

UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
Facultad de Humanidades
y Ciencias de la Educación
Departamento de Filología Inglesa



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN

**ENGAGING WITH CROSS-CURRICULAR
ISSUES THROUGH THE POPULAR
CULTURE OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING
COUNTRIES: A PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL
AND STUDY ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION AT
AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SCHOOL**

Tesis doctoral

José María Santoro Moreno

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Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación



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SCHOOL**

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Table of Contents

Abstract	25
Resumen	27
1. Introduction	24
2. Popular culture.....	34
2.1 The multifaceted concept of popular culture.....	37
2.2 Manifestations of popular culture	44
2.2.1 Publicity and promotion.....	45
2.2.2 Comics	52
2.2.3 Popular literature	71
2.2.4 Films	82
2.2.5 Television.....	98
2.2.6 Music	113
2.2.7 The Internet as a means of advertising films and series	120
2.2.8 Graffiti and body art	125
3. Teaching popular culture.....	147
3.1 Teaching popular culture through comics.....	149
3.1.1 Introduction	149
3.1.2 Language and key pedagogical aspects	150
3.1.3 Topics.....	159
3.1.4 Characters.....	179
3.1.5 Reading images	183
3.2 Teaching popular culture through TV series	185
3.2.1 Use of language	185
3.2.2 Key pedagogical aspects	186
3.2.3 Topics.....	188
3.2.4 Characters.....	190

3.3	Teaching popular culture through popular literature	192
3.3.1	Benefits of popular literature.....	192
3.3.2	Linguistic issues	194
4.	Teaching cross-curricular issues and values through popular culture	199
4.1	Cross-curricular issues and values	201
4.2	Didactic proposal	205
4.2.1	Unit 1: comics to teach cross-curricular issues	205
4.2.1.1	Topic 1. Moral and civic education in digital culture: technology dependency or healthy use of technology?.....	210
4.2.1.2	Topic 2.Moral and civic education in politics: being in a predicament	221
4.2.1.3	Section 3. Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?.....	233
4.2.1.4	Section 4. Health education: adolescence, a crucial period to avoid developing early addictions?.....	252
4.2.1.5	Section 5. Comic workshop: social issues.....	265
4.2.2	Unit 2: using TV series and popular literature to teach cross-curricular issues.....	270
4.2.2.1	Topic 1. Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?	273
4.2.2.2	Topic 2. Coeducation: oppression, abuse, and violence in popular literature; and deviant behavior in TV series.....	287
4.2.2.3	Topic 3. Health education at the intersection with coeducation: drugs and addictions in TV series and popular literature.....	303
4.2.2.4	Section 4. Moral and civic education: ethics–based leadership in TV series.....	324
4.2.2.5	Section 5. Breaking news workshop: social issues.....	333
5.	Popular culture manifestations at the intersection between popular culture of English-speaking countries and cross-curricular issues.....	337
5.1	Introduction	339

5.2	Goals and research questions.....	339
5.3	Contextualization.....	340
5.4	Participants' profile.....	340
5.5	Research tools.....	343
5.6	Procedure.....	346
5.7	Data analysis.....	346
5.8	Results.....	347
5.8.1	Surveys.....	347
5.8.2	Observation forms.....	358
5.9	Discussion.....	361
6.	Conclusion: limitations and further lines of research.....	365
7.	Spanish sections.....	369
7.1	Título.....	370
7.2	Índice.....	370
7.3	Resumen.....	371
7.4	Introducción.....	372
7.5	Conclusión.....	374
	References.....	377
	Appendices.....	415

Figures

Figure 1. Pink bottles of Nivea	47
Figure 2. Blue package of Nivea	47
Figure 3. A floating woman	49
Figure 4. Whiskey on the rock.....	49
Figure 5. <i>American Idol</i>	49
Figure 6. <i>Top Chef</i>	49
Figure 7. <i>Mad Men</i>	49
Figure 8. <i>Modern Family</i>	49
Figure 9. Gap Jeans in the commercial by Madonna and Missy Elliot	50
Figure 10. Cognac in the video for <i>Pass the Courvoisier</i> by Busta Rhymes	50
Figure 11. Diet Coke in the video for <i>Telephone</i> by Lady Gaga.....	50
Figure 12. Mobile Phone in the video for <i>Telephone</i> by Lady Gaga.....	50
Figure 13. NHS stop smoking campaign	51
Figure 14. Never drink drive	51
Figure 15. Panels without text	53
Figure 16. Panels and text	53
Figure 17. Panels are as important as text.....	54
Figure 18. Unframed panels	56
Figure 19. <i>Migrant Mother</i> by Dorothea Lange	57
Figure 20. <i>Mount Williamson</i> by Ansel Adams	57
Figure 21. Prototypical American superhero features	58
Figure 22. Honeybunch.....	59
Figure 23. The lemonade fling	61
Figure 24. Brutopia	62
Figure 25. Unsteadystand.....	63
Figure 26. Getting that healthy, wealthy feeling	64

Figure 27. Midnighter and Apollo	66
Figure 28. Midnighter and Apollo with their adoptive child	66
Figure 29. Terry Berg. Green Lantern: something old, something new	67
Figure 30. Arrow and drugs	68
Figure 31. She-Hulk and gender issues.....	69
Figure 32. Batwoman and Maggie Sawyer	70
Figure 33. The best-selling books of all time	72
Figure 34. Children’s fiction	73
Figure 35. Fantasy.....	75
Figure 36. Mystery.....	76
Figure 37. Historical fiction	77
Figure 38. Genres in popular literature	79
Figure 39. <i>Dead until dark</i>	81
Figure 40. <i>Twilight</i>	81
Figure 41. <i>Interview with the vampire</i>	81
Figure 42. <i>Shadowhunters</i>	81
Figure 43. <i>Lethal weapon</i>	84
Figure 44. <i>Kill Bill</i>	84
Figure 45. <i>A good day to die hard</i>	84
Figure 46. <i>Tomb raider</i>	85
Figure 47. <i>The mummy</i>	85
Figure 48. <i>Indiana Jones and the kingdom of the crystal skull</i>	85
Figure 49. <i>Zoolander</i>	85
Figure 50. <i>Wedding crashers</i>	85
Figure 51. <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i>	86
Figure 52. <i>Philadelphia</i>	87
Figure 53. <i>Crash</i>	87

Figure 54. <i>The Graduate</i>	87
Figure 55. <i>Easy rider</i>	87
Figure 56. <i>All the president's men</i>	88
Figure 57. <i>Executive action</i>	88
Figure 58. <i>Lawrence of Arabia</i>	88
Figure 59. <i>Schindler's list</i>	88
Figure 60. <i>Vampire in Brooklyn</i>	89
Figure 61. <i>The Rocky horror picture show</i>	89
Figure 62. <i>The lost boys</i>	89
Figure 63. <i>Interview with the vampire</i>	89
Figure 64. <i>Poltergeist</i>	90
Figure 65. <i>The Amityville horror</i>	90
Figure 66. <i>House</i>	90
Figure 67. <i>The night of the living dead</i>	90
Figure 68. <i>Texas chainsaw massacre</i>	90
Figure 69. <i>Dirty dancing</i>	91
Figure 70. <i>Saturday night fever</i>	91
Figure 71. <i>Purple rain</i>	91
Figure 72. <i>Flashdance</i>	91
Figure 73. <i>Star Trek: Inside the most influential science-fiction series ever</i>	92
Figure 74. <i>Born on the fourth of July</i>	93
Figure 75. <i>The pianist</i>	93
Figure 76. <i>The last of the Mohicans</i>	93
Figure 77. <i>The return of the bad men</i>	93
Figure 78. <i>I shot Jesse James</i>	93
Figure 79. <i>Slumdog Millionaire</i> poster	95
Figure 80. <i>Slumdog Millionaire</i> dance scene	95

Figure 81. Dance scene	96
Figure 82. Jewellery and adornments	96
Figure 83. Traditional costumes with vivid colours	96
Figure 84. <i>Who am I to you?</i>	97
Figure 85. <i>Brave of heart wins the bride</i>	97
Figure 86. <i>Foreign land</i>	97
Figure 87. <i>Ramayan</i>	98
Figure 88. <i>Mahabharat</i>	98
Figure 89. <i>Dishoom</i>	98
Figure 90. Suspended animation.....	104
Figure 91. Apparent death.....	104
Figure 92. <i>Murder house</i>	105
Figure 93. <i>Asylum</i>	105
Figure 94. <i>Coven</i>	105
Figure 95. Myth of Frankenstein	106
Figure 96. The original cast returns 25 years later	108
Figure 97. <i>I am Jazz</i>	110
Figure 98. <i>Modern family</i>	110
Figure 99. <i>The real O’Neals</i>	110
Figure 100. <i>Cheaters</i>	111
Figure 101. <i>Candid camera</i>	111
Figure 102. <i>Big brother</i>	111
Figure 103. <i>The Osbournes</i>	112
Figure 104. <i>Keeping up with the Kardashians</i>	112
Figure 105. <i>Mariah’s world</i>	112
Figure 106. <i>Shoot the dog</i> by George Michael.....	119
Figure 107. <i>American life</i> by Madonna	119

Figure 108. <i>True Blood</i>	122
Figure 109. <i>The Blair witch project</i>	124
Figure 110. <i>Paranormal activity</i>	124
Figure 111. <i>Rec</i>	124
Figure 112. <i>Quarantine</i>	124
Figure 113. <i>Cloverfield</i>	124
Figure 114. <i>The last exorcism</i>	124
Figure 115. <i>Apollo 18</i>	125
Figure 116. <i>Devil's pass</i>	125
Figure 117. <i>The fourth kind</i>	125
Figure 118. Political graffiti	127
Figure 119. Gang graffiti.....	127
Figure 120. Hip-hop or New York style graffiti.....	128
Figure 121. Tag.....	128
Figure 122. Piece or piecing	128
Figure 123. Existential graffiti.....	129
Figure 124. Traditional style	131
Figure 125. Realistic style	131
Figure 126. Watercolour style	131
Figure 127. Tribal style	132
Figure 128. New school style	132
Figure 129. Neo traditional style	132
Figure 130. Japanese style.....	133
Figure 131. Blackwork style.....	133
Figure 132. <i>Tables for ladies</i> by Edward Hopper.....	138
Figure 133. Greek papyrus	138
Figure 134. Oyster dish	138

Figure 135. <i>Broken eggs</i> by Jean-Baptiste Greuzen	138
Figure 136. <i>Cider making</i> by William Sidney Mount	138
Figure 137. Basking Robins	139
Figure 138. Toblerone	139
Figure 139. Toblerone logotype	139
Figure 140. Krackel	139
Figure 141. Orbit	139
Figure 142. Wrigley's eclipse.....	139
Figure 143. Burger King	140
Figure 144. Coca-Cola	140
Figure 145. No kid hungry	140
Figure 146. <i>Batman</i>	150
Figure 147. Carl series	151
Figure 148. Electron.....	151
Figure 149. <i>Ezra</i>	153
Figure 150. <i>Far Side</i>	154
Figure 151. <i>Bizarro</i>	154
Figure 152. Batman faces aliens	155
Figure 153. Batman and the supernatural.....	155
Figure 154. Language barrier in <i>Star Trek</i>	157
Figure 155. Societal rules in <i>Star Trek</i>	158
Figure 156. <i>Yet another fantasy gamer comic</i>	159
Figure 157. Medical comics	160
Figure 158. Anatomy comic strips.....	160
Figure 159. <i>Maus</i>	161
Figure 160. <i>Yossel</i>	162
Figure 161. <i>Treasure island</i>	163

Figure 162. <i>Moby Dick</i>	165
Figure 163. <i>Great expectations</i>	165
Figure 164. <i>G.I. Joe</i>	167
Figure 165. <i>Calvin and Hobbes</i>	167
Figure 166. <i>Calvin and Hobbes</i>	167
Figure 167. <i>The last of the Mohicans</i>	168
Figure 168. <i>For better or for worse</i>	169
Figure 169. <i>Spy versus spy</i>	170
Figure 170. Geographic stereotypes	170
Figure 171. <i>Conan and the people of the black circle</i>	171
Figure 172. <i>Nam</i>	172
Figure 173. Price guides for comics	173
Figure 174. <i>Captain America</i>	174
Figure 175. Environmental issues in <i>Captain Planet</i>	175
Figure 176. Diversity in <i>Captain Planet</i>	176
Figure 177. <i>Star Trek</i> and science	179
Figure 178. <i>Star Trek</i> and technology.....	179
Figure 179. Female superheroes	180
Figure 180. Male superheroes	180
Figure 181. The enemy	181
Figure 182. <i>Black Panther</i>	182
Figure 183. Heroes.....	183
Figure 184. Villians	183
Figure 185. <i>Friends</i>	186
Figure 186. <i>Frasier</i>	186
Figure 187. <i>Coupling</i>	186
Figure 188. <i>Merlin</i>	188

Figure 189. <i>Law and order</i>	189
Figure 190. <i>The Simpsons</i>	190
Figure 191. Dana Scully.....	191
Figure 192. <i>Touch</i>	191
Figure 193. Gender (session 2, coeducation)	341
Figure 194. Gender (session 1, moral and civic education)	341
Figure 195. Age (session 1, moral and civic education)	341
Figure 196. Age (session2, coeducation)	342
Figure 197. Education (session 1, moral and civic education).....	342
Figure 198. Education (session 2, coeducation)	342
Figure 199. Languages spoken (session 1, moral and civic education).....	343
Figure 200. Languages spoken (session 2, coeducation)	343
Figure 201. Quantitative data of questionnaire 1. Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?.....	348
Figure 202. Quantitative data of questionnaire 2. Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?.....	349
Figure 203. Questionnaire 1, cross-curricular issues: moral and civic education	350
Figure 204. Questionnaire 1, types of manifestations: TV series, and popular literature	351
Figure 205. Questionnaire 1, materials design	352
Figure 206. Questionnaire 2, cross-curricular issues: coeducation	355
Figure 207. Questionnaire 2, type of manifestation: comics.....	356
Figure 208. Questionnaire 2, materials design	357

We all have our guilty pleasures –that ‘beach book’ we secretly read in the dead of winter, the reality television show that we don’t want anyone to know we watch, the pop song whose lyrics we would never admit we know by heart– but why do we feel guilty?

(KATHERINE LARSEN 2012: 4)

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Abstract

This Doctoral dissertation focuses on the multifaceted concept of popular culture, the various manifestations of popular culture in the English-speaking world, teaching values and cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture in the English language, exploring a wide range of techniques to teach popular culture through comics, TV series, and popular literature. In this project, materials that draw on popular culture, e.g. comics, advertising, music, cinema, television series, food, popular literature, graffiti, or body art, have been designed. The core of this dissertation is an extensive purpose-built pedagogical proposal for Official Language Schools, which addresses cross-curricular issues against the backdrop of the popular culture of English-speaking countries. This is complemented by a study on whether the partial implementation of this proposal helps students develop a different perception of social issues.

Even though there have been many changes and much progress in the teaching of foreign languages in Spain over the last 40 years, it is considered that teaching values and cross-curricular issues through different manifestations of popular culture can offer an engaging approach in the field of foreign language teaching at Official Language Schools, since most of our students are familiar with popular culture manifestations. Therefore, lessons based on materials inspired by manifestations of popular culture have the potential to be more appealing, attractive and interesting for students.

This PhD includes an original didactic proposal to teach cross-curricular issues to address social aspects through popular culture manifestations of English-speaking countries. For this purpose, two didactic units based on three popular culture manifestations, comics, TV series, and popular literature, were designed.

At a later stage, a study was conducted. This came from a 10-session didactic proposal where two sessions were selected and implemented with my C1 students. Two purpose-built questionnaires were used to gauge students' opinion about the material implemented in class. Similarly, a teacher observation form has been used during the sessions to keep a record of the sessions.

Thus, this PhD dissertation analyses the potential of cross-curricular issues to address key social aspects through popular culture manifestations of English-speaking countries.

Keywords

Manifestations of popular culture, cross-curricular issues, English-speaking countries, and social issues.

Resumen

Esta Tesis Doctoral se centra en el concepto heterogéneo de la cultura popular, sus diversas manifestaciones en el mundo de habla inglesa, y la enseñanza de valores y temas transversales a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular en lengua inglesa, explorando una amplia gama de técnicas para enseñar cultura popular a través de comics, series de televisión y literatura popular. En este proyecto se han diseñado materiales que versan sobre la cultura popular como por ejemplo los comics, la publicidad, la música, el cine, las series de televisión, la comida, la literatura popular, el grafiti, o el arte corporal. La esencia de esta Tesis Doctoral es una propuesta didáctica diseñada específicamente para las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas que aborda los temas transversales y cuyo telón de fondo es la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa. Esto se complementa con un estudio sobre si la implementación parcial de esta propuesta ayuda a que el alumnado desarrolle una percepción diferente de distintos aspectos socioculturales.

Aunque ha habido muchos cambios y se ha progresado en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en España en los últimos 40 años, considero que enseñar valores y temas transversales a través de diferentes manifestaciones de la cultura popular ofrece un enfoque motivador en el campo de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas, ya que gran parte de nuestro alumnado está familiarizado con las manifestaciones de la cultura popular. Por consiguiente, las lecciones basadas en materiales inspirados por las manifestaciones de la cultura popular tienen el potencial de ser más atractivas, y de especial interés para el alumnado.

Esta Tesis contiene una propuesta didáctica original que auna los temas transversales y distintos aspectos socioculturales a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa. Con este fin, se han diseñado dos unidades didácticas basadas en tres manifestaciones de la cultura popular, comics, series de televisión y literatura popular.

En una etapa posterior, se presenta un estudio. De la propuesta didáctica de diez sesiones, se seleccionaron e implementaron dos con mi alumnado de C1. Dos cuestionarios elaborados específicamente para el estudio se utilizaron para medir la opinión del alumnado sobre el material implementado en clase. De manera similar, una hoja de observación se utilizó durante las sesiones para llevar un registro de las mismas.

Por consiguiente, esta Tesis analiza el potencial de los temas transversales para abordar aspectos socioculturales clave a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa.

Palabras clave

Manifestaciones de la cultura popular, temas transversales, países de habla inglesa, y aspectos socioculturales.

1. Introduction

The term popular culture is comprehensive. The denotations associated to the word “popular” tends to be regarded with approval or affection as it relates to manifestations suited to or intended for the general masses.

The notion of culture comprises different elements that encapsulate racial, ethnic, religious, or linguistic diversity. Culture is also an intertwined system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and norms that give meaning and significance to both individual and collective identity. Basically, it is the “glue” that connects people, as it brings them together; it is an entity we identify with, and consequently, something we belong to. The word culture does not only involve a lifestyle but a context where languages play an all-important role. Culture is also the context within we behave, think, live, feel and relate to one another. Culture refers to concepts, ideas, customs, skills, or the arts by means of which groups of people identify themselves.

Teaching a foreign language entails going beyond the language itself to incorporate key cultural elements of the country/ies where the language is spoken. In this sense, English as the lingua franca or international language nowadays has a special status. Even though the use of English in international contexts may not be related to English-speaking countries, people need a point of reference when speaking about themselves and their own environment and, for this reason, the study of the cultures of English-speaking countries keeps being relevant in foreign language teaching.

Since both language and culture are bound together, I firmly believe that there needs to be a balance between the study of the target language and the analysis of the cultures where this language is spoken.

On the one hand, popular culture comprises everyday objects, actions and events that affect how people believe and behave. Sometimes individuals are not aware that messages are sent to tell them what is appropriate or inappropriate, in fashion or old-fashioned, or polite or impolite. On the other hand, television programmes, films, songs, commercials, cartoons, comics, and television series, among others, have an influential role on people and the way they see life and, consequently, help shape people’s identity and behaviour.

This Doctoral Dissertation focuses on teaching values and cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture in the English-speaking world. The core of this dissertation is an extensive pedagogical purpose-built proposal for Official Language Schools, which addresses cross-curricular issues against the backdrop of the popular culture of English-speaking countries. This is complemented by a study on whether the partial implementation of this proposal helps students develop a different perception of social issues.

Following the *Common European Framework of Reference for languages* (Council of Europe 2001) and its *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), this pedagogical proposal incorporates all the language activities: listening, reading, speaking, interaction, writing and mediation. Popular culture is everywhere: on TV, on the radio, or in books. Since popular culture is an influential phenomenon, the use of its manifestations (comics, advertising, music, television series, cinema or popular literature) to design pedagogical materials may give way to engaging and insightful tasks for students. I strongly believe that the creation of materials based on these

premises is likely to be attractive to youngsters because young people tend to spend a considerable part of their time listening to music or watching films or series. Hence, the objectives of this dissertation are to:

- a) gauge the effectiveness of popular culture manifestations to learn about cross-curricular issues.
- b) know whether the purpose-built materials are well designed.
- c) ascertain whether these materials are motivating and engaging.
- d) analyse to what extent students' cultural knowledge of the popular culture of English-speaking countries is enhanced by these materials.
- e) find out whether students show a different perception of social issues after the pedagogical intervention.

This Thesis is divided into 6 chapters. After Chapter 1, this introduction, Chapter 2 explores the multifaceted concept of popular culture and some of its most relevant manifestations: publicity and promotion, comics, popular literature, films, television, music, the Internet as a means of advertising films and series, graffiti, body art, and food. Chapter 3 is devoted to the teaching of popular culture through comics, TV series, and popular literature, focusing on language, topics, characters, and pedagogical aspects.

Chapter 4, defines cross-curricular issues, focuses on the various laws that highlight the importance of teaching cross-curricular issues in the Spanish educational context, and offers a didactic proposal based on cultural manifestations to analyse cross-curricular issues in the light of values in education. Chapter 5 presents a study on the partial implementation of this pedagogical proposal at an Official Language School. It gives information about student's profile, goals and research questions, research tools, the procedure to collect data, and their analysis. The pedagogical implications of this didactic proposal, its limitations, and further lines of research are gathered in the conclusion, Chapter 6. Chapter 7 contains the title of this PhD, the table of contents, a meaningful summary, the introduction, and the conclusion in Spanish.

2. Popular culture

Popular culture has always been considered a product or something manufactured. Nonetheless, it should not be underestimated due to its ability to influence people, and how people make use of it to express their identity. Therefore, section 2 deals with two main aspects: the concept of popular culture and how it is manifested in different fields such as publicity and promotion, comics, popular literature, television series and films, reality shows, music, the Internet, graffiti and body art, and food.

2.1 The multifaceted concept of popular culture

As Goleman (2006: 84) puts it below, it is by means of shared experiences that people may be aware of the world around them and the society in which they live. Accordingly, culture might become a powerful tool for students; an instrument which might give them access to other people's experiences, lifestyles as well as their thoughts. Thus, the different manifestations of popular culture might offer people opportunities to enhance their social intelligence through critical analysis:

Popular culture in the form of movies, shows, commercials and TV programs are rich with individual experiences and social interactions depicting emotions, personal needs, ambitions, obstacles, conflicts, feelings, beliefs, values and morals. I argue that engaging students in a critical analysis of these texts enhances their social intelligence (Goleman 2006: 84).

Popular culture "has the capacity to intervene in the most critical civic issues and to shape public opinion" (Dolby 2003: 8). Sfeir (2014: 16) supports Dolby's idea by arguing that "popular culture is a pedagogical site that should not be ignored. Everyday acts contribute to the transformation of the public sphere, the configuration of power, identity and citizenship." According to her, it is a way of expanding people's thinking about others as it provides people with a different perspective on issues such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and class.

The term popular culture is also known as pop culture (depending on the author). The *Dictionary.com* (2015) defines it as a set of "cultural activities or commercial products reflecting, suited to, or aimed at the tastes of the general masses of people" (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/popular+culture>). People are likely to use abbreviations when, for example, sending typed mobile phone messages. Instead of typing the whole word "you," "u" is preferred, "r" for "are," "b" for "be," symbols such as "@" for "at," "\$" for "money," or the figures rather than typing the letters of the number. As a result, the speed at which the communication is processed is increased; and consequently, the term popular culture is also abbreviated to pop culture (Rojek 2001: 8). Even before the invention of text messaging, the controversial singer Prince was already a pioneer in the use of these abbreviations in his lyrics. This dates back to 1981 when his album *Controversy* was released.

Following this line, Gitlin (2002: 98-99) did some research on the abbreviation of communication by comparing sentences from top ten best-selling novels which had been published from 1936 to 2001. The research revealed that the number of words per

sentence had decreased by 43% and that of punctuation marks had declined by 32%. As a result, it was stated that the sentences in bestsellers are now briefer, simpler and seem to be conceived to be part of screenplays due to their closeness to oral communication rather than to novels themselves.

As Delaney (2007: 6) upholds, popular culture “may be defined as the products and forms of expression and identity that are frequently encountered or widely accepted, commonly liked or approved, and characteristic of a particular society at a given time.” Similarly, Browne considers that “popular culture consists of the aspects of attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, customs, and tastes that define the people of any society. Popular culture is, in the historic use of the term, *the* culture of the people” (Browne 2004: 25).

Up to now, three definitions of popular culture have been given where three different, but interrelated aspects are highlighted: product or activity, something commonly agreed on and identity. Popular culture is offered and specifically addressed to a wide group of consumers in the form of products or activities. These products or activities are widely accepted by a society, a community, or a group of people so that their own identity may be asserted. Thus, something is considered as popular culture as long as the three aforesaid aspects are fulfilled.

In relation to the term popular culture, Kid (2007: 71) distinguishes three main meanings within the word popular. First, he supports Browne’s definition (2004) that popular culture is the culture of the people, because the word popular means the people; accordingly, popular culture is the culture of the people. Kid (2007: 71) also considers that symbols of national identity deserve to be included within the definition of popular culture. Instances of these symbols are the national flag, popular songs, anthems, manners, and regional dances as well as costumes. Second, popular also suggests the idea of fame or widespread enjoyment. Third, popular culture means common culture too (Kid 2007: 71).

Hence, the term popular culture is comprehensive. The idea of “popular” tends to be “regarded with approval or affection by people in general” and relates to manifestations, such as popular music, “suited to or intended for the general masses” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/popular>).

The notion of “culture” comprises different elements that encapsulate racial, ethnic, religious, or linguistic diversity (Deanna 2007: 1-3). Culture is also an “intertwined system of values and attitudes, beliefs, and norms that give meaning and significance to both individual and collective identity” (Adler 1977: 212). Basically, it is the “glue” that connects people, as it brings them together; it is something we identify with, and consequently, something we belong to.

Culture was defined by Kohzadi and Azizmohammadi (2011: 2823) as “the development [...] of a whole society,” including:

[...] all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar,

nineteenth-century Gothic churches, and the music of Elgar (Eliot 1948: 31, cited in Kohzadi and Azizmohammadi 2011: 2823).

Contrary to this early vision of culture, Williams pointed out that Eliot's vision did not encompass its whole meaning, which is why it was suggested that a wider definition of culture should also include activities from both middle and lower classes such as: "steelmaking, touring in motor-cars, mixed farming, the Stock Exchange, coalmining and London transport" (Williams 1958: 234, cited in Chinitz and Daniel 2015: 70), because the term culture defines the nation of a country, not only what its inhabitants do, but what they think and what they devote their lives to.

The word culture does not only involve a lifestyle but a context where languages play an all-important role. Culture is also the context within we behave, think, live, and relate to one another; and last but not least culture refers to concepts, ideas, customs, skills, or the arts by means of which groups of people identify themselves (Brown 1994b: 163-164).

Likewise, Loveday (1982: 34) deems that the term culture "involves the implicit norms and conventions of a society, its methods or 'going about doing things,' its historically transmitted but also adaptive and creative ethos, its symbols and its organisation of experience." Therefore, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (1987: 703), culture is viewed as "the civilization, customs, artistic achievements, etc. of a people especially at a certain stage of its development."

In addition, Bueno González (1995: 362) distinguishes two meanings of culture, formal and deep. The former has to do with the geography, history as well as literature of a given country and its people, whilst the latter deals with customs, manners, and lifestyles, among others.

For other scholars there are four main senses of culture: the aesthetic sense, which comprises the media, cinema, literature, and music; the sociological sense, which has to do with home life, customs, and institutions; the semantic sense, or system of concepts integrated in the language; and the sociolinguistic sense, dealing with social skills, norms of politeness, intonations patterns, and paralinguistic skills, among others (Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi 1990: 3-4).

As a matter of fact, teaching a foreign language entails going beyond the language itself to incorporate key cultural elements of the country where the language is spoken. In this sense, English has a special status. It is the lingua franca or international language nowadays, therefore, "when we communicate internationally, we communicate interculturally" (Vez 1995: 33). Even though the use of English in international contexts may not be related to English speaking countries, people need a point of reference when speaking about themselves and their own environment and, for this reason, the study of the cultures of English-speaking countries keeps being relevant in foreign language teaching.

Since both language and culture are bound together, I firmly believe that there needs to be a balance between the study of the target language and the analysis of the cultures where this language is spoken. This is known as cultural literacy, which Hirsch considers as:

the network or information that all competent readers possess. It is the background information, stored in their minds, that enables them to take up a newspaper and read it with an adequate level of comprehension, getting the point, grasping the implications, relating what they read to the unstated context which alone gives meaning to what they read (Hirsch 1988: 2).

If readers find the expression “the material girl or the blond ambition” in a text, they know it refers to Madonna (Brown 2003: 2-10); “the purple boy/one” refers to Prince (<http://www.fox9.com/news/249909544-story>), “the Still The One hit maker” refers to Shania Twain (<http://rare.us/rare-country/heres-your-first-look-at-shania-twains-role-on-the-voice/>), or the king of rock ‘n’ roll refers to Elvis Presley (Bertrand 2000: 24). As stated above, the knowledge of these cultural aspects makes the reading more comprehensive.

Popular culture also comprises everyday objects, actions and events that influence people to believe and behave in certain ways. Sometimes we are not aware that messages are sent to tell us what is good or bad, suitable, or unsuitable, fashionable, or old-fashioned, polite or impolite. On the other hand, television programmes, films, songs, commercials, cartoons, comics, and television series, among others, influence people and the way they see life and, consequently, help shape people’s identity and behaviour. This is the reason why this phenomenon is called mediated popular culture. It is paramount to explore how messages are spread through popular culture. Indeed, it is thought that people are persuaded into what to believe and how to behave. Thus, people lives are deeply affected by popular culture (http://www.sagepub.in/upm-data/27801_Chapter1.pdf).

Interestingly, the notion of popular culture itself has raised some controversy. On the one hand, “popular culture has often been considered superficial and without significance in the study of culture” (Fedorak 2009: 2). On the other hand, Kidd (2007: 71) argues that popular culture is something necessary in all societies, because “it establishes norms, social boundaries, rituals, and innovations, while also paving the way for social change.”

As a matter of fact, popular culture is so integrated in our daily lives that sometimes it is not so easy to be aware of its role and influence. It has to do with a wide array of actions from the specific words or expressions that are chosen at the time of expressing ourselves, through the pieces of clothes we wear and match either to be fashionable or to indicate our belonging to a particular social group, to doing simple things such as eating or drinking something just because it is trendy. An example of this is the wearing of the purse around an elbow like Victoria Beckham in the case of women, causing a great number of women to suffer from shoulder problems, inflamed

tendons as well as torn muscles (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2336566/Why-holding-handbag-like-Victoria-Beckham-leave-VERY-painful-injuries.html>); or copying Justin Bieber's latest hairstyle in the case of men; feeding upon macrobiotic food, which is an eating habit based on grains and vegetables that has spread among celebrities all over the world due to its supposedly healthy benefits (<http://www.kushiinstitute.org/what-is-macrobiotics/>); or consuming green drinks, which is the latest craze and has to do with detoxication (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/11152457/Green-juice-this-years-most-fashionable-smoothie.html>) respectively (for more information on this issue see section 2.2.1. These tendencies that originate in the behaviour or attire of different celebrities are spread through the media so that people to include them in their lives as part of their daily routines. In this sense Fedorak (2009: 6) claims that the fact that something works or not in the field of popular culture (television, music, sports, fashion, and films) depends on youngsters. It is youngsters who have the last word in this matter, which is why popular culture is usually regarded as the voice of the people. Needless to say, some elements that were trendy in previous decades, such as clothing styles or music, reappear later for a new generation to acquire, buy and use as if they were completely new, modern and updated items.

As for clothing styles, not only are vintage clothes fashionable nowadays, but furniture for houses is inspired by this tendency too. Denim clothes, pantsuits, tracksuits, leopard print, sneakers, (denim) overalls, off-the-shoulder dresses, as well as slip dresses are instances of the 90s tendencies that seem to have made a comeback nowadays (<http://www.bustle.com/articles/135102-9-crazy-90s-trends-that-came-back-big-time-in-2015-photos>).

These are not isolated examples, as it also happens in the film industry. It may come as a surprise that franchises such as those of *Star Trek* (1979) (Canavan 2016: 319), *Star Wars* (1977) (Fleming and Knee 2020: 205), *Indiana Jones* (1981) (Jones-Matrona 2020: 87-88), *Alien* (1979) (Santiago Ruiz 2018: 75), or *Terminator* (1984) (Dolan 2020: 2) are coming back in the form of remakes, reboots, spin offs, or sequels. Apart from making money, this may be understood as a manoeuvre on the part of the industry to catch the attention of the new generations by refreshing the franchises every once in a while. Undoubtedly, if the former product was successful and made profits, the revised version will also be good, financially speaking. If something worked in the past, it is quite probable that it will also work nowadays, as long as slight changes are made in order to appeal to the new audiences (Braudy 1998: 327-329, and Acierno 2018: 82).

This idea of going backwards in order to revisit an all-time-classic by twisting the original concept was carried out by Ridley Scott in *Prometheus* (2012) and its sequel *Alien: Covenant* (2017) (Santiago Ruiz 2018: 75); or by Denis Villeneuve in *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) (Wegner 2020: 135).

As a matter of fact, television series have also followed this pattern. Even though they were cancelled many years ago, new seasons have been produced. They are not usually just remakes as they normally continue the plot on from where they previously stopped. Instances of these are: *The X-Files* (1993), which was cancelled after nine seasons, but in January 2016, six new episodes were aired and due to its success an eleventh season was ordered (Levy and Mendlesohn 2019: 310); *Dallas* (1978), whose fourteenth season ended its run in 2014 (Loock 2018: 305); *Heroes* (2006), whose fifth season was aired in 2015 (Achouche 2017: 62); *Twin Peaks* (1990), whose third season was scheduled to be aired in 2017 (Loock 2018: 300-301).

Hence, popular culture permeates every aspect of our lives:

Pop culture involves the aspects of social life most actively involved in by the public. As the 'culture of the people', popular culture is determined by the interactions between people in their everyday activities: styles of dress, the use of slang, greeting rituals and the foods that people eat are all examples of popular culture. Popular culture is also informed by the mass media (Delaney 2007: 1).

As stated above, the study of popular culture implies a study of the media because of the power of its images and symbols (Cervantes and Velázquez-Zvierkova 2010: 5). We are greatly influenced by television commercials and political advertisements, which are wisely devised to exert influence on all of us. However, it may not be so clear that television programmes have a similar function. For instance, just because somebody wears their hair in a certain style that they like it does not necessarily have additional connotations.

As stated above, popular culture is around us, in every little thing we do. What is more, through current entertainment programmes audiences can be manipulated without being aware of it. Thus, Fedorak (2009: 23) suggests that media might be an agent of change where the values, interests and concerns of people are reflected.

By contrast, it may come as a surprise that the teaching of popular culture may have tremendous benefits to students. Some of these benefits have to do with expanding their way of thinking about others, finding alternative narratives in students own lives, building culturally responsive awareness, building consumer awareness, and scaffolding social intelligence (Sfeir 2014: 15-25) (see next section).

The notion of popular culture tends to be contrasted with the concept of high culture (<http://study.com/academy/lesson/cultural-diversity-ethnocentrism-cultural-relativism-cultural-subsets.html>). Some subcultures are accessible to anyone who wishes to join them (popular culture), whilst others are only accessible to some members of society (high culture). The so-called high culture represents a subculture belonging to the elite in a particular society; for example, people who collect artwork from museums, those who go to the theatre to enjoy a ballet show, and the like, are all regarded as cultured or educated people. As these sorts of entertainments do not appeal to everyone, or simply cannot be afforded by everybody, the dominant subculture is the

so-called popular culture, as it is the one that is shared by the largest amount of people due to its ease of access. Let us extrapolate this to the field of food, music and television. The opera, the renaissance art, expensive restaurants where caviar is served, and classical music is played are included within the term high culture. By contrast, romantic Hollywood comedies, soap operas, cheap restaurants where fast food can be ordered and music from the American Billboard (The Hot 100 Chart) can be heard are included within the concept of popular culture (Crane 1992: 58-59).

Following this line, Easthope (1991: 69-70) differentiates between these two terms by arguing that there is a sophisticated type of literature addressed to the upper class so as to satisfy their tastes, whilst there is another intended for the masses, being the means of expression of the lower class. Both cohabit in the same society:

If literature expresses the culture of the English ruling class, 'the gentry', then popular culture may be defended as an expression of the working class and therefore cannot be omitted from an account of culture defined as the whole 'way of life' of a society. Yet this analysis could be termed culturalist in that it rests on the assumption that a group or class acts freely and constitutively through its cultural expressions, that the working class lives in an enclave separated from the rest of the social formation and is therefore able to make up for itself its 'own' culture [...] Popular culture was not so much a free expression of the working class but rather a set of imposed and constrained meanings ultimately determined by economic power.

The quotation below claims that there are two different schools of thought, as far as popular culture is concerned. These are the mass culture theory and the populist theory. Popular culture is usually regarded as something not requiring deep thoughts or reflection, something not important and superficial, whereas high culture tends to be considered more enlightening, distinctive, and worthier:

Mass culture theory suggests that high culture –for instance, opera, classical theatre, music, and fine art– is more valuable and enlightening and that those who partake of popular culture belong to the “mindless masses” who accept and absorb it without question or critique. In other words, according to this theory, popular culture is like an opiate for the masses. The populist theory considers popular culture a vibrant pursuit that offers intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and an opportunity to escape from the stresses of everyday life. Consumers [...] choose or reject elements of popular culture, based on their individuals needs and desires (Fedorak 2009: 4).

From the 20th century on, the term popular has three different uses, which have been suggested by Raymond Williams (1976: 198-199): it means well-liked by many people, it contrasts with high culture, and it describes a culture that has been made by people for themselves.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

There are teachers such as Jones (<http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/feb/20/pop-culture-teaching-learning-engaging-students>) who consider the didactic implications of both popular and high culture. The former is easy to understand and entertaining to most young people, whereas the latter tends to be more sophisticated, and more rewarding, as it challenges their intellect. He teaches religion through both popular and high culture. It is for this purpose that, for instance, lessons on heaven and hell have been planned where videos from Tom and Jerry are accompanied with Gustave Doré's illustrations of Dante's Divine Comedy.

To sum up, popular culture is gaining ground in the academic world. Stavenhagen (1986, cited in Rosales 2004: 208) believes that popular culture encompasses "*los procesos de creación cultural emanados directamente de las clases populares, de sus tradiciones propias y locales, de su genio creador cotidiano.*" Hence, popular culture is paramount not only because it shapes people's identity but also because people may shape and have impact on it as well, engaging in and benefiting from this reciprocal process.

2.2 Manifestations of popular culture

As discussed above, popular culture is a term that encompasses multiple and varied cultural manifestations. In order to understand how popular culture influences individuals, Saussure's iconic signs (concept later developed by Peirce), where "signified" (or meaning) and "signifier" (the sign) appear fused (1959, cited in Santoro Moreno 2016: 3), is revealing. Brummett (2014: 7-11) considers that influence begins by managing meaning. Everything around us is a sign and signs lead us to think about some other aspects which are related to them. When we look at our mobile phones, we do not think of the device itself but on other aspects such as its costs, the last time we used it, the document we read on the Internet through the phone, or the person we have to text, as well as some other elements one may associate the mobile phone with. Brummett (2014: 7-11) distinguishes three types of meaning: indexical, iconic, and symbolic. Indexical comprehends processes in which one thing is associated with another (smoke with fire, a thermometer with temperature rising, a CD with music, glasses with intellect); iconic refers to instances when something resembles something else (comedians imitating celebrities' voices or gestures; sounds like crash, boom or bang resembling a car crash, an explosion or gunfire); finally, symbolic is the meaning (usually connotational) that is associated to the word and that changes from one culture to another (for instance smoking cigarettes may mean coolness, low class, toughness, being interesting or even sexy). This categorisation is important for popular culture manifestations when it comes to managing meaning. As stated in section 2.1, popular culture is all around us and tries to shape people's behaviour. If everything surrounding us is a sign and signs are meanings, then it should be logical that this sort of subtle manipulation starts by altering or modifying the meaning of signs.

Popular culture encompasses a great deal of issues. Instances of this are race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, cultural imperialism, education, communication, society's

capacity to access knowledge and censorship among others. Popular culture is present all over the world by means of the influence of different industries. However, popular culture possesses a characteristic that makes it unique. Its uniqueness lays in its ability to change. Although it is specific to a time and a place, it may adapt itself to fit other periods of time. It is capable of being appealing to a wide audience, as items are conceived, manufactured, produced, and sold by companies to make a profit. One only has to think about the large number of merchandising products that are manufactured for each film or book that is released or published every year. This includes toys, T-shirts, board games, video games, posters, mugs, costumes, short novels, action figures, decks of cards, and key chains among others. (<http://es.slideshare.net/jdodwyer/popular-culture-presentation>).

Regarding the transmission of popular culture, the Internet has played an important role, as it has enabled the transmission of ideas and values from country to country. The Internet is used by companies to market their products. Apart from music, books, and films, food is an interesting way of introducing the culture of one country to another one. Examples of this are McDonald's, Burger King, Foster's Hollywood, Pepsi and Coca-Cola among others (<http://es.slideshare.net/hunaisabdulnafi/spread-of-american-pop-culture-original?related=6>).

Popular culture manifests itself through music, television, films, literature, comic strips, sports, toys, (video) games, clothes (fashion), fast food, advertising, newspapers, magazines, cyber culture, satellite broadcasts, religion, or politics, among others. It is within the next section that some of its manifestations are to deal with: publicity and promotion, where the relationship among publicity, promotion and celebrity is analysed; comics (and its features), where the importance of visual literacy is highlighted; popular literature; where mainly young adult literature is explored; films, including the Hollywood and Bollywood industry; television, exploring television series and reality shows; music, including its technical aspects and a brief background of musical genres; the Internet as an instrument to advertise films and television series; graffiti and body art, both of which are ways of expressing identity and otherness; food, and its relation to shopping, eating trends, marketing, advertising, nutrition, money, hunger, gender and class, to cite but a few; and finally, the last subsection entitled a general overview of popular culture includes a summary of the contents gathered in this second chapter.

2.2.1 Publicity and promotion

The concepts of publicity and promotion are closely related to the notion of celebrity. The term celebrity comes from the Latin word *celebritas*, “multitude” or “fame,” and *celeber* “frequented” or “famous.” Originally, instead of referring to a person, it referred to a condition (Boorstin 1984: 268).

Nowadays it is quite common that industries try to sell their products with the help of some famous people. It is logical that their products are sold easily, quickly, and effectively with the help of a celebrity. Thus, both the star and the product are advertised. This is a common practice in which they take advantage of because both

parties obtain a mutual benefit in the process. Hence, according to Turner (2013: 4-20), celebrity is regarded as a commercial commodity and as an object of consumption. In addition, celebrity may be defined as a cultural phenomenon due to its high visibility position and the role it plays in a wide range of ever-increasing cultural fields (apart from doing their job, celebrities attempt to make incursions in other fields: products are advertised, books are written, songs are sung or their own fashion lines are designed). The term celebrity may be found everywhere, from contests where the next pre-teen star is found, to the management of huge political campaigns. Each and every one of the people involved in the fulfillment of either contests or campaigns are aware of the power of the media in terms of publicity and promotion, which is why it is not a surprise that chief executive officers appear on TV, magazines or newspapers with the aim of promoting their company's products or autobiographies. The development of a celebrity is not just a business but a key factor in the entertainment industry. Some examples of this include Donald Trump and Allan Sugar who became stars of the reality show called *The Apprentice*. The word celebrity is usually associated with publicity handouts, advertisements, commercials, interviews, or the revelations about famous people's private lives on TV as well as in tabloids; however, a celebrity is not regarded as the outcome of publicity, but quite on the contrary, it is the extent to which it has become part of our daily life (Turner 2013: 4-20). The example below clarifies it.

To put it more simply, celebrities are not famous because they shoot commercials; they were already popular before doing so. It is their popularity that is expected to attract people's attention on the product being advertised. Thus, it is believed that products are bought because stars tell people to buy them. The images below are intended to promote the cream Nivea for men. At first, footballers apparently show their rejection to use cream just because it is presented in pink bottles (see Figure 1); however, everything changes when they are given the same cream in a blue box (see Figure 2). Football is supposed to be a masculine sport whilst pink is associated with femininity. This might explain the footballers' initial refusal. The industry is selling the same cream wrapped up in a different package, which is why the previous idea that meaning is managed by popular culture deserves being mentioned here once again. If popular culture has some influence on people, this influence will start by managing meaning. Everything around us is a sign which makes people think of different aspects associated with it. The product advertised in blue or pink is the same, but it is only the colour of its appearance (sign) which makes football players react positively (blue colour) or negatively (pink colour). Hence Brummett's idea that people are likely to be influenced by controlling the meaning of signs at which they are exposed holds some merit.



Figure 1. Pink bottles of Nivea
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c-oPHA979k>)



Figure 2. Blue package of Nivea
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c-oPHA979k>)

Following with the term of celebrity, Boorstin (1971: 58) claimed that “The celebrity is a person who is well-known for their well-knownness.” Nonetheless, Marshall (1997: 72-73), as discussed above, suggests that the celebrity becomes a key point of media attention, personal aspiration and an entity or means where cultural meanings are negotiated and organised. Smiling is considered a public virtue and an act which entails a social value. The action of smiling has become an attention grabber; and celebrities know how to display their best smiles to the media:

The public has slipped, perhaps decisively, from the disciplinary grasp of educational and governmental authorities into the gentler hands of the smiling professions. Smiling has become one of the most important public virtues of our times, a uniform that must be worn on the lips of those whose social function it is to create, sustain, tutor, represent and make images of the public [...] (Hartley 1992: 121-122).

Rarely do people know about stars because of their intellectual achievements, but for just appearing on TV. Seldom do people remember the name of the doctor who performed the first heart transplant, or the name of the scientist who discovered the so-called black matter. On the contrary, we all know the names of celebrities on television and what they have done and are currently doing. Not only are celebrities a product, but they also are an instrument to entertain the masses as the quotation below suggests:

He has been fabricated on purpose to satisfy our exaggerated expectations of human greatness [...] He is made by all of us who willingly read about him, who like to see him on television, who buy recordings of his voice, and talk about him to our friends (Boorstin 1984: 268).

If we talk about publicity, then we are bound to talk about consumerism. McLaren (1995: 2) considers that consumerism is a “predatory culture.” Sfeir (2014: 19-20) shares this view on publicity and consumerism and upholds that consumerism is

so powerful that it is capable of infiltrating and contaminating people's minds, ears, and eyes because of well-wrought marketing campaigns.

Barker (1989: 4) hints that "ideas, images, attitudes, forms and contents of the media [...] exist within media 'texts' and can also reproduce themselves in us." Accordingly, the media has power to exert influence on people. For instance, the media are capable of inserting certain beliefs on people such as *Guinness is good for you!*, *Live in your world, play in ours* (PlayStation 2), *The happiest place on Earth* (Disneyland), *Quality never goes out of style* (Levi's), or *Because you're worth it* (L'Oréal).

Having dealt with the concept of celebrity and its intrinsic relation to both publicity and promotion, it is paramount to define the concept of publicity. Publicity is a means of transmitting information to the audience about products and services by making use of both offline and online media. The former includes print media, television, radio and billboards. The latter needs an Internet based platform: Twitter, Facebook, blogs or pop-ups are examples of this. Its purpose is to convey information to as many people as possible within the shortest period of time. The way of publicising a product highly depends on the target audience. If a toy had to be advertised, it would be addressed to anyone having children. In the case of a working mother, the advertising technique should be focused on the difficulties of balancing motherhood and work. As long as the product is for babies, mothers are expected to be the potential purchasers (<https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-publicity-2295550>).

When it comes to advertising a product, the recommendation is to establish a hierarchy of effects. First, people's attention needs to be attracted; secondly, people have to develop an interest in the product advertised; third, that interest becomes a desire when they feel the necessity to obtain it; and finally, the product is bought. This is known as the AIDA model, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action (Hall 2002: 1).

Similarly, Lavidge and Steiner (1961: 60) suggest that there are three functions to bear in mind when advertising a product: knowledge and awareness; liking and preference; and conviction and purchase.

In Sheehan's view (2013: 61-62) publicity is considered to be persuasive, as the advertiser makes use of the most attractive features of the product to attract the consumer's attention. These features are not selected arbitrarily, but intentionally due to their meaningful importance to the audience. Occasionally, the message is not overtly conveyed. Such publicity is regarded as subliminal (beneath the surface), as a sort of hidden message is sent towards people's subconscious. An example of subliminal advertising is that of pouring alcohol on ice cubes which evoke a woman. According to Sheehan (2013: 61-62), the concept of embedding alcohol in sexual imagery is thought to bring about a rising on the anxiety levels, which may become calmer by increasing people's drinking habits. The images below belong to the "Black and White" Scotch whiskey promotional campaign. What the pictures depict is a floating ice cube, which symbolises a floating woman (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).



Figure 3. A floating woman
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyOuBQPOCVA>)



Figure 4. Whiskey on the rock
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyOuBQPOCVA>)

Not only are products advertised within programme breaks, but also on TV shows. The jury on *American Idol* drink from red Coca-Cola glasses (see Figure 5). Besides, the waiting room is decorated in Coca-Cola red. Another example is *Top Chef*. Toyotas are not only driven by *Top Chef* contestants so as to get to the grocery store, but they are told to make use of Toyota sections as though they were dishes (see Figure 6), needless to say about the branded appliances as well as the cookware. Further instances are the Holland beer Heineken advertised in *Mad Men* (see Figure 7) and a whole episode of *Modern Family* (see Figure 8), devoted to an iPad (Sheehan 2013: 66).



Figure 5. *American Idol*
(<https://imcclass.com/tag/american-idol/>)



Figure 6. *Top Chef* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shmfZkOQ66c>)



Figure 7. *Mad Men* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deXGXYJo4-0>)



Figure 8. *Modern Family* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lG6jvc4NXo>)

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

Even pop stars use brands in their songs. The song *Into the Groove* was revisited by both Madonna and Missy Elliot in order to promote Gap jeans (see Figure 9) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-XA2lsbgjA>); the number one hit *Touch my Body* by Mariah Carey named the platform YouTube in the lyrics.

Apart from including brands in their lyrics, these are overtly shown in their videos. Instances of this are: Busta Rhymes' video *Pass the Courvoisier*, which provoked an increase in the sales of cognac by depicting, pouring and drinking the alcoholic drink (see Figure 10); Lady Gaga made use of a Diet Coke can as if it were a roller for her hair in her video for *Telephone* (see Figure 11); she also got out a Virgin mobile of her pocket in the same video (see Figure 12); (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3112086/Singers-dropping-brands-song-lyrics-packing-music-videos-products-cash-sponsorship-deals.html>).

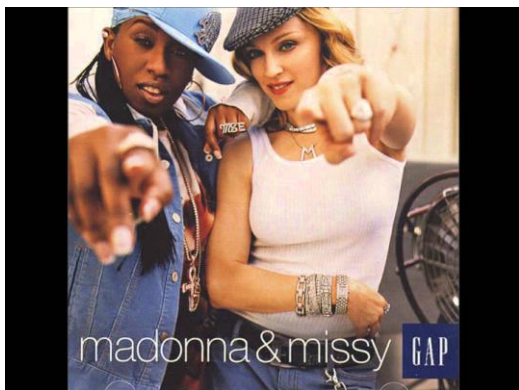


Figure 9. Gap Jeans in the commercial by Madonna and Missy Elliot, *Remixed and revisited* album 2003



Figure 10. Cognac in the video for *Pass the Courvoisier* by Busta Rhymes, *Genesis* album 2002



Figure 11. Diet Coke in the video for *Telephone* by Lady Gaga, *The Fame Monster* album 2009



Figure 12. Mobile Phone in the video for *Telephone* by Lady Gaga, *The Fame Monster* album 2009

Kottak (2016: 23) supports the idea that “the main purpose of commercial television is neither to entertain nor to enlighten, but to sell.” On the contrary, it is also true that some campaigns have had a positive impact on the lives of many people. For example, they encouraged individuals to stop smoking (see Figure 13) or to abstain from alcohol consumption before driving (see Figure 14).



Figure 13. NHS stop smoking campaign
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HccVUa_zOb-M)



Figure 14. Never drink drive
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otR8V7rl_njA)

Besides the media, cinema is thought to be another visual medium from which products can also be promoted. Roadsters from Nissan are driven by the protagonists in *The Avengers* (2012); Facebook is advertised in *The Social Network* (2010); a 2084 Chrysler 3000 is seen in the new version of *Total Recall* (2012); Makintosh technology was shown in the Chinese film *I Know a Woman's Heart* (2011), boosting in the sales of this technology (Sheehan 2013: 64-65).

Stereotypes are also common elements in advertising. These can be observable from three different perspectives. Stereotypes find their way into advertising probably due to their ability to express meanings quickly. It is thanks to the stereotype image that viewers or readers can get a general idea of the message that is being conveyed. This is known as range of stereotypes (Sheehan 2013: 76); where the image of a computer geek may be associated with technology, a trendy young boy might lead people to think of a fashion advertisement, or a supermom depicts someone who is able to work and take care of her family. A second perspective is called valence of portrayals, which has to do with the positive or negative values that people associate the stereotype with. The last perspective refers to the frequency of portrayals of each stereotype. Jackson and Ervin (1991: 67) claimed that there are three reasons which make it relevant. They focused on the importance of Afro-American people on the media. First, the more frequent the presence of the stereotype is, the more accepted the image will be. This way, people are aware of the fact that Afro-Americans may have certain effects on their lives (Barak Obama, Oprah Winfrey and the like); secondly, it shows society's intention of accepting Afro-Americans into the mainstream culture; third, there is a potential impact on individuals.

Another aspect to bear in mind when advertising is the culture who the advertisement is addressed to. This is linked to the concepts of individualism and collectivism. In individualist societies, the individuals' interests are dominant over those of the group, whereas in collectivist societies what matters is the interests of the whole

group. Therefore, advertisements highlighting collective interests and values would prove their suitability within collective societies (Diehi, Terlutter and Weinberg 2003: 128-130).

Before advertising a product, a step-by-step process needs to be developed in order to ensure that the objective is achieved. In the first place, a strategy needs to be well-thought-out so as to meet the objective. Then, the strategy is revised by the advertising agency. After proving the suitability of the strategy, a series of advertisements on radio stations and newspapers might help to create brand awareness; needless to say, free samples might be handed to people so that they can test the product. When dealing with the media, it is essential to determine the time that the advertisement is meant to last on the radio as well as its frequency of repetition at the time of being aired. Besides timing, creativity is another paramount feature that cannot be left aside. This is when publicists come into play, as publicists are expected to come up with innovative ideas and techniques to promote the product. Finally, the budget available is to determine whether the techniques and strategies to follow are feasible (<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/elements-advertising-plan-advertising-strategy-14601.html>).

Finally, celebrities' benefit from promoting products in the same way that companies obtain benefits from using celebrities to advertise them. It is through the use of persuasive imagery in the media that they have their products sold.

2.2.2 Comics

Comics are an artistic way of expression combining drawings as well as text. A story is visually told, and the concept art may literally be regarded as a masterpiece. Accordingly, “comics might be defined as a hybrid word-and-image form in which two narrative tracks, one verbal and one visual, register temporality spatially” (Chute 2008: 452). Parsons and Smith (1993: 2) add that “comics are a literary form. They express the popular culture of our day and the values and moods of our society.”

It seems that the purpose for including images is telling the story. The audience is expected to follow the story by having a look at the pictures, which are designed to engage readers. Besides telling the plot, imagery is combined to bring about emotions in the reader. Furthermore, its sequencing is conceived to build up tension or make it disappear. What is more, text and image are employed in three different ways. On the one hand, the impact of the image is sometimes so powerful that it is self-explanatory; accordingly, text is reduced to a minimum and limited to those parts of the story which need to be expanded so as to enrich it (see Figure 15). On the contrary, there are occasions in which images only have the function to support the text. Otherwise, they might not be well-interpreted or decoded in isolation since they might give rise to multiple interpretations (see Figure 16). Finally, there are comics which present a middle ground, where both text and image are equally relevant (see Figure 17). The story can be easily understood by means of the images and the texts they are

accompanied by too, since there are no text constraints (<http://sequart.org/magazine/2335/it-takes-two-%E2%80%93-text-image-in-comics/>).



Figure 15. Panels without text. McCloud, Scott. (1994). *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Perennial (https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B0vtKqkt0q-bNTk1MzlhMmYtMmMyNS00Yzc3LTg_zMDEtMjEzNDI3ZmZjMzAx/edit)



Figure 16. Panels and text. McCloud, Scott. (1994). *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Perennial (https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B0vtKqkt0q-bNTk1MzlhMmYtMmMyNS00Yzc3LTg_zMDEtMjEzNDI3ZmZjMzAx/edit)



Figure 17. Panels are as important as text. McCloud, Scott. (1994). *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Perennial (https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B0vtKqkt0q-bNTk1MzlhMmYtMmMyNS00Yzc3LTg_zMDEtMjEzNDI3ZmZjMzAx/edit)

Definitely, image and text are two elements that are interwoven and have the role of supporting one another, as the next quotation suggests: “in comics at its best, words and pictures are like partners in a dance and each one takes turns leading. When both partners try to lead, the competition can subvert the overall goals [...] though a little playful competition can sometimes produce enjoyable results” (McCloud 1994: 156).

As stated above, text and image are two combined elements within comics. These elements are placed on the comic pages as follows: panels; which are the frames on the page; gutter; which is a blank space to separate the panels; balloons, including the characters’ speech; and captions, which include the narrator’s voice (Saraceni 2003: 7-10). Khordoc (2001: 156-157) also points out that the use of balloons is one of the main features of comics. In Fenwick’s view (1998: 142), every day English is the language to be found. This is meant to be brief, simple, and personal. Accordingly, direct speech is expected.

Another paramount feature of comics is colour. According to McCloud (1994: 185-192) colour is believed to have both physical and emotional effects on the audience. However, the use of colour in comics has always been subjected to two factors: commerce and technology. Not only were sales boosted by using colour in comics but also costs. Hence, comics were printed in primary colours and on cheap paper. Although full colour comics increase costs, they are more appealing to people, as they seem to be more real. Messages are more directly conveyed in black and white comics, whilst those in full colour comics are more powerful.

These days comic buyers can enjoy a sort of vanguardist evolution from comics, which is known as graphic novel. The latter is likely to be longer than the former.

Baeters and Frey (2014: 4) suggest that graphic novels are “a genuine sub form of comics” whose story is more nuanced and better developed than it used to be. Not only are they well-structured, but also professionally written. These graphic novels are also called adult comics, alternative comics as well as post-underground.

It is considered that comics and graphic novels have different and similar features, which can be found at four levels (Baetens and Frey 2014: 8-19): form, content, publication format, and production and distribution aspects. In terms of form, comics have always had the same format of juxtaposed images placed in a grid, which are meant to be read as a sequence from left to right and from up to bottom. Besides these aspects, the figure of the narrator is present in graphic novels (either verbally or visually). Graphic novels also intend to avoid conventions; hence the possibility of avoiding the grid structure, which was first used by Will Eisner (see Figure 18). As for content, it has been pointed out that graphic novels are more sophisticated and serious than comics; therefore, they are conceived as materials which are more apt to be read by adults than by youngsters due to their (semi)autobiographical nature. Others are considered to be documentaries, a news reporting or an account of past events. In this sense, the following examples are thought to be the best graphic novels ever written: *Maus* (1986-1991) by Art Spiegelman, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000-2003), and *Fun Home* (2006) by Alison Bechdel. It is worth mentioning that the main characters in the above examples of graphic novels are not superheroes. Regarding the publication format, serialisation is preferred by comics, whilst graphic novels are published by following the same format as novels in terms of size, pages and paper. Regarding production and distribution, graphic novels depend on two factors: their production depends on the effort on the part of small independent publishers, whereas their distribution is tied to the existence of small specialised shops.

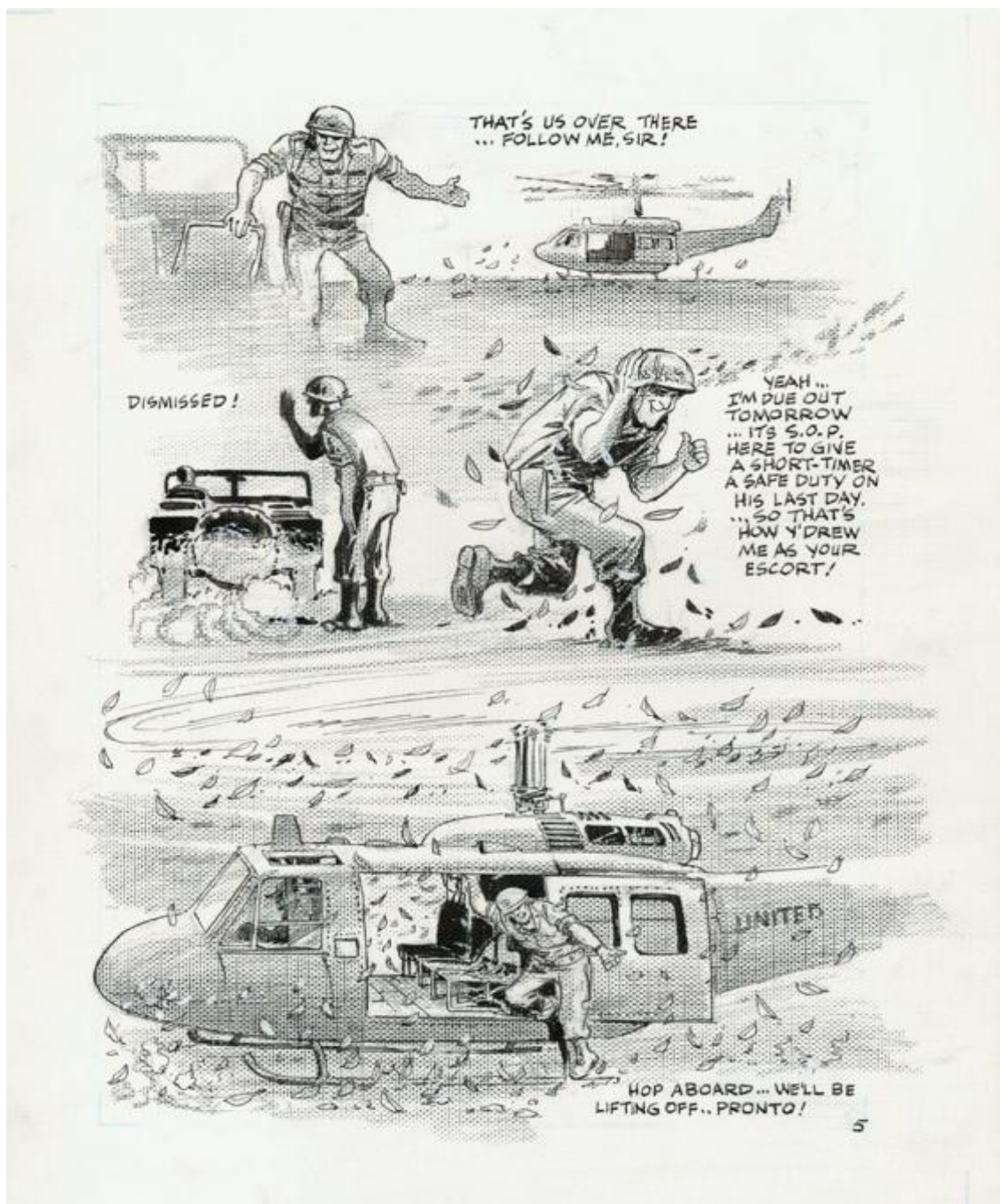


Figure 18. Unframed panels. Eisner, Will. (2000). *Last Day in Vietnam: A Memory*. Dark Horse Comics. (<https://es.pinterest.com/benguilherme/will-eisner/?lp=true>)

McCloud (1994: 170-171) points out that a six-step path is followed in order to create a comic: idea/purpose, form, idiom, structure, craft and surface. First, any project starts with an initial idea or purpose; that is, the content. Second, the idea needs to be shaped. Third, the style and genre it belongs to needs to be decided. Fourth, at this stage, aspects to be included and those to be left out need to be agreed on. Fifth, it is time for the project to be developed and to solve any setbacks that may arise. Finally, those aspects that are more easily appreciated at a superficial level are due to be valued and finished.

Cohn (2013: xv) states that comics may be regarded as visual language due to the similarities he found between language as a science and his knowledge of comics. Similarly, Tiemensma (2009: 2) adds that nowadays society is mainly visual, as the media is somewhat aware of the power of imagery. It is well-known that images convey meanings way faster than words, hence, that they are combined in comics. In Barry's view (1997: 75-78), such combination makes that the meaning conveyed by pictures has a dominant role, whilst that of words remains at a secondary level. Therefore, comics demand that readers are skilful at interpreting the message or meaning of their images. That is what Fenwick (1998: 132) calls visual literacy.

Literacy is the ability to read and write, but visual literacy refers to the ability to read and understand images. This has become a vital skill in the 21st century due to image profusion in the media (in newspapers, magazines, advertising, on television, and on the Web). The reader is expected to think of the images critically by placing them in the right context (<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/675>). Instances of this are as follows: the photographer Dorothea Lange published a photo showing a migrant worker in a Californian farm accompanied by her starving children. The photo caused the government to provide food to the starving farm workers. Dorothea Lange was hired to take pictures of people during the Great Depression (see Figure 19). Ansel Adams photographed Mount Williamson during World War II. Apparently, it depicts a peaceful rocky landscape; nonetheless, Adams took this image intentionally, because that was the view that Japanese prisoners had from their internment camp at Manzanar, California. Internees were only allowed to go outside to collect rocks for their gardens (see Figure 20). Visual literacy is not the capacity to simply describe the scene in a picture, but the ability to use critical thinking in order to figure out what the author intentionally attempts to convey, as the images have a purpose.

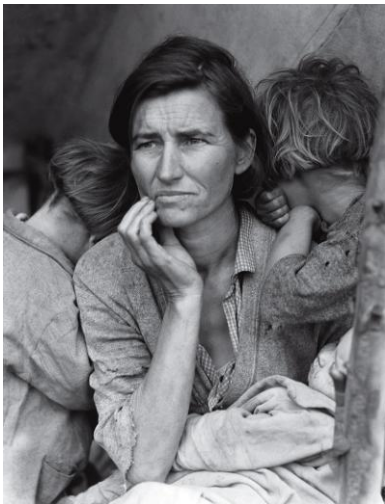


Figure 19. *Migrant Mother* by Dorothea Lange (<http://100photos.time.com/photos/dorothea-lange-migrant-mother>)



Figure 20. *Mount Williamson* by Ansel Adams (https://shop.anseladams.com/Mount_Williamson_p/1901019.htm)

Regarding the shape of the drawings, Cohn (2013: 139-143) suggests that comics can be drawn in different ways. On the one side, there is a specific way of drawing comics in America, which is typical of mainstream superhero comics, where physical features are prone to being exaggerated. Men tend to be far more muscular than women, who are curvier and slimmer. Men's hands are likely to be bigger than that of the women's, and as far as heads are concerned, women's heads are more rounded and show less hardened facial traits (see Figure 21). On the other side, another style of drawing comics, whose lines are thicker and attempt to portray humorous situations, can be found too. This comic style, which moves away from the mainstream, is known as Indy, alternative or underground (see Figure 22).

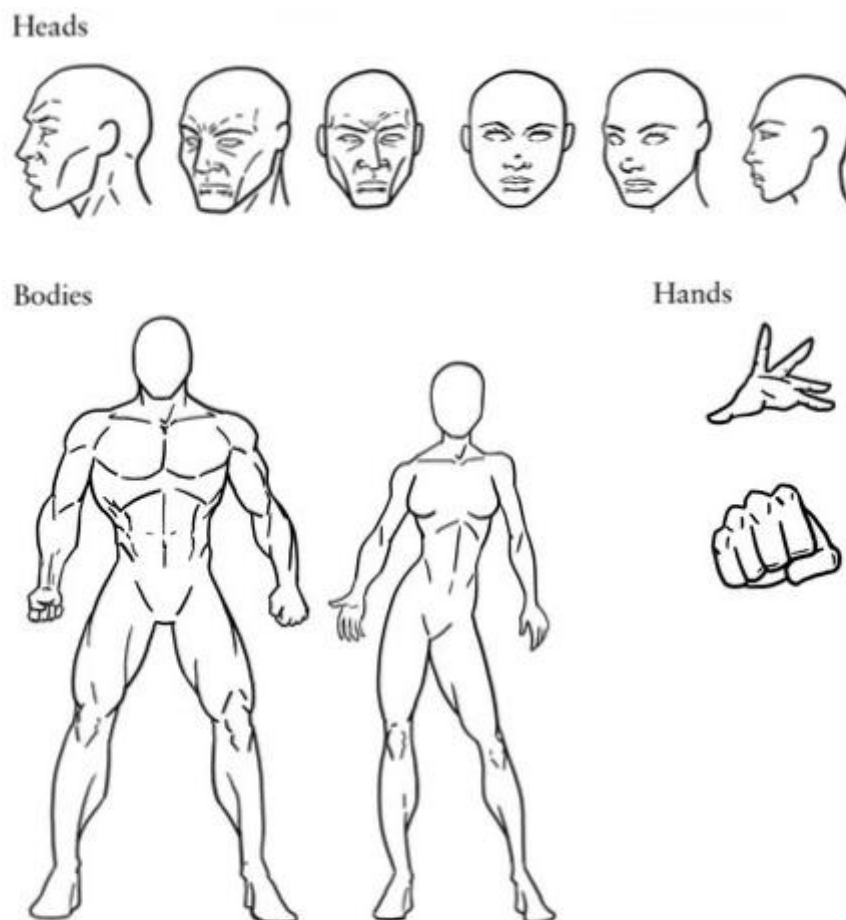


FIGURE 7.1 Schematized representations of male and female human heads and body in Kirbyan American Visual Language.

Figure 21. Prototypical American superhero features. Cohn, Neil. (2013). *The Visual Language of Comics: Introduction to the Structure and Cognition of Sequential Images*. London: Bloomsbury. (<https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=RVABAQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=comic+structure&ots=BmsGhK2bIA&sig=KDhsiYScVwoS2xzR6iU6095rDWg#v=onepage&q&f=true>)



Figure 22. Honeybunch. Crumb, Robert. Honeybunch Kaminski: *The Drug-Crazed Runaway in She's Leaving Home*. (1970). Uneda Comix. (<http://www.henniker.org.uk/html/RobertCrumbCarload.htm>)

Two main styles seem to have been identified. These are named cartoony, which portrays rounded characters; and realistic, which depicts characters in terms of real shapes (Tiemensma 2009: 5).

It is through comics that children could find themselves in a predicament, as they are given the opportunity to take part in moralistic and ethical dilemmas in an attempt to understand the world around them. They observe how their favourite hero applies ethics in problem solving. Thus, social learning is embraced. In the case of adults, comics can be read at a different level for the status quo to be analysed by making use of critical thinking. Based on moral values as well as feedback from others, social comparison is most common to happen at the adolescence stage. Villain behaviour is hinted at as the sort of model to be avoided. By contrast, superheroes are willing to act in favour of the community, and then the community does something for the heroes. Hence, heroes show prosocial behaviour apart from leadership and empathy. Literally, people feed off their images, as their features are embraced by readers in order to shape people's personalities, ethics and morals (<http://www.lateralmag.com/articles/issue-1/i-need-a-hero-why-were-wired-to-worship-superheroes>). Barker (1989: 283) points out that there are two characteristics for a comic to be influential: the story has to start at some place recognisable by the reader and be directly connected to his/her daily life, e.g. home, school, park, etc.; after that, the story line may undergo some changes. For instance, Disney comic stories usually start with Donald and the three nephews at home or playing in the garden. Then, the change comes when Uncle Scrooge invites them to take part in an adventure to solve a mystery or find a treasure. However, there are some rules for the adventure to happen: first, although there is an evident absence of parents, it is Scrooge who acts as the adult in charge of the situation. In *The Hunka Junka* his nephews are assigned the mission to find an old coin on a remote island with no reward at all. If Scrooge is the boss, his nephews are his employees, and they work for free. In the second place, the idea of wealth is present in every story, but nothing is said about work or effort. In *The Great Rainbow Race*, Donald and his nephews need to find the clay pot of gold on the other side of the rainbow. This is supposed to be in Arabia, where they realise that there is no lemonade. Magica da Spell discovers their plan and makes their plane crash, spreading seeds all over the desert. She summons a storm, which accidentally makes the seeds grow and bloom. Later on, the three nephews collect the fruits to make lemonade. Thirdly, if there are no jobs, there are no employees. Fourth, revolutionary change is a threat for the current social wellbeing. In *The Lemonade Fling* a march in favour of Love and Peace is dismantled by offering people lemonade free of charge (see Figure 23). Disney comics also refer to Cuba (nicknamed as Brutopia, see Figure 24) and Vietnam (called Unsteadystan, see Figure 25)–. Finally, the vision of Third World people is perhaps the most interesting aspect. Two types of children are distinguished: Scrooge's nephews, whose uncle is teaching them how to become rich adults, and the other children who do not want to be rich, because they do not know how valuable it is.

Similarly, Uncle Scrooge reminds them of the emotions that he felt when earning his very first dime in *Getting that Healthy, Wealthy Feeling* (see Figure 26). What is highlighted is the awful conditions of child labour.



Figure 23. The lemonade fling. Barks, Carl. *Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge Adventures: The Lemonade Fling* #43. (1998). Gladstone. (http://isach.info/comic.php?comic=donald_duck_600_the_lemonade_fling)

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

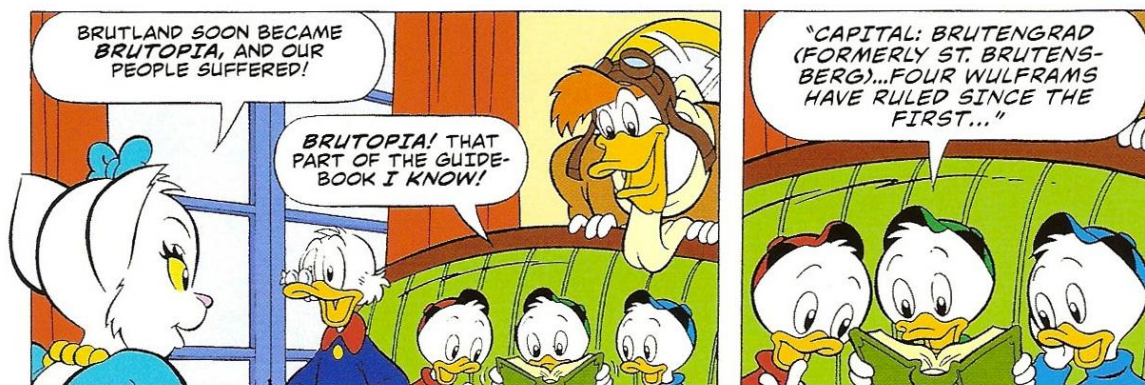


Figure 24. Brutopia. Barks, Carl. *Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge Adventures: The Long Arm of Brutopia #17*. (1997). Gladstone. (<http://duckcomicsrevue.blogspot.com.es/2011/10/curse-of-flabberge.html>)



Figure 25. Unsteadystand. Banks, Carl. *Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge Adventures: Treasure of Marco Polo #6*. (1987). Gladstone. (http://marcopolo.mooldoo.com/?f=ViewPic&i=/pics/illustrations/disney/mpdisney_tromp06_Demi.jpg)



Figure 26. Getting that healthy, wealthy feeling. Fallberg, Carl. *Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge Adventures: Rug Riders in the Sky # 50* (1964). Gold Key. (http://characters.wikia.com/wiki/Scrooge_McDuck)

From Inger's point of view (2009: 98-99), Charlie Brown (1950) was conceived as an answer to the increasing anxieties and insecurities of people in the Industrial Revolution period. For Inger (2009), Charlie Brown is a representation of people's anxiety and neurotic behaviour, their necessity to discover their identity, their relationship to society and their responsibilities towards it, and the obsession to control their destinies. According to Schulz (1976), the reasons why Charlie Brown represents everyman are the following:

Readers are generally sympathetic toward a lead character who is rather gentle, sometimes put upon, and not always the brightest person [...] No matter what happens to any of the other characters, somehow Charlie Brown is involved at the end and usually is the one who brings disaster upon one of his friends or receives the blunt of the blow. Charlie Brown has to be the one who suffers, because he is a caricature of the average person. Most of us are much more acquainted with losing than we are with winning. Winning is great, but it isn't funny (Schulz 1976: 83-84).

