

Ms. Weber

AP English Language and Composition

Lessons/work:

Directions:

1. Finish reading *Persepolis* and complete the attached questions.
2. Use the graphic organizer to fill in lists of words for each category. Look up unfamiliar terms and research unfamiliar events/places/people.
3. Write a review of the graphic novel and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using the format. Then defend, challenge, or qualify the idea of graphic texts as a legitimate medium for academic study.
4. In 1-2 paragraphs, compare and contrast the American influence and the Islamic influence on Marji's life. Which has a greater effect on her?
5. In 2-3 paragraphs, write a story that parallels Marji's experiences through the point of view of a young boy. What changes, if any, are significant?
6. Read "Beneath the Drawn Veil." What additional biographical information about Satrapi do you learn that helps you understand her graphic novel?

If you do not have your book, an online version can be found here: <https://archive.org/details/PersepolisVolume1/page/n9/mode/2up>

Study/Discussion Questions for Persepolis

These questions are designed to extend students comprehension of what is happening in the novel. Some of the questions may seem deceptively simple; encourage students to look beyond the immediate answer and think about the implications of what is happening in the story.

1. The Veil Pg. 3
 - 1) Why does Marji's mother disguise herself?
 - 2) Why do women have to wear the veil?
2. The Bicycle Pg. 10
 - 1) Why did the police and the Shah burn the people in the movie theater?
 - 2) Why does God leave Marji?
3. The Water Cell Pg. 18
 - 1) Is Grandpa for or against the government?
 - 2) Why does he get arrested for being a communist?
4. Persepolis Pg. 26
 - 1) Has the revolution already happened?
 - 2) Which side are her parents on?
5. The Letter Pg. 33
 - 1) Why was the book-signing clandestine?
 - 2) Why does Marji feel shame?
 - 3) What is the revolution for?
 - 4) Who exposes Mehri's relationship?
6. The Party Pg. 40
 - 1) Why does the Shah attempt to create a democracy?
 - 2) Why wouldn't any countries accept the Shah?
7. The Heroes Pg. 47
 - 3) Why did the CIA train the torturers?
 - 4) Why does the author/artist portray Marji's image shrinking?
8. Moscow Pg. 54
 - 1) Why does Marji's grandfather remain loyal to the Shah?
 - 2) Why does Fereydoon stay to meet the Shah's soldiers?
9. The Sheep Pg. 62
 - 1) What are the idealistic differences within the revolution?
 - 2) Do you think the elections were faked? Why or why not?
 - 3) What dangers make Marji's friends leave?
 - 4) Which war starts?

10. The Trip Pg. 72
 - 1) Why does the government close the universities?
 - 2) Why does Iraq attack Iran?

11. The F-14s Pg. 80
 - 1) Why does Marji's father not believe the news?
 - 2) Why does Marji think that her father is not a patriot?

12. The Jewels Pg. 87
 - 1) Why are the Iranians turning on each other?
 - 2) Why does Mali's family move to Tehran?

13. The Key Pg. 94
 - 1) Why would virgin martyrs need "carnal knowledge" in heaven?
 - 2) Why do people beat their chests for the martyrs?

14. The Wine Pg. 103
 - 1) Why are parties and other activities banned?
 - 2) Why do the police ask to search Marji's parents' apartment?

15. The Cigarette Pg. 111
 - 1) Why didn't Iran accept the proposed peace?
 - 2) What does, "To die a martyr is to inject blood into the veins of society" mean?

16. The Passport Pg. 118
 - 1) Why did Iran close its borders?
 - 2) Why is it so difficult to obtain a passport?

17. Kim Wilde Pg. 126
 - 1) Why are posters and other Western items illegal?
 - 2) Why do you think Marji's mother is permissive about letting her go out?

18. The Shabbat Pg. 135
 - 1) Why is this chapter entitled "The Shabbat?" What is the Shabbat?
 - 2) What does Marji see in the rubble?

