

Assign 1: Group Essay



Summarizing, Analyzing, & Evaluating a
Newspaper Comic Strip: Comics & Culture

Purposes



- ❧ To summarize one comic strip from the comic strip from a newspaper.
 - ❧ Describe the comic strip so readers understand the “plot” --what happens in the narrative--and can visualize it.
 - ❧ Include text and visuals.
- ❧ To interpret and analyze the comic strip.
 - ❧ What is the source of the strip’s humor? What ideas does it present about society and culture? About how we understand ourselves and our relationship to our society? About family, work/business, marriage, teens and children, dating, old age?
 - ❧ Consider text and visuals.
- ❧ To evaluate this comic strip.
 - ❧ Is this comic strip funny? Well done (e.g., text and artwork)? Provocative? Thoughtful? Engaging? Clichéd? Stereotypical? Sexist? Support your evaluation.

Context, Occasion, Medium, Genre

- Each group will choose **one** comic strip from the comic strip sheets to write about. Due date: See syllabus.



- Formatting: You will not format this like a traditional essay with an intro, body, and conclusion and traditional paragraphing. Instead, everyone will use these five headings in bold: **Introduction; Summary and Description; Strip Analysis; Evaluation; Sources** Use block paragraphs instead of indenting the first line.
 - Points: 20 (Group members will receive the same grade.)
 - Length: 1.5-2 pgs
 - Formatting Guidelines: one-inch margins, single-spaced paragraphs, block paragraphs (rather than indent as you typically would).
 - Font style, sizes: Headings, Arial, 14pt, bold (no underline); Text, TNR, 12pt
 - See Course Notes for examples
- Principles of collaboration (TSGW, Ch 26): How to write an essay as a group. Understand group dynamics and how to work together to complete the essay.
- Focus on the one strip you choose but consider all the other strips on the sheet – get a sense of how comics work. Do you see common connections among the strips? You can also look up more comic strips from your series.
- Basic research on the strip: bkgrd on creators, strip's basic situations, characters, themes.
- Considerations: Who is your audience? What planning will you do – invention documents. There is no formal audience sheet or planning work required for this assignment; however, you should consider these and make use of planning documents described in TSGW, Ch 11. And you can create your own planning docs. Think about audience and create planning docs because they will help you think and write.

What Is a Comic Strip?



☞ “An open-ended dramatic narrative about a reoccurring set of characters, told in a series of drawings, often including dialogue in balloons and a narrative text, and published serially in newspapers”

☞ From *Comics as Culture*, by Thomas Inge, 1990

What Is a Comic Strip?



- ❧ Comic strips (or comics) are expressed in pictures and words--meaning is created by the interaction of text, pictures, and space
- ❧ Comic strips are also called funnies, although this later term can be considered derogatory
- ❧ Panel--Single drawing often enclosed in a rectangle or sq. frame. (Some strips also include unframed panels)
- ❧ Strip--series of panels
- ❧ Balloon (circle or oval)--enclosed white space that conveys dialogue
- ❧ Thought Balloon (looks like a cloud)--unspoken thoughts or musings
- ❧ Cartoon--single frame that conveys humor or satire