

Using *The Prophet: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* in the classroom: A Q&A with the creators

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Why should a new generation of students care about this book?

ADL: While the twenty-first century offers some new challenges, admittedly, today's generation shares some of the conflicts and concerns that previous generations have endured. We have always contended with power dynamics, with finding meaning in our lives, with understanding others, with navigating relationships, and so on. Addressing these topics through *The Prophet* can leave us feeling more connected to our history and our predecessors. In short, we are not alone in our struggles; we belong to a complex tapestry of human experience.

What is it about the graphic novel format that makes the book classroom-friendly?

JR: From my experience teaching in middle school, I know that so many students are visual learners (myself included), and sometimes it takes that addition of pictures for some students to engage with the material. Graphic novels—whether they're poetry, like *The Prophet*, or nonfiction and biography, like so many other graphic novels on the market—open up new pathways for students who might otherwise miss out on the kinds of literary experiences others have been able to enjoy.

What kinds of classes would you hope to see the book used in?

JR: I think this book would be great for teaching literacy classes and art classes in middle school.

ADL: I agree, and I think the book could work well at a number of levels, from middle school through college-level courses. One of the things I appreciate most about the poem is how it can speak to a variety of audiences and experiences. Everyone can glean something from Gibran's beautiful words. Therefore, I would love to see not only collegiate humanities classes take this on; high school art or middle school civics classes might also add the book to their preexisting curricula.

Are there any classroom discussion questions you would like to propose for the book?

ADL: Students should feel invited to offer their own interpretations and creative imaginings of the book and not feel obligated to accept the adaptation exactly as we have presented it. It would be wonderful for them either to draw their own accounts of Gibran's text or to expand beyond the brief glimpses we see of Orphalese. They could enrich their reading by visualizing even more of this society, its highs and its lows, and by applying some of their own youthful experience to the text.

What would you like to see students take away from their reading? Put another way, how do you think this book can inspire today's students to lead their best lives?

JR: I'd like students to take away some of the same things I did while reading this book. Despite the fact that it was written one hundred years ago, it has so much to say about life that is

completely relatable today. No matter how different life in 2023 seems from 1923, there are experiences that humans share across geography *and* time. There are so many ways to be distracted, so many things that call our attention, but it is still possible and necessary to recognize the beauty in friendship, or the importance of sorrow if one is to feel joy.