COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on . . . topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

SEEING IS BELIEVING: GRAPHIC NOVELS IN THE CLASSROOM

One of the most difficult tasks a teacher has is engaging students with complex and unfamiliar subject matter. One solution to student engagement and content comprehension issues may be found in the appropriate use of graphic novels.

A number of research studies, including Beverley Brenna's work with elementary school students (2013) and Joanna Schmidt's work with college students (2011), among others, demonstrate the benefits to using graphic novels in the classroom. The combination of pictures and words supports comprehension and inspires self-motivation. For example, rather than decode an unfamiliar word,

students can use the visual aid to "see" what a word means. This is particularly helpful, of course, with struggling readers or English language learners. Graphic novels offer an educator the means to differentiate instruction while using one teaching resource. Students can clearly see the interdependency of the text with the images, and advanced or on-grade-level students can explore the ways in which the text complements or enhances the images and vice versa.

In addition, using images allows a story to move forward at a rapid pace without the risk of the students losing the narrative. They will be motived to turn the pages and explore the story as it unfolds. In some graphic novels, the text is minimal or even nonexistent. In those cases, students have the opportunity to use higher-order thinking skills to infer the meaning of the images based on the clues offered in what they can see and how it relates to the context of the larger narrative.

One of the most interesting findings in the research is that processing text and images together leads to better recall and learning. Neurological experiments have shown that humans process text and images in different areas of the brain, known as the Dual-Coding Theory of Cognition. According to Allan Paivio (1986), images are much easier for the brain to retrieve from memory. He found that pairing a text with an image increases memory retention for both text and images.

Selected Classroom Strategies
While the advantages of using the appropriate graphic novels in the classroom can be substantial, some specific strategies are useful when teaching with these resources. The following are some examples of ways to use the graphic novel *Ghost River*: *The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga* in a classroom. Have the students approach page five of the graphic novel using one of these suggestions.