



Persepolis is a graphic memoir (an autobiography structured as a graphic novel) that tells the story of Marji, a young girl growing up in revolutionary Iran, where the threat of violence, arrest, and torture are everyday fears. As the child of educated, socially-connected parents, Marji comes of age in a household where she is encouraged to voice her opinion, which leads her into conflict in the world outside her home. This text is essential to any discussion about the genre of the graphic novel and provides a keen insight into a world that many young readers today cannot fathom. Satrapi makes faraway and confusing elements of the modern conflict in the Middle East accessible and understandable to readers worldwide through the eyes of its adolescent protagonist. During the study of this text, students will analyze the introduction, development, and complexity of literary themes in the book. In the interest of analyzing theme, students will also observe and discuss a variety of authorial/artistic choices; to this end, literary terms that students will identify and analyze include allusion, bildungsroman, indirect characterization, foreshadowing, graphic weight, juxtaposition, foreground, figurative and literal imagery, emanata, metaphor, and symbolism. Lender copies are available in my classroom upon request, but I highly recommend that each student obtain a copy of the book for their own study since in-text annotations can go a long way to aid comprehension and analysis. **Students**, you'll need a copy (either your own or a signed-out lender copy) with you in class by the due date next week.

Parents, there are some potentially controversial issues involved with this novel; the narrative depicts moments of violence, murder, torture, and political as well as religious extremism. Even though the illustrations are stylized, even cartoonish, several characters die violent deaths (e.g. by firing squad, public hanging, by falling while running from the police). In one instance, blood is figuratively depicted as black, oozing from a shadowy figure. Other scenes portray bombings, revolutionary battles, and dead victims. The story also contains an implied mention of sexual assault (in that the protagonist's mother reveals that — since it's illegal to execute a virgin — unmarried female prisoners are forced to "marry" soldiers before their deaths). If you'd like to review the book on your own, a full e-text is posted on my site, BentonEnglish.com. Copy of the material available for parental review. If, upon review and consideration, you would prefer your child to study an alternate literary work, please shoot me a quick email by the start of next week: bentonro@pcsb.org