES HOW EVERY MUSLIM THAT CAN DO IT HAS TO VISIT MAKKAH AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFETIME.

HAVE YOU DONE THIS YET, NAZAR? AND WHERE'S MAKKAH? I HEARD YOU MENTION IT WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE PILLAR OF PRAYER...

MAKKAH'S IN SAUDI ARABIA. I HAVEN'T BEEN THERE YET, BUT MY MOM ACTUALLY JUST BOUGHT MY FATHER A PLANE TICKET THERE FOR HIS 50TH BIRTHDAY. IT WILL BE HIS FIRST PILGRIMAGE...THE HIGH POINT IN THE LIFE OF A MUSLIM.
HEY YOU'RE ALL THE WAY AT LEVEL 15! AND YOU'VE GOT ALL THE POWER-UPS! HOW'D YOU DO THAT?

I JUST PLAY A LOT, AND I'VE GOT THE STRATEGY GUIDE AT HOME.

WHAT OTHER GAMES DO YOU HAVE? DO YOU HAVE THAT NEW POWER PRO BASKETBALL GAME?

ACTUALLY I DO! WOULD YOU WANNA COME OVER FOR DINNER SOME TIME? I CAN SHOW YOU ALL THE VIDEO GAMES I'VE GOT. MY FATHER ISN'T LEAVING FOR MAKKAH FOR ANOTHER WEEK, AND I THINK MY PARENTS WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU AS A GUEST...

COOL! I'D HAVE TO ASK MY MOM FIRST THOUGH.

NO PROBLEM. HEY DID YOU DO THE HOMEWORK FOR MISS BERMANS CLASS?

WHY WON'T YOU GIVE ME BACK MY BALL?

STOP YOUR CRYING!

TAGI! NOW YOU'RE IT!

ONE MORE GAME OF GIRLS AGAINST BOYS!

HURRY UP! LUNCHTIME'S ALMOST OVER!

THAT'S THE BELL! LUNCHTIME'S OVER!

AW, MAN...

THAT'S SO NOT COOL...

THE END
Africa’s Civilizations

The Sounds of Silence... and Salt.
How much is this, please?

How much is this please?

I have 4 left.

I will give you 10,000.

In that case, I will take all of them for 20,000.

I can offer you it for 40,000.

That seems like a lot of money to just that. I can only give that amount.

I can do it for 20,000 or 12 for 25,000. That's a very good price, sir.

I can do 6 for 20,000 or 12 for 25,000. That's a very good price, sir.

I can do 6 for 20,000 or 12 for 25,000. That's a very good price, sir.

I will do 10 apples and 5 oranges. Plus a bunch of these please.

I will give 10 apples and 5 oranges. Plus a bunch of these please.

Yes, sir, but what do you have to spend?

I saw these at the other stall and they were much cheaper than these.

I saw these at the other stall and they were much cheaper than these.

I have very little. But I still want you to tell me your whole costs.

I saw these at the other stall and they were much cheaper than these.

I saw these at the other stall and they were much cheaper than these.

I have very little. But I still want you to tell me your whole costs.

I don't expect that answer.

I don't expect that answer.

Of course, I will always give you the best price.

Of course, I will always give you the best price.
WHY DID YOU COVER YOUR EARS, DARLING?

BECAUSE IT WAS VERY LOUD AND CONFUSING, DAD.

BUT WHEN PEOPLE ARE TRADING, THEY HAVE TO BARGAIN FOR THE BEST PRICE. BOTH THE TRADER AND THE BUYER HAVE TO BE HAPPY WITH THE FINAL AMOUNT.

SO DO THEY ALL TRADE LIKE THAT?

NOT ALWAYS. THERE USED TO BE SOMETHING CALLED THE "SILENT TRADE." THIS WAS CARRIED OUT WHEN TWO PEOPLE DIDN'T SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE.

THE ARAB TRADERS USED TO COME DOWN TO GHANA TO TRADE, BUT THEY COULDN'T SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE.

