Incoming 6th Graders

Please read two novels by Jeff Anderson: *Zack Delacruz, Me and My Big Mouth* and *Zack Delacruz, Just My Luck.* Both books must be annotated. (See page below on how to annotate a text)

Write and create a comic strip that includes between eight and ten scenes from an important event that took place during **the two-week period between the end of the first novel and the beginning of the second novel.**

Each scene must have appropriate settings, characters, captions and dialogue bubbles that relate to the events and characters in both books. While creating and developing the events for your cartoon, keep in mind that timing is important, as the events must not be events that happened in either novel, rather during the time period between the two novels. This will require careful planning prior to beginning your comic strip in order to ensure a smooth transition between the novels that connects one with the other.

Comic books and graphic novels use precise and succinct language to establish the tone, mood, characters, plot, and so forth. In writing your comic, make sure the dialogue is purposeful, and the words are meaningful. There is no space for fluff and filler language when writing a comic strip.

You also need to create a story that does not need to be explained in very many words. Once again, readers will be paying attention to the visuals and only seeing the text in order to get a full idea of what is going on in each scene. Writing a comic that involves a page that lacks in text or graphics will drive away the interest.

Below are some guidelines to help you create your comic strip:

Determining the Characters Involved:

The characters in your comic strip will most likely be the same ones that are in the two novels. The characters serve as a framework for writing your dialogue since most or usually all of the characters will have their own dialogue and actions to bring the story to life. You want your characters to be memorable which means that they are immediately recognizable. Remember that characters are likely to appear on the same page so make sure they all look distinct and different so they can be clearly identified.

Preparing the Plot and Storyline:

The next question that you need to figure out is what you want to do with these characters. You still need a problem or conflict that needs to be solved in order to get the readers hooked, but it must not expand into different directions. Comics are not very heavy in text since the drawings are there, so being minimalistic in creating the story is good. Keep the story basic and straightforward. One good trick for the plot is to know the desired ending and work your way backwards. This will help in making your dialogue and planning what each of the scenes will look like in the drawing.

Setting the Location and Timeframe

Coming up with a location allows you to build a world around it where you can plan you backdrops and other reoccurring visuals so your readers know the direction of your story. You should plan the timeframe so you can map out the different events and illustrate them accordingly. When writing a comic strip you need to know when your story begins and when it ends so you can find out the different times when key events occur.

Formatting the Comic Script

You need the creation of panels that will contain the dialogue. The name of the character speaking prefixes the dialogue so the reader knows who is saying what. This is necessary for characters that speak off-panel. Any letters that are found in a balloon instead of a panel represent thoughts. Sometimes you want a character to whisper, so you need to show that in the dialogue by using smaller or lighter letters. Your comic strip should have sound effects that are normally emphasized and integrated with the visuals. Don't forget to put any captions when needed.

Students may use the attached planning sheet to plan their comic strips:
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson195/comic-strip-planning.pdf

This online tool allows students to easily create and print comic strips. Students may also create their own.
http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/comic-creator-30021.html

How to Annotate a Text

Marking and highlighting a text is like having a conversation with a book – it allows you to ask questions, comment on meaning, and mark events and passages you want to revisit.

Below are some suggestions that will help with annotating.

- Use a pen, pencil, post-it notes, or a highlighter (although use it sparingly!).
- Summarize important ideas in your own words.
- Add examples from real life, other books, TV, movies, and so forth.
- Define words that are new to you.
- Mark passages that you find confusing with a ???
- Write questions that you might have for later discussion in class.
- Comment on the actions or development of characters.
- Comment on things that intrigue, impress, surprise, disturb, etc.
- *Note how the author uses language. A list of possible literary devices is attached*.
- *Note symbolism, motifs, themes*
- Draw a picture when a visual connection is appropriate
- Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs used in the passage.
- **Diction** (word choice): the denotative and connotative meanings of words
  •different words for the same thing often suggest different attitudes (e.g., happy vs. content)
  • denotative vs. connotative (e.g., dead vs. passed away)
- **Images**: Vivid appeals to understanding through the five senses
- **Details**: Facts that are included or those that are omitted
- **Language**: The overall use of language such as formal, clinical, informal, slang, syntactical structure
- **Sentence Structure**: How the author's use of sentence structure affects the reader

Suggested methods for marking a text:

* Use sticky notes if you cannot write in the book

* Color code your annotations by using different color post-its, highlighters, or pens.

* Use brackets if several lines seem important, just draw a line down the margin and underline/highlight only the key phrases.

* Place an asterisk (*) next to an important passage; use two if it is really important.

* Use the space in the margins to make comments, define words, ask questions, etc. (marginal notetaking)

*Underline/highlight: Caution! Do not underline or highlight too much! You want to concentrate on the important elements, not entire pages (use brackets for that).

*Use circles, boxes, triangles, squiggly lines, stars, etc. to mark important elements such as figurative language

Literary Term Definitions:

1. Alliteration – the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same consonant sound: e.g., "The twisting trout twinkled below."
2. Allusion – a reference to something outside the text such as a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing to make a connection for the reader: e.g., "He met his Waterloo."

3. Flashback – a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event.

4. Foreshadowing – the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action

5. Hyperbole – a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration; it may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g., "The shot heard 'round the world."
6. Idiom – an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g., to drive someone up the wall.
7. Imagery – the words or phrases a writer uses that appeal to the senses.

8. Irony – there are three types; -

   Verbal irony – when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form of verbal irony: e.g., "It is easy to stop smoking. I've done it many times."

   Situational irony -- when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic.

   Dramatic irony – when a character or speaker says or does something that has different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications: e.g., Anne Frank looks forward to growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be.
9. Metaphor – a comparison of two unlike things not using "like" or "as": e.g., "Time is money."

10. Mood – the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work.

11. Oxymoron – a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g., "sweet sorrow" or "cold fire."
12. Paradox – occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., "Much madness id divinest sense."
13. Personification – a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics: e.g., "The wind cried in the dark."
14. Rhetoric – the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking.
15. Simile – a comparison of two different things or ideas using words such as "like" or "as": e.g., "The warrior fought like a lion."
16. Suspense – a quality that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events.
17. Symbol – any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., a tortoise represents slow but steady progress.
18. Theme – the central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g., pride often precedes a fall.
19. Tone – the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject, character, or audience; it is conveyed through the author's choice of words (diction) and details. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc.
20. Understatement (meiosis, litotes) – the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., "I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year."