

Analyzing a (Not So) Simple Graphic Text

Presentation by Tracy Edmunds, M.A.Ed.

www.TracyEdmunds.com

“Just as every word and aspect of grammar is purposeful in a traditional text, every part of the panel in a comic or graphic novel is used with intention.”

—Ryan Chapman [@APLit_Teacher](#) on Twitter

PAGE ONE

Page Background:

What do you notice about the page background? Why do you think [Jacob Chabot](#) did this?

The background extends down the whole page, behind all the panels. This grounds the story in its setting—you know that it all takes place here.

Panel One:

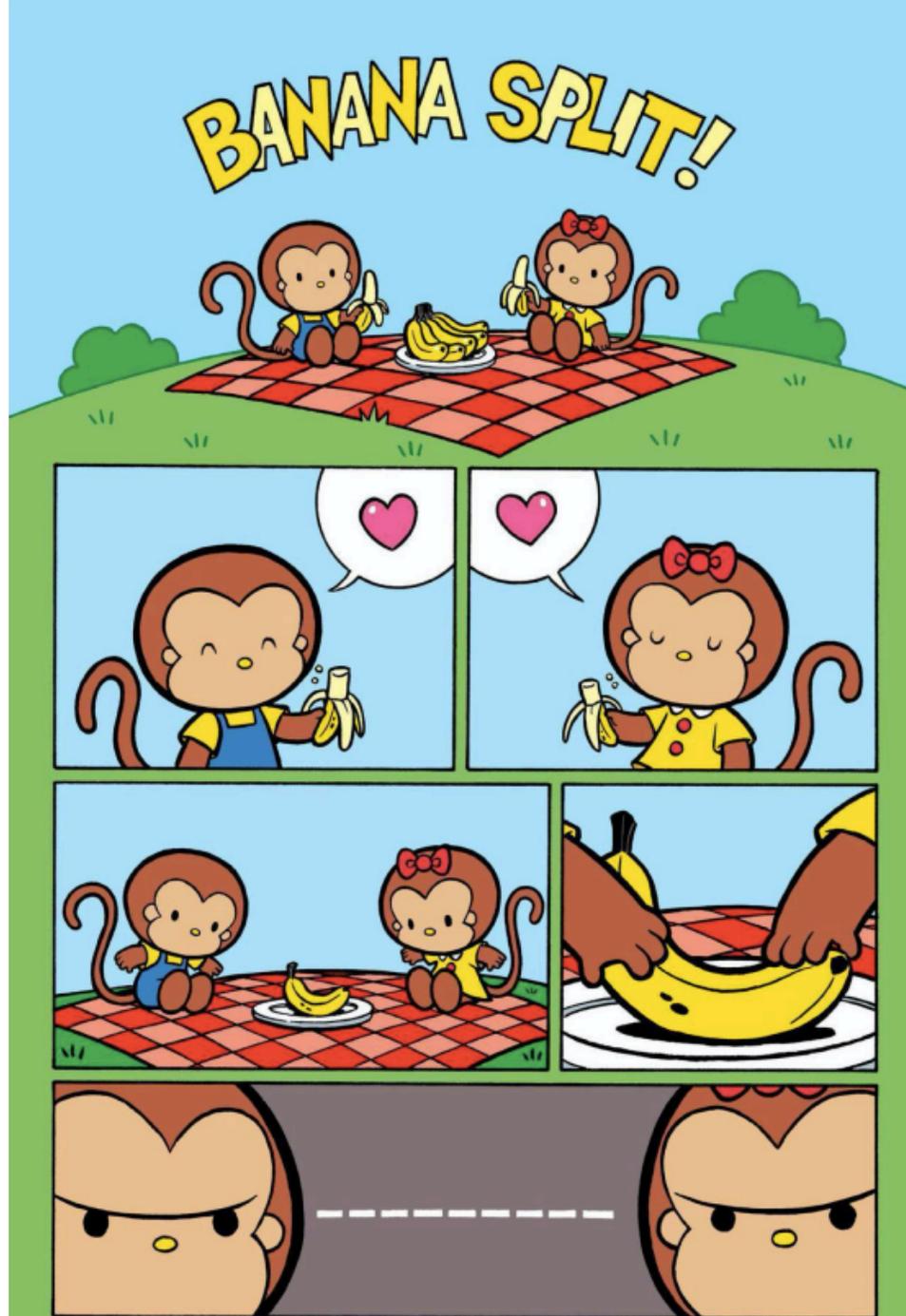
What is going on? How do you know?
Two monkeys are having a picnic. You can tell it's a picnic because they are outside on the grass and they are on a blanket. They are eating bananas.