SO IF IT WAS SILENT, HOW DID THEY MANAGE TO TRADE WITH EACH OTHER?
FIRST THE ARAB TRADER WOULD LEAVE HIS SALT SLABS ON A BLANKET UPON THE SAND DUNE...

...THEN HE WOULD BEAT A DRUM TO SIGNAL HIS ARRIVAL BEFORE RETREATING BACK OUT OF SIGHT...

...THE GHANAN TRADER WOULD THEN LEAVE AN AMOUNT OF GOLD THAT HE BELIEVED WAS A FAIR TRADE...

...HE WOULD ALSO BEAT THE DRUM TO ANNOUNCE HE HAD MADE HIS OFFER. HE WOULD THEN RETREAT...

...THIS WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL BOTH TRADERS WERE SATISFIED. IF SO, THEY WOULD BEAT THE DRUM AND TAKE THE WARES.
Salt, gold, silver, ivory, honey, jewelry, tools, metal, and leather goods, rare birds, livestock, horses, and cloth were all important goods in the Trans-Saharan trade system.

Salt was very precious as it was used to preserve food. It was mined by slaves in Tighaza, a settlement in the Sahara.

And that is why it was called "silent trading." Because everything was done without any talking.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I'M GOING TO TRADE.

WHY AREN'T YOU LEAVING ANY GOLD?
CHAPTER 4

China in the Middle Ages

I’LL DO IT TOMORROW...
STopping here to study was a fantastic idea, Chang.

Who said anything about studying? I'm here to fish!

We'd better get going if we want to make it to the testing center by sundown.

Help... me...

I'd be happy to help you study, Chang. What are friends for, right?
I MADE IT THROUGH THE FIRST 2 TESTS WITHOUT HAVING TO STUDY - SO DON'T YOU WORRY, CHIU.

BUT THIS IS THE FINAL TEST TO SEE IF WE'LL GET GOOD GOVERNMENT JOBS! IT MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN YOU THINK.

"TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE QUIETLY, TO LEARN WITHOUT LOSING INTEREST... INDEED, WHAT DIFFICULTY FOR ME?"

WHO SAID THAT?

CONFUCIUS! DON'T YOU REMEMBER THAT QUOTE FROM YOUR STUDIES?

UHM... YEAH, OF COURSE!

HEY, CHIU, IS THIS THE TESTING SITE?

WHILE WE'RE PREPARING FOR THE TEST, WE'LL CALL THIS PLACE HOME...
HELLO, STUDENTS, I HOPE YOUR JOURNEY WAS NOT TOO TIRING. YOUR MINDS WILL NEED TO BE FOCUSED ON YOUR STUDIES.

WELL, OUR ROOM IS NOT FANCY BUT IT’LL HAVE TO DO!

“SIMPLE MEALS, WATER TO DRINK, BENT ELBOW FOR PILLOW, THEREIN IS HAPPINESS.”

IF YOU ASK ME, HAPPINESS IS A LONG NAP!

CONFUCIUS SAYS...
2 Weeks Later

Chang! The test is today! Don’t tell me you are just getting started on your studies!

“I’ve been up all night cramming as much knowledge into my head as possible!”

Hey!

Is that supposed to be an insult?

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one’s ignorance.

Who said that Confucius?

Ughh! Why did I wait until the last minute?

...zzz

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I’LL DO IT TOMORROW...
...A MAN WHO HAS COMMITTED A MISTAKE AND DOESN'T CORRECT IT IS COMMITTING ANOTHER MISTAKE.

GREAT,Just WHAT I NEED, A DREAM SEQUENCE.

CUT YOU HELP ME OUT WITH SOME CHEAT SHEETS OR SOMETHING?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN CONFUCIUS?

IT MEANS... WAKE UP AND START STUDYING!
CONFUCIUS IS RIGHT, I SHOULD GET BACK TO STUDYING.

THIS DREAM IS TOO DistrActing...

I'D BETTER WAKE UP AND STUDY FOR REAL!

ZZZ... HUH?

