

Additions to the Middle School Booklist

Megan Langman, Supervisor of Curriculum and
Instruction

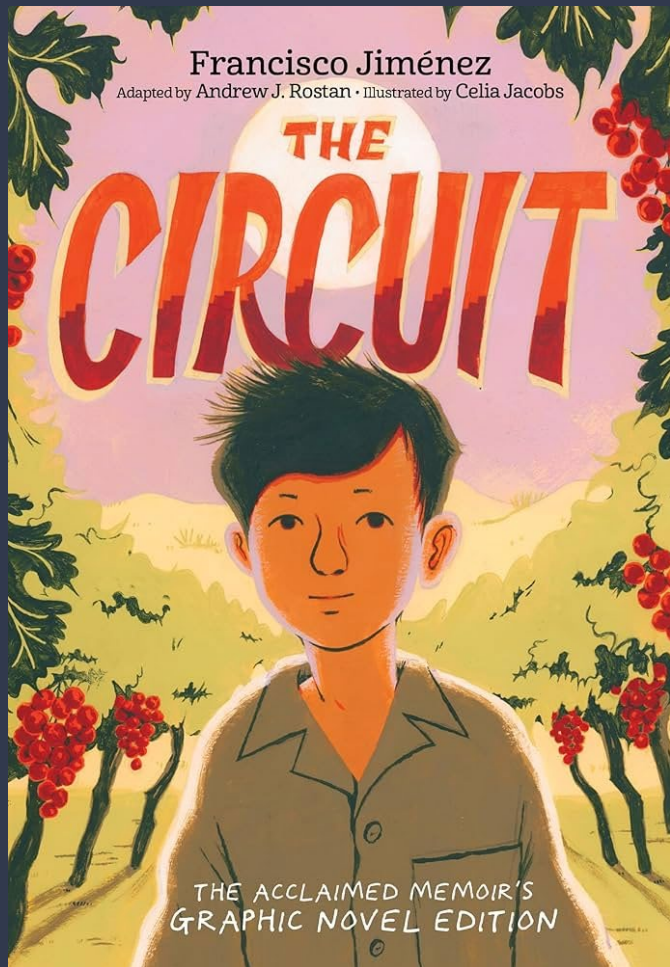
April 6, 2026



Grade 6: Theme- Discovering Ourselves and Creating Community

ONE Proposed Addition

The Circuit: Graphic Novel Edition by Francisco Jiménez



The Circuit: Graphic Novel Edition

By Francisco Jiménez

Publication year: 2023

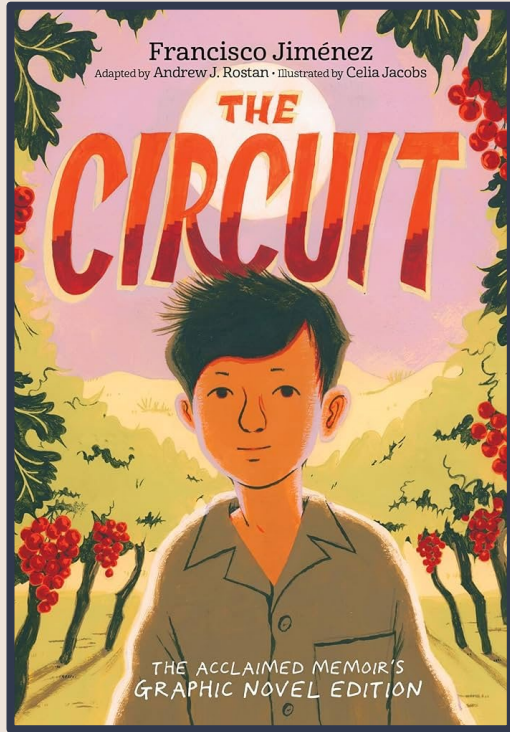
Genre: Graphic nonfiction; memoir adaptation; middle grades–YA