Schmitt admits that comics, otherwise known as the ninth art, are still a marginalised art form; however, they have "effects on traditional, hierarchical modes of

reading and on the entire notion of literacy” (1992: 153). Accordingly, they may be regarded as a threat to the concept of literacy supported by conservative educators.

McAllister (2001: 1-2) states that comics are a means to express ideology, and mentions the strip *Yellow Kid* (1895), where the protagonists lived in the streets of a poor slum. They frequently mocked of the activities of high class society but, even though it was conceived for the readers to have a good time, “the sense of fantasy and use of humour masked a sense of despair” (Berger 1973: 27).

The German psychiatrist Fredric Wertham (http://web.archive.org/web/20050404094311/http://lambiek.net/wertham_fredric.htm) defended that mass media, especially comics, have a negative effect on youngsters, for instance, he believed that characters like Batman and Robin (1939) had a homoerotic relationship (Durand 2011: 105).

Sometimes Batman ends up in bed injured and young Robin is shown sitting next to him. At home they lead an idyllic life. [...] They are Bruce Wayne and “Dick” Grayson. Bruce Wayne is described as a “socialite” and the official relationship is that Dick is Bruce’s ward. They live in sumptuous quarters, with beautiful flowers in large vases, and have a butler, Alfred. Batman is sometimes shown in dressing-gown. As they sit by the fireplace the young boy sometimes worries about his partner...It is like a wish dream of two homosexuals living together (Wertham 1954: 190).

At the same period there was a campaign on the part of parents as well as religious groups who claimed that comics should be censored as their dangerous and violent contents had increased the rates of juvenile delinquency (Barker 1989: 14). It is also suggested that adults’ mindsets are captured within comics for children as a way to instruct them from their early youth, so that they would agree with certain ideas, concepts and outlooks on life:

Children’s comics are devised by adults, whose work is determined and justified by their idea of what a child is or should be [...] comics show the child as a miniature adult, enjoying an idealised, gilded infancy which is really nothing but the adult projection of some magic era beyond the reach of the harsh discord of daily life [...] Juvenile literature, embodying purity, spontaneity, and natural virtue, while lacking in sex and violence, represents earthly paradise. It guarantees man’s own redemption as an adult: as long as there are children, he will have the pretext and means for self-gratification with the spectacle of his own dreams (Dorfman 1975: 30, cited in Barker 1989: 279-280).

As a result, the Comics Magazine Association of America (Lendrum 2004: 70-71) established a code in 1954 to avoid conflict. In the section entitled “Marriage and Sex,” it is stated that comic strip creators are not allowed to depict or make allusions to illicit sexual relations. In addition to this, scenes portraying violent love and sexual

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

abnormalities are unacceptable. Love stories and romances between characters should highlight the sacred vows of marriage and the importance to build a family. Sexual perversions or any attempt to make reference to them are not permitted. Apart from Batman and Robin, there were other avengers who overtly came out of the closet. Instances of these are Northstar and Midnighter. The former was single and was thought to represent homosexuality (as well as other thorny issues such as AIDS), whilst the latter was married to Apollo, thus representing a gay marriage (see Figure 27). Interestingly, they had a strong paternal instinct or parental responsibility. Northstar adopted a girl suffering from AIDS, whereas Midnighter and Apollo, who portrayed a same sex family, also had a daughter (see Figure 28).



Figure 27. Midnighter and Apollo. Millar, Mark. *The Authority* #29 (2002). Wildstorm. (<http://www.geekquality.com/ok-now-kiss/>)



Figure 28. Midnighter and Apollo with their adoptive child. Morrison, Robbie. *The Authority* Vol 2 #4 (2003). Wildstorm, DC Comics. (<http://ontd-political.livejournal.com/7999175.html>)

Similarly, Palmer-Mehta and Hay (2005: 390) made an allusion to issue 137 of the series Green Lantern, which was awarded by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation the best comic book award in 2001 for having introduced a gay character in the plot (Terry Berg) (see Figure 29). Likewise, in the late 1960s, Green Lantern faced issues of racism, poverty, and drugs (see Figure 30), as Green Arrow's little sister felt the appeal of heroin (Weiner 2010: 5). As stated above, allusion to drugs was not allowed by the comic code. This means that the comics dealing with these issues were published without the Committee's approval.

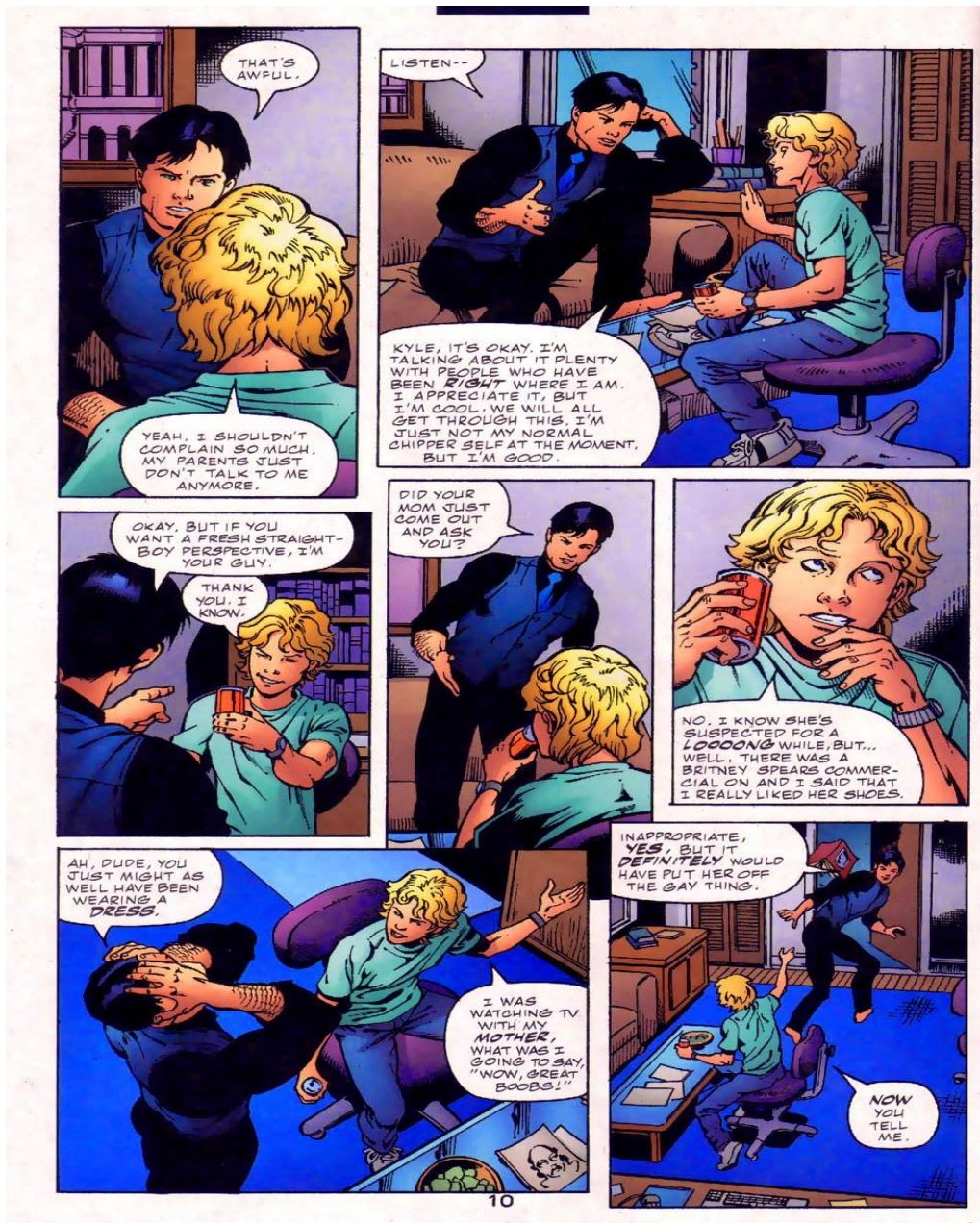


Figure 29. Terry Berg. Green Lantern: something old, something new #129. (2000). DC Comics. (https://www.google.es/search?q=midnighter+and+apollo&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&sqj=2&ved=0ahUKEwjN35Doy5XVAhVCuxQKHUub_BTcQ_AUIBigB&biw=911&bih=439&dpr=1.5#tbm=isch&q=terry+berg+green+lantern&imgrc=wsSEglmzXI5CeM:)

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

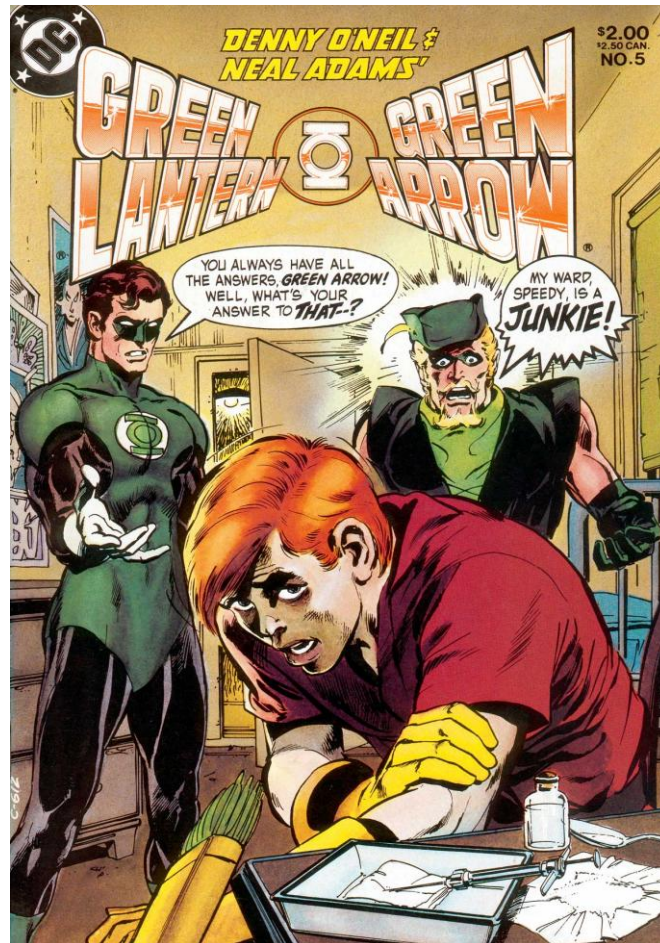


Figure 30. Arrow and drugs. O’Neil, Denis. *Green Lantern/Green Arrow: Peril in Plastic. Vol 1 #5* (1983). DC Comics, (<https://www.google.es/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwift-K81pXVAhVH1RoKHXesBc0QjRwIBw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mycomicsshop.com%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dgreen%2520lantern%252085&psig=AFQjCNFEVFLmCLcZTxWi9IoyZhqgSvjSiw&ust=1500565016709852>)

On the other hand, there are also female avengers, who struggle to free themselves from the oppression of male characters; for example, the attorney Jennifer Walters (also known as *She-Hulk*; the female version of *Hulk*). “To live in her world is always to be confronted with how her gender intersects with her career path, which is a battle many women faced in the 1970s and 1980s” (Swartz-Levine 2016: 79). Meaningfully, her real strength does not stem from any superpower, but her mind (see Figure 31). In this strip, the two girls talk about making a good impression on She-Hulk’s first day at work, however, they insist on the importance of her outfits and physical appearance, leaving aside the issue of her intellect or that of being an efficient worker. According to Henderson (2016: 73-74), in the case of Batwoman, she starts dating Maggie Sawyer, who is a police officer (see Figure 32). When Sawyer’s ex-husband discovers that her ex-wife feels attracted to women, they start a legal battle in order to get their daughter’s custody. It is at this point when both women, Sawyer and Batwoman, break up in an attempt to recover Sawyer’s daughter.



Figure 31. She-Hulk and gender issues. Slott, Dan and Templeton, Ty. *She-Hulk: Another Me Another U. Vol 2 #21*. (2007). Marvel. (<http://talkingcomicbooks.com/2014/03/21/gender-issues-hulk/>)



Figure 32. Batwoman and Maggie Sawyer. Williams, James H. III, and Haden Blackman, W. *This Blood Is Thick: Veins. Vol 2 #23.* (2013). DC Comics. (<http://www.afterellen.com/books/195343-batwoman-23-finally-gives-us-what-weve-been-asking-for>)

To sum up, comics are “Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (McCloud 1994: 9). This needs to be skilful at the time of interpreting the pictures, as the author drew them with a purpose. Comics are considered to be influential due to the fact that they embody moral values, social behaviour and ethics. Besides, comics are used to raise awareness about issues that matter to certain sectors of society. Such could be the case of the LGBTIQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Intersexual Queer) collective that finds a space to raise their voice within comics, as the examples above showed. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words; however, people should be skilful at decoding the messages images hide. The fact of living in a visual culture and society highlights the importance of comics as a manifestation of popular culture, as being skilful at interpreting images will provide people with abilities to live in this world.

2.2.3 Popular literature

Literature has always been the means whereby social movements, ideologies, new ways of thinking have arisen and have been spread among readers as quick as “viruses.” Both television and the Internet are relatively new ways of transmitting ideas. Long before their emergence, books had been a source of knowledge. For Versaci (2001: 61), literature is a medicine whose aim is to make people better. In Neuburg’s view (1977: 12), popular literature was initially addressed to the poor classes, since it “offers us a window upon the world of ordinary men and women; [besides this, it is] what the unsophisticated reader has chosen for pleasure.” Furthermore, defining popular literature is not an easy task (Hansen 1998: XII-XIII). This is so because popular literature is indeed produced by those who consume it. By contrast, it should not be considered as the literature of the many, but instead as that of mass-market literature. That is why McCracken (1998: 1) points out that popular literature is created by an industry focused on commercial entertainment and is aimed to please the masses. Popular literature is only a section of that industry which oversees the adapting of books to the big screen, the radio, the television format as well as periodicals. The concept of popular literature refers to literature that reaches a large audience. The wide variety of topics that it deals with is supposed to be of common interest to plenty of people. Entertaining, informing and persuading a myriad of people is its main purpose. In addition to this, reading popular literature may inform us about two aspects: who we are and the society in which we live in.

From Stevenson’s standpoint (2002: 15), what is reflected through popular literature is a wide range of moral, aesthetic, social, philosophical as well as frivolous concerns. This is likely to be what people find appealing. Leaving aside its moralistic value, popular literature “may often fall into stereotyping, vulgarity, sensation and the fashionably disposable” too (Bloom 2008: 3).

Popular literature is characterised by two elements: conventions and inventions. The former are “usually quite specific to a particular culture and period and do not mean the same outside this specific context” (Cawelti 1976: 5). Instances of conventions may be stereotyped characters, and commonly accepted ideas and metaphors. The latter are elements envisioned by writers (Ashley 1989: 87), e.g.: an imaginative plot, innovative language usage, and non-stereotyped characters. Conventions maintain traditions whilst inventions bring changes and new values.

From McCracken’s point of view (1998: 2), three crucial aspects are to be found within a text of popular literature, these are the world, the reader and the text. The three of them co-exist since they are intrinsically linked. The world refers to the social context, where a participant faces a social conflict. The second aspect, the reader, has to do with the construction of the self. Depending on our view of the self, the reader shall be regarded as active and critical or passive and uncritical. The text is the third element, as it is where the other two elements –the reader and the world– collide.

As for the plot, it is a necessary element for the story –with its incidents, episodes, and actions– to be understood. Regarding characters, they seem to be stock figures, who serve the plot. In terms of setting, locations are either familiar or exotic, providing characters the opportunity to escape. Regarding language, writers write as people speak in order to get closer to everyday language (Brooks 1992: 5-22). Features such as the cover, the title and the publisher, allow the reader to know the genre of a particular work (McCracken 1998: 12).

In 2014 the E-book friendly site published an estimation of the best-selling books of all time. This was gathered in the infographic below (see Figure 33), designed by UK-based creative search agency Mediaworks for Furniture UK. Books were grouped into eight categories: children’s fiction (see Figure 34), fantasy (see Figure 35), mystery (see Figure 36), classic literary fiction (up to 1950s), modern literary fiction (after 1950s), magic realism, historical fiction (see Figure 37), and young adult fiction. It is based on estimates of 2,6 billion sales in the most popular genres. The one which stands out is children’s fiction, with sales of 1 billion copies.

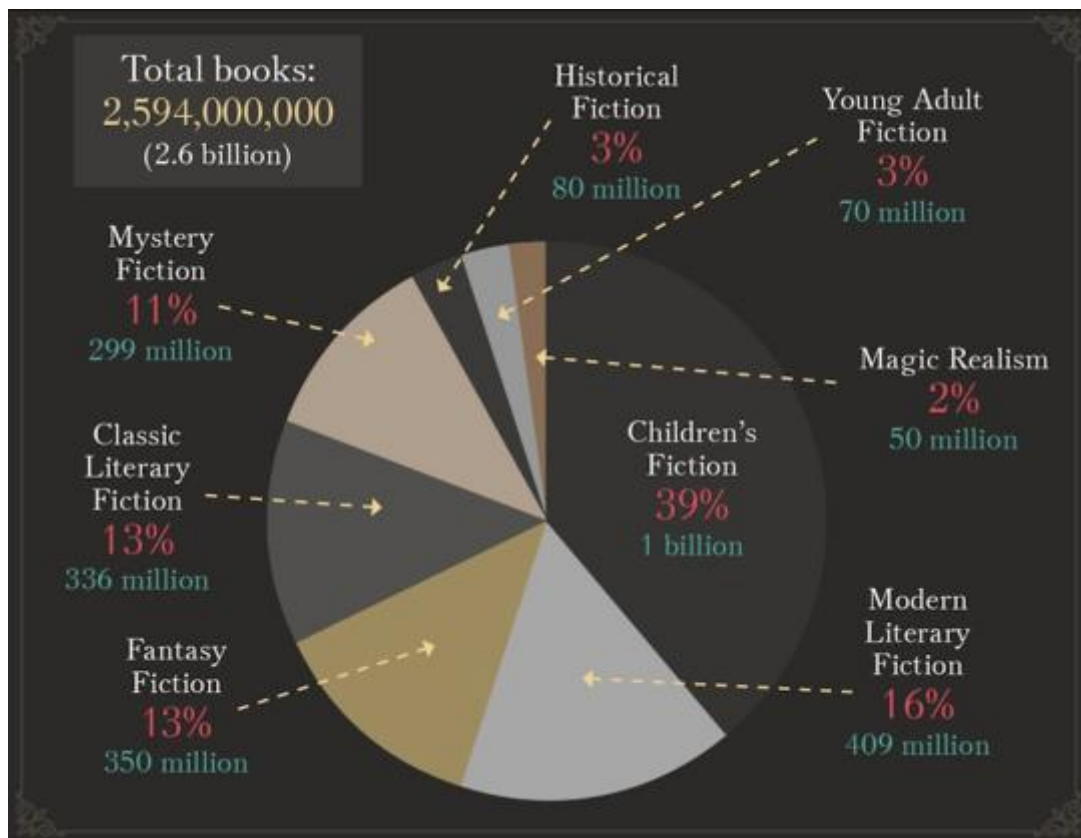


Figure 33. The best-selling books of all time (<https://ebookfriendly.com/most-popular-book-genres-infographic/best-selling-books-of-all-time-infographic/>)

A best seller is a book which is profusely sold over a period of time, “a book of real merit that goes on to become a classic” (Bloom 2008: 1). Best sellers may be grouped into three categories in accordance with the speed at which they are sold: fast sellers, steady sellers, and best sellers. Fast sellers are characterised by quick sells,

which are likely to decline shortly after their release. On the contrary, steady sellers lack instantaneous high sales, but they tend to sell well over a two-year period. Best sellers are prone to being a combination of the previous two categories; a great number of copies are quickly sold and these high sales are normally kept during a two-year period (Escarpit 1966: 20-86, cited in McCracken 1998: 22). The greater the number of copies sold and read, the greater hopes and fears shared by readers. Best sellers are thought to provide a structure within which readers' lives fit and can be understood (McCracken 1998: 2). As published by the E-book friendly site, the figures below gather the best-selling books of all time. As for children's fiction (see Figure 34), The *Harry Potter* series, whose first instalment *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* (1997) exceeded 100 million copies, is by far the most successful story up to date, since it has sold more than 450 million copies as a whole. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) by C.S. Lewis is found in second position with around 85 million copies so far. It can be read by either children or adults due to its double reading. Connections can be made among the story, Lewis's life, other works by Lewis, and other writers such as J.R.R. Tolkien. Both authors are thought to be influenced by one another (Brown 2005: 8). *Black Beauty* (1877) by Anna Sewell is in third position. This is considered to be one of the most popular Victorian animal stories. In fact, it is a "plea for humane treatment of horses and the working classes narrated by Beauty himself" (Morse and Danahay 2007: 6).



Figure 34. Children's fiction (<https://ebookfriendly.com/most-popular-book-genres-infographic/best-selling-books-of-all-time-infographic/>)

The *Harry Potter* saga has caused a revolution among youngsters and adults. From the moment it was published (1997), both parents and those in charge of deciding what children should be reading seem to disagree with the idea that kids devote time to its reading. This is likely to be due to a change of rules in the story. I am under the impression that the author warms the reader to the fact that appearances can be deceiving. Here nothing is taken for granted: people from oil paintings leave their frames to visit others near them; the architecture of Hogwarts School is unstable, its emplacement cannot be located on a map (based on Cockrell 2004: 15); “there were a hundred and forty-two staircases at Hogwarts: wide, sweeping ones; narrow, rickety ones; some that leads somewhere different on a Friday; some with a vanishing step halfway up that you had to remember to jump” (Rowling 1997: 131).

Another unusual aspect in this literature for children is the one where Harry Potter’s world grows up at the same time as its audience does it. As proof of this, I may say that each sequel is more mature than the previous. There is no doubt that the author does not want the readers to lose their interest in the series and feel that they are too mature to continue reading the adventures of Potter as the years go by. Perhaps, that is the reason for the author’s step up in the plot development. In the first instalment the character is 11 (1997) and is one year older with every new publication; in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) one of the characters was about to die. In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), readers, witness a pet execution. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), the main character starts revealing his attraction to girls. The volume is thicker than the two previous ones; the plot is darker and has a higher degree of complexity (for deeper detail see Cockrell 2004: 25-26). *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003) is the longest of them all and deals with the issues of violence and morality. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005) shows a sixteen-year-old boy. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007) Harry is 17; however, he is 36 at the end of the story. The author herself revealed to the BBC that the main themes are death, tolerance and questioning authority (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/7053982.stm>). In *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016), which is not a novel but a script, he is now 36. It deals with the issue of fatherhood. Surprisingly, Rowling wrote in a tweet that the transformation that the character Remus Lupin suffers is a metaphor for AIDS (<http://www.sensacine.com/noticias/cine/noticia-18545924/>). I agree that this is not a theme for children’s literature, nonetheless, it might make sense to take into account the level of maturity in which Rowling writes, as the latest instalment would be the eighth one in the series.

Surprisingly, the audience was shocked in 2007 by one of Rowling’s revelations. She confirmed to one of her followers in a tweet that Dumbledore was gay (<http://www.upworthy.com/a-fan-asked-jk-rowling-how-she-knew-dumbledore-was-gay-and-she-replied-with-something-obvious>). After a fan said how it could be possible that the readers did not notice that fact, the author replied that gay people look like people. Later on Laura Mallory, an activist mother of four from Georgia, claimed that it

was time for parents to wake up, as in her view, the supposed harmless fantasy depicted in the books was a manoeuvre to spill the seeds of anti-Christian values (<http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/story?id=3755544&page=1>). It comes as no surprise that the Catholic Church shows its discontent with the books, as they deal with magic and this supposedly turns to evil. Reverend Gabriele Amorth (<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/vaticans-chief-exorcist-repeats-condemnation-of-harry-potter-novels>) condemned the novels because “you start off with Harry Potter, who comes across as a likeable wizard, but you end up with the Devil. There is no doubt that the signature of the Prince of Darkness is clearly within these books.” He, the Vatican’s chief exorcist, added that by “reading Harry Potter a young child will be drawn into magic and from there it is a simple step to Satanism and the Devil.”

Later, two articles entitled were published about the issue in the official Vatican newspaper, *l’Osservatore Romano*. One of the articles was in favour and the other was against these novels. They had the same title *The Double Face of Harry Potter* (Stephens 2009: 28).

Regarding fantasy (see Figure 35), according to the aforementioned site, the first and second positions are occupied by *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) and the prequel *The Hobbit* (1937) by J.R.R Tolkien with 150 and 100 million copies respectively. They are believed to be marked by issues of social as well as cultural differences (Chance 2010: 26). There seems to be a tie in the number of copies sold between *The Hobbit* and *She: a History of Adventure* (1887) by H. Rider Haggard, who makes use of the past to evaluate the present (Hinz 1972: 416). It is considered an African adventure novel where the protagonists are to discover their own cultural roots while exploring the ruins of a proto-Egyptian civilisation (Malley 1997: 275).



Figure 35. Fantasy (<https://ebookfriendly.com/most-popular-book-genres-infographic/best->

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

[selling-books-of-all-time-infographic/](#)

Agatha Christie and Dan Brown stand out in the genre of mystery (see Figure 36). *Angels and Demons* (2000) and its follow up novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) focus on a contemporary conspiracy theory. After research was conducted, the results proved that the popular belief in *The Da Vinci Code* is due to an existential threat or death related to anxiety (Newheiser, Tausch and Farias 2011: 1007).



Figure 36. Mystery (<https://ebookfriendly.com/most-popular-book-genres-infographic/best-selling-books-of-all-time-infographic/>)

The ranking of historical fiction (see Figure 37) is headed by two war novels: *The Eagle Has Landed* (1975) and *Gone with the Wind* (1936), written by Jack Higgins and Margaret Mitchell respectively. It is believed that Americans learn more about the Civil War from *Gone with the Wind* than from any other book. Here the horrors of the war are presented through a female's standpoint. Female roles and gender expectations after the war and the irrelevant role of women, who apparently were unable to be independent at the time, are depicted from a nineteenth century female's point of view and are portrayed by Scarlett –the main character– (Faust 1999: 6). By contrast, *The Eagle Has Landed* is the story of a group of good men who are fighting for a rotten cause. Before it was published, all Germans were thought to be Nazis, murderers, or looters (Higgins 1996: 5).



Figure 37. Historical fiction (<https://ebookfriendly.com/most-popular-book-genres-infographic/best-selling-books-of-all-time-infographic/>)

Apart from the above genres, there are others that are briefly summarised below: romance, action/adventure, science fiction, fantasy, thriller, young and new adult, horror/paranormal/ghost, mystery/crime, police procedural, historical, western, family saga, women's fiction, magical realism, and literary fiction (<https://writerswrite.co.za/the-17-most-popular-genres-in-fiction-and-why-they-matter/>). Firstly, romance is also an important genre. Romance depicts a romantic relationship in terms of sensual tension, desire, and idealism. Even though the author initially keeps the couple apart, they are bound to end up together. As a result, Cawelti (2014: 37) considers that romance genre follows the pattern boy meets girl –or the other way around–, they fall in love, and fight for their relationship. Leaving aside romance, the protagonists of action adventure do not only face physical danger, but tension also increases as the story advances. From Cawelti's point of view (2014: 39-40), an action adventure story presents obstacles and dangers to be overcome by the protagonist with the aim to accomplish a mission. As for science fiction, plots, which may be set in the future, the past or other dimensions, are defined by the type of settings. Scientific ideas and advanced technological concepts are meant to be developed and expanded in the stories. From Sobchack's standpoint (1987: 18), "written science fiction has existed as a recognised genre long before there was a body of film which lay claim to the name science fiction." As the writer Theodore Sturgeon stated (1962: 10, cited in Sobchack 1987: 19), "a good science fiction story is a story with a human problem, and a human

solution, which would not have happened at all without its science content.” On the contrary, Fantasy creates stories which are based on myths, magic, or the Dark Ages. It is obvious that kingdoms are meant to be found. In Timmerman’s words (1983: 2): “Fantasy gives us the opportunity to become lost for a time in another world so that we can discover or recover a fresh perspective in this world.” By contrast, thriller focuses on stories which are built around a character in jeopardy. The threat might be either physical or psychological. As Simpson sees it (2010: 187), intensifying the action, using cliff-hangers, and high levels of suspense are by far some of its most important characteristics.

As far as youngsters are concerned, two genres must be differentiated: young adult and new adult. The former is mainly addressed to young adults as well as adolescents, since it deals with coming-of-age stories. The latter explores the challenges and uncertainties of leaving home and emancipation. These books are considered to be the follow up to young adult literature. As Carlsen sees it (1980, cited in Vanderstaay 1992: 48), young adult literature has the figure of a teenager as a main character, who speaks in the first person singular, and describes his/her initiation in the adult world.

Nevertheless, characters are expected to overcome supernatural or evil beings in horror/paranormal/ghost genre. This genre is devoted to “the paranormal, mystery, the uncanny, magic, and beings either benevolent or demonic from other places or other dimensions” (Stephens and McCallum 2001: 165). Mystery/Crime genre is about a crime that must be solved, a question that must be answered or an identity that must be revealed. Hence that clues are meant to be followed in order to find the truth. From Cawelti’s standpoint (2014: 42-43), hidden secrets are to be discovered and their revelations might have bad consequences for the main character. Following the line of the previous genre, police procedural genre is more oriented to the technical aspects of investigations; which is why it is focused on aspects of criminology, forensic aspects, police work as well as collecting evidences for a police officer to solve either a crime or a mystery. What police procedural genre permits the reader is “to experience the vicariously pleasures of criminal attacks on a repressive society” (Winston and Mellerski 1992: 2).

As the term suggests, historical genre does not only portray historical figures as characters, but also historical events. In Nünning’s view (1997: 217), real facts, fiction, history and myth are merged into historical novels. Furthermore, western genre is set in the old American West. Cowboys, Indians, miners, frontiersmen, or mountain men are instances of the most common characters in its stories. Wedding (2001: 3) highlights how both alcohol and alcoholism are portrayed in settings such as saloons, bar fights, and town drunks in the western genre.

Family saga genre is about businesses, properties, acquisitions, as well as family curses. Normally two or more generations of a family are involved in the plot. Normally these tales are named family sagas since both lives and adventures of families are told; e.g. the stories around the leading families of Iceland, as suggested by Ross (2000: 5).

Furthermore, women’s fiction depicts female characters that face challenges, difficulties and crises which are directly related to this gender. What is more, conflict is also associated with economy, family, society, art, politics, and religion. According to Ferris and Young (2006: 3), women’s fiction has been “popularised by Harlequin in the United States and Mills and Boon in Britain;” and characterised by a male-female couple, and a two member relationship with no third person involved. Nonetheless, magical realism deals with “magical happenings in a realist matter-of-fact narrative” (Bowers 2004: 12), i.e. magic realism makes use of magical events which are part of ordinary life. In Zamora and Faris’ view (1995: 3), “the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism.” Finally, in an attempt to explore the human condition, literary fiction is far more concerned with the inner lives of characters and themes than plot. What literary fiction simulates is the social world, inviting the readers into the minds of characters (Panero, Weisberg et al. 2016: 46). Thus, it follows logically that reading literary fiction improves empathy, as pointed out in Mar, Oatley, and Peterson’s research (2009: 407). Needless to say, that various subgenres are included within each genre. Some of them are gathered in the graph below (see Figure 38).



Figure 38. Genres in popular literature (<https://writerswrite.co.za/the-17-most-popular-genres-in-fiction-and-why-they-matter/>)

Regarding the myth of the vampire, it is quite evident that it has been a recurrent theme in literature. Instances of this are *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2016) by Anne Rice, *The Vampire Diaries* (1991-2007) by Lisa Jane

Smith, and *Dead until Dark* (2001-2012, see Figure 39) by Charlaine Harris among others. However, it is considered that a new treatment has been given to the figure of the vampire nowadays. Stephanie Meyer, who is the author of the *Twilight* series (2005-2020, see Figure 40), is responsible for that new outlook on the character. What differentiates *Twilight* from *Dracula* or *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) –see Figure 41– is that the former has a girl as the main character. In critics' view, there are other aspects to be taken into account: it is believed that the female character, Bella, “is not in control of her own sexual awakening” (Siering 2009: 1) as this depends on the allowance on the part of the vampire. Therefore, Ames (2010: 37) suggests that the saga might not be in favour of feminism.

Vampire narratives are often a reflection of their contemporary time, the political landscape, and [...] point to the progress and /or stumbling points of movements, such as feminism. [...] Vampire narratives are a product of their own time period and [...] Meyer's series represents the current time period and /or speaks to the present state of feminism (Ames 2001: 39).

Despite the huge success of the novels, which led to their production as well as their adaptation for the big screen, the cultural critic, named Jost (2008: 1), dared to say “that never before had he found a series so compelling, while at the same time been so offended by a story's content and despicable cast of characters”[...] It gives the impression that readers are obliged to step back in time to settle in a period when “women were property and only received validation from men's opinions of them” (Jost 2008: 1). As for feminism (North 2008), the final instalment in the series, entitled *Breaking Dawn*, has been regarded as a “creepy anti-abortion allegory” due to two factors: the traditional thinking that is kept by the female character in the novel and the supposedly promotion of teen motherhood. Besides, it is suggested that the novels are “a how-to manual for an abusive relationship” (Voynar 2008). Moreover, the protagonist is portrayed as a girl who needs to be rescued by the male character. Furthermore, *Twilight* is claimed to be a novel which portrays heterosexual couples, whilst *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice depicts homosexual relationships between the characters of Louis and Lestat (Ames 2010: 49).

As stated above, this type of fiction is a representation of our contemporary time. It is undeniable that *Twilight* and *Shadowhunter's* have caused such an impact on popular culture that either their adaptations for the big screen or television have been produced or are on their way. Similarly, Sholehati Ningrum (2015: 13-15) considers that the *Shadowhunter's* series (2007-present, see Figure 42) is also a reflection of American modern society. For instance, it is claimed that being a soldier is a typically male profession, which is a fact depicted in the book: “[...] It's only been recently that women have been Shadowhunter's along with men. I mean, there have always been women in the Clave – mattering the runes, creating weaponry, teaching the Killing Arts – but only a few were warriors, ones with exceptional abilities” (Clare 2007: 134). Sholehati Ningrum is also inclined to argue that there are elements in the novel that

stereotyped masculinities inside and outside the text (men are prone to being muscular and having big and sophisticated weapons); in her view, a parallelism can be observed between the figure of Shadowhunter's and Samurais, as they would rather die before witnessing how their honour is tainted "I sank my dagger into his neck and he died, soaking me with his blood. I expected the pack to set on me and tear me apart. But they knelt at my feet and bared their throats in submission. The wolves have a law: Whoever kills the clan leader takes his place" (Clare 2007: 361).

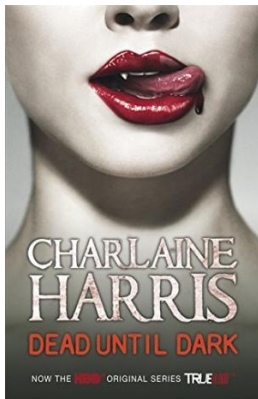


Figure 39. *Dead until dark* (<https://www.iberlibro.com/9780575097025/Dead-Dark-True-Blood-Novel-0575097027/plp>)

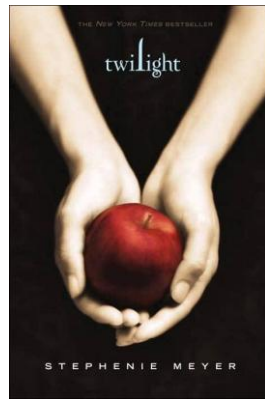


Figure 40. *Twilight* (<http://www.miratelinc.com/blog/14-highest-earning-authors-from-the-forbes-list-and-their-philanthropy/>)

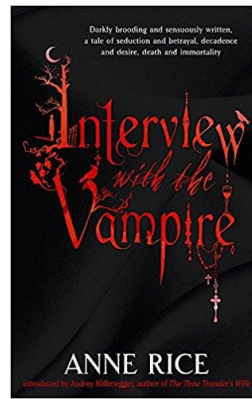


Figure 41. *Interview with the vampire* (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Interview-Vampire-Number-Chronicles/dp/0751541974>)

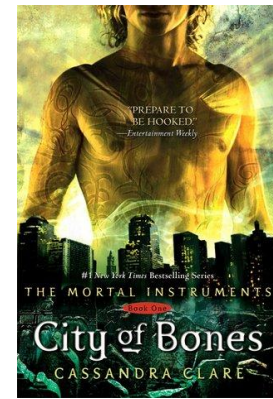


Figure 42. *Shadowhunters* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/256683.City_of_Bones)

According to Glickberg (1967: 75), "all literature, however fantasy or mystical in content, is animated by a profound social concern, and this is true of even the most flagrant nihilistic work." It is belief that a culture has the ability to express its values by means of the media. Those are mainly television, films, books, and newspapers among others. Society's reaction to these will be manifested through the refusal or acceptance of its values (Sholehati Ningrum 2015: 15-16).

In conclusion, popular literature is aimed to entertain, please, inform, and persuade a wide audience, since its topics are believed to be of common interest to a great number of people. Moral, aesthetic, social, philosophical as well as frivolous concerns are conveyed through popular literature. As previously mentioned, this manifestation of popular culture is characterised by two main elements: conventions and inventions. On the one hand, conventions are mechanisms to maintain traditions (Cawelti 1976: 5); and on the other hand, inventions are mechanisms to bring changes and new values (Ashley 1989: 87).

Besides conventions and inventions, three intrinsically connected aspects are also found within a text: the world, the reader, and the text itself. Firstly, the world is the context in which the participant faces up to the social conflict; secondly, the reader

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

might be active and critical or passive and uncritical; and finally, the text is the space where the reader and the world collide with one another.

Taking into account that every year a great number of books are generally adapted for either the big screen or television, both areas shall be covered in the following pages under their respective sections.

2.2.4 Films

2.2.4.1 Hollywood

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2017) indicates that Hollywood is the term given to the movie industry in the United States of America; besides, it “is a part of Los Angeles, California, where the American movie industry is based” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Hollywood>). Moreover, *The Free Dictionary* (2017) adds that it “it is the group of studios and celebrities that produce big-budget films for popular audiences” (<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Hollywood>). Defining Hollywood is not an easy task since both terms Hollywood and New Hollywood are to be distinguished. As King (2002: 2) sees it, Hollywood is a “multi-faceted creature;” however, on the other hand, New Hollywood “represents a style of filmmaking different from that which went before [...] it signifies a changed industrial context [also related] to changes in a broader social, cultural or historical context.” Such changes were the civil rights movement, popular music and fashion, protests against the war in Vietnam, feminism, demands for gay rights, the Kennedy assassination, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the oil crisis, Nixon, and the Watergate scandal, to cite but a few. From Neale’s standpoint (2000: 213), initially, Hollywood films were addressed to white audiences. But Hollywood was aimed at appealing to international audiences and, therefore, the products were eventually adjusted to suit foreign tastes. The majority of its genres have enjoyed popularity beyond the American borderline, especially the western genre, which has been produced several times in various European countries. As any other industry does in a capitalist economy, Hollywood produces artistic products for a market to make a profit, as a result (Belton 1994: 63). At first, the industry landscape was dominated by three companies: Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures and United Artists; the other five were Loews-MGM, Paramount Publix, The Fox Film Corporation (which was called 20th Century Fox after 1935), Warner Bros., and RKO (after 1928), which were subsequently merged (Neale 2000: 219). Nowadays, the landscape has slightly changed. The major studios are Warner Bros., Disney, Twentieth Century Fox, Paramount, Universal, Sony Pictures/Columbia and Dream Works (King 2002: 67). According to Pells (2012: 202), Hollywood was conceived of as cultural capital, a home to actors from all over the world. Furthermore, Campbell (2016: 346) states that there are four aspects that make Hollywood relevant. In the first place, Hollywood does not only highlight the scale of American cultural exports, but their dominance over the international market too; secondly, it shows that America’s cultural impact is continuous; thirdly, it is able to adapt itself to new ways of production and transmission;

and finally, it tells us how this country has been constructed on its own. As Ellwood (2012) puts it:

It is a fact, blessedly confirmed, that the American movie is affectionately received by audiences of all races, cultures and creed on all continents amid turmoil and stress as well as hope and promise. This isn't happenstance. It's the confluence of creative reach, storytelling skill, decision making by top studio executives and the interlocking exertions of distribution and marketing artisans (Ellwood 2012: 1).

For instance, *Avatar* (2010) by James Cameron was screened in 122 countries and became the most successful film in the history of the industry (Ellwood, 2012: 515). The world is aware that everything that produces money becomes a business, which is why Hollywood is currently producing two more sequels of the same franchise. Accordingly, this success is a sign of its supremacy over the film industry beyond the borderline of the States.

Besides, Campbell (2016: 346) argues that the impact of the industry is continuous. He underscores that approximately 63% of the worldwide box office, which is the term used to measure a film's success, in 2013 belonged to American films. Moreover, in 2013, around 70% of Hollywood's annual revenue came from other countries. What is more, eighteen of the top twenty films in 2014 were American productions, whereas the other two were productions funded from the States.

The paramount importance of the film industry goes from advertising to consumption, and it is summarised by Fluck below:

The medium of the twentieth century precisely because it synthesises the literature, the visual, and the aural. Its mechanisms operated in everything from the consumption of sporting events to fashion shows. Already in the 1920s it was observed that the essence of American movies was advertising – not primarily or necessarily for products but for poses, values, and visual pleasure. Here the spectator and consumer merged (Fluck 2004: 59).

According to the American Movie Classics Company (<http://www.filmsite.org/genres.html>), the main film genres are action, adventure, comedy, crime and gangsters, drama, epic or historical, horror, musical, science fiction, war, and western.

Traditionally, action films have been aimed at male audiences due to the array of races, rescues, battles, martial arts, explosions, fires, and the like featured. Instances of this are *Lethal Weapon* (1987, see Figure 43), which included an Afro-American detective in the role of work colleague for a Caucasian detective –being the former replaced with a Caucasian woman in contemporary films– (Gates 2004: 20); *Mission: Impossible* (1996), *Romeo Must Die* (2000), *Kill Bill* (2003, see Figure 44) regarded as “a typical action film hybridised with many violent genres such as the spaghetti western, the Japanese samurai, yakuza and anime, the Chinese kung fu, the American

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

blaxploitation, the gangster film, and rape revenge film” (Thiele 2009: 187); *A Good Day to Die Hard* (2013, see Figure 45), which has something that makes it different from the rest of action films: this is not a juxtaposition of protagonist and antagonist; what is not so self-evident is who the villain and who the hero is.



Figure 43. *Lethal weapon*
(<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093409/>)

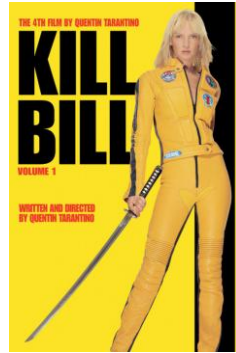


Figure 44. *Kill Bill*
(<https://puzzledpagan.com/2015/07/18/kill-bill-the-remixed-movie/>)

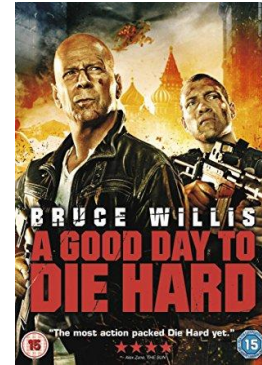


Figure 45. *A good day to die hard* (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Good-Day-Die-Hard-DVD/dp/B008OGHEVA>)

Initially, adventure films were products designed for male consumption, hence the creation of heroes. However, heroines like in *Tomb Raider* (2001, see Figure 46) are also found. Despite being less frequent, female characters tend to be portrayed with much more sex-appeal than male characters, who are likely to be muscular (Burgess and Stermer 2007: 419-421). What is expected in adventure films is treasure hunts, quest, expeditions, either in the jungle or the desert, travels, conquests, and explorations. *The Mummy* (1999, see Figure 47), *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003), *Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull* (2008, see Figure 48), and *Robin Hood* (2010) are some examples of this genre. Indiana Jones is thought to be a hero. It is believed that an analogy between Indiana Jones and King Arthur may be established, since Indiana’s tales “are tales of knighthood, modernisations of medieval chivalric romances in which America stands in for the Arthurian court, the Third World becomes the forest of adventure, and the Nazis [are] hostile knights to be defeated to recuperate and reaffirm America’s cultural destiny” (Aronstein 1995: 3). By contrast, the mummy is alien to the western concept of death since the mummy has the capacity of being reanimated. Also, the mummy is considered to be a reminder of human beings’ mortality and fear of death (Guran 2006: 376).



Figure 46. *Tomb raider* (<https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film388868.html>)

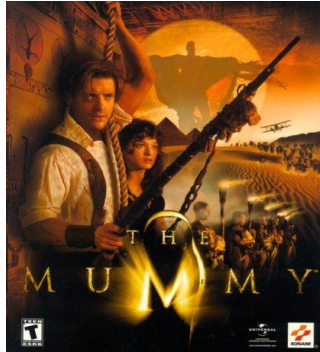


Figure 47. *The mummy* (<http://popclassicsjg.blogspot.com.es/2010/05/mummy-dir-stephen-sommers-1999.html>)

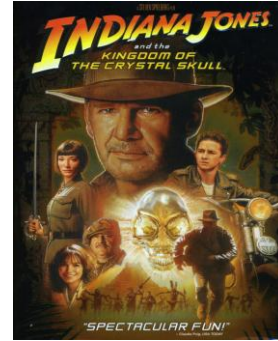


Figure 48. *Indiana Jones and the kingdom of the crystal skull* (<http://cinemorgue.wikia.com/wiki/File:Indiana-Jones-And-The-Kingdom-Of-The-Crystal-Skull-DVD-L097363418641.jpg>)

Comedy films: are likely to exaggerate situations, the language, and the action. Comedies are also classified in several subgenres: romantic comedy, crime comedy, sports comedy, coming-of-age comedy, social-class comedy, military comedy, fish out of water comedy, and gross-out comedy. For example *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *There is Something About Mary* (1998), *Zoolander* (2001, see Figure 49), which makes use of irony to depict the world of fashion, criticise child labour, and the aesthetic pressure (Vinuesa Caballero 2016: 54); *Wedding Crashers* (2005, see Figure 50), whose main characters do not only defect from marriage but also from obligations; obligation “to belong to a family, to be who you say you are and be a productive member of society” (Love 2004: 126).

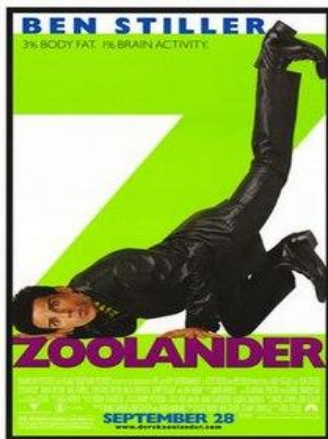


Figure 49. *Zoolander* (<http://www.relatably.com/q/zoolander-quotes-earrings>)

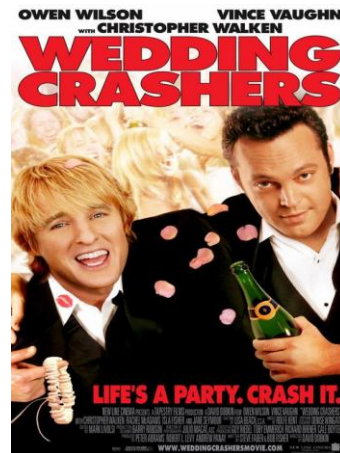


Figure 50. *Wedding crashers* (http://movies.wikia.com/wiki/Wedding_Crashers)

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

As for crime and gangster films, they are based on the rise and fall of criminals who operated outside the law. For instance *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *The Godfather* (1972), and *Pulp Fiction* (1994). Wright (2003: 43) points out that the feelings and fears in gangster films disappear by achieving financial and social success. In King's view (2002: 13-19), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967, see Figure 51) is an instance of a film belonging to the so-called New Hollywood. New Hollywood films were innovative –in terms of content and style– and were produced during the period ranging the decades of the 1960s and the 1970s. The protagonists of the film *Bonnie and Clyde* are not regarded as robbers but as a modern personification of Robin Hood, since they robbed the banks which took possession of mortgaged properties when poor farmers could not afford the payments.



Figure 51. *Bonnie and Clyde* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/bonnie_and_clyde/)

Similarly, drama films (Tisdell and Thompson 2007: 653-661, and Wilson, Nairn, Covrdaile and Panapa 1999: 232) present real life situations and characters that are in conflict with either themselves, others, or forces of nature. Accordingly, characters are shown at their best, their worst and everything in-between. The most common themes exploited are racial prejudice, religious intolerance, drug addiction, poverty, alcoholism mental illness, and violence, for example *Forrest Gump* (1994), *American Beauty* (1999), *Precious* (2009). Tisdell and Thompson (2007: 663) conducted a study, in which participants were invited to watch the film *Philadelphia* (1993, see Figure 52). After watching the film, one of the participants admitted that he had changed his outlook on gay people; whereas others claimed that the media were useful to know the difficulties that marginalised people had to face. Later on, the film *Crash* (2004, see Figure 53) was projected and white partakers recognised that they felt uncomfortable with the way racism was exercised in the film on the part of Caucasians, Afro-Americans, Iranian, and Latinos. To sum up, films have the potential to foster reflection and to facilitate change by making the audience analyse and reflect on their mindset and their own prejudices.

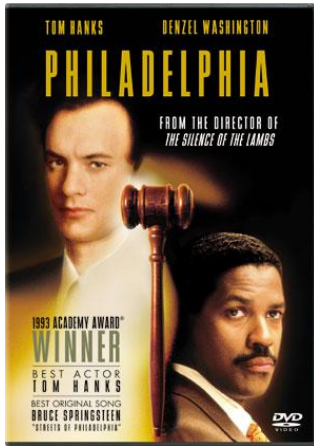


Figure 52. *Philadelphia* (<http://vtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Film/Philadelphia>)



Figure 53. *Crash* (<http://www.goldderby.com/article/2015/oscars-best-picture-crash-paul-haggis-brokeback-mountain-entertainment-13579086-story/>)

From King's standpoint (2002: 13-19), both *The Graduate* (1967, see Figure 54) and *Easy Rider* (1969, see Figure 55) are also instances of films belonging to the so-called New Hollywood. On the one hand, *The Graduate* seems to be a consumer-oriented film, since Benjamin (the protagonist who apparently has everything) is suggested to get a university degree in plastics. Something considered as fake, unnatural, and superficial. On the contrary, life on the road is depicted in *Easy Rider*, which is full of marijuana, LSD as well as contemporary music.



Figure 54. *The Graduate* (<https://www.amazon.com/Graduate-Italian-Poster-POSTER-ONLINE/dp/B0016DBY64>)

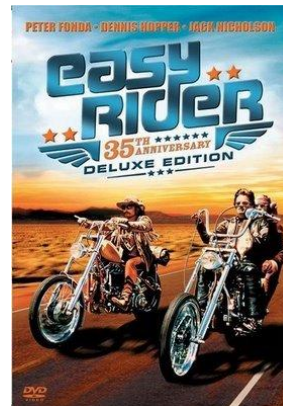


Figure 55. *Easy rider* (<http://cinestonia.blogspot.com.es/2012/01/buscando-mi-destino-1969-dennis-hopper.html>)

Owing to scandals in politics, it is hinted that the Watergate scandal gave rise to the development of another genre: the paranoid conspiracy thriller. This is portrayed in *All the President's Men* (1976, see Figure 56). *Executive Action* (1973, see Figure 57) is thought to be more challenging to film, since no solutions are given at the end of the story, which suggests a possible conspiracy on the part of the right wing in order to assassinate president Kennedy (King 2002: 13-19).

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School



Figure 56. *All the president's men*

(https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/all_the_presidents_men/)

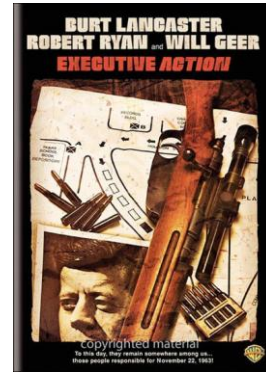


Figure 57. *Executive action*

(<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/executive-action-1973>)

Epic or historical films are films where past events are recreated, transporting the audience to other eras such as biblical times, the Middle Ages, or the Victorian era. Instances of this are *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *The Ten Commandments* (1959), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962, see Figure 58), whose main character is presented as someone “who sees beyond the boundaries of race, class, nationality, gender and religious doctrine,” (Bingham 2010: 76); or *Schindler's List* (1993, see Figure 59), “which takes on a trauma of collective historical dimensions” (Hansen 1996: 292).

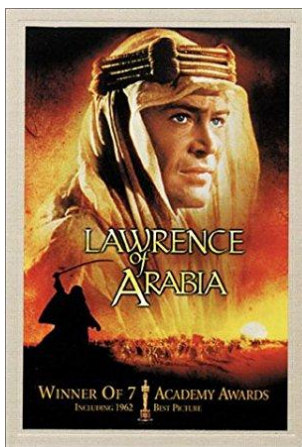


Figure 58. *Lawrence of Arabia* (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lawrence-Arabia-DVD-Region-NTSC/dp/B00003CXB2>)



Figure 59. *Schindler's list* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108052/>)

By contrast, horror films are focused on the dark side of life. It deals with nightmares, fears, and the unknown. Hence, forbidden, strange and alarming events are shown. Some of the most successful horror film franchises are *Halloween* (1978-present), *Friday the 13th* (1980-present), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1980-present), or *Hellraiser* (1987-present) (Christopher 2015: 55).

Within the horror genre, it seems that the figure of the vampire has been used as an allegory of social fears, problems and transgression that frequently crossed the line and shook audiences' minds (Kellner 2011: 90-91). Instances of this might be: *Vampire in Brooklyn* (1995, see Figure 60) which portrayed Afro-American vampires; *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), see Figure 61), which depicted transsexual vampires (Harper 2017: 9); *The Lost Boys* (1987, see Figure 62), where young homeless vampires appeared (Kane 2006: 1); *Interview with the Vampire* (1994, see Figure 63), which showed refined Victorian vampires; or *Twilight* (2008), where the world of two different species collide (Gordon and Hornick 2015: 12-13).



Figure 60. *Vampire in Brooklyn*
(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114825/>)



Figure 61. *The Rocky horror picture show*
(<http://www.elche.es/vento/proyeccion-de-halloween-the-rocky-horror-picture-show/>)



Figure 62. *The lost boys*
(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093437/>)



Figure 63. *Interview with the vampire*
(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110148/>)

Further instances that link fiction to real life events (Kellner 1983: 121-131) suggests that the franchises *Poltergeist* (1982-2015, see Figure 64), *The Amityville Horror* (1979-2017, see Figure 65) or *House* (1986-1992, see Figure 66) portrayed social fears at that time such as how people lost their houses, how families broke up, or how the family's economy was too tight. These issues probably dealt with the same concerns that people in the 21st century seem to be experiencing nowadays.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

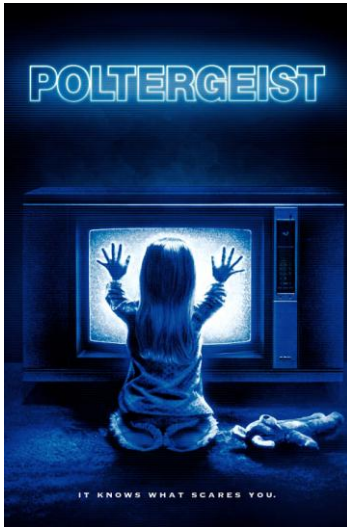


Figure 64. *Poltergeist*
([http://horror.wikia.com/wiki/Poltergeist_\(1982\)](http://horror.wikia.com/wiki/Poltergeist_(1982)))

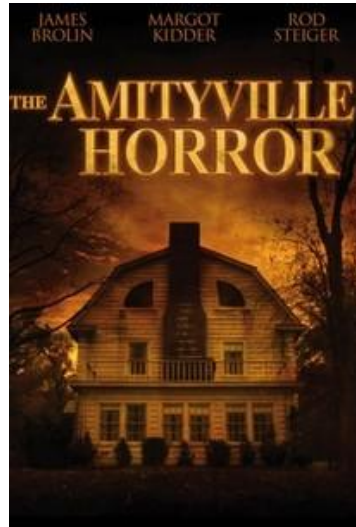


Figure 65. *The Amityville horror* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1000875_amityville_horror?)

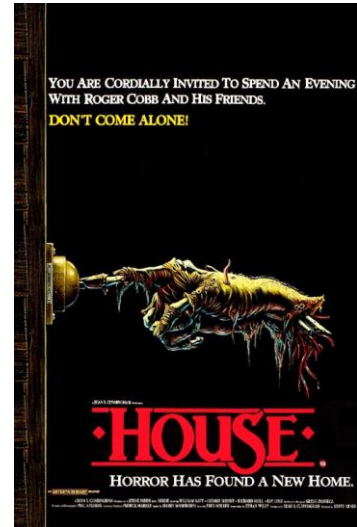


Figure 66. *House*
(<https://iscfc.net/2014/12/03/house-1986/>)

Besides, horror films such as *The Night of the Living Dead* (1968, see Figure 67) and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974, see Figure 68) are considered to be the result of society's mindset in the States after the Vietnam War (King 2002: 13-19).

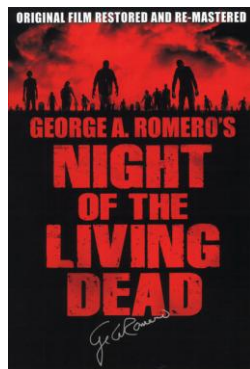


Figure 67. *The night of the living dead*
(<https://itunes.apple.com/us/movie/night-of-the-living-dead/id375547313>)

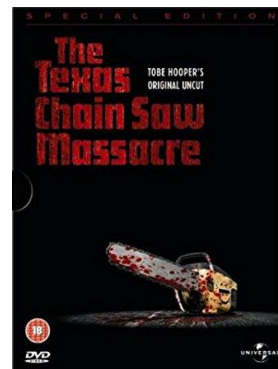


Figure 68. *Texas chainsaw massacre*
(<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Texas-Chainsaw-Massacre-Special-DVD/dp/B000085RPG>)

Leaving aside the atrocities depicted in horror films, musicals or dance oriented films –as the name suggests– are focused on music, dance with choreographies and songs with lyrics which support the story line. Such is the case of *Dirty Dancing* (1987, see Figure 69), portraying social issues such as class and gender; thus, dancing becomes either a social practice and a form of meaning (Kaltenbacher 2004: 138); *Evita* (1996), *Dreamgirls* (2006), *Mamma Mia!* (2008), *Lalaland* (2016). As Denisoff and Plasketes see it (1990: 257), the entertainment industry makes use of a strategy whereby both the music industry and the film industry are combined to promote a product. This strategy is

named synergy. The films *Saturday Night Fever* (1977, see Figure 70), *Purple Rain* (1984, see Figure 71), *Flashdance* (1983, see Figure 72), and *Top Gun* (1986) were accompanied by their original motion picture soundtracks, which were released before the films' premiere. Thus, soundtracks helped to promote films.

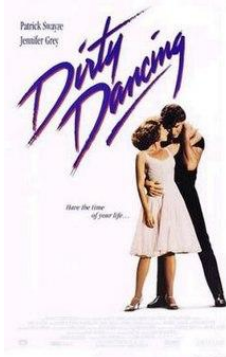


Figure 69. *Dirty dancing* (<http://www.filmstarts.de/kritiken/39225.html>)



Figure 70. *Saturday night fever* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0076666/>)

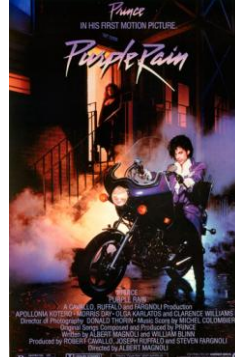


Figure 71. *Purple rain* (<http://www.nme.com/news/music/prince-25-1194583>)



Figure 72. *Flashdance* (<https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film669395.html>)

On the contrary, science fiction depicts the dangerous and sinister nature of knowledge like in *Frankenstein* (1931) (Laltha 2017: 6) and *The Fly* (1986) (Sánchez 2007: 175); viruses developed in laboratories and possible plagues *28 Days Later* (2002) (Carroll 2012: 397); genetic engineering and cloning *Gattaca* (1997) (Sánchez 2007: 197) and *The Island* (2005) (Laltha 2017: vi), or natural disasters *Deep Impact* (1998), *Armageddon* (1998) and *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), among others (Baker 2017: 263).

The multidisciplinary nature of cinema allows the audience to contemplate, reflect and think about some other cultural aspects, cultural roles, and values. For example, the franchise *Star Trek* is so prolific that there are multiple sequels as well as a television series. This franchise is relevant for popular culture because the first interracial kiss was broadcasted on its third season; which is why Provo (2014: 333) suggests that the franchise could serve as a platform where acceptance towards ethnicity, gender, and race might find a place and be built. Furthermore, it was the first TV series where an Afro-American woman was given the role of the captain of the enterprise, claiming equality between men and women (Fedorak 2012: 196). The book *Star Trek: Inside the Most Influential Science-Fiction Series Ever* (see Figure 73), which was a special edition of the Time magazine in 2016, gathered further details about this issue (https://books.google.es/books?id=WCWiDAAQBAJ&pg=PT162&dq=star+trek+first+female+captain&hl=es&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH_PDeIvbOAhXHORQKHW0LBDUQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=star%20trek%20first%20female%20captain&f=false).

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

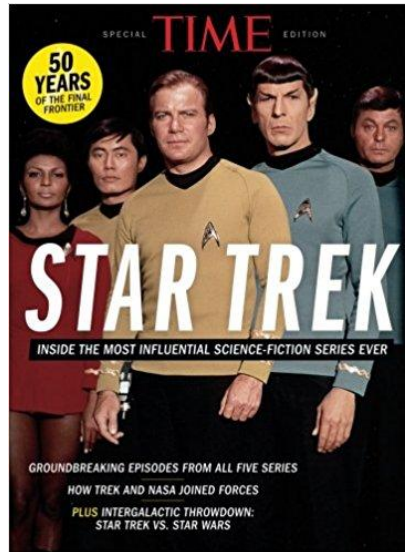


Figure 73. *Star Trek*: Inside the most influential science-fiction series ever
(<https://www.amazon.com/TIME-Star-Trek-Influential-Science/dp/1683304357>)

Fedorak also underlines the term fictive kinship, being a distinctive feature of the saga. When family relatives are not very close, people tend to include friends, neighbours, and colleagues within their kinship network. In the saga, “strong bonds of friendship, loyalty, and support systems usually reserved for close family members” are developed (ibid, 2012: 197). Moreover, Kapell (2016: 140) explains that Captain Kirk’s mission is to disseminate the norms, rules and ideals established by the United Federation of Planets all over the galaxy, which is why the Star Trek saga seems to support the idea that “The American way of life will somehow prevail in the universe” (Lawrence and Jewett 2002: 257).

According to Provo (2014: 335), *Star Trek* should be regarded as “a promise of tolerance, peace, exploration, and humanity in our future.” Without *Star Trek*, “modern pop culture would be filled only with bleak visions for tomorrow, of aliens ruthlessly invading and destroying Earth.”

War films tell stories about combat, survival, sacrifice, escape, the effects of war on society as well as moral and human issues. Instances of this are *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989, see Figure 74), where metaphorically the nation is regarded as a mother that is to be saved from its weakness by a masculine hero (Burgoyne 1994: 211); *The Pianist* (2002, see Figure 75), based on the memoirs of a pianist in a ghetto in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation in Poland (Moldes 2005: 270); or *Thank You for Your Service* (2017), which explores the trauma of war in American veterans after returning home (García Lozano 2018: 353).

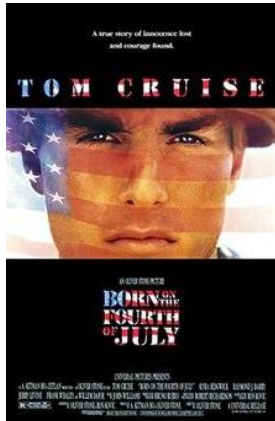


Figure 74. *Born on the fourth of July*
<http://www.moviepostershop.com/born-on-the-fourth-of-july-movie-poster-1989>



Figure 75. *The pianist*
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Pianist-DVD-Adrien-Brody/dp/B0001E5TSI>

Finally, westerns do not only portray the borderline between civilisation and the wilderness, but the confiscation of the territorial rights of the original inhabitants of the frontier, e.g. *The Last of the Mohicans* (1920, see Figure 76) portraying native Americans on the big screen (Jojola 2011: 18), *The Return of the Bad Men* (1948, see Figure 77), and *I Shot Jesse James* (1949, see Figure 78). Four factors characterise the westerner (Wright 2003: 43): first, there is no mention of where he earns his money; second, he often lives in isolation or in a very simple society; third, deserts, mountains or small towns are suitable settings for the westerner to confront his enemies; and finally, violence becomes morally right when occurring in accordance with a code whereby “executions, revenge killings, and killings in defence of one’s life and property” are permitted.



Figure 76. *The last of the Mohicans*
<https://www.amazon.com/Last-Mohicans-Revolutionary-Frontier-action/dp/B01N4UXC54>



Figure 77. *The return of the bad men*
<http://the-greatwesternmovies.com/2015/04/09/return-bad-men/>



Figure 78. *I shot Jesse James*
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0041497/>

In conclusion, Hollywood is a film industry which invests large sums of money to produce films addressed to the masses as well as to promote them by means of advertising, commercials and publicity. What characterises Hollywood is: the great number of American cultural exports; its power over the international market; a continuous cultural impact; and its capacity to adapt itself to new ways of production and transmission. In addition to this, the multidisciplinary nature of cinema enables people to contemplate, reflect and think about cultural aspects, roles, values, social fears, problems, and transgressions. What is more, the cinema –as a cultural manifestation– is influential, since it might serve as a platform where acceptance towards ethnicity, gender, and race might find a place and be built. Thus, films have the potential to foster reflection and to facilitate change by making the audience analyse and reflect on their mindset and their own prejudices

Before moving on to the next subsection, it is worth noting that apart from the Hollywood-based industry, there are some other emerging film industries all over the world. Such is the case of Bollywood, “Hindi-speaking film companies from Mumbai, Bombay” (Christopher 2011: 101); Nollywood, a filmmaking industry based in Nigeria (Marston, Woodward and Jones 2007: 45); Kollywood, a film industry settled in Tamil Nadu, southern India (Christopher 2011: 101); Tollywood, Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad, India (Kumar 2006: 129), which is a city within a city; and Trollywood, a Swedish-based film industry (Achtenhagen 2011: 359). However, only the first — Bollywood— is covered in the next subsection due to its large scale production, since approximately 800 films are produced per year (Mishra 2002: 1).

2.2.4.2 Bollywood

As stated above, Bollywood is a term referring to the Hindi-speaking film industry settled in Mumbai, Bombay (Christopher 2011: 101). From Das Gupta’s standpoint (1988: 130), Indian cinemas are regarded as modern temples, whose enormous spaces and inner décor are designed to seduce the audience. Hence, Indian cinemas were also known as temples of desire. As Mishra (2002: 1-2) sees it, about eight hundred films per year, screened in thirteen thousand cinemas, viewed by approximately eleven million people a day and exported to an estimated one hundred countries, which gives a general overview of the gigantic size of this type of entertainment in India. It is worth highlighting its cultural value in order to admire it as an “Epico-Mythico-Tragico-Comico-Super-Sexy-High-Masala-Art” (Rushdie 1995: 148-149), which has made its way into the world’s popular culture to such an extent that Indian culture is to be found and recognised in songs, video clips, performances, soap operas, as well as television films.

On the contrary, the quotation below suggests that the term Bollywood is wrongly used, since it is not a synonym for Hollywood. Both are aimed at entertaining; however, the so-called Bollywood films are produced for the audience to avoid thinking of starvation and poverty for a while:

Do not call it Bollywood. This is a very wrong thing to call it. We are not trying to copy Hollywood. We are making films for an audience of a billion people. Over 80% of these people don't have enough food in their bellies. Our country does not provide its people with pool halls, basketball courts and video parlours, so we make films for them that will let them forget their lives for 3 hours. We create total fantasy, not the polished reality that Hollywood portrays. Never forget that, never forget that we are making films that allow people to believe for 3 hours that they are not poor and hungry (Subhash Ghai, 2002: 12).

Apart from the national imaginary, what Bollywood projects in its films is the idea of an India as a world power. On the one hand, the success of this type of cinema lays on the investment in various ways of distribution such as DVD, VCD, satellite broadcast, music rights as well as video on demand. However, on the other hand, the Bollywood industry also makes its way through fashion, advertising, the music industry, Internet websites and live performances (Vasudevan 2011: 3-4). This is due to the development of media and technologies in South Asia (Desai and Dudrah 2008: 11).

This huge film industry, rooted in India, grows in parallel with Hollywood and the European industry. Indeed, Bollywood films are being distributed in Africa, Europe, and America as well as in Asia for an audience who are unable to speak the language of the films but who are visually hypnotised by them. What is at issue here is the impact of Bollywood on films produced in other countries. The American production *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008, see Figure 79) is thought to be a Bollywood-like film. This is so, because of a song and a final dance scene in the Bollywood style (see Figure 80) and its offer of a cultural ethnography of India (Ashcroft 2014: 9-10).



Figure 79. *Slumdog Millionaire* poster (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Slumdog-Millionaire-DVD-Dev-Patel/dp/B001JJBC5S>)



Figure 80. *Slumdog Millionaire* dance scene (http://goldderby.latimes.com/awards_goldderby/2009/01/pga-awards-5193.html)

Bollywood films are characterised by their length, colourful, repetitive plots, a profusion of music and dancing, and a happy ending. As for length, these types of films take three hours at least, which is why some intervals or breaks are taken all along the projection at the cinema so as to keep the audience engaged. The length of the film is due to the belief that the audience needs to empathise with the characters in the story. In order to appeal to the viewers, Bollywood films are full of vivid colours. Apart from wearing heavy jewellery (see Figure 81), female characters are dressed in saris, and over

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

the top costumes (see Figure 82). Actresses are used to wearing copious amounts of makeup. Basically, the story repeats itself over and over from one film to another: a man falls in love with a rich woman and they are expected to fight to be together against all odds. This fight for love takes place among music and dancing scenes, which are aimed to spice the film up and help the audience to remember the film by means of an association between the dancing scene (see Figure 83) and the film itself. In the end, the antagonist is punished, the couple ties the knot, and the feuding families get together; that is why a happy ending is guaranteed (<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/five-distinct-characteristics-bollywood-movies>). In respect to the songs, they are not sung by the actors but rather by playback singers (Desai and Dudrah 2008: 11).



Figure 81. Dance scene

(<http://music.rushbiz.com/hamesha-tumko-chaha-piano-strings/>)

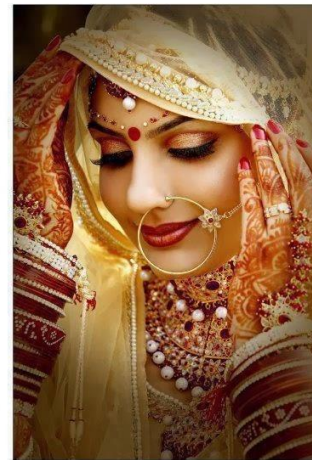


Figure 82. Jewellery and adornments

(<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/475692779364047171/>)

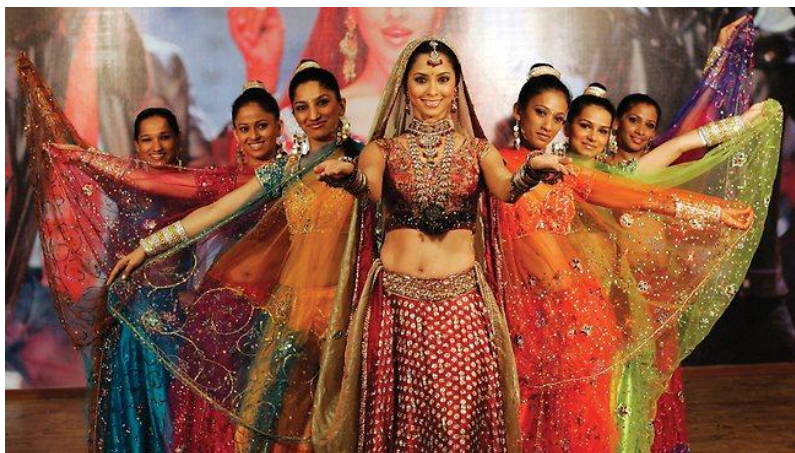


Figure 83. Traditional costumes with vivid colours

(<http://laperfectaprometida.com/blog/pelis-boda-amor-y-bollywood/>)

The world of the traditional Indian family has been portrayed by films such as *Who Am I to You?* (1994, see Figure 84), *Brave of Heart Wins The Bride* (1995, see Figure 85), *Foreign Land* (1997, see Figure 86), *Whether or Not There's a Tomorrow* (2004). Such films open a window through which extended families, multicultural engagements, and ritual forms like marriage, its ornamentation and performance are shown. The image of traditional families that is portrayed is thought to be a way of regulating social relationships (Vasudevan 2011: 5). Moreover, it is worth mentioning the emergence of the domestic drama in the 1990s, aimed to reflect socio-political and economic changes at the time. *Pardes*, also known as *Foreign Land* (1997), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, translated as *Something Happens* (1998), or *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun*, whose title was adapted as *Who Am I to You?* (1994) are examples of films reflecting such issues (Malhotra and Alagh 2010: 19).

Leaving aside the genre focused on either the traditional family or romance, other genres are bound to be found within Bollywood-like films. *Ramayana* (2010, see Figure 87) or *Mahabharata* (2013, see Figure 88) are considered to be mythological and devotional films, since they deal with epic stories and religious South Asian traditions. Messages about the British rule and the pre-independence period are the subject matter of historical films. Social films, also known as topical, do not only depict the nation's hopes and ideals, but also the broken promises of a young independent nation. The plot of horror and supernatural films is devised with elements of Indian superstitions and folklores, including divine or semi-divine interventions against evil. Action films are a mixture of comedy, romance, family melodrama, cabaret, car stunts. *Dishoom* (2016, see Figure 89) might be an example including dozens of extra for the dance scenes (Dudrah 2006: 175-180, cited in Desai and Dudrah 2008: 12-13).