Panels 2 & 3:

What has happened between the first panel and these panels? How do you know?
You can't see their mouths, but you can tell each monkey has taken a bite of their banana. You can see that part of each banana is gone, and there are banana "crumbs" nearby.

What do the hearts mean? How do you know?
The monkeys are in separate panels, so it probably doesn't mean they love each other. They must love the bananas.

Why do you think the panels are symmetrical?
Maybe to show that each monkey loves bananas equally.



Panel 4:

What is going on? How do you know?
The monkeys only have one banana left.

The monkeys' eyes are just dots, so how can you tell they are looking at the banana?
Body language: they are leaning towards it.

Bonus math: How many bananas has each monkey eaten? Hint: Look back at the first panel. (Answer: 3)

Panel Five:

What is happening in this panel? How do you know?
The monkeys are both reaching for the banana. The monkeys' positions have been established in earlier panels, so you can tell each hand belongs to a different monkey. Also, the position of the thumbs help show that a hand is coming from each side.

Panel Six:

What is happening in this panel? How do you know?
The monkeys are looking at each other. Chabot has added brows to make them look angry or determined. The dotted line shows that they are looking straight into each others' eyes. The background color is darker and more ominous.

How can you tell which monkey is which in this panel?
The monkeys' positions have been established in previous panels, and you can just see the bow on Tammy's head.

PAGE TWO

Panel 1:

What is going on? How do you know?

The monkeys are both saying they love bananas. They are both holding the banana, they are leaning toward each other, and they still have angry brows. They must be arguing over the banana because they both want it. Hello Kitty is walking towards them.

Panel 2:

What is Hello Kitty saying? What does she mean?

There is a picture of a coin and a curly line to show it is flipping over. You can tell she is asking a question because of the question mark. So, she is asking if they can flip a coin to decide who gets the banana.

How can you tell the monkeys are listening to her?