Authorship and focus: Written by acclaimed Latino author; centers the lived experiences of migrant families

Length: ~160 pages

Awards/Accolades:

- Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection



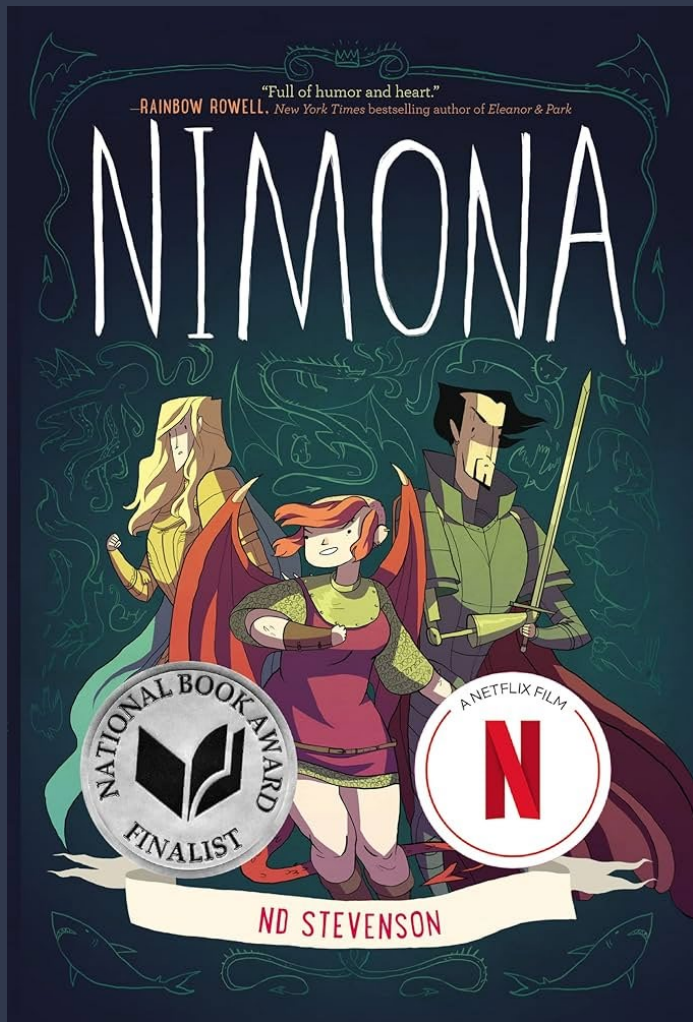
Overview: This visual adaptation of Jiménez’s acclaimed memoir follows Panchito and his family as they migrate for seasonal farm work across California, navigating poverty, language barriers, interrupted schooling, and tight-knit family bonds. The graphic format makes the themes of resilience, belonging, and educational access highly approachable and discussion-ready for diverse readers.

Note: The memoir upon which this graphic adaptation is based is already board approved for 6th grade.

Grade 7: Theme- Life's Journey

ONE Proposed Addition

- **Nimona** by Noelle Stevenson



Nimona

By ND Stevenson

Publication year: 2015

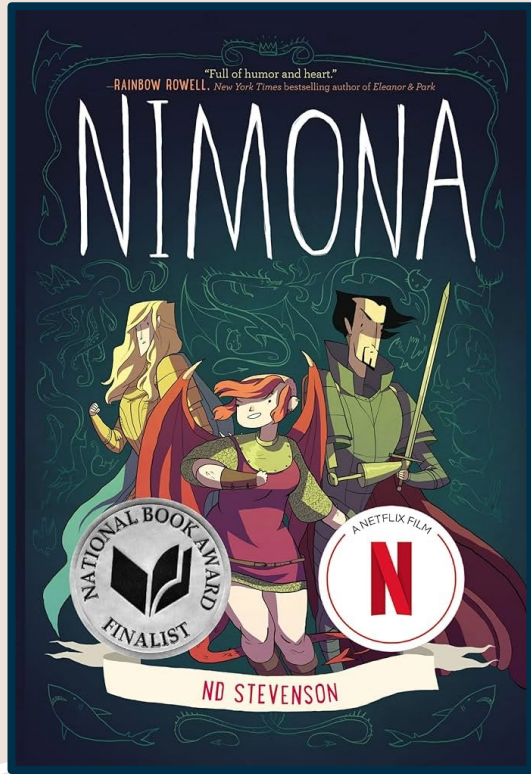
Genre: Graphic novel; fantasy/sci-fi; satirical adventure