WHAT A WILD DREAM! THANK GOODNESS I STILL HAVE TIME TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST.

WE JUST TOOK THE TEST! YOU SLEPT THROUGH THE WHOLE THING!

CHANG!

OH.
CHAPTER 5

Medieval Japan

- HONOR -
WAY OF THE
SAMURAI
In medieval Japan, rival daimyo were often in conflict to establish supremacy and to gain new land. They enlisted an army of samurai, whose lives and loyalty were owed to their daimyo. Samurai trained their entire lives to serve and fight for their masters.

Our story begins as a young samurai is finishing his daily training...

You’ve done well, Yoshiro. You are my most promising young student.
I have taught you all that I know, and that is all I can do.

But the day will come when you must apply what I have taught you in real combat. I have faith that you will succeed.

Thank you, Master Isamu.

What's this!
You down there: what is going on?

It's him! He's here! It's...

...KATSURO.
A fierce, bloodthirsty warrior. His reputation is ruthless—and well-earned.

A former student of Master Isamu, he has come to conquer his former master and claim the land for his own daimyo.
But Master Isamu...

What if I am not ready?

Yoshiro...

There comes a time in every man's life when he must defend his honor.

Trust in your training. You will know what to do.

I will meet you at the frontline.

Master Isamu...
RING AROUND THE ROSIE.
A POCKET FULL OF POSIES.
ASHES, ASHES...

WE ALL FALL DOWN!
HA!
HA!
HA!

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CHAPTER 7

The Renaissance

WELCOME TO VENICE!
This sounds really good - “Since the earliest days of the Venetian republic, we have welcomed visitors from all over the world to our watery city.”
Welcome to Venice!

When you travel to China in a Venetian vessel, you'll be sailing with experts! Silks, ceramics, spices - whatever you wish will be yours to sell all over Europe.

Perhaps you've heard of Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller. Blessed with the hospitality of the great Khan in the 13th century?

Under the rule of the Doges, we Venetians have made the seas our own. We traded with both for longer than any other Italian city-state.

Let us tell you more:

The power of the Doge helps keep us independent from both mainland Italy and the Pope.

Whether you're travelling to Venice as a temporary guest or coming to start a business, there's a lot that makes our city-state a worthy destination.
You'll have plenty of options for travel, too - Venice has over 30,000 ships available to be fitted either for trade or warfare!

Whether you're trading in spices or enriching a navy, come to our Arsenal, and we'll build you anything you like. Military leaders will want to pay special attention to our advances in firearm technology.

But maybe you have other things on your mind....SPIRITUAL matters, for example.

You'll find everything from insect repellent to the right clothing for the hot, dry climate, all in Venetian markets!

Come and take a look!

We've been outfitting travelers to the Middle East since the Crusades, and we hope to make your trip comfortable and enjoyable, as well!

If you're looking to make a trip to the Holy Land, come to Venice first!

Or maybe you're a craftsman! Glassblowers, cartographers, furniture makers, printers, silkweavers - they have all thrived for years in Venice!
Venice holds special charm for those who love the Fine arts. Giovanni Bellini, Titian, and that young lion Tintoretto...some of the true greats of Renaissance painting have adorned our churches with Prescoes. They’ve even decorated the facades of fine homes on the Grand Canal!

Speaking of the arts, maybe you’ve heard of our Carnival. Every year between Christmas and Lent* we throw a huge party! People come from all over the world to celebrate, wearing masks and other costumes.

* A ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY STARTING IN LATE FEBRUARY/EARLY MARCH

We hope we’ve convinced you!

Canals, Fine arts, Carnival, and everything you need to do business in Italy AND abroad!

We’ve got it all, right here in VENICE!

So please, feel free to come visit us when you have a moment - we’re waiting!

WELCOME TO VENICE!
CHAPTER 8

The Reformation

Martin Luther: The Man, The Myth, The Monk
WE WANT YOUR VIEWS, AS THE MAN THAT STARTED A MOVEMENT THAT SWEPT THROUGH EUROPE AND HELPED CHANGE SOCIETY AS WE NOW LIVE IT.

