



X-MEN – B1

I. About this Lesson

Activity title: Exploring “X-MEN” by MARVEL

Level: B1

Subject: English as a foreign language

Timing: 50-60 minutes

Resources: Computer with internet access, worksheet.

Learning objectives:

- a. Presenting one’s favorite comic
- b. Practice reading comprehension
- c. Place the story of the X-MEN as an allegory for marginalized people in society

Materials needed:

- a. Computer with internet access for X-MEN comic God Loves, Man Kills (1982) (https://www.marvel.com/comics/issue/20817/x-men_god_loves_man_kills_-_special_edition_1982)
- b. Whiteboard and markers
- c. Comic strips
- d. Copies of worksheets for students to use



II. Lesson scenario

1. Instructions for the teacher

Preparation before the lesson

Before the lesson provide access to the print and/or online version of “God Loves, Man Kills” (1982) by Claremont and Anderson. Ask students to read the whole comic even if they do not understand everything at first: they are likely to understand more as they progress through the pages. This should be a very fun lesson for students as this is a popular comic within the Marvel Universe and many will certainly be familiar with the X-MEN – however, do not let their excitement overshadow the learning objectives of the lesson, try to incorporate both to make sure students receive the message conveyed. You can also give them more examples of Marvel’s comics to get them excited about using this material in the classroom – i.e. Spiderman, Avengers (Iron Man, Hulk, Black Widow, Loki, Thor, Thanos, Captain America, etc.), Punisher, Daredevil, etc.

*Note: It would be a good practice that this lesson is preceded by a simplified lesson on diversity (in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, class) so that students better understand this lesson when it is taught.

*Note: This lesson is recommended for older learners (14+) as it contains graphic language and images (physical/verbal violence, swear words/insults)



One week before the lesson:

- Ask students to pick their favorite strip from the book, and prepare an explanation as to why they prefer that one in particular. Ask them to write down any questions they might have that can be discussed in class. Additionally, they should all be able to explain the main message that the comic conveys. They can also write 3 things they did not understand or did not like in the comics.

Introduction (5 min)

Start the lesson with a short “CHECK IN” by telling students:

- a. Today, we will be studying Marvel’s *God Loves, Man Kills* by Christopher Claremont and Brent Eric Anderson.
- b. For the preparation, I asked you to read the whole book, choose your favorite strip, explain the message conveyed and note 3 things you did not understand. We will use all of these during our lesson.
- c. Here is the plan for today’s lesson:
 - First, I will split you all into groups of 5-6 and we will each present our favorite strip to our group members
 - Then, we will come back together and discuss what we did not understand
 - Finally, we will do some exercises together to explore the concept of “mutants”, the message the comic conveys and explain the use of allegories in the English language



Part 1: Divide students in groups to discuss their favorite comic strips (10 min)

- a. Divide students in groups of 5-6. This can be done by asking them to pick their groupmates or randomly dividing them yourself.
- b. Ask students to discuss amongst them which strip(s) they liked most, using words from the list of expressions provided previously (10 min)
 - i.e. I really enjoyed...; the nicest thing about this comic is.... Etc.

Part 2: Discuss with students what they did not understand (30 min)

- a. Introduce the next activity: "I asked you to explain the message conveyed in the comic and to write 3 things you did not understand in it."
- b. Ask students to raise their hands and pick some to tell you what they thought the comic was about – you can write some of their answers on the whiteboard (5 min)
- c. Discuss with them elements in the comic book they did not understand – try to resolve all questions. If these pertain to the message conveyed then you can continue with the next activity (10 min)
- d. Ask students: "From what you have read and understood, what is a mutant?" (5 min)
 - Let students take their guesses or give explanations
 - Provide this definition: in the Marvel Universe, mutants are human beings possessing a genetic trait called the "X gene" (hence the name X-MEN). This gives them superpowers.
- e. Tell students that mutants in the Marvel Universe, such as Wolverine, have always stood as a metaphor for the underclass, the outsiders; they represent the ultimate minority



- You can define this vocabulary for them by showing them the table in TASK 1 in the worksheet. The table contains relevant terms that might be used throughout the lesson (10 min)
- This is a great way to enrich B1 students' vocabulary and it also strengthens their understanding of the topic within everyday conversations.

Part 3: Exploring allegories in relation to marginalized people (20 min)

- a. Show students some strips from the X-MEN comic where the X-MEN are seen as creatures of the devil, not deserving to live. Have students complete TASK 2 on the worksheet (10 min). This will strengthen their reading comprehension skills.
 - You can find more similar strips in pages 9 & 18 or you can choose other strips that you think are relevant
- b. Briefly introduce the concept of allegories to the class. Allegories are “a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one”. When it comes to reading comprehension in the English language, it is important to understand these techniques within texts as they help learners understand the text better.
- c. Explain to your students, whether they have experienced this or not, that some people are often excluded and/or disliked by groups of people because they may not have the same colour, amount of money, ethnicity or gender as them – these indicators may be irrational/illogical but they are still being used. The X-MEN comic tries to portray this phenomenon by showing its



main characters as mutants whom William Stryker and his army of Purifiers want to kill because they are different and have unique superpowers.