Length: ~272 pages

Authorship: Created by nonbinary author ND Stevenson

Awards/Accolades:

- National Book Award Finalist (Young People's Literature)
- Eisner Award Winner (Best Graphic Album-Reprint; nominee for Best New Graphic Album)
- New York Times bestseller; ALA/YALSA Best Graphic Novels for Teens selection

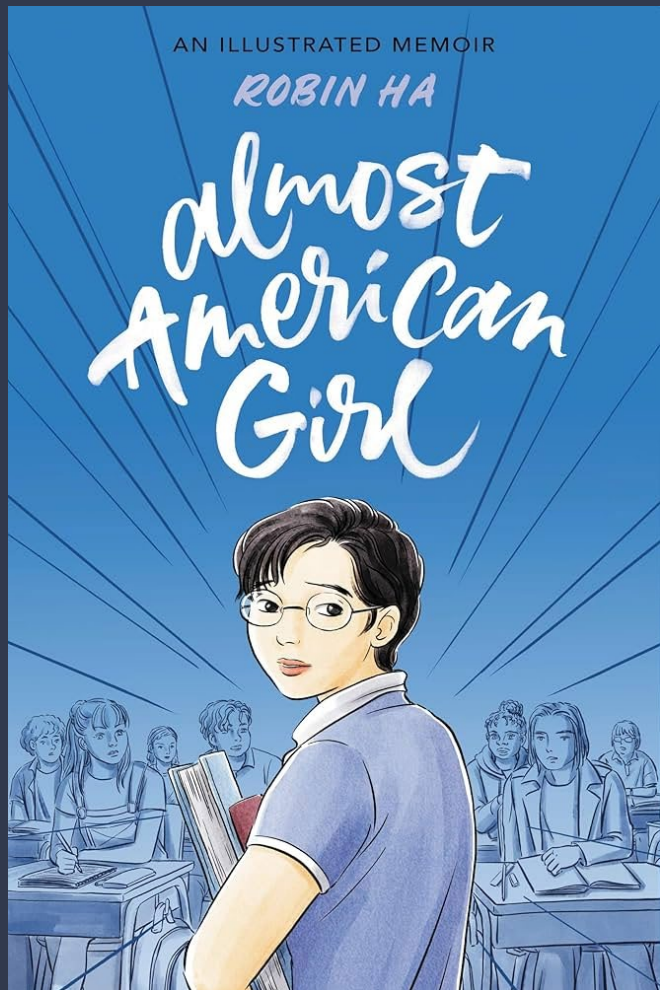


Overview: A shapeshifting teenager, Nimona, teams up with “villain” Ballister Blackheart to expose the hypocrisy of a kingdom’s hero-industrial complex. What starts as anarchic fun becomes a sharp, heartfelt look at power, propaganda, friendship, and identity, blending humor with emotional stakes and action-filled artwork.