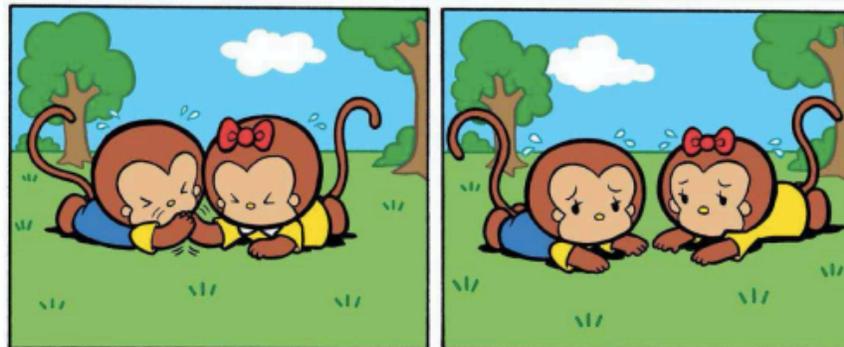
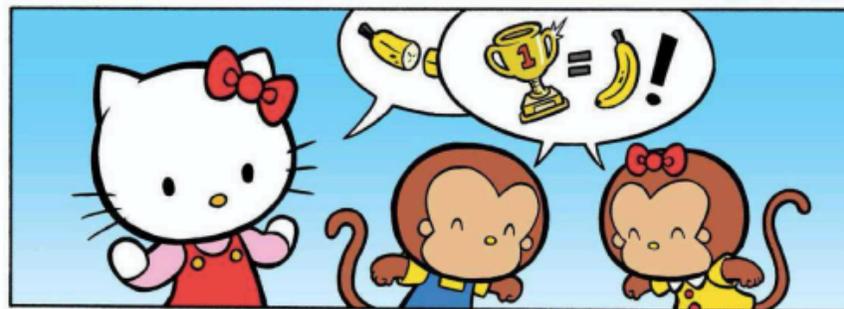
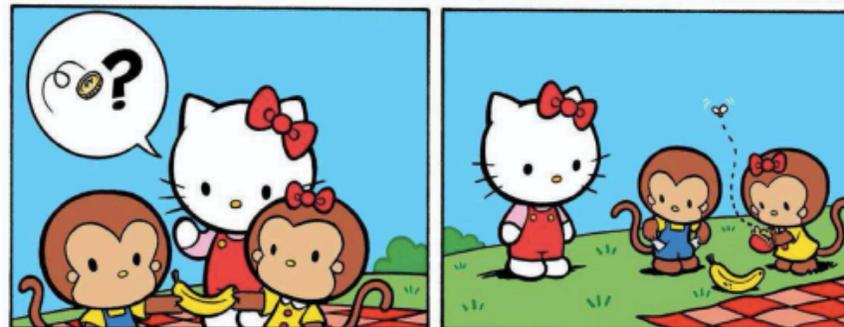
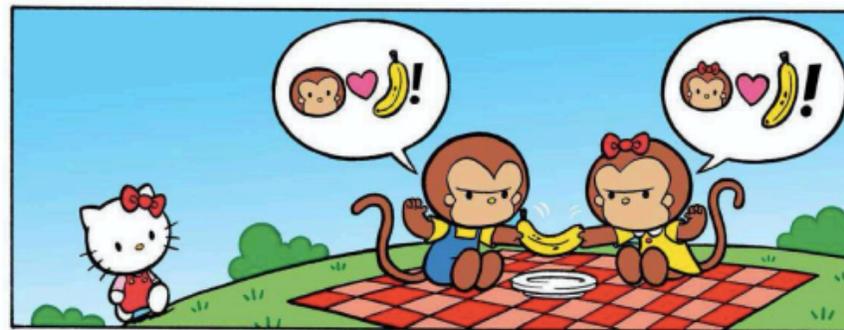
They don't have angry brows anymore and their heads are tilted up toward her slightly.

Panel 3:

What is happening here?

The girl monkey opened her purse to get a coin, but it is empty. The fly coming out is a way to show that the coin purse hasn't been opened in a long time.

The boy monkey has pulled out his pockets to show that they are empty, so he doesn't have a coin either.



Panel 4:

What are the characters saying?

Hello Kitty's word balloon shows a banana cut in half. She is saying they could cut the banana in half and share it. The monkeys' balloon shows a trophy, an equal sign, and a banana. The trophy means winning, so they are probably saying they want to have a contest and the winner gets the banana.

How do you know both monkeys are talking?

The word balloon has two tails, one to each monkey.

Why are the word balloons overlapping?

The monkeys' balloon is partially covering up Hello Kitty's balloon. They are ignoring her, and they are probably talking louder than her.

Panel 6:

What is happening here?

The monkeys are having an arm-wrestling contest. The little water drops mean they are sweating, they are also squeezing their eyes shut, and there are little movement lines around their hands to show that they are shaking. All of this shows that they are trying really hard to win.

Panel 7:

What happened?

You can tell neither monkey has won the arm wrestling because they both look tired and neither is celebrating. They have eyebrows that show they are tired and maybe sad.

PAGE THREE

Panels 1–4:

What is going on? How do you know?

The monkeys are having different contests: chess, archery, dancing, and a running race.

Why do you think these panels are round?

More time is passing here than in previous panels, like a montage in a movie. These panels show one moment of each contest to show us that the monkeys have done them all and no one has won any of them.

Panel 1:

What do the little black scribbles above the monkeys' heads mean?

They are frustrated or angry because neither of them has won the chess game. They also have angry brows.

Panel 2:

What is the boy monkey doing?

The girl monkey just shot her arrow into the same spot as his—note she is closing one eye to aim. He is smacking his own head to show that he is frustrated or exasperated. The little white lines show the movement of his arm and the burst shows him hitting himself.

Panel 3:

What is happening here?