SO THE OUTFIT- IT'S FINE FOR THIS INTERVIEW?

OKAY, WHAT WE WANT TO DO TODAY MASTERT LUTHER IS TALK WITH YOU A BIT ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

YEAH, DEFINITELY. LET'S GET STARTED.

WELL, I DON'T THINK I'M ALL THAT IMPORTANT. I ONLY REACTED TO WHAT I SAW AROUND ME, YOU KNOW?

WHAT WE WANT TO DO TODAY MASTERT LUTHER IS TALK WITH YOU A BIT ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

WE WANT YOUR VIEWS, AS THE MAN THAT STARTED A MOVEMENT THAT SWEPT THROUGH EUROPE AND HELPED CHANGE SOCIETY AS WE NOW LIVE IT.

HMMM?

I NEVER DREAMED THAT ALL OF THIS WOULD HAPPEN, YOU KNOW?

I MEAN TO DO WAS Fix SOME PROBLEMS THAT I SAW IN THE CHURCH.

WELL, I DON'T THINK I'M ALL THAT IMPORTANT. I ONLY REACTED TO WHAT I SAW AROUND ME, YOU KNOW?

ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS FIX SOME PROBLEMS THAT I SAW IN THE CHURCH.

ALL I DID WAS TRY TO BRING THINGS BACK TO WHAT I HAD READ IN THE BIBLE, RIGHT?
I was young then, teaching at the university. Always trying to understand what the church was supposed to do.

And then the church started selling indulgences. You remember them, right?

The idea was that if you paid for an indulgence, then the amount of penance you had to perform for a sin you committed was reduced.

Wait, Master Luther, let me stop you here.

No, no. Everyone gets that wrong! Indulgences only dealt with reducing penance during a person's life.

But forget that! My point was that nothing you do, no amount of good works, can earn God's grace.

He grants that himself, and he does it out of love.

My point was that we must live a life of faith, do you see?

And while we're talking about people getting their stories wrong,

Let me address that story about me nailing the 95 theses on the cathedral door.
I don't know where that came from. It wasn't me, I can tell you that much.

You know, it was common practice for the people to nail notices on the church door.

I certainly expressed my concerns with church officials in a letter.

But then what happened?

Well...

I bet it was probably one of my friends that I also sent the letter to. Probably that Frederick—he was always nailing stuff to that church door.

All right, we've helped clear that up.

But again, I never thought so much change would occur. I just wanted to address some problems that I saw around me.

The church disagreed with me, but they didn't take me seriously at first. Eventually, though, they saw the problem.
“Broken spears lie in the roads; we have torn our hair in our grief....

The houses are roofless now, and their walls are red with blood....
We have pounded our hands in despair against the adobe walls, for our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead...

The shields of our warriors were its defense, but they could not save it.

From The Broken Spears
- author unknown
CHAPTER 10

The Age of Exploration

Around The World in 1000 Days
PIGAFETTA'S JOURNAL, MARCH 31ST, 1520. WE HAVE NEARLY SAILED TO THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD.

HMM... ROASTED PHEASANT IN ORANGE SAUCE... FRESH BREAD WITH HERB BUTTER... MAYBE A FINE CHEESE...

SUPPLIES ARE RUNNING LOW.

NOPE, BOILED BOOT LEATHER.

AGAIN.

THE CREW IS GROWING UNEASY.

HOW MUCH MORE OF THIS ARE WE EXPECTED TO TAKE, PIGAFETTA? THIS EXPEDITION WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE A FEW WEEKS, BUT IT'S ALREADY BEEN SIX MONTHS!

CARTAGENA'S RIGHT! WE'RE JUST SAILING UP AND DOWN THE COAST!

WE'LL NEVER FIND A PASSAGE TO ASIA, THE NEW WORLD IS A CONTINUOUS WALL OF LAND!

THE SHIPS ARE LEAKING.