Grade 8: Theme - Resiliency

ONE Proposed Addition

- **Almost American Girl:** An Illustrated Memoir by Robin Ha



Almost American Girl

By Robin Ha

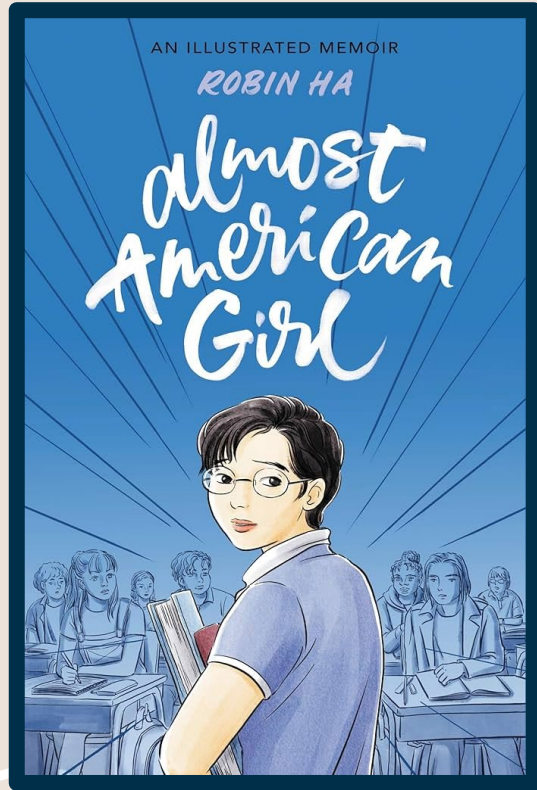
Publication year: 2020

Genre: Graphic memoir; immigration/coming-of-age

Length: ~224 pages

Author focus: Created by Korean American cartoonist Robin Ha

- Awards/Accolades:
 - Harvey Award nominee; YALSA Great Graphic Novels for Teens (Top Ten)
 - ALA Notable Children's Book; Walter Award Honor (Younger Readers/Teen recognition lists)
 - Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection; multiple state reading list selections



Overview: When a Seoul-raised teen relocates abruptly to Alabama, language barriers, isolation, and shifting family dynamics upend her world. Through spare, expressive artwork, Ha charts the work of finding community, especially in a comic-drawing class, while navigating identity, belonging, and the complexities of immigration.

Grade 8: Theme - Resiliency

ONE Proposed Change to Required Reads

Current Required Texts:

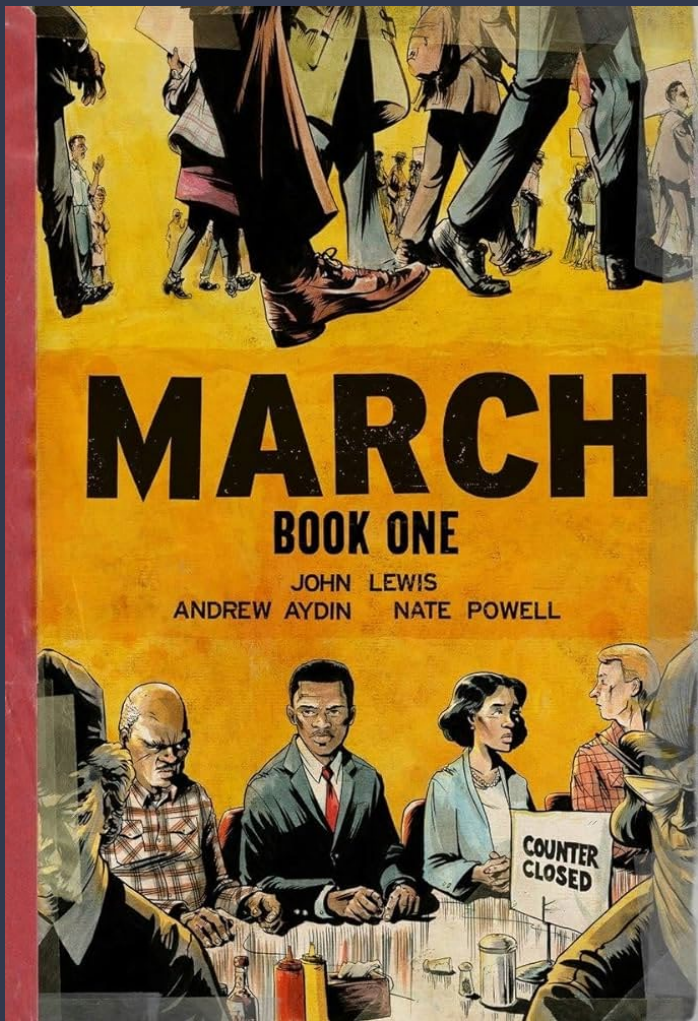
Night by Elie Wiesel

I Have a Dream: Writing and Speeches That Changed the World by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Warriors Don't Cry by Melba Patillo Beals (will be the companion text to *March*)

Additional Required Texts:

March: Book One by John Lewis (Author), Andrew Aydin (Author) and Nate Powell (Illustrator)



March: Book One

By John Lewis (author), Andrew Aydin (author), Nate Powell (illustrator)

Publication year: 2013

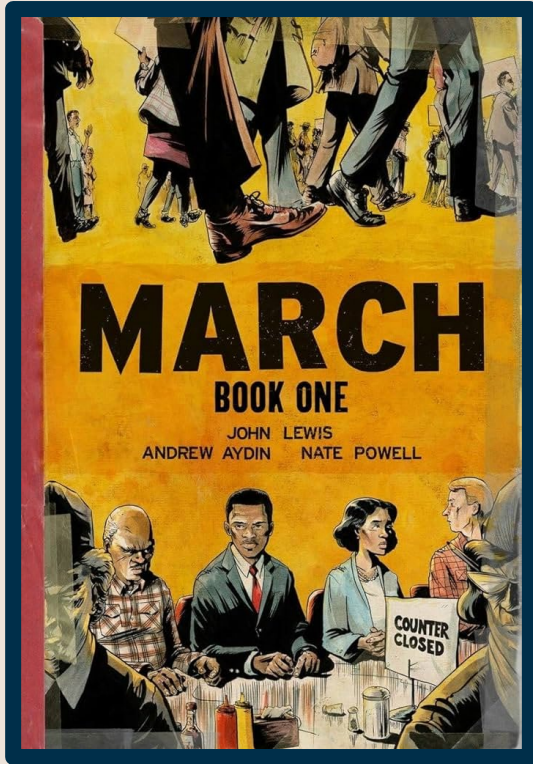
Genre: Graphic nonfiction; civil rights memoir

Length: ~128 pages

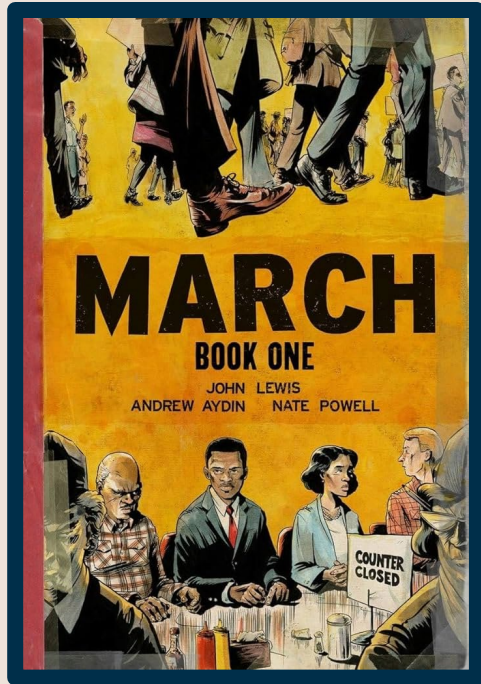
Author focus: Written by Congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis

Awards/Accolades:

- Coretta Scott King Author Honor (2014)
- Robert F. Kennedy Book Award – Special Recognition (2014)
- YALSA Top 10 Great Graphic Novels for Teens; ALA Notable Book
- #1 New York Times and #1 Washington Post bestseller



Overview: The first volume of John Lewis's graphic memoir traces his early life, Nashville sit-ins, and the emergence of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Black-and-white art and clear narration ground a vivid account of organizing, nonviolent protest, and moral courage during the Civil Rights movement. To be taught in conjunction with *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals.