19. The Dowry Pg. 143
 - 1) Why do the police give a dowry to Niloufar's parents?
 - 2) Give three reasons that Marji's parents decide to send her out of Iran?

Persepolis Graphic Organizer Word List

Directions: Place the words below into the category on the next page where you think they fit best.

Savak Qom Fire Ceremony Pink Floyd

 Rene Descartes Bani Sadr Moscow Bee
Gees

Mosque Marie Curie Abadan Leon Trotsky

 Stevie Wonder Italy Islamic Zarathustra

Mongolia Iron Maiden Chador Cyrus the Great

 Persepolis ABBA Iraq Fidel Castro

Tehran Free Masons Reza Shah Kim Wilde

 Turkey Alexander Azerbaijan Black Friday

USSR Ataturk Astara Michael Jackson

 Spain Gandhi Nuptial Ceremony Israel

Malcolm X Khorramshahr Anwar Sadat Che Guevara

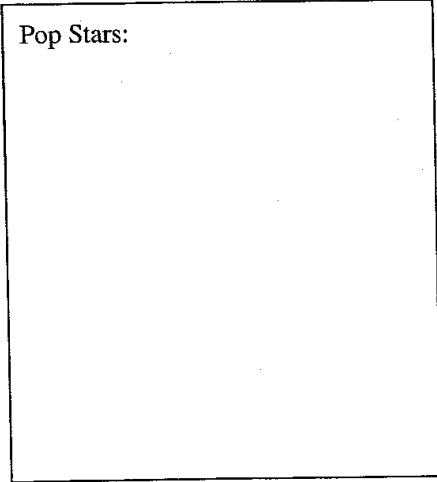
 Persian New Year—Norouz Karl Marx Iran

Jimmy Carter Rod Stewart Julio Iglesias Vladimir Lenin

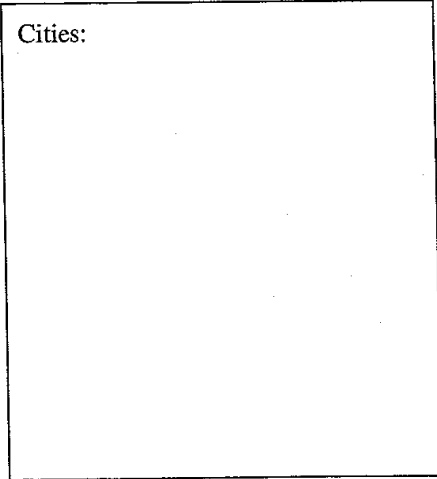
 Shabbat

Persepolis Graphic Organizer

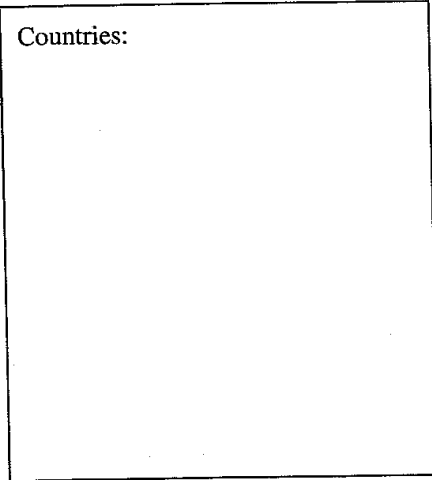
Pop Stars:



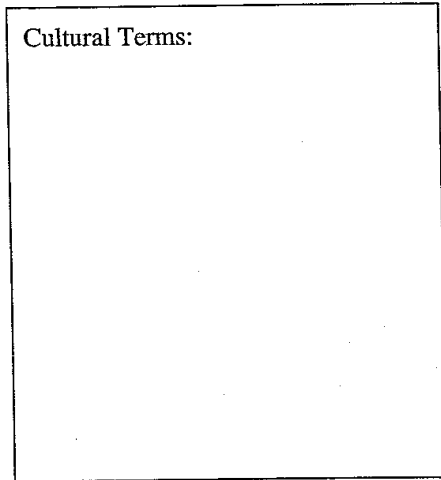
Cities:



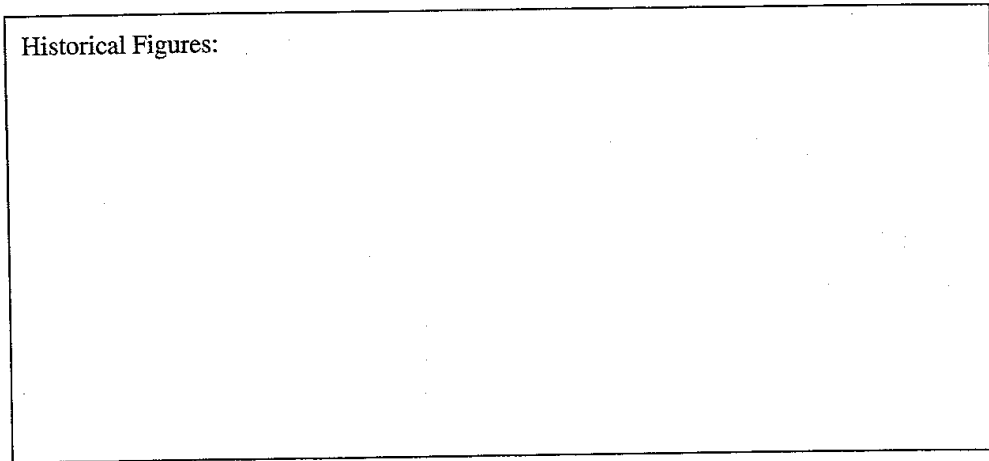
Countries:



Cultural Terms:



Historical Figures:



BENEATH A DRAWN VEIL

Ripley, Amanda

Time Canada; 6/9/2003, Vol. 161 Issue 23, p54, 2p, 2c, 6bw

As a child of Iran's revolution, MARJANE SATRAPI survived war and repression. Persepolis, her comic-book memoir, shines with rebellious life and laughter

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN A comic book does a better job conveying the true predicament of Iran than the leaders of the free world and the best efforts of its free press? Perhaps it means that Marjane Satrapi, the author of the autobiography *Persepolis*, is not distracted by the contradictions that riddle Iran. In black-and-white ink drawings, she presents the memories of her childhood—the repressive morality police marching the streets, the Iraqi F-14 jets streaking past the window panes, and the parties, intellectual debates and love stories carried on behind closed doors. Most importantly, she carefully records all the tiny ways that average people find to defy their oppressors—adults crushing grapes in bathtubs to make wine, teenagers trying to be hip though hip was against the law. She knows you will find these flashes of humanity familiar, even if you have never been forced to wear a veil and beat your breast twice a day in grade school.

Satrapi, 33, grew up in Iran during the Islamic revolution, and then the war with Iraq, before her parents sent her to Europe at 14 to save her from the punishment her curiosity attracted in Tehran. She now lives in Paris, and has been writing and illustrating children's books for years. But with *Persepolis* (named after Iran's ancient capital), she finally listened to her friends' advice and told her own story. She promised them, "If nobody wants it, I'll make copies and give it to all of you." The first three volumes, which began to be released in 2000, have sold nearly 150,000 combined copies in France, and have won critical acclaim. The story has been translated into German, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. The English edition came out in North America in April and in the U.K. 2 weeks ago. Her timing was perfect. "I am part of the 'axis of evil' you know" she likes to say.

Persepolis is told through the eyes of a child. And that is the ideal way for the uninitiated reader to absorb the whiplash of Iran's history. Wide-eyed, Satrapi as a young girl demands an explanation for the crimes of the Shah, and then for the violence of the revolution, and finally for the bombing of her neighborhood during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. The country—and Satrapi and her family—career from one ideology to the next. She is taught from first grade on that God chose the Shah; every time his name is mentioned, all the students have to stand up. But after the Shah flees the revolution, her teacher instructs the class to rip his picture out of their textbooks. Her parents, upper-class leftists, risk their lives marching for the revolution—only to watch as it is hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists.