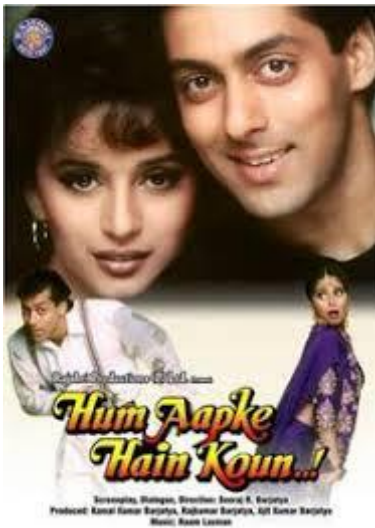


Figure 84. *Who am I to you?* (<http://www.bollywoodlife.com/movies/hum-aapke-hain-koun/>)

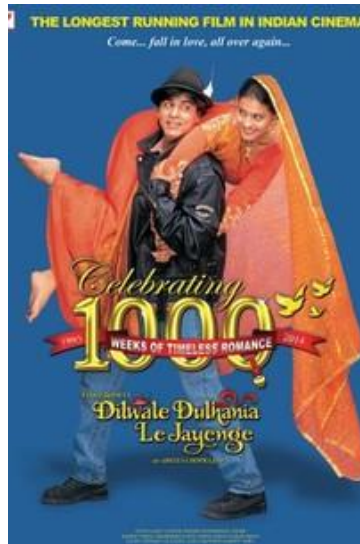


Figure 85. *Brave of heart wins the bride* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dilwale_dulhania_le_jayenge)

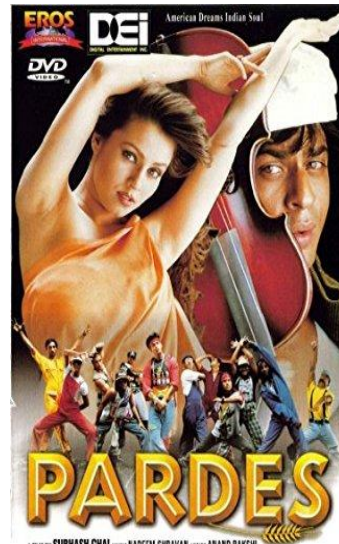


Figure 86. *Foreign land* (<https://www.amazon.ca/Pardes-Hindi-Bollywood-Indian-Cinema/dp/B004OVUG>)

)

[FA](#)



Figure 87. *Ramayana*
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramayana:_The_Epic)

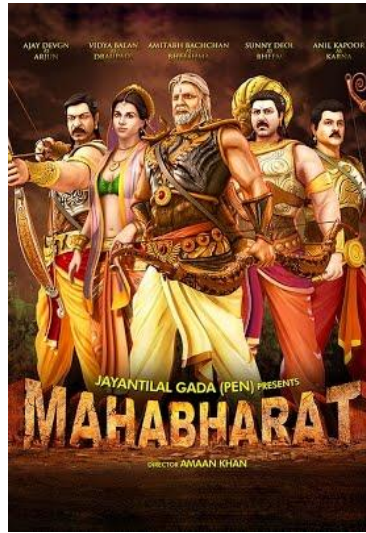


Figure 88. *Mahabharat*
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTwph_2VpFE)

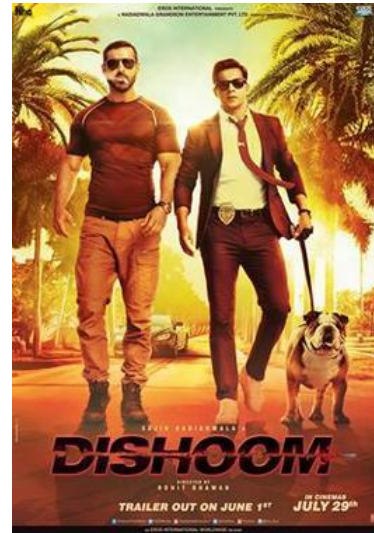


Figure 89. *Dishoom*
(<https://www.comingtrailer.com/movieposter/hindi/423825276/Dishoom>)

To put it in a nutshell, Bollywood films are believed to represent people's hopes and anxieties in a world that is subject to continuous and quick changes (Desai and Dudrah 2008: 11). As previously pointed out, this is so because of their three-hour length, the costumes, the imagery, the vivid colours, the ornaments, the jewellery, the settings, the music and the dance scenes. Everything is carefully planned right down to the last detail so as to immerse the viewers into the plot with a view to forgetting starvation as well as their worrying economic issues. Cinema is therefore considered an entertainment, a pastime.

2.2.5 Television

Bearing in mind that television is considered to be one of the most influential medias nowadays due to its entertainment format, the following pages delve into two key areas, television series and reality shows. These two cultural manifestations are appealing because of the contrast between the both of them: reality shows are intended to depict real life, on the one hand; and television series are likely to either depict fiction or fiction based on true events, on the other. In the following pages each of them is addressed separately.

2.2.5.1 Television series

According to Luengo Cruz (2008: 321), television series (henceforth TV series) are audio-visual cultural products aimed to entertain and distract the viewers from their working activities. Hence the importance of the time frame at which they are broadcasted. Similarly, Franco (2001: 453) argues that watching a TV series on a

weekly basis has become part of many people's routine. It takes place on the same day of the week, at the same time of the day, and in the same geographic area. Be that as it may, it follows that watching a TV series might be considered a sort of ritual which defines a cultural community. A series is also defined as a "group of episodes of a television programme broadcasted in regular intervals with a long break between each group, usually with one year between the beginning of each" (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/tv-series>)

Some series are categorised as cult series and this is due to the following reason. From Pérez Gómez's standpoint (2011: 21-24), decades ago a series was considered to be a cult series due to the action that was originated by fans, and the term was more restricted to fantasy series aimed at a reduced group of people. Nowadays, everything has changed, and this distinction is due to the development of tools such as official web sites and forums of discussion aimed at a wider audience. What is true is that there is a sector of population that watches series for the pleasure of entertainment, whilst there is another who does it not only for entertainment but also as a way of socialisation. After watching an episode, viewers can get more involved in the universe of the series by taking part and giving their opinions in specific forums designed for such issues. Thus, the ultimate goal of TV series is that the audience communicate with one another: making comments about what happened while watching the episode, what is expected to happen in the story from now onwards –by hypothesising–, and trying to give explanations to the aspects that are not explained in the story.

Benjamin (2003: 87) considers that there are two types of audiences: those who only watch the television product as a way of entertainment –passive audience–, and those who go beyond the entertainment aspect and write about it after having reflected on it –active audience–. The former are said to be awake and share a common world, whereas the latter are called dreamers, since they are believed to have a world on their own.

As the actor Patrick McGoohan said, TV series are also characterised by fascinating their followers who are capable of watching their favourite shows over and over with the same enthusiasm as the first time they did so (McGoohan, cited in Hills 2002: 132). Furthermore, Hills (2002: 131) adds three more features to TV series: "auterism, endlessly deferred narrative, and hyper diegesis." Firstly, the television product is normally linked to a television channel; nonetheless, those cases in which the name of a well-known director is behind the show is likely to be a synonym of quality. Viewers are thought to support the show when associated with a famous name rather than supporting an anonymous product. In the second place, the fact of not giving an answer to all the narrative lines is known as an endlessly deferred narrative. Doing so, both main and secondary characters will not be completely defined. Finally, hyper diegesis consists in showing a small portion of a large universe. Hyper diegesis intends to create various universes for the story. In this sense, it is common to watch the same characters in an alternative universe living different lives.

As Landau (2013: 3) puts it, there is an aspect the audience tends not to be aware of when watching a TV series. The type of TV commercials which are broadcasted during the minutes of the break may reveal whether the channel is targeting men or women. The former are associated with beers and cars whereas the latter are associated with cosmetics and feminine products. Leaving aside commercials, television –as a manifestation of popular culture– may lead to multidisciplinary analysis as different events and facts can be analysed from different points of view and disciplines; e.g. films or series may lead to analyse socio-political situations, or address a particular issue from an economical perspective. Indeed, technology, television and cinema merge and make borderlines among disciplines disappear (Cervantes and Velázquez-Zvierkova 2010: 8-9).

As the quotation below states, under no circumstances should television be underestimated, since it is an influential medium where opinions are conveyed, shared, agreed, or disagreed; and it is also a meeting point for moral conventions and values.

Television is much more than an entertainment medium. It is a forum for expressing ideas, values, and cultural mores. In 50 some years, television has become an integral component of human society, an influence as powerful as family, peers, religion, and schools. It can create an international sense of sorrow through images of tragedy (the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the death of Princess Diana, and natural disasters of Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Indonesia) or galvanize us into becoming involve in protecting the environment or righting civil injustices (Fedorak 2009: 40).

In this sense, the following examples would turn out to be suitable to support the idea that TV series are more than an entertainment. The medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* (2005) is still being broadcast on ABC after 16 seasons. It shows how a woman has an important job and has to face some difficulties in her private life. The series shows that there are strong women who are independent and this might be useful to other women; they may realise that they are not alone and that there are other women that suffer and have to struggle every day to survive in a man's world. Therefore Fedorak (2009: 8) thinks that “popular culture is also quick to showcase changing attitudes toward gender equality and to influence our opinions on this topic.”

Similarly, the comedy-drama *Desperate housewives* (2004) has also been broadcasted on ABC for 8 seasons. Although each woman on the series shows a slightly different type of desperation, they have to overcome huge difficulties at home in comparison to the hardships of their professional lives. It has been highlighted that they find little help on the part of men. “Love, marriage, appearances, human interaction, cultural expectations, and the breaking of rules” (Chicharro Merayo 2013: 26) are some of the themes treated.

In addition to this, the sitcom *Will and Grace* (1998) made the audience reflect that homosexuals and lesbians face similar problems along its 8 seasons. Definitively,

television “plays a significant role in determining how the audience will think about themselves and the world around them” (Fedorak 2012: 197-198). Hartley (2008: 78) defines sitcom as the mixture of the terms sketch comedy and situation drama. In addition to this, Neale and Krutnik (1990: 233) add that a sitcom is a “short narrative-series comedy, generally between twenty-four and thirty minutes long, with regular characters and setting.” Mills (2014: 469-470) suggests *Linda Green* (2001-2002) and *Gavin and Stacy* (2007-2010) as examples of sitcoms. Apart from sitcoms, (Altrah, Gymnich and Surkamp 1992: 1) other genres can be found: action series, cartoons, soap operas, and miniseries, to cite but a few.

Television series seem to have a great impact on people’s lives. For example, the broadcast of the supernatural series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) has become a cult figure in the field of popular culture since “Buffyspeak,” the “Buffyverse” or “Buffyuniverse” and “Buffypeople” have become popular all over the world. By “Buffypeople” Kellner (2004: 49) means those who are able to talk about the series by citing sentences from specific episodes and seasons. The show was also controversial as it was accused of threatening the Christian scheme based on redemption and salvation. The reason for this accusation was the plot on which the story was based: the living fighting against the undead, light against darkness, heaven, and the underworld so to speak. In fact, the figure of the vampire has been used as an allegory of social fears, problems and transgression that frequently crossed the line and shook audiences’ minds (Kellner 2011: 90-91). For instance, the characters of Spike and Drusilla (in “Buffy”) were inspired by Sid Vicious, the member of the punk band The Sex Pistols, and his girlfriend Nancy. In the series, the latter was into drugs. In addition to this, Kellner (2011: 104) argues that her necessity for blood was a metaphor for her addiction to drugs. “Buffy series presents images of youth who are intelligent, resourceful, virtuous, and able to choose between good and evil and positively transform themselves, while also dealing with their anxieties and grappling with the problems of everyday life” (idem 2011: 100). Ames (2010: 49) reflects on the key to its success, who suggests that “there may be a basic plot recipe that makes a young adult vampire storyline successful” and that could be an underlying love story. Apart from fighting against vampires, monsters and evil threats, Buffy falls in love with two characters. Whilst Buffy is a powerful woman, a fighter, a soldier with a mission to accomplish, Bella, from the *Twilight* franchise, is quite the opposite. She is a conservative girl who needs protection. The *Twilight* saga promotes sexual abstinence; on the contrary, the horror series *True Blood* (2008) depicts sexual contact in excess (Kellner 2011: 111-112).

Rodríguez Ferrándiz (2012: 68-69) argues that parallelisms are to be seen between the plot of the television series *True Blood* and the history of the United States of America. The plot takes place in the south of the United States, an area dominated by slavery and racial segregation. This leads Rodríguez Ferrándiz to consider that the emancipation of vampires on television might somehow be associated with the fight on the part of Afro-American people to abolish slavery in the southern states and obtain the same civil rights as Caucasians. In addition to this, there is an association called The

Fellowship of the Sun that reminds the aforesaid author of the Ku-Klux-Klan because of the idea of isolating vampires and organising terrorist attacks against them.

“A representative portion of Anglosaxon television series build up their stories by means of breaking –at different levels– the illusionist mirror that characterises traditional fiction” (García Martínez 2009: 1). This points out to metafiction, which was defined (Waugh 1984: 2) as a term that copes with fiction and reality. There are other several examples of current series that deal with this issue, e.g. *Black Mirror*, *Dead Set*, the anthology *American Horror Story*, *The Walking Dead* and *Wayward Pines*, among others. “Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (Waugh 2013: 2). Unconventional and experimental techniques are to be found in metafictional stories. Such techniques encompass: the rejection of a conventional plot, which is not real; and self-reflexibility is prone to becoming the main subject. (<https://www.geneseo.edu/~johannes/Metafiction.html>). In addition to these features, metafiction is also characterised by nonlinearity, irreversibility, and self-organisation (Stoicheff 1991: 85). Sholes (2014: 21) considers that metafiction is somewhere between fiction and criticism. Fiction of forms, ideas, existence, and essence are aspects included within the former. There seems to be a co-relation between the aforesaid four aspects of fiction and its critical perspectives –formal, structural, behavioural, and philosophical–.

To put it more simply, the borderline between reality and fiction appears to be blurred; accordingly, an unconventional plot including either flashbacks or flashforwards with self reflexive characters is expected. There are several examples of current series that deal with this issue, e.g. *Black Mirror*, *Dead Set*, the anthology *American Horror Story*, *The Walking Dead* and *Wayward Pines* to cite but a few.

Black Mirror

Black Mirror (2011-present) is a freshly baked TV series (Pousa 2013: 47-51) whose plot develops moral and ethic issues and this combination seems to be the key to its success. The series shows how the misuse of technology could destroy people’s lives. As for its characteristics, the show provides the audience with a cultural perspective based on science and technology. Furthermore, the information transmitted by the media and other users of new technologies is of paramount importance in every episode at the time of analysing how it is generated, transmitted and processed (Díaz Gandasegui Correo 2014: 589). Not only are citizens portrayed as passive consumers of information, but they also generate, take part in and interact with the information. In this sense, an active public opinion which has the capability to influence political decisions is created (Díaz Gandasegui Correo 2014: 591).

It is worth noting that the sociologist Postman (2006: 157) suggested that technology and social change are two elements that go hand in hand, as if they were an indivisible pack. Obviously enough, there is no point in asserting that technology is either neutral or culture friendly since technology provokes a social change. The impact

of current technologies has to do with the way individuals use them to communicate. According to Žižek (1989: 45), the fiction provided by television series constitutes the best means to observe today's world, since a direct observation to reality might be traumatic. Following this, it is King and Krzywinska (2000: 15) that affirms that the idea of a perfect future is replaced with a dark perspective regarding social changes in *Black Mirror*. That is why Miskowiec and Foucault (1998: 24) state that the mirror is a utopia, a place with no place, an unreal space. The mirror represents a direct or inverted analogy with our society, which appears in a perfected form or turned upside down. In Singh's words (2014: 122), the so-called black mirror is supposed to represent a screen when it is turned off. It is a dark image of us. By contrast, that image of society is more brilliant when the screen is on, distorting reality.

The series explores moral issues contrasting them with an inadequate use of new technologies. It is this combination that threatens people's integrity. In Díaz Gandasegui Correo's view (2014: 583), what is being analysed is the influence of new and groundbreaking technologies on society as well as its uses, effects and implications on a not so distant period of time. Thus what the series attempts to depict is a society controlled by new technologies.

Wayward Pines

The recent mystery series *Wayward Pines*, which is based on a trilogy book series by Blake Crouch, explores the use of suspended animation (see Figure 90 and 91) –also named “apparent death” (Stevenson 1975: 482)– to save the human race from its extinction (Monticelli 2019: 268-269). The term suspended animation is defined by *The Cambridge Dictionary* (2017) as “a state in which life in a body is temporarily slowed down or stopped. Some animals, such as hedgehogs, exist in a state of suspended animation during the winter” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/suspended-animation>). Bellamy et al (1996: 24) add that it is a “therapeutic induction of a state of tolerance to temporary complete systemic ischemia, i.e., protection-preservation of the whole organism during prolonged circulatory arrest, followed by resuscitation to survival without brain damage.” What the series explores is the nature of humanity and the parts of humanity that should be preserved. Issues of freedom versus government control are likewise brought to the fore (McCauley Rench 2016, cited in <http://www.potomacinstitute.org/steps/views-in-brief/67-book-review-wayward-pines-where-paradise-is-home?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=>). Monticelli agrees (2019: 272) that this social control is exercised through fear and ignorance.



Figure 90. Suspended animation
(<http://www.tracking-board.com/tb-talks-tv-wayward-pines-review-cycle/>)



Figure 91. Apparent death
(<http://www.tracking-board.com/tb-talks-tv-wayward-pines-review-choices/>)

In Cullen's view (2015: 145-147), the show is considered to be a mixture of *Twin Peaks* and *The Prisoner*. After a car crash, the protagonist finds a small town by the name of Wayward Pines. What its innocent façade hides is that phones do not have outside lines, cameras are to be found everywhere and the nature of the surveillance is unknown, the apparent quaint mountain-side town is surrounded by a five-metre-high electric fence, people are told to forget they had previous lives outside the town, citizens who try to escape are sentenced to a reckoning, and in this sense, it is also uncertain to what extent the townspeople are prepared to maintain the status quo. Eventually, the townspeople realise that it is a choice between acceptance and rebellion.

Furthermore, the book's author said in an interview that themes of isolation, time-displacement, human evolution and even cryonics are also to be found (<http://tvline.com/2015/06/11/wayward-pines-episode-5-aberrations-year-4028/>). Not to mention the idea of being observed that is always present in the story: citizens are aware that they are observed; their words have to be carefully chosen, because there are microphones recording their conversations all over the area; there are topics that are considered to be taboo; citizens know there are rules to follow; the inhabitants are obliged to accuse those who do not act or behave according to the established rules: "Do not try to leave. Do not discuss the past. Do not discuss your life before. Always answer the phone if it rings" (*The Daily Gamecock* 2015: 5).

American Horror Story

Up to date nine instalments of the horror anthology *American horror Story* series have been aired (2011-present). Even though each one is independent from the others, they are closely related. Every year the audience is surprised by a new concept, a new plot, and a new universe. Despite finding the same actors, the roles, and characters they are expected to interpret are different. As a consequence, the possibilities of the show are endless. This is basically one of the aspects that makes the series so appealing to spectators: on the one hand, there is a combination of variety and uniqueness; on the other, the development of an unexpected plot is alluring as it turns out to be complex, sophisticated and twisted. Trapero Llobera believes that "the show makes recourse to

the cultural and collective imaginary of terror and fantasy in order to build a constellation of characters dealing with the depiction of a contemporary bestiary” (2015: 69).

The story is told through the context of a horror story; and the information that the spectator receives is sequenced in such a way that any new piece of information added – as the episodes advance– is to affect the previous. Consequently, the course of the events is subject to dramatical change (Stewart 1982: 1).

The information that the viewers receive is shown by means of both flashbacks and flashforwards, which create a more thrilling atmosphere. The first season was about infidelity and it was set in a haunted house in Los Angeles (see Figure 92). Parenthood, unfaithfulness, and broken homes are key issues in the story too. The second season explored the topic of insanity in an asylum in Massachusetts where it seemed that the individuals inside the institution were less insane than the people outside. The search for redemption by means of religion is also depicted in the plot (see Figure 93). In season three there was a fight for power among women in a boarding school, which turned out to be a hidden coven of witches in New Orleans (Almendros Tolosa 2014: 5-6) (see Figure 94).



Figure 92. *Murder house*

(<http://americanhorrorstory.wikia.com/wiki/File:Ahsposter1.jpg>)



Figure 93. *Asylum*

(<http://www.sepiavlc.com/lie-nzos-grotescos-en-american-horror-story/>)

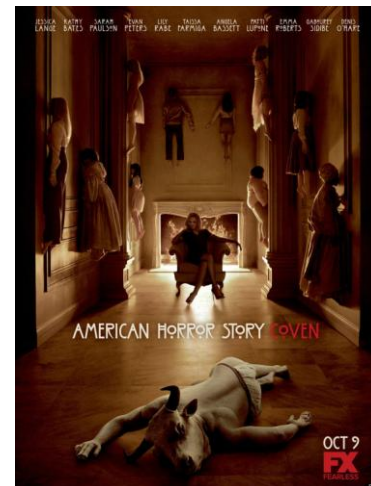


Figure 94. *Coven*

(<http://www.eurweb.com/2013/09/bassett-sidibe-in-new-american-horror-story-coven-promo-watch/>)

Even though there is a main argumentative line, there are also secondary story lines which make the story much denser than that of the previous instalments (Vink 2014: 146). Such secondary storylines are slavery, fight of the social classes, woman empowerment, and men versus women. The myth of Frankenstein can also be observed as a pair of young witches from the so-called boarding school try to create “the perfect boyfriend made from the spliced remains of mangled frat boys” (Osborn 2015: 158). Afterwards they breathed life into the dead corpse (see Figure 95). The contrast between

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black magic versus white magic is present; male figures represented by witch hunters attempt to exterminate female figures portrayed by witches; the concept of man versus beast is found in every instalment.

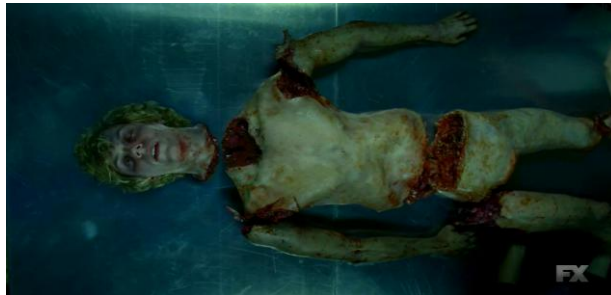


Figure 95. Myth of Frankenstein

(<http://vigilandoelcielo.blogspot.com.es/2014/02/an-american-horror-story-coven.html>)

As stated below, Trapero Llobera (2015: 70-73) adds that the series explores the ways in which someone becomes a monster or at least he/she is considered to be one. The real threat in each season is not a serial killer, but society itself, which actually turns out to be the real monster. On the one hand, the so-called monster is a reflection upon the social and individual environments at the time in which the product is conceived, developed, and created. On the other hand, the figure of the monster acts as a catalyst that will make the audience think of the dark side of society, its moral (or double moral) and its ideology:

[...] Todos los monstruos son humanos [...] el monstruo será un reflejo de los entornos individuales o sociales del momento de recepción y creación de los productos culturales pero también el monstruo servirá para reflexionar acerca de la cara oscura de la sociedad, de la moral y la ideología que operan culturalmente. [La serie va] a insistir en la concepción del monstruo como cuerpo cultural purgativo a través del cual se evidencian los miedos y ansiedades de la sociedad que los enmarcan (2015: 70-73).

Furthermore, it is unveiled that in every iteration of the series there are utopian micro-societies that are threatened by an exterior society. Those micro-societies are described as isolated universes, whose stability is at permanent risk. These two differentiated groups always exercise influence on one another. At least, the survival of one group is threatened by the other. For example, season one tells the story of the members of a family who try to solve their problems, and the ghosts that try to break them up; in season two, evil itself attempts to corrupt individuals inside an asylum; season three introduces a group of witches who are threatened by witch hunters (Trapero Llobera 2015: 73-74).

Twin Peaks

Regarding ground-breaking mystery series, *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991, 2017-present) changed television formats from the moment it was aired. Subsequent products drew inspiration from it as this series offered such a novel concept that the audience was delighted with the idea of solving the mystery. Little by little the audience discovered that the apparently innocent inhabitants of *Twin Peaks* hid secrets. The series “was about a corpse wrapped in plastic, a woman who talked to a log, and a dancing dwarf who spoke backwards. [...] It changed the face of television” (Thompson 1997: 152). Certainly, *Twin Peaks* broke the rules of its time, since the plot was sophisticated and difficult to follow at times due to the complexity of the characters, bizarre images and events were juxtaposed, and a sense of mystery surrounded the apparent quaint setting which deliberately leaves the audience with a cliff-hanger (idem 1997: 152).

The themes, images, storylines, proposed by the show inspired the series' followers to ask themselves questions and follow-up questions, which subsequently led them to write articles and essays dealing with the issues. Not until *Twin Peaks* was broadcasted on television did the viewers feel moved and inspired enough to debate and analyse the events depicted in the show so avidly for quite a long time. (Bianculli 2000: 271). Fans did not take long to look for possible clues in the episodes with the purpose of solving the mystery surrounding Laura's murder (Thompson 1997: 156).

What made the series very appealing to the audience was its innovation. Never before had the audience watched a series with such amount of symbolism. Be that as it may, it did not take long for it to become widely known as a cult series. This is why “A part of *Twin Peaks*' cultic appeal certainly lay in its visual inventiveness and its distinctive televisual look. The series frequently invites its viewers to “desuture” themselves, through self-conscious awareness, from the ordinary seducements of TV, and in so doing to, confirm cult membership” (Lavery 1995: 5). The twisted mind behind this great story is by David Lynch, who is prone to writing bizarre and strange scripts; the issues of violence, domestic violence or family violence seem to obsess him (Stevenson 1995: 72-73).

All in all, the two-season series is characterised by a profusion of characters whose words might deceive us due to their subtle nuances in meaning. Therefore, understanding the words of others is not the same as understanding what they mean. The main argumentative line is the mystery of Laura's murder, but also the inhabitants of this small town called *Twin Peaks* are somehow connected to Laura Palmer by means of bizarre story lines. The series is a juxtaposition of extremely obscure symbolic images, which are meant to be interpreted if one attempts to solve the mystery. It is this distinctive mixture of elements that helped him make a name for himself as a bizarre, strange, and obscure director (Thompson 1997: 154-160).

Characters' dreams are also meant to be interpreted. People, time, and space are likely to change while dreaming. They become strange, obscure, and bizarre; and apparently, they seem to make no sense at all. It is through these allegorical dreams that the hidden truth or citizens' secrets find their way out avoiding the censorship of

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

everyday life. The more complex, strange, and symbolic the dreams are, the lesser the intervention of censorship is to be found. It was Freud who named this process as oniric deformation (Giardini et al 2017: 55).

The two seasons of the show still left questions unanswered, which is why the film-maker David Lynch decided to shoot a film in 1992 so as to provide the audience with the information requested. It was entitled *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, which portrayed the last week of Laura Palmer's life, her acts, decisions, movements, thoughts, feelings, and events that eventually led her to death (Nochimson 2012: 173-177, and Hoult 2017: 16).

A third season was aired in 2017. The last episode of the second season (1991) ended up with a scene in which Laura Palmer told Agent Cooper that they would meet once again within twenty-five years (second season, episode 22). These twenty-five years have gone by between the end of the second season and the shooting of the third. The latter came to an end in 2016 and brought the original cast back (see Figure 96), including Laura Palmer herself (Ochonicky 2018: 417) (<http://time.com/4759458/twin-peaks-return-showtime/>).



Figure 96. The original cast returns 25 years later (<https://imgur.com/gallery/mr!Th>)

To conclude, television series are organised into seasons, which is why both directors and producers have more time or years to develop more complex and sophisticated characters than in a film. Taking into consideration that we are living in the era of entertainment, television series are not only a product manufactured to offer entertainment, but they also allow the audience to escape from the real world. In addition to this, TV series offer an opportunity to get closer to the real world by making the audience reflect on social issues.

2.2.5.2 Reality shows

A reality television show consists of recording some individuals' everyday lives by means of lightweight cameras which follow them everywhere they go in order to depict the events in which they are involved (Killborn 1994: 423). Even though these events are supposedly real, there is a certain attempt to reconstruct them thanks to

dramatisation, whose aim is to make them attractive to the audience. Finally, once the shooting comes to an end, it is time for the material to be edited so that the final product turns out to be suitable and appealing to the audience.

Perales Bazo (2011: 120) defines this television format as shows where non-professional actors cohabit and relate to one another. They are thought to react spontaneously in an attempt to overcome and defeat their opponents while cohabiting and being under permanent surveillance. Two factors tend to be repeated in this environment: competition and romance. Apart from this, Perales Bazo (2011: 123) also hints that reality shows might be regarded as an example of democracy, since an anonymous person might become an idol or a survivor who might be adored by the audience. Accordingly, opportunities of fame and fortune are equal for all contestants, regardless their origin.

In Crew's view (2006: 62), the term reality may be misleading, since the television format is likely to be prearranged due to: a careful selection of cast members with whom story lines are manufactured or thought out; challenges and competitions (either sports or mental games) that need to be overcome; romance and love stories are present; there is also a highly-produced soundtrack; contestants are set in an exotic location; and there is a final prize to fight for. Thus, these factors make the term reality difficult to associate with the word real.

Barton (2009: 460-476) conducted research on reality shows and claimed that they are watched due to the following reasons: as there were no other interesting options on the other channels; by watching a reality show the audience was able to imagine how they would react in a given situation; but most of all, a sense of voyeurism and an interest in observing the contestants' privacy seem to be the most crucial factors.

As indicated below, shows on television are hoped to be a mirror where society finds itself reflected. Thus, spectators witness life itself. Precisely, it is thanks to realities that certain entities, who have suffered from a certain type of marginalisation or exclusion, have been given a place to show themselves to the world, speak, express their identity, their thoughts, values, their way of understanding life and reaffirm their place in the world:

El espectador quiere ver lo que su sociedad refleja y padece, pero en ocasiones, la televisión y los productos en ella emitidos pueden servir de trampolín pedagógico para aquellas identidades tradicional, histórica y socialmente marginadas durante gran parte de la historia, y que hoy en día, necesitan su lugar en el mundo, el lugar de la visibilidad, de la aceptación y de la normalidad; como es el caso de la homosexualidad (García Manso 2013: 30).

The possibility that there might be shows where people who have suffered from social exclusion may raise their voices is empowering, provided that all prejudices are left behind. This might be the case of the American docu-reality *I am Jazz* (2015-present, USA, see Figure 97) (Johnston 2018: 455), the also American *Modern Family*

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

(2010-2020, USA see Figure 98) or *The Real O'Neals* (2016-2017, USA, see Figure 99) (Martin 2018: 284), where a bunch of people show their sexuality overtly and without any kind of censorship. These kinds of programmes would have been a scandal years ago due to the presence of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual people. On the other hand, it is thought that this broadcast which portrays the everyday life of this part of society was the key to its success. The show might be regarded as a platform to fight for LGBTIQ rights.



Figure 97. *I am Jazz*
(<https://watch-series.co/series/i-am-jazz-season-3>)

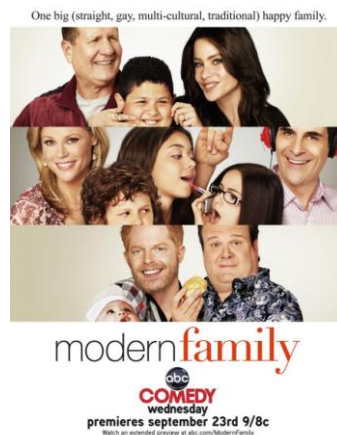


Figure 98. *Modern family*
(<https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film439937.html>)



Figure 99. *The real O'Neals* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_real_o_neals/s01/)

Realities “shape people’s way of thinking and being” (Redmon and Holmes 2007: 258). An illustrative example is the ‘alternative to the ideal of extreme thinness’ (Sastre 2013: 124) with which Kim Kardashian provides her followers in *Keeping up with the Kardashians* (2007-present, USA). She seems to have implants in her body. She decided to go to the doctor’s and get an X-ray. The process was recorded and was available online as well as on television. It is at this point that Sastre (2013: 133) suggests that “her transparent body has nothing to hide, is fully accessible, and exemplifies a collapsing of the private self with the public self.” Brighenti (2007: 336) adds that “the mere fact of being aware of one’s own visibility status –and not the fact of being under actual control– effectively influences one’s behavior [...]; accordingly, “in a disciplinary society, visibility means disempowerment.”

On the contrary, *The Osbournes* (2002-2005, USA) depicts the “melodrama of a soap opera, the real-time footage of the documentary, the voyeuristic snooping of the celebrity house tour, the interaction of incompatible and competing personalities of the “gamedoc,” all combined with the themes, issues and framing of a sitcom” (Gillan 2004: 57). The term “gamedoc” means “a shift to a “post documentary” television culture [...] gamedocs consist of rituals [...] as people get up, eat, wash up, chat, and sleep for the cameras” (idem 2004: 611-612). In the same vein, Corner (2002: 268) adds that *The Osbournes* is a mixture of both documentary and soap opera, where the

audience plays the role of both voyeur as well as judge, as far as the performance of the Osbourne family is concerned.

A different type of reality show is *Cheaters* (2000-present, USA), which focuses on people being caught while having an extramarital affair (see Figure 100); *Candid Camera* (1960-2016, USA) displays “normal” people who are expected to face strange situations while they are not aware that they are being shot by hidden cameras (see Figure 101). Clissold admits that the best part of the show takes place when the victims of the Candid Camera format notice that they are being shot for a television show. Needless to say, “issues of invasion of privacy, covert surveillance, social acceptance/alienation and manipulative authority all circulate” (2004: 40).

The format *Big Brother* (2000-present, UK) was inspired by the Arizona Biosphere project. It was in the 1990s that the participants of the project lived under a dome for two years, creating an isolated society. Afterwards television executive producers came up with the idea of extrapolating this project to a television format (Mathjis and Jones 2004: 1). Not only did it receive positive reviews, but it was also criticised by the media as for “exploitation of intimacy and human dignity [...] calling for concrete actions from regulators in terms of intervening in or censoring the programme” (Biltereyst 2004: 95-96). Rarely has a show caused such type of controversy. The same author argues that the show was regarded as a threat, because it established a social debate concerning issues such as:

...the social role of television and the media, the status of the private and the public sphere, the nature of vulgarity and cultural quality; the survival of traditional values within a global media environment; the commercialism of intimacy, love and sex; the representation of the physical body; the ‘problem’ and future of youth; and so forth [...] (Biltereyst 2004: 96).

What remains clear is that *Big Brother* (see Figure 102) was nothing but controversial. Apart from the accusations of inhumane experimentation on people’s psychological health, the programme was watched by millions of viewers, who phoned to vote and knew what was going on by surfing the net. Consequently, its scandalous nature and its success went hand in hand (Mathjis and Jones 2004: 2).



Figure 100. *Cheaters*
(<http://uproxx.com/tv/cheaters-facts-joey-greco-stabbing->

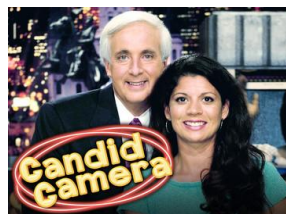


Figure 101. *Candid camera*
(<http://tvlistings.zap2it.com/tv/candid-camera/EP00434260?aid=zap2it>)



Figure 102. *Big brother*
(<https://twitter.com/bbuk>)

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

[video/](#)

Currently, it seems that celebrities and everything around their lifestyles deserve special attention. Proof of this is the great amount of shows devoted to singers, models, and their relatives. “As we embark upon a new century of broadcasting, it is clear that no genre form or type of programming has been as actively marketed by producers, or more enthusiastically embraced by viewers, than reality-based TV” (Friedman 2002: 6). Lately, there has been an explosion of reality shows on television depicting celebrities’ everyday life such as the American shows, *The Osbournes* (2002-2005, USA, see Figure 103), *Keeping up with the Kardashians* (2007-present, USA, see Figure 104) (Asseraf 2018: 35-41), or *Mariah’s World* (2016-2017, USA, see Figure 105) (Spano: 2015). Even the queen of pop was offered to shoot one based on her previous Rebel Heart World Tour (2016), which eventually did not materialise itself (<https://www.cromosomax.com/30793-madonna-se-plantea-protagonizar-su-propio-reality-show>).

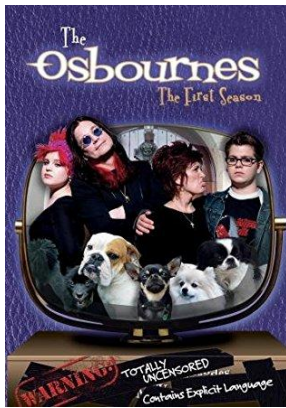


Figure 103. *The Osbournes*
(<https://www.amazon.com/Osbournes-Season-1-Uncensored/dp/B00005JLBW>)



Figure 104. *Keeping up with the Kardashians*
(http://es.doblaje.wikia.com/wiki/Las_Kardashian)

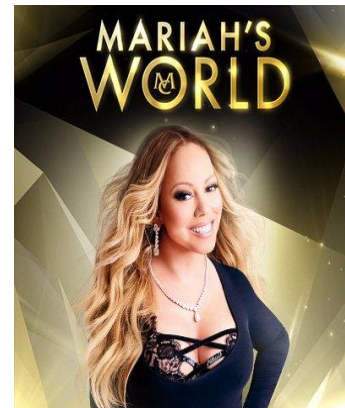


Figure 105. *Mariah's world*
(<https://twitter.com/mariahsworld>)

Hill (2005: 42-45) refers to the difficulty to categorise the profusion of reality shows that have emerged lately. He mentions *Survivors* (2000-present, USA), a mixture of a gameshow and an observational documentary; *Fame Academy* (2002-2003, UK), *Popstars* (2001, UK) or *Pop Idol* (2001-2003, UK), reality talent shows; *Faking It* (2014-2016, UK), which depicts people practising a profession different from their own; and *Jamie's Kitchen* (2002, UK), which is about the famous chef Jamie Oliver.

Reality shows about getting people's house remodelled are *Property Brothers* (2011-present, Canada), *Divine Design* (2003-2011, Canada), or *Love it or List it Vancouver* (2013-present, Canada). Rosenberg (2008: 505) claims that this proliferation of shows based on remodelling houses is due to a world dominated by consumer capitalism “in which the house is promoted simultaneously as a site of shelter

and sanctuary, identity production and taste presentation, and as a commodity.” Besides, there are also shows related to the so-called life-changing event, for instance, *Amazing Wedding Cakes* (2008-2011, USA), *Say Yes to the Dress* (2007-present, USA), or *Don't Tell the Bride* (2007-present, UK). Ingraham (2009: 171-172) considers that wedding shows are “the moment for creating the illusion of happiness, order, well-being, and plenitude [...They are] “ritual, drugged, and feel-good experiences.”

To sum up, taking into consideration that reality TV is supposed to depict real life, the audience needs to ask themselves to what extent this depiction is real. As stated at the beginning of this subsection, these allegedly real situations are said to be conceived, planned, dramatised, shot, reshot, and ultimately edited in such a way that the resulting product satisfies the audience's demands; consequently, it all comes down to marketing. On the plus side, reality TV might be regarded as a double-sided door, which is opened from the spectators' homes. It is through this portal, so to speak, that another side of society crosses the threshold of TV so as to account for the existence of a different part of society that the audience is not so acquainted with. This is an attempt of bringing otherness into people's comfortable area in order to make them aware that there are two sides of one society. On the negative side, if everything a person does is public, there is no privacy. Furthermore, as it is almost impossible to act all the time in front of the cameras, individuals are in some way holding back their real personality. The audience does not really know to what extent e.g. Kim Kardashian's true self is shown on her show *Keeping up with The Kardashians*. As Andy Warhol pointed out “in the future everyone will be world famous for fifteen minutes” (Gloor 2011: 61). From his well known atemporal quotation it follows logically that it is through this television format that unknown people are given the opportunity to become famous. It is through their social exposition that these anonymous individuals enjoy their allegedly 15 minutes or even more of fame. There are as many reality shows as there are social necessities: dating, law enforcement, makeover, lifestyle change, fantasies fulfilled, docusoaps starring celebrities, hidden cameras, reality game shows, talent shows/searchers, spoofs, and parodies to cite but a few.

2.2.6 Music

To start with, music (Levinson 2011: xvi) is thought to be an art form; and as every type of art, it provokes emotions, feelings, impressions, and sensations. I believe that it also possesses the ability to change people's moods from cheerfulness to sadness. Undoubtedly, it has a sort of influence on the listeners (Koelsch 2014: 170), which is why it deserves a section as one of the main manifestations of popular culture.

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, music is defined as a “science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity;” or “vocal, instrument, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/music>). However, music is more than a set of technical aspects.

One of the most complete definitions of music may be that of Fedorak (2009: 47), who suggests that music is: an art aimed to entertain. Not only is music considered a vehicle that enables socialisation, but it is also a way to express cultural and national identity. Therefore, it is a means which shows somebody's culture including values, ideals, as well as history. It is believed to be a source that allows people to comment on issues that matters most to them such as social, political, economic, and religious. Consequently, it is an instrument which encourages and provokes activism. In addition to this, it is an element that allows people to identify themselves with a tendency, a group of people, a certain urban tribe with a well-established style and way of thinking. Furthermore, music is a legacy, a treasure that passes from generation to generation. And finally, it is thought to be an instrument to promote a new craze.

Szwed (1970: 220) stated that "song forms and performances are themselves models of social behaviour that reflect strategies of adaptation to human and natural environments." Similarly, Fedorak (2009: 23-24) adds that music is to be considered the instrument through which cultural values are established in a similar way to popular legends, festivities and celebrations, and clothing trends.

From Blacking's point of view (1995: 224), every known human society is thought to have an element which might be defined as music by a well-trained musicologist. In addition, Cross and Morley (2009: 66) add that music has an important part to play in courtship as well as in entertainment in most cultures. It is also believed to be a paramount element in funerary rituals and seasonal festivals. Moreover, it is played in rituals marking the transition from teenager to adulthood.

Cross and Morley (2009: 66) also point out that music may be experienced individually or collectively. The latter highlights the possibility that a strong sense of group identity might be established due to the capacity of music to act as a medium where people socially participate and contribute. Thus, group membership may be created and kept based on music.

Music has always been regarded as a positive element which motivates and encourages people. Schellenberg (2004: 511-514) conducted a study which revealed that music lessons slightly helped to improve participants' IQ. Afterwards, another experiment was conducted by Jacob (2006: 716) to test to what extent the clients in a bar were influenced by background music, in particular, cartoon songs or drinking songs. The study showed that drinking songs seem to lengthen the period of time that customers spent in the bar. One year later, another experiment was carried out (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin and Pharr 2007: 163) in order to prove the benefits of music. After being exposed to a stressor, participants from group one were exposed to classical or self-selected relaxing music, which led to a reduction in the levels of anxiety, anger, and nervousness. On the contrary, group two sat in silence or listened to heavy metal music, which provoked a less significant reduction in the aforesaid stress levels. Even though the three experiments focused on observing different aspects, they all had in common the positive effects of music on individuals.

There is a long tradition of music and a wide range of musical styles. Some of the most common musical genres are: alternative, blues, children's music, classical, country, dance, electronic, hip-hop, rap, indie pop, Christian and gospel, jazz, Latin, new age, pop, rhythm and blues, soul, reggae, rock and world music to cite but a few (Sikkema et al. 2003: 36-40). A study on musical genres concluded that the preference of a musical style or another was associated with two main factors: class and education. People who have a higher level of education tend to be the most tolerant towards other people's musical tastes. Despite their musical scope being wider, they are prone to disliking the musical tastes of individuals with lower levels of education. Eventually, heavy metal is preferred by lower class individuals, whereas rap and gospel are generally associated with Afro-Americans (Bryson 1996: 884-899).

According to Rojek (2011: 22), raw emotions, values as well as worries are conveyed by means of pop music. A pop song may be regarded as "the product of social and cultural forces." Thus, individuals can feel inspired to take direct action. In this sense, pop superstars –like Madonna, Sting or Bono– "have emerged as celebrity diplomats, acting without plebiscite to articulate common concerns relating to hunger poverty, natural disasters and environmental degradation" (Cooper 2008, cited in Rojek 2011: 24). It is assumed that the mixture of African and European musical traditions gave rise to popular music. Nonetheless, many of the most relevant genres nowadays were conceived in the Americas, mainly because of the influence of African tradition. Nowadays, pop music is thought to be the genre that produces more hits than the rest of styles (Ahlkvist and Fisher 2000: 305-306); and as Frith sees it (2001: 95-105), pop was originated in the mid 1950s. In Rojek's view (2011: 1-2), frequently, the songs that become hits share the so-called pop-music formula. This consists of a song with a catchy melody and a good rhythm; lyrics, which are easy to remember; a chorus, which is repeated along the song. Although there are artists who do not produce pop music, they are able to produce songs by following the pop-music formula and adding elements from their own genre; thus they create their own style of pop music (Blair 1993: 21-33). That is why Frith (2001: 95-98) upholds that pop music, although it is professionally produced and packaged, is designed to appeal to anyone and, accordingly, has no specific market as it is rather conservative due to its production being standardised.

Regarding blues, Barlow (1990: 325-346) claims that it is rooted on the cotton plantations. This melancholic genre is inspired by Afro-American working and living conditions, prison experiences, travels, and sexual relationships. As for the lyrics, they fall into two categories: songs about survival in a hostile social environment on the one hand, and self-assertion songs on the other. That is why this musical style was originally known as real, due to it was about telling the truth about things. African melodies and rhythms were brought by Africans when they were transported to America as slaves in the 18th and 19th century. These rhythms and melodies were preserved until the abolition of slavery in 1856, since they believed that singing while working made their tasks easier. After the abolition of slavery, many slaves became Christians and sang hymns in church, whereas others played popular songs. Both used to do it by adding African

rhythms and that is how blues music was born. Some blues songs were slow and sad due to heartbreak and painful issues; others were up-tempo due to their themes about being in love and having fun. Some blues singers are Billie Holliday, Muddy Waters and Willie McTell. Coolen (1982: 69) points out that blues origins are either African or European. Its harmony and musical structure are thought to be European, whereas scales and intonation are believed to be African. Blues deals with everyday life issues, and some events that took place in the 1960s helped blues to remerge. This was due to “the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X, the passing of the Civil Rights and the Voting Rights Act, the Watts riots and the founding of the Black Panther Party,” as Adelt (2010: 2) sees it.

With respect to jazz music, Gushee (1994: 152) suggests that the key to its success is the combination of a new sound played by musicians who were not capable of reading music. This genre arose due to the combination of European and African musical traditions which were brought to the States (Schuller 1986: 3). Hence, jazz is regarded as an Afro-American genre (Fiehrer 1991: 21), created by mixing blues with European harmony, which became increasingly popular in New Orleans in the 1910s (Schuller 1986: 3-4). As for its origins (Schuller 1986: 64), jazz is believed to be originated between 1895 and 1917 and the approximation to one date or another depends on the historian. The early form of jazz –played during the aforesaid period– is considered to be naïve, crude or dated. Afterwards, various jazz genres were developed around the country due to regional variations. Some of the leading exponents in this genre were the trumpet player Louis Armstrong as well as Joe “King” Oliver, who were involved in creating new ways of improvising in Chicago in the 1920s (Schuller 1986: 64), whereas in a ten-year period big band jazz and swing were being developed in New York City (Steward 2007: 25). Then, swing became the new craze in the 1940s. Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Fletcher Henderson used to lead great jazz orchestras (Schuller 1989: 3-4, and Kaplan 1999: 415) and crooners such as Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole or Bing Crosby used to sing with jazz orchestras (Monson 2009: 31). However, in the 1950s musicians such as Charlie Parker, Miles Davis or John Coltrane refused to play in jazz orchestras due to their longing for improvising and experimenting, which is why they developed the bebop and modal jazz style. Even though they were not as easy to dance to as the previous style they found their own audience. Besides, it was in the 1930s and 1940s that professional African American blues musicians created small bands who wanted to play in small clubs. The strategy was aimed to attract audiences, but the youngsters who came to these clubs thought that blues was an old-fashioned style. Hence, bands created rhythm and blues (henceforth R&B) so as to satisfy the tastes of young audiences (<https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/music-popular.htm>). Therefore, R&B might have evolved from bebop jazz, jump blues styles, boogie-woogie, and urban blues styles in the 1940s (Baptista 2000, cited in Rabaka 2013: 37). It is also hinted that R&B emerged due to changes in American race relations (Ward 1998: 2-8) and the Afro-American freedom struggle. Rabaka (2013: 37) underlines that Motown Records turned out to be “the most successful R&B record company of the Civil Rights Movement.”

Initially, R&B was known as race music, a term under which all African American music styles –spirituals, gospel, blues, ragtime, jazz and jump blues– were gathered. Nowadays R&B music is about romantic soul songs and ballads, whilst in the 1940s it was a loud and lively music. Ray Charles, Joe Turner, Sam Cooke, Little Richard, or Jackie Wilson are well-known R&B singers (Cooper 2000: 119). Even though R&B is rooted in the African American tradition, it “has demonstrated a phenomenal capacity to move hearts, minds, feet and sundry other extremities, irrespective of boundaries of race, class, gender, religion or nationality.” What is more, it was considered to be a “potent weapon in the black freedom struggle and hailed its singers as PRIEST-PHILOSOPHERS of the Movement” (Ward 1998: 259). Eventually, it became the people’s music.

After swing and blues, an oriented dance style known by the name of boogie-woogie was developed. Soon after other dance styles like jitterbug and jive appeared (Lüthi and Nebiker 1993: 6). Then a new musical style called rock and roll arose in the 1950s. From Laing’s standpoint (1997: 116-132) rock is a “conjuncture of musical and lyrical practices.” It was created by musicians who were capable of combining R&B and a danced oriented country music named Western Swing. Famous early rock and roll singers are Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, and Bill Hayley and His Comets. What musicians did in the 1960s was to combine rock and roll with elements of R&B in order to create rock music, soul music (which was a melodic R&B style) and new country music styles. What Elvis added to rock and roll was religious as well as secular songs, apart from being a mixture of country music and rhythm and blues (Frith 2001: 75). Leaving Elvis Presley aside, it was also in this decade that performers like James Brown gave birth to funk, which was a more rhythmic style. James’ eager lyrics referred either to the figure of an oppressor or to the extent in which everyday life might be hard (Morant 2011: 71-82). By contrast, rock and roll was perhaps the first form of popular culture to celebrate, without reservation (Gillet 2011: 1).

Fedorak (2009: 4) reflects on the fact that popular culture is modified by each generation so as to make it its own. Afterwards, it is passed onto the next generation and the process continues. Rock and roll music is considered an example of endurance and changeability. This music style varies from country rock to heavy metal. All of them have their own fans, who identify with them to the extent that a microculture is created in some cases (e.g. Goths). Taking into account that we are consumers of popular culture, we have to be aware that the specific type of popular culture people consume can separate them from other groups or foster feelings of membership in social groups they identify with.

Rock and Roll promoted the utopia of a distant America, a utopia which could encourage the everyday experiences of British working-class teenagers with all their longings, desires, hopes, frustrations and leisure needs...It achieved a significance in Britain which it never possessed in America (Wicke and Fogg 1990: 61-62).

It is well-known that Elvis Presley, the so-called king of Rock and Roll, never performed abroad; nonetheless, his films as well as his long-playing vinyl records were enough to have his work promoted outside his homeland. At the time, young audiences became familiar with Elvis' images and moves, and this was a challenge to the patterns of society (Campbell and Alasdair 2016: 354). People were not used to watching someone who was able to move his body in such a way. Considered to be a scandal which might threaten to alter youngsters' behaviour, his early performances which were broadcasted on television only allowed the viewers to watch Elvis' face on the screens in their homes.

Music is also a means to convey thoughts; and Afro-American music is also a vehicle to convey either social or political thought, which is why –from Rabaka's point of view (2013: 34)– hip hop music and culture are mainly produced by black ghetto youth, whose main themes are the history, culture, and struggles of working-class and underclass black folk. In Levine's view (1977: 239-240), music has become an instrument for African Americans to criticise their enslavers, oppressors as well as abusers. It is believed that both rap and hip-hop music roots can be found from basements, on street corners, in public parks and house parties in the 1970s (Watkins 2005: 9). It was in these locations that artists created rhyme after rhyme while drinking, dancing, jiving, and partying. The emergence of these art forms are due to “racially oppressed and economically impoverished environments [as well as] a period of widespread musical and spiritual, sexual, cultural, social, and political transformation and transition in African America” (Rabaka 2013: 40-44). As Chang (2007: 90) sees it, there is a trinity of hip-hop music: DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash and Afrika Bambaataa. The latter is regarded as a pioneering Disc Jockey due to his approach to styles like German techno, disco, rock, soul, and calypso. Leaving aside the amusement aspect of hip hop, Bambaataa claimed that hip hop might be an instrument to provoke a social change by making his listeners aware of the fact that they could change their lives if they wanted to (Watkins 2005: 22).

The art of making music allows composers to express their feelings, emotions, opinions, ways of thinking, or (dis)agreement with a certain event. However, according to Thomas (2001: 163), there is no other genre as influential as rap due to the controversy around it and the culture that is represented through it. Gangs, drugs and crime are some of its more recurrent issues, apart from being characterised by the use of sexually explicit lyrics. Quinn (1996: 65) suggests that a common practice in the news is that of connecting rap with crime, e.g. placing rappers in articles about crime. This Afro-American musical genre depicted the struggle of Afro-American people in a white world. That is why Blanchard (1999: 5) suggests that rap music was born as a way of showing resistance against the systems of subjugation, which are responsible for creating differences among social classes in the States. Social class differences create angry, which generates violence. Providing the working class with resources and opportunities to face a better life would end up with this bitter burden

Paul (2000: 248) stated that rap was a valid form of poetry when he checked that students from different backgrounds were engaged in the process of teaching poetry through rap music.

Another way of claiming poetic justice was the so-called protest songs or message songs. A protest song is to survive as long as universal frustrations are communicated through its lyrics. Otherwise, an old protest song is doomed to become irrelevant with the passing of years. It started in America in the nineteenth century as a reaction against the war, slavery, and poverty. In the 20th century other issues such as women's rights, economic injustice, politics, and civil rights were claimed too (Rodnitzky 1969: 35). In Kizer's words (1983: 3), "to protest is to verbalise a dissatisfaction with the status quo." The complaint may be made either overtly or covertly; obviously, there is mention of something that needs to be changed. Instances of protest songs are: Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the USA*, where he claimed recognition for the forgotten heroes of the Vietnam war (Cullen 2005: 75-76) ; George Michael's *Shoot the Dog* (see Figure 106); which was about the political relationship between Tony Blair and George W. Bush in the context of the Iraq war (Jovanovic 2007: 146-147); or Madonna's *American Life* (see Figure 107), which is considered an anti-war protest song against the Iraq invasion on the part of the States (Scherzinger and Smith 2007: 211) .



Figure 106. *Shoot the dog* by George Michael (<http://www.thecentralbox.net/pop-ebv-/189382-george-michael-shoot-the-dog-2002-pal-pcm-clean.html#post331636>)



Figure 107. *American life* by Madonna (<http://jenesaispop.com/2009/08/26/21669/madonna-no-quiere-saber-nada-de-american-life/>)

On the other hand, music has also been used as a means for fundraising. For instance, the charity Christmas song *Do They Know It's Christmas Time?* (1984) by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure was aimed to fight against famine in Ethiopia. They thought that a live show could be a good strategy to raise funds. This show was called Live Aid and it was so successful that similar shows have been repeated on other occasions (Philo 1993: 107-110). The three-Grammy awarded charity single entitled *We Are the World* (1985) by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie. Its record sales were also intended for

humanitarian causes in Africa (Marcus 1989: 277). In 2010, this song was re-recorded by new singers to raise funds for Haiti, which had been devastated after an earthquake (Balaji 2011: 51-66). Simultaneously, a Spanish version of the aforesaid track *Somos el Mundo*, written by Emilio and Gloria Estefan, was also released (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jqxq8O30WVU>). In 2005, Prince released the tracks *S.S.T.* and *Brand New Orleans* to provide financial relief for the effects of the Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (Bielefeldt 2006: 97). Accordingly, Billinson (2016: 1) points out that popular music is not only a means to express emotions, but also an instrument to raise awareness and funds after a disaster of such great magnitude.

Regarding the musical scene, there are specific countries which are under the spotlight for record labels. In this sense, Leyshon, Matless and Revill (1998: 10) admit that although the US products prevail over the rest, there are five main markets in the world for the music industry such as the United States Billboard, the British Billboard, France, Japan and Germany. Likewise, Campbell and Alasdair (2016: 353) points out that it is the Internet that challenges the supremacy of American music, in terms of accessibility and distribution. As a matter of fact, access to music from all over the world can take place anytime and anyplace by means of portable devices. People surf the net in search of new tendencies, western sounds, eastern rhythms, or melodies. They may also be interested in getting to know what the latest craze in a neighbouring country is or which songs are currently receiving more radio airplay in a remote area than in the other parts of the world.

As stated above, music is an element which is in constant evolution, change, transformation, and adaptation. It evolves because it changes and proof of that are the great amounts of genres and multiple subgenres that exist. It is also capable of suffering a transformation in order to adapt itself to the new demands of the audiences so as to please them. These four features showcase that music is an element which is always alive. Needless to say, that it is generally used to raise funds when there is a tragedy, in an attempt to overcome the trauma through the healing experience of music.

2.2.7 The Internet as a means of advertising films and series

Besides being described as a common practice, the Internet is defined by *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as “as electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organisational computer facilities around the world” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Internet>). To put it more simply, the Internet is a system that connects computers all over the world.

Furthermore, the Internet is regarded as a mass medium by Morris and Ogan (1996). They consider that users can communicate with one another in four different ways: one-to-one asynchronous communication, e.g. e-mails; many-to-many asynchronous communication, e.g. Usenet (or users network), electronic bulletin boards, and Listservers which require the receiver to sign up for a service or log on to a programme to get access to messages; synchronous communication, which can be of

three types (one-to-one, one-to-few, or one-to-many), e.g. chat rooms; and finally, asynchronous communication, which allows the user to look for information on the site.

Apart from being a common practise, an interwoven system and a mass medium, there are other features that have contributed to its global success. These are its geographic distribution (once connected users have access to anything they want: e-mail, web, newsgroup or mailing list); its robust architecture cannot be deactivated and it is capable of adapting itself to damages; it operates at near light speed; it provides universal access with the same technical interface and capabilities no matter where the user is; its exponential growth in size (in terms of the amount of users), processing power (due to an increasingly sophisticated software) and software sophistication; the information is not subject to change, get distorted or mixed up when sending an email due to the fact of being based on digital data; and finally, freedom of speech. It means that every single thing that people write may be read by anyone who has access to the Internet (http://www.livinginternet.com/tindex_p.htm).

According to Franklin (2001: 1), the Internet is “an emerging practice of everyday life.” Probably, there is not a single person in developed countries who does not make use of the Internet every day. It has become a daily activity which has become as common as turning on the television. As Fedorak (2009) states below, the Internet has caused an impact on the way people interact with one another, get access to information, purchase online, and entertain themselves; what is more, its use is subject to cultural elements:

The Internet and its role in popular culture [...] is influenced by many cultural elements, including socio-economic status, gender, and cultural and national identity. The Internet, in turn, impacts on popular social interaction (through online media, for instance), acquisition of information (previews of television programs and films, graphic novels), economic activity (cybershopping), political discourse [...], and the flow of popular culture (online gaming, music) (Fedorak 2009: 49).

As stated above, the way individuals use the Internet is determined by cultural characteristics. This is so because people’s interests are believed to vary depending on factors such as social class and gender, to cite but a few.

It is relatively easy to surf the Internet to find information on almost anything; nevertheless, the last thing on people’s mind is that someone is following our search. Google, Chrome, or Firefox are Internet search engines aimed at influencing the search. By doing a search, individuals provide the Internet search engine with information about themselves. This is crucial for advertisers and the reason why on subsequent web searches you are likely to find advertisements about the product or information that you have previously enquired about (Campbell 2016: 351).

Roseboro (2011: 224-225) argues that the capacity of the world wide web “to influence, to reach, and to affect is undeniable. Perhaps most important to those of us

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

who are interested in the way young people learn, the Internet further complicates the ways we discuss knowledge and identity as socially constructed.” It is commonly agreed that there are no boundaries when it comes to using the Internet. Everything on the net is in the public domain, it is easily accessible, and it is at the disposal of anyone who is intended to search for it, read it or obtain it. Comments are uploaded to forums of any type in order to be shared with users from all over the world. Accordingly, individuals shape their own identity by means of the knowledge provided by others.

From Rodriguez Ferrándiz’s (2012: 70-71) point of view, the Internet is regarded as a means of promoting products. For instance, before the first episode of the television series *True Blood* was broadcasted in September 2008, there was a three-phase-promotional campaign on the part of the agency Campfire from the month of May to August 2008: introduction, integration and focalisation. In the first phase, letters were sent to influential bloggers, who decoded the hints that led them to a web page entitled <http://www.trueblood.wikia.com/wiki/RevenantOnes.com>. It is on this site where allegedly Japanese vampires shared their discovery with the bloggers. This discovery was the invention of True Blood. It was actually a sort of forum to discuss the matter. Subsequently, bloggers were sent test tubes containing samples of the product named True Blood. Then a second webpage was created (<http://trueblood.wikia.com/wiki/Bloodcopy.com>) for allegedly vampires from all over the world to post their videos explaining their views on the issue so that bloggers could watch them and continue speculating on the issue. Afterwards a comic was released portraying the universe of the series (*True Blood: The Great Revelation* see Figure 108).



Figure 108. *True Blood*. Wohl, David. *True blood the great revelation* # 0. (2008). IDW Publishing (http://trueblood.wikia.com/wiki/Comic_Book_Series_-_The_Great_Revelation)

The second phase was focused on causing controversy on the web. Two websites were created with a view to boost participation. One website was for the American Vampire League, which was in favour of the integration of vampires, and another for The Fellowship of the Sun, which was against the integration of vampires in society. On these websites, Internet users could find interviews, videos, mottos, and propaganda. The last phase consisted in introducing the scene and the characters of the series. Videos as well as documentaries were found online (such as *In Focus: Shedding Light on Vampires in America I and II*). The title of the series and the channel where it was going to be broadcasted on were not revealed on the web. This fact was regarded as storytelling through promotional content (idem 2012: 70-71).

As stated below, new releases are in need of a successfully prearranged precampaign of promotion which should assure the industry that the new product will be watched by a wide audience. It is at this point that the Internet has proven its ability to combine various techniques traditionally employed in advertising. These days almost no film is broadcasted without the prelaunch of a web site about the storyline and universe of the film:

Each new release operates – if it is to be at all successful – within a complex web of information sites: radio spots, theatrical trailers, various sorts of television promotions, billboards, product tie-ins, and increasingly, the Internet. Certainly, the last of these is the newest marketing ploy, yet it is one that combines the lures of many more traditional advertising techniques: the graphic pull of posters, the hyped language of the old-fashioned press released, interviews with stars via live-time chat rooms, publicity stills, sneak previews via downloadable video clips, offers of movie-related giveaways, and selections from film soundtracks. Today, in fact, almost no major film is released unaccompanied by its own carefully fashioned “official” Web site – one that can provide an extremely cost-efficient yet information-intensive medium for promoting the movie – and often by a variety of fan-created and fan-driven unofficial sites as well (Telotte 2001: 32).

In 1999, the low-budget film *The Blair Witch Project* (see Figure 109) received a similar promotional campaign, where the contents previously released on the net were advertised as if they were authentic materials (<http://blairwitch.proboards.com/>) The DVD released contained two mockumentaries (*The Curse of the Blair Witch and The Blair Witch Legacy*) about the previous events that took place before the main argumentative line of the film. Thus, a whole universe for the franchise was created before the film was set to be released (Thevenot and Watier 2001: 10). In Banash’s view (1999: 111), the film presented itself as an unmediated documentary outside of our technologically mediated culture. *Paranormal Activity* (2007, see Figure 110), *Rec* (2007, see Figure 111), *Quarantine* (2008, see Figure 112), *Cloverfield* (2008, see Figure 113), *The Last Exorcism* (2010, see Figure 114), *Apollo 18* (2011, see Figure 115), *Devil’s Pass* (2013, see Figure 116), and *The Fourth Kind* (2009, see Figure 117) (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>) are some of the examples that prove that there

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

has been a great amount of low-budget films which have generated huge sums of money. Most of them are described as found footage horror/thriller films; and indeed, they fight against those Hollywood multi-million-dollar budget films which make use of highly expensive special effects.



Figure 109. *The Blair witch project* (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)

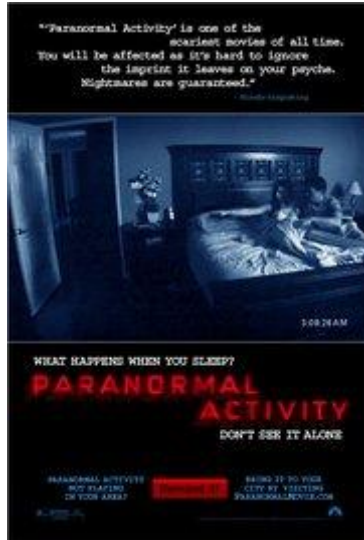


Figure 110. *Paranormal activity* (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)

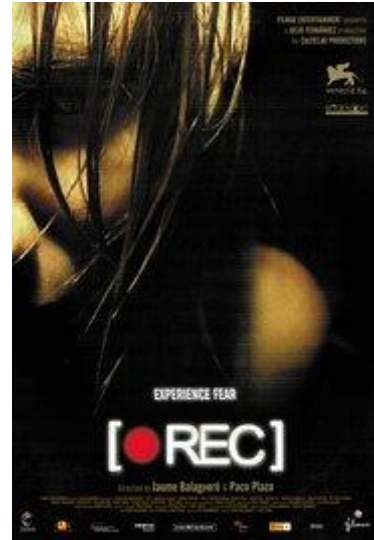


Figure 111. *Rec* (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)



Figure 112. *Quarantine* (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)



Figure 113. *Cloverfield* (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)



Figure 114. *The last exorcism* (<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)

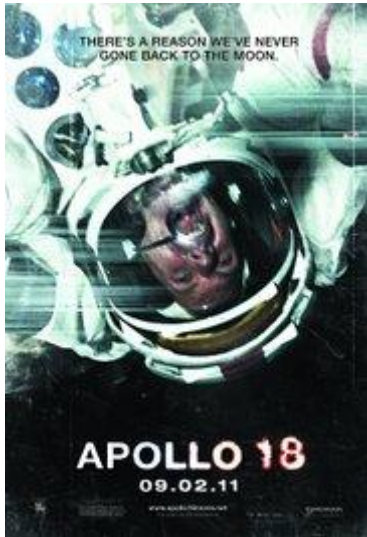


Figure 115. *Apollo 18*
(<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)



Figure 116. *Devil's pass*
(<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)



Figure 117. *The fourth kind*
(<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls077323865/>)

Hence, the relevance of the role that new technologies play at the time of promoting films and series in general. It is not just a matter of making a huge profit, but to do it with a low budget. This section has explored how the industry makes use of the Internet as a tool, a platform or a medium where films and television series are advertised. There is no doubt that the Internet has a great impact on our lives. Executive producers can advertise their products via the Internet. Ever since almost everyone has instant access to the Internet through mobile phones or tablets, the potential to get to a wider audience online anytime, anywhere is higher than through the television. Accordingly, the Internet may also be regarded as a meeting point where different manifestations of popular culture find a place to interact with users and combine with other manifestations.

2.2.8 Graffiti and body art

Graffiti as well as body art are two more manifestations of popular culture. What these two manifestations have in common is that both of them have to do with drawings; the former is carried out on walls or other surfaces and the latter is done on the body itself.

2.2.8.1 Graffiti

Graffiti, also known as street art, is another manifestation of popular culture. It is through drawings in public places that graffiti artists find a way to express themselves. Being regarded as vandalism or an art form is a matter that depends on the circumstances under which the graffiti is drawn. While being defined by *the Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as “usually unauthorised writing or drawing on a public surface” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/graffiti>), a nuance is added by that of *the Oxford Dictionary*: “writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a

wall or other surface in a public place” (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/graffiti>). The truth is that the term comes from an Italian term *graffiare*, whose meaning is to scratch. The concepts of place, culture, hegemony and identity are conveyed by this manifestation of popular culture, whereby adolescent personality, ancient cultures, sexual attitudes, artistic style, gender differences, behaviour, communication, female suppression, territoriality, criminality are issues that graffiti deal with (Alonso 1998: 2-3).

Such clandestine messages are to be found on the wall of garages, public restrooms, and jail cells. Although graffiti design can be simple, sophisticated, black and white or colourful, the choice of the design may be motivated by a need for recognition and the necessity of taking over public or private spaces. Spray has proved to be the most efficient instrument to draw graffiti due to the need for size, visibility, speed, and convenience. Graffiti is an art and a form of expression, which is expandable, flexible, and not easy to control. This art form may be individual or collective. The former includes bathroom wall marking, signatures, love exaltations, comments in response to advertisements or dealing with politics. The latter includes messages addressed to a community, to people who understand the messages and who may act on them. In these production nicknames, codes or symbols are employed so that people know what community it belongs to (<https://www.graffiti.org/faq/graf.def.html>). In this sense, Hanauer’s research revealed that the graffiti on the separation wall between Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories were a manoeuvre to influence either national or international actions “concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict over national borders, self-determination and human rights” (2011: 301). Furthermore, graffiti about practical information, emotions and beliefs are likely to be drawn on the plywood covering either doors or windows before a hurricane came too close (Alderman and Ward 2007: 1).

In Hutchinson’s view (1993: 138), this form of art is regarded as vandalism, against which society might fight by banning the sales of spray paint cans and by condemning it as a criminal act. Similarly, Fedorak (2009: 61) subtly emphasises that street art tends to be controversial due to its multiple interpretations of meaning and its appealing images, letters, and aesthetic symbols. Nonetheless, its greatness lays in the author’s self-expression, for instance, for political discourse as well as cultural resistance. The photographer Susan A. Phillips (1999) did some research on the gangs in Los Angeles, their graffiti and their meaning or messages. Later on she compared them with graffiti in Chicano and African American gangs as well as hip hop taggers. She came to the conclusion that graffitiists encode messages which mainly make sense to their own bands, although this form of art is also a way for marginalised youth to communicate with other audiences.

Graffiti can be grouped into three categories: political, gang, and hip-hop or New York style graffiti. Political graffiti (see Figure 118) might arise from unrecognised and underground political groups, radical student movements, unsatisfied individuals, emergency situations (such is the case of riots) and politics. This type of

graffiti may be linked to other art forms. The production of posters, comics, newspapers, pamphlets, mural paintings, and art exhibitions are instances of this. Gang graffiti (see Figure 119) are produced by gangs in urban areas. As previously stated, cryptic codes or styled initials are included as part of the contents. Their productions indicate group membership, distinguish enemies from allies, and mark ideological as well as territorial boundaries. Indeed, boundaries are also manifested by tattoos (to be talked about below) and clothing styles. As its own name indicates, hip-hop or New York style graffiti (see Figure 120) comes from the New York underground scene in the 1970s, but it has spread all over the world by using walls, rocks, road signs, billboards, or train carriages as canvases. Artists producing this style of graffiti do not need to belong to any group, band, or community. However, they are given the opportunity to belong to crews. Artists are part of one crew or another depending on their level of proficiency. Tags and pieces are found among their works. The former come from the artist's name tag, being written in overstated cursive style. The latter come from the word masterpiece and they are regarded as museum objects due to their quality (<https://www.graffiti.org/faq/graf.def.html>). What deserves to be highlighted here is that the art of graffiti seems to be merged with other art forms in the previous classifications. Hence it is observable that different manifestations combine one another. By contrast, Gottlieb (2008: 53-54) suggests a system of classification called "iconclass," which stands for iconographic classification. It was initially developed by Henri van de Waal in 1947 and included nine classes of graffiti: religion and magic; nature; human beings, mankind in general; society, civilisation, culture; abstract ideas and concepts; history; the Bible; literature; classical mythology and ancient history. What is more, Otta (1993: 589) claims that graffiti may fall into twenty categories: "racial insults, sexual insults, general insults, sexual humour, general humour, sexual requests, romanticism, politics, drugs, religion, morals, names, hygiene, personal problems, grammatical corrections, scatological remarks, AIDS-related remarks, sexuality, philosophical remarks, and miscellaneous remarks."



Figure 118. Political graffiti
(<http://www.ibtimes.com/political-graffiti-illustrates-civil-unrest-around-world-cairo-yemen-photos-554551>)



Figure 119. Gang graffiti
(<https://es.pinterest.com/eddiendendon/gang-graffiti/?lp=true>)



Figure 120. Hip-hop or New York style graffiti (<http://www.widewalls.ch/10-new-york-graffiti-legends-still-kicking-ass/>)

Brewer (1992: 188) (see Figure 121) emphasises that the tagger looks for his/her recognition. The more tags a tagger draws, the more fame and sense of power s/he will have. Furthermore, the harder the level of accessibility, the more recognition will be obtained. As for piece, also known as piecing (see Figure 122) by Lachman (1988: 339), it is viewed as vandalism as well as an art form depending on the vision of space. The term piece or piece of graffiti is defined by Anderson and Verplanck (1983: 341) as “anything that is drawn, painted, etched, scratched or written on any surface visible to the public.” Graffiti is acceptable when being in a suitable space; however, it becomes unacceptable when drawing in public spaces because it is a way of going against the respective authority.



Figure 121. Tag (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-04/the-art-of-graffiti-tagging/6959396>)



Figure 122. Piece or piecing (<http://www.aerosolwarfare.com/vphotos/583/in/78/>)

In addition to this, a further category is added by Alonso (1998: 7-8). This category is named existential (see Figure 123) and is said to be the most common of them all. This is characterised by including personal commentaries, which are a manifestation of a personality for others to see. Within existential graffiti there are other subcategories depending on the contents expressed. Such themes may be sexual, racial, love, religious, philosophical, humorous, non-sexual or self. Often, they represent issues

that are taboo, which would not be conveyed publicly otherwise. Stocker, Dutcher, Hargrove and Cook (1972: 361) conducted a study which revealed that existential graffiti highlighting racial and sexual issues are the most frequent and are usually found in public bathrooms.

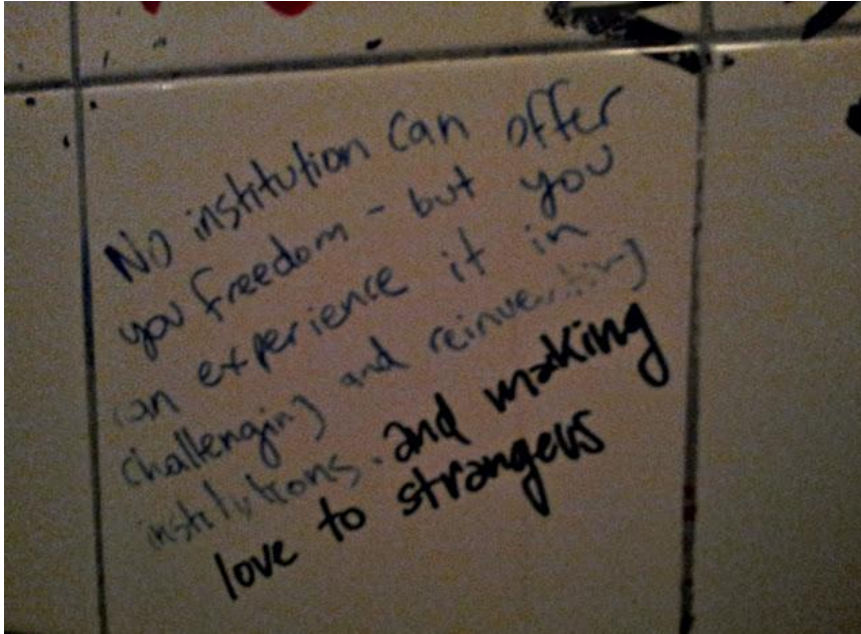


Figure 123. Existential graffiti (<http://boygirlbathroomgraffiti.tumblr.com/>)

2.2.8.2 Body art

As mentioned above, gang graffiti was also associated with tattoos in the sense that it was a way of showing identity, ideology, and group membership too. Thus, body art, otherwise known as a tattoo, is also considered a fine art. According to *the Dictionary.com* tattooing is “the act or practice of marking the skin with indelible patterns, pictures, legends, etc., by making punctures in it and inserting pigments” (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/tattooed>). *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* adds that this mark or figure is “fixed upon the body by insertion of pigment under the skin or by production of scars” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tattooing>). Tattooing our body is a way of expressing our identity. Initially, the art of tattooing was confined to prisoners, which is why Demello (1993: 10) conducted a study where she identified four different categories of tattoos: professional tattooing, semi-professional, street, and prison. Having a tattoo from one of the previous categories depends on people’s social status, economic state, artistic taste and technological factors (method used to carry out the tattoo). This may be hand picking (which involves a needle and India ink or the ink from a ball pen), the use of a homemade rotary machine or going to a specialised place such as a tattoo shop. Besides, tattoos are not only relevant because they are a sign of identity, but the way in which this distinctive mark is obtained is important too. Prisoners tattoo themselves with a needle in visible parts of their body in order to differentiate themselves from society. Self-tattooing highlights low social class

and the fact that the individual cannot afford a professional tattoo. Nevertheless, Chicanos usually cover the street tattooing that they got in their youth with professional tattoos when they can afford it. Thus, age, ethnicity, gender and group ascription, and membership are important factors.