The monkeys are dancing. Hello Kitty is giving both of them a perfect “10” score. Another tie!

Panel 4:

What is happening here?

This is the end of a running race—you can tell because they are “breaking the tape.” They have tied again!



Panel 5:

What is going on? How do you know?

The monkeys are too tired to have any more contests. Their body language and the sweat drops show that they are tired, and the curly lines above their heads show that they are dizzy and unable to stand up.

Panel 6:

What is happening here?

The boy monkey is asking (question mark) if they should cut the banana in half and share it. You can tell he is speaking because the tail of the word balloon points to him. The girl monkey is giving a thumbs-up in agreement.

Panel 7:

What are the monkeys doing?

The monkeys are running. The little puffs show that they are running fast.

Where do you think they are going?

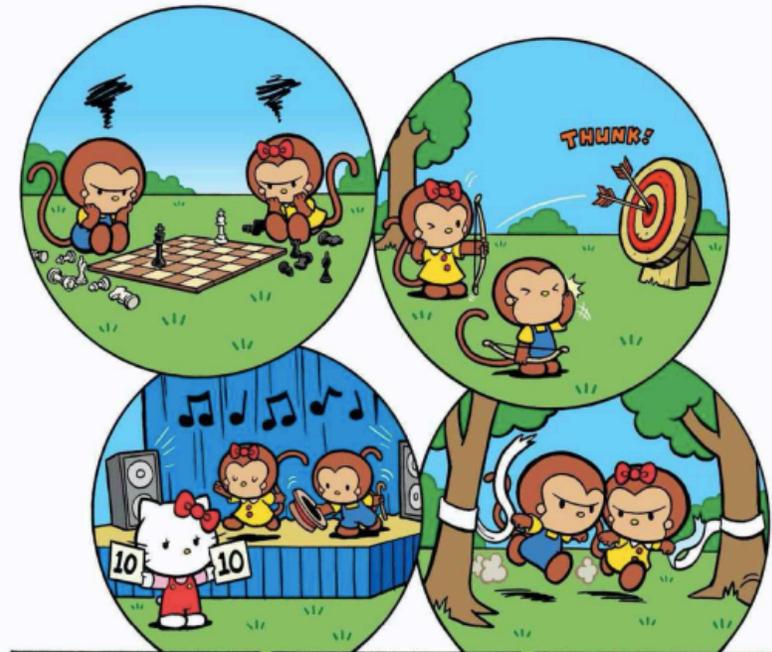
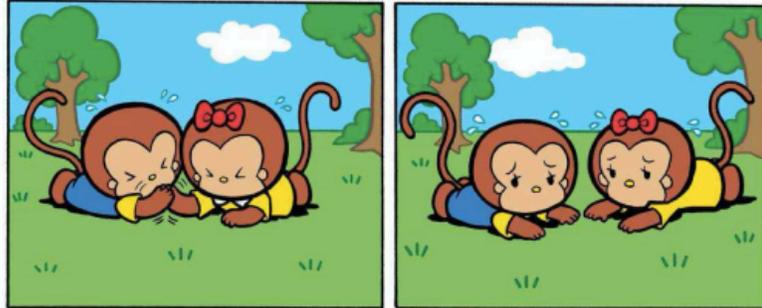
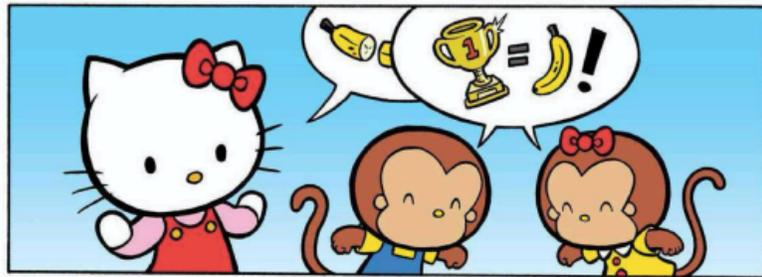
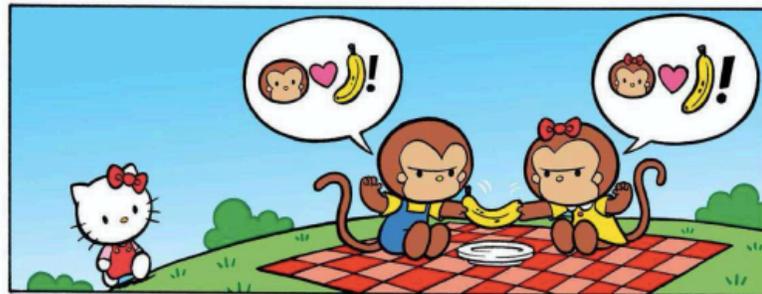
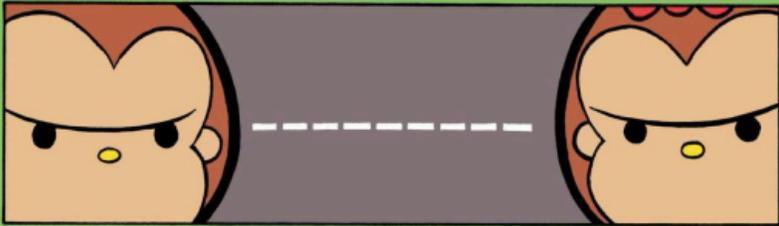
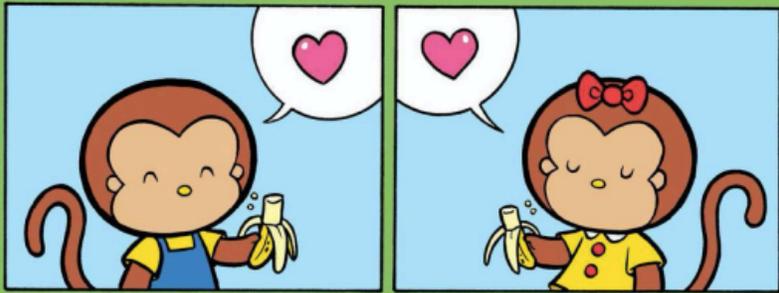
To get the banana.

