

***Page by Paige* Discussion Guide**

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****Literary Analysis****

Graphic Novels as a Format:

Graphic novels continue to be a source of debate in language arts classrooms. Since *Page by Paige* relies heavily on illustrating Paige's internal world, how would it have been a different reading experience if it was made as a prose novel instead? What makes visual storytelling different than prose storytelling? Some scenes don't have any words and let the pictures do the talking, so is that still considered literature? You can discuss the format more at large by asking the question if reading comics and graphic novels develops literacy skills. This can also be a good topic for a class debate. Or you can use this as a segway to discuss other forms of visual storytelling, such as Trajan's Column or German woodcut wordless books.

Metaphors:

Page by Paige is simply swimming in metaphors, because it's how Paige translates her experiences and processes feelings so she understands them. Select an example and have students describe the image visually, what they think is being expressed, and if it can be interpreted different ways. For example, an image of being submerged in water could be interpreted as calming or terrifying depending on the individual reader's point of view. Did you notice any reoccurring motifs, and what do you think it symbolized? Students can also be invited to come up with their own examples of how Paige would illustrate a scene from their own life.

Similes:

Some of the drawings in *Page by Paige* illustrate specific common expressions, making them more of a simile than a metaphor. For example, instead of writing that she feels so vulnerable it's like she's walking on a tightrope, Paige is actually walking on a tightrope. After analyzing examples in the book, invite students to illustrate a saying they use themselves. (Such as "walking on eggshells" or "being an open book.")

Personification:

Continuing on the theme of figurative language, you can also follow a similar process of analyzing personification in *Page by Paige*. Have students look for an example of when an object or abstract idea comes to life with human characteristics to interact with Paige. (Such as Paige's heart or paintings at the museum that talk to her.) What do you think is the deeper meaning? What does the object in the scene symbolize for Paige?

****Visual Analysis****

Nonverbal Communication:

Since the characters are drawn, the reader can interpret a character's thoughts and feelings through more visual cues. Select a scene from *Page by Paige* and discuss what you can learn about a character through their facial expressions and body language. (Such as when Jules confronts Paige about their friendship or whenever Paige interacts with her Mom.) Does this sometimes contradict with what the character is saying verbally?

Style Duality:

The look of Paige's inner world and external world are drawn differently. Why do you think the artist drew it this way? Have students articulate the difference in their appearances such as the shading, imagery, tone, and composition. How does the layout/composition influence the pacing? How does the line quality and shading style create a tone? Ask students if they themselves sometimes retreat into their own head, and what their mental realm is like. Is it a loud, colorful, dark, quiet, cluttered, etc? Does this contradict how they act and/or their physical environment in the real world? Is it an escape or a prison?

Word Art:

Sometimes Paige uses words visually to express what she isn't saying out loud. For example, when she begins her new school she imagines the signs with words of encouragement on them as a sort of pep talk. Is there anything that you tell yourself when things are rough, like a personal mantra? Then in other moments of *Page by Paige*, her imaginary words express her doubts and fears. They literally cloud her head. Are these things real issues or has she simply built them up in her head? Why does Paige doubt herself? What would your doubt clouds say?

Creativity:

Like many introverts, Paige has two sides: who she presents to the world and then who she is inside her head. She uses a creative outlet to merge the two more together. Do you feel like two different people sometimes? When you pour your heart into something private such as a journal, diary, instrument, or sketchbook is that a substitute for friendship? Is Paige's sketchbook a character in the story?

****Other Themes for Discussion****

Relationships:

*Parents...*Paige censors herself in front of her mother and avoids sharing her sketchbook with her until the end of the story. Why does she distance herself? Do you think she is acting out of anger? Ask students if they do the same thing with their parents.

*Friends...*Paige's friends all reflect back different qualities of herself. How does each friend help her? What traits, qualities, and skills do your friends bring out in you?

Home:

Throughout the story, Paige struggles to adjust to life in a big city and makes the city feel more like home by hanging up drawings of trees. Do you think she has evolved into a city girl or will she always be a country girl at heart? What are the benefits and drawbacks of living in the big city versus a small town? If you have moved to a new town yourself, what did you do to make it feel more like home?

Street Art:

Street art has grown to be more accepted by the art world, but still stirs up controversy. Would you consider wheatpastes like the ones hung by Paige to be vandalism or is it art? What's the difference between Paige's street art trees and graffiti tags? This can be a good opportunity to introduce students to other street artists such as Banksy and Swoon, or to perhaps have a class debate.

Online Criticism:

Paige struggles with criticism of her artwork when she posts it online, taking the comments very personally. Have you ever had a drawing criticized in an art class? How would that feel different than having your art criticized by a stranger online? Do you think it's easier to be mean online since you don't have to see the other person face to face?