OUR FOOD IS GONE.

MY CLOTHES ARE FROZEN TO MY SKIN!

AND THESE LANDS ARE STRANGE. I HEAR THE NATIVES ARE HEADLESS GIANTS... WITH FACES ON THEIR CHESTS!

I HEARD THAT, TOO!

AND THE BIRDS ARE SO BIG, THEY FEED ELEPHANTS TO THEIR BABIES!

AH, THAT'S NOT TRUE.

OH YEAH? WHAT ABOUT THOSE HORRIBLE BLACK GESE ON THE ICE OUT THERE? VICIOUS-LOOKING DEVILS!

RAWK?
WE SHOULD TURN AROUND AND SAIL BACK TO SPAIN WHILE WE STILL CAN...

CAREFUL, CARTAGENA. IT'S ONE THING TO COMPLAIN, BUT WATCH THAT YOU DON'T SAY SOMETHING THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED...

MUTINY!

APRIL 5TH.

CAPTAIN MAGELLAN!

THE SHIPS ARE IN REVOLT!

WHAT?

COWARDS! THEIR STOMACHS GRUMBLE A LITTLE AND THEY FORGET THE GLORY OF OUR MISSION.

WHO IS IT?

IT'S CAPTAIN MENDEZ!

CAPTAIN QUESADA

SANANTONIO

AND CARTAGENA.

TRINIDAD

VICTORIA

CONCEPCIÓN
Cartagena? He’ll be the leader. I’ve already imprisoned him once for plotting against me.

Well, I’ve been a soldier as well as a sailor. Let’s remind our friends why I’m called the Captain-General.

Cartagena will expect me to go after him on the Concepción first, but the Victoria is the most vulnerable ship...

Magellan sent one boat to “negotiate” with the Victoria.

Letter from Captain-General Magellan to Captain Mendoza.

While another boat full of armed men snuck up from behind.

It’s a very compelling letter.

Magellan used the 3 ships now under his control to trap the other two.
Meanwhile...

San Antonio

What's going on? Why are we adrift?

Captain Quesada! Somebody cut our anchor free!

And the current is taking us towards Magellan's ships!

Men?

Those three ships will cut us to ribbons if we drift any closer to them... well, no matter! We'll give 'em a fight they won't soon forget, right men?

Aboard the Concepción, Cartagena watched his mutiny crumble.

No!

I can't believe it! The sailors are cheering for Magellan! I can't outfight him, I can't outrun him... he's won!
CARTAGENA! WHAT IS YOUR ALLEGIANCE?

WE STAND FOR KING CHARLES OF SPAIN AND FOR FERDINAND MAGELLAN, HIS CAPTAIN-GENERAL.

Magellan held court and tried the mutineers. He needed most of the men for their sailing skills, and pardoned them...

But the ring-leader, Cartagena, was not so lucky.

With the mutiny quelled, we continued to look for, and eventually found, "the Strait of Straits," a passage through the New World.

It was dangerous sailing, and only Magellan's expert navigation saved us from shipwreck. Even so, there was a toll.

Three ships made it to the other side.
WE EMERGED INTO A BODY OF WATER THAT MAGELLAN NAMED THE PACIFIC OCEAN. HE WEPT WITH JOY TO SEE IT.

MORE HARDSHIPS AWAITED US THERE, HOWEVER.

THROUGH BAD LUCK, OUR SHIPS SAILED PAST ALMOST EVERY HOSPITABLE ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC, MISSING NEEDED OPPORTUNITIES TO RESTOCK OUR SUPPLIES OF FOOD AND FRESH WATER.

MANY DIED AS A RESULT.

MAGELLAN HIMSELF DIED VIOLENTLY IN THE PHILIPPINES, WHEN HE DECIDED TO HELP ONE ISLAND KING ATTACK ANOTHER.

BROKEN AND LEADERLESS, WE BARELY REACHED ASIA, WHERE WE COLLECTED WHAT SPICES WE COULD.