As for group membership, some examples are provided by Sanders (1988: 410): “military personnel pick tattoos which relate to their particular service, motorcycle gang members choose club insignia, and members of sports teams enter the shop en masse and all receive the same design.”

In addition, Australian aborigines tattoo their cheeks and mouths at puberty as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. In the case of girls, it is a way of showing that they are ready to get married (Spectrum Level 3. Student’s book. Oxford University Press 2016 http://www.oupe.es/es/ELT/Secondary/spectrum/Paginas_/spectrum.aspx). Historically, (Wageman 1994: 106) tattoos used to indicate whether the person tattooed was a slave or a ruler. Women from eastern Sudan tattoo their forearms for decorative reasons (Fedorak 2009: 76-77), whilst tattoos on their legs and faces are private and only their lovers can contemplate them. Polynesians tattoos express political rank and status, apart from ethnicity. Despite being a common practice among youngsters in western societies this art tends to be found among people belonging to all social classes: doctors, lawyers, or teachers. Fedorak (2009: 76) suggests that this is due to the impact that popular icons have in our lives. The art of tattooing our body is also common among singers, footballers, sports people, journalists, and the celebrities that appear on television. It seems that the fact of seeing these marks on their idol’s body is appealing to a part of the population, who admire somebody’s work; admiration may lead them to copy part of their image. In the eighties, for instance, people started to wear necklaces and accessories with crosses and rosaries because Madonna did so. Their use is currently being promoted by the Italian brand Dolce & Gabbana and the Swedish brand H&M (Rinallo 2013: 30-31).

Tattoos are classified in accordance with their style. They are categorised as: traditional style, realism style, watercolour style, tribal style, new school style, neo traditional style, Japanese style, and blackwork (<https://www.tattoodo.com/a/2016/02/a-beginner-s-guide-10-tattoo-styles-explained/>). Originally, the traditional style was born in the 1700s. When they encountered indigenous communities, sailors got inspired to draw markings on their bodies in a similar way to that of the tribes they met on their journeys (see Figure 124). According to Blackburn (1999: 15) traditional tattoos were intended to be unique since drawings were inspired by the individual’s life and background. Regarding realism style, it ranges from full colour tattoos to black and grey portraits of any famous person, including realistic depictions of nature (see Figure 125). Miñana Pastor (2017: 8) points out that realism is such a complicated style that a combination of many years of training and an innate talent are required to command it. As for the watercolour style, it is characterised by being extremely innovative and in vogue. Although its name might be deceiving, this style is carried out with ink on the body. It seems to be the choice for new generations who are in demand of something

different (see Figure 126). This style attempts to copy the watercolour technique by diluting colour ink with some water (Miñana Pastor 2017: 9).



Figure 124. Traditional style
(<https://es.pinterest.com/pin/493496071642730704/>)

Figure 125. Realistic style
(<http://tattoosboygirl.com/realistic-tattoos/>)

Figure 126. Watercolour style
(<https://es.pinterest.com/explore/atruajes-en-acuarela/?lp=true>)

In terms of age, tribal style is believed to be the oldest in the world. This style comprises of tattoos which are made by aboriginal communities, whose distinctive features are only noticed by those with a trained eye. For instance, Polynesian tattoos differ from those from Marquesan or Inupiaq or Berber (see Figure 127). Regarding colour (Trabookis 2012: 54), tribal designs are characterised by the use of either black or shades of grey in an attempt to make the body's shape and movement stand out. On the contrary, new school style is rooted in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Even though it is called new school, its popularity has declined due to its humoristic designs. This is so, because it focuses on caricatures and exaggerated figures with a highly animated aesthetic (see Figure 128), since the new school style aimed "to appeal to a new generation through the use of a new palette of bright colours and twists on the imagery to produce innovative, lighter, younger, funkier, and more humorous irony in the designs" (Trabookis 2012: 52). Additionally, neo traditional style is clearly an evolution of the traditional style previously mentioned in this category. What tattooists have included is different shades of lines which give the drawing a greater degree of depth. Apart from that, vibrant colours are blended to portray lively imagery (see Figure 129). In Barbour's view (2013: 3), neo traditional style is characterised by being illustrative, colourful, and inspired by traditional iconography.



Figure 127. Tribal style
(<https://es.pinterest.com/pin/177399672797650475/>)



Figure 128. New school style
(<https://es.pinterest.com/pin/79615385464302653/>)



Figure 129. Neo traditional style
(<https://es.pinterest.com/pin/14496030028975973/>)

Contrary to the above designs, oriental motives are the result of Japanese style, otherwise known as *Irezumi*, was originated between 1603 and 1868. Its drawings have to do with the country's age-old folklore, which is why dragons, heroes, phoenixes, and *kirin* –“a mythological winged creature that symbolises good fortune” (Lynskey 2008: 152)– are to be found. What makes this style more appealing is that every tattoo has its own story from Japan's rich past (see Figure 130). From Mansfield's standpoint (1999: 30), being tattooed on the face used to be a punishment for criminals in Japan; on the other hand, lovers, courtesans, and prostitutes used to have a tattoo done, which was inspired on love and religion. Apart from being regarded as an ancient art, it was also a sign to establish social rank, or even to protect you against either evil spirits or wild animals. Finally, the last style in this classification was named blackwork –also known as tribal (Henderson 2007: 340)–, after the black ink in which its drawings are made with (Miñana Pastor 2017: 9) (see Figure 131), however, this lack of colour does not limit its production. The output based on this style ranges from ancient sacred geometry to vanguardist ornamental designs, which may be either abstract or extremely detailed.



Figure 130. Japanese style (<http://tattoo-journal.com/35-beautiful-japanese-tattoos/>)



Figure 131. Blackwork style (<http://illusion.scene360.com/art/92219/fredao-oliveira/>)

From Kjeldgaard and Bengtsson's point of view (2005: 172), the fact of being tattooed has been "considered a marginal and sometimes deviant behaviour;" however, these drawings have become objects of mass consumption. On the contrary, professionals who currently devote their lives to use people's bodies as canvases have taken their fine designs to the category of art (Sanders 1989: 108).

Interestingly, Degelman and Price (2002: 507) conducted research among high school and university students who were shown a picture of a tattooed woman and another with a non-tattooed one. Students were asked to use adjectives to describe them. The study revealed that the picture with the tattooed woman was negatively rated in comparison with that of the woman without any tattoos. Thus, it might be deduced that there are some prejudices associated with tattooing.

Nowadays, people are not having their bodies tattooed so as to show group membership, indicate the subculture they belong to, or manifest a lifestyle, but they do so in order to have their bodies beautified by following the latest craze. Besides being a consumption phenomenon whose rationale is that the body is something that can be improved (Kjeldgaard and Bengtsson 2005: 172), Thompson and Hirschman (1995: 151) claim that bodies are stylised in order to become "living records of [...] life histories and consumption habits." Sanders (1988: 395) emphasises that tattoos are a symbol of disaffiliation from society and at the same time a mark of identity whereby the self is reinforced. Hence, certain tattoos are crafted by people themselves so that their meanings are linked to respective personal stories or life events. Such tattoos are so connected to people's background that they become a part of their selves. Instances of this are provided by Kjeldgaard and Bengtsson (2005: 173-175) after interviewing some people who have a tattoo: one stated that in his case, the mark of life events is manifested by means of the combination of two symbols from two institutions (the university he studied at and the military institution he worked with); a second had the logotype of a rock band he likes; the third one said that her tattoo reminded her of her youth and the outlook on life that she used to have in the period she had the tattoo done.

Watson (1998: 453-460) affirms that certain are prone to choosing places of their bodies which are easy to cover so as to avoid social rejection. Sanders (1988: 416) suggests that tattooees classify people depending on the reactions towards their designs: a positive reaction indicates social and cultural compatibility; and a negative response indicates incompatibility and a narrow and conventional perspective. Furthermore, men and women are likely to select different areas of their bodies to have a tattoo drawn. The former tends to prefer their hands and their arms where the designs may be publicly shown, whilst the latter rather have them on areas to which only trustworthy people may have access. Large designs like snakes, bloody daggers, skulls, dragons, or panthers are preferred by men as a symbol of masculinity, strength and danger; whereas small and delicate motives such as birds, butterflies or flowers are favoured by women as a sign of femininity and delicacy (Sanders 1988: 410-415).

As any other object of consumption, most tattoos seem to have their meanings. Yet certain consumers do not have tattoos drawn to be part of any subculture; what is more, they were not drawn with a specific meaning as the purpose of marking their bodies was no other than to be fashionable or simply because the symbol was nice. Following this, four consumption practices are distinguished. First, consuming as integration; the fact of becoming a mass phenomenon shows that body art is a shared, acknowledged and widely known form of expressing identity. Second, consuming as experience; bearing in mind that most of the times tattoos lack meaning for the tattooees, it is assumed that they get a tattoo drawn just to live that dangerous, exotic and transgressive experience. Third, consuming as classification; most tattoos are not consumed because of their deviant qualities but for their aesthetic capacity of stylising and beautifying someone's body. Nonetheless, these fine designs are permanent and cannot be changed in the same way as clothes. Thus, tattooees run the risk of their drawings becoming obsolete or old fashioned. And, finally, consuming as play; heavily tattooed people may experience a social bond to other people having tattoos (Kjeldgaard and Bengtsson 2005: 175-176).

To put it in a nutshell, graffiti is a cross-cultural phenomenon by means of which a private space is personalised, becoming public. It is thanks to that reorganisation of the landscape that people's identity is expressed. Promoting ethnic unity and diversity, however, street art might be regarded as a manifestation of either individual or collective ideologies (<https://www.graffiti.org/faq/graf.def.html>). Similarly, body art has become a mass phenomenon due to its capacity to beautify the body. Despite being considered as adornments of low social class, tattoos are currently consumed by people from all social classes. In fact, they have become objects of consumption in the same way as clothes, cars, or any technological device, as if these fine designs were elements of the latest craze. Age, ethnicity, gender, group membership, ideology and identity are conveyed through these drawings on the skin. In Turner's view (1999: 39), "body marks are commercial objects in a modern marketplace and have become optional aspects of a body aesthetic, which playfully and ironically indicate social membership."

2.2.1 Food

There seems to be an increasing obsession with food in the Western culture. The public is constantly bombarded with all types of information about food by the media, which provides folk remedies and results from scientific research, the arguably beneficial effects of low-calorie life-long diets on aging, or the anti-inflammatory and life-prolonging properties of substances that are found in grape skin and berries. One thing is for sure, the magical properties of food are being asserted by the industry so as to manufacture and sell new products. Similarly, food themed TV like *The Food Network* in America and the British *Good Food Channel* are examples of this overwhelming exposure to food. Thus, the figure of a celebrity comes into play. *The F-Word*, *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares* or *Hell's Kitchen* are instances of TV shows whose main theme is food. However, television is far from being the only field of food expansion, as food themed books and magazine articles are also being published by either famous chefs or with their support (Parasecoli 2008: 1-2).

According to *The Business Dictionary*, food is an:

Edible or potable substance (usually of animal or plant origin), consisting of nourishing and nutritive components such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, essential minerals and vitamins, which (when ingested and assimilated through digestion) sustains life, generates energy, and provides growth, maintenance, and health of the body (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/food.html>).

Besides being an essential substance for life to exist, food turns out to be a means to a more specific end. Food needs to be regarded as an element whereby a sort of influence on people is exercised. This influence may be social, economic, or political, and it has given rise to several studies ranging from history to marketing. Apart from that, the term food hides more meanings often related to trash television. Hence, television chefs like Harold McGee from the States or Heston Blumenthal from Great Britain are changing the way that food is manipulated, prepared, cooked and conceptualised in luxurious and prestigious restaurants:

Food is pervasive. The social, economic, and even political relevance cannot be ignored. [...] Food influences our lives as a relevant marker of power, cultural capital, class, gender, ethnic, and religious identities. It has become the object of a wide and ever-growing corpus of studies and analysis, from marketing to history, from nutrition to anthropology. Yet, food reveals many other layers of meaning that are often left unexplored when it comes to phenomena that fall squarely under the heading of pop culture, especially the low brow or even the trash kind (Parasecoli 2008: 2).

Eating has become a social event, since it is an activity that most of the time is carried out in company in order to strengthen social relations. It is in that context that eating provokes positive or negative feelings. Positive ones are produced when we are well-accompanied, whereas the negative ones are brought about when we are in bad company. Therefore, feelings and emotions can be connected to food.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

Food is a many-splendored thing, central to biological and social life. [...] Eating together lies at the heart of social relations; at meals we create family and friendship by sharing food, tastes, values, and ourselves. Festive meals celebrate festive occasions and enlarge the social group at office picnics, church suppers, barbecues, and potluck dinners. [...] Eating good food when hungry causes a euphoric feeling, feasts and meals are a wonderful way to create positive social relations. Similarly, when social relations are bad, eating can be painful and unpleasant. [...] Food is a primary focus of much economic activity [...] Food is a product and mirror of the organization of society on both the broadest and most intimate levels. It is connected to many kinds of behavior and is endlessly meaningful. Food is a prism that absorbs and reflects a host of cultural phenomena (Counihan 1999: 6).

Apart from being something that people all over the world have in common, food is an element that highlights differences across cultures. Thus, it is through foodways that people are aware of their distinctiveness, e.g. French are called “Frogs” by the British, as they are in the habit of eating frogs’ legs; eating pork is avoided by Muslims and Jews; and “hot dogs” are avidly consumed by North Americans. That is why the study of eating habits would help to understand individuals across culture and historical periods (Counihan 1999: 6-7).

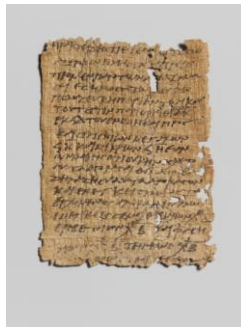
Regarding the connection between food and power, Arnold (1988: 3) states that “food was, and continues to be, power in a most basic, tangible and inescapable form [...] Food was not only essential for the maintenance of human life and bodily activity, but was also fundamental to the structures of dominance and dependency;” in turn, Camporesi (1989: 137) suggests that both hunger and malnutrition might be part of a political strategy with the aim to keep their power by forcing the poor to be debilitated, weak and deprived of health. Consequently, controlling food is a way of exerting power. In Goody’s words (1982: 113), “the hierarchy between ranks and classes takes a culinary form,” e.g. there are not only different food habits but also prohibitions against eating with those of lower social class in India (Goody 1982: 116). In Mintz’s view (1985: 185), “one could become different by consuming differently,” e.g. sugar was a food that only rich people could afford in the past. This made that sculptures were created with sugar as a way of illustrating their power. Hence, the rich and poor are differentiated by consumption habits. Consequently, Menell (1985: 331-332) adds that “likes and dislikes are never socially neutral, but always entangled with people’s affiliations to class and other social groups. Higher social circles have repeatedly used food as one of many means of distinguishing themselves from lower rising classes. This has manifested in a succession of styles and attitudes towards food and eating.”

Although differences in terms of race, class and gender are manifested through eating habits, thinness might have become a synonym for control, power, wealth, competence, and success. This image is projected through advertising, fashion, and the media (Dyrenforth, Wooley, and Wooley 1980: 465-471). In this sense, Counihan

(1999: 9) considers that “the standard of thinness upholds a class structure where men, whites, and the rich are superior to women, people of colour, and the poor.” There are deliberately stricter standards of thinness in the case of women and the notion of obesity slightly varies depending on ethnicity and class status. Parasecoli (2008: 13) affirms that Afro-American women pay great attention to the shape of their derrière or their “booty.”

Food and body are also closely linked to race issues. Food terms like chocolate, liquorice, and cinnamon are some of the most common metaphors hiding sexual subtexts. It is through these food metaphors that black bodies are described, shaped and inscribed in mainstream culture. In addition to this, Counihan (1999: 4-5) claims that “women and men both hold standards of thinness for women that continually reproduce female oppression.” Fortunately, it is suggested that this body oppression may come to an end when the objectification of their bodies is challenged as well as redefined. In this sense, Parasecoli (2008: 13) analyses of people’s obsessions with figure, shape, and dieting as body image is said to influence an individuals’ eating habits.

In 2016, there was an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York where food was connected to other issues such as gender, religion, class, and old-school political mudslinging. Money, hunger, gender, and class are the themes found in Figure 132. The painting shows two women working as a cashier and a waitress and not at home; two patrons having dinner represent that most Americans could not afford eating out during the Depression; the painting is wisely entitled *Tables for Ladies* encouraging women to eat out at a time of gender inequality. The second figure is a Greek papyrus, which turned out to be an incredibly old shopping list (see Figure 133). Thirdly, the Oyster dish depicts a mollusk that was all the rage for New Yorkers in 1881 (see Figure 134). By contrast, the broken eggs on the floor, the child holding the yolk, and the couple’s astonished attitude towards the girl, hint at the loss of the girl’s virtue (see Figure 135). Finally, the last picture is about politics in 1840. The reason for this affirmation is the following: the then Whig candidate for the presidential elections was considered to be fond of cider and someone who preferred a more humble lifestyle than the one full of excesses by the Democratic president in the White House at the age (see Figure 136). Consequently, the painting was ultimately commissioned as political propaganda (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/food-tour-metropolitan-museum-art-180959894/>).



Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

Figure 132. *Tables for ladies* by Edward Hopper (1930) (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/food-tour-metropolitan-museum-art-180959894/>)



Figure 133. Greek papyrus (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/food-tour-metropolitan-museum-art-180959894/>)

Figure 134. Oyster dish (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/food-tour-metropolitan-museum-art-180959894/>)



Figure 135. *Broken eggs* by Jean-Baptiste Greuzen (1756) (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/food-tour-metropolitan-museum-art-180959894/>)

Figure 136. *Cider making* by William Sidney Mount (1840) (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/food-tour-metropolitan-museum-art-180959894/>)

Even though this section is entitled food, the discussion about those aspects of popular culture needs to go beyond shopping, eating trends, marketing, advertising, nutrition to cite but a few. It is not a matter of what people want to put on my table to eat and then ingest it; it is a matter of cultural change, which is updated and expanded. That is why films, books, comics, songs, music videos and websites should also be considered as aspects of pop culture where food finds a place (Parasecoli 2008: 6).

When it comes to advertising, many logos seem to have hidden meanings or messages. For instance, number 31 is hidden in the Basking Robins logo, since the founders expect that clients try one flavour per day each month (see Figure 137). Another example is Matterhorn Mountain, located in Zermatt, Switzerland. The place is well-known as the “City of Bears.” Both elements are gathered in the Matterhorn logo (see Figure 138 and 139). Besides, the term Krakel has a line in the middle, as if it actually were to break in the same way as the crunchy chocolate bar (see Figure 140). Furthermore, astronomy is also present in logos. On the one side, the initial capital letter “O” is believed to symbolise the planet Earth. One half is illuminated by the sun and the other is in darkness (see Figure 141). On the other side, Wrigley’s eclipse literally depicts an eclipse around the initial “E” (see figure 142). Additionally, the Burger King sign portrays a hamburger between two slices of bread (see Figure 143). Regarding drinks, it is pointed out that a cross is drawn between the letters “O” and “L” in the

Coca-Cola logo. This is remarkably similar to that of the Danish flag, which proved to be a good promotional campaign in the aforesaid country (see Figure 144). Finally, the bitten apple of the promotional campaign for No Kid Hungry shows the silhouette of a child on the right and that of an adult on the left (see Figure 145). These examples show that food related messages can be frequently found anywhere. (<http://www.businessinsider.com/hidden-symbols-in-common-food-logos-2017-3/#tostitos-1>).



Figure 137. Baskin Robins ([http://abc7news.com/food/baskin-robbins-offering-\\$150-scoops-today-/3013226/](http://abc7news.com/food/baskin-robbins-offering-$150-scoops-today-/3013226/))



Figure 138. Toblerone (<https://www.confectionerynews.com/Article/2017/11/16/Toblerone-fakery-spat-shows-growing-power-of-the-pound-store-Lawyer>)



Figure 139. Toblerone logotype (<http://www.abc.es/recreo/abci-curioso-mensaje-oculto-logotipo-toblerone-201609200939-noticia.html>)



Figure 140. Krackel (<https://www.groovycandies.com/krackel-bar-theater-candy>)



Figure 141. Orbit (<http://www.orbitgum.com/products/peppermint>)



Figure 142. Wrigley's eclipse (https://www.123rf.com/photo_28087029_group-of-eclipse-chewing-gum-made-by-wrigley-isolated-on-white-with-clipping-path.html)



Figure 143. Burger King
(https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/mainzgermanyjan-31burger-king-restaurant-s-logo-by-248653006?zanpid=10680_1520773468_e778b41622b1e2a2834e0ea9c96380_2a&sharedid=78888)



Figure 144. Coca-Cola
(https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/truro-canada-july-11-2014-parked-205029433?zanpid=10680_1520773541_3ed139469fa545974c0252a8b5d3539b&sharedid=78888)



Figure 145. No kid hungry
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sodexousa/5810044884/>)

There may be elements which apparently have nothing in common but may influence one another in a certain context. The example below combines food, the media, the Web, social behaviour, and advertising in order to assert that everything is connected, and that one action leads to the next:

A given ingredient can be analyzed by scientists and nutritionists, whose research is picked up in bits and pieces by newspapers, magazines, TV talk shows, and blogs, influencing consumers' expectations and behaviours, creating fads and fashions, prompting changes in distribution chains and in shopping habits, while at the same time interfering with the industry development of new foods, which translates into nutritional claims, advertising, and marketing campaigns that in turn interact with consumers' perceptions and with scientists' research (Pinacoreli 2008: 6).

Saussure's iconic signs (signified and signifier) were previously mentioned in section 2.2. Now they serve as a base for Lacan (2002: 145) to affirm that signifiers do not change; it is the signified that changes depending on the other signs linked with it. Meanings are susceptible to shift through mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. In Pinacoreli's view (2008: 7), the meaning of a slice of ripe cheese may be subjected to change in accordance with the context where it is placed. The slice of ripe cheese may be the logo of a business or may represent the people of an association (it is worth remembering the above examples of Burger King or No Kid Hungry, where their respective logos represented the businesses); it may appear in the pages of a diet book too, as foodstuff to be included in eating habits due to its nutrients or its beneficial effects; the slice might be held in the hands of a politician, suggesting that he is in favour of local agriculture; it might also appear in the last film of a celebrity, as part of his lunch to influence people to consume it; or even in the menu of a high-end

restaurant in order to attribute prestige to the place. In all these contexts, the meaning of the slice of ripe cheese is reconstructed.

Sánchez Romera (2001: 38-39) argues that memory and mind are linked to emotions by means of the senses; the body and its basic needs, being hunger and thirst. Bearing in mind that eating and drinking are biological necessities, he affirms that people experience a rollercoaster of sensations, feelings and emotions while feeding themselves.

The sensory being is born from the sensations that its own brain reproduces under a determined stimulus, as this stimulus provokes a chain of reactions in different parts of the brain itself that go and come through electrical impulses. Nevertheless, the spirit and the degree of ability to feel sensations depend exclusively on the individual. The only necessities that the body recognizes from the brain are, in gastronomy, hunger and thirst. The necessity is to stay alive in some way or another: all stimuli from our brain end up transformed into emotions, and these emotions are part of our lives... Everything depends on sensations; then memory and remembering take us to the world of analysis, from which a state of wellbeing and happiness, as well as its contrary, can derive (Sánchez Romera 2001: 38-39).

The fact of eating together entails a close relationship or intimacy on the part of dinner guests, which is why, in Counihan's words (1999: 9), "eating is a sexual and gendered experience throughout life. Food and sex are metaphorically overlapping. Eating may represent copulation, and food may represent sexuality." It is hinted that meat consumption might be regarded as a patriarchal symbol. Thus, women may choose to turn to vegetarianism as a rebellious act aimed to reject patriarchal values as well as to reaffirm female power. On the one hand, salad, chicken, and yogurt are considered to be light foods, which are associated with women's consumption. On the other hand, beef, beer, and potatoes are believed to be heavy foods, which are associated with men's consumption. Hence, women are stereotyped as weak, fragile, and unable to exert force, whilst men are identified as strong, powerful, and the fittest beings. Ultimately, this connection between people and food may be extrapolated to living and dead. It is believed that "by absorbing parts of the body of a person through the act of eating we also come to possess the properties which belonged to that person" (Freud 1918: 107, cited by Counihan 1999: 17). Such practice is seen as a link that connects the living and the dead.

To conclude, this chapter has addressed issues like the relation between food and the body. The media makes use of food and body images to exercise some sort of control over people's lives in terms of thinness. Thus, the ideal or perfect body image is integrated in one's inner self. Thus, individuals are likely to try to shape their bodies in such a way that they look like the "divine" bodies they were bombarded with. The concept of thinness varies from culture to culture and from race to race. In the white culture, thinness is a synonym for success, whilst in the Afro-American culture curves and a great "booty" are in demand. Apart from associating some foods with men and

others with woman –a fact that attempts to build distances among them– eating is compared to sexual intercourse, hence eating together entails a close relationship and intimacy. Leaving aside the necessary intake of food to survive, to fuel our body, and the pleasure that eating provokes, what remains clear is that food is a way of exercising power over people. Individuals are told what to eat, with whom (positive and negative sensations), how many times per day, how food should be cooked, the purpose for doing so, and what the individual shall ultimately obtain.

2.2.2 A general overview of popular culture

From Crockatt’s point of view, “America stands for many as a symbol of globalisation” and this may be due to the fact that “the expansion of American power happened at the same time as the growth of international capitalism” (Crockatt 2003: 57, 122). Undoubtedly, American popular culture has spread all over the world through literature, music, the film industry, and the media, among others. In the past, American influence was regarded as a possible threat to other cultures, as Sardar and Davies state:

America was taking over the lives of ordinary people in the rest of the world an shrinking their cultural space – their space to be themselves, to be different, to be other than America [...] as though it were a hamburger: a commodity, a brand, out to capture all cultural space for itself (Sardar and Davies 2002: 104-5)

Some of the most common ways of introducing American culture in our lives are by means of music, films, and television. It is simple to observe the influence and impact of the American music industry in the world by just looking at the number of American artists that are awarded in the annual Ceremony of the World Music Awards. However, this process might be about to change, as “the rise of new forms of music production and distribution on the Internet also work to challenge both American-centred dominance, and the opportunities for music producers to develop a greater degree of autonomy” (Campbell 2016: 353). Regarding films, in Noble’s view (2006: 12), “adopting American practices can bring American abundance.” This might be so because the film industry has also been a way of disseminating American culture by projecting American lifestyles and economic techniques aimed at teaching people how they should buy, sell, and live. Needless to say, that Bollywood has emerged as a powerful film industry that makes its way in a world dominated by Hollywood.

It is through Bollywood films that the Hindi language, culture, fashion, traditions, and lifestyles are projected to the rest of the world. As for television, the TV series *Dallas* is taken as an example in order to show how the power of the States is depicted, displayed and spread in other countries whose inhabitants are set to absorb, accept and integrate the message broadcasted, as shown below:

Theorists of cultural imperialism assume that hegemony is prepackaged in Los Angeles, shipped out to the global village, and unwrapped in innocent minds [...] the hegemonic message is transferred to the defenceless minds of viewers the

world over for the self-serving interests of the economy and ideology of the exporting country (Liebes and Katz 1993, cited in Björk 2003: 55).

The point is that viewers from other countries watch the series by bringing their own personal experience in life and cultural background which contrast with those broadcasted on television. Thus, there are some reasons for claiming that there seems to be a tendency to “Americanisation” through the three manifestations of popular culture previously mentioned.

Nonetheless, American influence is far from ending here, and can be extrapolated to other manifestations. The findings of research carried out in 2017 have revealed that the use of American vocabulary and spelling are increasing all over the world, even in the UK, due to the influence of TV and the film industry. Indeed, 15 million digitalised books published from 1800 to 2010 and 30 million geolocated tweets were analysed (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/13/american-english-language-study>) proving that American spelling and vocabulary are closer to citizens through this visual medium. Gonçalves, Loureiro-Porto, Ramasco and Sánchez (2017: 1-8) point out that there were two events that helped American English to be the dominant form of English. These were the end of the World War II and the Fall of the Berlin Wall, which left the States as the world’s only superpower.

Popular literature, films and comics are manifestations through which new ideas are conveyed and transmitted. Indeed, they reflect our own society and a way of teaching values, morals and ethical issues. Entertaining, informing and persuading a myriad of people are supposed to be the purposes of popular literature. What films and comics have in common is that they rely on visual literacy due to the combination of words and images, or the idea of an image referring to something else. As our society is ruled by images, audiences need to be skilful at interpreting the messages conveyed or evoked by them. Thus, this practise requires the implementation of critical thinking. In the case of popular literature, people are used to observing how celebrities are very often engaged in writing or collaborating in the writing of books. As stated in section 2.2.3, this might be regarded as a manoeuvre on the part of the industry to promote a book and guarantee that a great number of copies are sold. A double effect might be brought about. The use of the image of celebrities to advertise a product might mean a push to boost the sales; and simultaneously, celebrities benefit as well as they help to promote themselves. The industry is aware of the power of the media at the time of advertising and promoting products, which is why visual literacy is also associated with publicity and promotion. Everything is a sign and its meaning can be altered. Provided that the industry wants to exercise a certain influence on the audience, the meanings of signs are expected to be altered or changed.

It is through the Internet that the industry has found another platform for products to be advertised. It seems that having constant online access has become part of people’s life. Most people cannot get by without this interwoven system and the

industry is well-aware of it, which is why sites are conceived and created for consumers to enter and interact with other consumers. These websites are easy to access and quickly to find. In the event of launching a product or releasing a film/series, a precampaign is prepared so as to promote the product online and in advance. This way the industry makes sure that a good number of people get to know about the product before its launch, or release in the case of a film/series.

As for graffiti, its designs range from simplicity to sophistication. This art form may be individual, conveying somebody's own individuality, opinions, and comments; or collective, whose encoded messages are addressed to a specific group of people or community.

Street art is closely related to body art in the sense that both may be used as instruments to indicate group membership. In this way and as indicated below, people express their identities, ethnicity, gender, ideology, social status, and artistic taste by marking their bodies with these drawings, which become an extension of themselves.

In so doing, tattooed people voluntarily shape their social identities and enhance their definitions of self. Drawn by the affiliational and individuating consequences of their choice and despite the potential for disrupted interactions, tattooees choose to mark their bodies with indelible symbols of what they see themselves to be (Sanders 1988: 426).

Another manifestation of popular culture is food. Here is where fast-food restaurants come into play. Ritzer (2000: 1) points out that the well-known franchise McDonald's may be suitable to provide the paradigm of "the process by which the principles of fast-food restaurants are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world." Within the UK, there are approximately 1200 restaurants of which around 600 are franchised. McDonald's has over 30,000 restaurants in the world, operating in over 100 countries and territories. (<http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk/ukhome/whatmakesmcdonalds/questions/running-the-business/facts-&-figures/how-many-mcdonalds-restaurants-are-there-in-the-uk-and-the-world.html>). Campbell (2016: 336) also admits that McDonaldisation entails four important aspects: efficiency (related to customers' satisfaction and the inner rules of the franchise), calculability (dealing with products expenses) predictability (products and services are the same in every single restaurant of the franchise all over the world) and control (as people's actions in these places are shaped).

Fast-food restaurants, franchises, shopping malls, resorts, even home shopping television, and everything that invites us to consume goods and services is regarded as part of American culture. "What is critical [...] is that they are powerful representations of American culture and they all bring that culture to any nation to which they are exported" (Ritzer 2001: 97-118).

Obviously, food is a way of globalisation, since it is through foreign dishes that cultures are brought into contact. That is why Pinacoreli insists on the issue that a whole industry with important revenues is generated thanks to the insertion of foreign food

dishes into the culture of origin: “Foreign foods are captured in a network of symbols, images, practices and beliefs that occupy an important space in pop culture” (2008: 14).

To conclude, popular culture is literally a battlefield to establish political, social, and ideological control over society (da Silva Mendes Moraes 2018: 174). As stated above, this control is considered to be emitted through publicity, promotion and celebrity, comics, popular literature, films/TV series, music, the Internet, graffiti and body art, and food.

3. Teaching popular culture

3.1 Teaching popular culture through comics

This section discusses teaching popular culture through comics, including key elements as language, topics, characters, and visual literacy.

3.1.1 Introduction

This section uses comics to teach cross-curricular issues, values, and interdisciplinary aspects. Comics express the values and moods of our society.

One of the reasons for comic strips to be used in the classroom is fostering reading. Parsons and Smith (1993: 2) suggest that “many students, regardless of age, claim that comic books started them on the path to reading and loving literature,” which is why their use as a tool in class is a good starting point.

Comics have the potential to catch reluctant readers' attention and at the same time this art form challenges those who are fluent in reading conventional books (Clever 2008: 28).

The combination of text and image is found in three different ways (see section 2.2.2): some images lack text, since sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, others have text support to avoid multiple interpretations, and there are also vignettes whose texts are as important as their images.

Regarding text, language is brief, simple, and personal. In terms of register, everyday English and direct speech are used. As for values, moral dilemmas and social learning are embraced. From Parsons and Smith's viewpoint (1993: 2), comics are a valuable learning tool in the classroom since human dilemmas are exposed, human issues are solved, and the values and moods of our society as well as today's popular culture are expressed.

Flipping through the pages of a comic, students may find that comics can be a visual support to tackle social issues as well as language arts. Living in a visual society makes even more prominent the right interpretation of images. What is expected is that the reader is skilful at decoding the meaning of images, since they have a predominant role in comic strips. Williams (2008: 13) suggests that comics can be exploited in class at multiple levels: analysing the story, the author's intention, characters, context, and how words, images and design are interrelated.

Comics are a pedagogical tool due to the following reasons: they deal with a wide range of topics (which may give rise to a debate or to a reflection on an issue), reading and writing skills may be improved with exercises like “add-a-panel” (where the story is expanded by adding the students' own panels), “fill-it-up” (where students write the script of a comic) or “sort-it-out” (where students work to put together some panels to tell a story), socio-cultural aspects and stereotypes are also found, character and plot analysis are facilitated, and story-writing exercises are stimulated. When using comics for the first time in the classroom, political cartoons are suitable to introduce a theme –as a warmup or ice breaker–. For that purpose some websites –

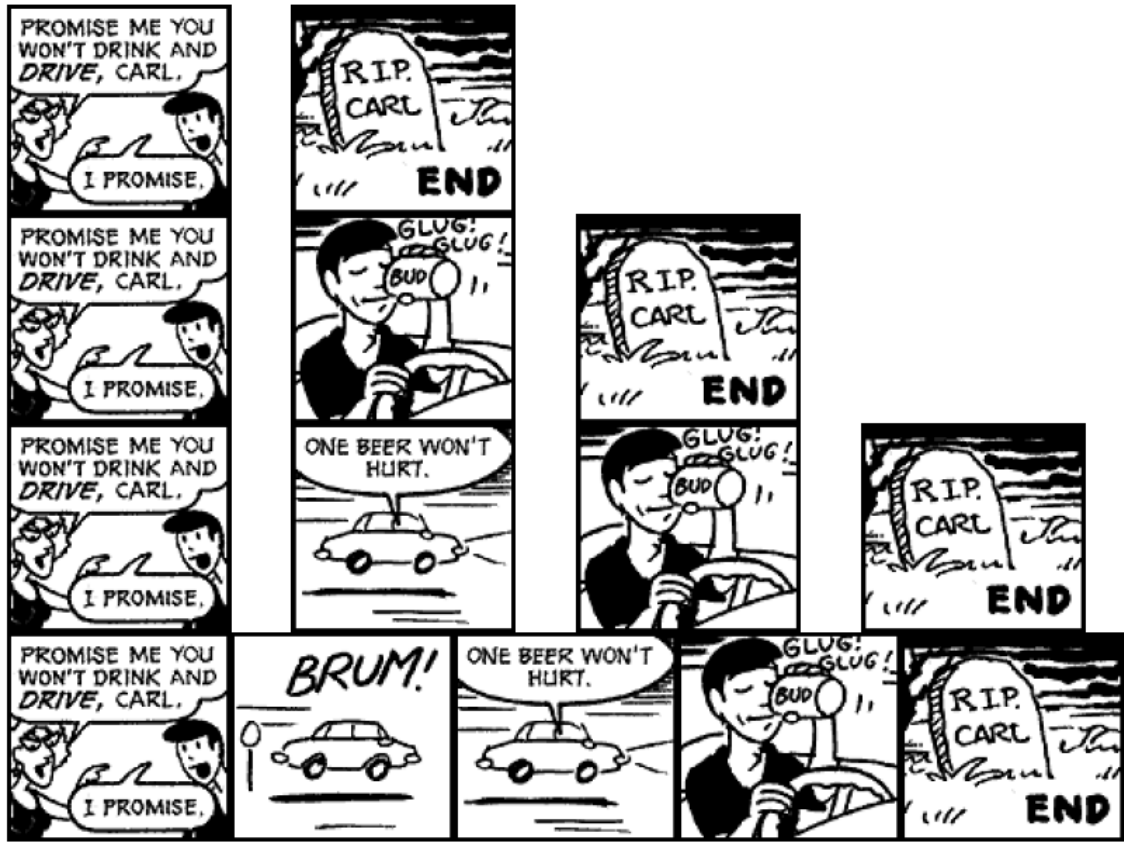


Figure 147. Carl series (www.scottmcccloud.com/comics/carl/3a/02.html)

Teachers can make use of comic strips as attention-getters as well as icebreakers to introduce a new topic, stimulate critical thinking, or ethical discussions. Using comics at the beginning of the lesson can help students to focus their attention (see Figure 148) (Cheesman 2006: 48).

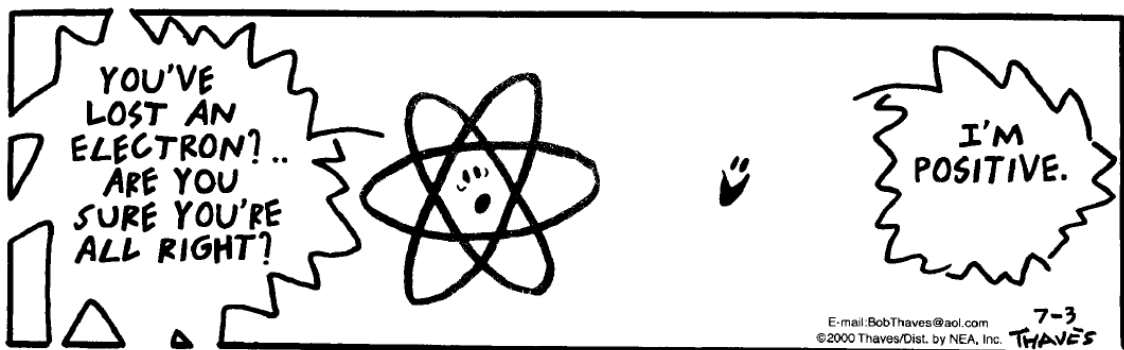


Figure 148. Electron (<https://search.proquest.com/openview/6341ab9cded89acf70e6b927289a6b83/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=49226>)

Depending on the level and the subject, Parsons and Smith (1993: 1-13) provide up to thirty ways to exploit comics in the classroom; some of them are: comparing a number of historical and literature based comics, examining the political ideas in a type of comic; studying current life issues, studying how norms and values in comics parallel

societal norms, analysing literary conventions, focusing on the use of language, exploring where comics are rooted, studying the concept of comic marketing, gathering and studying comics promoting specific standpoints, and creating a comic where students are the main characters. Some of the activities that can be conducted by working on comics alongside their possible alternatives are displayed below and are suggested, put forward, and proposed by Parsons and Smith (1993: 1-13), unless otherwise stated.

Picking a number of frames, pictures or panels from a comic page (see Figure 149) is suitable to work on the sort of feelings the images evoke and the way feelings are created by the illustrator, the mood and the atmosphere of the scenes, students' reaction to the drawings and actions, the way to convey action and emotion in comics, or the techniques that the cartoonist make use of (Parsons and Smith 1993: 2). In the strip below, the images evoke feelings of tension, anger, or fury due to the fact that the characters show their teeth. In addition, the position of their arms shows strength and an intention to attack. The illustrator creates feelings of loneliness, tranquility, and sadness by using mostly cold colours. The cold and moist snow that covers the ground and the combination of cold colours create a lifeless atmosphere. By observing the frames and characters' body language, one is under the impression that the characters are about to fight. Finally, the cartoonist makes use of some techniques to convey action and emotion: in the first panel, emotion is conveyed by showing a big finger which gives a sense of authority. In the second frame, action is conveyed by means of the wind that makes the girl's hair move, besides the girl's pose makes it clear that she is ready to fight. And in the third vignette, the man's arm occupies part of the second panel, there is a leaf in the air, and the man's silhouette is surrounded by lines to convey that he is in motion and represents a threat to the enemy.

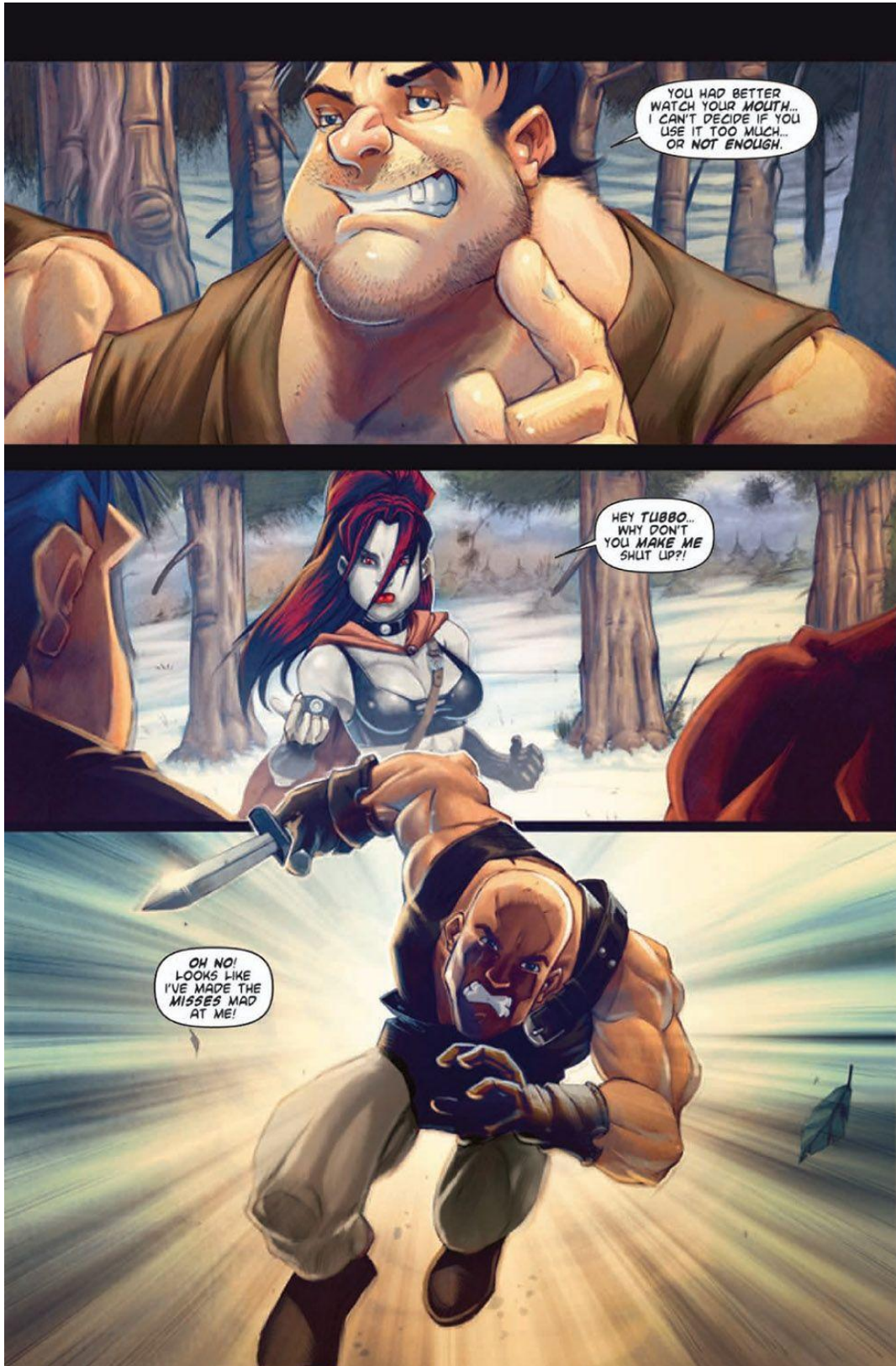


Figure 149. *Ezra* (<https://www.comixology.com/Ezra-Evoked-Emotions-1-of-3/digital-comic/111>)

Some possible ways to work on political strips are to highlight the political ideas of the main character or those of the author, then reflect on them, and discuss them afterwards. On the other hand, having collected some political strips from various newspapers, students might compare them, identify the political standpoint that is suggested, and explain how the message is reinforced by the cartoonist's style. In the case of *G.I. Joe*, Norlund (2006: 1) suggests that the comic contains nationalistic tones and mature story lines, which include themes such as torture, death, or revenge. What G.I. Joe's team does is to fight against Cobra –a terrorist organization–.

By contrast, *Far Side* (see Figure 150) and *Bizarro* (see Figure 151) are comics that see the world differently, in a jocular or ironical way Parsons and Smith (1993: 2). Accordingly, students can infer and describe the cartoonist's vision of the world and tell about what makes these comics funny. Another possibility is that students can draw a comic strip with a different slant of the world by using the same techniques as in the examples. In the case of *Bizarro*, a rhetoric question is posed: are human beings the real threat to planet Earth? The lawyer asks the Earth, which has not got the capacity to speak. In fact, there is a stick of dynamite on the floor –which poses a serious threat to those in the courtroom–. All in all, the situation depicted is absurd and the author has the intention to make the reader laugh by placing the Earth in a place where it does not belong to and in an unreal situation. The situation portrayed in *Far Side* is similar to the previous. This time a fantasy character is trying to fit in within the real world. Even though pirates “lack” jobs, Captain Hook is determined to ask for advice to find one. The scene is hilarious since having a hook in one arm is not advisable to give massages.



Figure 150. *Far Side* (<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/4315715767133423/>)



Figure 151. *Bizarro* (<https://www.facebook.com/bizarrocomics/>)

Were students to explore whether comics are rooted on television, films or books, some instances to start with would be *Batman*, *Spiderman*, *Superman*, *Dick Tracy*, or *Little Orphan Annie*. The aim is to compare the Superman portrayed on television, in films, and in comics. For instance in Di Paolo's view (2009: 195), the character Batman has evolved since his birth in 1939. In the 1940s, Batman fought against gangsters, vampires, Nazis, and villains like Catwoman or Joker. In the 1950s Batman faced aliens (see Figure 152), in the 1960s Batman inspired a psychedelic television series. In the 1970s Batman dealt with supernatural stories, the muscles of his body were toned, and had a melancholic mood (see Figure 153). In the 1980s the story lines were violent, and in 1989-1997 four major films were released depicting a gothic Batman facing classical villains.



Figure 152. Batman faces aliens

<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/373728469064092415/>

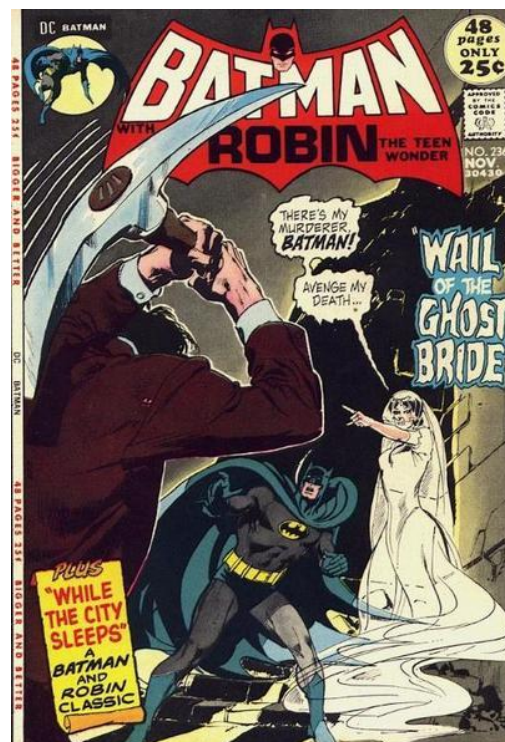


Figure 153. Batman and the supernatural

<http://www.gothamcalling.com/13-batman-ghost-stories/>

The concept of good versus evil may be exploited by making a list of comic heroes and another with villains to compare the personality traits in both groups. After making a list including real life people/celebrities their personality traits can also be described to reveal whether celebrities' traits resemble those of heroes or those of villains. In Baumeister and Pizarro's view (2013: 21) the villains The Joker and Magneto are as popular as the heroes themselves. The former is a psychopathic and indiscriminate killer, whilst the latter feels disdain for human beings.

As far as *Mad Magazine* is concerned, two alternatives might be suggested. Having read some extracts from *Spy versus Spy* in *Mad Magazine*, a debate about the

effect of humour on real life politics could be established, or the breaking news about the East and West relations could be compared with the comic strip *Spy versus Spy* (Parsons and Smith 1993: 5). Debating on comic strips about political satire may generate ideas for future essays, as if it was a brainstorming technique. While reading characters' thoughts, students can reflect on whether another decision would have been possible, reflect on the consequences of a different decision, or ponder which actions are suitable or not. Using comics, students realise how important decisions are.

In case of culture shock (*Blade Runner*, *Tarzan*, *Star Trek*, or *Buck Rogers*), students can identify the two cultures in conflict and the conflict itself. Afterwards the features and values of both cultures can be described. Students may find out whether there are any cultural biases or not. For instance, the civilisations that are popularised in *Star Trek* are, on the one hand, the Federation (representing modernism in the Western World), and on the other hand, the Klingons, the Borg, the Romulans, and the Cardassians (representing traditionalist societies) (Gonzalez 2015: 73). The culture clash is brought about by means of the language barrier which makes communication difficult or impossible between humans and an alien race (see Figure 154), or by violating the societal rules of another culture without prior knowledge (see Figure 155), or due to different customs between two races as in *Yet another fantasy gamer comic* (see Figure 156).



Figure 154. Language barrier in *Star Trek* (<https://intl.startrek.com/news/preview-thats-no-universal-translator>)

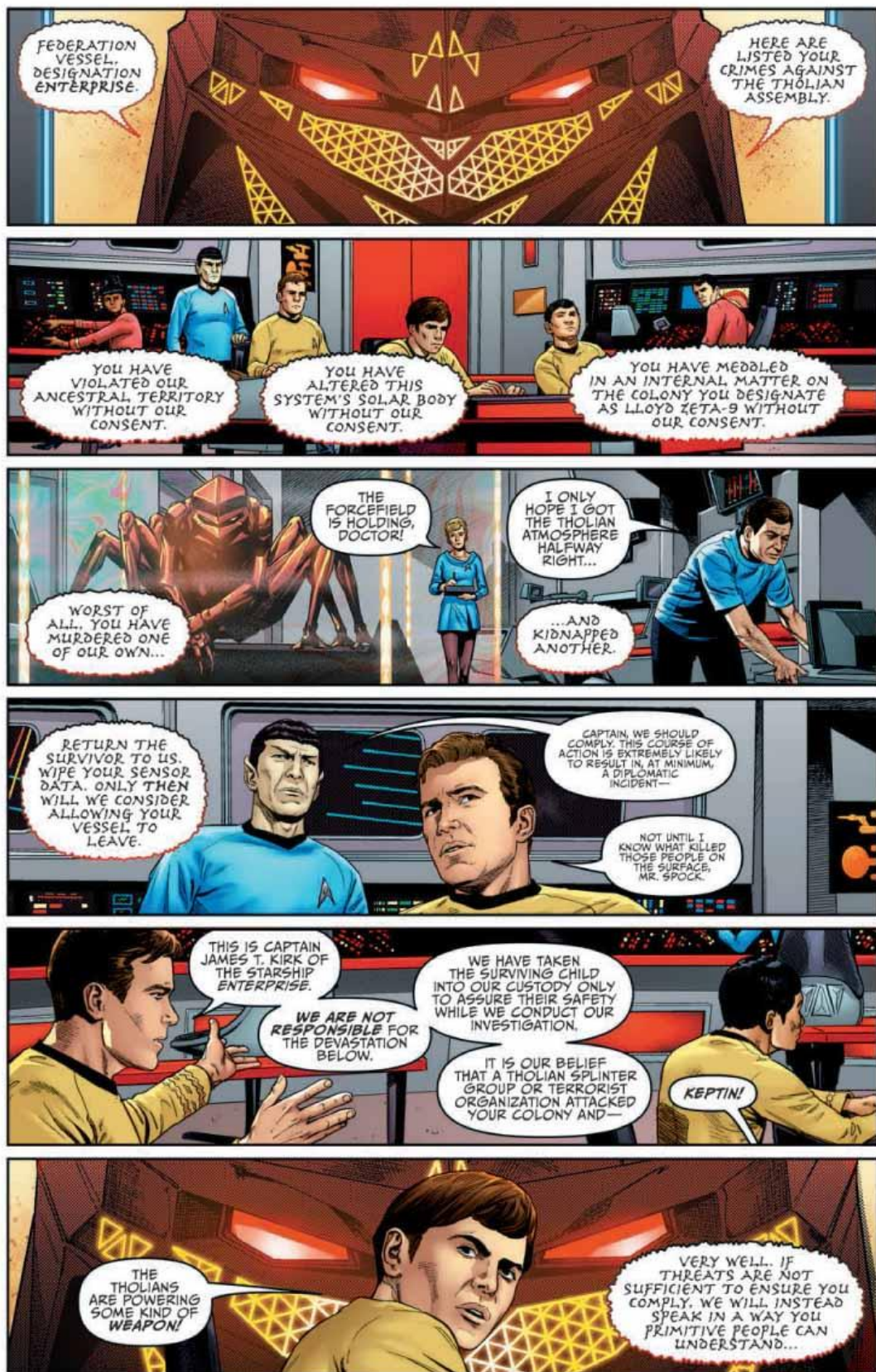


Figure 155. Societal rules in *Star Trek* (<https://forum.sanctuary.fr/t/star-trek-year-five-1-7->

lanzing-kelly-collectif/183489)



Figure 156. *Yet another fantasy gamer comic* (<https://yafgc.net/comic/2616-culture-clash/>)

Finally, involving students' drawing skills two activities can be conducted. A comic strip may be created to make both parents and teachers aware of the positive aspects of comics, their value and how favourable and beneficial they are. Students can be the protagonists of a story (Parsons and Smith 1993: 12).

3.1.3 Topics

Science and technology, medicine, health, war and the holocaust, adventures, historical events, humour, irony, symbolism, and topical issues (such as moral dilemmas, gender equality, intolerance, feminism, and stereotypes) are some of the topics illustrated in the comic strips of this section. For instance, comic strips based on science allow students to read, discuss, and debate about science issues (see Figure 157). The comic series *Medikidz* –which stands for Medical Information for Kids– aims to teach children about disease processes such as asthma, breast cancer, or childhood obesity. What is more, anatomy is also taught to medical students through comic strips (see Figure 158) (Park, Kim and Chung 2011: 275-277).

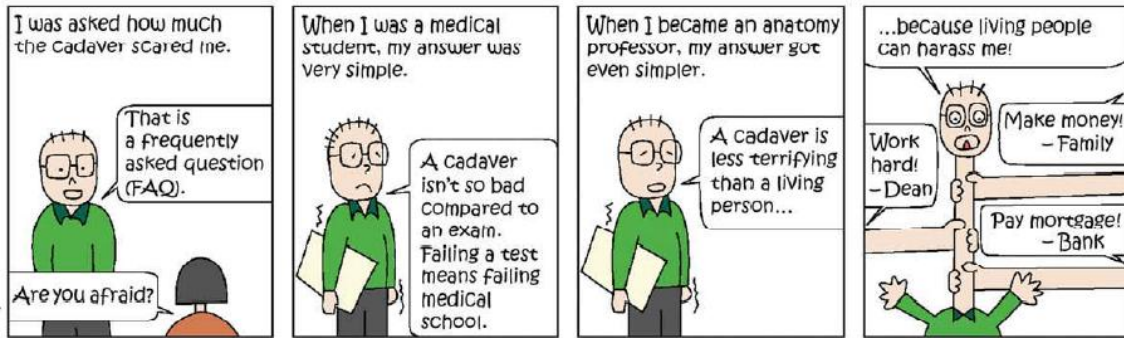


Figure 157. Medical comics (http://vkh.ajou.ac.kr/cartoon_english/Anatomy%20comic%20strips.pdf)

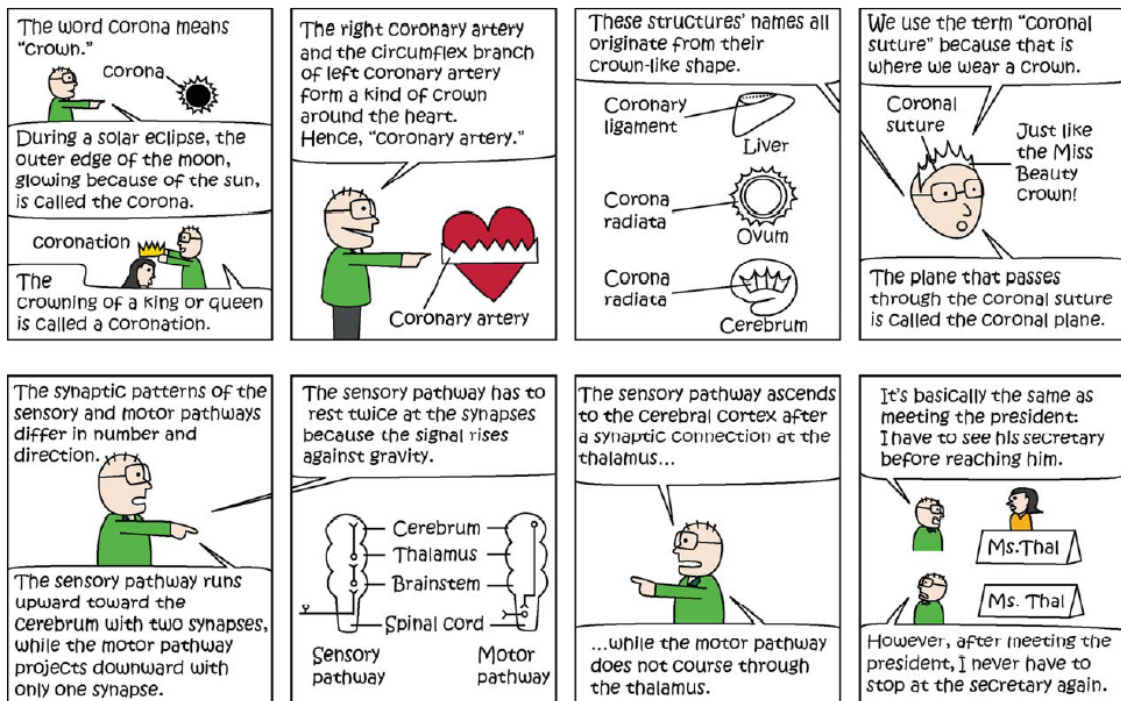


Figure 158. Anatomy comic strips (http://vkh.ajou.ac.kr/cartoon_english/Anatomy%20comic%20strips.pdf)

Issues which might be difficult to tackle in class –such as World War II and the Holocaust– have been successfully treated with comics, for instance, *Maus* (1986, see Figure 159) by Art Spiegelman and *Yossel* (2003, see Figure 160) by Joe Kubert (Ravelo 2013: 8).



Figure 159. *Maus* (<https://comicsalliance.com/tribute-maus/>)

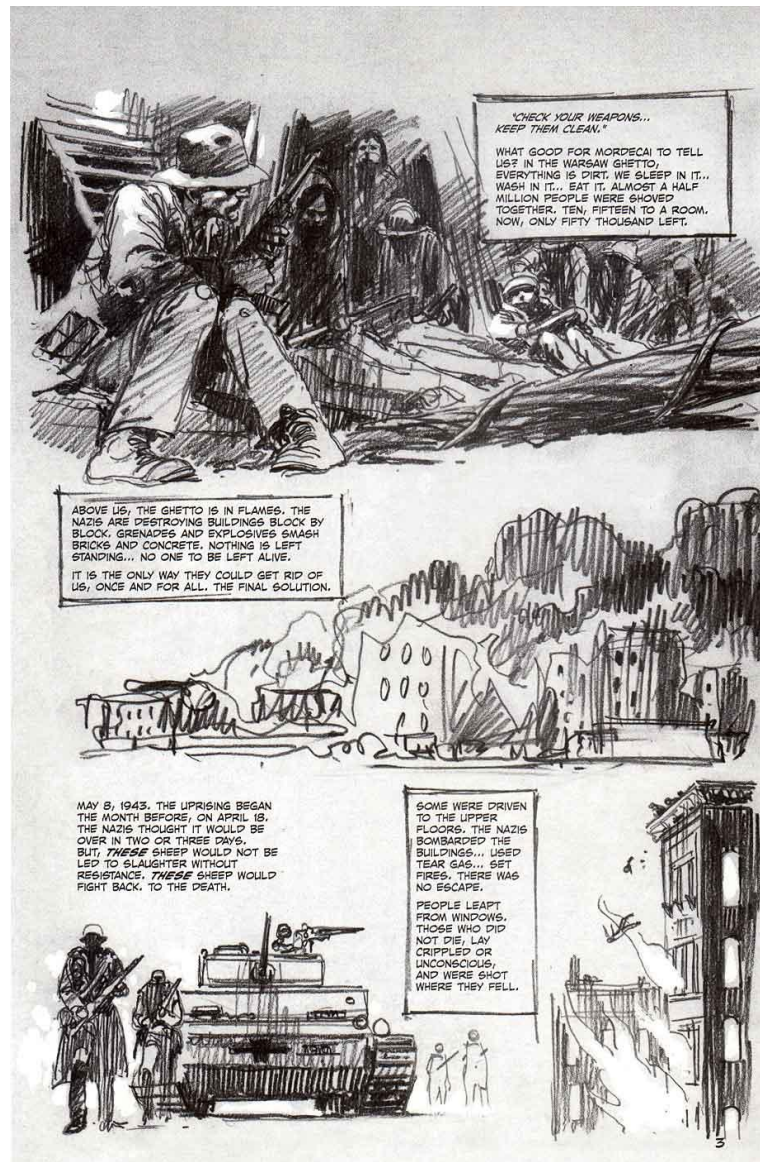


Figure 160. *Yossel* (http://www.jbooks.com/firstchapters/index/FC_Kubert1.htm)

Treasure Island (see Figure 161), *Moby Dick* (see Figure 162), and *Great Expectations* (see Figure 163) are examples of historical or literature-based comics. Comparing the books with the comic versions is advisable to discover whether the comic is a faithful version, a free adaptation, or a version with slight changes. To do so, students may read either the long versions or simply teachers may select some extracts to be worked on. What students can do is point out the differences between the book and the comic version, highlight the advantages and disadvantages of each one, or notice whether historical events are dealt with in the same way in both versions (Parsons and Smith 1993: 2).



Figure 161. *Treasure island* (<https://www.comixology.eu/Marvel-Illustrated-Treasure-Island-2007-2008-5/digital-comic/627690>)



Figure 162. *Moby Dick* (<https://www.comixology.com/Marvel-Illustrated-Moby-Dick-2008-5-of-6/digital-comic/527356>)



Figure 163. *Great expectations* (<http://www.classicalcomics.com/product/great-expectations-graphic-novel-uk/>)

When dealing with political ideas or philosophy, two options may be explored. On the one hand, *Archie*, *Mad Magazine*, *G.I. Joe* (see Figure 164) *Sergeant Rock*, and comics dealing with martial arts are examples of comics sharing the same topic, since war-related messages are conveyed (Sharm 2009: 75).



Figure 164. *G.I. Joe* (<https://comiconlinefree.com/g-i-joe-vs-cobra/issue-8/9>)

Making a list of the “strangest” comics may be useful to discuss about current life issues. For example students can reflect upon people’s actions portrayed in *Far Side* (mentioned above); the reason for having the title *Far Side*; or the meaning of life for *Garfield* and *Calvin & Hobbes* (see Figure 165 and 166). *Calvin and Hobbes* make a point about existential or philosophical issues which contrasts with their youth. That is what makes the strip appealing (Draper 2009: 2). According to the characters, life has no sense if everyone is going to die in the end, therefore, what they can do is to enjoy the moment, the present, live and experience.



Figure 165. *Calvin and Hobbes*

(https://twitter.com/calvinn_hobbes/status/494150562989236224)

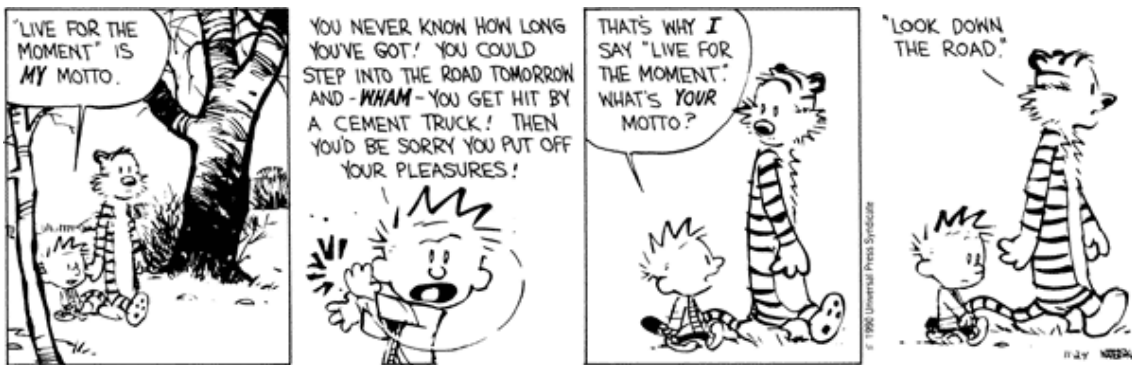


Figure 166. *Calvin and Hobbes* (<https://u.osu.edu/rudolph1023/2016/04/22/calvin-and-hobbes/>)

Some other activities can evolve into a discussion. The Classic Comic Book series is useful to discuss events that have previously been treated in class. For this purpose, *The Last of the Mohicans* (see Figure 167) is suitable to discuss colonial wars. Then, students might need to make use of critical thinking in order to answer questions

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

involving the problems the characters are facing, human dilemmas, the depiction of certain events in the comic whilst others are left out (Parsons and Smith 1993: 4). As the comic strip shows below, racism, distrust, social status, and ethnicity are some of the issues the characters are facing.



Figure 167. *The last of the Mohicans* (<https://www.comixology.co.uk/Marvel-Illustrated-Last-of-the-Mohicans-2007-1-of-6/digital-comic/527306>)

Regarding society, students can decide whether or not norms in *Archie, For Better or For Worse* (see Figure 168) or *Family Circle* parallel the societal norms of contemporary society, or whether characters resemble people students know. Once the characters' qualities have been identified, students can point out whether or not the characters of the comic strip are stereotyped. Students can also say to what extent these comics are close to reality or normal life (Parsons and Smith 1993: 4). For instance what the strip below shows is a small number of roles and habits within a family that are repeated daily. As the woman is in charge of cleaning and the child is the one who gets the windowpane dirty shortly afterwards, characters are stereotyped. This is why the comic below is quite close to reality, since it depicts a situation which housemakers/house spouses are acquainted with.



Figure 168. *For better or for worse* (https://fborfw.com/strip_fix/2019/04/)

As Young sees it (2017: 872-873), “Political humour is an umbrella term that encompasses any humorous text dealing with political issues, people, events, processes, or institutions.” It is within this category that the political satire plays a predominant role. For example in the strip below, it seems that spies behave in the same way as the presidents of their nations: summits and meetings are arranged, they pretend to get on well, although they do not trust one another. Accordingly, the cartoonist is making use of humour to draw attention to a current situation. Humour is like an attention getter (see Figure 169). Issues of stereotypes (see Figure 170), prejudices, equality, politics, or any other social issue might be subject to be tackled too (Summerlin 2015: 30-38).

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

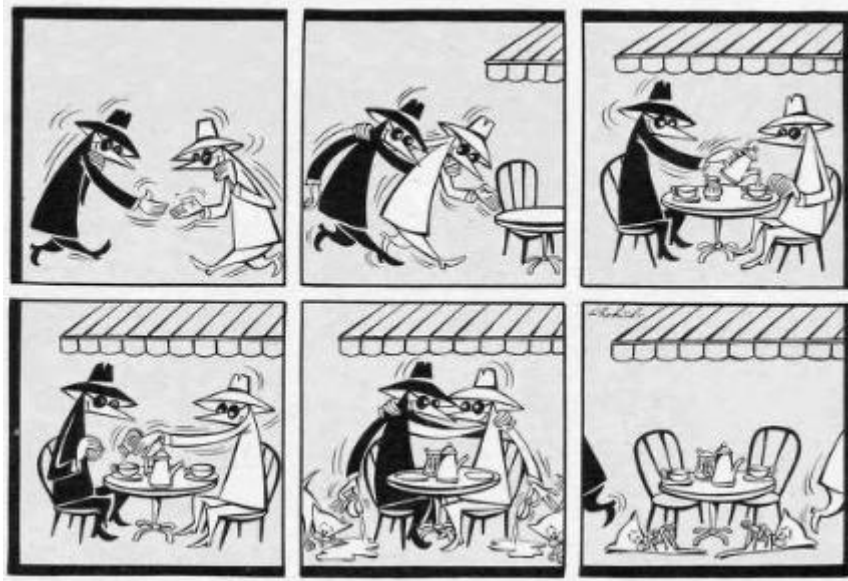


Figure 169. *Spy versus spy*

(<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n1>)



Figure 170. Geographic stereotypes (<https://comicvine.gamespot.com/images/1300-6595816>)

Taking as an example the comic *Conan and the People of the Black Circle*, not only can cults be studied, but also how cult beliefs are spread. Cult hierarchy, a cult's structure and a cult's leader are also aspects to analyse. Further issues for consideration are similarities or differences between the aforesaid aspects in comics and real life. In Lachman's view (2001: 59-62) occult and esoteric ideas, sorcery and black magic are gathered in the comic *Conan* (see Figure 171).



Figure 171. *Conan and the people of the black circle* (<https://www.darkhorse.com/Comics/24-074/Conan-and-the-People-of-the-Black-Circle-1>)

A further practical approach is asking students to go to a comic book store to interview the owner or the workers of the shop about the characteristics that make a comic become popular, the best-selling comics/authors, the type of clients who buy comics and ask the workers about controversial comics. *Nam, Team Yankee, Captain*

America, *Sergeant Rock*, and *Captain Planet* are examples of comics that could be worked on to debate about censorship, and acceptable or unacceptable comics. In fact, a for and against debate may be organised to decide whether a comic should be censored. For example, *Nam* (see Figure 172) is a comic that fits well within the scope of what is considered acceptable, unacceptable, or censurable. It deals with issues of patriotism, violence, and trauma as well as the psychological impact of the Vietnam War as a conflict event (Earle 2018: 159). *Nam* and comics alike are aimed at an adult audience, which is why “they are published outside the control of the American comic code” (Huxley 1989: 160), thus escaping censorship.



Figure 172. *Nam* (<https://www.zonanegativa.com/the-nam-primera-patrulla/>)

Regarding price guides for comic books (see Figure 173), the issue of marketing can be analysed together with how the prices of comics are decided or set, what the most expensive comic books are, or whether there is any other useful information in price guides, e.g. a grading guide can be found to value and classify the comics (no grade, poor, fair, good, very good, fine, very fine, near mint, near mint +, or mint grades). When buying, selling or trading comics there are some factors to take into consideration such as rarity, marketability, and restoration –colour touch, pieces added, tear seals, reinforcement, cleaned, re-glossed, or spine split seals (Nielsen 2015: 20-26). A synopsis of the story may also be found in a price guide. After reading some of them, students can identify whether there are any common themes, e.g. human problems, or social issues.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Comics Price Guide website. At the top left is the logo 'COMICS PRICEGUIDE.COM'. The navigation menu includes HOME, PRICE GUIDE, COMMUNITY, BLOG, FORUMS, BUY/SELL, and ABOUT. Below the menu, statistics are displayed: Members: 1,014,883, Values: 192,095,857, Publishers: 6,088, Comics: 1,068,313, and Coffee: 133,539. There are two search bars: 'SEARCH COMICS' (Search by Title) and 'PUBLISHERS' (Search by Publisher). The main section is titled 'COMICS FOR SALE' and features four comic listings:

Comic Title	Volume / Issue	Condition	Starting Price	Seller	Seller Rating
CONAN #41	Dark Horse Volume 1 June 2007	9.4 (Near Mint)	\$2.50	qityooms (42)	100% Positive
FLASH, THE #1	DC Volume 5 August 2016	9.4 (Near Mint)	\$3.00	rramadan (58)	100% Positive
I AM LEGEND #1	Eclipse Volume 30 1991	9.2 (Near Mint)	\$5.00	Xamial (3)	100% Positive
GREEN LANTERNS #47	DC Volume 1 July 2018	9.4 (Near Mint)	\$1.50	pghhead (241)	100% Positive

Figure 173. Price guides for comics (<https://comicspriceguide.com/>)

Given the opportunity to attend a comic auction, comics could be studied from another perspective: as an article, a product, or a commodity (Dewally and Ederington 2006: 693-694). Furthermore, students can observe what happens in an auction, who buys comics, how much is paid for them. Afterwards, students can mull over the possible reasons why people are willing to pay huge sums of money for a comic, or the reason for a great interest in certain comics. If a comic becomes popular, then relevant animations and video games are developed (Sheu and Chu 2017: 22).