Rationale for Adoption: *March* tells the story of the Civil Rights Movement through the personal experiences of Congressman John Lewis. Students learn about protests, sit-ins, and marches from a first hand account. The book shows how ordinary people took extraordinary risks to fight for justice. Students see how courage, persistence, and collective action can lead to social change. *March* will be paired with *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beals, to demonstrate the overlap in experiences as well as resilience portrayed by the protagonists. As a firsthand account from a key civil rights leader, the book provides an important perspective that helps students see history through the experiences of those who fought for change.

Teacher Feedback from Pilot Classes:

“Piloting *March* by John Lewis has been a great experience. Below are a few highlights that capture the reasons why I am confident in *March* becoming a whole class novel for all 8th grade students.”

- *March* seamlessly pairs with *Warriors Don't Cry*. John Lewis and Melba Patillo Beals have similar life experiences, so I was naturally able to tie in various excerpts from *Warriors Don't Cry* and allow my students to compare and contrast them.
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream Writings and Speeches That Changed The World* is also a required 8th grade text, and this paired effortlessly with *March*, as well. John Lewis shares various memories of how Martin Luther King Jr. was a mentor to him; therefore excerpts from the book fit well throughout our novel study.
- Author's purpose and text structure are both areas we are looking for our 8th grade students to grow in, and learning about graphic novel design features and analyzing them in *March* has been the perfect way to blend these two elements together and challenge my students to think critically about them.
- I see the graphic novel as more accessible to students with IEP's and students in MTSS. The confidence they have to analyze the text and share their ideas out loud in class is exciting to see.

Student Feedback from Pilot Classes:

- “The pictures give the readers an opportunity to see what happened and the actions that you can't picture from a normal book.”
- “*March* would be a pretty well rounded graphic novel for middle school students....it does have harsh topics within the story, but that is just learning history of what had happened. A person should know most of the history of this country, not just the good parts. The bad parts helped shaped this country and its people, and can help other students and people learn from this story.”
- “From reading *March*, I learned so many more things about the Civil Rights Movement. I feel more educated on the events that happened during the movement and was interested while reading the book, the photos also gave me a better visualization.”



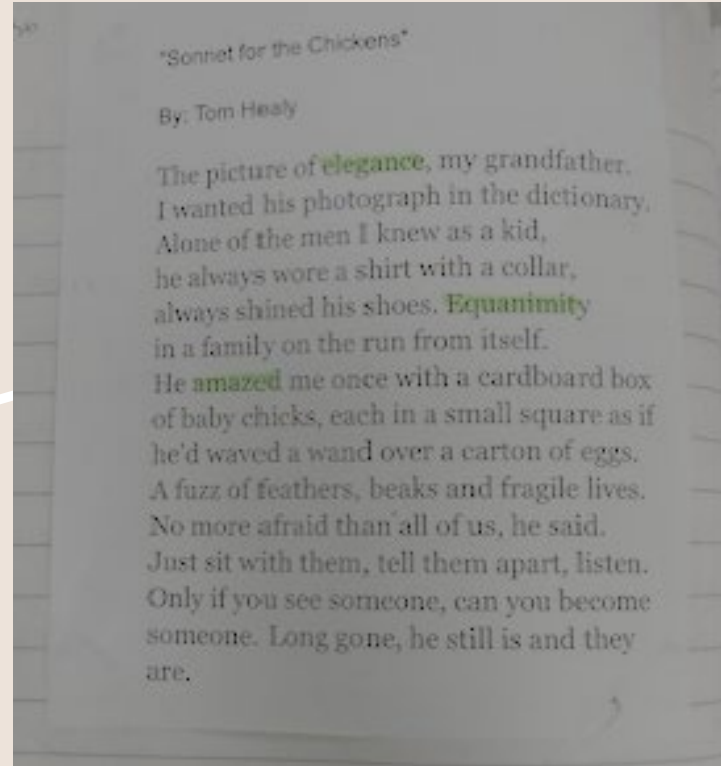
Student Work Sample

"Sonnet for the Chickens"