Panel 8:

What is happening here?

The monkeys have run back to their picnic blanket to get the banana. There is one puff and they are sort of stopped in mid air – this shows that they ran up fast and stopped quickly. A raccoon has eaten their banana! You can see his still-stuffed cheek and the banana peel. Both monkeys are doing a “facepalm” to show they are exasperated.

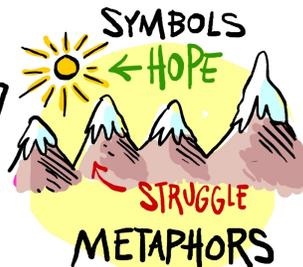
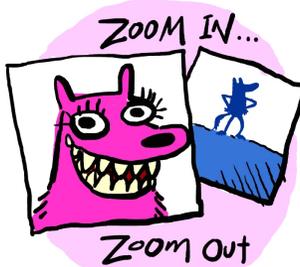
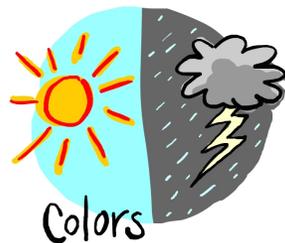
BANANA SPLIT!



the ACCESS LENSES

Thinking about **MOODS** is an excellent way to access a text.

Artists, Writers & Performers show **MOODS** using the following information...



© TREVOR BRYAN © ART BY PETER H. REYNOLDS (JR, AUTHOR OF THE DOT)

Don't forget to make strong connections through moods, lenses and symbols.

The Art of Comprehension

By Trevor Andrew Bryan



Name: _____ Date: _____



Graphic Novel Scavenger Hunt

Directions: As you read a graphic novel, look for the elements listed below. In the boxes, write the number of the first page where you find each one. It's okay if you don't find them all — not every graphic novel has all of these elements.

Word balloon



Close Up



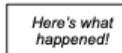
Thought bubble



Splash



Caption



Unusual panel shape



Sound effect



Environmental text



Motion lines



Emanata



↑ [Tracy's Teaching Tools](https://www.tracysteachingtools.com/)
on Teacher Pay Teachers