Symbolism in comics is another aspect that deserves attention. Symbolism can be studied in the following three examples: patriotism or political standpoint, environmental issues, and values of a society. As for patriotism or political standpoint the symbols that are intended to show patriotism in e.g. *Captain America* (see Figure 174) may be identified. Creating and using a political spectrum to place characters in accordance with their political viewpoints, might give rise to discuss political standpoints (Parsons and Smith 1993: 9). According to Scott (2007: 325-328), Captain America's shield is a symbol of loyalty and patriotism, like the American flag. Both objects have the same colours. Regarding the environment, *Captain Planet* is suitable to tackle environmental issues, e.g. deforestation, reforestation, and environmental projects are hinted (see Figure 175). As far as values are concerned, the main values of a society, the needs of a society, messages of propaganda, and what the comic story suggests doing in case law and order breaks down are aspects to exploit through comics. Students can also be asked whether they know any other comics addressing the same themes as the above.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School



Figure 174. *Captain America* (<https://wallpapersafari.com/w/6UxDrv>)

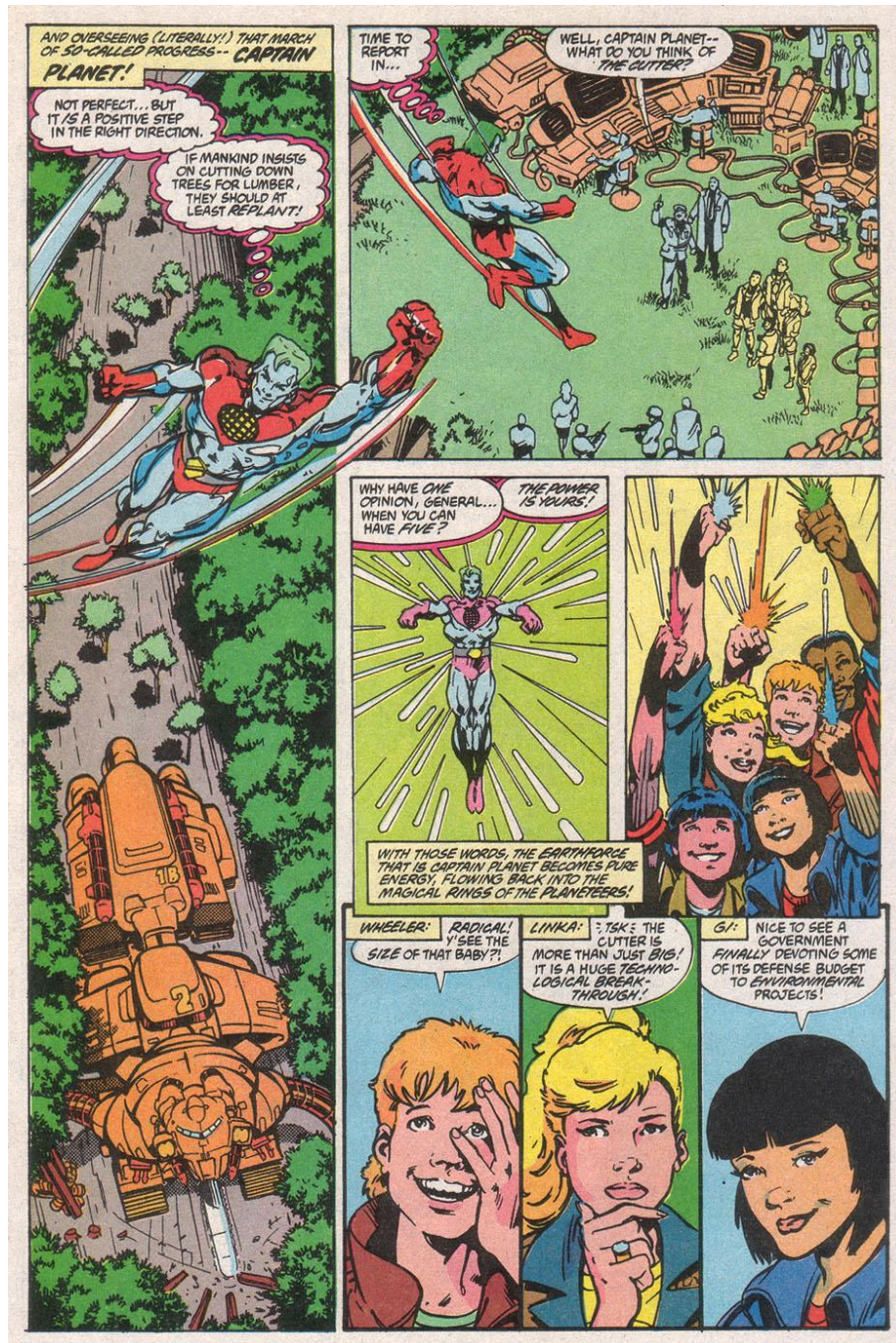


Figure 175. Environmental issues in *Captain Planet* (<https://view-comic.com/captain-planet-and-the-planeteers-issue-11/>)

Comics may be useful in social studies when studying areas like Geography so as to examine the cities mentioned in the respective comics and what they suggest about the cities described within them. Comics also allow the analysis of Politics, political problems, political situations and political issues, strength in diversity, strength in community, group action, individual action –individual versus group e.g. *G.I. Joe*, *Archie*– are some suggestions that may be discussed too, or concepts such as regionalism, racial tolerance, and political action (Parsons and Smith 1993: 8). In

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

Captain Planet (see Figure 176), five people from five different regions of the world are gathered –Africa, Asia, South America, North America and the Soviet Union–, which brings to the fore issues of ethnicity, race, and diversity. The strip below suggests strength in diversity and strength in community too. The former is due to the characters’ personal backgrounds, and the latter has to do with the idea of working together for the wellbeing of the planet, thus, group action is encouraged (Dauer 2004: 255-256).



Figure 176. Diversity in *Captain Planet* (<https://view-comic.com/captain-planet-and-the-planeteers-issue-1/>)

In addition to this, Sciences and Western technology can also be fostered through *Star Trek*. A list can be made about the science and technology used in the story, the facts mentioned and how science and technology are involved in the story either positively or negatively (Anijar 2000: xii). As observed, e.g. the strip below illustrates a sort of science lesson dealing with a hyper nova, gamma energy, an Einstein-Rosen bridge, a wormhole, and the possible collateral effects of an explosion. In this case the strip portrays how technology can be used to avoid a disaster (see Figure 177). On the contrary, science and technology are regarded as something negative when the enemy is more technologically advanced, e.g a technologically advanced enemy, whose artifacts are able to repair themselves by means of nanotechnology, could turn out impossible to defeat (see Figure 178).

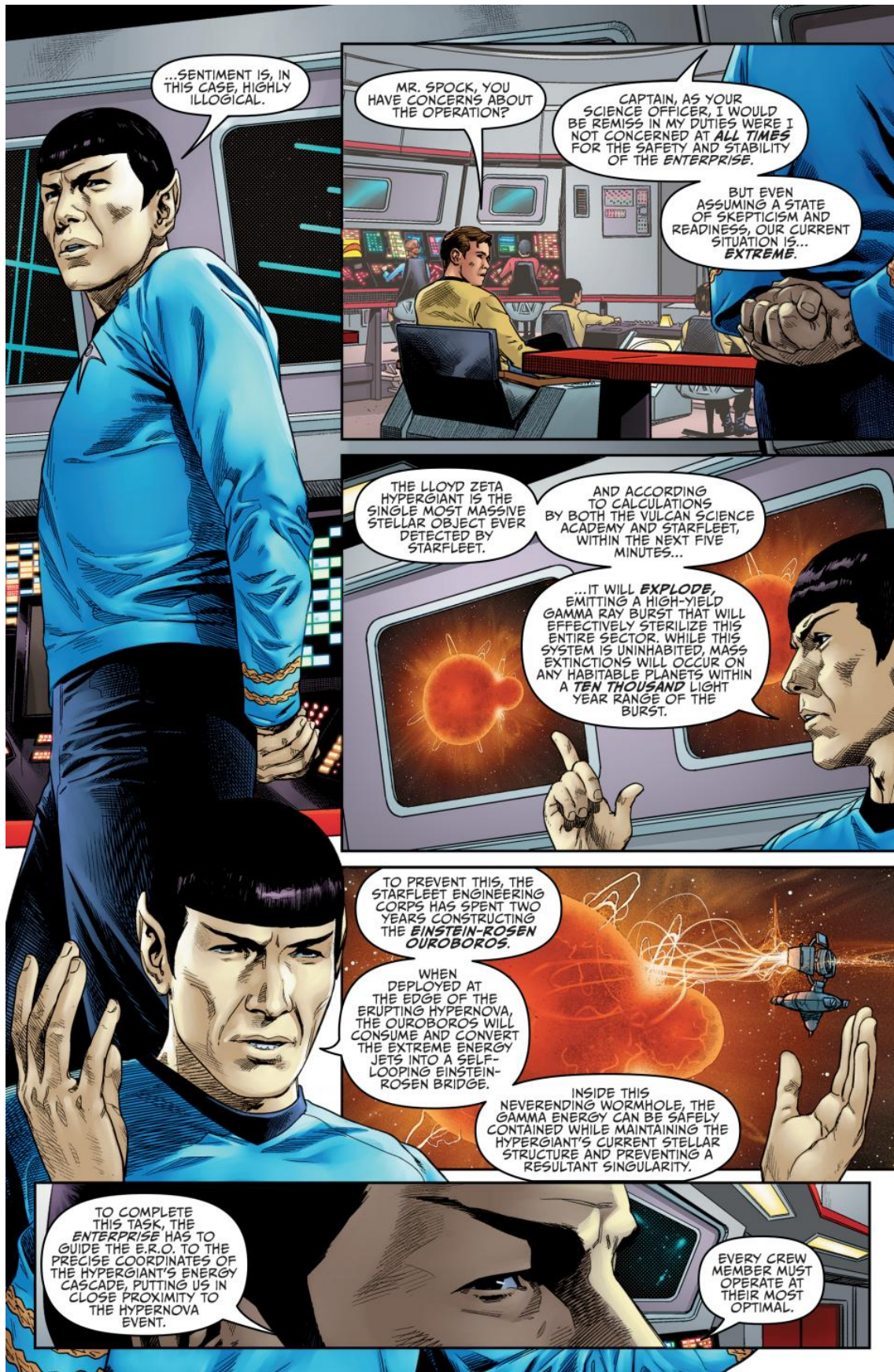


Figure 177. *Star Trek* and science (<https://www.comixology.eu/Star-Trek-Year-Five-1/digital-comic/753658>)



Figure 178. *Star Trek* and technology (<https://www.herocollector.com/en-us/Article/best-of-the-borg-top-10-comics>)

In summary, comics deal with a wide range of topics such as, politics, ethics, the environment, culture, technology, science, biology, ethnicity, or racism, but it is not only topics that are important, topics in conjunction with good characters are what account for the quality of comics.

3.1.4 Characters

Physical appearance, character development and socio-cultural background are analysed in this section.

When comparing superheroes, two possibilities are given. First, a chart may be created to compare both female (see Figure 179) and male (see Figure 180) superheroes

in terms of similarities, differences, personalities, imperfections, or flaws. Afterwards, students can compare –in terms of heroism– superheroes with celebrities, who might be either dead or alive. In addition to this, heroic features or leadership qualities may be highlighted in both comics and real life. Having a look at the images below it is easy to see that the heroines are hyper sexualised, their femininity is over-exaggerated, and most of the times super heroines seem to be underweight: in Robbins' view (2002), heroines' waists are extremely thin and their legs are twice as long as their upper bodies. It seems that their abilities and superpowers are overshadowed by their physical appearance. By contrast heroes look tall and strong, they have great and exaggerated muscles, male necks tend to be thicker than their heads, and chins are usually prominent. But both have something in common: male's and female's noses are short and sometimes their eyes lack pupils (Parsons and Smith 1993: 4).



Figure 179. Female superheroes
(<https://feminisminindia.com/2017/06/12/super-heroines-unrealistic-portrayal/>)



Figure 180. Male superheroes
(<https://www.amazon.com/Monifith-Superhero-Distressed-Christmas-6pcs-8x12inch/dp/B07H3ZV2FW>)

Physically, American men in comics look strong, handsome, with broad shoulders, and have a good knowledge of science and technology, which contrasts with the enemy: the Japanese have buck teeth, thick glasses, and rat-like facial features. Portraying villains that way was a political maneuver for people –especially youngsters– to get psychologically ready and enroll in the army when the time came (Scott 2007: 325-328) (see Figure 181).



Figure 181. The enemy (<https://research.utexas.edu/showcase/articles/view/sentinel-of-liberty-captain-america-on-the-home-front-in-wwii>)

Moreover, viewpoints, dialects, symbols, characters coming from foreign countries or other cultures, anachronisms, and characters from the past or present are characteristics to be analysed. From Cunningham's standpoint (2010: 51-53), mainstream comics lack black superheroes. DC has none, whilst Marvel has three black superheroes: *Black Panther*, *Doctor Voodoo*, and *War Machine*. What is more, there are even less black female villains than black male villains. In terms of background, *Black Panther* (see Figure 182) is a hero that comes from an imaginary kingdom – Wakanda– settled in Africa. Thus, this African hero comes from a completely different background.



Figure 182. Black Panther (<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/629870697857409583/>)

Another set of comics might be useful to distinguish the features of both protagonists (see Figure 183) and antagonist (see Figure 184) as well as to identify character development. According to Lefèvre (2015: 262-263), the antagonist brings about setbacks as well as conflicts, which must be solved by the protagonist, who does not make use of violence offensively but defensively. What Phillips and Strobl (2006: 304) suggest is that protagonists want to restore public order, as they act like peacekeepers.



Figure 183. Heroes

(<https://articulo.mercadolibre.com.mx/MLM-643954830-dc-comics-heroes-poster-lenticular-3d-JM?quantity=1&variation=39131063167>)

Figure 184. Villians

(<https://ifanboy.com/articles/who-has-the-best-villains-in-comics/>)

3.1.5 Reading images

Visual literacy or semiotics (Corbett 2003: 139-140) is the study of signs and working with comics requires both understanding and interpreting images. Visual literacy is the ability to decode, interpret or read images, pictures, or illustrations (Fenwick 1998: 132). Scrivener (1994: 167) mentions picture stories. A picture story is a sequence of images that students use to tell a story with narrative tenses either as a written or oral exercise.

When it comes to visual literacy, Corbett (2003: 144-150) highlights essential elements like framing, saliency, the portrayal of characters, the gaze, distance, perspective, and clothes. When reading images, framing and saliency are of paramount importance. Big elements in central position are more relevant whilst small elements placed in the margins are less important to understand the message of the image. The elements located at the top of the frame are thought to be 'ideal' whereas those at the bottom of the image can have a more down-to-earth meaning; this is the composition observable in religious paintings. Besides, saliency is also established through contrast in colours. The way characters are portrayed in a vignette allows the viewer to make judgements and interpret feelings and emotions. The characters' gaze and especially its direction is a crucial element: eye-contact means that the character expects and demands a response on the part of the viewer. On the contrary, no eye-contact shows distance between the characters. If the character smiles social contact is encouraged, whereas a frown can suggest the character does not agree with somebody's views.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 66), the viewer feels empathy when characters are gazing out-of-frame. There is also a tendency for male characters to look firmly, whereas female characters seem to stare blankly. Physical distance is another factor that needs to be considered. A close-up shot implies closeness and proximity, a middle shot entails social communication, and a long shot is the most impersonal of them all. Changes in vertical perspective have to do with power, and changes in horizontal perspective deal with the viewer's involvement.

The viewer's involvement is higher when the viewer and the character are face-to-face. The more oblique the angle is, the more evident the distance between the character and the viewer is. As to the register, language can be formal or informal; dress code can also be formal or casual. The clothes that characters wear send messages about the individual and the community too, e.g. the military wear uniforms, businesspeople are dressed alike, and men and women do not wear the same outfit. Accordingly, clothes reveal the cultural group characters belong to (Corbett 2003: 150-152).

Descriptive images may include symbols, e.g. the picture of a musician may portray a musical instrument, and a book may accompany a writer. The combination of image and text makes it easy to decode facial expressions. Thus, the message will depend on the interaction of text and image (Corbett 2003: 157-159).

Kellner (1991: 63) upholds that we live in a culture saturated with images. Barry (1997: 75-78) adds that television, films, the Internet as well as advertising make use of the power of images. In comics there is a combination of word and image: the former is secondary, and the latter is primary. This is so because images communicate more than words.

In Frey and Fisher's view (2008: 14-17), colour is also a powerful tool when reading images, since colours improve motivation, willingness to read is increased, learning enhanced and retention is also improved. Besides, colours have meanings: red is associated with danger and excitement, blue evokes calm and security, pink stands for

tranquility and relaxation, green is connected to fertility, creativity, and healthy food, black is linked to authority and, finality, and yellow is an attention grabber.

In conclusion, comics are a pedagogical tool to work on a wide variety of topics, aspects of language, and characters' features –in terms of physical, socio-cultural background and character development–.

3.2 Teaching popular culture through TV series

TV series are an appealing, engaging, and interesting form of teaching popular culture. This section addresses the aspect of language that can be enhanced through TV series in the classroom, key aspects of their use as a pedagogical tool, some relevant topics of the series/episodes, and the features of the characters in the story.

One of the reasons to use TV series and videos in the classroom is the fact that videos are an appealing material to the so-called “video generation” (Smilanich and Lafreniere 2010: 604-605).

Dubeck and Tatlow (1998: 319) favour the projection of TV series rather than films in the classroom since the former are shorter. Yang (2011: 5) suggests that a TV series is primarily the main resource for students of English as a foreign language to know about the UK, the United States, their people, and their culture. Similarly, Sherman (2003: 2) points out that a TV series is a “window on English language culture” and the “second best thing after living and studying in (the) target cultural context.” Yang (2011: 33) adds that TV series are an authentic culture input with multiple examples of deviant behaviour, conflicts, and casual speech. They mirror a native speakers' culture.

3.2.1 Use of language

Language is one reason for teachers to use TV series as a tool. Dialogues in TV series represent real-life interactions or at least they are closer to real-life dialogues than those found in textbooks for students of English as a foreign language. What is more, they are authentic materials providing authentic audio-visual examples of day-to-day oral interactions (Sert 2009: 24-25).

Sherman (2003: 38) claims that *Friends* (see Figure 185) and *Frasier* (see figure 186) are full of up-to-date language; conversely, comedy plots tend to be complicated since the language is fast and plays with words and puns. Frumuselu, De Maeyer, Donche and Gutiérrez Colon Plana (2015: 107) emphasise the relevance of viewing *Friends* to learn phrasal verbs, slang, colloquial expressions, and informal and conversational speech.

The use of the hyperbole can be studied, for example, through the British TV series *Coupling* (see Figure 187) (Sert 2009: 25-31). Further aspects that can be learnt through this series are expressions of numbers (such as millions of or hundreds of), words referring to large amounts/quantities (masses of or loads of), adjective

modification of amount(s) and number(s) (adjective + amounts of), time expressions (years, weeks, hours), and size, degree and intensity (enormous, endless, or gigantic).



Figure 185. *Friends*
(<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/504684701991919491/>)

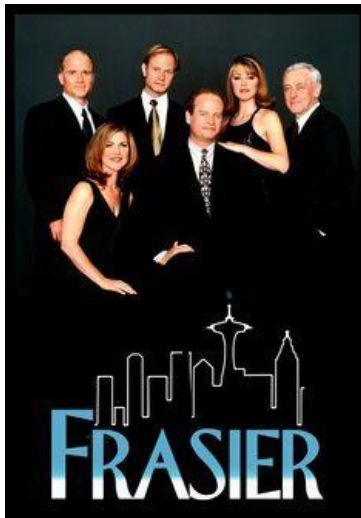


Figure 186. *Frasier*
(<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/40444053058878203/>)

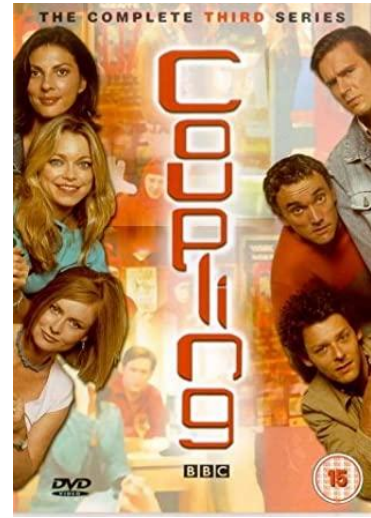


Figure 187. *Coupling*
(<https://www.amazon.es/Coupling-Complete-DVD-Jack-Davenport/dp/B011078LLE>)

Jokes and humour, which are socio-culturally shaped, are the hardest part to understand for non-native speakers and short sitcoms such as *Friends* make jokes more accessible (Talaván Zanón 2006: 47). Joshi, Tripathi, Carman and Bhattacharyya (2016: 146) believe that the use of sarcasm can also be studied with *Friends*, e.g. “being stranded in traffic is the best way to start the week; I absolutely love this restaurant, they have taken 40 minutes to bring our appetizers.”

3.2.2 Key pedagogical aspects

According to Bedjou (2006: 28), language is better acquired and learnt if the focus is on interesting content and TV series are an English teaching tool that can engage students since authentic (native speaker) content is brought into the class. Using episodes to teach a foreign language lets teachers be creative when designing a lesson (Yassaei 2012: 13).

When projecting TV series in the class, Harmer (2007: 310) proposes six techniques to exploit this visual material:

- a) The silent video technique. It consists in muting the video while projecting it.
- b) Freeze framing. Students watch the initial part of the video. Then the image is frozen, and students are asked what they think will happen next.
- c) Partial viewing. Most of the screen is covered with a piece of paper.
- d) Picture or speech. This is pair work. One student watches the video while the other faces away and listens to his/her partner description of what is being projected. Then they swap roles.

- e) Using subtitles. The video is viewed with subtitles; consequently, students can listen and read.
- f) Picture-less listening or video off. Students listen to the audio before watching the video.

Yasseai (2012: 15) states that grammar structures, vocabulary and writing can be taught with videos. Having selected a scene with the grammar aspect that the teacher aims to teach, the video is played, the image is frozen, and students are asked questions to practice the grammar structure, e.g. *what is s/he doing? What did s/he do? What was s/he doing? What is s/he going to do next? What will happen next?* As for lexicon, students can learn new vocabulary by guessing or identifying the sounds of objects and devices in a scene. In the case of using the vision off technique, students can write a story based on what they listen to, thus promoting creativity.

Yang (2011: 34) claims that TV series can help students develop critical thinking, cultural awareness, and values education. Its selection depends on six criteria: it must be popular among students, interesting for students, visually attractive, linguistically easy, it has to avoid taboos, and the subject matter has to be suitable for students' age.

Sherman (2003: 41-42) indicates several activities to be carried out with TV series. These activities need to be designed by the students once they have watched the episode at home:

- a) Selection of words. Three significant sentences from the episode are chosen and the class is asked: who said them, to whom, where, when and why, and why they are significant.
- b) Jumbled statements. Three comprehension questions can be made.
- c) Summary. Students can write down some key words to recount the episode briefly.
- d) A detailed 150-word text about a crucial scene in the episode is written. Two aspects can be discussed: what is going on and how it affects the outcome of the episode. In turn, questions can be made, and the character's behaviour can be commented on too.
- e) Relevant language items in the episode are analysed. Not only single words, but expressions and phrases also need to be highlighted. Prepositions, unexpected pronunciation, functional language, tenses, and verb forms can be considered as well.
- f) Missing scene. Students can either write the script or improvise an invented scene or add a new scene to the episode.
- g) The message/contribution of the episode is discussed.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

Another possibility is to conduct a vocabulary matching test as a pre-watching activity. After watching the episode, a post-test can be carried out to ascertain whether students have understood the vocabulary (Shabani and Zanussi 2015: 118).

Providing the teacher wants to use subtitles while watching the episode, three techniques can be implemented (Talaván Zanón 2009: 48-49): English dialogues with English subtitles, English dialogues with subtitles in the students' mother tongue, and dialogues in the students' mother tongue and English subtitles.

3.2.3 Topics

As business ethics issues were brought to the forefront down to the previous economical crisis, Reynolds and Oliver (2010: 122-123) suggest that the BBC television series *Merlin* (see Figure 188) is suitable to teach servant-leadership principles to public school adolescents. The goal is to show an ethics-based leadership perspective. This can be done by observing how actors behave in leadership scenarios that can be used as a vehicle for social change. Taking into account that Millennials are a virtual generation, digital materials such as videos from TV series prove to be appealing enough to engage students (Gifford 2010: 165). Up to ten characteristics of servant-leadership have been identified in the character of Merlin: stewardship, empathy, foresight, persuasion, conceptualisation, commitment to the growth of people, listening, awareness, building community, and healing. It is also pointed out that “servant-leadership can be applied to teaching civil rights, human rights, global citizenship, and in service-learning programs” (Reynolds and Oliver 2010: 129).



Figure 188. *Merlin* (<https://en.pixiz.com/frame/merlin-et-arthur-pendragon-3128002>)

Kaiser and Orlen (2006: 12) suggest that series about lawyers and justice such as *Law and Order* (see Figure 189) and *Court TV Network* have created inaccurate visions of the real exercise of law. Accordingly, extracts from these series could be exploited to debunk a generalised vision of the current practice of law.



Figure 189. *Law and order* (<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/757730706031437899/>)

Dubeck and Tatlow (1998: 319) claim that *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is suitable to teach physics, astronomy, and biology. Abstract concepts become concrete through images.

Scanlan and Feinberg (2000: 127-128) point out that critical thinking as well as sociological themes can be taught through *The Simpsons*. This series depicts a mini society in which a family interacts with social institutions: family, education, religion, mass media, and government. Current events are depicted from a satirical point of view: legalising casino gambling, gun control, the role of education and religion, the issue of making people redundant, teachers' strike against school funding cuts, poor medical treatment, protests against logging, globalisation, criminology, and gender issues (e.g. female entry in an all-male military school). Another example of the gender issue is shown in the episode *Lisa on Ice* (see Figure 190), when she becomes the first girl to play in the ice hockey league. Her parents' roles are sharply divided: Homer pushes his children to be competitive, whereas Marge tries to teach them that competition is not what matters. Other themes associated with the episode are: deviance, media socialisation, the role of public education, riot behaviour, and sport in society.



Figure 190. *The Simpsons* (<https://www.lasertimepodcast.com/2017/09/20/talking-simpsons-lisa-on-ice/>)

Drama series like *Star Trek*, *ER*, *The X-Files*, *LA Confidential*, *NYPD*, *West Wing*, *Sherlock Holmes* usually keep the same cast and settings and every episode has a main story which can be understood without having watched the previous episodes. Also, as the settings are so realistic that they can provide a window to the real world (Sherman 2003: 35).

As for *The X-Files*, there is an obsession with science and technology, a lack of confidence in both of them, and a sense of conspiracy on the part of the government. What the TV series did was to voice society's concerns (Hodges 2008: 231-240).

Odd and current events, folklore as well as urban legends provide the series with variety. "UFOs, alien visitations, contactees/abductees, cloning and the families/histories of the two protagonists" (Delasara 2000: 8) are combined with the theory of conspiracy. Taking into account the paranoia of conspiracy around which the series develops, and as Delasara sees it (2000: 18), *The X-Files* might be considered a social myth and a representative sample of people's fears and anxieties, uncertainty, and ambiguity regarding the truth; together with uncertainty as for the good will, good character and good sense of the leaders of government, business, the military, and both the legal and the medical system.

To summarise, *The X-Files* should not only be regarded as a science fiction TV series, but also as a show that empowers women, challenges gender conventions, promotes equality, spreads and infects the audience with the paranoia of conspiracy, and reflects people's fears.

3.2.4 Characters

One possibility is to analyse family models on TV series. Various types of families are found: *The Good Wife* presents a home family and a work family; *Grey's Anatomy*

shows a work family; *Lost* explores strangers as family. Characters can be studied in terms of relationships: how well a character gets on with the other characters (e.g. police detective partners will be prone to fighting as if they were a couple). Besides, when a new character is introduced in the story, it is crucial to observe how the arrival of this new character impacts regular characters' life (Landau 2013: 73-76).

The X-Files series challenges genre conventions since solving a case largely depends on the female character's expertise and rationality (Hodges 2008: 231-240). The female character –Dana Scully– is an FBI agent who does not live in a luxurious apartment, does not wear designer outfits, and does not have an extremely desirable car. Despite this, she has a strong sense of justice, is pro-active, and carries out tasks that have traditionally been done by male characters (Mizejewski 2004: 3-4). According to Mizejewski (2004: 14), women represented 20 percent of the FBI in the 1990s; by contrast, they represented 50 percent in the TV series of the late 1990s and early 2000s era. This might be regarded as a formula to facilitate social change by encouraging women to access previously male-oriented jobs (see Figure 191). Another sign of social change has been pointed out by Nordahl-Hansen, Oien and Fletcher-Watson (2017: 635), who consider that there is an increase in the number of characters with autism in TV series, which can contribute to an increase awareness of developmental disabilities. This is the example of *Touch* (see Figure 192).



Figure 191. Dana Scully

(<https://www.papermag.com/how-dana-scully-is-x-files-anti-style-hero-1427528727.html>)



Figure 192. *Touch*

(<https://www.justwatch.com/mx/serie/touch>)

The key for the audience to empathise with a character is through vulnerability. Viewers feel emotionally involved when they feel the same as what the character does in the story. Vulnerability is due to physical or psychological constraints such as lack of basic survival resources and safety in *The Walking Dead*, *Lost*, and *Revolution*; lack of time in *The Killing*, *24*, and *Homeland*; lack of loyal support on the part of the system, friends, family or allies like in *Mad Men*, *The Sopranos*; lack of trust and self-confidence in a relationship as in *Girls*, *Sex and the City*, *Scandal*, *Grey's Anatomy*;

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

lack of qualifications or readiness in a crisis e.g. *The Good Wife*, *The X-Files*, *Damages*, *Deadwood*; lack of physical or mental health e.g. *House*, *Dexter*, *Boss*; lack of money e.g. *Breaking Bad*, *Weeds*, *2 Broke Girls*; feeling trapped or lack of freedom as in *Prison Break*, *The Americans*, *Once Upon a Time* (Landau 2013: 97).

3.3 Teaching popular culture through popular literature

The reasons for using popular literature in the class are grounded on its multifarious benefits.

There is a necessity for people to develop the ability to read critically a wide variety of texts so that critical awareness of the social, political and economic messages in cultural manifestations may be developed and furthered (Alvermann, Moon and Hagood 2018: 4).

Popular literature has been used to teach ethics, promote empathy, and build critical thinking. Society is reflected in contemporary fiction, which stimulates students' interest (Gibson 2007: 197-199).

Fife (1999: 1-3) affirms that students are more familiar with films and TV series rather than with books; nonetheless, they can be taught to read literature at allegorical and moral levels through visual science fiction, which serve as modern retellings of literary classics.

When learning to read critically, individuals need to understand that texts are not neutral, since the authors' opinions are explicitly or implicitly reflected. Thus, texts may influence readers' opinions (Janks 2013: 7).

3.3.1 Benefits of popular literature

According to Arthur (2006: 200), using literature in the classroom is quite a language learning experience, which may become a source of pleasure and satisfaction for students. As a result, literature becomes an appealing and engaging teaching tool. Two features are highlighted (Gajdusek 1988; cited in Minoo and Bagherkazemi 2010: 30-31): internal coherence and conscious patterning. The former refers to the interconnection and interrelation of sentences which engage the reader in interpretation, meaning negotiation and the production of coherent discourse. That is why popular literature requires highly interactive demands on the part of learners. The latter has to do with the writer's ability to make use of patterns of sounds, meanings, and structures to connect intellectual, emotional, and physical experiences. These patterns are to help students to develop their communicative and interactional competence.

Popular literature benefits students as they become more competent in language and literature. Some more reasons are given (Maley 1989: 12) to use literary texts as an instrument to teach a foreign language: its universality, ambiguity, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power, and ambiguity. In connection with universality, even though writers make use of a variety of approaches, popular literature deals with themes which are common to all cultures (love, death,

anger, beliefs, human relationships, or nature). Non-triviality: literary texts are not trivialised since the author writes about things that matter to him/her. Personal relevance. Popular literature is about people's experiences and consequently it deals with ideas, sensations, as well as events which may be part of the reader's experience. Variety: as for vocabulary, literary texts include a wide variety of lexicon related to medicine, law, bullfighting, jobs, fashion, business and economics, and the media. Interest: pleasure is what the reader obtains while reading popular literature, as it deals with engaging topics. Economy and suggestive power: there is a difference between what is said and what is implied. Many ideas are suggested with a few words. Ambiguity: readers' reaction towards a literary text will vary from one reader to another. Thus, debate, discussion and comments are guaranteed.

Additionally, ten benefits of working on popular literature with students are put forth by Ur (1991: 201). Popular literature is an enjoyable resource to learn a language, since a wide range of writing styles are provided, and different reading skills are developed. Not only is critical thinking encouraged, but also creative thinking. Moreover, students' world knowledge is enriched in the process as language and culture are bound together. As human situations and conflicts are depicted, students are aware of such issues. Consequently, word power is increased and both emotions and intellect are combined.

Moreover, Van (2009: 3-9) mentions a series of benefits of popular literature in the EFL classroom. While reading, students are provided with a wide range of lexicon and meaningful contexts, therefore, cultural awareness is enhanced. Texts provide opportunities for students to work in groups collaboratively. In this case, teachers become facilitators and guides. The fact of reading fosters active learning and critical thinking, the combination of the reader's experience and the text's language enhances meaning, hence learners create individual meanings.

Zoreda and Vivaldo-Lima (2008: 22) add further reasons for using popular literature in class. Variety is introduced in the language classroom by working on literary texts. It is also hinted that negative attitudes towards the target culture could be overcome. Furthermore, understanding a text requires that students make use of their cultural, linguistic, and interpretative skills. Some other advantages of popular literature are discussed by (Gajdusek 1988; cited in Minno and Bagherkazemi 2010: 3-4). Not only is talking encouraged, but also discussion, comments and questions based on the text. Accordingly, texts can motivate small group work. Popular literature can also serve as a stimulus for composition. It is regarded as a means for designing lessons based on content, since it allows to teach complex grammar structures in context, and there is also a sharp increase in the lexicon acquired on the students behalf.

Nasr (2001: 352-358) makes some additional points in favour of using popular literature in the classroom. Popular literature has the potential to improve all the skills. Working with popular literature may favour the development of positive feelings

towards the language that is being learnt. Besides implementing reading strategies while reading, individuals' perspectives are broadened, and cognitive development is boosted.

3.3.2 Linguistic issues

When it comes to teaching popular culture, a student-centred approach is usually followed. The vehicular language in class is mainly the target language, for example English. When the texts selected are long, students need to read them before the lessons. There must be a variation on the typology of activities, e.g. pair work, group work, whole-class discussion, and student presentations. The goal of the lesson is discussing, exploring, and appreciating popular literature, apart from developing students' skills in the target language (Fennell 2016: 115).

A text can be exploited either critically or stylistically (Maley 1989: 10). The former requires a good command of literary terms as well as conventions. The latter is focused on making interpretations while describing and analysing the language of the text. Additionally, Van (2009: 4-5) offers another classification of approaches to text analysis. Stylistically, texts have the potential to spark students' sensitivity through the study of unconventional and 'non-grammatical' language. On the other hand, the language-based approach facilitates students' responses and experiences with literary texts through cloze exercises, brainstorming, summarising, and jigsaw reading. All this contributes to enhance collaboration, independence, interaction, peer teaching, and motivation. Finally, the reader response approach takes into consideration the text and at the same time the reader's personal experiences, opinions, and feelings. Right from the start this approach makes literary texts more accessible, since students' background knowledge is activated, takes advantage of emotional reactions, and both individual and group work are increased.

When teaching literary texts in the classroom, Carter and Long (1991; cited in Savvidou 2004: 4-5) distinguish three main models: cultural, language, and personal growth model. In the cultural model, students are required to do some research on the text from a social, political, literary, and historical point of view. The language model has things in common with the previous language-based approach highlighted by Van (2009). The personal growth model combines the two previous models; students learn a language and are aware of its culture, and at the same time the model provokes students' personal development by interacting with the opinions, ideas, and feelings conveyed. Further benefits of the personal growth model are stated by Williams and Burden (1997; cited in Minno and Bagherkazemi 2010: 6), who underscore that feelings as well as emotions are engaged.

Further options are put forth to exploit literary texts in English foreign language classes depending on whether simplified texts, easy texts, and young adult texts are used. As for using simplified texts, Zoreda and Vivaldo-Lima (2008: 22-23) claim that graded literary materials either for beginners or intermediate level students are successful when combined with the novels' audio and the film versions, all of which offer language and intercultural aspects. By contrast, McKay (1982: 532) points out to

the downsides of using graded readers. There are no agreed standards to assure that a text lacks difficulty, which means that a teacher's choice is largely based on intuition, and Young adult texts are suitable as a teaching instrument due to their linguistic and literary simplicity. They are characterised by brevity, a small cast of characters, and themes such as personal growth. The negative side is that young adult texts are aimed at young adults and not adults. Adults may not identify with young adults' interests.

Nonetheless, there are others who consider that the complexity of the text is not relevant; what matters is the approach or the way on which the text is worked upon. Maley (1989: 11-22) proposes a three-step procedure: first, warming up with activities such as brainstorming, or working previously on a topic related to the text. Second, before answering comprehension questions, students compare and contrast two texts sharing the same topic. Key phrases can also be extracted and matched with "effect words" (words expressing learners' feelings towards the key phrases). Third, students can be engaged in parallel activities to extend the topic and let students speak out tasks (e.g. role plays and writing activities). Similarly, Khatib, Derakhshan and Rezaei (2011: 216-218) suggest a task-based approach to teach literature in the EFL classroom.

A procedure to exploit scripted plays is put forth by Davies (1990: 93). What is suggested is that students read the text before the audio track is played. Afterwards, the text is discussed. If necessary, the audio track can be played a second time to draw attention to specific emotions, attitudes, or utterances. Roles are chosen and the play is rehearsed. Students are expected to perform a scene or some scenes. Each performance will be followed by a discussion.

Akyel (1995: 63) also offers a set of activities dealing with popular literature in which students brainstorm about the topic by reading the title. Then both the title and the possible theme can be related to students' personal experiences. Another option is that students match items within the text, such as words or phrases to their definitions before reading the text. After reading the text, collocations and word associations can be grouped.

Another proposal is taking some crucial ideas from the text so that students mark them as true or false and provide evidence from the text itself. One more possibility is that students interpret some excerpts from the text justifying their opinions.

Demetriou and Ruiz Mas (2009: 34-62) propose further activities with texts such as matching some plot summaries with their corresponding titles. Another possibility is linking a series of statements with the characters who say them in a play. As for the lexicon, matching specific vocabulary with its corresponding meaning is another possibility. On the other hand, multiple choice questions can foster reading comprehension. Conversely, filling in the blanks in a text with the suitable words helps students develop reading comprehension skills. Another common exercise is saying whether some sentences are true or false in accordance with the text.

Another alternative to exploit literary texts is by using the reading circles. The aim of reading circles is to engage students in a discussion of the meaning and stylistics

of a literary text by establishing personal connections between the themes and issues within the text (Hall 2015: 99-154). Brumfit and Carter (1986: 15) support the use of literary texts due to their authenticity, as they are instances of real language in context, to which students can respond directly. This shows the suitability of reading circles to guide students when it comes to exploiting a literary text.

When teaching a language, teachers also teach its culture, consequently, language and culture are bound together, which is why Collie and Slater (1987: 4) assert that a country's literary works provide an insight into its society. Hence, literary texts can become a privileged material to teach not only language but also culture. Fennell (2016: 108) highlights that literature gives students opportunities to learn new lexicon in context and use the new vocabulary in further discussions, comments and debates; e.g. Hall (2005: 36) points out that metaphors are part of literary language and daily conversations, as often language does not mean what is literally said. Therefore, literary texts are open to a variety of interpretations. This leads students (Lazar 1993: 19) to stimulate their imagination, develop critical abilities and increase emotional awareness.

The popularity of reading circles is increasing (Fennell 2016: 115). Furr (2007: 15-18) has developed six roles which are assigned to students: discussion leader, summariser, connector, word master, passage person, and culture collector. The discussion leader oversees the preparing of 5 questions about the text, and s/he guarantees that every student takes part in the discussion. The summariser writes down some notes regarding the characters, events, main ideas and uses his/her own words to tell the story in no more than 2 minutes. The connector tries to find or make connections between the story and the world outside. Questions will be made to the class, and comments can be made. The word master has the role of selecting key words, phrases, new lexicon, and vocabulary which are complicated or which are relevant for the story; the meaning of the lexicon must be explained. The passage person chooses key, engaging, or complicated parts of the text, some of which can explore the plot, characters, or language. The passages are read aloud in class so that students can answer some questions about them. The culture collector finds similarities and differences between the student's culture and the culture in the story. Passages or excerpts from the story are selected and read aloud for the rest of the class to answer some questions. Once every student has been assigned a role, students will read the story at home and from the point of view of their roles (Fennell 2016: 116). Information and ideas are to be exchanged in class. Furr (2007: 16-20) affirms that students are capable of discussing issues in English and at the same time solving difficulties by collaborating with their peers.

As Noll (1994: 92) sees it, "literary circles" are "powerful because students direct their own learning." When students get involved in "literary circles" a stronger sense of autonomy is developed. Burns (1998: 124) adds that students become more cooperative, and responsible. In fact, carrying out this set of activities helps build relationships within the group, as students are brought together (Li 2005: 128).

“Reading circles” are not only about reading literature but about developing and strengthening students’ skills in an engaging, interesting, and innovative way.

To conclude, popular literature proves to be an essential tool for language teachers in the EFL class, since language and culture are analysed at the same time. Many benefits have been highlighted such as learning new lexicon, working on grammar structures in context, or promoting discussion, debates and comments about the ideas, issues or topics tackled in the text.

**4. Teaching cross-curricular issues and values through
popular culture**

4.1 Cross-curricular issues and values

Cross-curricular issues are a set of contents which have to do with current social issues. They have to be integrated in the curriculum and be part of the activities in all the areas of knowledge. In addition, education on values is also present in the educative system according to *Real Decreto 1631/2006, de 29 de diciembre* (Royal Decree 1631/2006 of 29th December), whereby Official Language Schools are regulated.

The educational system framed by the *Ley Orgánica de Educación 2/2006, de 3 de mayo* (Organic Law of Education 2/2006 of 3rd May) sets up a number of cross-curricular topics (formerly known as cross-curricular contents) which are to be worked with across the curriculum, from every area. Each teaching unit of each course must focus naturally upon one or more of these topics, aiming at their complete study over the entire course. These cross-curricular issues are: road safety education, environmental education, consumer education, health education, coeducation, moral and civic education, education for peace, sex education, and education about the Andalusian culture.

The aforesaid law defines cross-curricular issues as follows. Road safety education aims to develop respectful attitudes and prevent traffic accidents. Health education focuses on sport practice, healthy eating and drinking habits. Coeducation is promoted through critically analysing situations involving stereotypes, sexism, prejudices, or even situations of inequality between men and women and disabled people too. Inspired by the Spanish Constitution as well as human rights, moral and civic education aims to allow students to exercise democratic citizenship, giving rise to a fair and equitable society. Education for peace provides students with skills or abilities to prevent and resolve conflicts. On the other hand, raising awareness, fostering sensitivity, and promoting respect towards nature, animals, and the environment are the goals of environmental education. Knowing about and valuing sexuality as well as its diversity is the aim of sex education. Given the fact that society is influenced by consumerism, what consumer education tries to achieve is that students value critically social and personal habits related to consumerism. Finally, students are not only expected to know, value and respect the basic aspects of their own culture, but they are also expected to value other people's cultures [*Ley Orgánica de Educación 2/2006, de 3 de mayo* (Organic Law of Education 2/2006 of 3rd May) 17168-17172].

In addition to this, according to Moreno (1995: 11-19), cross-curricular issues are a way to introduce society's concerns within the classroom. The goal is to educate people to promote peace, defend equal rights for both men and women, respect differences or be able to keep themselves or the people around them in good shape either physically or mentally. For instance –as Moreno (1995: 11-19) suggests– education for peace would be suitable to observe the level of violence between students and the spontaneous solution for a conflict, which may be solved by using reasoning while trying to convince or by using aggression as a rule. The aggression might be physical, gestural, or verbal and may be addressed to same-sex people, opposite sex

people, contemporaries or people from other ethnicities, races or religions. As for coeducation, aspects to analyse are the level of sexism and the use of a sexist language. Regarding health education, the capacity to care for one's body needs to be observed. Aspects such as hygiene, healthy eating habits, avoidance of drug consumption or consumption of unhealthy products, sport practice, and ability to overcome negative emotional states deserve attention too.

According to Botero Chica (2006: 59), cross-curricular issues are expected to solve current social issues such as lack of respect towards nature, indiscriminate deforestation, irrational exploitation of natural resources, intolerance, violence within the family, urban violence, poor sex education, inappropriate eating habits, and drug addiction.

Therefore, it can be stated that cross-curricular issues are the bridge between social concerns and subjects. Thus cross-curricular issues are the common thread in the activities carried out in the classroom, becoming valuable instruments to develop activities that lead to new knowledge, pose an issue to resolve, ask oneself questions and give them an answer (Moreno 1995: 19). As Barnes sees it (2015: 11), students work in a cross-curricular way when they are able to apply knowledge, attitudes and skills from a variety of disciplines to an idea, question, issue, or experience.

Similarly, *Ley Orgánica de Educación 2/2006, de 3 de mayo* (Organic Law of Education 2/2006 of 3rd May 17162-17163) highlights that values are the key to develop solidarity, responsibility, tolerance, equality, a sense of justice, and social values. These values have a cross-curricular character and must be taught in class.

Rosales López (2015: 144-145) points out that cross-curricular issues refer to teaching and learning contents that ought to appear in all the subjects or at the very least the majority of them. These contents are developed through the activities carried out in the classroom. Cross-curricular issues are not easy to include in only one subject which is why various subjects or most of them need to be coordinated.

According to the *Instrucción 12/2018, de 4 de Septiembre, de la dirección general de ordenación educativa sobre la ordenación y el currículo de las enseñanzas de idiomas de régimen especial de la comunidad autónoma de Andalucía para el curso 2018/2019* (Instruction 12/2018, 4th September, which specifies the ordinance and the curriculum for language teaching in Andalusia in the academic course 2018/2019), values are to be taught in the language class from the A1 level to C2. For instance, within the aforesaid document the following sections explicitly state the paramount importance of teaching values when a foreign language is being learnt: 2.2 evaluation criteria; students are able to identify –in either a reading comprehension or a conversation– sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects related to daily life, interpersonal relationships, costumes and values, as well as social conventions in the cultures in which the language is spoken (2018: 3); 7.1 sociocultural and sociolinguistic contents related to culture, costumes and values include celebrations, ceremonies, festivities, as well as basic notions about values and beliefs associated with culture such

as humour, important traditions, basic notions about religion, artistic and cultural references, the most popular institutions, the most important countries where the language studied is spoken, and a basic introduction to register and geographical varieties (2018: 9); and 7.9, intercultural contents, whereby students will be capable of respecting other cultures, valuing ethnic, religious, social and linguistic diversity, identifying prejudices and stereotypes towards other cultures and societies to overcome them, interesting themselves in acquiring intercultural values which include a wider vision and a critical sense of the students' own culture and society, being acquainted with attitudes towards gender perspective to achieve equal opportunities between men and women, using non-sexist language, and promoting the exercise of democratic citizenship (2018: 17).

Besides, in the C1 level, there are also three sections, which are slightly different from the previous mentioned areas about values. These are sections 6.2 evaluation criteria, 7.9 intercultural contents, and 10.3 culture and society. In section 6.2 students need to be aware of the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of the cultures and communities where the language is spoken, including subtle nuances, attitudes, uses and values. These are integrated in students' intercultural awareness, which allows them to draw conclusions and act consequently in a wide range of registers and styles (2018: 72). As for section 7.9, intercultural contents, students need to be capable of commanding intercultural skills, attitudes and knowledge to carry out mediation activities in which respect, empathy, tolerance, flexibility, universal values or an open minded attitude are of paramount importance (2018: 78). And section 10.3, culture and society, specifies that students need to value ethnic, religious, social and linguistic diversity, foster civic education, develop positive attitudes towards gender perspective to achieve equal opportunities between men and women, use a neutral language to avoid sexual bias, overcome stereotypes and prejudices towards other cultures and societies (2018: 82). Similarly, *Decreto 239/07, de 4 de septiembre* (Decree 239/07, 4th September) –which regulates Official Language Schools in Andalusia– states that one of the objectives of language teaching is to make use of the language for personal, professional cultural, social, and educative development whilst fostering intercultural values, linguistic diversity, civic education, a European dimension in education, and the concept of equality between men and women (2007: 8), also mentioned above.

Furthermore, the *Common European Framework of Reference for languages – CEFR*– states that “students of a foreign language do not only have to learn the target language but they also have to be acquainted with the society and culture of the community in which the foreign language is spoken” (Council of Europe 2001: 120). Consequently, language is bound to culture and culture is bound to language. They cannot be learnt in isolation. They are bound together, as if they were two sides of the same coin. For instance, section 5.1.1.2, entitled sociocultural knowledge, refers to both knowledge and culture of the society or community in which a language is spoken. The characteristics of a given society/community and its culture are associated with values, beliefs and attitudes which are in relation to factors such as social class, occupational groups, wealth, regional cultures, security, institutions, tradition and social change, history –e.g. historical events or historical personages–, both ethnic and religious

minorities, national identity, foreign countries, foreign states and foreign people, politics, arts –e.g. music, visual arts, literature, drama, popular music and song–, religion, and humour (102-103). In addition to this, *Real Decreto 1629/2006. 29 de diciembre* (Royal Decree 1629/2006 29th December) –which regulates Official Language Schools in Spain –affirms that sociocultural contents are of paramount importance, since knowledge of the society and culture of the community where the target language is spoken needs to be learnt in terms of values, beliefs and attitudes; otherwise, communication might be affected (2007: 3-4). Moreover, the CEFRL claims that “knowledge of the shared values and beliefs held by social groups in other countries and regions, such as religious beliefs, taboos, assumed common history, etc., are essential to intercultural communication. These multiple areas of knowledge vary from individual to individual” (Council of Europe 2001: 11). According to *LOMCE 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre* (LOMCE 8/2013, 9th December), the Spanish Educational system attempts to transmit and implement values to facilitate personal freedom, responsibility, democratic citizenship, solidarity, tolerance, equality, respect and justice, as well as the avoidance of any type of discrimination.

From Rosales López’s standpoint (2015: 155), there are three main groups that influence the learning of cross-curricular issues: family, school, and community (i.e. the media, the activities organised by the town council, and non-governmental organisations are some instances).

As Botero Chica sees it (2006: 49-50), cross-curricular issues allow the educational system, society, and family to be interrelated. Cross-curricular issues have a global character and connect the different subjects of the curriculum. Respect to human rights and other cultures is instilled, a critical awareness of consumer education is developed, ethnic and gender discrimination are avoided by means of cross-curricular issues. Nonetheless, cross-curricular issues need to be transmitted via a methodology, teaching techniques and strategies for them to become useful instruments. Essentially, cross-curricular issues can be grouped in three categories, social, health and environmental issues:

- a) Social issues, including values, urbanism, consumerism, human rights, and cohabitation.
- b) Environmental issues, which have to do with the respect towards the environment, animals, plants, and the universe.
- c) Health issues: are concerned with the care of the human body, eating, and drinking habits, drug addiction prevention, and sex education.

Nevertheless, *LOMCE 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre* (LOMCE 8/2013, 9th December), adds other categories like civic education, education for peace, and the use of information and communication technologies.

- d) Civic education: is intended to foster a society, which is free, tolerant, fair, and defends the values of freedom, pluralism, human rights, and law, being the bases of democracy.
- e) Education for peace: to prevent conflicts, violence, and bullying.
- f) A responsible use of information and communication technologies, including audio-visual communication.

Botero (2006: 52) suggests that teaching values and cross-curricular issues successfully takes three aspects into consideration: it is necessary that education is linked with life itself to build students' personalities; values and cross-curricular issues need to be part of the teaching practice to show the bright and the not so bright side of life by analysing the phenomena taking place in everyday life; and finally, students have to interpret reality to take an active part in it, e.g. making a proposal about socioeconomic issues, or giving possible solutions to improve everyday life.

According to *El Segundo Plan de Igualdad de Género* (the Second Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020), it is imperative to develop gender policies so that both men and women have the same rights and opportunities. This *Segundo Plan de Igualdad de Género* (Second Plan for Gender Equality) is based on *Decreto 19/2007, de 23 de enero* (Decree 19/2007, 23rd January), which suggested measures not only to promote Education for Peace but also to make sure that social harmony was improved by means of new guidelines regarding coeducation, gender equality as well as the prevention of gender violence from schools. Thus, dealing with values and cross-curricular issues is not a choice but an obligation since teachers must comply with them by law.

To conclude, cross-curricular issues and values are crucial elements for students to develop their capacities as human beings. Not only do they need to be integrated in the curriculum but also subjects have to be coordinated. Cross-curricular issues and values are tackled from several perspectives, angles, and areas of knowledge. This broad vision is meant to help students to be aware of the world they live in.

4.2 Didactic proposal

Two didactic proposals have been designed. In Unit 1, comic strips are used to teach different cross-curricular issues, whereas in unit 2 cross-curricular issues are taught through a combination of TV series and popular literature. Unit 1 explores cross-curricular issues through one cultural manifestation, whilst two cultural manifestations have been selected to analyse cross-curricular issues in Unit 2.

Unit 1: Comic Strips and Society

4.2.1 Unit 1: comics to teach cross-curricular issues

The five sections of this first unit aim to make students aware of the society in which they are living. Section one focuses on new technologies, people's dependence on new technologies, and their positive and negative effects; section two is about ethics; section three explores gender equality, coeducation, and stereotypes; section four addresses alcoholism, causes and effects of addictions; and, finally, section five is a comic workshop, a review to wrap up the unit by merging all the previous sections. This didactic proposal has been designed for an Official Language School, where each session last 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The main goals of the unit are that students are able to:

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

- discuss the dangers of new technologies.
- distinguish humour, feelings and emotions in political strips.
- identify gender roles, stereotypes and societal norms.
- talk about addictions and their effects.

The unit consists of 5 sections dealing with comics. Section 1: *Moral and civic education in digital culture: technology dependency or healthy use of technology?* Section 2: *Moral and civic education in politics: being in a predicament*; section 3: *is there (in)equality in household chores?* Section 4: *Health education: adolescence, a crucial period to avoid developing early addictions?* And section 5: *Comic workshop: social issues*.

In particular, the goals of section 1, *Moral and civic education in digital culture: technology dependency or healthy use of technology?*, are to develop students' abilities to:

- discuss current society's dependence on new technologies.
- notice how humour and irony are implicit in the comic strips.
- state both positive and negative aspects of technology.
- learn the vocabulary of comics.

The importance of section number 1 –*Moral and civic education in digital culture: technology dependency or healthy use of technology?*– lies in the fact that modern society seems to rely upon new technologies to the extent that it has become a social issue: cell phones have applications for almost everything it was previously written down on paper –it includes an agenda for phone numbers, a notebook to write notes or a list of things to do–; furthermore, the application Whatsapp replaces phone calls; and social networks, either on computers screens or on cell phones, are replacing face-to-face interactions.

Hence, section 1 raises awareness of the dangers of new technologies and the dependence that the twenty-first century society has on electronic devices. Besides, both positive and negative uses of technology are highlighted in several comic strips. Issues such as irony, humour, isolation, social relationships, communication, dependence, and diversity are explored.

As González (2011: 132) sees it, “the Internet propitiates individualisation and immersion in [...] countless media bubbles [...] transforming us into cells isolates from a huge web of information that we find quite foreign, strange and distant.” Thus, the digital culture that people live in may favour individualisation and isolation. Finally, this section questions whether developing social relationships, familiar bounds, even building up a hierarchy of values may depend on the use of new technologies.

The objectives of section 2, *Moral and civic education in politics: being in a predicament*, are mainly to develop students' capacity to:

- decode the meaning of the strips with no accompanying captions.
- recognise the use of humour.
- describe the feelings and emotions conveyed by observing the images.
- be aware of moral and civic education.
- get familiar with idioms related to moral dilemmas.

The use of humour in comic strips as well as in real life is noteworthy since it is a way to keep the reader interested and engaged in the reading; humour can also be used as a contrast to tragedy; or simply, humour can be a means to highlight how absurd a real issue might be.

Accordingly, section 2 explores moral and civic education by means of political comic strips with no captions. Having no captions implies that students are expected to pay attention to the way feelings and emotions are conveyed in the panels. Besides, humour is observed by placing the characters in hilarious situations. The characters in the stories are two spies who represent countries/governments that have a fallen out with one another. Within this context, students decide whether the actions depicted are ethical.

In connection with section 3, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*, the goals are to help students be able to:

- identify attitudes as well as male and female roles.
- distinguish gender stereotypes.
- understand the importance of coeducation and equality in modern society.
- learn idioms about the house, around the house and house idioms.

If there was real gender equality, it would not be necessary to devote a section to this matter. Issues such as the wage gap, the higher number of male political representation, equality of rights and opportunities in all sectors of society are goals that have not been entirely achieved. Given the relevance that coeducation and gender equality have in the current curriculum for Official Language Schools, the Second Plan for Gender Equality will expand from 2016 to 2021. This is why devoting a section to this aspect is paramount.

Thus, section 3 is a proposal for coeducation and gender equality. Students work on comic strips depicting male and female stereotypes, their attitudes, and the roles assumed by the members of a family at home –mostly, in the context of housework as well as the relationship between husband and wife–. Students reflect on issues such as

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

whether stereotypes, attitudes, and roles are acquired, integrated and learnt from society; and to what extent the events portrayed reflect real life.

The goals of section 4, *Health education: adolescence, a crucial period to avoid developing early addictions?*, are to boost learners' abilities to:

- talk about health education.
- get familiar with idioms about drinking habits.
- identify the effects of alcoholism.
- learn vocabulary about drugs and their symptoms.
- classify terms about personal description.

Since drinking alcohol at weekends has become a common practice for teenagers and bearing in mind that they start consuming spirit drinks at an earlier age, the subject needs to be tackled overtly.

That is why section 4 fosters health education among students, especially healthy drinking habits and moderation in the consumption of spirit drinks. With the view of promoting a healthy lifestyle, students will be able to identify the reasons that may lead individuals to develop an addiction, the effects of consuming spirit drinks in excess, and how teenagers are introduced into drug consumerism. Apart from that, students will get familiar with some idioms and terms related to the lexical field of drugs/alcohol. When it comes to drink to excess, terms like *big bottle*, *binge*, or *booze* have become part of teenagers' jargon.

Finally, the goals of section 5, *Comic workshop: social issues*, are to help students:

- plan and create their own comic.
- draw inspiration from the contents of the previous sections to design their comic strip.
- elaborate a comic strip that tells a story with a moral.

In this section, students cooperate to carry out a task which incorporates some of the values and cross-curricular issues which students have been worked on.

Section 5 is a summary of the previous sections to wrap up the unit. Students plan, design, draw, and elaborate a comic with captions. To accomplish the task, students will draw inspiration from the contents covered in the previous four sections, e.g. the use of new technologies, moral and civic education, coeducation, and health education.

The five sections of this unit share the following layout: students' tasks appear on the left of the following tables, whereas a series of instructions or teachers' notes are

on the right. Some cultural notes are included to help teachers explain who the cartoonists mentioned in the different sections are and give additional background information about the cartoonist's production and creation in the tasks proposed.

4.2.1.1 Topic 1. Moral and civic education in digital culture: technology dependency or healthy use of technology?

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES																		
<p>Warm up</p> <p>1. ESSENTIAL COMIC TERMINOLOGY</p> <p>First work individually and match each term to its definition. Then, share your ideas with your partner</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>TERMS</th> <th>DEFINITIONS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Caption</td> <td>a) An image covering one or more pages.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Cartoon</td> <td>b) Show something in a very noticeable way.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Cartoonist</td> <td>c) It is the space between panels.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Comic</td> <td>d) A round shape next to the head of a character in a cartoon inside which the character's words or</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	TERMS	DEFINITIONS	1. Caption	a) An image covering one or more pages.	2. Cartoon	b) Show something in a very noticeable way.	3. Cartoonist	c) It is the space between panels.	4. Comic	d) A round shape next to the head of a character in a cartoon inside which the character's words or	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>Before starting with the first comic strip in the first section, students need to get familiar with the lexicon of comics.</p> <p>Answers:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>TERMS</th> <th>DEFINITIONS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Caption</td> <td>i) A short piece of text under a picture that describes it or explains what the people in it are doing or saying.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Cartoon</td> <td>f) A drawing, especially in a newspaper or magazine, which tells a joke or makes a humorous political criticism.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Cartoonist</td> <td>e) A person who draws cartoons.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	TERMS	DEFINITIONS	1. Caption	i) A short piece of text under a picture that describes it or explains what the people in it are doing or saying.	2. Cartoon	f) A drawing, especially in a newspaper or magazine, which tells a joke or makes a humorous political criticism.	3. Cartoonist	e) A person who draws cartoons.
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	thoughts are written.		
5. Frame	e) A person who draws cartoons.	4. Comic	g) A magazine or a book that contains a set of stories told in pictures with a small amount of writing.
6. Gutter	f) A drawing, especially in a newspaper or magazine, which tells a joke or makes a humorous political criticism.	5. Frame	k) A border that surrounds an image.
7. Image	g) A magazine or a book that contains a set of stories told in pictures with a small amount of writing.	6. Gutter	It is the space between panels.
8. Panel	h) A short series of funny/amusing drawings with a small amount of writing, often published in a newspaper.	7. Image	l) Picture
9. Speech bubble	i) A short piece of text under a picture that describes it or explains what the people in it are doing or saying.	8. Panel	j) An individual frame consisting of a single drawing.
10. Splash (page)	j) An individual frame consisting of a single drawing.	9. Speech bubble	A round shape next to the head of a character in a cartoon inside which the character's words or thoughts are written.
11. Spread	k) A border that surrounds an image.	10. Splash (page)	Show something in a very noticeable way.
12. Strip	l) Picture.	11. Spread	a) An image covering one or more pages.
		12. Strip	h) A short series of funny/amusing drawings with a small amount of writing, often published in a newspaper.

All the definitions have been taken and adapted from the Cambridge online Dictionary (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/>)

	ingles/frame)
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TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #d8bfd8; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; display: inline-block;">Pre-reading tasks</div> <p>2. CARTOONISTS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM SOCIAL ISSUES</p> <p>Think about comics and cartoonists and answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Do you know any cartoonist? b) Have you ever read a comic? c) What types of comic do you usually read? d) If so, which issues do they cope with? e) Have you ever heard about Clay Butler? 	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>The class is organised into pairs to discuss the questions. Pairs of students are asked to share their ideas.</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Matt Groening, Clay Butler, Will Eisner, Robert Crumb, Carl Barks, Carl Fallberg, Mark Millar, Robbie Morrison or Dan Slott. b) If so, students are invited to tell about the plot, the characters, the cartoonist, how they knew about the comic, or how they obtained it. c) Manga, science fiction, fantasy, superhero comics, war comics. d) Human rights, wars, politics violence, racism, sexism, capitalism, workers' rights, the environment, or consumerism. <p>Cultural note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Clay Butler is a comic book illustrator whose black and white work draws inspiration from social issues. Indeed, his works are a satire on a

	<p>wide variety of issues that range from politics to the environment.</p> <p>According to Rall (2002: 34-38), Butler’s strips consist of illustrative single-panel gag cartoons, since intellectual, philosophical and cultural realities are reflected. A philosophical, ethical and moral thread is found in his works.</p> <p>What Clay Butler does is to influence public debate through drawings and comic strips which deal with issues such as human rights, wars, political violence, racism, sexism, capitalism, workers' rights, the environment, and consumerism (https://www.jrmora.com/blog/tag/clay-butler/).</p>
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TASKS	TEACHERS’ NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #d3d3d3; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; display: inline-block;">While-reading tasks</div> <p>2.1 TECHNOLOGY DEPENDENCY</p> <p>Work in groups of 3 or 4 and discuss these comic strips:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make a brief summary of the comic strip: What is it about? b) What is the intention of the cartoonist? c) What do you think about the comic? 	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>After handing out a comic strip to each pair of students, these are given time to answer the questions while working on the comic strips below (<i>Someday We’ll Do Everything by Computer!! WWW:TVSUCKS.COM, We’re Not Sure...We Think He May Be Retarded</i>). Each pair of students will then tell the other groups about the strip they have read.</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) For example

<p>d) Is there any similarity between the comic and any aspect or situation of our daily life?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Someday we'll do everything by computer!!</i> exemplifies how computers have become an instrument to carry out actions or tasks that used to be done physically (like learning a sport), with our own hands (such as cooking) or interacting with somebody face to face (to create social bonds or keep social relationships).• <i>We're not sure...we think he might be retarded</i> Two adults are criticising that a boy spends time carrying out activities which involve touching objects, creativity and foster spatial intelligence.• <i>TVSUCKS</i> The protagonists criticise and complain via the Internet instead of chatting face-to-face in a park or in a café. <p>b) What the cartoonist does is using humour to criticise some social behaviours. It is a satire, indeed.</p> <p>d) For instance People's dependence on new technologies to communicate instead of interacting face to face.</p>
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Someday We'll Do Everything by Computer



Butler. Sidewalk Bubblegum. (1995) (www.sidewalkbubblegum.com/category/comics-about-science-technology/)

WWW.TVSUCKS.COM

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School



Butler. Sidewalk Bubblegum. (1996) (www.sidewalkbubblegum.com/category/comics-about-science-technology/)

We're Not Sure... We Think He May Be Retarded



Butler. Sidewalk Bubblegum. (1997) (www.sidewalkbubblegum.com/category/comics-about-science-technology/)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
While-reading tasks	Suggested procedure: Students work in pairs. This is followed by a whole group debriefing.

<p>2.2 TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS TO AN END IN STAR TREK</p> <p>Look at this comic strip from <i>Star Trek</i>.</p> <p>a) State whether technology is portrayed as positive or negative.</p> <p>b) What is technology used for?</p> <p>c) Compare the use of technology in <i>Star Trek</i> with Clay Butler’s comic strips above.</p> <p>d) What is the role of female and male characters in the <i>Star Trek</i> comic strip?</p> <p>e) Had you been a member of the crew, would you have chosen the same option as them?</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>The strip belongs to the cartoon <i>Star Trek</i>. Not only have comics been published, but also films and TV series based on the <i>Star Trek</i> universe have been released. Provo (2014: 333) suggests that <i>Star Trek</i> serves as a platform where acceptance towards ethnicity, gender, and race is built.</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>a) Technology is regarded as something positive in this comic strip from <i>Star Trek</i> since it allows the spaceship to travel long distances faster. In addition, technology on board permits the crew to detect either satellites or other spaceships on its way to its destination.</p> <p>b) Technology is used to report on a problem, offer some possible solutions, and detect a threat.</p> <p>c) The crew on board of the Enterprise work as a team whereas people on Clay Butler’s comic strips work individually; therefore, the concept “collectivity versus individualism” is highlighted here. On the one hand, technology in <i>Star Trek</i> is used to report on a problem, detect a threat, and offer some alternatives. On the other hand, Clive Butler’s comic strips constitute a more critical approach to technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Someday we’ll do everything by computer</i> <p>The strip portrays people who want to learn how to ride a bike, prepare a home-made meal, build a father-son relationship, or develop values.</p>
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By contrast, these people try to achieve their goals using a computer. Accordingly, the strip criticises the lack of personal involvement in learning what is wrong or right through experience, creating/keeping personal relationships face-to-face, cooking with your own hands, or having fun by practicing sport on your own.

- *We're not sure...we think he might be retarded*

Computers tend to be associated with mechanical work, whereas building, engineering are linked to creativity, However, it seems that doing things with your own hands is something from the past and children use personal computers to play or to learn how to do something instead of experiencing it directly by touching objects as the boy in the example does.

- *TVSUCKS*

The protagonists criticise that people spend hours watching TV, but they all behave in the same way. No one does anything differently. The protagonists watch the computer screen instead of the TV screen.

d) Women

The female characters are in charge of reporting the captain on any possible threat, giving words of advice, and offering different alternatives.

Men

Scotty reports on a problem to the bridge; Spock makes a suggestion;

	<p>the captain weighs the pros and cons and is the one who ultimately decides what to do.</p> <p>e) Free response. Probably yes; it was the shortest way. It would have been more dangerous to take the longest way since it would have been easier to bump into the enemy.</p>
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Star Trek: Dilithium Dilemma



Warkentin, Thomas. (1980). *Star Trek Comics Checklist* (<https://www.startrekcomics.info/ustosstrips.html>)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>After-reading task</p> <p>3. NEW TECHNOLOGIES: A CONVENIENCE OR A HINDRANCE</p> <p>Discuss and justify your view on the dangers of new technologies in a for and against debate.</p>	<p>Students are divided into two groups –one group will be against and the other will be for the use of new technologies (in our daily life, at work, on the part of children/teenagers). One student says an opinion and justifies it with an argument, then another student from the other group tries to refute it and makes another point. Student can use the vocabulary and structures of persuasion, suggestions and opinions.</p>

4.2.1.2 *Topic 2 Moral and civic education in politics: being in a predicament*

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-reading tasks</p> <p>1. WHAT'S IN A VISUAL TEXT?</p> <p>Work in pairs and answer the questions below:</p> <p>a) Have you seen a comic without captions?</p>	<p>Suggested procedure and answers:</p> <p>a) Students are given time to interact with their partners and exchange ideas. Students are monitorised. Attention is paid to the lexicon they may want to use and do not know in the target language: e.g. “spy on somebody, suspect, enemy, plan something, dream about something, have an idea, steal something from somewhere, or replace something with.”</p>

<p>b) Why would a cartoonist only use images?</p> <p>c) What is the point of including no captions?</p>	<p>b) Students speak out. What the cartoonist is trying to do is to make images speak for themselves. Having no captions obliges the reader to focus on the characters' gestures, their actions, or notice whether there is movement. In this case, images are enough to understand and follow the story.</p> <p>c) The purpose of including no captions is to make the reader infer the meaning of the images and deduce what the story is about by just observing the vignettes. Sometimes the impact of the images is so powerful that they are self-explanatory and there is no need of captions at all.</p>
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TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;">While-reading tasks</p> <p>2. HUMOROUS POLITICAL STRIP IMAGES FOR STORYTELLING</p> <p>Keep working in pairs and talk to your partner about the questions below:</p> <p>a) The comic strips below were drawn by Antonio Phobias. Do you</p>	<p>a) Cultural note:</p> <p>William Grimes wrote an article about Antonio Phobias, “Antonio Phobias, 77; Drew ‘Spy vs. Spy’ Cartoon,” for <i>The New York Times</i> in 1998. He worked as a cartoonist editor for the Havana version of <i>El Mundo</i> until he started criticising Fidel Castro’s policies in his comic strips. Despite having been awarded in the category of cartoon of the year twice, he fled from Havana and was hired to work in the New York-based <i>Mad magazine</i>. His black and white comic strip <i>Spy vs. Spy</i> is about two cold war spies who try to defeat one another. Grimes,</p>

know anything about him?

b) What are the feelings/emotions evoked by the frames?

c) What happens in the story?

d) Try to add captions to verbalise the story.

William. (1998). Antonio Phobias, 77; Drew 'Spy vs. Spy' Cartoon. The New York Times, pp. 14 (www.nytimes.com/1998/03/arts/antonio-phobias-77-drew-spy-vs-spy-cartoon.html).

Suggested procedure:

Every group of students is given a set of vignettes of the political comic strip *Spy vs. Spy*, whose frames need to be ordered. Students are encouraged to figure out the right order. Then their versions of the stories are compared with the original comics.

b)

1. Initially, they feel happy since they have met by chance. Even though they are gentle, they mistrust one another.

2. Doubt and suspicion.

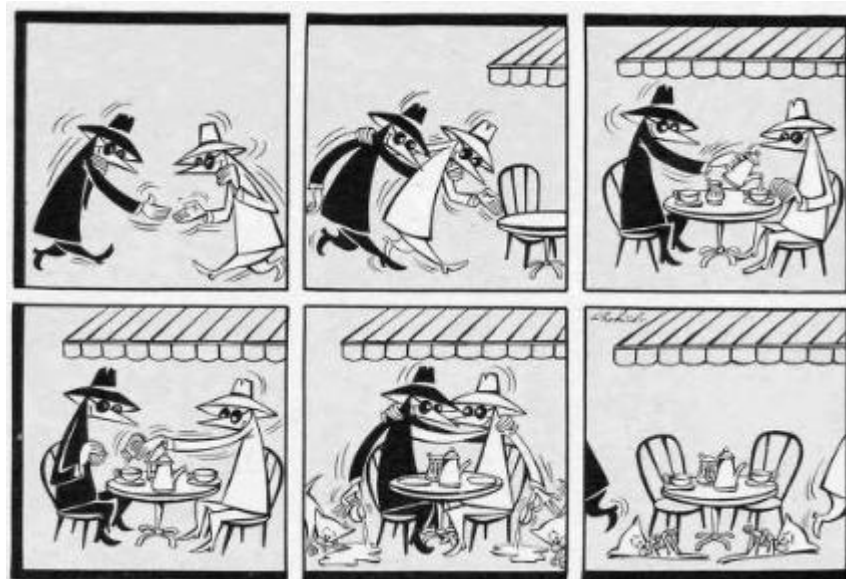
3. Curiosity; appearances can be deceiving.

4. Shocking at discovering the enemy is dead; suspicion that something might be wrong; and happiness of having misled and finally killed the enemy.

5. In this strip, the spy dressed in black is mischievous and does annoying actions, whilst the spy dressed in white is trustful and does not suspect of the enemy's plan.