By: Tom Healy

The picture of elegance, my grandfather.
I wanted his photograph in the dictionary.
Alone of the men I knew as a kid,
he always wore a shirt with a collar,
always shined his shoes. Equanimity
in a family on the run from itself.
He amazed me once with a cardboard box
of baby chicks, each in a small square as if
he'd waved a wand over a carton of eggs.
A fuzz of feathers, beaks and fragile lives.
No more afraid than all of us, he said.
Just sit with them, tell them apart, listen.
Only if you see someone, can you become
someone. Long gone, he still is and they are.


1. Staple the sonnet into the Reading Section of your Notebook.
2. Highlight 3 words that have positive connotation
3. In **ONLY** 6 words answer the question: if the chickens in the poem could speak for themselves, what do you think they would say about their situation?



Student Work Sample

1. Caption this image - think John Lewis and Part I of *March*
2. Mark text that aligns with who John Lewis WAS and IS so far in *March*

What's going on in this picture?




Political representatives investigate mass mystery chicken outbreak

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What's going on in this picture?



"Chickens ready for change"

"Sonnet for the Chickens"
By: Tom Healy

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I wanted his photograph in the dictionary.
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Student Work Sample

Notice and Note Signposts

Notice & Note Sign Posts

Contrasts & Contradictions

When a character does something that contrasts with what you'd expect or contradicts their earlier acts or statements, **STOP** and ask, "Why is the character doing that?"

Aha Moment

When a character realizes, understands, or finally figures out something, **STOP** and ask yourself, "How might this change things?"

Tough Questions

When a character asks themselves a very difficult question, **STOP** and ask yourself, "What does this question make me wonder about?"

Words of the Wiser

When a character (probably older and wiser) takes the main character aside and offers serious advice, **STOP** and ask, "What's the life lesson and how might it affect the character?"

Again and Again

When you notice a word, phrase, or situation mentioned over and over, **STOP** and ask yourself, "Why does this keep happening again and again?"

Memory Moment

When the author interrupts the action to tell you about a memory, **STOP** and ask yourself, "Why might this memory be important?"

3/11 Signpost #2
Words of the Wiser

The advice is probably a life lesson, and if we pay attention to it, we see an important idea the author wants us to think about. Also, we gain insight about the main character, the conflict they face, the plot, and perhaps the message of theme the author wants you to consider.

What is the life lesson being taught at this moment? The lesson being taught is to do it for yourself, and do not give up. This tells him to work harder, until he succeeds.

Signpost #3
Contrasts and Contradiction

When a character acts in a way you do not expect or in a way that is opposite of his or her previous actions.

Why is the character doing that?
The mom does not yell at Michael and instead carefully motivates him with the family. The mom does this so Michael becomes better ofensive line.

Signpost #3
Contrast + Contradictions

When a character surprises someone, readers wonder how what he has just said is different from what we expect.

Why is the character doing that?

The Good Side

The mom telling the boy what to do contrasts to what you'd normally think she'd do. She still has to be tough but she's kinder than she was. He needs to do it.

March Part II

Signpost	Question
Words of the Wiser	The lesson being taught is to do it for yourself, and do not give up. This tells him to work harder, until he succeeds.
Contrasts/Contradictions	The mom does not yell at Michael and instead carefully motivates him with the family. The mom does this so Michael becomes better ofensive line.