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY CARTAGENA MUTINIED. MAGELLAN WAS A HARD MAN AND THE TASK HE SET BEFORE US SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE. BUT, THANKS TO HIS LEADERSHIP, WE ACCOMPLISHED ONE OF THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS IN ALL OF HISTORY. WE SAILED A COMPLETE CIRCLE AROUND THE ENTIRE WORLD.

IN THE END, OF OVER 250 MEN ON FIVE SHIPS, ONLY 19 SAILORS IN ONE LEAKY SHIP MADE IT BACK TO SPAIN.
A Gentlemen’s ‘Discussion’

The Champion
Thomas Hobbes

VS.

The Challenger
John Locke

The Age of Enlightenment
Our story begins,
catching master Hobbes mid-philosophy... so that in the nature of man, we find three main causes of conflict. First, competition; secondly, shyness; thirdly, glory. The first makes men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation...

In this state of nature, every man is enemy to every man...

Oh, this again!

I don't think master Hobbes ever tires of the sound of his own voice!

And thusly...

But I must counter with a natural law theory of my own.

I beg to differ, good sir...
DO YOU CONTEST THAT LIFE IS NOT NASTY, BRUTISH AND SHORT?

YES YES. 'NASTY, BRUTISH AND SHORT.'

WE'VE ALL READ YOUR BOOK, MR. HOBBES.

WELL, THEN. IF YOU'VE READ MY BOOKS, PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR CONCEPT OF NATURAL LAW.

OF COURSE, GOOD SIR. YOU SEE, I BELIEVE THAT MAN IS BORN TRULY FREE, AND THAT HE IS ENDOwed WITH SUCH NATURAL RIGHTS AS LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY.

AND FURTHERMORE...
AH, BUT CAN'T YOU SEE THAT SUCH THINGS CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT A STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THEM?

WITHOUT AN ALL-POWERFUL MONARCH, MAN CANNOT ENJOY SUCH FREEDOMS.

I MUST DISAGREE, SIR. MAN IS GRANTED THESE NATURAL RIGHTS AT BIRTH. THE GOVERNMENT EXISTS TO PROTECT THOSE FREEDOMS.

IF THE PEOPLE'S NATURAL RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED BY THE GOVERNMENT, THEN THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT.

YOUR IDEALISTIC DREAMS ARE QUAIN'T, AND YOUR THEORIES GIVE MAN FAR TOO MUCH CREDIT.

WELL, I FEAR YOUR THEORIES ARE, IF I MAY QUOTE...

"NASTY.
BRUTISH.
AND SHORT!"

OOOOOOO!

WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
OH, I THINK YOU HEARD ME.

NOW, NOW, GENTLEMEN. I RUN A CLEAN ESTABLISHMENT. I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE IN HERE.

IN FACT, I THINK YOU HEARD ME JUST FINE.

AND MASTER Hobbes, we just recovered from your last 'discussion' with DESCARTES... AND HE WON'T COME AROUND ANY MORE!

...WE'LL SIMPLY CONTINUE TO 'DISCUSS' OUTSIDE, IF THAT'S ALRIGHT WITH YOU, MR.-

I'M SORRY, WHO ARE YOU?

FINE!

THE NAME'S LOCKE.

JOHN LOCKE.

ALRIGHT, GENTS, LET US RETIRE OUTSIDE TO HEAR THIS 'DISCUSSION'.
WHEN I'M DONE WITH YOU, YOU'RE GONNA FEEL LIKE LEVIATHAN JUST WALKED ALL OVER YOU, WHHELP!

OH YEAH? WELL I'M GONNA PHILOSOPHIZE YOU SO HARD THERE AIN'T GONNA BE NOTHING LEFT BUT A BLANK SLATE!

TABULA RASA, BABY!

NO HE DIDN'T!

NOW I'M GONNA FURTHER SERVE UP MY THEORIES ON LIBERALISM!

PUH-LEEZE! TIME FOR MY ALL-POWERFUL MONARCH TO REGULATE YOU!