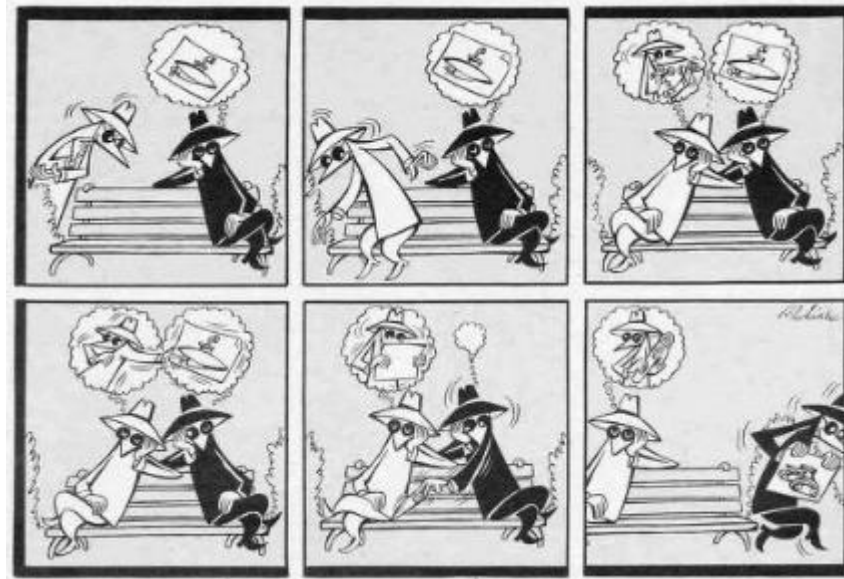
	<p>6. The situation is as deceitful as the enemy; the character feels relief at thinking the food was not poisoned, but in the end, it was.</p> <p>c) Free response.</p> <p>d) Each group of students reads aloud the captions they have written. At the end of the task students can vote for the best story.</p>
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Spy versus Spy 1



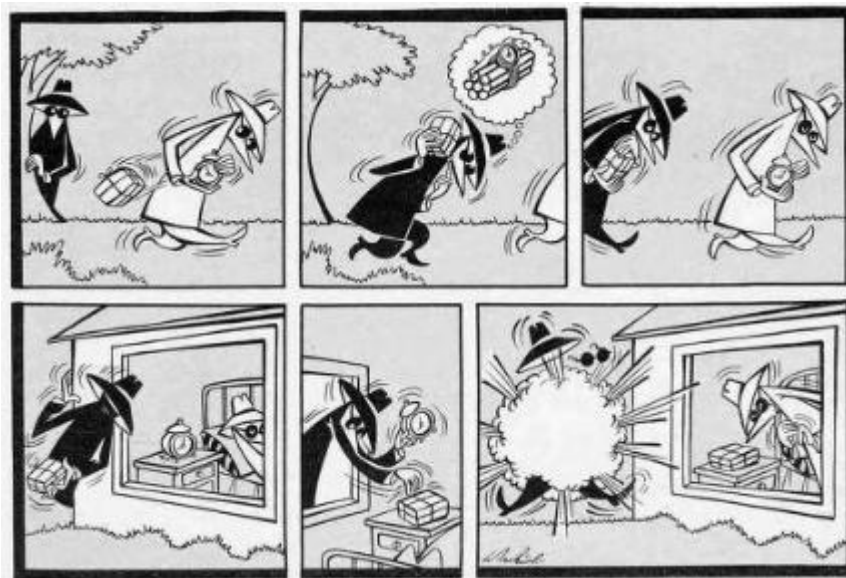
Phobias. *Spy versus Spy: The Complete Casebook* (2001) (<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n1>)

Spy versus Spy 2



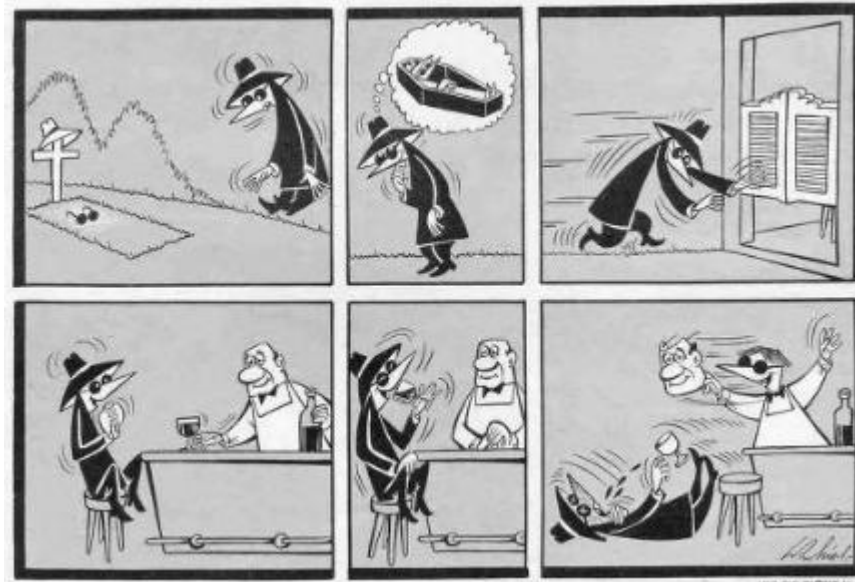
Phobias. *Spy versus Spy: The Complete Casebook* (2001) (<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n1>)

Spy versus Spy 3



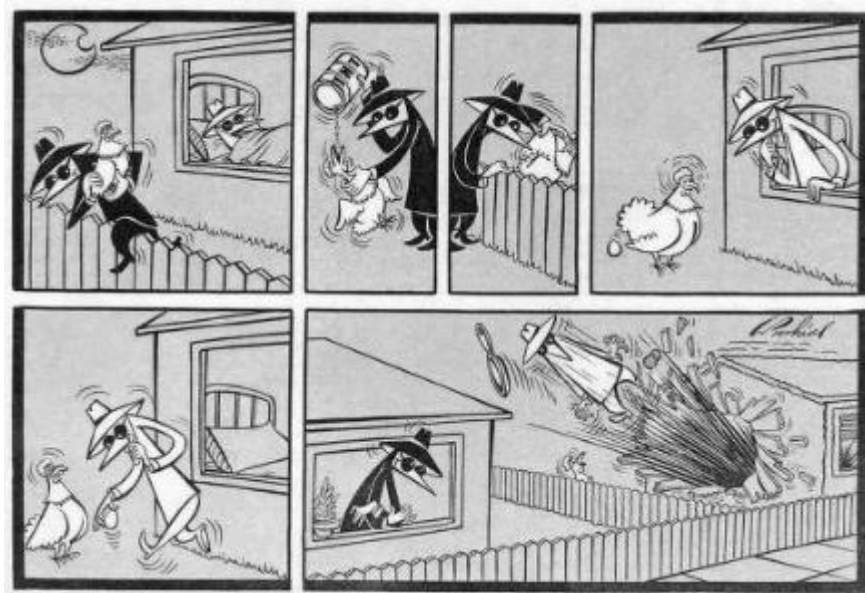
Phobias. *Spy versus Spy: The Complete Casebook* (2001) (<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n3>)

Spy versus Spy 4



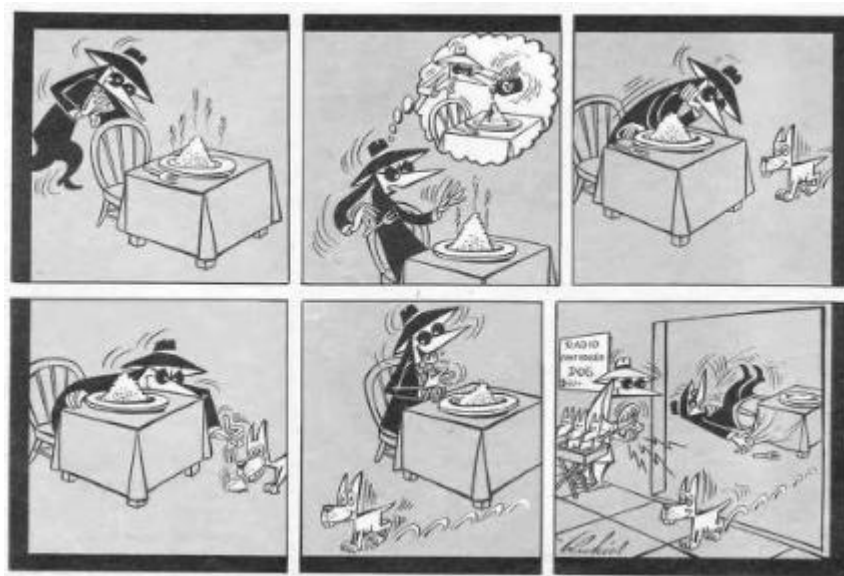
Phobias. *Spy versus Spy: The Complete Casebook* (2001) (<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n3>)

Spy versus Spy 5



Phobias. *Spy versus Spy: The Complete Casebook* (2001) (<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n9>)

Spy versus Spy 6



Phobias. *Spy versus Spy: The Complete Casebook* (2001) (<https://archive.org/details/SpyVsSpyTheCompleteCasebook/page/n19>)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>After-reading tasks</p> <p>3. ON THE HORNS OF AN ETHICAL DILEMMA</p>	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Students decide on the plot of the strip,b) Pronunciation is checked and analysed here.

Keep working with the same partner and answer the questions about the strips above:

- Summarise the story that has been assigned to you.
- Now read the captions you added.
- How is humour conveyed?
- According to you, what do these two spies represent?
- Is there humour on real life politics? Have a look at tweets below and discuss them.

Tweet #1



Tweet #2

c) The story is entertaining, although it is exaggerated. What is humorous is the ending. The cartoonist always plays with the surprise factor, which is something he always leaves for the end.

d) Suggested answer.

These two spies may represent two enemy nations, the urge to know what the other is up to, and the need to destroy one another.

e) The teacher brings some politicians' tweets or some memes about politicians and they are discussed with students. Then students are encouraged to find further examples on the Internet. Some possibilities are:

Tweet #1:

https://www.google.es/search?q=politicians+tweets&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=Py1MRsfKdafABM%253A%252CRQ3jUEmKMG2iuM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_-kSVCFY_iXnPRuuuVTkwHdUhxLDVjA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiD8t7B2OznAhVNzhoKHS9NA-QQ9QEwAHoECAoQBA#imgc=Py1MRsfKdafABM

Tweet #2:

<https://itonlyencouragethem.wordpress.com/2013/04/05/tweets-that-rocked-irish-politics/>

f) Vision off: the audio is played without projecting the video yet to prevent students from reading and copying words or sentences from



f) Watch the video and answer the following questions:

- i. Say who the interviewee is and what he does for a living.
- ii. Enumerate the ethical dilemmas discussed in the video.
- iii. Indicate the answer the interviewee gives for each and every one of the dilemmas.
- iv. Focus on the phrases and vocabulary below and say what they mean:

Come up, face something publicly, face something poorly, came about in a very strange way, it is not a big deal, rely on your gut, have a look at their stuff, become heralded, and wipe it off.

the images.

Answers:

i.

Apart from having a weekly ethic column in The New York Times, Jeffrey Seglin makes contributions in a magazine named Real Simple. Basically, he helps people to handle problems.

ii.

- If charity sends me free address labels and I don't make a contribution, is it ok to use them?
- Is it unfair to move into better (open) seats at a sporting event or concert?
- Is it ok to fantasise about somebody else when I'm with my partner?
- Is it ok to sneak a peek at your child's email on text messages?
- Is it ok to use a shop or a restaurant bathroom if I'm not making a purchase (and I really have to go)?

iii.

- There's nothing wrong with using the address labels as long as you haven't requested them.
- There's nothing wrong with moving into better (open) seats at sporting events as long as there is nothing in the tickets that prevents you from doing it. If the usher

Ethical Dilemmas on Fox 25 Morning News



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7eAB6u2Hqs>

approaches you and ask to see your tickets, you should be prepared to move back. Don't lie.

- A man in his 60s made him the same question but replacing his partner with fictional characters. Jeffrey has taken up the issue with a therapist. Jeffrey says it is normal. But in the event of fantasising about somebody else every time you are with your partner, Jeffrey advises to tackle the issue with your partner openly.
- Child's safety is more important than child's privacy. Before sneaking a peek at your child's email or text messages, let the child know in order to build trust with him/her.
- Unless you are not trespassing a private home and you do not pretend to be somebody you are not, it will be ok. I have done it myself.
- The right thing to do is to point it out even if it means by any rules losing the game.

iv.

- *Come up = if a job or opportunity comes up, it becomes available*
- *Face something publicly = accept reality openly.*
- *Face something poorly = accept reality badly.*
- *Come about in a very strange way = to happen or to start happen in a very strange way.*
- *It is not a big deal = not to be a serious problem, it is*

	<p><i>not important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rely on your gut = trust your instinct.</i> • <i>Have a look at their stuff = look at their things.</i> • <i>Become heralded = to be a sign that something important, and often good, is starting to happen, or to make something publicly known, especially by celebrating or praising it.</i> • <i>Wipe it off = remove something.</i> <p>All the definitions have been taken and adapted from the Cambridge online Dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/frame)</p>
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4.2.1.3 Section 3. Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid #4a7ebb; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Warm up</div>	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>Fostering coeducation is the goal of this section, and before discussing household chores, students work on some idioms: around the house,</p>

1. HOME IDIOMS THROUGH VISUAL THINKING

In groups of 4-5 match the idioms with their meanings (there is a set of idioms per group). Then write sentences including the idioms and later illustrate the idiom visually with a drawing. At the end of the task explain/show the other groups your idioms and the visual support you have created.



Set 1




Idioms around the house	Meanings	Examples	Drawings
1. Throw in the towel	No longer exist, disappear		
2. Throw money down the drain	Smoke a lot		
3. Skeleton in the closet	Quit, give up		
4. Hit the roof	Waste money		

about the house and home idioms. The class is divided in groups of 4-5 and each group of students is given a set of idioms to match to their meanings. Then students are asked to write a sentence including every idiom to contextualise them (idiom in real context). Later students illustrate the idioms visually with either a drawing or a sketch (visual thinking). Finally, each group shows/explains the rest of the groups their set of idioms with their visual support.

All the images, idioms and examples have been taken from the web <https://7esl.com/idioms-about-the-house/>, unless otherwise stated.




Keys for set 1



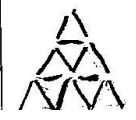
Idioms around the house	Meanings	Suggested examples	Suggested drawings
1. Throw in the towel	Quit, give up	After struggling with my homework, I finally threw in the towel and went to bed.	
2. Throw money down the drain	Waste money	That's a worthless investment. He's throwing his money down the drain.	

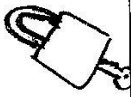




5. Smoke like a chimney	An embarrassing or shameful secret			3. Skeleton in the closet	An embarrassing or shameful Secret	Most people have at least one skeleton in the closet.	
6. Go out the window	Deceive someone			4. Hit the roof	Become very angry	When I found out Tom crashed my car, I hit the roof.	
7. Build castles in the air	Take a lot of things when you go somewhere			5. Smoke like a chimney	Smoke a lot	Jeff smokes like a chimney. I worry about his health.	
8. Lead (someone) up the garden path	Create dreams, hopes, or plans that are impossible, unrealistic, or have very little chance of succeeding						http://www idioms4you.com/complete-idioms/hit-the-roof.html
9. Everything but the kitchen sink	Become very angry						

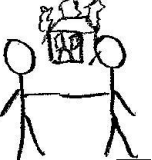
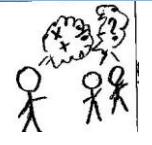
Set 2



Idioms about the house	Meanings	Examples	Drawings
1. Halfway house	Solve your problems or get organized		
2. A house of cards	Eat everything in somebody's house		
3. As safe as houses	Something that combines the qualities of two different things		
4. Eat out of house and home	An organisation or plan that is weak and can easily be destroyed		
5. Get your own house in order	Be very safe		
6. House of correctio	An organisation that is divided by		





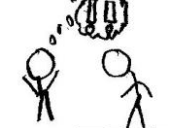
6. Go out the window	No longer exist, disappear	His diet went out the window during the holidays.	
7. Build castles in the air	Create dreams, hopes, or plans that are impossible, unrealistic, or have very little chance of succeeding	You need sound financial advice and a strong plan if you're going to start your own business—don't just build castles in the air.	 http://blog.castleinthear.biz/2016/05/ironcraft-returns-to-castle-in-air.html
8. Lead (someone) up the garden path	Deceive someone	They led me down the garden path and made me believe there would be a job for me.	



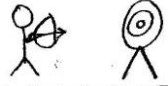
n	internal disagreements will not be able to cope with external pressures			9. Everything but the kitchen sink	Take a lot of things when you go somewhere	We were only going to be camping for two nights, but she still insisted on bringing everything but the kitchen sink along with us.	
7. A house divided against itself cannot stand	Prison			Keys for set 2			
8. Get on like a house on fire	Be the boss in the house, run a household			Idioms about the house	Meanings	Suggested examples	Suggested drawings
9. Go round the houses	A bar, coffee, or other public venue where musicians perform and are paid only by the collection of money from the audience in a basket or similar receptacle			1. Halfway house	Something that combines the qualities of two different things	This band is a halfway house between rock and pop.	
				2. A house of cards	An organisation or plan that is weak and can easily be destroyed	Their plan turned out to be a house of cards.	

10. Wear the pants in the house	If two people get on like a house on fire, they like each other very much and become friends very quickly			3. As safe as houses	Be very safe	I've locked the door. They're as safe as houses.	
11. Basket house	Waste time saying a lot of things that are not important before you get to the subject you want to talk about			4. Eat out of house and home	Eat everything in somebody's house	That big dog will eat us out of house and home!	
				5. Get your own house in order	Solve your problems or get organized	Jim should go about getting his own house in order before he starts criticising how I live my life!	
Set 3				6. House of correction	Prison	She said he's out of the house of correction.	
Home Idioms	Meanings	Examples	Drawings	7. A house divided against itself cannot stand	An organisation that is divided by internal disagreements will not be able to cope with external	The candidate urged the members of his political party to unite because he understood that a	
1. There's no place like home	A place that is as pleasant and comfortable as your own home						

2. Home sweet home	Your home is a special place				pressures	house divided against itself cannot stand.	
3. Home away from house	Have successfully completed something, as a project or activity			8. Get on like a house on fire	If two people get on like a house on fire, they like each other very much and become friends very quickly	I was worried about my university friends meeting my new girlfriend, but everyone got on like a house on fire.	
4. Make yourself at home	Become closer to your target			9. Go round the houses	Waste time saying a lot of things that are not important before you get to the subject you want to talk about	I really can't be bothered going all round the houses with you. This is the deal.	
5. Close to home	Force somebody to understand something important			7. Ram(something) home			
6. Be home and dry	Said to show happiness when returning home after being away						

8. Home in on	Make yourself comfortable						
				10. Wear the pants in the house	Be the boss in the house, run a household	All right, if you have to wear the pants in the house, have it your way.	
				11. Basket house	A bar, coffee, or other public venue where musicians perform and are paid only by the collection of money from the audience in a basket or similar receptacle	Many of the most famous musicians began their careers eking out a living in basket houses around Greenwich Village in New York City.	
				Keys for set 3			
				Home Idioms	Meanings	Suggested examples	Suggested drawings

	<p>1. There's no place like home</p>	<p>Your home is a special place</p>	<p>The holiday was great! Still, there's no place like home.</p>	
	<p>2. Home sweet home</p>	<p>Said to show happiness when returning home after being away</p>	<p>Every evening after work, she enters her house and thinks, "Home sweet home!"</p>	
	<p>3. Home away from house</p>	<p>A place that is as pleasant and comfortable as your own home</p>	<p>When I was young, my best friend's house was my home away from home.</p>	
	<p>4. Make yourself at home</p>	<p>Make yourself comfortable</p>	<p>Please come in and make yourself at home.</p>	
	<p>5. Close to home</p>	<p>Affect someone in a strong and personal way</p>	<p>Some of my relatives criticise the education system. As a teacher, their comments hit close to home.</p>	

	6. Be home and dry	Have successfully completed something, as a project or activity	I just need one more source for this essay and then I'll be home and dry.	
	7. Ram (something) home	Force somebody to understand something important	The terrible injuries I saw in that accident really rammmed home for me the importance of wearing seat belts.	
	8. Home in on	Become closer to your target	He began with a couple of jokes before homing in on the main subject of his talk.	

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; background-color: #e6f2ff; display: inline-block;">Pre-reading tasks</div>	<p>a) Cultural note:</p> <p>The cartoonist Lynn Johnston was born in Collingwood, Ontario</p>

2. WOMEN ISSUES THROUGH THE LENSES OF A FEMALE CARTOONIST

Work in pairs and answer the questions below:

- a) Do you know who Lynn Johnston is?
- b) Do you know the comic strip *For Better or For Worse*?
- c) What does the title suggest you?
- d) What could the comic be about?
- e) When is this set expression mainly used?

(Canada). She mainly published books about parenting, but soon after the publication of her third book, she signed a twenty-year contract to draw comic strips. That is when *For Better or For worse* was born. She was the first woman to receive a Reuben Award for Cartoonist of the Year by the National Cartoonist Society in 1985. What is more, she has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, has received the Order of Canada, and claims a star on Canada's Walk of Fame (<http://thecomcartoflynnjohnston.com>).

b) Even though students will probably not know the comic strip *For Better or For Worse*, they may need some help to deduce what the title means.

c) and d) Free answers.

e) The sentence *For Better For Worse* is mainly used in a wedding ceremony.

Cultural note:

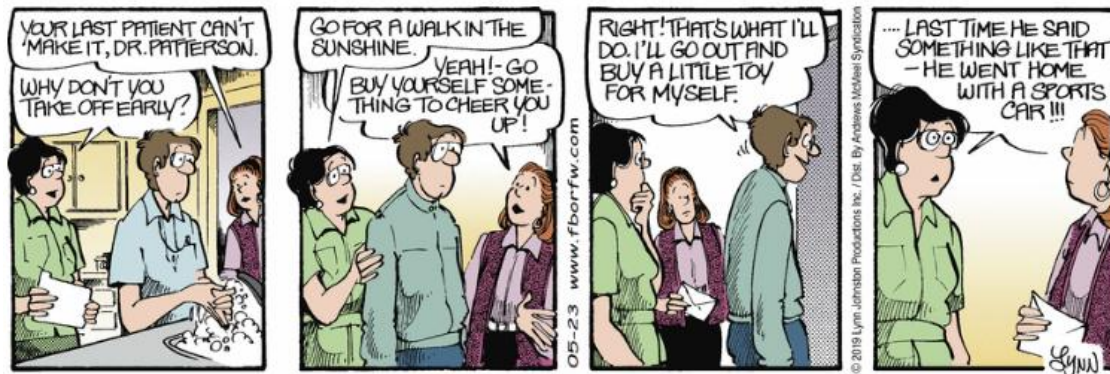
The following is an example of how the title of the comic strip is found within the catholic wedding vows.

I, (John), take you, (Susan), to be my lawfully wedded (husband/wife), to have and to hold, from this day forwards, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part (<http://catholicweddinghelp.com>).

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;">While-reading tasks</p> <p>2.1 FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE</p> <p>In small groups, work on the comic strip that has been assigned to you and answer the questions below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Analyse characters and identify the roles they play. b) Reflect on how female characters are portrayed. c) Do you think that characters might be stereotyped? If so, why? d) Study the language in the captions. How are feelings or emotions conveyed? e) Does this family have prearranged rules or norms? f) If so, are the prearranged rules or norms followed and respected by all the members of the family? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The woman is responsible for the household chores. There is one occasion in which she assumes there is something wrong with the man, since he is doing the washing up. Then she advises him to stop doing it. This shows that gender roles are deeply entrenched. Her son and her husband do not share the housework with her. His son is a messy boy. The man is portrayed as clumsy, as he messes what the woman has already cleaned. In fact, both of them –the boy and the man– do it. They are careless and seem to lack empathy. b) Female characters are in charge of the housework. Even though the woman asks for help and wants to share the household chores with the rest of the members of the family, her husband and her son do not lift a finger. c) The characters are stereotyped, since they play the roles that society has assigned them: the woman does the housework, the man watches TV, and the boy does not tidy his room up. These roles are deeply entrenched in society. That is why coeducation and equality need to be fostered and not only at home but also at schools. d) Feelings and emotions are conveyed by means of question marks and exclamation marks which represent surprise or astonishment; eyes and mouths wide open indicate surprise, something shocking or emotionally disturbing; lines around the head or mouth show the character is screaming because s/he is angry or furious; body language

	<p>also shows that the character is thinking, or does not care what he has been told.</p> <p>e) The boy and the husband do not lift a finger since they assume that the household chores are a woman's duty. What happens is that they do not understand that the housework is meant to be shared and cannot depend on only one person.</p> <p>f) In "For Better or For Worse 1" the two women observe that the man is doing the washing up. They consider that the man is not supposed to be doing the washing up and advice him and persuade him to stop doing it.</p>
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For Better or For Worse 1 (Thursday, 23rd April 2019)



Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (<https://www.fbortfw.com/>)

For Better or For Worse 2 (Wednesday, 3rd April 2019)



Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/stip_fix/2019/04/)

For Better or For Worse 3 (Thursday, 4th April 2019)



Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/stip_fix/2019/04/)

For Better or For Worse 4 (Friday, 4th April 2019)



Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/strip_fix/2019/04/)

For Better or For Worse 5 (Saturday, 6th April 2019)



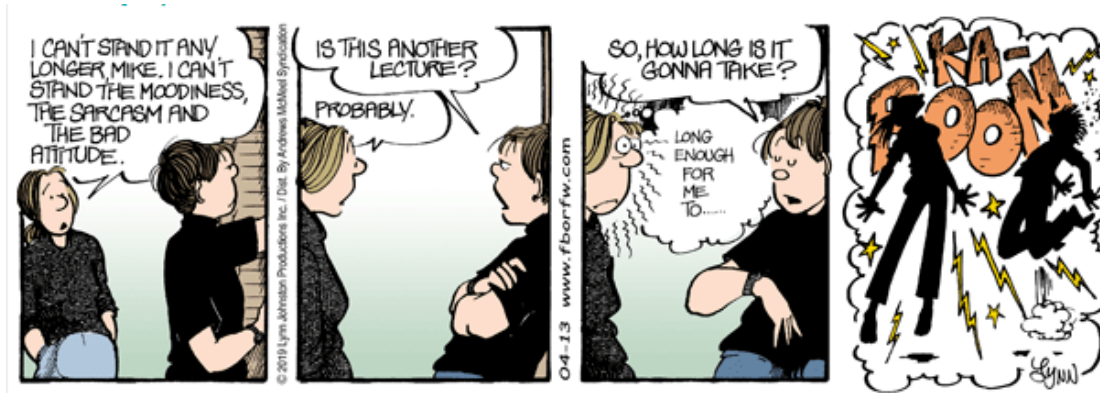
Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/strip_fix/2019/04/)

For Better or For Worse 6 (Saturday, 7th April 2019)



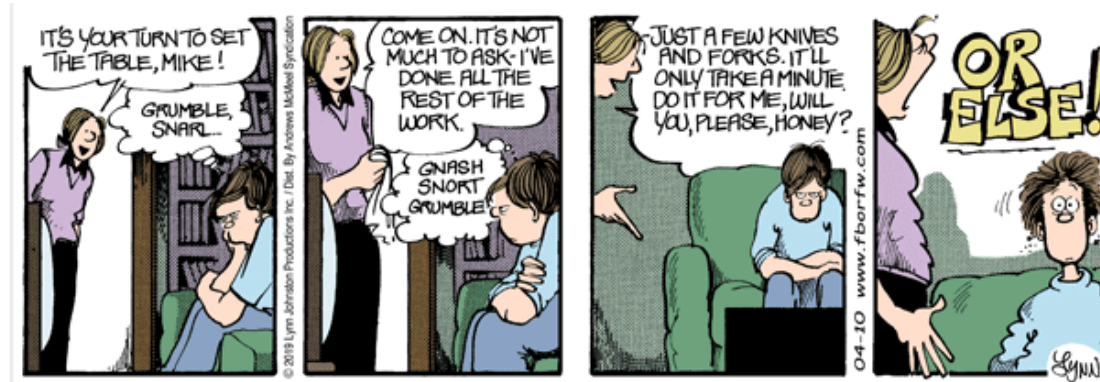
Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/strip_fix/2019/04/)

For Better or For Worse 7 (Saturday, 13th April 2019)



Johnston. *For better or for worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/strip_fix/2019/04/)

For Better or For Worse 9 (Wednesday, 10th April)



Johnston. *For better or For Worse* (2019) (https://fborfw.com/strip_fix/2019/04/)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES						
<p style="text-align: center;">After-reading tasks</p> <p>2.2 HOUSEHOLD CHORES AS A SOURCE OF CONFLICT</p> <p>Complete the following chart and answer the questions below:</p> <p>a) Make a classification of the family members and describe them.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Father</th> <th>Mother</th> <th>Son</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) Do the characters resemble people you know?</p> <p>c) If so, in which way?</p> <p>d) Compare the reality portrayed in the comic with our society: how much does it resemble or daily life, our society, our attitude?</p> <p>e) Watch the video and do the tasks below:</p> <p>Tips to Avoid Fighting with Your Partner over Household Chores</p>	Father	Mother	Son				<p>a) Suggested answers.</p> <p>Father: he does not seem to share the household chores, he watches TV while sitting on the sofa instead. He also shows himself as careless when he messes up what his wife has cleaned up first. He is careless, selfish, and lacks empathy.</p> <p>Mother: she is the one who does all the household chores. Her husband does not cooperate. It seems that getting angry is the solution for him to help her with the housework. She is desperate, committed, and determined.</p> <p>Son: two scenarios describe his attitude. First, tidying the room up is also part of the household chores, but his room is a mess. Second, when his mother cleans the windows, he does not mind touching the glass and leaving his hand print on it. The son could be described as, careless and untidy.</p> <p>b) Free answer.</p> <p>c) Free answer.</p> <p>d) As for coeducation, it is compulsory for schools to develop and implement a planning whose aim is to promote equality among students all year long, no matter their gender, religion, or social class. Unfortunately, there is still work to do in the field of coeducation, since the situations depicted in the above comic strips are part of the daily</p>
Father	Mother	Son					



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ci0adXY2Og>)

i. List the three tips mentioned.

-
-
-

ii. What is the phonetic transcription of the word “chores”?

iii. What is the meaning of the following terms? They are examples of real English.

Cite, split up, I'll go with it, swap that beer for a broom or hit the bricks, a leading cause of, chillaxing, pay somebody alimony, resonate in, to be well worth it,

routine in many homes.

e) Students work individually and afterwards compare their notes with those of their classmates.

Keys:

i.

- Split tasks/chores. Determine your split.
- Establish work hours. Clean the house together at the same time. Make a chore chart.
- Hire it out. Hire somebody who helps you with the housework.

ii. /tʃɔːrɪs/

iii.

- *Cite = name, mention, say*
- *Split up = divide, share out, separate.*
- *I'll go with it = accompany.*
- *Swap that beer for a broom = replace one thing with another.*
- *Hit the bricks = walk the streets, go away, go play in traffic, take a hike, take a walk.*
- *A leading cause of = a main reason.*
- *Chillaxing = combination of the terms chill and relax (it is an example of blending).*
- *Pay somebody alimony = marital allowance.*

<p>iv. Complete these sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sharing chores equals..... • Men hate.....while women hate..... •promotes relationship satisfaction. •is associated with better relationship quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resonate = understand.</i> • <i>Hire out = employ temporarily.</i> • <i>To be well worth it = worthwhile.</i> <p>iv.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sharing chores equals divorce. • Men hate going shopping while women hate doing the dishes/the washing up. • Buying time promotes relationship satisfaction. • Sharing tasks is associated with better relationship quality.
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4.2.1.4 Section 4. Health education: adolescence, a crucial period to avoid developing early addictions?

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-reading tasks</p> <p>1. SUPERHEROES: ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE</p>	<p>a) Most superheroes and heroines have struggled with alcoholism or drug addiction at some point: Iron man, Batman, Jessica Jones, Venom, Captain Marvel, Wolverine, Firestorm, John Constantine, Hercules, Moon Knight, Anthem, Mothman, Tommy Monaghan, and Francis Ruben (he obtains his superpowers by drug abuse: consuming</p>

<p>Work in pairs and answer the questions below:</p> <p>a) Do you know any comic which deals with alcohol or drugs?</p> <p>b) Do you think that this sort of issues might be of interest?</p>	<p>cigarettes, caffeine and alcohol) (https://screenrant.com).</p> <p>b) It is useful to make teenagers aware of the dangers of consuming dangerous substances. Through the comics students will know about the situations that normally lead people to consume alcohol, cigarettes or other kinds of drugs that develop either physical or psychological dependence. Also, students would get to know what the protagonists feel and to what extent their day-to-day routines are affected.</p>
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TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;">While-reading tasks</p> <p>1.1 SET PHRASES FOR ALCOHOL EFFECTS</p> <p>a) Read the comic strip below to see some terms/expressions in context, and then explain their meaning to your classmate. <i>To be washed up, go on the wagon, drink to get a lift, pull oneself together, be licked.</i></p> <p>b) Observe the characters and reflect on how addiction is presented in connection with gender.</p>	<p>a) Answer key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To be washed up: be no longer effective or successful.</i> • <i>Go on the wagon: not to drink for a period of time; abstain from drinking.</i> • <i>Drink to get a lift: drink to be stoned/high.</i> • <i>Pull oneself together: to control oneself; to regain one's self-control.</i> • <i>Be licked: be defeated.</i> <p>b) The characters mentioned a girl, but she does not appear at this point of the story. The publishing of the comic series started in 1924 and came to an end in 1949; which is why it is a man –and not a woman– who suffers the effects of alcoholism. This may be considered</p>

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

	a stereotype, since alcoholism is way more associated with men than with women, especially in the period that the comic was published.
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Wash Tubbs

WASH TUBBS

—By Leslie Turner



WASH TUBBS

—By Leslie Turner



WASH TUBBS

—By Leslie Turner



WASH TUBBS

—By Leslie Turner



COMICS WITH PROBLEMS #71 - The WASH TUBBS Alcoholism Comic Strips (1949)

Earliest known storyline on alcoholism (and specifically Alcoholics Anonymous) to appear in a syndicated newspaper comic book series

Turner. *Comics with problems* (1949) (<http://www.ep.tc/problems/71/>)

TASKS	TEACHER'S NOTES																				
<p style="text-align: center;">After-reading tasks</p> <p>1.2 DRUG GLOSSARY AND VISUAL SYMPTOMATOLOGY</p> <p>After reading the following comic strip, say:</p> <p>a) What is the main issue the protagonist faces?</p> <p>b) What are the effects on him?</p> <p>c) What is the main reason for him to stop drinking?</p> <p>d) Associate each drug with its street name.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>DRUG NAME</th> <th>STREET NAME</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Marijuana</td> <td>Ecstasy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hashish</td> <td>Cheese</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heroin</td> <td>Gangster</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Opium</td> <td>Blue heaven</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DRUG NAME	STREET NAME	Marijuana	Ecstasy	Hashish	Cheese	Heroin	Gangster	Opium	Blue heaven	<p>a) The main issue the protagonist faces is being able to stop drinking to get back his relationship with his daughter.</p> <p>b) He does not feel well; he knows he has a problem with spirit drinks and reckons that it cannot be solved; he looks shaggy; family bounds are weakened or even broken; at a certain point he says he has “nothing to give a kid” which may imply that he has probably lost his job.</p> <p>c) The first and foremost reason for him to stop drinking is to have contact with his daughter again.</p> <p>d) Answer key:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>DRUG NAME</th> <th>STREET NAME</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Marijuana</td> <td>Weed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hashish</td> <td>Gangster</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heroin</td> <td>Cheese</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Opium</td> <td>Black stuff</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DRUG NAME	STREET NAME	Marijuana	Weed	Hashish	Gangster	Heroin	Cheese	Opium	Black stuff
DRUG NAME	STREET NAME																				
Marijuana	Ecstasy																				
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DRUG NAME	STREET NAME																				
Marijuana	Weed																				
Hashish	Gangster																				
Heroin	Cheese																				
Opium	Black stuff																				

Cocaine	Weed
MDNA	Snow
LSD	Black stuff

Cocaine	Snow
MDNA	Ecstasy
LSD	Blue heaven

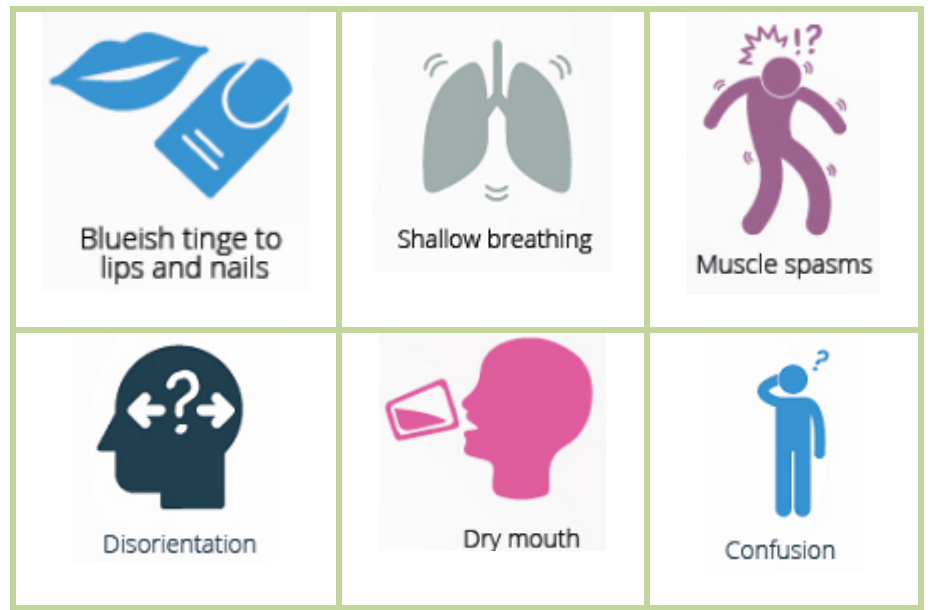
e) Match the pictures with the symptoms they evoke.

Extreme drowsiness, bluish tinge, limp muscles, dry mouth, low blood pressure and slow pulse, disorientation, confusion, shallow breathing, stomach spasms, muscle spasms, delirium.



The lexicon has been taken from the glossary of addiction terms (<https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction/glossary>).

e) Answer key:



 Low blood pressure and slow pulse	 Extreme drowsiness	 Limp muscles
 Stomach spasms	 Delirium	

f) Classify the lexicon about personal description into eight categories to create a mind map.

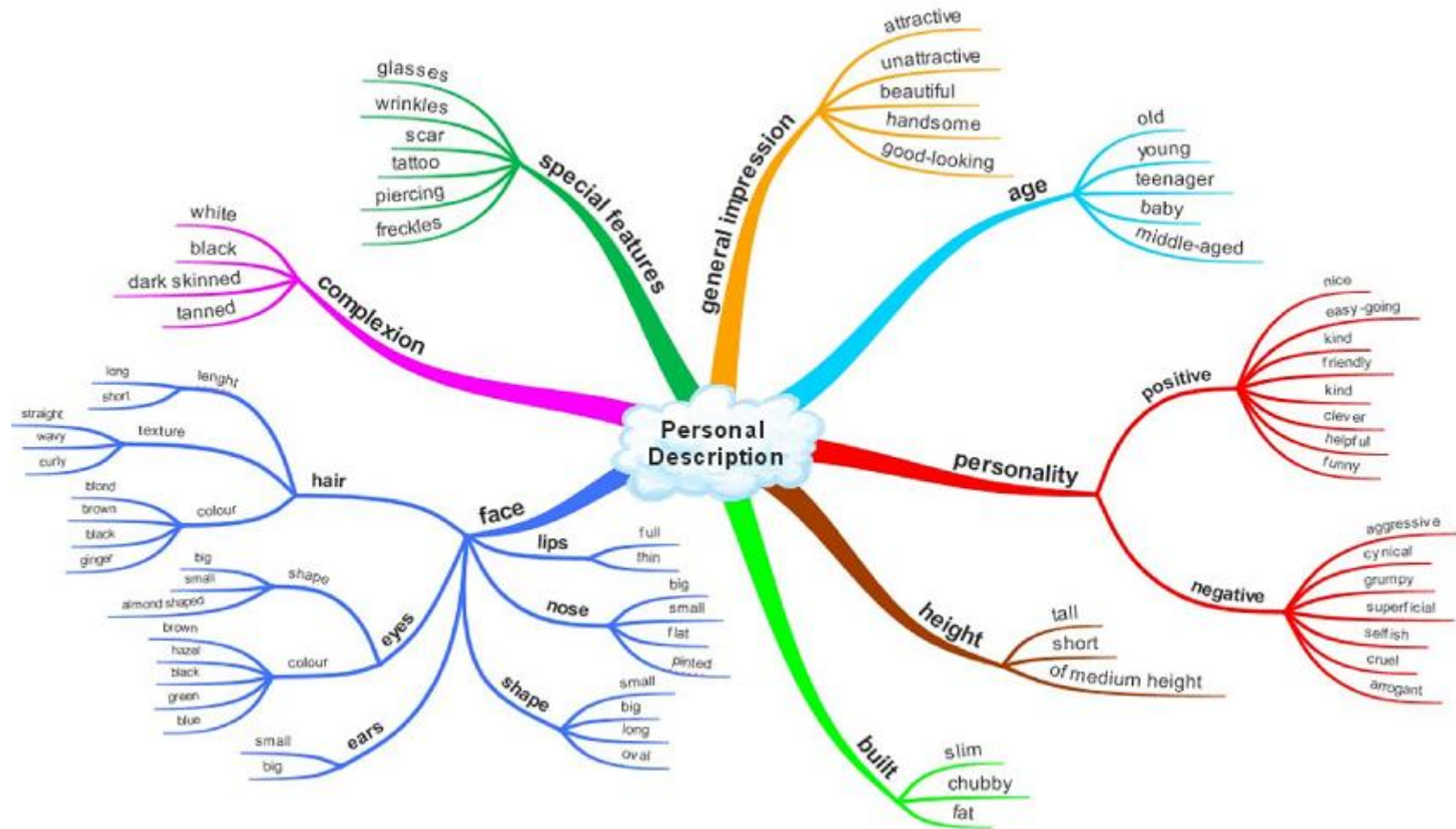
Categories: built, height, personality, face, complexion, age, general impression, special features.

Lexicon: *old, young, teenager, baby, middle-aged, attractive, unattractive, beautiful, handsome, good-looking, glasses, wrinkles, scar, tattoo, piercing, freckles, pale, dark, dark skinned, tanned, nice, easy-going, kind, friendly, clever, helpful, funny, aggressive, cynical, grumpy, superficial, selfish, cruel, arrogant, slim, chubby, fat, short, medium-height, tall, lips, nose, shape, small (x2), big (x2), long, oval, full, thin, flat, panted, colour, shape, hair, texture, straight, wavy, curly, blond, brown (x3), black (x2), ginger, almond shape, blue, green, hazel, length, long, and short.*

(The vocabulary and pictures have been taken from <https://www.ukat.co.uk/drugs/>).

f) Students work individually and then in groups of 3-4 when they start developing their mind maps. Finally, each group explains the other groups their mind maps. See Figure for a sample mind map.

Personal description



<https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-worksheets/grammar/adjectives-personality-character/personal-description-mind-map/73981>

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-reading tasks</p> <p>2. REASONS WHY TEENAGERS DRINK ALCOHOL</p> <p>Read the questions below and think of possible arguments to support your ideas:</p> <p>a) Why do you think that teenagers get into alcohol or drugs?</p> <p>b) What are the possible reasons that may lead a person to abuse alcohol or drugs intake?</p> <p>c) Watch this video and write down the reasons why teenagers drink alcohol. Compare the reasons the person in the video gives with your initial ideas. Then compare your notes with those of your partner.</p> <p>Reasons Why Teenagers Drink Alcohol</p>	<p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>a) They may be too young to weigh the pros and cons; have a weak personality; not being able to say NO; they may need to belong to a group and act, behave and do what the other members of the group do to be accepted within it; they may drink or take drugs to socialise; or they may simply be copying adult behaviours to look cool or older when being with other youngsters.</p> <p>b) Consuming spirit drinks or other drugs can be down to culture, religion, family or work influence. Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression can also make people more vulnerable towards heavy drinking or drug intake.</p> <p>c) Apart from the reasons above, the video adds some more: peer pressure and copying parents' behaviour.</p>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsEggebDU9E>

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>While-reading tasks</p> <p>2.1 TEENAGERS GET INTO DRINKING</p> <p>Observe the comic strip below and answer the following questions:</p> <p>a) How is the alcoholic drink introduced in the story?</p>	<p>a) When teenagers run out of soft drinks, one of them shows a whiskey bottle that he had brought without prior notice. He had probably stolen the bottle since teenagers are not allowed to buy spirit drinks.</p> <p>b) Initially, the other teenagers were shocked. Bringing alcohol to the gathering was something nobody expected.</p> <p>c) These group of friends get into drinking by socialising and copying adult's habits. While drinking they feel they are not so young anymore;</p>

<p>b) What is the teenagers' initial reaction?</p> <p>c) How do these teenagers get into drinking?</p> <p>d) Discuss the meaning of the terms <i>It's a crit</i>, and <i>I'm game</i>.</p>	<p>and they drink together as a group task that makes them feel closer to one another.</p> <p>d) Students try to deduce the meaning from context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>It's a crit</i>. It is a blending for the phrase <i>critical hit</i>. This is a usual term in role games. In the event of a combat and after having rolled the dice, <i>critical hit</i> indicates the best possible damage. The term blending refers to the combination of two words to create a new one. To do so, the beginning of a word is combined with the ending of another word, e.g. <i>Smoke</i> + <i>Fog</i> = <i>Smog</i>, <i>Motorway</i> + <i>Hotel</i> = <i>Motel</i>, <i>Breakfast</i> + <i>Lunch</i> = <i>Brunch</i>, <i>Critical</i> + <i>Hit</i> = <i>Crit</i>.• <i>I'm game</i>: is used to indicate that the speaker is interested in doing whatever has just been suggested. It is similar to <i>I'm up for that</i>.
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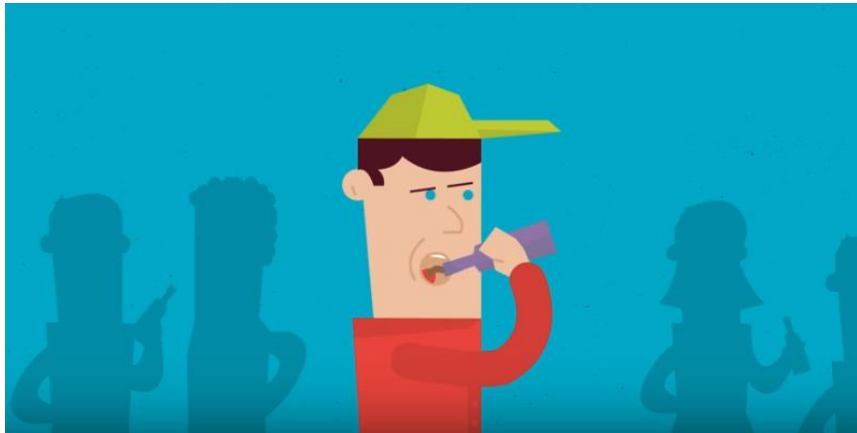
An Introduction to Alcohol



Krumpholz. *Kilgore Books and Comics* (2017) (<http://www.kilgorebooks.com/shop/yjbrmejz440fzexkul2ohpyjfke8wb>)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;">After-reading tasks</p> <p>2.2 ALCOHOL'S EFFECT ON TEENAGE BRAIN</p> <p>After reading the comic strip:</p> <p>a) Write down key words while listening to the audio of the video below. Then answer the questions and complete the sentences individually. Later compare your information with your classmate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What happens at the age of 25? - What happens before the age of 25? - The hippocampus is the part of the brain where... - Frontal areas of the brain.....and they control..... - Three consequences are mentioned: - Alcohol interferes in four major aspects: 	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>a) Vision off.</p> <p>The audio is played, but the video is not projected yet. Students take notes while listening to the audio. Once they have answered the questions and completed the sentences, they share the answers with the whole class. Then, the video is projected (image and audio are combined).</p> <p>Answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is at the age of 25 that the brain is fully developed. - Functional and structural changes before the age of 25. - The hippocampus is the part of the brain where learning and memory occurs. - Frontal areas of the brain are affected by alcohol and they control impulses. - The three consequences are violence, lack of self-control, and poor decision making.

Alcohol's Effect on Teenage Brain



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY37BFmVxwQ>

- Alcohol interferes in people's ability to drive, having a healthy relationship, getting accepted to college and finding a good job.

4.2.1.5 Section 5. Comic workshop: social issues

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>1. CREATING A COMIC ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES</p> <p>Group work task to wrap up the unit:</p> <p>a) Have a look at the two panels below, which represent the beginning</p>	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>a) Students work in groups of 3 and look at the 4 strips below. Every group of students is expected to add more panels in between to expand the stories. Students add 2 panels to the first set (new technologies), 3</p>

and the end of a story respectively. Work with your partner and insert more panels in between the two panels below to connect them. Add 2 panels to the first set (new technologies), 3 more panels to the second set (ethics), 4 panels to the third set (coeducation/gender equality), and 5 more panels to the fourth set (health education).

more panels to the second set (ethics), 4 panels to the third set (coeducation/gender equality), and 5 more panels to the fourth set (health education). Every group decides the storyline before starting drawing. For this task, inspiration can be drawn from the contents of the previous four sections: moral and civic education in digital culture (dependence on new technologies), ethics (political correctness), coeducation (household chores), and health education (unhealthy habits).

At the end of the session, all the strips belonging to set 1 are placed together on the board. Later students can vote for the best strip. The same procedure can be carried out for the other strips.

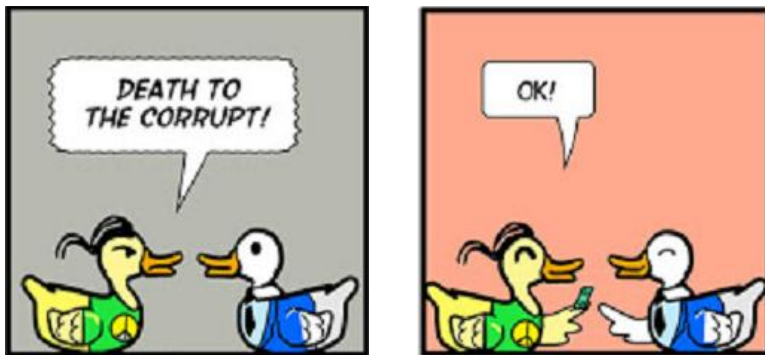
The best comic of every cross-curricular issue can be published either in the school magazine or on the school website. They can also be uploaded to the school accounts on both Facebook and Instagram.

Set 1: new technologies



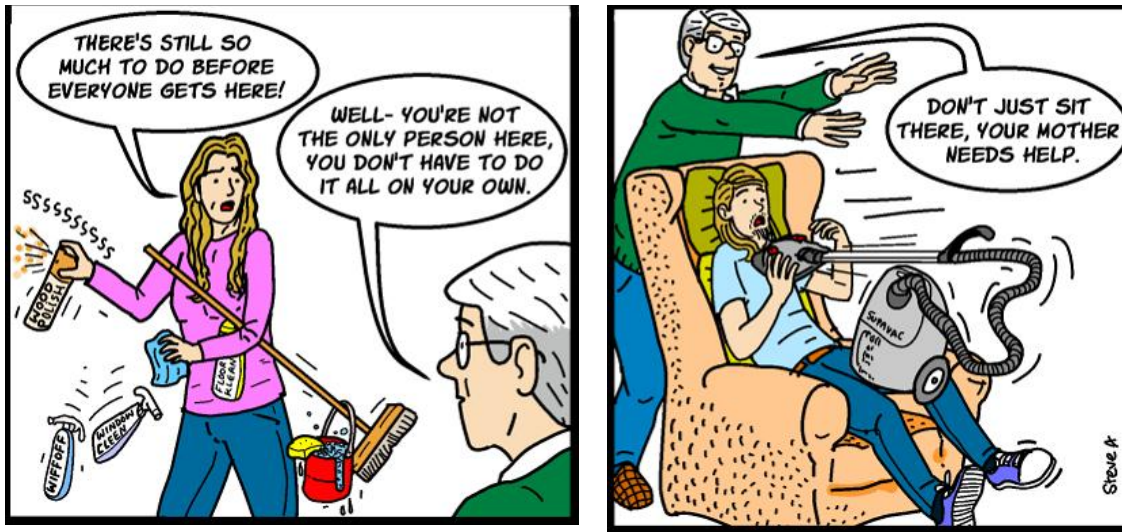
<https://www.pinterest.es/pin/325596248052059781/>

Set 2: ethics



<https://www.tes.com/lessons/dXie0Eobfp-NiQ/introduction-to-ethics>

Set 3: gender equality



<https://cazcomic.wordpress.com/tag/housework/>

Set 4: health education



www.scottmcccloud.com/comics/carl/3a/02.html

Unit 2: TV Series, Popular Literature and Society

4.2.2 Unit 2: using TV series and popular literature to teach cross-curricular issues

The five sections of this second unit aim to make students aware of the society in which they are living through the analysis of TV series and popular literature. This didactic proposal has been designed for an Official Language School, where sessions last 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The main goals of the unit are to help students to be able to:

- discuss the uses of new technologies in popular literature and TV series.
- identify oppression, abuse, violence and deviant behavior in popular literature and TV series.
- reflect on addictions and observe symptoms or effects.
- distinguish, comment and discuss various ethical behaviors and their implications for social change.

The goals of section 1, –*Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*– are to develop students’ abilities to:

- discuss current society’s use of new technologies.
- comment on how new technologies may either get people in touch or isolate them.
- ponder the positive and negative aspects of technology/ the Internet.
- get familiar with lexicon related to new technologies.

The importance of section number 1 lies in two facts: how the Internet is somehow modifying our thinking processes, and the dichotomy in the use of new technologies that may isolate users from the people they are surrounded by versus its use to contact people who are miles away. Hence, section 1 raises awareness of the dangers of new technologies and the effects they are having on people’s habits and social relationships through an episode of a TV series as well as some excerpts from a text. Both highlight new technologies breakthroughs as well as their drawbacks.

The objectives of section 2, *Coeducation: oppression, abuse, and violence in popular literature; and deviant behavior in TV series*, are mainly to develop students' capacity to:

- describe parental roles.
- identify situations of oppression, abuse, violence and deviant behaviour.
- describe the feelings and emotions conveyed by the texts and the TV episode.
- be aware of moral and civic education.
- learn lexicon and idioms about oppression.

Section 2, *Coeducation: oppression, abuse, and violence in popular literature; and deviant behavior in TV series*, depicts real life situations in which celebrities have witnessed a violent episode, and celebrities' lives or their relatives have been at risk at a certain point of their lives. Accordingly, section 2 explores coeducation by means of excerpts of popular literature and an episode of a TV series.

The goals of section 3, *Health education at the intersection with coeducation: drugs and addictions in TV series and popular literature*, are to boost learners' abilities to:

- talk about health education.
- get familiar with lexicon about symptoms and effects of drugs.
- comment on addictions.

The aim of section 3, *Health education at the intersection with coeducation: drugs and addictions in TV series and popular literature*, is to foster health education. With the view to promoting a healthy lifestyle, students watch an episode about addictions, focusing on the symptoms and effects of drugs. Additional excerpts about preadolescents who have developed or are about to develop an addiction on either spirit drinks or smoking are analysed.

The objectives of section 4, *Moral and civic education: ethics-based leadership*, are mainly to develop students' capacity to:

- discuss, debate and comment on ethical issues.
- develop a leadership perspective based on ethics.
- promote and foster social change.
- identify leadership principles.

What section 4 explores is the concept of leadership. A good leader is the person who takes decisions ethically and thinks of how his/her decisions can affect others. For

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

this purpose, students identify a series of roles in an episode of a TV series and describe the scenarios in which the conflicts or the moments to take serious decisions take place. Students are expected to observe how actions have an impact on other people's lives.

Finally, the goals of section 5, *Breaking news workshop: social issues*, are to help students:


- plan and create their own news bulletin.
- draw inspiration from the contents of the previous sections to design their news bulletin.
- elaborate a news bulletin about current social issues.

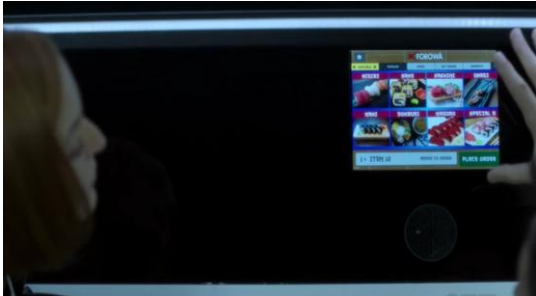
In this section, students cooperate to carry out a task which incorporates some of the values and cross-curricular issues which students have been working on.


Section 5 is a summary of the previous sections to wrap up the unit. Students plan, design, elaborate, and record a news bulletin. To accomplish the task, students draw inspiration from the contents covered in the previous four sections, e.g. the use of new technologies, moral and civic education, coeducation, and health education.

The five sections of this unit share the next layout: students' tasks appear on the left of the following tables, whereas a series of instructions or teachers' notes are on the right. Some cultural notes are included to help teachers give further background information and explain the relevance of the TV series and the literary texts chosen.

4.2.2.1 Topic 1. Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-watching task</p> <p>1. SOCIAL MEDIA MAKE US UNSOCIAL</p> <p>Watch this short video and point out what makes us unsocial, the actions people do, and the purposes for which people make use of new technologies.</p> <p>How social media make us unsocial</p>  <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5GecYjy9-Q</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>Social Media historian Allison Graham offers a witty and ironic view of a society that feels alone together. This TEDx talk shows insights of a life lived online and how social media is used to connect and disconnect us (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5GecYjy9-Q).</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>The people on the video make use of social media to get popularity. They take pictures and upload them on social sites for other people to know what they are doing. Occasionally, pictures are taken while climbing a rocky mountain or while driving, proving the protagonists do not enjoy the task unless it is shown to others. Thus, social acceptance/recognition is claimed. What people do not seem to be aware of is that being connected virtually disconnects them from the people who surround them.</p>

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>While-watching tasks</p> <p>2. SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE X-FILES</p> <p>Watch these scenes from the TV series (<i>The X-Files</i>: season 11, episode 7) and think about the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where the couple is. Describe the setting. What they are doing. How they are spending the time. Give details. Describe their behavior. Whether there is anything you find strange, disturbing and bizarre or common, usual and familiar. <p><i>The X-Files</i>: season 11, episode 7</p> 	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>Initially, <i>The X-Files</i> –which combines elements of science fiction, detective fiction, police procedurals and horror– gained followers slowly and became a mainstream television hit by the third season. It was probably the most successful science fiction show of the 1990s. An obsession with science and technology, a lack of confidence in both of them, and a sense of conspiracy on the part of the government made explicit society’s concerns at the time. Besides, the show challenges genre conventions since solving a case largely depends on the female character’s expertise and rationality (Hodges 2008: 231-240).</p> <p>Suggested procedure and answers:</p> <p>Students write down their ideas, their thoughts, or impressions. Then they can be compared in pairs, and later in threes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The couple is in a restaurant. The place is empty. There are neither waiters nor clients. Apparently, there is no life. The two protagonists are the only couple in the restaurant. Watching the scene, the viewer is under the impression that the setting is a cold place, since blue, black and grey are the main colours. They walked in the restaurant to order food. The actors try to order the dishes by means of new technologies.

	<p>d) They are spending their time using their cell phones, instead of having a chat. Apart from having dinner, people usually go to restaurants to talk, be together and socialise.</p> <p>e) Although they are close to one another, it seems they are miles away, since there is neither verbal nor physical interaction.</p> <p>f) It is quite common to see people in public places using mobiles or laptops even if they are accompanied. A few years ago, people would have found this practice strange, disturbing or bizarre, but now it has become common, usual and familiar. We have found a way to escape or to isolate ourselves from the people nearby.</p>
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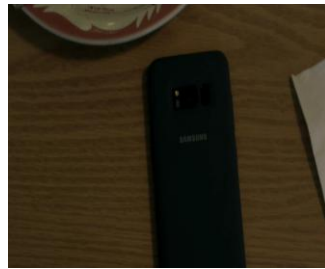
TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Post-watching tasks</p>	<p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>a) Gloomy or cold restaurant vs. restaurant at daylight. Cold colours vs.</p>

3. SOCIAL VS. UNSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE X-FILES

After watching the scenes below:

- Compare these scenes with the ones of the previous task (while-watching tasks) and highlight the differences.
- Describe the actors' attitude and behaviour.
- Mention whether there is any similarity to reality.
- Comment on the meaning of the scenes below.

The X-Files: season 11, episode 7

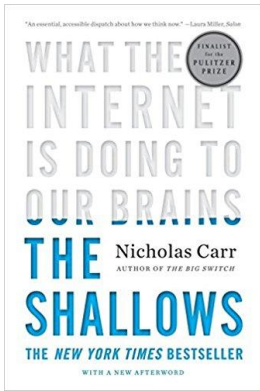


hot colours. Empty room vs. lively place. Silence vs. noise/words.

b) They seem to have a positive attitude. They have a nice chat, smile and there is even time for jokes. In addition, there is physical contact when their hands touch, which might point out that there is nothing better than face-to-face communication.

c) There is a tendency among people from their mid-teens to their thirties to abuse the use of new technologies when in company. By contrast, people in their forties onwards behave more like Mulder and Scully in the restaurant: they interact, chat, and there is eye-contact.

d) Having a waitress entails talking, eye-contact, and decoding body language. The protagonist orders food by using his voice and not an application. Paying in cash implies physical contact and non-verbal communication. Putting cell phone down means people do not want to pay attention to new technologies and that they want to enjoy their time together.

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-reading tasks</p> <p>4. NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE BRAIN IN POPULAR LITERATURE</p> <p>a) Look at the front cover of the book and say how you interpret it.</p> <p><i>The Shallows: What the Internet is doing to our Brains, by Nicholas Carr</i> (reviewed by Sorin Adam Matei)</p>  <p>https://www.amazon.com/Shallows-What-Internet-Doing-Brains/dp/0393339750</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>Nicholas Carr warns people about the dangers of new technologies, provoking a social debate.</p> <p>Nicholas Carr's books, which have been translated into more than 25 languages, focus on issues such as technology, economics, and culture. <i>The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains</i> (2011) does not only deal with technology, but with technology's effects on people's thoughts and perceptions. When it was published it became both a New York Times bestseller and a Pulitzer Prize finalist. However, it was in 2015 that he was awarded the Neil Postman Prize on behalf of the Media Ecology Association due to his achievements in Public Intellectual Activity. His next release also coped with the field of technology: what he explores in <i>The Glass Cage: Automation and Us</i> (2014) is the personal and social consequences of people's dependency on computers, robots and applications (http://www.nicholascarr.com/).</p> <p>As Mann and Postel see it (2015: 9), what Nicholas Carr suggests in his book <i>The Shallows</i> (2011) is that somehow the Internet makes the capability to focus and concentrate difficult; besides, research on psychology has shown that it only takes six minutes for students to get distracted by either telephones or computers.</p> <p>Nicholas Carr' works are both groundbreaking and thought-provoking,</p>

b) Say whether the title indicates that the text is positive or negative. Then read the text and check your answers.

c) Match the terms with their definitions.

<i>Retweet</i>	<i>He is the inventor of the web</i>
<i>Blog post</i>	<i>He was the inventor of the printing press</i>
<i>To browse</i>	<i>Brief exchange of information made up of small or unconnected pieces.</i>
<i>Fleeting and fragmentary communication</i>	<i>Navigating the Internet, e.g. searching for specific information on a specific website.</i>
<i>Hyperlinked content</i>	<i>Navigating the Internet, e.g. searching for random various topics and getting information about them on different websites.</i>
<i>Networked computers</i>	<i>Instrument</i>
<i>Web surfing</i>	<i>To talk online</i>
<i>Chatting</i>	<i>Turn something into an Internet link.</i>
<i>Tool</i>	<i>Computers that are connected with other</i>

giving rise to a social debate. They alert and make people aware about the dangers of new technologies, since people's brains are thought to be shaped as well as influenced by them. Besides, Dewan (2014: 95) argues that this is the age of distraction, as people find it difficult to work on a single task for a long period of time due to continuous distractions.

Suggested procedure and answers:

a) Students are going to use Google to find the online application "Mentimeter." Then, students will input from one to three words maximum. Words will be projected on the whiteboard in different sizes depending on the times they are repeated. The more repeated the words are, the bigger size they will have.

Note: at the end of the section students are reminded of the "Mentimeter" task to find a similarity between this task and *The X-Files* episode. The point is that the episode is mute since new technologies cut out oral communication and isolate people from others around them. The reason for using "Mentimeter" is to reproduce the atmosphere of silence in the episode, since it is expected that students do not interact with one another orally.

b) According to the author and the cultural note above, new technologies have a negative effect on people's brain. New technologies influence and shape people's brains, bringing about distractions, and lack of concentration.

	<i>computers for the purpose of communication and file sharing.</i>	c) Keys (these terms have been highlighted in the text: <i>The Shallows</i>).	
<i>Gutenberg</i>	<i>A website that is used to store blogs that people create.</i>	<i>Retweet</i>	<i>Repost a message posted by another user.</i>
<i>Tim Berners-Lee</i>	<i>Repost a message posted by another user.</i>	<i>Blog post</i>	<i>A website that is used to store blogs that people create.</i>
		<i>To browse</i>	<i>Navigating the Internet, e.g. searching for specific information on a specific website.</i>
		<i>Fleeting and fragmentary communication</i>	<i>Brief exchange of information made up of small or unconnected pieces.</i>
		<i>Hyperlinked content</i>	<i>Turn something into an Internet link.</i>
		<i>Networked computers</i>	<i>Computers that are connected with other computers for the purpose of communication and file sharing.</i>
		<i>Web surfing</i>	<i>Navigating the Internet, e.g. searching for random various topics and getting information about them on different websites.</i>
		<i>Chatting</i>	<i>To talk online</i>

	<i>Tool</i>	<i>Instrument</i>
	<i>Gutenberg</i>	<i>He was the inventor of the printing press</i>
	<i>Tim Berners-Lee</i>	<i>He is the inventor of the web</i>
<p>All the definitions have been taken and adapted from the Cambridge online Dictionary https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/frame)</p>		

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>While-reading task</p> <p>4.1 WORKING ON KEY STATEMENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE TEXT THE SHALLOWS</p> <p>Read the following excerpts from <i>The Shallows</i> and find the answers to the statements below:</p> <p>a) Think of a possible reason to use the verbs <i>giveth</i> and <i>taketh</i>.</p> <p>b) Deduce the meaning of these statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.</i> <i>This will kill, that. The book will kill the edifice.</i> 	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>Students reflect on the meaning of the statements individually; later they share their ideas in pairs and then in threes.</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>a) They are archaisms and their use is formal.</p> <p>b) Suggested meanings of the statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of knowledge makes you vulnerable. According to the text, the “edifice” was the Church, which used to have the power of knowledge. Similarly, the book will be killed or replaced with the Internet.

- *As we become shallower readers and writers. We become dumber.*

- If we read and do not understand the text, our reading is superficial or poor, our writing is poor too.

Excerpt from *The Shallows*: part 1

Nicholas Carr has a problem and I think I have it, too. You might have it as well even if you don't know it yet. How many times, sitting down in front of the computer to do some piece of significant writing, have you caught yourself drifting off into meaningless Web surfing, chatting with random friends just because they were online, or answering e-mails that could wait until later? Carr believes that these symptoms betray more than a mere lack of good primary-school education. He is convinced that this is a cultural illness. If we are to extrapolate, it marks a civilizational turning point equal in consequences to the calf worshipping that sent the Jewish people on their historical wanderings. Since it is related to the adoption of a new tool and of new practices associated with it, it is probably more appropriate to say that it is as eventful as the invention of the printing press, only in the reverse. What Gutenberg giveth, Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the Web, taketh away.

The main claim of the book, illustrated with many and at times speculative warrants, is that the Web unravels ancient reading and writing practices. The intellectual journey is fascinating. Carr's capacious, curious mind is wont to poach on many intellectual territories. This is a privilege to which he feels entitled by his digerati status sponsored by several previous best sellers. It can, however, be an invitation to sweeping generalizations, especially when Carr claims that the Internet is in the process of changing the most intimate mechanisms of our brains.

This claim is part of a very broad proposition, not unlike that depicted in a central episode of Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In it, Frollo, the Defender of Faith and old order, pointing a bony, accusatory finger at one of the first printed books, while gazing in nostalgic silence at the Notre Dame Cathedral, utters the memorable

words: "This will kill, that. The book will kill the edifice." In other words, democratizing access to knowledge through printing replaced churches and cathedrals both as institutions of knowledge and as direct communicative channels. All that was dispensed by the clergy in carefully choreographed mass services, declaimed in sermons, or illustrated in the stained windows became in time the object of leaflets, booklets, and books that came in all sizes, bindings, and prices.

Carr believes that it is now the turn of print media to be sacrificed by networked computers and hyperlinked content on the altar of change. An act equivalent to the killing of a god, the ritual immolation of old media by the new one is laden with three unintended, negative consequences. The first is that as we adopt *always on* media of communication, books become obsolete containers for knowledge, both physically and, more importantly, as a genre. Why publish a book, when you can disseminate your ideas online, on a blog, on Facebook, or on Wikipedia? This leads to the second consequence, the disappearance of an old set of intellectual practices. As we cease writing or using books for learning, we cease reading or writing in a sustained, focused, introspective manner. We turn our very own selves from personalities with a clear and subtle inner architecture, finely crafted through formal education, to "pancake people—spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button," in the words of the essayist and playwright Richard Foreman (quoted on p. 196). The third consequence, which is the most risqué and speculative, is that in abandoning books and embracing new intellectual "grazing" practices, our brains become conditioned only to accept and consume information in small, disjointed bits and eventually would be able to process anything else. In

Matei. *The Shallows: What the Internet is doing to our Brains* (2010: 130)

Excerpt from *The Shallows*: part 2

a nutshell, as we become shallower readers and writers, we become dumber.

The third conclusion, at times stitched together from extrapolation of medical studies on sea slugs and limited laboratory experiments, deserves more critical scrutiny. One of the studies cited to support the idea that the Internet rewires our brains had a total of 24 subjects, who were asked to search for information while lying in a buzzing, claustrophobic magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine wearing goggles instead of looking at screens. The highly artificial setting and the limited number of subjects cannot support claims as sweeping as those advanced by the book, namely, that our minds are rewired after only one week of Googling things around. More research over longer periods of time needs to be conducted to really prove that new media use changes our innermost cognitive processes. Carr's discussion of the changes in how we consume and share information and of the decline of the book as a genre deserves, however, our immediate attention. Although not always very original, the book does a good job at summarizing previous, truly insightful observations on the paradoxes of the new media revolution. Probably none is more penetrating than David Levy's (2005) conclusion that even when the new media do their job well, filtering and serving relevant information that we might really need, they also fail us. The capacity of new media to serve good, reliable information far outstrips our ability to select, attach meaning, and construct new knowledge from the semiprocessed material that is pushed to us. Most of it comes to us in discrete units, whose intimate connections to each other or with a broader context we do not fully comprehend. Furthermore, since we rely on search and filter tools to access and retrieve most of our raw knowl-

arguments, which contain all that is needed to check their validity. Such arguments, being recorded on a tangible, incontrovertible medium, give the interlocutor (reader) the ability to test and reject them, if some of their premises can be shown to be flawed. Finally, arguments can be attached to a specific speaker. Traditional book writing is responsible for a broader intellectual ethos, which values individual responsibility for what is said, consistency, verifiability, and intelligibility outside the original communicative context. With the advent of networked, **fleeting, and fragmentary communication**, arguments are harder and harder to understand in the full complexity given to them by their communicative context. As we hop from tweet or Facebook status, to **blog post**, to summary of online magazine article, to YouTube clip, to some random page of a Google Book, or to a Wikipedia page, we often lose track of who said what, to whom, and in what context. We might know more, about a greater diversity of things, but we end up knowing more superficially. If we agree with the old saying that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," after reading Carr's book we might conclude that a little knowledge about many things should be feared even more. We should not only fear the false security offered by knowing about a smattering of ideas, but also that knowing superficially prevents us from examining the premises of the things we think we know. In an era dominated by **retweets** linking to a chain of blog posts that cannibalize original sources buried too deep in the entrails of the Web to check, attribution becomes a moot issue. Our knowledge has reverted to folklore. It is anonymous, distributed, fragmentary, quasi-oral, impersonal, and hard to judge ethically, since it is hard to attribute to anyone in particular.

Matei. *The Shallows: What the Internet is doing to our Brains* (2010: 131)

Excerpt from *The Shallows*: part 3

edge, we cease to be in possession of any knowledge of our own. This hinders our ability to understand new knowledge, since we are not capable to reconstruct from our own preexisting knowledge the connections between its units. We are in the process of forgetting to memorize core ideas and facts, and without them we cannot make sense of what the computer has to offer us. In effect, the promise of the Web as a form of “external memory” is a false one, since memory is associative by definition. When we fail to store some basic associations between some nodes of knowledge that we can control above and beyond what the Web has to offer us, we fail to memorize.

An even more sensitive chord is touched when the author digresses on how **browsing** the web modifies our reading and thinking habits. Again, summarizing well-known and truly profound studies on literacy and reading, among which Paul Saenger’s (1997) *Space Between the Words* stands out, not to mention Walter Ong’s (1982) or Goody’s (1987) older contributions, Carr makes the sensible observation that the writing and reading of books created the premises for deep, clear, and self-sufficient

Of course, to such arguments one can oppose those advanced by Weinberger (2011) in *Too Big to Know*. Books are, according to Weinberger, poor utensils. Ideas, arguments, and even facts are forever linked in an unending “great chain of being.” Books fragment that which was meant to be whole. They sever the connection between our lived experiences. Ultimately, they reify ideas. Conjectures are treated like objective facts, not like the products of intersubjective negotiation between living, breathing individuals that they really are. By Weinberger’s gospel, it is the Web that giveth that which books taketh away: a marketplace for negotiating ideas in the open and for finding new trails of wisdom through the maze of the world.

Although a novel contribution to our understanding of new media and its effect on knowledge only insofar as it reemphasizes well known topoi, books, or studies, *The Shallows* can be fruitfully used in graduate seminars, especially when read in counterpoint to the tomes, such as other Weinberger’s (2002; 2007) or Shirky’s (2008; 2010), that take the opposite, optimistic view. The calisthenics imposed by the parallel reading of these books make for

Matei. *The Shallows: What the Internet is doing to our Brains* (2010: 131)

Text 4: *The Shallows*

excellent mental gymnastics, especially in a day and age when graduate education has become a form of training and indoctrination in narrowly conceived specialties. Carr is a genuine erudite and his style is well honed by previous exercise in the art of middlebrow digerati causerie. The volume reads well and could be used as an effective rhythm breaker, especially if the course includes other, drier materials.

Matei. *The Shallows: What the Internet is doing to our Brains* (2010: 132)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;">Post-reading task</p> <p>4.2 NEW TECHNOLOGIES: A STEP FORWARD OR A STEP BACK</p> <p>Comment on the following extracts from the text:</p> <p>a) <i>Browsing the web our brain is rewired; reading and thinking habits are modified</i> (caption 3, page 131, 2nd paragraph).</p> <p>b) <i>The reader is able to test and reject when written on paper</i> (caption 2, page 131, 2nd column).</p> <p>c) <i>Book writing is responsible for a broader intellectual ethos</i> (caption 2, page 131, 2nd column).</p> <p>d) What are the <i>three negative consequences about the disappearance of print media</i> that are mentioned? (caption 1, page 130, 4th paragraph).</p> <p>e) <i>We are in the process of forgetting to memorise core ideas and facts</i> (caption 3, page 131, 1st paragraph).</p> <p>f) <i>We end up knowing more superficially</i> (caption 2, page 131, 2nd column).</p>	<p>Suggested procedure and answers:</p> <p>Individually, students will write down their ideas. Then they work in pairs to share their thoughts. And finally, they will discuss the extracts in groups of three.</p> <p>a) Reading is more superficial when reading on a screen. It is like scanning. There are more distractions on a screen, e.g. advertisements, other websites/other windows that are opened, individuals often skip from one web page to another when searching for information, often forgetting the initial aim of the search due to distractions.</p> <p>b) Human ability to make judgements is stronger when reading on paper. Probably, because paper is something tangible, by contrast, the information on the Internet cannot be physically “touched.”</p> <p>c) Reading on paper and reading on a screen do not have the same effect. People are more focused on the task while reading on paper.</p> <p>d) The three consequences are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books are becoming obsolete, since ideas can be published on social media, e.g. a blog, Facebook, Wikipedia, to which everyone has free access. • If books are not used for learning or they are replaced by online contents, people are likely to stop reading and writing in a continuous, focused and introspective way.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaving the practice of reading books implies that human brain will be conditioned to accept small and disconnected bits of information and, as a consequence, people may not be able to consume or accept other formats. To sum up, reading and writing superficially makes us dumber. <p>e) The text suggests that people are reluctant to memorise information since they rely excessively on new technologies, for example people used to know by heart many telephone numbers, but now they do not think they need to memorise them because they are in their cell phones.</p> <p>f) If individuals are prone to reading superficially, their knowledge and ability to think critically will be diminished. Reading comprehension will be affected.</p>
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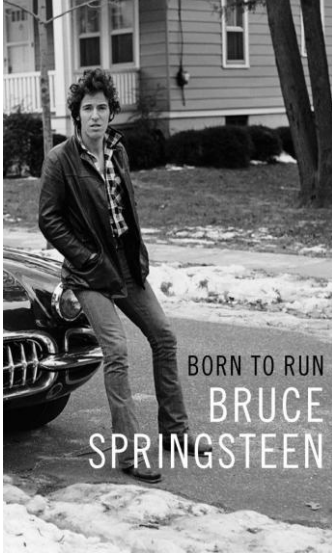
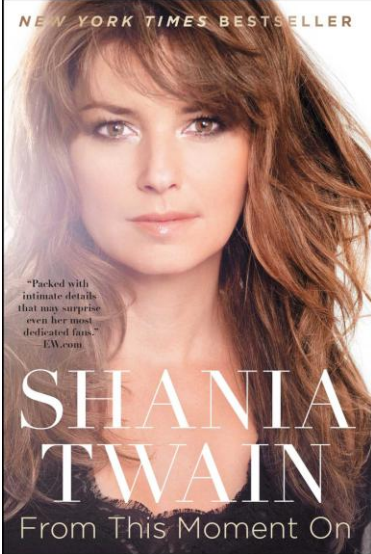
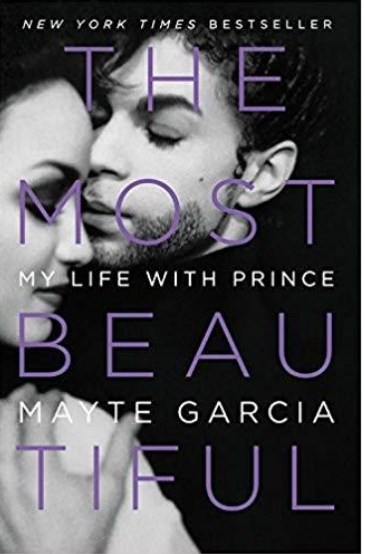
4.2.2.2 Topic 2 Coeducation: oppression, abuse, and violence in popular literature; and deviant behavior in TV series

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Warm up</p> <p>1. THE MIRROR: A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHORT FILM</p> <p>Watch the following short film entitled <i>The Mirror</i> to do the tasks below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Explain what a mirror is. <li>b) Infer the reason why the short film is called <i>The Mirror</i>. <li>c) Identify different ways of oppression in the video and how control is exercised over the girl. <li>d) Deduce the meaning of the acronym YWCA. <p><i>The Mirror: A Domestic Violence short Film</i></p>	<p>Suggested answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A mirror is an object that projects your reflection when you are opposite to it. <li>b) The protagonist needs to look at herself in the mirror to be aware of her reality. It is at this point when she gives a step forward to change her life. <li>c) Ways of oppression in the video: economic, physical, and verbal by means of threats and abuse. Not only does the man controls the way his wife dresses, but he also controls who calls her on the phone. He also shows mistrust or lack of confidence in his partner and jealousy. <li>d) YMCA stands for Young Women Christian Association. It is a movement that fights for women their leadership, and women's and girls' rights. Next to the acronym YWCA a telephone number is shown. This is a hotline for women who want to get out of an abusive relationship (http://www.ymca.org).