Satrapi herself tries on identities like costumes; first she is convinced she is a prophet and has regular consultations with God in her bedroom. Then, during the revolution, she demonstrates with her friends in the backyard, pretending to be Che Guevara. After the revolution is over, Satrapi listens as a family friend newly released from prison recounts how the nerves in the foot can be perfect torture receptacles. "My parents were so shocked that they forgot to spare me this experience," Satrapi writes.

She laments the lack of a hero in her own family: her dad never went to prison, not once! But soon her uncle is released from jail and regales her with stories of suffering. She sleeps with the swan that he fashioned out of bread in his cell. During the day, she and her friends make up "torture games" to play in the street.

But within days, her uncle is taken back to prison and executed. The family friend is found drowned in his bathtub. Satrapi's non-religious French school is shut down and she is sent to an all-girls school. All the while, people cope by living in the small cracks in the system. It is in these cracks that *Persepolis* shines. When Satrapi and her friends are handed veils to wear, they tie them together to make a jump rope. From her parents' vacation to Turkey, she asks them to bring back forbidden tokens of Western culture: a denim jacket, chocolate and posters of Kim Wilde and Iron Maiden, which they dutifully smuggle in the lining of a coat. After she is threatened by the Guardians of the Revolution on the street, who berate her for her sneakers and jacket, she locks herself in her bedroom and dances madly to *Kids in America*.

But Satrapi does not neglect the darker side of human adaptation, either. As one corrupt leadership is swapped with another, the hypocrisy trickles down. A neighbor who has always had a spot on her cheek now claims she got it from a bullet at a revolutionary demonstration. Another woman who used to flit round the neighborhood in miniskirts suddenly dons a full-length chador. The war with Iraq begins, but the cancers within seem almost as toxic as the bombs outside. Satrapi's mother puts up black curtains to prevent the neighbors from spying on their illegal card games. Satrapi is struck by a slogan on a wall: "To die a martyr is to inject blood into the veins of society"

The book ends when Satrapi is sent off by her parents to Austria, where she will find herself free but utterly alone. (A sequel about this excruciating adjustment is out in France and set for release in English in September 2004.) In the last frame, Satrapi looks back one last time to see her mother, a rock of a woman, fainting in her father's arms.

When Satrapi visited Iran in 2000, she was impressed with the changes. They were small, but then Satrapi is a student of details. "Probably I will not see Iran the way I want to see it in my lifetime. But so what?" she says, talking so fast she outpaces her own breath. The adult Satrapi, like the child in her book, is a beguiling character. She is adrift in earnestness one moment, and then alight with brutal realism the next. From a hotel room in Austin, Texas, she marvels at the open-mindedness of the Americans who have come to hear her on a promotional tour. Her biggest problem so far is caused by the smoking restrictions. In Iran, she learned that the more forbidden something was, the more she craved it. "So I smoke 10 times as much in America," she says.

Later, in less sunny tones, she sums up her rebuttal of President Bush's rhetoric toward Iraq and Iran. "What I would like is for the U.S. to say, 'We don't give a shit about you. We are the lion in the jungle, and we are eating you because we are more powerful.' Fine. But all this talk of goodness and liberation and 'We love you' makes me sick."

After two months fighting for a visa, Satrapi arrived at JFK Airport in New York on May 14. For an hour and a half she was interrogated, fingerprinted and, she says, talked down to by customs officials. Afterward, in the corridor of the airport, drained and shaken, she did something she has never done: she fainted, "like one of these Victorian ladies," she says, laughing. Or like her mother, watching her leave Tehran airport so many years before. Then Satrapi got up, climbed into a waiting limo, rolled down the windows and started smoking.