Student Work Sample

Graphic Novel Terminology



Graphic Novel Worksheet:

Understanding Comic Book Terminology

Instructions: Below is a comic strip designed to help you understand some common comic book terms. Read through the comic and pay attention to how each term is illustrated and used. After reviewing the comic, answer the questions below each section.

Graphic Novel	Z Pattern: <i>Notice how your eyes naturally follow a "Z" pattern across the comic panels. This guides your reading from one panel to the next.</i>	Panel: <i>Each box is a panel. Panels contain a segment of the story and are read in sequence.</i>	Splash Page: <i>A splash page is a full-page panel, often used to highlight a key scene or introduce a story.</i>
Gutter: <i>The space between panels is called the gutter. It allows time to pass or scenes to change.</i>	Dialogue Balloon: <i>Dialogue balloons show what characters are saying. They typically have a tail pointing to the speaker.</i>	Caption: <i>Captions provide additional information, such as narration or the character's thoughts.</i>	Emanata: <i>Symbols or lines that show emotion or motion, like sweat drops or speed lines.</i>

Activities: Using pages 1-61 in *March*, find examples and cite the page number for each question below to help support your response. Make sure you have 8th grade appropriate answers and they are in **RED**.

1. Describe how the "Z Pattern" helps in reading comics.

On page 6, the way you read the panel is from left to right. You can also have the Z Pattern be up and down. This pattern helps the reader know which panel is next for reading.

2. What is the purpose of using a Splash Page in a comic?

A Splash Page is just a page with panels without big dialogues. We can see this used on page 8-9 where it highlights the troops using tear gas on the people who were protesting.

3. How does the Gutter affect the storytelling in a comic?

The gutter is the space between panels that changes the scenes or past times. This can be seen on page 13 when the panels go through John Lewis getting up for the day and the gutters separates them to show different parts of his morning.

4. Explain the difference between a Dialogue Balloon and a Caption.

The difference between a Dialogue Balloon and a Caption is that in a Dialogue Balloon, it is a character speaking and shows what they're saying while the Caption gives additional information or thoughts of a character. You can see both on page 1, the caption gives us information on where they are while the Dialogue Balloon gives us what the characters are saying to each other.

Student Work Sample

Evelyn
Opening of *March* and *Warriors Don't Cry*: A Close Analysis of Author's Purpose

MARCH: Pages 5-9	WARRIORS DON'T CRY: Pages 1-3(top)
What part of his life did John Lewis' prologue feature? Young Adult - 25	What part of her life did Melba Pattillo Beals' opening scene feature? Newborn baby
What happened in this moment of John Lewis' life? In this moment they marched over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. But were met with soldiers on the other side and they threw tear gas at them. To get voting rights peacefully.	What happened in this moment of Melba Pattillo Beals' life? She talked about how she needed a surgery at a white hospital to keep her alive and the one doctor refused to care for her after the surgery almost leading to her death.
The very first word balloon on Page 5 states, "Can you swim?" What does this simple question reveal about danger ahead? It reveals that they might have to jump off the bridge in order to survive.	In the very first sentence on Page 1 Melba Pattillo Beals' describes, "My Grandmother India always said God had pointed a finger at our family, asking for just a bit more discipline, more praying, and more hard work..." What might this simple statement reveal about danger ahead in Melba's life? It reveals how she's going to have to face difficult things in her life. And she might have to work harder.

Washington Post columnist, Kathleen Parker, once declared, "People in positions of power and privilege have a duty to perform at a higher level. If not them, then who?"

How does this quote relate to both opening scenes of *March* and *Warriors Don't Cry*? What does it make us wonder?
We are supposed to trust the police officers and doctors. It makes me wonder why should we trust our lives with people who won't let us all trust them no matter skin color.

Task: Compare and contrast author's purpose in the opening scenes of both memoirs

- Students needed to analyze word choice, specifically imagery, and visuals to determine the author's perspective at the beginning of their tale.
- In addition, this task asks students to consider the roles of power and authority in both protagonists' lives.

QUESTIONS?