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5JiqCLh6ps>

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-reading tasks</p> <p>2. SOCIAL ISSUES IN POPULAR LITERATURE</p> <p>Comment on the following aspects of the three book covers below:</p> <p>a) Read the book titles and say what they mean to you.</p> <p>b) Guess what the three books/authors may have in common.</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p><u>Bruce Springsteen</u></p> <p>This twenty-Grammy-Award winner has made use of popular culture to raise awareness of social issues and injustices towards the working class in the USA (Garman 2008: 69).</p> <p><u>Shania Twain</u></p>

<p><i>Born to run, by Bruce Springsteen</i></p>	<p><i>From this moment on, by Shania Twain</i></p>	<p><i>The most beautiful: my life with Prince, by Mayte Garcia</i></p>	
			
<p>http://bruce.springsteen.net/news/2016/springsteens-autobiography</p>	<p>https://www.amazon.com/This-Moment-Shania-Twain/dp/1451620756</p>	<p>https://www.amazon.es/MOST-BEAUTIFUL-Mayte-Garcia/dp/0316468975</p>	
<p>c) Match the terms and idioms with their definitions (extracted from <i>Born to run</i>)</p>			
<p>1. Live up to</p>	<p>a) redemption</p>	<p>11. Downplay</p>	<p>k) Small push</p>

Taking into account that country music is a musical style dominated by men, Shania Twain has been the first and only woman to have sold 40.000.000 copies of an album. Indeed, her *Come on Over* album has become the bestselling country album of all time by a female musician (Twain 2011: 425).

Prince

The most prolific artist of all time –39 albums were produced in 40 years– was a synonym for transgression, scandal and controversy. His lyrics, his outfit, and his vocal technique blurred gender conventions. Some of his accolades are seven Grammy Awards, a Golden Globe and an Academy Award (Hawkins 2016: 124). Mayte García –the Arab style ballerina who is the author of Prince’s memoirs– was his first wife. She describes the artist and the human being.

Suggested answers:

- a) Students make guesses based on the titles.
- *Born to run*: is about someone who wants to escape from something.
 - *From this moment on*: refers to a turning point, something that is going to change.

2. Step into the breach	<i>b) Hit someone in a part of his body</i>	12. Check on sb	<i>l) Feel embarrassed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The most beautiful: my life with Prince.</i> It is about someone sharing her life with Prince. <p>b) Apart of being memoirs, the authors comment on violent and abusive episodes that have influenced their lives.</p> <p>c) Answer key: (terms and idioms extracted from <i>Born to run</i>, by Bruce Springsteen)</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>1. Live up to</i></td> <td><i>Be as good as</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>2. Step into the breach</i></td> <td><i>Do job in somebody's absence</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>3. Let him have it square between his broad shoulders</i></td> <td><i>Hit someone in a part of his body</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>4. Treat somebody like the help</i></td> <td><i>A person of lesser social standing must do things for you</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>5. Bring home the bacon</i></td> <td><i>Earn money for a family to live on</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>6. To be a Quennie</i></td> <td><i>A sort of diva</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>7. Penance</i></td> <td><i>Self-punishment</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>1. Live up to</i>	<i>Be as good as</i>	<i>2. Step into the breach</i>	<i>Do job in somebody's absence</i>	<i>3. Let him have it square between his broad shoulders</i>	<i>Hit someone in a part of his body</i>	<i>4. Treat somebody like the help</i>	<i>A person of lesser social standing must do things for you</i>	<i>5. Bring home the bacon</i>	<i>Earn money for a family to live on</i>	<i>6. To be a Quennie</i>	<i>A sort of diva</i>	<i>7. Penance</i>	<i>Self-punishment</i>
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3. Let someone have it square between	<i>c) A person of lesser social standing must do things for you</i>	13. Nag	<i>m) Minimise the importance</i>															
4. Treat somebody like the help	<i>d) Large gap, difference</i>	14. The aftermath	<i>n) Demonstrate sb's worth, skill</i>															
5. Gulf	<i>e) Self-punishment</i>	15. Nudge	<i>o) Vomiting a lot</i>															
6. To be a Quennie	<i>f) Persuade</i>	16. Sick as a dog	<i>p) Confront</i>															
7. Penance	<i>g) Earn money for a family to live on</i>	17. Stand up	<i>q) Worry, annoy, complain</i>															
8. Bring home the bacon	<i>h) Do job in somebody's absence</i>	18. Prove sb's worth	<i>r) Look at sb to make sure that s/he is safe or correct</i>															
9. Atonement	<i>i) Be as good as</i>	19. Wince	<i>s) Period that follows an unpleasant event or accident, and the effects that it causes</i>															
10. cajole	<i>j) A sort of diva</i>																	

	8. <i>Gulf</i>	<i>Large gap, difference</i>
	9. <i>Atonement</i>	<i>Redemption</i>
	10. <i>Cajole</i>	<i>Persuade</i>
	11. <i>Downplay</i>	<i>Minimise the importance</i>
	12. <i>Check on sb</i>	<i>Look at sb to make sure that s/he is safe or correct</i>
	13. <i>Nag</i>	<i>Worry, annoy, complain</i>
	14. <i>The aftermath</i>	<i>Period that follows an unpleasant event or accident, and the effects that it causes</i>
	15. <i>Nudge</i>	<i>Small push</i>
	16. <i>Sick as a dog</i>	<i>Vomiting a lot</i>
	17. <i>Stand up</i>	<i>Confront</i>
	18. <i>Prove sb's worth</i>	<i>Demonstrate sb's worth, skill</i>
	19. <i>Wince</i>	<i>Feel embarrassed</i>

	Meanings have been taken from the Cambridge online dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/)
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TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid #800000; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0b0b0;">While-reading tasks</p> <p>2.1 MEMOIRS OF OPPRESSION, VIOLENCE AND ABUSE</p> <p>Read the text you have been assigned, and use the main aspects to discuss the points below with the other two members of your group (3 students per group):</p> <p>Jigsaw reading</p> <p><i>Born to run:</i></p> <p>a) Say how Springsteen's father and mother are described.</p> <p>b) Find out how Springsteen's mother canalised her frustration.</p> <p><i>From this moment on:</i></p> <p>c) Find out different types of violence in the extract.</p> <p>d) State how oppression is exercised.</p>	<p>In this jigsaw reading an extract is read individually and then it is summarised to the other two members of the group.</p> <p>Suggested answers.</p> <p><i>Born to run:</i></p> <p>a) Springsteen's father suffered from an illness that threatened the stability of the whole family. Springsteen's mother made the move from an easy lifestyle to a hard life. There is a strong contrast between the comfortable life she had with her parents and the humble and hard life with her husband. Springsteen's mother represented stability for the family because she was responsible for getting money, doing the household chores, bringing up the kids, and handling Springsteen's father when he was out of control.</p> <p>b) Her frustration was canalised by loving her children and focusing on her work.</p> <p><i>From this moment on:</i></p> <p>c) Types of violence: rape, child abuse, incest, screams, and domestic</p>

e) Comment on the incident and what surprised you most.

f) Describe the behavior of a victim of domestic violence.

The most beautiful:

g) Put yourself in Mayte's shoes and think whether you would have acted differently.

h) Discuss whether she makes any mistake.

i) State how oppression is exercised.

violence, including insults, physical aggressions –e.g. nudge and slap– and silence.

d) Oppression is exercised by means of silence, and traumatising the victim, who was Shania's mother. At a certain point, financial oppression is mentioned as a reason for arguments.

e) Free answer. The most surprising aspect could be that in the end nobody did anything to change the situation, neither the police, nor the wife or the children. They continued with their lives as a family but as if nothing had happened.

f) There is a tendency to downplay violence, excuses are made for the abuser, and victims are prone to blaming themselves for the offender's actions.

The most beautiful:

g) Free answer: the reader may think that s/he would not have waited so long to speak my mind as Mayte's health was at risk. Her body suffered restrictions (the food intake was reduced dramatically) that could have led to illnesses such as anorexia nervosa.

h) She regrets not having said anything before. She makes excuses for Prince and does not blame him, for example, Prince did not ask her whether she needed anything for a period of eighteen months. She might be regarded as a victim of oppression. Having no money and keeping this secret led Mayte to cut down her food intake.

	<p>i) Oppression is exercised in three different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of money. Although she worked hard on the stage, her salary was reduced to the point that she was not able to afford her apartment and expenses.• Food. As money was tight, she reduced the food intake up to the point of eating just honey and tea.• Silence. Not being able to say that she was starving and broke worsened the situation.
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Excerpt from *Born to run*: My mother

Truthfulness, consistency, professionalism, kindness, compassion, manners, thoughtfulness, pride in yourself, honor, love, faith in and fidelity to your family, commitment, joy in your work and a never-say-die thirst for life. These are some of the things my mother taught me and that I struggle to live up to. And beyond these...she was my protector stepping literally into the breach between my father and me on the nights his illness got the best of him. She would cajole, yell, plead and command that the raging stop...and I protected her. Once, in the middle of the night, my father returning from another lost evening at the tavern, I heard them violently arguing in the kitchen. I lay in bed: I was frightened for her and myself. I was no more than nine or ten but I left my room and came down the stairs with my baseball bat. They were standing in the kitchen, my father's back to me, my mother inches away from his face while he was yelling at the top of his lungs.

Excerpt from *Born to run*: Married life

My mother was a puzzle. Born into a relatively well-off family, used to much of life's good things, she married into a life of near poverty and servitude. My aunts once told me that when she was young, they called her "Queenie" because she was so spoiled. They said she never lifted a finger. Huh? Are we talking about the same woman? If this is so, this was someone I'd never met. My dad's family treated her like the help. My father could be sitting, smoking at the kitchen table, and his parents would call on my mother to go to the store, get the kerosene for the stove, drive them and our relatives where they needed to go –and she did it. She served them. She was the only person my grandmother would allow to bathe her in the last corrosive months of her cancer. She covered for my dad constantly, bringing home the bacon on countless mornings when, depressed, he simply couldn't get himself out of bed.

I shouted at him to stop. Then I **let him have it square between his broad shoulders**, a sick thud, and everything grew quiet. He turned, his face barroom red: the moment lengthened, then he started laughing. The argument stopped: it became one of his favorite stories and he'd always tell me, "Don't let anybody hurt your mom."

As a young girl of twenty-three, she struggled with the early years of motherhood, ceding far too much control to my grandmother, but by the time I was six or seven, without my mother, there was nothing. No family, no stability, no life. She couldn't heal my dad or leave him, but she did everything else.

Springsteen, *Born to run* (2009: 35-36)

Excerpt from *From this moment on*: The reservation

Although our family saw rough times, some of the stories my dad would tell about what he saw during his time with Indian Affairs showed us that we were actually doing pretty well in comparison. My father would tell me about how some Native communities in Canada had alarmingly high rates of suicide, rape, incest, child abuse and neglect, alcohol and

She spent her life doing it. Her whole life. It was never over. There was always one more heartache, one more task. How did she express her frustration? With appreciation for the love and home she had, a gentle kindness to her children and more work. What **penance** was she doing? What did she get out of it? Her family? **Atonement**? She was a child of divorce, abandonment, prison; she loved my dad and maybe knowing she had the security of a man who would not, could not, leave her was enough. The price, however, was steep.

At our house, there were no dates, no restaurants or nights out on the town. My father had neither the inclination, the money nor the health for a normal married social life. I never saw the inside of a restaurant until I was well into my twenties and by then, I was intimidated by any high school maître d' at the local diner. Their deep love and attraction and yet the dramatic **gulf** between my mother and father's personalities was always a mystery to me. My mother would read romance novels and swoon to the latest....

Springsteen. *Born to run* (2009: 36-37)

Excerpt from *From this moment on*: Domestic violence

In a small house where emotions are running high, few secrets are hidden from little ears. Typically, my mother would **nag**, and my father would ignore her at first. As the tension mounted, so did the volume of their voices, then the verbal insults, until one of them would **nudge** or snap the other. From there it wouldn't take long for

drug abuse, and other social problems –all at a higher rate than most non-Native populations in Canada. Still, living outside the reservation in the white world, when we were kicked out on the street because my dad couldn't afford the rent. I remember vividly asking my parents, "Why don't we just go live on a reserve so we don't have to worry about where we're going to live all the time?" Although my father was bringing home these depressing stories about life on some reservations, from my perception of things, though the relatives on our family reserve in Temagami lived modest lives, they didn't seem to suffer from the extreme scenarios my father witnessed through his work in Indian Affairs. In fact, they seemed to be doing better than we were, for the most part.

Shania. *From this moment on* (2011: 44-45)

Excerpt from *The most beautiful: my life with Prince*: Starving

When we set out on the Diamonds and Pearls Tour in April 1992, I was still well funded by my belly dancing money, but by the time we started Act I in March of 1993, I was broke and paying the rent on my empty apartment in Minnesota. What little money I had left I used to pay my phone bill, because Mama's voice on the other end of the line was my

things to escalate into full-scale physical fighting. We kids understood that money was often tight, and the root of many of my parents' arguments was the stress of trying to survive financially.

After breaking things up, they nodded and filed out the door, but what if my mother needed medical attention? Surely she should have at least been examined. No one was sent to **check on her** –or us, for that matter. We were traumatised, and the only person there to help us cope with **the aftermath** of the horrific events of that night was my beaten, broken mother. Today, forty years later, with the far greater awareness of spousal abuse and the victim's tendency to **downplay** the violence, make excuses for the abuser –even blame herself for the offender's actions– the situation would be investigated further and handled more thoroughly. Back then I was relieved that the police at least ended the fighting, just by showing up. And with that, everything returned to normal. Until the next time.

Shania. *From this moment on* (2011: 11)

Excerpt from *The most beautiful: my life with Prince*: Taking a decision

Prince was startled, because in the time we'd known each other, he'd seen me in pain, he'd seen me **sick as a dog**, he'd seen me frustrated and upset, but he dad never seen me cry at work.

"What's going on?" he asked, and I let him have it.

"I could be in Cairo right now, making a thousand bucks a night.

life raft at times. Sometimes I splurged and got a salad or a basket of bread with Thousand Island dressing from room service. There were times I was hungry enough to sneak food from room service carts in the hotel hallway. I learned that tea with a lot of honey kept me sustained for a long time, especially when I put the whole honey bear into the bottom of the mug. That would be my breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

On show nights, I couldn't eat anything before I danced, because I needed to feel light, but afterwards, if there was still food on the crew's craft service table, I'd quickly wrap up a little meal to go and stow it with my things above my seat on the bus, so it would be there when I came back ready to dig in. Like clockwork. Prince would call me just before we boarded. I'd get on his bus silently praying, *Please, tell me we're eating*. I was reluctant to ask him to feed me after the pay-docking incident.

That summer, we were in Minnesota shooting some footage for a music video, and prince asked me to decorate a video cassette cover that he wanted to use as a prop. I went to Michaels crafts and spent my last few dollars on beads and chains. I took them home and put the thing together, and then I sat there, looking at my empty refrigerator. My empty stomach. My empty bank account. I started crying, and I cried all the way to Paisley Park. It took every morsel of nerve I could scrape together, but shaking in my boots, I walked up to him and said, "I'm leaving."

García. *The most beautiful: my life with Prince* (2017: 139-140)

Instead, I'm here, living on Triscuit crackers and water and spending money I don't have to buy foo foo for you. I'm going home. And then I'm going to Cairo. Maybe later on, if you--"

"Hold up, hold up," he said without raising his voice. "I don't even know how much you make."

"Three hundred a week," I said. "And my rent is six hundred a month."

He **winc**ed like I'd kicked him in the shins. "Let me make a call."

"I don't want you think I'm that person who's--"

"You're not that person. Relax." He got on the phone to the business office, and his voice was tight with irritation. "Can you tell me how much Mayte is making?" There was a pause while he listened to the person on the other line. "Okay, I need to see a list of what everyone else is making, too."

The following week, my pay had been tripled. Daddy was proud of me for **standing up** about it, and I was glad to think that the net result was a significant pay raise for everyone. I knew Prince wasn't being miserly; he had so many people doing so many things for him, it was impossible for him to know what was going on with all the people all the time. Sometimes an individual he cared about had to step up and say something, and people weren't always willing to do that.

I felt like an idiot that I hadn't said something eighteen months earlier, but I was glad I'd **proven my worth** as a dancer. Being Prince's friend—or girlfriend—was not enough to keep you employed by him.

García. *The most beautiful: my life with Prince* (2017: 140-141)

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>After-reading tasks</p> <p>2.2 LOOKING BACK ON SOCIAL ISSUES IN POPULAR LITERATURE</p> <p>Look at the questions in the Pre-reading section and compare your initial answers with what you already know after reading the texts. Say whether you were initially right.</p> <p>a) Read the book titles and say what they mean to you. b) Guess what the three books/authors may have in common.</p>	<p>Free answers:</p>

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-watching tasks</p> <p>3. THE SIMPSONS</p> <p>Picture-less listening. Listen to the audio and take notes about what the speaker says.</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>According to Pinsky (2001: 2-3), the television series <i>The Simpsons</i> is watched by 60 million viewers in 70 countries. Indeed, Homer Simpson has a star on Hollywood Boulevard. The series is considered the best programme of the twentieth century (Owen 2000: 64). It uses the parody and satire to deal with controversial issues such as the news, nuclear power, child-rearing, police work, religion, or elderly</p>

How Matt Groening created *The Simpsons*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDbGU90xWTA>

a) Say


- The time it took Matt Groening to create *The Simpsons*.
- Where *The Simpsons* were created.
- Why Matt Groening called the characters Homer, Marge, Lisa and Bart.
- What the key for the series success is.

people. The series plays with discourses of genre and criticises other media forms (Grey 2006: 2).

a) Suggested procedure. Picture-less listening. The audio is played without projecting the video. Students take notes. The audio is played for the second time and students focus on the specific information of the statements in exercise a). Then, the video is watched again.

Answer Key:

- It took him 15 minutes to create *The Simpsons*.
- The Simpsons were created in The Great Sea Falls Bungalow.
- He called the characters Homer after his father, Marge after his mother, Lisa after his daughter, and Bart was supposed to be Matt, named after himself (Matt Groening), but he thought it was too obvious and decided to replace Matt by Bart.
- The key for its success is great writing, great acting, good voices, and good background music. Matt Groening thought animation was secondary.

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES												
<p style="text-align: center;">While-watching tasks</p> <p>3.1 UNCONVENTIONAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE SIMPSONS</p> <p>Watch the TV series (<i>The Simpsons</i>: season 10, episode 3) and do the task below:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Simpsons</i>: season 10, episode 3</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7trd03</p>	<p>Suggested answers.</p> <p>a) Classification of characters in the episode:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Homer</th> <th>Marge</th> <th>Bart</th> <th>Lisa</th> <th>Nelson</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <th>Role</th> <td>A laissez-faire father</td> <td>A strict mother</td> <td>Abusee</td> <td>The voice of conscience</td> <td>Abuser</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) Five scenarios:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nelson provokes an accident in a racetrack to have fun. Milhouse is pushed off the track. 2. Nelson shoots a car to amuse himself. 3. Nelson slaps Bart because he is bored. 4. He yells at Lisa “that’s cheating” and shortly after he uses a screwdriver to open the skee-ball machine and get a great deal of tickets. 5. Nelson tries to push Bart to shoot a bird. 		Homer	Marge	Bart	Lisa	Nelson	Role	A laissez-faire father	A strict mother	Abusee	The voice of conscience	Abuser
	Homer	Marge	Bart	Lisa	Nelson								
Role	A laissez-faire father	A strict mother	Abusee	The voice of conscience	Abuser								

<p>a) Classify the characters according to the role they play in the episode:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Homer</td> <td>Marge</td> <td>Bart</td> <td>Lisa</td> <td>Nelson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Role</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>b) Identify five scenarios in which the abuser exercises oppression or deviant behavior.</p> <p>c) Explain Homer’s and Marge’s behavior towards Bart in the episode.</p> <p>d) Find some examples of deviance or unconventional behavior in connection with Homer.</p>		Homer	Marge	Bart	Lisa	Nelson	Role						<p>c) Marge is the only one who seems to worry about her son. She is a strict mother. At the beginning Bart is advised to stay away from Nelson, but later Marge explicitly forbids Bart to go out with Nelson. By contrast, Homer does not speak to Bart about the trouble maker Nelson is. He leaves the entire job to Marge. He is the kind of father that allows their children to do whatever they want to do. Education is not only taught and learnt at school, it starts at home by bringing up your children. Taking responsibility for your children is a task that has to be equally balanced on both parents.</p> <p>d) Homer shows a sexist behaviour when telling his wife that “folding clothes is not a man’s job.” That is not a good example for his children.</p> <p>There is another scene in which Homer gives Lisa money so that she can go and buy beer for him. This is illegal since Lisa is an underage girl who is not allowed to buy alcoholic drinks.</p>
	Homer	Marge	Bart	Lisa	Nelson								
Role													

TASKS	TEACHERS’ NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid #800000; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; background-color: #f08080; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 10px;">After-watching tasks</div> <p>3.2 REAL ENGLISH ABOUT DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR IN THE SIMPSONS</p>	<p>a) Suggested meanings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shame on you: verguenza debería darte.</i> • <i>Scam: fraude.</i> • <i>One cold blooded killer: un asesino de/a sangre fría.</i>

a) Find a suitable term or phrase in your language for these phrases/words. Also add a definition.

<i>Shame on you</i>	<i>Right through the neck</i>
<i>Scam</i>	<i>Nelson is bad news</i>
<i>One cold blooded killer</i>	<i>Smack</i>

b) Say what Bart learns in the episode.

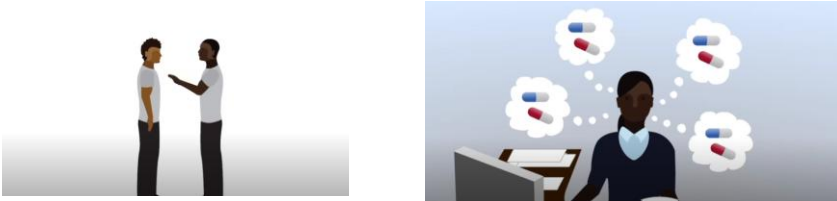
c) Decide what the message of the episode could be.

- *Right through the neck: justo en el cuello/directo al cuello.*
- *Nelson is bad news: Nelson es problemático.*
- *Smack: dar una bofetada.*

b) After killing a bird and leaving the eggs of the bird unprotected, Bart tries to protect the eggs of the bird as if he were his mother. Thus he understands what Marge has been trying to do since the beginning of the episode. –Avoiding that Bart hangs out with bad companies was Marge’s goal. It seems to be an exercise of empathy.

c) Bart starts hanging out with bad companies, although Marge tries to advice him. Bad companies have a bad influence on Bart. After killing a bird and leaving the bird’s eggs motherless, Bart starts blaming himself for not having heard his mother. From that moment on Bart takes care of the eggs until they hatch. At a certain part of the story, a sort of leaser appears. The leaser climbs trees to eat birds’ eggs and replace the birds’ eggs with its own. Thus, birds would incubate the leaser’s eggs without noticing it. The message could be that even animals have deviant or unconventional behavior.

4.2.2.3 Topic 3. Health education at the intersection with coeducation: drugs and addictions in TV series and popular literature

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>Pre-watching tasks</p> <p>1. QUITTING DRUGS</p> <p>Watch the mute video below and create the dialogues with your partner.</p> <p>Why are drugs so hard to quit?</p> <div>  </div> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xbk35VFpUPI</p> <p>Listen to the audio of the video and write down some notes about the following information:</p>	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>The mute version of the video is projected for students to create the dialogues. Students create the dialogues and rehearse them.. Then the video is played with the audio.</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Quitting drugs with no help doesn't work, since it is a brain disease. <li>b) Addiction is when you feel a strong urge to keep taking the drug even if it is causing harm. <li>c) When taking drugs, a rush or a high is felt. Over time the rush is not strong and more drug is needed to keep from feeling bad. This is what happens when someone is addicted. The chemical signals in the brain change when taking drugs. On the one hand, this affects one's choices, actions, and even the way one feels. On the other hand, the part of the individual's brain that lets them feel pleasure can be changed by drugs. This pleasure centre is active when you eat, fall in love or experience


- a) Say why drugs are so hard to quit.
- b) Explain what an addiction is.
- c) Mention the effects of drugs on people's brain.
- d) Find key vocabulary and explain its meaning.

something you enjoy. After a while, the drug becomes more and more important.

d) Suggested options:

TERMS	MEANINGS
<i>1. Drug treatment</i>	<i>The use of drugs or exercises to cure a person of an illness.</i>
<i>2. Give up drugs</i>	<i>Quit drugs</i>
<i>3. A strong urge</i>	<i>A strong wish, especially one that is difficult or impossible to control.</i>
<i>4. Cause harm</i>	<i>Physical or other injury or damage</i>
<i>5. Feel a rush or a high</i>	<i>A sudden strong emotion or physical feeling</i>
<i>6. Keep from feeling bad</i>	<i>Avoid or prevent experiencing pain</i>
<i>7. Chemical signal</i>	<i>Cell to cell communication</i>

Meanings have been taken and adapted from the Cambridge online Dictionary (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles>).

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>While-watching tasks</p> <p>2. EFFECTS OF DRUGS IN NURSE JACKIE</p> <p>Watch the following episode at home and work in groups of three to complete the tasks below.</p> <p><i>Nurse Jackie</i>: season 1, episode 8</p>  <p>https://www.lainformacion.com/arte-cultura-y-espectaculos/series-que-hay-que-ver-nurse-jackie_q6uhutzekm2g0yxpmctqw6/</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p><i>Nurse Jackie</i> can be described as non-conforming as her behaviour can be condemned either socially or morally due to her addiction to pills and her use of bad language such as taboo words and swearing. Thus <i>Nurse Jackie</i> challenges stereotypical expectations about suitable feminine behaviour (Bednarek 2015: 431). While other series about nurses –<i>Hawthorne</i>, and <i>Mercy</i>– were cancelled, <i>Nurse Jackie</i> kept on air. The key to its success is the combination of a realistic view of its main character and a realistic view of nursing (2012: 12-14).</p> <p>Suggested answers.</p> <p>a) - <i>I think that the temporary nurse is on something.</i> Zoey has a conversation with Jackie in the washroom. Zoey suspects that the temporary nurse is taking drugs and indeed he is working while high. This sentence is significant because Zoey justifies her suspicion by enumerating the symptoms the temporary nurse has: slow movements, glassy eyes, he is non-responsive to light shining directly to the eye, and he doesn't feel pain.</p> <p>- <i>Addiction is a disease.</i> Being aware that the temporary nurse is taking drugs at work, nurse Jackie talks to nurse Mohammed about the issue; however, nurse Mohammed does not take it so seriously. This makes nurse Jackie get angry. Mohammed says that addiction is a disease and Jackie replies it isn't. What the viewer knows is that Jackie is being</p>

- a) Choose three significant sentences from the episode and ask the class who said them, to whom, where, when and why, and why they are significant.
- b) Write down three comprehension questions.
- c) Summarise the episode in two or three sentences.
- d) Do a mind map, an outline or an infograp about a crucial scene in the episode. Explain what happens and how it affects the outcome of the episode.
- e) Find relevant examples of real English in the episode such as *for God's sake, it sucks, or you are done!*

hypocrite since she takes drugs at work too. Jackie doesn't want to acknowledge that she is ill. The first step to overcoming an addiction is becoming aware that one is ill.

- *I'm sorry honey, you can't eat that.* Jackie kept some pills in her pocket. While eating doughnuts, Jackie's daughter gets dirty. Jackie is about to give her daughter a tissue when she realises that small portions of the medicine are falling on top of her daughter's doughnut. Jackie finally throws her daughter's doughnut to the bin. The sentence is relevant since Jackie is aware of how irresponsible she is being.

b) - *Why does Jackie smoke while having lunch with her friend, Doctor Eleanor O'Hara?* She smokes because of nervousness and stress. Jackie doesn't eat at all. That is one of the effects of tobacco –it suppresses/reduces appetite. Jackie is telling O'Hara the problems she had to face: the strange new temporary nurse, her daughter's panic attack, and Doctor Coop found out that Jackie has a daughter and she doesn't want him to tell anybody about it.

- *Why does Zoey have a look with a flashlight at the temporary nurse's eyes?* Zoey suspects that the temporary nurse is high at work. After rolling over the temporary nurse's foot with a stretcher, he didn't feel anything at all. What Zoey did was to check on him.

- *In which moments/scenes did Jackie take some type of drugs? Why do you think she did it?* There are three moments/scenes in which the viewers observe Jackie consume some type of drugs, either legal or illegal. First scene: apparently, she takes a pill to calm herself down

after noticing that accidentally she had sprinkled her daughter's doughnut with the same "substance" she is taking. Second scene: Once Doctor Coop finds out Jackie has a daughter, she goes to the washroom and smash some pills to sniff the substance they contain. She is determined to separate work from private life, and she's got the feeling that things are out of control. Doctor Coop likes gossiping and it's a matter of time the whole hospital knows about her daughter. Third scene: while sitting at the table to have lunch, she smokes a cigarette to calm down since that day she had to face several issues at work and in her family life. Nevertheless, the viewers don't see Jackie eating anything at all, just smoking.

c) Apparently, nurse Jackie takes drug pills to cope with stress at work, and in her private life. She is in charge of a new temporary nurse who has a strange behavior. Later on, it is discovered that this new nurse is consuming drugs while working. The hard work at hospital is combined with problems in her private life. All this leads Jackie to keep on taking pills.

d) Free answer.

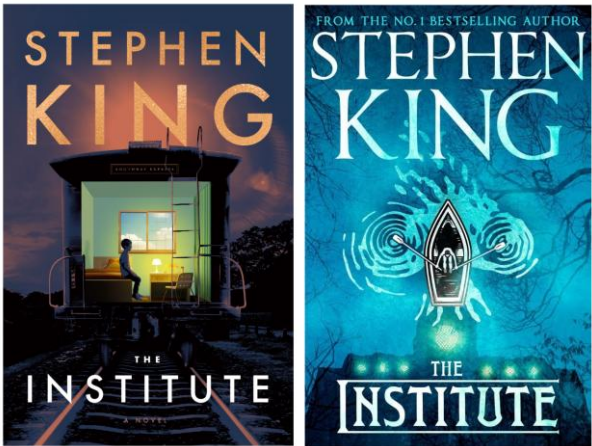
e) Single words, expressions and phrases are analysed. Prepositions, pronunciation, functional language, tenses and verb forms can be considered as well. These are some suggested answers:

For God's sake.

Drug seeker

	<i>It sucks.</i>	<i>Are you on any medication?</i>
	<i>You are done!</i>	<i>Blood thinning</i>
	<i>Stick with every patient.</i>	<i>I rolled his foot over.</i>
	<i>We are way too busy.</i>	<i>Keep it to yourself.</i>
	<i>I think the temporary nurse is on something.</i>	<i>I don't know what your deal is.</i>
	<i>Keep making that face and that wrinkle about your nose is gonna become permanent.</i>	

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>After-watching tasks</p> <p>3. ABUSING SUBSTANCES WHILE WORKING</p> <p>Implement the tasks you have prepared about the episode at home in groups of three. Your classmates have to complete them.</p>	<p>Free answers</p>

TASKS	TEACHER'S NOTES
<p>Pre-reading tasks</p> <p>4. THE INSTITUTE: A STORY OF OPPRESSION, ABUSE AND VIOLENCE</p> <p>a) Look at the two front covers for the book <i>The Institute</i> and work with your partner to guess what the plot of the book is.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Institute</i> by Stephen King</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">  </div> <p>https://www.reddit.com/r/stephenking/comments/cu5ymt/which_cover_do_you_prefer_for_the_institute_us/</p>	<p>Cultural notes</p> <p>It seems that the key to Stephen King's popularity is the combination of fear and realism. He has written 550 individual works (Strengell 2005: 3). Despite criticising American life –its institutions, gender myths and relationships, and small-town communities–, King's stories enjoy success on best-seller list and movie theatres (Magistrale 2010: vii). The excerpts for the activities in this section have been taken from <i>The Institute</i> (2019) by Stephen King.</p> <p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>A possibility is to give students one front cover and, after a few minutes, the other</p>

b) Check whether you were right or wrong by watching the book trailer:

The Institute trailer



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa3zCh0vEi4>)

cover is handed out so that two plots can be envisaged. Conversely, if the two front covers are given at a time, only one story combining both pictures may be expected.

Suggested answers:

a) Free answers.

b) Children with special talents are disappearing from their rooms at night. They are taken to a secret government facility called *The Institute*, where experiments are conducted.

TASKS	TEACHER'S NOTES
<p>While-reading tasks</p>	<p>The aim of the reading is to discuss about tobacco and alcohol consumption in preadolescence. Other issues that the excerpts from</p>

4.1 DRUGS IN THE INSTITUTE

Work in groups of 3-4 members.

Reading circles.

Before reading the text (*The Institute*, chapter 2: Shoots for shots), read the instructions of the role that has been assigned to your group. Bear it in mind and follow the instructions while reading the text at home.

The Institute mention are oppression, violence and the use of drugs in preteenagers.

Suggested procedure:

Students are divided into groups of 3-4 members. Every group is assigned one of the roles –discussion director, summariser, connector, illustrator, literary luminary, word wizard, researcher and travel tracer–

Students read the text at home so that they can write down some notes while reading. They have to analyse the text according to the assigned role. An example is provided below.

Suggested answers:

Role sheet: Summariser

Summary:

This chapter introduces characters. Luke, who is the smart kid, is trying to figure out where he is, who the other kids are, and why they are in *The Institute*. Kalisha and the other kids give Luke a bit of background information: they are injected substances they do not know and they have to pass tests. In exchange, they are given tokens they can use to obtain food, tobacco, or spirit drinks.

Key points:

There are five key points in chapter 2: injecting substances on kids of 10-11 years old is practiced on a regular basis. There is a sign in the canteen that says: “Please drink responsibly.” In the Institute Kids are allowed to get buzzed but they cannot fall down drunk since it cannot be afforded. Kids are also allowed to develop the habit of smoking. Giving people something to get entertained –such as drinking or smoking– avoids them to cause any trouble.

Connection: did today’s reading remind you of anything?

The sentence “not in Kansas anymore, Toto” reminded me of *The Wizard of Oz*. A film I have watched hundreds of times since my childhood. It fits perfectly at this point in the story as Luke doesn’t know where he is. He feels he is a stranger in a strange place, in the same way as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Role sheets have been taken from

(https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles_role_sheets.pdf)

Reading circles: role sheet 1

Summarizer

Name _____ Circle _____

Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____

Book _____

Summarizer: Your job is to prepare a brief summary of today's reading. Your group discussion will start with your 1-2 minute statement that covers the key points, main highlights, and general idea of today's reading assignment.

Summary:

Key Points:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Connections: Did today's reading remind you of anything? Explain.

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf).

Reading circles: role sheet 2

Questioner/Discussion Director

Name _____ Circle _____

Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____

Book _____

Questioner/Discussion Director: Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details; your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read. You can list them below during or after your reading. You may also use some of the general questions below to develop topics to your group.

Possible discussion questions or topics for today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Tips: Consider

- A discussion of a work's characters: are they realistic, symbolic, historically-based?
- What motivates the characters or leads them to make the choices they do?
- An in-depth discussion of the work's events
- A discussion of any confusing passage or event
- The historical context and/or events that occurred in a particular work
- Commentary on the social, political, or economic context in which a work was written -- how does the context influence the work?
- An analysis of a specific image, passage, phrase, etc.
- An analysis of a recurring image, phrase, event, etc.

Topics to be carried over to next discussion: _____

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf).

Reading circles: role sheet 3

Literary Luminary

Name _____ Circle _____
 Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____
 Book _____

Literary Luminary: Your job is to locate a few special sections or quotations in the text for your group to talk over. The idea is to help people go back to some especially interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the reading and think about them more carefully. Also look for literary devices and make connections to the six elements of fiction. As you decide which passages or paragraphs are worth going back to, make a note why you picked each one and consider some plans for how they should be shared. You can read passages aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read them silently and then discuss. *Remember, the purpose is to suggest material for discussion.*

Page # and Paragraph	Reason for Picking	Plan for Discussion

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf).

Reading circles: role sheet 4

Vocabulary Enricher/Word Wizard

Name _____ Circle _____
 Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____
 Book _____

Vocabulary Enricher/Word Wizard: The words a writer chooses are an important ingredient of the author's craft. Your job is to be on the lookout for a few words that have special meaning in today's reading selection.

- Jot down **puzzling or unfamiliar** words while you are reading. Later, look up the definitions in either a dictionary or some other source.
- You may also run across words that **stand out** somehow in the reading – words that are repeated a lot, used in an unusual way, or are crucial to the meaning of the text. Mark these special words, too, and be ready to share your ideas on their usage to the group.

Note: When discussing vocabulary, you should always refer back to the text in order to examine the word in context.

Word	Pg. # & Paragraph	Definition	Reason/Plan for Discussion

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf).

Reading circles: role sheet 5

Researcher

Name _____ Circle _____

Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____

Book _____

Researcher: Your job is to dig up some background information on any relevant topic related to your book. This might include

- The geography, weather, culture, or history of the book’s setting
- Pertinent information about the author and other related works
- Information about the time period portrayed in the book
- Information on any topics or events represented in the book
- Information on any topics or events that may have influenced the author
- Pictures, objects, or materials that illustrate elements of the book
- The history and derivation of words or names used in the book
- Information about any character that is based on a historical person

This is *not* a formal research report. The idea is to find some information or material that helps your group understand the book better. Investigate something that really interests you – something that struck you as puzzling or curious while you were reading.

Ways of gathering information:

- The introduction, preface, or “about the author” section of the book
- Library books and magazines
- On-line computer search or encyclopedia
- Interviews with people who know the topic
- Other novels, nonfiction, or textbooks you’ve read

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (<https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1>)

Reading circles: role sheet 6

Travel Tracer

Name _____ Circle _____

Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____

Book _____

Travel Tracer: When you are reading a book in which characters move around often and the scene changes frequently, it is important for everyone in your group to know *where* things are happening and how the setting may have changed. That’s your job: carefully track where the action takes place during today’s reading. Describe each setting in detail, either in words or with an action map or diagram. While you may use this sheet, you may find that you need to use an additional sheet. If that is the case, be sure to staple any additional sheets to this role sheet. *Also, always give the page locations where the scene is described.*

Describe or sketch the setting

Where today’s action *begins*: _____ Page where it is described _____

Where *key events* happen: _____ Page where it is described _____

Where today’s events *end*: _____ Page where it is described _____

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (<https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1>)

[/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf](https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf)).

Reading circles: role sheet 7

Connector

Name _____ Circle _____
Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____
Book _____

Connector: Your job is to find connections between the book and you, and between the book and the wider world. Consider the list below when you make your connections.

- Your own past experiences
- Happenings at school or in the community
- Stories in the news
- Similar events at other times and places
- Other people or problems that you are reminded of
- Between this book and other writings on the same topic or by the same author

Some connections I made between this reading and my own experiences, the wider world, and other texts or authors:

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf).

[/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf](https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf)).

Reading circles: role sheet 8

Illustrator

Name _____ Circle _____
Meeting Date _____ Reading Assignment _____
Book _____

Illustrator: Good readers make pictures in their minds as they read. This is a chance to share some of your own images and visions. Draw some kind of picture related to the reading you have just done. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flowchart, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that happened in your book, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Any kind of drawing or graphic is okay – you can even label things with words if that helps. *Make your drawing(s) on any remaining space on this side and on the other side of this sheet. If you use a separate sheet of paper, be sure to staple it to this role sheet.*

Presentation Plan: Whenever it fits in the conversation, show your drawing to your group. You don't have to explain it immediately. You can let people speculate what your picture means, so they can connect your drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you can always have the last word: *tell them what your picture means, refer to the parts in the text that you used, and/or convey what it represents to you.*

Daniels. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (1994) (https://www.ipadlitcircles.com/uploads/1/0/6/6/10664962/lit_circles.role_sheets.pdf).

Excerpt from *The Institute*. Shoots for shots: chapter 2, part 1

Luke guessed the newcomer's age as sixteen, but later found out he was two years high. Nicky Wilholm was tall and blue-eyed, with a head of unkempt hair that was blacker than black and cried out for a double dose of shampoo. He was wearing a wrinkled button-up shirt over a pair of wrinkled shorts, his white athletic socks were at half-mast, and his sneakers were dirty. Luke remembered Maureen saying he was like Pigpen in the Peanuts comic strips.

The others were looking at him with wary respect, and Luke instantly got that. Kalisha, Iris, and George were no more happy to be here than Luke was himself, but they were trying to keep it positive; except for the moment when Iris had wavered, they gave off a slightly goofy making-the-best-of-it vibe. That wasn't the case with this guy. Nicky didn't look angry now, but it was clear he had been in the not-too-distant past. There was a healing cut on his swollen lower lip, the fading remains of a black eye, and a fresh bruise on one cheek.

A brawler, then. Luke had seen a few in his time, there were even a couple at the Broderick School. He and Rolf steered clear of them, but if this place was the prison Luke was beginning to suspect it was, there would be no way to steer clear of Nicky Wilholm. But the other three didn't seem to be afraid of him, and that was a good sign. Nicky might be pissed off at whatever purpose lay behind that bland Institute name, but with his mates he just seemed intense. Focused. Still, those marks on his face suggested unpleasant possibilities, especially if he wasn't a brawler by nature. Suppose they had been put there by an adult? A schoolteacher doing something like that,

Excerpt from *The Institute*. Shoots for shots: chapter 2 part 2

"Besides, the nearest police force is probably a bunch of Deputy Dogs and Hiram Hoehandles miles from here," Iris said. "Since you seem to've nominated yourself Head Explainer, Nick, why don't you really fill the kid in? Jeepers, don't you remember how weird it is to wake up here in what looks like your own room?"

Nick sat back and crossed his arms. Luke happened to see how Kalisha was looking at him, and thought that if she ever kissed Nicky, it wouldn't be just to pass on a case of the chicken pox.

"Okay, Ellis, I'll tell you what we know. Or what we think we know. It won't take long. Ladies, feel free to chime in. George, keep your mouth shut if you feel a bullshit attack coming on."

"Thanks a lot," George said. "And after I let you drive my Porsche."

"Kalisha's been here the longest," Nicky said. "Because of the chicken pox. How many kids have you seen during that time, Sha?"

She considered. "Probably twenty-five. Maybe a few more."

Nicky nodded. "They—we—come from everywhere. Sha's from Ohio, Iris is from Texas, George is from Glory Hole, Montana—"

"I'm from Billings," George said. "A perfectly respectable town."

"First off, they tag us like we were migrating birds or goddam buffalo." Nicky brushed his hair back and folded his earlobe forward, showing a circlet of bright metal half the size of a dime. "They examine us, they test us, they give us shots for dots, then they examine us again and do more tests. Pinks get

not just at the Brod but almost anywhere, would get canned, probably sued, and maybe arrested.

He thought of Kalisha saying Not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

“I’m Luke Ellis.” He held out his hand, not sure what to expect.

Nicky ignored it and opened the green equipment cabinet.

“You play chess, Ellis? These other three suck at it. Donna Gibson could give me at least a half-assed game, but she went to Back Half three days ago.”

“And we will see her no more,” George said dolefully.

“I play,” Luke said, “but I don’t feel like it now. I want to know where I am and what goes on here.”

Nick brought out a chess board and a box with the armies inside. He set the pieces up rapidly, peering through the hair that had fallen across his eyes rather than brushing it back.

“You’re in the Institute. Somewhere in the wilds of Maine. Not even a town, just map coordinates. TR-110. Sha picked that up from a bunch of people. So did Donna, and so did Pete Littlejohn. He’s another TP that’s gone to Back Half.”

“Seems like Petey’s been gone forever, but it was only last week,” Kalisha said wistfully. “Remember all those zits? And how his glasses kept sliding down?”

Nicky paid no attention. “The zookeepers don’t try to hide it or deny it. Why would they, when they work on TP kids day in and day out? And they don’t worry about the stuff they do want to keep secret, because not even Sha can go deep, and she’s pretty good.”

“I can score ninety per cent on the Rhine cards most days,” Kalisha said. Not boasting, just matter-of-fact. “And I could tell you your grandmother’s name if you put it in the front of your mind, but the front is as far as I can go.”

more shots and more tests.”

“I got the tank,” Iris said again.

“Whoopee for you,” Nick said. “If we’re pos, they make us do stupid pet tricks. I myself happen to be TK-pos, but George the motormouth there is quite a bit better at it than I am. And there was one kid here, can’t remember his name, who was even better than George.”

“Bobby Washington,” Kalisha said. “Little black kid, maybe nine. He could push your plate right off the table. Been gone . . . what, Nicky? Two weeks?”

“A little less,” Nicky said. “If it was two weeks, it would have been before I came.”

“He was there one night at dinner,” Kalisha said, “and gone to Back Half the next day. Poof. Now you see him, now you don’t. I’ll probably be next. I think they’re about done with all their tests.”

“Same here,” Nicky said sourly. “They’ll probably be glad to be rid of me.”

“Strike the probably on that one,” George said.

“They give us shots,” Iris said. “Some of them hurt, some of them don’t, some of them do stuff to you, some don’t. I spiked a fever after one of them, and had the most godawful headache. I was thinking maybe I caught Sha’s chicken pox, but it was gone after a day. They keep shooting you up until you see the dots and hear the hum.”

“You got off easy,” Kalisha told her. “A couple of kids . . . there was that one named Morty . . . can’t remember his last name . . .”

“The nose-picker,” Iris said. “The one who used to hang with Bobby Washington. I can’t remember Morty’s last name,

My grandmother's name is Rebecca, Luke thought.

"Rebecca," Kalisha said, and when she saw Luke's expression of surprise, she burst into a fit of the giggles that made her look like the child she had been not so long ago.

"You've got the white guys," Nicky said. "I always play black."

"Nick's our honorary outlaw," George said.

"With the marks to prove it," Kalisha said. "Does him no good, but he can't seem to help it. His room is a mess, another act of childish rebellion that just makes more work for Maureen."

Nicky turned to the black girl, unsmiling. "If Maureen was really the saint you think she is, she'd get us out of here. Or blow the whistle to the nearest police."

Kalisha shook her head. "Get real. If you work here, you're a part of it. Good or bad."

"Nasty or nice," George added. He looked solemn.

either. He went to Back Half like two days after I got here."

"Except maybe he didn't," Kalisha said. "He wasn't here long at all, and he broke out in spots after one of those shots. He told me so in the canteen. He said his heart was still beating like crazy, too. I think maybe he got really sick." She paused. "Maybe he even died."

George was looking at her with big-eyed dismay. "Cynicism and teenage angst is fine, but tell me you don't really believe that."

"Well, I sure don't want to," Kalisha said.

"Shut up, all of you," Nicky said. He leaned forward over the board, staring at Luke. "They kidnap us, yes. Because we have psychic powers, yes. How do they find us? Don't know. But it's got to be a big operation, because this place is big. It's a fucking compound. They've got doctors, technicians, ones who call themselves caretakers . . . it's like a small hospital stuck out here in the woods."

"And security," Kalisha said.

"Yeah. The guy in charge of that is a big bald fuck. Stackhouse is his name."

"This is crazy," Luke said. "In America?"

"This isn't America, it's the Kingdom of the Institute. When we go to the caff for lunch, Ellis, look out the windows. You'll see a lot more trees, but if you look hard, you'll also see another building. Green cinderblock, just like this one. Blends in with the trees, I guess. Anyway, that's Back Half. Where the kids go when all the tests and shots are done."

"What happens there?"

It was Kalisha who answered. "We don't know."

It was on the tip of Luke's tongue to ask if Maureen knew, then

remembered what Kalisha had whispered in his ear: They listen.

“We know what they tell us,” Iris said. “They say—”

“They say everything is going to be alllll RIGHT!”

Nicky shouted this so loudly and so suddenly that Luke recoiled and almost fell off the picnic bench. The black-haired boy got to his feet and stood looking up into the dusty lens of one of the cameras. Luke remembered something else Kalisha had said: When you meet Nicky, don’t worry if he goes off on a rant. It’s how he blows off steam.

“They’re like missionaries selling Jesus to a bunch of Indians who are so . . . so . . .”

“Naïve?” Luke ventured.

“Right! That!” Nicky was still staring up at the camera. “A bunch of Indians who are so naïve they’ll believe anything, that if they give up their land for a handful of beads and fucking flea-ridden blankets, they’ll go to heaven and meet all their dead relatives and be happy forever! That’s us, a bunch of Indians naïve enough to believe anything that sounds good, that sounds like a happy . . . fucking . . . ENDING!”

He whirled back to them, hair flying, eyes burning, hands clenched into fists. Luke saw healing cuts on his knuckles. He doubted if Nicky had given as good as he’d gotten—he was only a kid, after all—but it seemed he had at least given somebody something.

“Do you think Bobby Washington had any doubts that his trials were over when they took him to Back Half? Or Pete Littlejohn? Jesus Christ, if brains were black powder, those two couldn’t have blown their noses.”

He turned to the dirty overhead camera again. That he had

King. *The Institute* (2019)
(<https://continuous.epub.pub/epub/5d7878f7dc6dca0007feba36>)

nothing else upon which to vent his rage rendered it a touch ludicrous, but Luke admired him just the same. He had not accepted the situation.

“Listen up, you guys! You can beat the shit out of me, and you can take me to Back Half, but I’ll fight you every step of the way! Nick Wilholm doesn’t trade for beads and blankets!”

He sat down, breathing hard. Then he smiled, displaying dimples and white teeth and good-humored eyes. The sullen, brooding persona was gone as if it had never been there. Luke had no attraction to guys, but when he saw that smile, he could understand why Kalisha and Iris were looking at Nicky as if he were the lead singer in a boy band.

“I should probably be on their team instead of cooped up here like a chicken in a pen. I could sell this place better than Sigsby and Hendricks and the other docs. I have conviction.”

“You certainly do,” Luke said, “but I’m not entirely sure what you were getting at.”

“Yeah, kinda went off on a sidetrack there, Nicky,” George said.

King. *The Institute* (2019)
(<https://continuous.epub.pub/epub/5d7878f7dc6dca0007feba36>)

Excerpt from *The Institute*. Shoots for shots: chapter 2, part 3

Nicky crossed his arms again. “Before I whup your ass at chess, new kid, let me review the situation. They bring us here. They test us. They shoot us full of God knows what, and test us some more. Some kids get the tank, all kids get the weird eye test that makes you feel like you’re going to pass out. We have rooms that look like our rooms at home, which is probably supposed to provide some kind of, I don’t know, soothing for our tender emotions.”

“Psychological acclimation,” Luke said. “I guess that makes sense.”

“There’s good food in the caff. We actually order off a menu, limited though it may be. Room doors aren’t locked, so if you can’t sleep, you can wander down there and pick up a midnight snack. They leave out cookies, nuts, apples, stuff like that. Or you can go to the canteen. The machines there take tokens, of which I have none, because only good little girls and boys get tokens, and I am not a good little boy. My idea of what to do with a Boy Scout is to drop him on his pointy little—”

“Come back,” Kalisha said sharply. “Stop the shit.”

“Gotcha.” Nick flashed her that killer smile, then returned his attention to Luke. “There’s plenty of incentive to be good and get tokens. There are snacks and sodas in the canteen, an extremely wide variety.”

“Cracker Jacks,” George said dreamily. “Ho Hos.”

“There are also cigarettes, wine coolers, and the hard stuff.”

Iris: “There’s a sign that says PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY. With kids as young as ten pushing the buttons for Boone’s Farm Blue Hawaiian and Mike’s Hard Lemonade, how hilarious is that?”

“You’ve got to be kidding,” Luke said, but Kalisha and George were nodding.

“You can get buzzed, but you can’t get falling-down drunk,” Nicky said. “Nobody has enough tokens for that.”

“True,” Kalisha said, “but we do have kids who stay buzzed as much as they can.”

“Maintenance drinkers, you mean? Ten- and eleven-year-old maintenance drinkers?” Luke still couldn’t believe it. “You’re not serious.”

“I am. There are kids who do whatever they’re told just so they can use the booze dispenser every day. I haven’t been here long enough to, like, make a study of it, but you hear stories from kids who were here before you.”

“Also,” Iris said, “we have plenty of kids who are working on a good tobacco habit.”

It was ludicrous, but Luke supposed it also made a crazy kind of sense. He thought of the Roman satirist, Juvenal, who had said that if you gave the people bread and circuses, they’d be happy and not cause any trouble. He guessed the same might be true of booze and cigarettes, especially if you offered them to scared and unhappy kids who were locked up. “That stuff doesn’t interfere with their tests?”

“Since we don’t know what the tests are, it’s hard to say,” George told him. “All they seem to want is for you to see the dots and hear the hum.”

“What dots? What hum?”

“You’ll find out,” George said. “That part’s not so bad. It’s getting there that’s the bitch. I hate getting shots.” Nicky said, “Three weeks, give or take. That’s how long most kids stay in Front Half. At least Sha thinks so, and she’s been here the longest. Then we go to Back Half. After that—this is the story—we get debriefed and our memories of this place are wiped somehow.” He unfolded his arms and raised his hands to the sky, fingers spread. “And after that, chilluns, we go to heaven! Washed clean, except maybe for a pack-a-day habit! Hallelujah!”

“Back home to our parents is what he means,” Iris said quietly.

“Where we’ll be welcomed with open arms,” Nicky said. “No questions asked, just welcome home and let’s all go out to Chuck E. Cheese to celebrate. Does that sound realistic to you, Ellis?”

It didn’t.

“But our parents are alive, right?” Luke didn’t know how it sounded to the others, but to him his voice sounded very small. None of them answered, only looked at him. And really, that was answer enough.

King. *The Institute* (2019) (<https://continuous.epub.pub/epub/5d7878f7dc6dca0007feba36>)

TASKS	TEACHER’S NOTES
<p>After-reading tasks</p> <p>4.2 TOBACCO AND SPIRIT DRINKS IN PREADOLESCENCE: READING CIRCLES</p> <p>Work in groups of 3-4 students.</p> <p>Gather with the members of your group. Use the role sheet – summariser, discussion director, literary luminary, word wizard, travel tracer, researcher, connector, illustrator– you have filled in at home.</p>	<p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>Students comment on and start a discussion about the text by following the instructions on the role sheet they received in the previous session.</p>

The discussion director starts the class discussion about *The Institute*, chapter 2: Shoots for shots.

4.2.2.4 Section 4. Moral and civic education: ethics-based leadership in TV series

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-watching tasks</p> <p>1. ETHICS IN BANKING: SECRET OF ICELAND ECONOMIC MIRACLE</p> <p>a) Vision off. Listen to the audio and write down the main ideas you hear. Then share and compare what you wrote down with your partner. Later discuss it in threes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Secret of Iceland Economic Miracle</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>As business ethics issues were brought to the forefront down to the previous economical crisis, Reynolds and Oliver (122-123) hint that servant-leadership principles need to be taught in schools to show an ethics-based leadership perspective. A set of definitions for ten principles are provided by Spears (2004: 7-11): listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.</p> <p>Suggested procedure:</p> <p>Using the picture-less listening technique, students listen to the audio</p>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ-DLIWCfAI>

b) Match the terms to the definitions.

Student A: listening, empathy, healing, awareness and persuasion.

- The servant-leader strives to understand, accept and recognise others for their special and unique spirits.
- Not only does the servant-leader have the ability to heal one's self, but also those who have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts and have broken spirits.
- The servant-leader has a special capacity to understand issues which involve ethics and values. Hence, situations are viewed from a more integrated, holistic position.

as if it were a listening task. Then students share their ideas and comment on them with other students. Once the short discussion has finished, the video is watched

Answer key:

a) Main ideas in the video:

The video starts by saying that Iceland is the first country to beat its economical crisis. It was in 2008 that Iceland suffered the biggest collapse in business. However, it took Iceland seven years to overcome the crisis and become the best country for business. Since then, the president of Iceland has given lectures at leading business schools to make students aware that overcoming an economical crisis is feasible. The key/cure/solution for overcoming the crisis was let the banks fail. In other words, Icelandic banks weren't bailed out and bankers were sent to prison instead.

b) This is a task for students to get familiar with key vocabulary. Student A reads five definitions. Then they swap roles, and student B reads his/her five definitions.

Student A

Listening. The servant-leader seeks to identify and clarify the will of a group. Listening receptively to what is being said is also sought. This must be followed by periods of reflection.

- Instead of imposing his/her ideas, the servant-leader tries to find ways to convince others. Thus, consensus will be built within the group.
- The servant-leader seeks to identify and clarify the will of a group. Listening receptively to what is being said is also sought. This must be followed by periods of reflection.

Student B: conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, building community.

- A commitment to serving the needs of others is assumed. Openness and persuasion
- The shift from local communities to large institutions had an effect on human lives. The servant-leader seeks to create cohesion within the group.
- Looking at a problem from a different outlook and beyond day-to-day realities requires discipline and practice.
- It enables the servant-leader to understand lessons from the past, the present and be aware of future consequences.
- The servant-leader is responsible for nurturing (with a figurative meaning) people, since people are believed to have an intrinsic value beyond their contributions as workers/employees.

Empathy. The servant-leader strives to understand, accept and recognise others for their special and unique spirits.

Healing. Not only does the servant-leader have the ability to heal one's self, but also those who have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts and have broken spirits.

Awareness. The servant-leader has a special capacity to understand issues which involve ethics and values. Hence, situations are viewed from a more integrated, holistic position.

Persuasion. Instead of imposing his/her ideas, the servant-leader tries to find ways to convince others. Thus, consensus will be built within the group.

Student B

Conceptualisation. Looking at a problem from a different outlook and beyond day-to-day realities. It requires discipline and practice.

Foresight. It enables the servant-leader to understand lessons from the past, the present and be aware of future consequences.

Commitment to the growth of people. The servant-leader is responsible for nurturing (with a figurative meaning) people, since people are believed to have an intrinsic value beyond their contributions as workers/employees.

	<p>Building community. The shift from local communities to large institutions had an effect on human lives. The servant-leader seeks to create cohesion within the group.</p> <p>Stewardship. A commitment to serving the needs of others is assumed. Openness and persuasion rather than control are emphasized (taken and adapted from Spears 2004: 8-10).</p>
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TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES			
<div style="border: 1px solid #92d050; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #e1f5fe; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 10px;">While-watching tasks</div> <p>2. LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IN MERLIN</p> <p>Watch the following TV series (<i>Merlin</i>: season 1, episode 1) and complete the chart:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Merlin</i>: season 1, episode 1</p>	<p>Cultural note:</p> <p>This BBC TV series, which is rich in medieval allusions, is an attempt to appeal both an uninitiated young audience and an audience who is already familiar with the legend of Merlin and King Arthur (Sherman 2015: 82). Indeed, “through its relationships with ethnicity, historicity, and ideas of religious tolerance, <i>Merlin</i> is a series that consistently promotes the acceptance of difference” (Tollerton 2015: 113), hence the series could be a reflection of modern Britain multiculturalism and diversity.</p> <p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>a)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Servant-leadership</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Character</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Say why</td> </tr> </table>	Servant-leadership	Character	Say why
Servant-leadership	Character	Say why		



<https://en.pixiz.com/frame/merlin-et-arthur-pendragon-3128002>

a) Identify the characters that act/ behave in accordance with the servant-leadership principles, and justify why each character embodies that principle.

Servant-leadership principles	Character	Say why
Listening		
Empathy		
Healing		

principles		
Listening	Arthur	Although Gwen and Morgana wanted to fight against the invaders to save their village, Arthur refused their suggestion, since women were not supposed to be sent to fight. That was a man's job. When he realised that he was running out of fighters, he decided to listen to Gwen and Morgana once again and he allowed them to fight.
Empathy	Arthur	Leaders value people no matter who they are. Arthur decides to help Merlin regardless his social status. Arthur values Merlin as he is special and unique.
Healing	Will	Will dies to protect Merlin's secret.
Awareness	Arthur	In the same conversation with Gwen and Morgana, Arthur is able to make a decision when he is aware of the circumstances.

	community		his armor, but now it is Artur who helps Merlin to put on his armor. According to Reynolds and Oliver (2010: 128), Arthur is showing Merlin respect.
	Stewardship	Merlin, Morgana and Gwen	Risking their lives, Merlin, Morgana and Gwen decide to go to the village that has been invaded, since king Uther cannot send anymore troops to fight and protect the village.
(Taken and adapted through Reynolds and Oliver 2010: 128).			

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid #92d050; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #e1f5fe; margin-bottom: 10px;">After-watching tasks</div> <p>3. LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IN REAL LIFE</p> <p>Taking into account the ten servant-leadership principles which are introduced through the TV series <i>Merlin</i>:</p> <p>a) Identify institutions, situations, shows, celebrities or people on the</p>	<p>Suggested answers:</p> <p>a) Suggested answers:</p> <p>Listening: e.g. the government listens to a team of experts to take decisions during the state of emergency because of COVID-19.</p> <p>Empathy: there is an American reality show called <i>30 Days</i> in which celebrities do a regular job or change their lifestyle for a period of 30</p>

news who behave/show/depict any of the ten principles.

b) Think whether anyone in your social circle behaves in accordance with any of the ten servant-leadership principles as portrayed in *Merlin*.

c) Mention any situation in your life in which you have had to behave in accordance with any of the ten principles or at least you have tried to follow/apply them.

d) Role play: leaders and followers.

Student A: leader.

You are Prince Thomas and you meet two villagers while having a walk with prince Michael. These two villagers would like to talk to you. You want to listen to both of them attentively, since you consider that a good leader must take care of everyone in the kingdom. Make sure no one interrupts until you get the full message. Otherwise you will not choose what to do wisely.

Student B: leader.

You are Prince Michael. While having a walk with Prince Thomas, you meet two villagers. You think the two villagers are distracting you from what really matters. There are other issues in the kingdom that deserve your attention. What these two villagers have to say to you can wait. Try to interrupt the conversation from and tell them what you reckon they have to do.

days, e.g. a Christian who lives as a Muslim, live in a wheelchair, live in an Indian reservation. They put themselves in other people's shoes.

Healing: someone who has given away his life to protect others, for example.

Awareness: Any celebrity who has founded or works for charity, e.g. Shania Twain has her own charity called "Shania Kids Can Charity Foundation," and Madonna founded "Raising Malawi" to support orphans and vulnerable children.

Persuasion: any celebrity appearing in a fund-raising campaign, for example the two actors of the *Supernatural* series –Jensen Ackles and Jared Padalecki– launched a campaign to raise money for Houston, which had been hit by Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Conceptualisation: an example could be the bakers of the reality show *Amazing Wedding Cakes* sketch, design, plan and make the arrangements for a wedding cake –which is in fact a piece of art– to be ready before the ceremony is held.

Foresight: e.g. during the state of emergency, the government advised the population to stay at home to avoid the virus to spread and infect more people.

Commitment to the growth of people: someone assigning others important tasks for them to feel useful. For instance Prince's former wife –Mayte García– is an expert in belly dancing. However, he

<p>Student C: follower.</p> <p>You are a villager called Sue. You are Richard's wife. You are worried about your husband because he can't find a job and without a job, you won't be able to pay taxes, which have significantly increased. The last thing on your mind is to lose your house. You trust both Princes can understand your situation and help you somehow.</p> <p>Students D: follower.</p> <p>You are a villager called Richard. You are struggling to find a job, and it seems that nobody wants to hire you in the kingdom. Talk to both Princes and convince them you are able to do any job.</p>	<p>encouraged her to try new dancing styles and even learn how to shoot and edit video clips. In other words, she was encouraged to be more versatile. Prince knew how to get the best of people.</p> <p>Building community: e.g. someone who shows others the respect of an equal, thus creating social cohesion and personal bonds.</p> <p>Stewardship: any celebrity who takes action and fights in favour of human rights, LGTBQ+ community, gun control, or coeducation; for example Paula Abdul released a song with an accompanying video to make women aware of the importance of checking themselves to detect breast cancer.</p> <p>b) Free answer. For instance students identify roles within the group of people they hang out with and say whether there is a leader, whether or not the other members of the group listen to the leader, or whether there is someone who tries to impose their ideas.</p> <p>c) Free answer.</p> <p>d) Students work in groups of four to do a dialogue. Two students play the role of leaders whereas the other two students are the followers. As the instructions indicate, leaders are going to work on opposite principles (one leader wants to help the followers and try to listen to them to give them a good word of advice while the other leader does not care about the followers' problems).</p> <p>Once students have acted out, they have to discuss two aspects: how</p>
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	<p>they felt in their roles and the impact of servant-leadership on the outcomes of the situations depicted. Being able of being in somebody else's shoes is an exercise of empathy.</p> <p>(Taken and adapted through Reynolds and Oliver 2010: 129).</p>
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4.2.2.5 Section 5. Breaking news workshop: social issues

TASKS	TEACHERS' NOTES
<p>1. CREATING A NEWS BULLETIN ON SOCIAL ISSUES</p> <p>Group work task to wrap up the unit.</p> <p>Watch the English news on television, read the newspaper either in its printed or online version and choose an item of news of your interest related to the issues addressed in this unit: <i>moral and civic education: (do new technologies isolate us?), coeducation (abuse, violence, and oppression in popular literature, and deviant behavior in TV series), health education at the intersection with coeducation (drugs and addictions in TV series and popular literature), and moral and civic education (ethics-based leadership)</i>. The goal of the task is to plan and elaborate in groups a news bulletin on social issues. There is an example</p>	<p>Students prepare a television news bulletin about social issues. The news can be chosen either by reading the newspaper or watching the news on television. of the sample newspaper clipping on domestic violence has taken from the Daily Spectrum:</p> <p>The outcome of the task can be more appealing if a chroma key is available at school. A chroma key allows to insert images or videos behind students; for example if students are talking about domestic violence, a picture of the building in which the crime has allegedly been committed can be inserted afterwards. For this task, inspiration can be drawn from the contents of the previous four sections: moral and civic education (new technologies make us unsocial), coeducation (a life of oppression, abuse, violence, and deviant behaviour), health education (drugs and addictions), and moral and civic education</p>

below of newspaper clipping about domestic violence.

IN OUR VIEW

Domestic violence

The deaths of Adria Parker and her 5-year-old daughter, Eliza, apparently at the hands of Parker's live-in boyfriend, Landon Jorgensen, last month in Central were tragic, heart-wrenching and devastating, not only to the immediate family members involved but to the entire community.

As a society, we cannot help but be collectively stunned and grieved when domestic violence takes such a toll in our own back yard.

But a second tragedy will occur if we as a community ignore the call to action this situation provides.

We have resources available to aid the victims of domestic violence such as the DOVE Center and the Erin Kimball Foundation, and they are always in need of our assistance.

Donate your time and volunteer. Donate resources and write a check or drop off some of those clothes hanging in your closet that you haven't worn in a decade.

Make it a habit. Continue to support these organizations even without a tragic reminder to spur you to action.

However, the existence and our support

of those types of organizations alone will not end domestic violence in our society.

We must be vigilant. We must speak up.

We've come a long way in the past few decades. Domestic violence is no longer quite as taboo a subject as it once was in our society. But we still have work to do.

Our sons and daughters need to know that it is never acceptable for a domestic partner to raise a hand in anger. Home should be a place of love and refuge, and no one should have to live with violence or abuse of any kind in that sacred space.

Indeed, even our neighbors should know that fact, and if you suspect abuse is taking place in any home, reach out; offer to help.

If you'd like to find out more information on how to donate, the DOVE Center can be reached at 628-0458 or you can visit it online at <http://dovecenter.org/donations.php>. The Erin Kimball Foundation can be reached at 673-1659 or you can visit if online at <http://erinkimball.org>.

If you experience spousal abuse in any form, call the police or call one of the organizations listed above. Get help. You deserve better.

[\(https://www.newspapers.com/clip/12163796/the-daily-spectrum/\)](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/12163796/the-daily-spectrum/)

(ethics-based leadership).

Apart from uploading the television news bulletin on the school website and its social sites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, the written version of some news can be published in the school magazine. Moreover, this task might be part of the programme *Aula de Cine (Cinema in the Classroom)*, since the programme has to do with innovation in education. The programme has the aim to approach students to this cultural manifestation by either watching films depicting social issues or taking active part by planning and shooting their own productions.

Instructions:

Once the item of news has been selected, work on both the lexicon and grammar. Look up the terms you do not know and adapt the language to your needs. It is imperative not to reproduce the words of the piece of news verbatim. The aim is to make a summary of the article using your own words and grammar structures. Then, you will be recorded in class while telling the item of news on which you have worked. A chroma will set behind you to insert images or videos afterwards. There has to be a newscaster –a student who introduces the piece of news– as the journalists on television. Besides, you can shoot some commercials to include them between the transition of the news.

5. Popular culture manifestations at the intersection between popular culture of English-speaking countries and cross-curricular issues

5.1 Introduction

This Doctoral Dissertation focuses on teaching values and cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture in the English-speaking world. The core of this dissertation is an extensive purpose-built pedagogical proposal for Official Language Schools which addresses cross-curricular issues against the backdrop of the popular culture of English-speaking countries. This is complemented by a study on whether the partial implementation of this proposal helps students develop a different perception of social issues.

The pedagogical proposal consists of two units with five sessions each. Unit 1 combines TV series and popular literature, whilst unit 2 focuses on comics. For the study, one session was chosen from each unit.

The reason for choosing session 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, was to raise awareness of the dangers of new technologies and the effects they are having on people's habits and social relationships (see chapter 4.2). Madonna stated that technology was the beast of the 21st century in her documentary *I'm Going to Tell You A Secret* (2006). Highlighting the impact new technologies have had in people's lives was the rationale behind the combination of two manifestations: an analysis of visual content through a TV series, and enhancing critical thinking with popular literature. Session 2, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*, draws on *El Segundo Plan de Igualdad de Género* (the Second Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020), according to which, gender policies need to be developed to guaranty that men and women have the same rights and opportunities. This Plan is based on *Decreto 19/2007, de 23 de enero* (Decree 19/2007, 23rd January) (see chapter 4.1). As a teacher and as a student I have experienced that comics almost never make their way to the lessons. This PhD Dissertation, however, reveals a wide range of techniques to teach through comics. Challenging myself and my students was the main reason to address the topical issue of gender equality through comic strips, which are claimed to be attention grabbers (see chapter 3.1).

The data collected disclose that students are willing to delve into cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture from English-speaking countries since it is considered an engaging approach to address topical social issues.

5.2 Goals and research questions

Exploring cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries allows students to observe different scenarios, witness a variety of situations, discuss and work directly on materials which bring values to the fore.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

a) How effective are popular culture manifestations from the English-speaking world to address cross-curricular issues?

b) What is the impact of exploring cross-curricular issues through popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries?

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

- c) What are students' perceptions of the didactic proposal?
- d) To what extent do students show a different perception of social issues after the pedagogical intervention?

The aims of this research are to:

- a) gauge the effectiveness of popular culture manifestations to learn about cross-curricular issues.
- b) know whether the purpose-built materials are well designed.
- c) ascertain whether these materials are motivating and engaging.
- d) analyse to what extent students' cultural knowledge of the popular culture of English-speaking countries is enhanced by these materials.
- e) find out if students show a different perception of social issues after the pedagogical intervention.

5.3 Contextualization

Two sessions of the didactic proposal were implemented in the Official Language School "Sierra Morena," La Carolina (Jaén). The town of La Carolina, whose population is about 17000, is settled in a rural and industrial area; however, either commercial or industrial activities are suffering a severe economic crisis. Nearby towns provide the school with a large number of students. Taking into account that the number of unemployed people in the area is high, the Official Language School plays an important part citizens' education by providing them with the opportunity to learn and improve their skills in foreign languages to access the labour market.

The school was founded 30 years ago. Three foreign languages are taught in Sierra Morena Official Language School: English (from A1 to C1), French (from A1 to B1), and German (from A1 to B1). The staff belongs to three departments. There are 7 English teachers, 1 French teacher, and 1 German teacher. The school offers morning, afternoon, and evening classes. As to the School facilities, there are 4 offices, 8 classrooms (with computers, projectors, and Internet access), a mediateque (with books, films, and TV series in the three foreign languages taught in the school), a special room, which facilitates students' participation and interaction.

Although there are adolescents enrolled students, the vast majority of students (400 approximately) are unemployed adults who hold a university degree or are studying at the university.

5.4 Participants' profile

The sessions of the didactic proposals were implemented in the first course of the advanced level, C1. This group of students is a mixed-ability group: some students attend sessions regularly and others on occasion; some do not have any type of contact with the institution until the month of June, when certification exams take place; some

took the Initial Placement Test; others got access to C1 holding certifications from other institutions; and, finally, in terms of age there are young as well as older. Consequently, students present different levels of language skills which represent an excellent range for this study's credentials.

Even though there are 22 students enrolled in the first course of the advanced level, C1, not all of them come to lessons every week. This is why 12 students participated in the study: although 12 students attended both lessons, only 9 students completed the questionnaire corresponding to the first session, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, whilst 11 students completed the questionnaire of the second session, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*.

Regarding gender, the number of female students, who attended the session, about coeducation, significantly surpasses the number of male participants (Figure 193). However, the number of male students increased in the session which addressed moral and civic education (Figure 194).

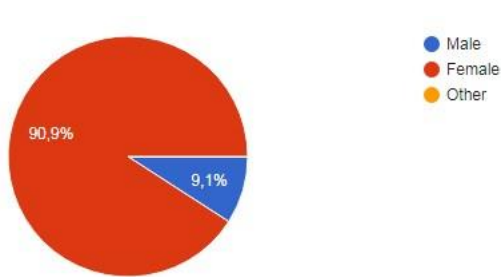


Figure 193. Gender (session 2, coeducation)

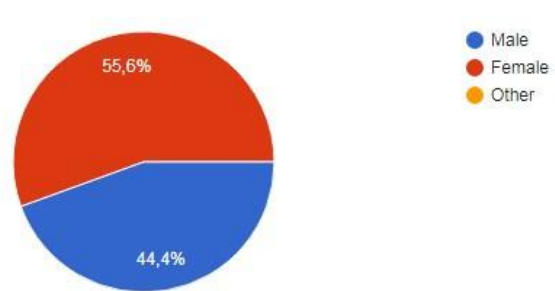


Figure 194. Gender (session 1, moral and civic education)

The age of the participants in the first session ranges from 19 to 45 (Figure 195), whereas it ranges from 19 to 52 in the second session (Figure 196). This is an intergenerational class, where various generations (from teenagers to middle-aged people) share their experiences.

