



Playing with Comics

Grade: 4/5

Overview

In addition to the articles and advertisement changes in print media over the years, the style and humor of the comics section in print media have undergone significant changes. Students will use their critical thinking skills to analyze the changes that have occurred in the comics sections of newspapers. Using primary source documents available on the [Historic Oregon Newspapers website](#), students will compare and contrast comics created in the early 1900s with comics created in the present day.

Oregon Common Core State Standards

Language Arts Standards:

- CCSS.ELA.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
- CCSS.ELA.SL.4.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Materials

- Historic Oregon Newspapers website
- Copies of comics (from 1900s)
- Copies of comics (present day)
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Comparison sheet (optional)
- Access to the Internet

Key Vocabulary

- Comic/comic strip

Lesson

- *Introduce topic:* Tell the students that they will be working with comic strips that were created during the early 1900s.
- *Brainstorm:* Create a bubble map anchor chart for students to refer throughout the lesson.
- Some discussion questions to consider:
 - Is there a difference between comics and comic strips?
 - What are some examples of comics?
 - What is your definition of comics?
 - What are some features of comics?
- *Introduce definition:* Write down the definition next to the bubble map. [Merriam-Webster](#) defines the word “comic strip” as “a series of cartoon drawings that tell a story or part of a story.”
 - You may want to take this time to go over some key vocabulary from the comic strips or text features of comic strips.
- *Activity:* Hand out copies of comics (more may be found on the Historic Oregon Newspapers website using the [advanced search option](#)). Students should browse the newspaper articles and write down their findings. A list of links to the comics are provided below.
 - Determine whether students will be working in pairs or groups; independent work is not recommended. Students may share an activity sheet.
 - Provide students with the compare and contrast activity sheet. One is provided below. Remind students that they will share their findings with the class.
- *Debrief:* Discuss what students have noticed when browsing through the comics.
- Some debrief questions to consider:
 - While browsing through the website, what did you find interesting?
 - What are some major differences between comics created then and now?
 - What are the similarities?
 - What did you like about the comics?
 - What didn't you like about the comics?
 - Which one do you like better, and why?

Extension Activity Ideas

Activities can be modified several different ways, depending on the grade level and focus of study. Listed are activity ideas that can be adapted and extended to and for any grade level.

- *Compare and Contrast:* Instead of providing students with comic strips from the present day, have students bring in their favorite comic books to compare and contrast. This activity is also a nice segue into newspaper text features, and to finding similarities and differences in text features from the 1900s to the present day.

- *Create Comic Book:* After analyzing and working with the comic strips from the 1900s, have students create their own comic strip or comic book. Work through the whole writing process from the brainstorm stage to the proofreading stage to the illustrating stage. Publish comic strips or comic book to the class library.

Old Doc Yak Comic Strips

Just like the ever popular *Garfield* and *Calvin and Hobbs*, the *Old Doc Yak* comics were a popular series created and printed daily in newspapers.

Please note: Most comics can be found on the Historic Oregon Newspapers website using the [advanced search option](#); enter the keyword “comic” and browse the results. These results may be narrowed by year, publication, and keyword.

["Old Doc Yak: Fancy Angler" from *Sunday Oregonian*, August 31, 1913](#)

["Old Doc Yak Has a New Trick" from *Sunday Oregonian*, December 07, 1913](#)

["Old Dock Yak: Mechanic" from *Sunday Oregonian*, May 10, 1914](#)

["Old Doc Yak: Toot! Toot!" from *Sunday Oregonian*, July 25, 1915](#)

["Old Dock Yak Gets Towed Out" from *Sunday Oregonian*, May 06, 1917](#)

Compare and Contrast Activity Sheet

Compare and Contrast Activity Sheet

<p>Driving Question:</p> <p>What are the differences in comic strips created in the 1900s and in the present day?</p> <p>What are the similarities in comic strips created in the 1900s and in the present day?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read comic strip out loud to partner. 2. Compare and contrast the two comic strips. 3. Find 3 differences each between the comics, and write down in the appropriate space. 4. Find 3 similarities between the comics, and write down in the appropriate space. 5. If necessary, use http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/search/pages/ to find more examples. 6. Don't forget to write down the URL if you searched for more comics. 7. Fill out reflection section at the end. 8. Prepare to share your findings with the class.
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	1900s (Write 3 examples)	Present Day (Write 3 examples)
1.		
2.		
3.		

What do both have in common?
(Write down 3 examples)

1.	
2.	
3.	