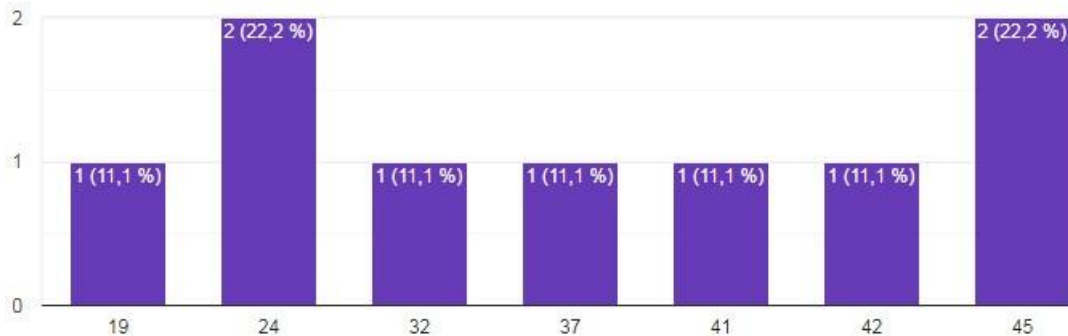


Figure 195. Age (session 1, moral and civic education)

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

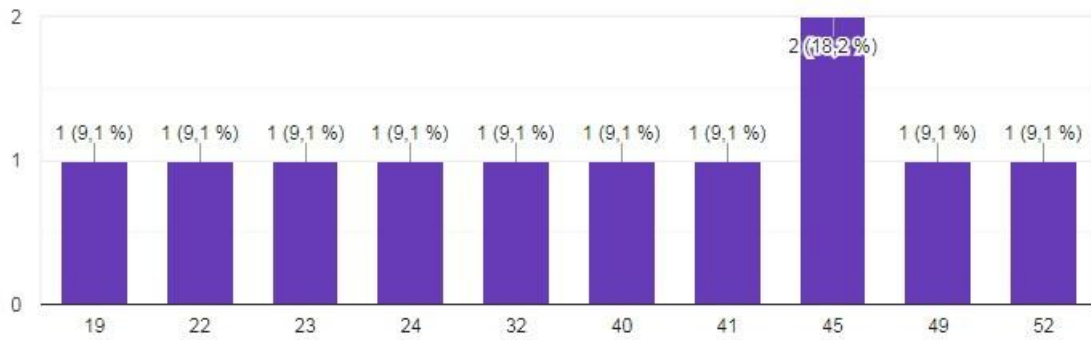


Figure 196. Age (session2, coeducation)

As for their education, all the participants in the first session (Figure 197) have a university degree, whereas 9,1% of the participants in the second session (Figure 198) have no university degree so as a whole, more than 90% of the students have a university degree.

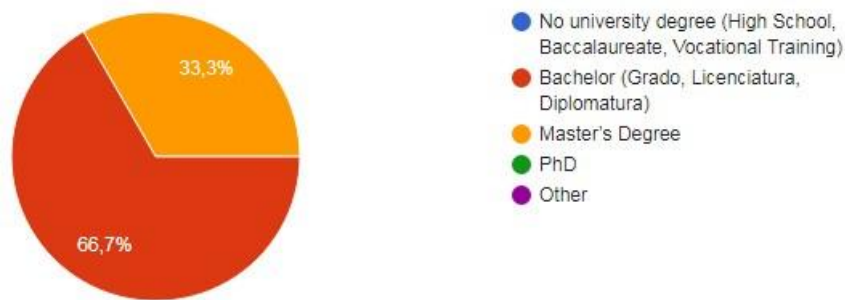


Figure 197. Education (session 1, moral and civic education)

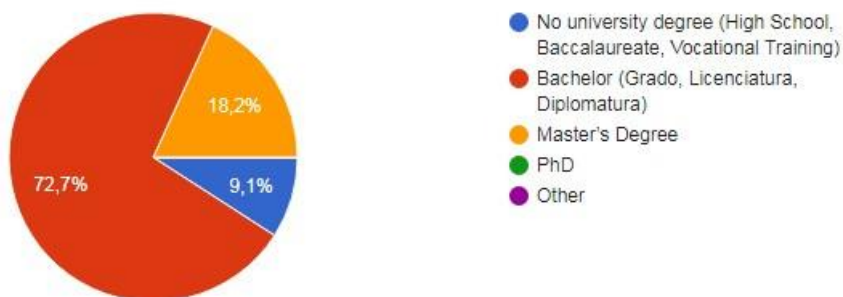


Figure 198. Education (session 2, coeducation)

Informants speak, at least, Spanish and English; some of them are also able to communicate in French, German or other languages (Figures 199 and 200).

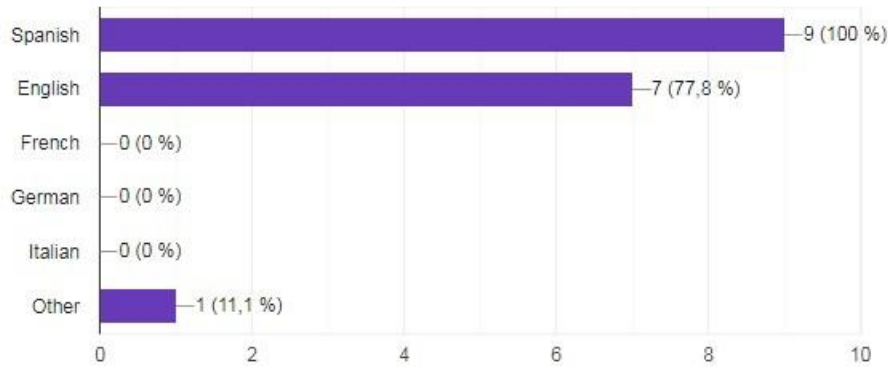


Figure 199. Languages spoken (session 1, moral and civic education)

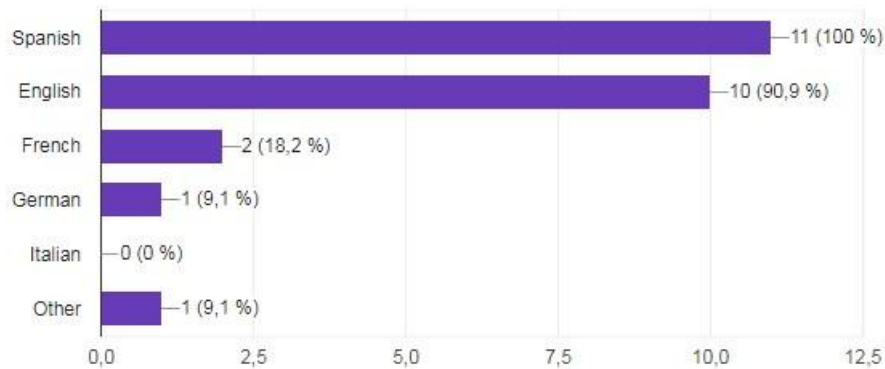


Figure 200. Languages spoken (session 2, coeducation)

5.5 Research tools

The study draws upon data obtained from two surveys (one for each session) completed by students, and a classroom observation form completed by the researcher. They were designed to ascertain the pedagogical value of the pedagogical materials. Although many items are concurrent to both surveys, share many items, the specific cross-cultural aspects and cultural manifestations addressed in each session (*Session 1. Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?* and *Session 2. Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*) required the construction of two parallel but different research tools.

Both surveys asked participants to provide personal data (age, gender, education and languages spoken). Then, participants were asked to rate statements that asked them about the cross-cultural issues and cultural manifestations addressed in class on a 1 to 5 Likert scale of agreement, 1 being “strongly disagree,” and 5 “strongly agree.” The

surveys also contained a few open-ended questions which invited informants to justify their answers or to add further relevant information.

The survey for session 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?* (see Appendix 1 for the complete survey) contains the following 18 statements:

1. This unit has made me reflect on how new technologies isolate us.
2. This unit has raised my awareness of the dangers of new technologies.
3. I have increased my awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people's brain.
4. I have understood that there is no downside to the use of the Internet.
5. TV series (e.g. *The X-Files*) encourage me to analyse social issues such as social isolation.
6. Popular literature (e.g. *The Shallows*) makes it difficult to deal with social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.
7. Exploring popular literature from English-speaking countries helps me understand society's concerns such as the downsides of the Internet.
8. Exploring TV series from English-speaking countries keeps me from understanding society's concerns such as social isolation.
9. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies in class through TV series from the English-speaking world.
10. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet in class through popular literature from the English-speaking world.
11. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class does not help me reflect on current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.
12. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. coeducation, and health education) in subsequent lessons.
13. I found this unit highly interesting.
14. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries such as TV series, helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies.
15. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.
16. My perception of social issues such as the benefits and dangers of the Internet has changed after completing this unit.
17. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, such as popular literature, are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet.
18. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.

The survey for session 2, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?* (see Appendix 2 for the complete survey) includes 17 statements:

1. This unit has made me reflect on the importance of equality in household chores.

2. I have increased my awareness of how poor household chore organization hinders couples' wellbeing.
3. I think comic strips are useless to identify gender stereotypes.
4. Working on comics (e.g. *For better for worse*) encourage me to discuss social issues such as gender equality in modern society.
5. Comics keep me from understanding society's concerns such as gender stereotypes.
6. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes in class through comics from the English-speaking world.
7. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores in class through comics from the English-speaking world.
8. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class is unimportant to reflect on current social issues such as equality between men and women.
9. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. health education, and moral and civic education) in subsequent lessons.
10. Exploring comics help me understand society's concerns such as equality between men and women.
11. I found this unit highly interesting.
12. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics), helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes.
13. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.
14. My perception of social issues such as household chores as a source of conflict has changed after completing this unit.
15. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics) are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as gender equality.
16. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.
17. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality between men and women in class through comics from the English-speaking world.

The *Teachers' classroom observation form* used in both sessions (see Appendix 3 for the complete form) comprises 19 statements:

1. The unit is engaging.
2. Students participate actively.
3. The authentic materials selected are appropriate for the group.
4. TV series motivate students.
5. Popular literature motivates students.
6. Comics motivate students.
7. TV series help students reflect on cross-curricular issues such as social isolation because of new technologies.
8. Popular literature helps students reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies.
9. Comics help students reflect on cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

10. The unit has increased students' awareness of how poor organization of household chores hinders people's wellbeing.
11. Comics are useful to identify gender stereotypes.
12. The unit encourages students to discuss gender issues in modern society.
13. The unit raises students' awareness of the dangers of new technologies.
14. The unit makes students aware that there are downsides to the use of the Internet.
15. The unit increases students' awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people's brain.
16. Students make use of English to interact and express opinions about social issues such as the use of new technologies.
17. Students are aware that the unit connects cross-curricular issues and society's concerns such as equality between men and women.
18. Students' interaction is promoted by student-centred activities such as role playing, debates, peer cooperative, and group work.
19. Other comments.

5.6 Procedure

After designing the two purpose-built surveys, the research tools were validated through expert judgement. Six experts were contacted: a PhD from an Official Language School in Huelva, as it is paramount to receive feedback from a colleague who works in the same institution as myself; and five experts working at tertiary level in Spain (Universities of Jaén, Córdoba, La Rioja) and abroad (Munich, Germany). Slight modifications were suggested in terms of wording. The most relevant suggestion, however, was the addition of a teachers' classroom observation form to complement data provided by students, which was then devised and later revised by three of the six experts.

On the 26th and 29th October 2020 the first session, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?* and the second session, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?* were implemented and the corresponding surveys were completed. Surveys were administered via Google Forms and were filled in using the students' mobile phones. The rationale for the study was detailed in both surveys to inform participants, who had to grant written consent before accessing the surveys themselves.

As regards to the classroom observation form, while the session was in progress I collected data in a teachers' classroom observation form where observable features of goal achievement were gathered.

5.7 Data analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Quantitative data were analysed following median and standard deviation, whilst qualitative data comprised participants' free answers in the questionnaires, which were analysed thematically in accordance with three categories: cross-curricular issues, types of manifestations and materials design.

The median and the standard deviation were obtained through the software Microsoft Office Excel, which enables to conduct statistics analysis. The analysis was conducted through descriptive statistic and the items of the surveys were analysed in accordance with two measures of variability: the median and the standard deviation. The former is the arithmetic average of a group of scores, whilst the latter indicates how much variation there is from the average. A low standard deviation is obtained in the event that data points are close to the mean, whereas a high standard deviation is obtained when data points are spread out over a range of values (Mohini and Prajak 2012: 113).

This study includes quantitative data as well as qualitative data. On the one hand, quantitative data are the base of the statistics analysis. They are data that can be measured and verified. Quantitative analysis makes use of the data collected to verify the research questions (Hernández-Sampieri 2006: 270-272). Quantitative data was collected through students' surveys and the teachers' observation form.

5.8 Results

5.8.1 Surveys

The following figures show the quantitative data obtained from questionnaire 1 (Figure 201) and questionnaire 2 (Figure 202). In addition to this, quantitative data are complemented with qualitative data obtained from the teachers' observation forms. The former were provided by students through the questionnaires, and the latter, which include observable features of goal achievement, were collected while the sessions were in progress and helped kept a record of the sessions.

Questionnaire 1		
<i>Moral and civic education: Do new technologies isolate us?</i>		
Items	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
1. This unit has made me reflect on how new technologies isolate us.	4,66	0,707
2. This unit has raised my awareness of the dangers of new technologies.	4,44	0,726
3. I have increased my awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people's brain.	4,33	0'707
4. I have understood that there is no downside to the use of the Internet.	2,77	1'388
5. TV series (e.g. <i>The X-Files</i>) encourage me to analyse social issues such as social isolation.	3,66	1,224
6. Popular literature (e.g. <i>The Shallows</i>) makes it difficult to deal with social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	2,88	1,364
7. Exploring popular literature from English-speaking countries helps me understand society's concerns such as the downsides of the Internet.	3,55	1,130
8. Exploring TV series from English-speaking countries keeps me	3,44	1,509

from understanding society's concerns such as social isolation.		
9. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies in class through TV series from the English-speaking world.	4,44	0,881
10. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet in class through popular literature from the English-speaking world.	4,22	1,092
11. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class does not help me reflect on current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	2,33	1,414
12. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. coeducation, and health education) in subsequent lessons.	4,55	0,527
13. I found this unit highly interesting.	4,33	0,866
14. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries such as TV series, helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	4,11	0,927
15. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.	1,88	1,054
16. My perception of social issues such as the benefits and dangers of the Internet has changed after completing this unit.	3,44	1,130
17. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, such as popular literature, are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet.	2,44	1,236
18. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.	4,33	0,5
Figure 201. Quantitative data of questionnaire 1. Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?		

Questionnaire 2		
<i>Coeducation: Is there (in)equality in household chores?</i>		
Item	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
1. This unit has made me reflect on the importance of equality in household chores.	3,727	1,190
2. I have increased my awareness of how poor household chore organization hinders couples' wellbeing.	3,909	1,221
3. I think comic strips are useless to identify gender stereotypes.	2	1,095
4. Working on comics (e.g. <i>For better for worse</i>) encourage me to discuss social issues such as gender equality in modern society.	4,181	0,603
5. Comics keep me from understanding society's concerns such as gender stereotypes.	3,272	1,420
6. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes in class through comics from the English-speaking world.	3,909	1,044
7. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores in class through comics from the	3,818	1,078

English-speaking world.		
8. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class is unimportant to reflect on current social issues such as equality between men and women.	2,090	1.136
9. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. health education, and moral and civic education) in subsequent lessons.	4,454	0,687
10. Exploring comics help me understand society's concerns such as equality between men and women.	3,636	1,286
11. I found this unit highly interesting.	4,181	0,873
12. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics), helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes.	3,909	0,831
13. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.	1,727	1,272
14. My perception of social issues such as household chores as a source of conflict has changed after completing this unit.	2,454	1,128
15. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics) are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as gender equality.	1,727	0,904
16. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.	3,545	0,687
17. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality between men and women in class through comics from the English-speaking world.	3,818	1,078
Figure 202. Quantitative data of questionnaire 2. Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?		

Questionnaire 1

The results yielded by questionnaire 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, are arranged into three categories: cross-curricular issues (items 3, 4, 11, and 12), types of manifestations of popular culture (items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 17), and materials design (items 1, 2, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 18).

Cross-curricular issues: moral and civic education

Item	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
3. I have increased my awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people's brain.	4,33	0'707
4. I have understood that there is no downside to the use of the Internet.	2,77	1'388
11. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class does not help me reflect on current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	2,33	1,414

12. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. coeducation, and health education) in subsequent lessons.	4,55	0,527
Figure 203. Questionnaire 1, cross-curricular issues: moral and civic education		

In questionnaire 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, items 3, 4, 11, and 12 enquire into cross-curricular issues. Item 3 asks whether students believe that their awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people’s brain has increased. Here the average of participants who agree or strongly agree is high ($\bar{x}=4,33$) and the deviation is low ($\sigma=0,707$). As to item number 4, participants’ understanding of the absence of downsides in the use of the Internet, the average plummets ($\bar{x}=2,77$) and standard deviation is more spread out ($\sigma=1,388$). This item was a distractor and students’ answers show they agree that using the Internet has its drawbacks.

Most of the students’ answers are grouped towards the “strongly disagree/disagree” options in item 11, “analysing cross-curricular issues in class does not help me reflect on current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.” Most students think that exploring cross-curricular issues aids them to reflect on social issues, that is why the median is grouped towards the options strongly disagree/disagree ($\bar{x}=2,33$), although the deviation shows there is variation in students’ answers ($\sigma=1,414$). As the contents of the text were dense and hard to understand to a certain extent, the material was given to students to be read and prepared at home prior to the lesson. Regrettably, some students did not go through the texts at home, which accounted for the fact that it was difficult for them to know what the rest of their classmates were talking about, and prevented them from conveying opinions and relate ideas with personal experiences. Not having read the material in advance made them feel unprepared for the whole class discussion. Conversely, participants showed a high interest in exploring further cross-curricular issues (e.g. coeducation, and health education) in subsequent lessons (item 12), which is why the highest average ($\bar{x}=4,55$) as well as the lowest deviation ($\sigma=0,527$) of the whole questionnaire 1 are obtained in this item.

Types of manifestations: TV series, and popular literature

Items	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
5. TV series (e.g. The X-Files) encourage me to analyse social issues such as social isolation.	3,66	1,224
6. Popular literature (e.g. The Shallows) makes it difficult to deal with social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	2,88	1,364
7. Exploring popular literature from English-speaking countries helps me understand society’s concerns such as the downsides of the Internet.	3,55	1,130
8. Exploring TV series from English-speaking countries keeps me	3,44	1,509

from understanding society's concerns such as social isolation.		
9. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies in class through TV series from the English-speaking world.	4,44	0,881
10. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet in class through popular literature from the English-speaking world.	4,22	1,092
17. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, such as popular literature, are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet.	2,44	1,236
Figure 204. Questionnaire 1, types of manifestations: TV series, and popular literature		

Questionnaire number 1 was designed in accordance with two manifestations, TV series and popular literature. The first item of this category aimed to ascertain whether TV series (e.g. *The X-Files*) encourage participants to analyse social issues such as social isolation (questionnaire 1, item 5). Older students were aware of the issue and felt uncomfortable when they were talking to someone who was texting; by contrast, younger participants were not able to see this practice as an issue, since texting while being with other people is a usual practice for the youngest participants. That is the reason why the average is slightly low ($\bar{x}=3,66$), and the deviation slightly high ($\sigma=1,224$). This disparity of opinions spurs an open debate to analyse social issues like social isolation.

Item 6, which enquires into whether popular literature (e.g. *The Shallows*) makes it difficult to deal with social issues such as the dangers of new technologies, shows a low average ($\bar{x}=2,88$), since item 6 is a distractor, and a high deviation ($\sigma=1,364$), because there is disparity of opinions, probably due to the fact that the students who had not read the text prior to the lesson did not feel comfortable in this part of the unit. Interestingly, in item 7 (“exploring popular literature from English-speaking countries helps me understand society’s concerns such as the downsides of the Internet”) the average boosts ($\bar{x}=3,55$) whereas the deviation diminishes ($\sigma=1,130$). Both items (6 and 7) are practically the same but the results obtained are different to some extent.

There is a wide contrast in the results of items 8 and 9, although both ask participants about society’s concerns. In the former students are enquired if exploring TV series from English-speaking countries keeps them from understanding society’s concerns such as social isolation. Here the average slightly falls ($\bar{x}=3,44$) in comparison with item 7 (since item 8 is a distractor), and there is much more variation in participants’ responses ($\sigma=1,509$). Yet, there is even more contrast in the results yielded by item 9, “I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies in class through TV series from the English-speaking world.” Here the average soars ($\bar{x}=4,44$), and there is less variation in the participants’ responses ($\sigma=0,881$).

The average in item 10, “I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet in class through popular literature from the English-speaking world,” shows students agreement or strong agreement ($\bar{x}=4,22$); and the standard deviation indicates that figures are less spread out ($\sigma=1,092$). Similar results are obtained in connection with item 17. As item 17, “Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, such as popular literature, are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet,” was formulated as a distractor, the average of students’ answers is low ($\bar{x}=2,44$), whilst the standard deviation is high ($\sigma=1,236$), showing dissimilarity among students’ responses.

Materials design

Items	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
1. This unit has made me reflect on how new technologies isolate us.	4,66	0,707
2. This unit has raised my awareness of the dangers of new technologies.	4,44	0,726
13. I found this unit highly interesting.	4,33	0,866
14. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries such as TV series, helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	4,11	0,927
15. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.	1,88	1,054
16. My perception of social issues such as the benefits and dangers of the Internet has changed after completing this unit.	3,44	1,130
18. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.	4,33	0,5

Figure 205. Questionnaire 1, materials design

When students are asked whether the unit has made them reflect on how new technologies isolate human beings (item number 1) the median is 4,66 and the deviation is low ($\sigma=0,707$). Similarly, the average of participants’ answers expressing that this unit has raised their awareness of the dangers of new technologies (item 2), is 4,44. Although standard deviation slightly diminishes, it is still low ($\sigma=0,726$). In item 13, students reflect on whether they find the unit especially interesting. The corresponding mean is high ($\bar{x}=4,33$) and the deviation keeps being low ($\sigma=0,866$). Item 13 gives participants the opportunity to justify their answers, all of which are encouraging, e.g. apart from learning and reflecting on cross-curricular issues, participants express that they enjoyed the unit and the materials design motivated them to participate actively. Some participants stated that the content of the materials of the unit was so revealing

that it spurred further critical thinking, as Isabel¹ explains: “I suspected that there was something wrong with the use of the Internet but I did not know what it was exactly” (Isabel). It was also claimed that “cross-curricular issues are the basis of culture and they help people have a global perspective of culture through various cultural manifestations” (Carlos). Consequently, the unit as a whole is perceived as “a sort of reminder to bear in mind how new technologies have to be used, or vice versa, to prevent current problems such as addictions, isolation, or lack of verbal communication” (Laura).

Item 14 invites participants to consider whether this unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries such as TV series, helps them reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies. The average is slightly lower than in the previous item ($\bar{x}=4,11$), and therefore, the standard deviation also increases slightly ($\sigma=0,927$). Here, participants also justified their answers with revealing comments. It is considered that “TV series are more attractive materials to learn and work on cross-curricular issues and observe how social issues such as social isolation or the overuse of new technologies are regarded in other countries” (Paula). It was specified that “the materials raised my awareness of how new technologies are changing our lives for better or for worse” (Susana) and made students ponder whether they and their own families are making suitable use of the Internet and new technologies (Juana). One of the things they acknowledge enjoying is listening to other students’ opinions and sharing personal experiences (Tania). Discussing the issue in class seemed to be the highlight of the lesson.

When students were asked whether this unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivated them (item 15), their answers tended to be grouped towards option number 1, “strongly disagree.” As this item was formulated as a distractor, the average reached 1,88, and the standard deviation was 1’054.

Most of the participants point out that their perception of social issues such as the benefits and dangers of the Internet has changed after completing this unit (item 16). They argued that people have to be more careful with its use and infer whether the information on the Internet is reliable: “people have to be careful with the Internet” (Lucía). It is also crucial to “work on and develop critical thinking to know whether what people read on the Internet is true” (Sergio). Interestingly, this lesson seems to spur students’ action, as Laura asserts: “I am going to be more cautious when I use the Internet, when I read on the Internet.” Understanding how the use of the Internet can modify people’s cognitive processes made one student change her perception of the Internet, and understand that it is not a ‘harmless’ tool (Paula). By contrast, other participants affirmed that the unit had not changed their perception of the dangers of the

¹ To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, nicknames are used instead of students’ actual names.

Internet because they were already aware of its drawbacks and risks: “I haven’t changed my perception about the dangers of the Internet” (Linda); “I had a negative perception of the Internet before finishing the unit” (Isabel). However, completing the unit reinforced their previous thoughts. This disparity of opinions made the average of participants who answered this item affirmatively, “strongly agree/agree,” lower ($\bar{x}=3,44$) and the standard deviation to be more spread out ($\sigma=1,130$).

The last item of this category, number 18, asks participants whether this unit has enhanced their understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries. The average of participants who answered “strongly agree” is high ($\bar{x}=4,33$), and the standard deviation is low ($\sigma=0,5$). Students justify their answers by saying that “the unit is highly interesting” (Pedro); “I spent a very good class” (Juana). According to students, the lesson was very well prepared and they expressed their interest in spending more time discussing similar social issues: “the unit is well organized and I would like to discuss about more social issues such as the environment, and health education” (Laura). Learning while speaking about topical issues seems to have been welcomed by participants: “*aprender hablando de topics que te hacen reflexionar es interesante y divertido*²” (Paula). In addition, the selection of materials appears to be suitable to question and give some answers to current social issues: “it is an interesting and suitable material to solve the problems of society” (Carlos).

The results gathered from questionnaire 2, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*, are grouped into three categories: cross-curricular issues (items 2, 8, 9, and 17), type of manifestation of popular culture (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 15), and materials design (items 1, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 16).

Questionnaire 2

Cross-curricular issues: coeducation

Items	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
2. I have increased my awareness of how poor household chore organization hinders couples’ wellbeing.	3,909	1,221
8. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class is unimportant to reflect on current social issues such as equality between men and women.	2,090	1.136
9. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. health education, and moral and civic education) in subsequent lessons.	4,454	0,687
17. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality between men and women in class through comics from	3,818	1,078

² Although students answered the questionnaire in English, this student answered item 18 in Spanish. All quotes contain students’ actual wording.

the English-speaking world.		
Figure 206. Questionnaire 2, cross-curricular issues: coeducation		

This category comprises four items. In item 2, “I have increased my awareness of how poor household chore organization hinders couples’ wellbeing,” the average of participants’ answers ($\bar{x}=3,909$) shows that participants agree on the statement, although the data points are a bit spread out ($\sigma=1,221$). By contrast, item 8, “analysing cross-curricular issues in class is unimportant to reflect on current social issues such as equality between men and women,” is formulated as a distractor. The average ($\bar{x}=2,090$) indicates that students strongly disagree and disagree with the statement, whilst the deviation is high ($\sigma=1.136$), since there is variation on students’ answers.

When students are invited to express whether they are interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. health education, and moral and civic education) in subsequent lessons (item 9), the average ($\bar{x}=4,454$) points out that participants strongly agree on exploring other cross-curricular issues. The deviation ($\sigma=0,687$) indicates that data points are close to the mean. Most participants have ticked the same box (strongly agree).

Conversely, the average ($\bar{x}=3,818$) shows that most of the students agree or are undecided when asked whether they would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality between men and women in class through comics from the English-speaking world (item 17). The standard deviation is high ($\sigma=1,078$).

Type of manifestation: comics

Items	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
3. I think comic strips are useless to identify gender stereotypes.	2	1,095
4. Working on comics (e.g. <i>For better for worse</i>) encourage me to discuss social issues such as gender equality in modern society.	4,181	0,603
5. Comics keep me from understanding society’s concerns such as gender stereotypes.	3,272	1,420
6. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes in class through comics from the English-speaking world.	3,909	1,044
7. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores in class through comics from the English-speaking world.	3,818	1,078
10. Exploring comics help me understand society’s concerns such as equality between men and women.	3,636	1,286
15. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics) are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as gender equality.	1,727	0,904

Figure 207. Questionnaire 2, type of manifestation: comics

Questionnaire number 2 was designed on the basis of comics, (questionnaire number 1 combined two manifestations). The first item of this category (type of manifestation) suggests that comics are useless to identify gender stereotypes (item 3). The average ($\bar{x}=2$) points out that most students strongly disagree or disagree with the statement and the deviation is high ($\sigma=1,095$) showing that the data are spread out.

As the mean shows ($\bar{x}=4,181$), the majority of participants strongly agree or agree on the fact that working with comics (e.g. *For better for worse*) encourage them to discuss social issues such as gender equality in modern society (item 4). Therefore, the deviation is low ($\sigma=0,603$). On the contrary, in connection with item 5, “comics keep me from understanding society’s concerns such as gender stereotypes,” participants seem to be undecided ($\bar{x}=3,272$). Here, the standard deviation, which is high ($\sigma=1,420$), points out that there is variation in participants’ answers.

The results for items 6 and 7 are similar. The mean in item 6 reveals that most students would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes in class through comics from the English-speaking world ($\bar{x}=3,909$). Likewise, the mean for item 7 points out that most participants would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores in class through comics from the English-speaking world ($\bar{x}=3,818$). Although there is disparity of opinions in item 6 ($\sigma=1,044$) as well as in item 7 ($\sigma=1,078$), participants agree on their willingness to learn more about cross-curricular issues.

When students are asked whether exploring comics helps them understand society’s concerns such as equality between men and women (item 10), the mean indicates ($\bar{x}=3,636$) that there are more participants who chose option “agree” rather than “undecided.” The standard deviation is high ($\sigma=1,286$).

The last item of this category, item 15, enquires into whether popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics) are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as gender equality. The average ($\bar{x}=1,727$) shows that students strongly disagree with this statement; accordingly, cultural manifestations such as comics are considered suitable to examine cross-curricular issues. And the corresponding deviation is low ($\sigma=0,904$). Students justify their answers by saying that gender equality is a topical and a relevant issue: “these topics are suitable and important” (Pedro); “comics combine humour and social issues interestingly” (Lucía); “even though comics are not my favourite manifestation, all cross-curricular issues (global warming, consumerism, or eating and drinking habits) can be explored through comics” (Laura); “these comics have perfectly shown the difference in gender equality” (Isabel); and comics allow participants to analyse gender equality visually: “I think it’s a visual form of analyzing the topic to talk about it” (Susana). From students’ standpoints, comics are suitable to address gender equality, since real situations are

depicted through humour. Comics are thought to be essential tools to examine not only gender equality but also a great variety of social issues in class such as global warming, consumerism, or healthy eating/drinking habits. Besides, comics are visual materials to explore a social issue, reflect on it, and discuss it. Manifestations of popular culture bring to the fore social issues (such as gender equality) that need to be addressed and questioned.

Materials design

Items	Median (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (σ)
1. This unit has made me reflect on the importance of equality in household chores.	3,727	1,190
11. I found this unit highly interesting.	4,181	0,873
12. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics), helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes.	3,909	0,831
13. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.	1,727	1,272
14. My perception of social issues such as household chores as a source of conflict has changed after completing this unit.	2,454	1,128
16. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.	3,545	0,687

Figure 208. Questionnaire 2, materials design

When students are asked whether the unit has made them reflect on the importance of equality in household chores (item 1) the average shows students agree or are undecided ($\bar{x}=3,727$) and the deviation is high ($\sigma=1,190$). The reason why there is variation in students' answers is apparent in item 14, "my perception of social issues such as household chores as a source of conflict has changed after completing this unit." Some students answered that they were already aware of this aspect: "I already had an opinion" (Isabel); "I have the same perception" (Juana). Therefore, they did not have to reflect so much on the importance of equality in household chores as they already had a previous opinion based on their experience. That is likely to be the reason for the average in item 14 to be even lower ($\bar{x}=2,454$) than in item 1, whereas the standard deviation slightly diminishes ($\sigma=1,128$). However, students are willing to address equality on household chores, since in their views it is an issue that deserves more attention (Laura). Besides it is claimed that the whole family benefits from sharing household chores since responsibility is shared (Carlos).

Students find this unit highly interesting (item 11) because comics catch students' attention, language is practiced and learnt whilst reflecting on issues that affect everybody: "comics catch our attention" (Laura); "I think cross-curricular issues are very interesting and these topics are permanently present in our lives, we learn

English, practice, and contrast ideas and feelings” (Paula); “it is an interesting topic for Millennials” (Isabel). It is hinted that coeducation deserves more attention at school (Juana). So, the mean shows students agree or strongly agree on the fact that the unit is highly interesting ($\bar{x}=4,181$), which is why the deviation is low ($\sigma=0,873$). Students appreciated this unit, as learning a language implies lexicon, grammar structures, phonetics, and above all cultural knowledge to build one’s opinions: “being able to speak a second language is not only about using grammar and lexicon, but also about learning and understanding culture, and being able to talk about it” (Laura).

Similarly, item 12, “this unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics), helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes,” indicates that students agree or strongly agree that comics help them reflect on gender stereotypes. The mean of students’ answers almost reaches four out of five ($\bar{x}=3,909$), and the standard deviation is low ($\sigma=0,831$). Students agree on the effectiveness of comics to identify gender stereotypes: “in the comics we can see more clearly the problem of stereotypes” (Pedro). Issues such as gender stereotypes need to be introduced to youngsters and children to prevent or fight against misconceptions and promote coeducation from childhood: “I think it is a very clear way to see problems for some ages” (Isabel); gender stereotypes should be explicitly addressed “since an early age” (Susana). Even though the use of comics is widely acclaimed, participants would like to explore the same issue through a combination of other manifestations of popular culture, as not everyone enjoys comic strips, especially older students: “I like comics but they are not my reading preference. I’d like to use other formats to reflect on cross-curricular issues” (Laura). “I don’t mind using comics occasionally but I’d like to explore other formats” (Isabel). However, comics are recognised as a cultural manifestation that gives voice to social issues: “giving a voice to these issues through comics can help us all to change our points of view and improve ourselves” (Paula).

The fact that the average of students’ answers in item number 13, “this unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me,” is low ($\bar{x}=1,727$) shows that students strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. Besides, there is variation in students’ answers ($\sigma=1,272$).

The aim of the last element in this category (item 16) is to know whether this unit has enhanced students’ understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries. The average of participants who agree or are undecided about item number 16 is $\bar{x}=3,545$, while the disparity among participants’ opinions ($\sigma=0,687$) is the lowest of all the items in the category of materials design.

5.8.2 Observation forms

Observation form 1: Moral and civic education

Cross-curricular issues

Students were asked questions to prompt group discussion on the dangers of new technologies, whether the use of new technologies isolates us or connects us, and the impact the Internet has on our brain. Students participated actively by giving opinions and sharing personal experiences about new technological breakthroughs and drawbacks, the current use of new technologies in society, the impact of new technologies on people's habits and social relationships, and how new technologies may either join or isolate people.

Types of manifestations

Daily life was depicted in the series *The X-Files*, e.g. social isolation, texting while being with other people, absence of verbal communication, and paying more attention to the mobile phone than to the people around us. Students showed enthusiasm while talking about Mulder and Scully since they were familiar with the TV series. Besides, the cultural note in the tasks (see unit 2 in section 4.2) helped clarify the importance of the series in popular culture, e.g. the show revolves around the theory of conspiracy, there is an obsession with science and technology and at the same time there is lack of confidence in both. The show gives prominence to a female character because solving a case largely depends on the female's expertise and rationality, thus the series challenges gender conventions.

The text *The Shallows* gave students food for thought. Students furthered their reading strategies at home (see materials design below) and made them reflect on the dangers of new technologies before attending the lesson.

Materials design

Students did not expect to watch an excerpt of a TV series episode in which nobody spoke, which sparked their observation skills: observing habits, behaviours, and attitudes that are assumed to be 'common' and 'normal.'

Due to the complexity of the text *The Shallows*, students were asked to read it in advance so that they could prepare their comments prior to the lesson. Strikingly, some students brought a list of new terms they had searched for, while others had underlined the most interesting parts of the text. They were eager to share their points of view. Student interaction was carried out in pairs, whole group discussions, and it was supported by mind maps.

Observation form 2: Coeducation

Cross-curricular issues

Discovering that poor organization of household chores is the leading cause for divorce was surprising for participants; accordingly, the unit contributed to spur students' awareness of this social issue. Students were asked questions to prompt group discussion on equality between men and women, gender stereotypes, male and female roles.

Types of manifestations

Students were surprised at the choice of manifestation of popular culture. Using comic strips as materials to address the tasks was beyond their expectations. Comics made the lesson special. As students were not familiar with the comic strip *For better for worse*, the cultural note in the teachers' note section gave participants background information regarding the cartoonist and the comic. Comics proved to motivate students, as shown by their smile and laugh, and the discussion on equality on household chores and gender stereotypes geared by students' comments on the strips. The fact that comics are engaging is supported by the information gathered in the following category.

Materials design

Interestingly, none of the students said that they needed their usual five-minute break. The break was intentionally postponed since students were busy, concentrated in the tasks, and they wanted to keep working. Students seemed to be especially talkative, because everyone contributed with their points and the materials inspired them to talk about personal experiences. Students expressed that they enjoyed the lesson and that they highly benefited from it.

The unit appears to have worked better than expected since students participated actively and took the lead by establishing roles in their groups, e.g. one student found it easier to guess the meaning of the idioms, another student was in charge of drawing, and the third member of the group was in charge of explaining, to the whole class, the meaning of the set of idioms through the drawings. Since many participants were visual learners, they appreciated working on visual thinking during the lesson.

To conclude, this and the previous section have analysed the quantitative data gathered by the research tools: the surveys (questionnaires 1 and 2) and the observation forms.

In both surveys, participants show a high interest in exploring more cross-curricular issues in subsequent lessons, which is why other cross-curricular issues such as road safety education, health education, environmental education, consumer education, education for peace, or sex education could be the basis for further lines of research.

After the implementation of unit 1, students report higher awareness of how new technologies both connect and disconnect people, how people's habits and social relationships are affected, and how the Internet modifies our thinking processes, which is in line with Martín Jiménez's assertion that introducing new technologies at early ages such as tablets, smart telephones, and personal computers atrophies people's intelligence (Martín Jiménez 2020: 142). Similarly, social isolation ignited a variety of opinions between youngsters and adults, as the issue was observed from different perspectives. Implementing unit 2 raised awareness of the importance of sharing household chores and reaching equality between men and women. It also helped participants to identify gender stereotypes, and male and female roles.

Analysing cross-curricular issues in class through popular culture manifestations allowed participants to reflect on current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies and equality between men and women by means of discussion, debates, and pair work interactions. TV series, popular literature, and comics seem to have awakened students' interest to learn about cross-curricular issues.

5.9 Discussion

Four research questions frame the study: a) the effectiveness of popular culture manifestations from the English-speaking world to address cross-curricular issues b) the impact of exploring cross-curricular issues through popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries c) students' perceptions of the didactic proposal d) the extent to which students show a different perception of social issues after the pedagogical intervention.

Regarding the effectiveness of popular culture manifestations from the English-speaking world to address cross-curricular issues (research question 1), the study revealed that TV series, popular literature, and comics are suitable to explore current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies, and equality between men and women. Popular culture manifestations are powerful tools to address social issues in class, as they are an open window to witness daily life situations that affect all of us. As stated by Dony (2009: 1), comics are a pedagogical tool, and they can be exploited in classroom at multiple levels (Williams, 2008: 13). Likewise, in Yang's view (2011: 33), TV series are authentic culture input and they mirror a native speakers' culture. Indeed, Sherman (2003: 2) adds that TV series are a window to English-speaking countries, their culture, and to a certain extent they are the closest that viewers are probably going to get to living in the target cultural context. Popular literature (books, novels, or articles) provide exposure to real language, real cultural information, and students get the impression that they are learning real English, since the language is not altered, simplified, or adapted (Mestari and Malabar 2016: 126).

In fact, the implementation of the didactic proposal had an impact on participants (research question 2). Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries made students understand that people from other countries face similar social issues, most of which have a global impact. This is in line with Yang's suggestion (2011: 5) that TV series are core resources for students of English as a foreign language to know about the English-speaking countries, their people, and their culture. Another effect of exploring cross-curricular issues through popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries is heightened motivation. Not only were authentic materials used, but also popular culture manifestations constituted attention grabbers. There is a tendency to follow the contents in a book, which is why tasks based on popular culture manifestations to explore cross-curricular issues break with routine and demonstrate that lessons can be carried out beyond a textbook. They also provide students with the opportunity to address social issues with authentic materials, bringing an innovative approach to lessons. This is supported by Cheesman (2006: 48) who considers that

comics are attention getters and help students focus. Similarly, Smilanich and Lafreniere (2010: 604-605) claim that TV series are appealing materials to the so-called video generation, also known as Millennials. Furthermore, Gibson hints (2007: 197-199) that students' interest is stimulated when reading popular literature since society is reflected.

Students' perceptions indicate that the didactic proposal, as a whole, was welcomed by attendants (research question 3). Students valued the materials design and the selection of popular culture manifestations: TV series, popular literature, and comics. They appreciated that materials were "modern," authentic, and up to date. According to Mestari and Malabar's opinion (2016: 125), the use of authentic materials closes the language gap between the classroom and real life and they prepare students for their social lives (Morley and Guariento 2001). Similarly, materials were explored through a variety of techniques that promoted students' interaction and visual thinking, critical thinking, peer cooperative work, group work, whole group discussions, and debates. All this permitted to conduct students' centred tasks. Thus, there was a variation in the typology of activities, as Fennell (2016: 115) defends. However, some adult students manifested their preference to use other types of cultural manifestations rather than comics, as they consider comics to be more appealing to youngsters. This shows that adults may have the preconception that comics are materials aimed at children and teenagers. Another argument that can support students' view is that adults may not be skilful at interpreting the message or meaning of images in comics. That is what Fenwick (1998: 132) called visual literacy (see section 3.1.5).

Nevertheless, students confess that comic strips are remarkably good visual materials to witness current social issues that affect people. Another remarkable aspect is that more time for whole group discussions and debate was demanded. Conveying opinions, speaking their mind, listening to others, telling anecdotes, talking about previous experiences with social issues, and interacting is what students enjoyed most. According to Goleman (2006: 84), it is by means of shared experiences that people become aware of the world around them and the society in which they live. In the case of unit 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, the tasks focused on popular literature would have performed better if all the students had previously read the text *The Shallows* at home. Doing so would have granted all students more opportunities to take part actively in the discussion. Ash (2004: 26) indicates that not having read the text may respond to an absence of interest on the topic; by contrast, students respond favourably when the text connects to their interests and experiences. As stated by Fife (1999: 1-3) students are more used to watching TV series rather than reading texts, but as Alvermann, Moon and Hagood uphold (2018: 4), people need to develop the ability to read critically a wide variety of texts so that critical awareness of the social, political and economic messages in cultural manifestations may be developed and furthered. In addition, Fennell (2016: 115) suggests that long texts need to be read before the lessons.

The last research question was aimed to find out the extent to which students show a different perception of social issues after the pedagogical intervention. Even though social isolation, the dangers of new technologies, and the downsides of the Internet are social issues students are familiar with, in the first survey, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, most students point out that the implementation of the unit had made them see these social issues differently. Students reported higher awareness of the dangers of new technologies, which is in consonance with Martín Jiménez's views (2020: 142), and Carr's standpoints (2018). The former makes people aware that the fact of introducing new technologies at early ages such as tablets, smart telephones, and personal computers atrophies people's intelligence. The latter alerts that new technologies shape and influence people's brain. Somehow the Internet makes the capability to focus and concentrate difficult; research on psychology demonstrates that it only takes six minutes for students to get distracted by either telephones or computers. According to Dewan (2014: 95), people find it difficult to work on a single task for a long period of time due to continuous distractions.

Conversely, Janks (2013: 7) adds that popular literature may influence readers' standpoints; hence the importance of critical thinking, since texts may contain the authors' views either explicitly or implicitly. Gibson (2007: 197-199) also supports that reading popular literature helps build critical thinking. To sum up, the pedagogical intervention made students acquire a broader perspective of current social issues.

In survey number 2, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*, some students report that they already had a preconceived opinion about gender stereotypes, equality between men and women, and poor organization of household chores. However, implementing the unit allowed them to further their knowledge of these social issues, for example, students realised that inequality is still a reality in household chores, some roles or tasks are still ascribed to women and others to men. As a result, students' previous knowledge was complemented with the pedagogical intervention. As to the language and culture teaching, Parsons and Smith (1993: 2) maintain that comics are a valuable learning tool since they expose human dilemmas and express the values and moods of society.

In summary, the study reveals that exploring cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture from the English-speaking world motivates students to address (global) social issues. Besides, the materials proposed seem to have also succeeded in getting students' attention and engaging them in meaningful learning.

6. Conclusion: limitations and further lines of research

The multifaceted concept of popular culture by Dolby (2003: 8) as an entity with “the capacity to intervene in the most critical civic issues and to shape public opinion,” and by Sfeir (2014: 16) as a “pedagogical site that should not be ignored [since] everyday acts contribute to the transformation of the public sphere, the configuration of power, identity and citizenship” by expanding people’s thinking about others through a different perspective on social issues, provided the framework to delve into the various manifestations of popular culture in the English-speaking world.

Apart from highlighting the multifaceted concept of popular culture, the pedagogical proposal focuses on teaching values and cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture in the English language, exploring a wide range of techniques to teach popular culture through some of its manifestations: comics, TV series, and popular literature. Popular culture manifestations from the English-speaking world are effective to motivate students to address issues such as equality between men and women, social isolation due to new technologies, and gender stereotypes.

Popular culture manifestations are a reflexion of reality and depict issues that affect current society. In Goleman’s view (2006: 84), the different manifestations of popular culture might offer people opportunities to enhance their social intelligence through critical analysis, making them aware of the world and the society in which they live. The cultural manifestations selected succeeded in keeping students’ attention, and raising awareness that language and culture are bound together. The combination of humour and social issues expressed through images makes comics a suitable manifestation to examine gender equality. Watching a series of mute scenes in motion has the potential to spark students’ interest in analysing the dangers of new technologies through TV series. Reading a series of ideas, facts, and data opens doors to sparking students’ examination of the downsides of the Internet through popular literature.

In addition to this, manifestations of popular culture from the English-speaking world are a window to observe how social issues such as social isolation or the overuse of new technologies are regarded in other countries (TV series and popular literature), and reflect on issues such as gender stereotypes (comics). From Parsons and Smith’s viewpoint (1993: 2), comics are a valuable learning tool in the classroom to expose human dilemmas, and express the values and moods of society. Williams (2008: 13) adds that comics can be exploited in class at multiple levels: analysing the story, the author’s intention, characters, context, and how words, images and design are interrelated. In the case of TV series, Sert (2009: 24-25) supports their use as authentic materials providing authentic audio-visual examples of day-to-day oral interactions, which are closer to real-life dialogues than those found in textbooks. Sherman (2003: 38) adds that TV series are full of up-to-date language. Finally, from Gibson’s standpoint (2007: 197-199), society is reflected in popular literature; hence authors defend their use to build critical thinking (Janks 2013: 7). Reading texts critically (Alvermann, Moon and Hagood 2018: 4) help develop and further critical awareness of the social, economic, and political messages in popular culture manifestations. Therefore, teaching cross-curricular issues through manifestations of popular culture has

the potential to enhance students' awareness of global issues and their knowledge of the society in which they live.

The materials designed seem to have brought to the fore key manifestations of popular culture as a means to address cross-curricular issues. Students coincide that they would like to explore further cross-curricular issues, such as health education, or moral and civic education, in subsequent lessons, since the units implemented were found to be particularly engaging and insightful to raise awareness of current social issues (such as the dangers of new technologies, gender stereotypes or gender equality). Not only does the material assist students to learn and practice English, but also to contrast ideas and feelings, and acquire cultural knowledge.

The study reveals that the various manifestations of popular culture had an impact on exploring cross-curricular issues, since students observe, witness, and reflect on situations depicting social isolation because of new technologies, the dangers of new technologies, and equality in household chores. Likewise, participants praise the materials design and expressed their enjoyment and learning from whole class discussion.

To conclude, one of the most remarkable findings is that the methodology and tasks proposed involved a relevant exercise of introspection, changing or complementing students' knowledge and cultural awareness.

Limitations

The first limitation is the reduced number of participants in the study; although 12 students attended both lessons only 9 students completed the questionnaire for session 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, whilst 11 students completed the questionnaire for session 2, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*

Regarding gender, the number of female students significantly surpasses the number of male participants. Of the 9 students who filled in the first questionnaire there were 4 male participants; additionally, 10 of the 11 students who completed the second questionnaire were females. A study with a more balanced number of female and male participants would guarantee that male opinions are equally heard.

A final limitation is participants' age, since there are many more adults than teenagers, and there is only one male student having completed both questionnaires. The study would have benefited from an intergenerational perspective.

Further lines of research

In my Master's Thesis, *The role of oral skills in the foreign language: a study on speaking and interaction* (2013), a didactic proposal to foster the speaking skill in the classroom was developed, and the possibility of designing further pedagogical materials was hinted. The didactic proposal designed for this PhD stems from my interest in material development and contains two units with five sessions each, even though only one session from each session was implemented and studied.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

One possibility is devoting more teaching-time to these two sessions. A second possibility is implementing the remaining sessions for both units. A final course of action would be developing further material for the analysis of different cross-curricular issues through popular culture manifestations from the English language such as publicity, food, body art, graffiti, music, reality shows, or films from Hollywood, Nollywood and Bollywood.

7. Spanish sections

Esta Tesis se encuentra redactada íntegramente en inglés, por lo que a continuación se podrá leer en castellano el título, el índice, un resumen significativo, la introducción y la conclusión como lo indica el Reglamento de Doctorado en su artículo 25.4.

7.1 Título

Involucrar al alumnado en el análisis de los temas transversales mediante la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa. Una propuesta didáctica y un estudio sobre su implementación en una Escuela Oficial de Idiomas

7.2 Índice

Resumen

1. Introducción
2. La cultura popular
 - 2.1. El heterogéneo concepto heterogéneo de la cultura popular
 - 2.2. Manifestaciones de la cultura popular
 - 2.2.1. Publicidad
 - 2.2.2. Comics
 - 2.2.3. Películas
 - 2.2.4. Televisión
 - 2.2.5. Música
 - 2.2.6. Internet como medio para publicitar películas y series
 - 2.2.7. Grafiti y arte corporal
3. La enseñanza de la cultura popular
 - 3.1. La enseñanza de la cultura popular a través de comics
 - 3.1.1. Introducción
 - 3.1.2. Aspectos lingüísticos y pedagógicos clave
 - 3.1.3. Temas
 - 3.1.4. Personajes
 - 3.1.5. La interpretación de imágenes
 - 3.2. La enseñanza de la cultura popular a través de series de televisión
 - 3.2.1. El uso del lenguaje
 - 3.2.2. Aspectos pedagógicos clave
 - 3.2.3. Temas
 - 3.2.4. Personajes
 - 3.3. La enseñanza de la cultura popular a través de literatura popular
 - 3.3.1. Beneficios de la literatura popular
 - 3.3.2. Cuestiones lingüísticas
4. La enseñanza de los temas transversales y valores a través de la cultura popular
 - 4.1. Temas transversales y valores
 - 4.2. Propuesta didáctica
 - 4.2.1. Unidad 1. Cómic para la enseñanza de temas transversales
 - 4.2.1.1. Tema 1. Educación moral y cívica en la cultura digital: ¿dependencia de la tecnología o uso saludable de la tecnología?
 - 4.2.1.2. Tema 2. Educación moral y cívica en la política: encontrarse en una situación difícil

- 4.2.1.3. Tema 3. Coeducación: ¿hay (des)igualdad en las tareas domésticas?
 - 4.2.1.4. Tema 4. Educación para la salud: adolescencia, ¿periodo crucial para evitar el desarrollo de adicciones precoces?
 - 4.2.1.5. Tema 5. Taller de cómics: aspectos socioculturales
 - 4.2.2. Unidad 2. El uso de series de televisión y literatura popular para la enseñanza de temas transversales
 - 4.2.2.1. Tema 1. Educación moral y cívica: ¿las nuevas tecnologías nos aíslan?
 - 4.2.2.2. Tema 2. Coeducación: opresión, abuso y violencia en la literatura popular; y problemas de conducta en las series de televisión
 - 4.2.2.3. Tema 3. Educación para la salud en la intersección con la coeducación: drogas y adicciones en las series de televisión y la literatura popular
 - 4.2.2.4. Tema 4. Educación moral y cívica: ética basada en el liderazgo
 - 4.2.2.5. Tema 5. Taller de noticias de última hora: aspectos socioculturales
 - 5. Manifestaciones de la cultura popular en la intersección entre la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa y los temas transversales
 - 5.1. Introducción
 - 5.2. Objetivos y preguntas de investigación
 - 5.3. Contextualización
 - 5.4. Perfil de los participantes
 - 5.5. Instrumentos de investigación
 - 5.6. Procedimiento
 - 5.7. Análisis de datos
 - 5.8. Resultados
 - 5.8.1. Cuestionarios
 - 5.8.2. Plantillas de observación
 - 5.9. Discusión
 - 6. Conclusión: limitaciones y futuras líneas de investigación
 - 7. Secciones en español
- Referencias
Apéndices

7.3 Resumen

Esta Tesis Doctoral se centra en el concepto heterogéneo de la cultura popular, sus diversas manifestaciones en el mundo de habla inglesa, y la enseñanza de valores y temas transversales a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular en lengua inglesa, explorando una amplia gama de técnicas para enseñar cultura popular a través de comics, series de televisión y literatura popular. En este proyecto se han diseñado materiales que versan sobre la cultura popular como, por ejemplo, los cómics, la publicidad, la música, el cine, las series de televisión, la comida, la literatura popular, el grafiti, o el arte corporal. Una parte fundamental de esta Tesis Doctoral es la propuesta didáctica diseñada específicamente para Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas que aborda los temas transversales y cuyo telón de fondo es la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa. Esto se complementa con un estudio para comprobar si la implementación

parcial de esta propuesta contribuye a que el alumnado desarrolle una percepción diferente de distintos aspectos socioculturales.

Aunque ha habido muchos cambios y se ha progresado en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en España en los últimos 40 años, considero que abordar valores y temas transversales mediante diferentes manifestaciones de la cultura popular ofrece un enfoque motivador en el campo de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas, ya que gran parte de nuestro alumnado está familiarizado con las manifestaciones de la cultura popular. Por consiguiente, las lecciones basadas en materiales inspirados en las manifestaciones de la cultura popular tienen el potencial de ser más atractivas y de especial interés para el alumnado.

Esta Tesis contiene una propuesta didáctica original que aúna los temas transversales y distintos aspectos socioculturales de la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa. Con este fin se han diseñado dos unidades didácticas basadas en tres manifestaciones de la cultura popular: cómics, series de televisión y literatura popular.

En una etapa posterior se presenta el estudio. De la propuesta didáctica de diez sesiones, se seleccionaron e implementaron dos con mi alumnado de nivel C1 de inglés. Se utilizaron dos cuestionarios elaborados específicamente para este estudio para conocer la opinión del alumnado sobre el material implementado en clase. De manera similar, se utilizó una hoja de observación durante las sesiones para llevar un registro de las mismas.

A modo de síntesis, esta Tesis analiza el potencial de los temas transversales para abordar aspectos socioculturales clave a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa.

7.4 Introducción

El término cultura popular es amplio. La denotación asociada a la palabra “popular” tiende a considerarse con aprobación o afecto, ya que está relacionada con manifestaciones adaptadas o destinadas al público en general.

La noción de cultura engloba diferentes elementos que incluyen la diversidad racial, étnica, religiosa, o lingüística. La cultura también es un sistema de valores, actitudes, creencias, y normas que dan sentido y significado a la identidad individual y a la colectiva. Básicamente, es el “pegamento” que conecta a las personas, ya que las une; es una entidad con la que nos identificamos y, en consecuencia, es algo a lo que pertenecemos. La palabra cultura no solo implica un estilo de vida sino un contexto en donde la lengua juega un papel de suma importancia. La cultura es también el contexto dentro del que nos comportamos, pensamos, vivimos, sentimos, y nos relacionamos los unos con los otros. La cultura hace referencia a conceptos, ideas, costumbres, destrezas, o las artes por medio de las cuales grupos de personas se identifican.

Enseñar una lengua extranjera implica ir más allá del idioma para incorporar elementos culturales clave del país o de los países en donde esa lengua se habla. En este sentido, el inglés como *lingua franca* o idioma internacional hoy en día tiene un estatus especial. Aunque el uso del inglés en contextos internacionales puede que no esté relacionado con los países de habla inglesa, los individuos necesitan un punto de referencia cuando se refieren a éstos así como a su propio entorno y, por esta razón, el

estudio e las culturas de los países de habla inglesa sigue siendo relevante en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras.

Ya que la lengua y la cultura están íntimamente relacionadas, considero que ha de haber un equilibrio entre el estudio de la lengua meta y el análisis de las culturas donde se habla el idioma.

Por una parte, la cultura popular abarca objetos cotidianos, acciones, acontecimientos que afectan a las creencias de las personas y cómo se comportan. A veces los individuos no son conscientes de que se les están enviando mensajes sobre lo que es apropiado o inapropiado, lo que está de moda o pasado de moda, lo que se considera educado o maleducado. Por otra parte, los programas de televisión, las películas, las canciones, los anuncios de televisión, los dibujos, los cómics, y las series de televisión, entre otras manifestaciones, tienen un papel influyente en las personas y en la manera en la que éstas ven la vida y, en consecuencia, ayudan a moldear su identidad y comportamiento.

Esta Tesis Doctoral se centra en la enseñanza de valores y temas transversales mediante las manifestaciones de la cultura popular en el mundo de habla inglesa. El núcleo de esta tesis es una extensa propuesta pedagógica específica para Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas que aborda temas transversales en el contexto de la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa. Esta propuesta se complementa con un estudio sobre si su implementación parcial de esta propuesta ayuda al alumnado a desarrollar una percepción diferente de los aspectos socioculturales tratados.

Siguiendo el *Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas* (Consejo de Europa 2001) y su *Volumen Complementario* (Consejo de Europa, 2020), esta propuesta pedagógica incorpora todas las destrezas comunicativas: comprensión de textos orales, comprensión de textos escritos, producción y coproducción oral, producción y coproducción escrita, y mediación. Ya que la cultura popular se encuentra a nuestro alrededor, en la televisión, en la radio, o en los libros, ésta constituye un fenómeno influyente. De ahí que el uso de manifestaciones populares (como cómics, publicidad, música, series de televisión, cine o literatura popular) para el diseño de materiales pedagógicos tenga el potencial de facilitar la elaboración de tareas de interés para el alumnado. Creo que la creación de materiales basados en estas premisas es un aspecto atractivo para los jóvenes porque tienden a emplear una parte considerable de su tiempo en escuchar música o ver películas o series. De ahí que los objetivos de esta tesis sean los siguientes:

- a) indagar acerca de la efectividad de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular para aprender sobre temas transversales.
- b) conocer si la propuesta específica de materiales está bien diseñada.
- c) determinar si estos materiales son motivadores e interesantes.
- d) analizar hasta qué punto estos materiales mejoran el conocimiento cultural que tiene el alumnado de la cultura popular de los países de habla inglesa.
- e) examinar si el alumnado muestra una percepción distinta de los aspectos socioculturales tras la intervención pedagógica.

Esta Tesis está dividida en 7 capítulos. Después del Capítulo 1, esta introducción, el Capítulo 2 explora el concepto de la cultura popular y algunas de sus manifestaciones más relevantes tales como publicidad, cómics, literatura popular, películas, televisión, música, Internet como un medio para publicitar películas y series, grafiti, arte corporal, y comida. El Capítulo 3 está dedicado a la enseñanza de la cultura popular a través de cómics, series de televisión, y literatura popular, centrándose en el uso del lenguaje, temas, personajes, y aspectos pedagógicos clave.

El Capítulo 4, que comienza con una definición de los temas transversales, se centra en diversas leyes que realzan la importancia de enseñar temas transversales en el contexto educativo español, y ofrece una propuesta didáctica basada en manifestaciones culturales para analizar temas transversales en relación con una educación en valores.

El Capítulo 5 presenta un estudio sobre la implementación parcial de esta propuesta pedagógica en una Escuela Oficial de Idiomas. Ofrece información sobre el perfil del alumnado, objetivos y preguntas de investigación, herramientas de investigación, y el procedimiento de recogida y análisis de datos. Las implicaciones pedagógicas de esta propuesta didáctica, sus limitaciones así como las futuras líneas de investigación están recogidas en la conclusión, que es el Capítulo 6. El Capítulo 7 contiene el título de la Tesis, el índice, la introducción, un resumen significativo y la conclusión en castellano.

7.5 Conclusión

El heterogéneo concepto de la cultura popular de Dolby (2003: 8) como una entidad con “la capacidad para intervenir en los temas cívicos más críticos y moldear la opinión pública”, y el de Sfeir (2014: 16) como un “entorno pedagógico que no debería ignorarse [ya que] los actos diarios contribuyen a la transformación de la esfera pública, la configuración del poder, la identidad y la ciudadanía” expandiendo el pensamiento que las personas tienen sobre los otros a través de una perspectiva distinta de los aspectos socioculturales y proporcionando el marco para indagar en las diversas manifestaciones de la cultura popular en el mundo de habla inglesa. Aparte de ensalzar el heterogéneo concepto de cultura popular, la propuesta pedagógica se centra en la enseñanza de valores y temas transversales a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular en la lengua inglesa, explorando un amplio abanico de técnicas para estudiar la cultura popular mediante algunas de sus manifestaciones: cómics, series de televisión, y literatura popular. Los resultados obtenidos demuestran que las manifestaciones de la cultura popular del mundo de habla inglesa son efectivas para motivar al alumnado a abordar temas como la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres, el aislamiento social debido a las nuevas tecnologías y los estereotipos de género.

Las manifestaciones de la cultura popular son un reflejo de la realidad y describen temas que afectan a la sociedad actual. Según Goleman (2006: 84), las diversas manifestaciones de la cultura popular podrían ofrecer oportunidades para

mejorar la inteligencia social del individuo a través del análisis crítico, haciéndole consciente del mundo y la sociedad en la que vive. Las manifestaciones culturales seleccionadas lograron mantener la atención del alumnado, concienciándolos de que la lengua y la cultura están unidas. La combinación de humor y aspectos socioculturales expresados a través de imágenes hace que los cómics sean una manifestación apropiada para examinar la igualdad de género. Ver una serie de escenas mudas en movimiento tiene el potencial de despertar el interés del alumnado por las series de televisión para analizar los peligros de las nuevas tecnologías. La lectura de una serie de ideas, hechos, y datos abre las puertas para facilitar el análisis de los inconvenientes del uso de Internet a través de la literatura popular.

Además de esto, las manifestaciones de la cultura popular del mundo de habla inglesa son una ventana para observar cómo aspectos socioculturales, tales como el aislamiento social o el uso excesivo de las nuevas tecnologías, son considerados en otros países (series de televisión y literatura popular), y reflexionar sobre temas como los estereotipos de género (cómics). Desde el punto de vista de Parsons y Smith (1993: 2), los cómics son una herramienta valiosa en el aula para exponer dilemas humanos, y expresar los valores y estados de ánimo de la sociedad. Williams (2008: 13) añade que los cómics pueden explotarse en clase atendiendo a distintos elementos: analizando la historia, la intención el autor, los personajes, el contexto, y cómo las palabras, las imágenes y el diseño están interrelacionados. En el caso de las series de televisión, Sert (2009: 24-25) apoya su uso como materiales auténticos que proporcionan ejemplos audiovisuales auténticos de las interacciones orales del día a día, las cuales están más cerca de los diálogos en la vida real que los que se encuentran en los libros de texto. Sherman (2003: 38) añade que las series de televisión emplean un lenguaje actual. Finalmente, desde el punto de vista de Gibson (2007: 197-199), la sociedad se refleja en la literatura popular; de ahí que autores defiendan su uso para construir el pensamiento crítico (Janks 2013: 7). Leer textos de manera crítica (Alvermann, Moon and Hagood 2018: 4) ayuda a desarrollar una conciencia crítica hacia los mensajes sociales, económicos y políticos en las manifestaciones de la cultura popular. Por consiguiente, enseñar temas transversales mediante la cultura popular tiene el potencial de mejorar la conciencia de los aspectos socioculturales del alumnado y su conocimiento de la sociedad en la que vive.

Los materiales diseñados parecen haber puesto de relieve manifestaciones clave de la cultura popular como vehículo para abordar temas transversales. El alumnado con el que se implementaron las sesiones coincide en que le gustaría explorar más temas transversales, como la educación para la salud, o la educación moral y cívica, en lecciones posteriores, ya que las unidades implementadas le resultaron atractivas e interesantes para crear conciencia de los aspectos socioculturales actuales (tales como los peligros de las nuevas tecnologías, los estereotipos de género o la igualdad de género). El material no solo ayuda al alumnado a aprender y practicar el inglés, sino que también le facilita el proceso de contrastar ideas y sentimientos, y favorece la adquisición del conocimiento cultural.

El estudio revela que las diversas manifestaciones de la cultura popular tuvieron un impacto al explorar los temas transversales, ya que el alumnado observa, presencia, y reflexiona sobre situaciones que reflejan el aislamiento social a causa de las nuevas tecnologías, los peligros de las nuevas tecnologías, y la igualdad de género en ámbitos como la realización de las tareas del hogar. Asimismo, los participantes alabaron el diseño de materiales y expresaron su placer por contribuir al debate que se genera en la clase y que facilita su aprendizaje.

Para concluir, uno de los hallazgos más notables es que la metodología y las tareas propuestas requirieron un ejercicio de introspección, lo que da lugar a que el alumnado cambie o complemente su conocimiento y conciencia cultural.

Limitaciones

La primera limitación es el reducido número de participantes en el estudio; aunque 12 alumnos asistieron a ambas clases, solo 9 alumnos completaron el cuestionario para la sesión 1, *Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?*, mientras que 11 alumnos completaron el cuestionario para la sesión 2, *Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?*

Respecto al género, el número de mujeres supera al número de hombres. De los 9 participantes que rellenaron el primer cuestionario había 4 hombres. Además, 10 de los 11 participantes que completaron el segundo cuestionario eran mujeres. Un estudio con un número más equilibrado de tanto de hombres como de mujeres garantizaría que las opiniones masculinas se escucharan de igual manera.

Una última limitación es la edad de los participantes, ya que hay muchos más adultos que adolescentes, y solo hay un participante masculino que ha completado ambos cuestionarios. El estudio se habría beneficiado de una perspectiva intergeneracional.

Futuras líneas de investigación

En mi Tesis de fin de Máster, *The role of oral skills in the foreign language: a study on speaking and interaction* (2013), se desarrolló una propuesta didáctica para fomentar la producción y coproducción de textos orales en el aula, y se apuntaba a la posibilidad de diseñar materiales pedagógicos adicionales. La propuesta didáctica diseñada para esta Tesis Doctoral radica en mi interés por el desarrollo de materiales y contiene dos unidades con cinco sesiones cada una, aunque solo una sesión de cada unidad fue implementada y estudiada.

Una posibilidad es dedicar más tiempo de clase a estas dos sesiones. Una segunda posibilidad es implementar las cuatro sesiones restantes de ambas unidades. Un plan de acción final sería desarrollar material adicional para el análisis de diversos temas transversales a través de las manifestaciones de la cultura popular de la lengua inglesa como la publicidad, la comida, el arte corporal, el grafiti, los “reality shows”, o las películas de Hollywood, Nollywood, y Bollywood.

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Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?

Popular culture manifestations at the intersection between popular culture of English-speaking countries and cross-curricular issues

Main researcher: José María Santoro Moreno (Sierra Morena Official Language School)

This survey is part of my PhD Thesis, *Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries: a pedagogical proposal and study on its implementation at an Official Language School*, which addresses the intersection between popular culture of English-speaking countries and cross-curricular issues.

The goal of this survey is to get to know your opinion about the unit I have designed in order to bring these aspects together and which has been implemented in your English class today.

By clicking on the "NEXT" icon:

- I confirm that I have been informed about the aids and main features of the present study.
- I have had the time and the opportunity to ask questions and raise any doubts I had.
- I have been assured that the confidentiality of my data will be maintained.
- I give consent voluntarily and know that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason.
- I give my consent for participation in the proposed study and for the anonymization of my answers.

I thank you very much for your contribution to this research.

NOTES:

Please, find below a brief definition of the keywords used in this survey.

1. Cross-curricular issues: a set of contents integrated across disciplines, which address current social issues. In Andalusia, cross-curricular issues are: road safety education, environmental education, consumer education, health education, coeducation, moral and civic education, education for peace, sex education, and education about the Andalusian culture –*Ley Orgánica de Educación 2/2006, de 3 de mayo* (Organic Law of Education 2/2006 of 3rd May)–.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

2. Popular culture: a set of “cultural activities or commercial products reflecting, suited to, or aimed at the tastes of the general masses of people” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/popular+culture>). Popular culture includes publicity and promotion, comics, popular literature, television series and films, reality shows, music, the Internet, graffiti and body art, and food.

Gender: - Male - Female - Other	Age:	Education. Please, indicate your field of study: - No university degree (High School, Baccalaureate, Vocational Training) - Bachelor (<i>Grado, Licenciatura, Diplomatura</i>) - Master’s Degree - PhD - Other	I speak: - Spanish - English - French - German - Italian - Other Please, specify:		
Please, tick the appropriate box: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).					
<i>First session</i> <i>Moral and civic education: do new technologies isolate us?</i>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1. This unit has made me reflect on how new technologies isolate us.					
2. This unit has raised my awareness of the dangers of new technologies.					
3. I have increased my awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people’s brain.					

<p>4. I have understood that there is no downside to the use of the Internet.</p>					
<p>5. TV series (e.g. <i>The X-Files</i>) encourage me to analyse social issues such as social isolation.</p>					
<p>6. Popular literature (e.g. <i>The Shallows</i>) makes it difficult to deal with social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.</p>					
<p>7. Exploring popular literature from English-speaking countries helps me understand society's concerns such as the downsides of the Internet.</p>					
<p>8. Exploring TV series from English-speaking countries keeps me from understanding society's concerns such as social isolation.</p>					
<p>9. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies in class through TV series from the English-speaking world.</p>					
<p>10. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet</p>					

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

in class through popular literature from the English-speaking world.					
11. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class does not help me reflect on current social issues such as the dangers of new technologies.					
12. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. coeducation, and health education) in subsequent lessons.					
13. I found this unit highly interesting.					
Please, justify your answer.					
14. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries such as TV series, helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies.					
Please, justify your answer.					
15. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.					

<p>16. My perception of social issues such as the benefits and dangers of the Internet has changed after completing this unit.</p>					
<p>Please, justify your answer.</p>					
<p>17. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, such as popular literature, are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as the downsides of the Internet.</p>					
<p>Please, justify your answer.</p>					
<p>18. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.</p>					
<p>Please, include any other comments about the materials implemented, the topics discussed, or any other aspect you consider relevant:</p>					

Appendix 2. Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?

Popular culture manifestations at the intersection between popular culture of English-speaking countries and cross-curricular issues

Main researcher: José María Santoro Moreno (Sierra Morena Official Language School)

This survey is part of my PhD Thesis, *Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries: a pedagogical proposal and study on its implementation at an Official Language School*, which addresses the intersection between popular culture of English-speaking countries and cross-curricular issues.

The goal of this survey is to get to know your opinion about the unit I have designed in order to bring these aspects together and which has been implemented in your English class today.

By clicking on the "NEXT" icon:

- I confirm that I have been informed about the aids and main features of the present study.
- I have had the time and the opportunity to ask questions and raise any doubts I had.
- I have been assured that the confidentiality of my data will be maintained.
- I give consent voluntarily and know that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason.
- I give my consent for participation in the proposed study and for the anonymization of my answers.

I thank you very much for your contribution to this research.

NOTES:

Please, find below a brief definition of the keywords used in this survey.

1. Cross-curricular issues: a set of contents integrated across disciplines, which address current social issues. In Andalusia, cross-curricular issues are: road safety education, environmental education, consumer education, health education, coeducation, moral and civic education, education for peace, sex education, and education about the Andalusian culture –*Ley Orgánica de Educación 2/2006, de 3 de mayo* (Organic Law of Education 2/2006 of 3rd May)–.

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

2. Popular culture: a set of “cultural activities or commercial products reflecting, suited to, or aimed at the tastes of the general masses of people” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/popular+culture>). Popular culture includes publicity and promotion, comics, popular literature, television series and films, reality shows, music, the Internet, graffiti and body art, and food.

Gender: - Male - Female - Other	Age:	Education. Please indicate your field of study: - No university degree (High School, Baccalaureate, Vocational Training) - Bachelor (<i>Grado, Licenciatura, Diplomatura</i>) - Master’s Degree - PhD - Other	I speak: - Spanish - English - French - German - Italian - Other Please, specify:		
Please, tick the appropriate box: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).					
<i>Second session</i>					
<i>Coeducation: is there (in)equality in household chores?</i>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1. This unit has made me reflect on the importance of equality in household chores.					
2. I have increased my awareness of how poor household chore organization hinders couples’ wellbeing.					
3. I think comic strips are useless to identify gender stereotypes.					

<p>4. Working on comics (e.g. <i>For better for worse</i>) encourage me to discuss social issues such as gender equality in modern society.</p>					
<p>5. Comics keep me from understanding society's concerns such as gender stereotypes.</p>					
<p>6. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes in class through comics from the English-speaking world.</p>					
<p>7. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores in class through comics from the English-speaking world.</p>					
<p>8. Analysing cross-curricular issues in class is unimportant to reflect on current social issues such as equality between men and women.</p>					
<p>9. I am interested in exploring more cross-curricular issues (e.g. health education, and moral and civic education) in subsequent lessons.</p>					
<p>10. Exploring comics help me understand</p>					

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

society's concerns such as equality between men and women.					
11. I found this unit highly interesting.					
Please, justify your answer.					
12. This unit, based on popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries (e.g. comics), helps me reflect on cross-curricular issues such as gender stereotypes.					
Please, justify your answer.					
13. This unit, which explores popular culture manifestations from English-speaking countries, demotivates me.					
14. My perception of social issues such as household chores as a source of conflict has changed after completing this unit.					
Please, justify your answer.					
15. Popular culture manifestations from English-speaking					

<p>countries (e.g. comics) are unsuitable to examine cross-curricular issues such as gender equality.</p>					
<p>Please, justify your answer. </p>					
<p>16. This unit has enhanced my understanding of popular culture from English-speaking countries.</p>					
<p>17. I would like to learn about cross-curricular issues such as equality between men and women in class through comics from the English-speaking world.</p>					
<p>Please, include any other comments about the materials implemented, the topics discussed, or any other aspect you consider relevant: </p>					

Appendix 3. Teachers' classroom observation form

Teacher (observer):

Group (observee):

Date and time:

The following category labels and their descriptors identify key pedagogical goals. The subsequent indicators illustrate possible observable features of goals achievement. All features would not be observable in any one class.

ITEM	CHECKLIST	COMMENTS
1. The unit is engaging.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Students participate actively.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. The authentic materials selected are appropriate for the group.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. TV series motivate students.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Popular literature motivates students.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Comics motivate students.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
7. TV series help students reflect on cross-curricular issues such as social isolation because of new technologies.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Popular literature helps students reflect on cross-curricular issues such as the dangers of new technologies.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Comics help students reflect on cross-curricular issues such as equality in household chores.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
10. The unit has increased students' awareness of how poor organization of	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Engaging with cross-curricular issues through the popular culture of English-speaking countries. A didactic proposal and a study on its implementation at an Official language School

household chores hinders people's wellbeing.		
11. Comics are useful to identify gender stereotypes.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
12. The unit encourages students to discuss gender issues in modern society.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
13. The unit raises students' awareness of the dangers of new technologies.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
14. The unit makes students aware that there are downsides to the use of the Internet.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
15. The unit increases students awareness of how new technologies have a negative effect on people's brain.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
16. Students make use of English to interact and express opinions about social issues such as the use of new technologies.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
17. Students are aware that the unit connects cross-curricular issues and society's concerns such as equality between men and women.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
18. Students' interaction is promoted by student-centred activities such as role playing, debates, peer cooperative, and group work.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
19. Other comments.		