- d. As an end to the lesson, show students Comic Strip in TASK 3. This signals the end to the lesson on a positive note, saying that as long as you are nice to each other and accept each other's differences (or not point to them at all) then we can all live in a more accepting and tolerant world.
- e. If you have time by the end of the lesson, have them go through some of the exercises on the worksheet. If not, ask them to complete them as homework. Make sure that you explain the answers in class the next time you meet so that no gaps are left in students' understanding of the topic of the lesson.

Answers Exercise 1:

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. False
5. True



2. Worksheet for student

TASK 1: Read the vocabulary list related to our topic.

There are some common words that relate to the inclusion or exclusion of people.

These include:

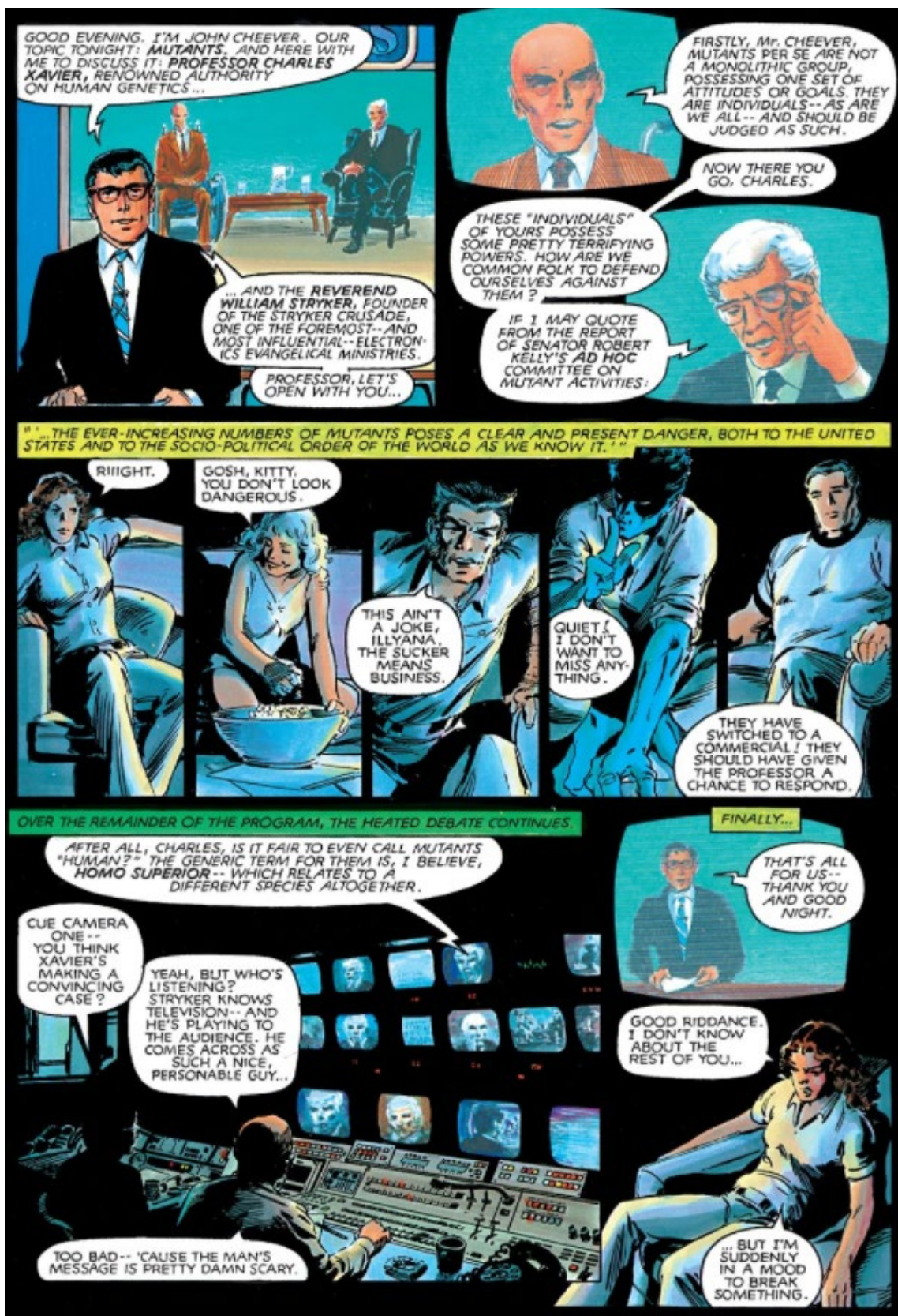
Word	Definition
Acceptance	The act of agreeing that a person will become a member of an organization or group, or that person's belonging to your group as an equal
Disadvantaged	People who do not have good living conditions, a good standard of education, etc., considered as a group
Diversity	The fact of there being people of many different groups in society, within an organization, setting, community, etc.
Equality	The right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment
Exclusion	The act of not allowing someone or something to take part in an activity or to enter a place
Inferior	Someone who is considered to be less important than other people
Marginalized	To treat someone or something as if they are not important
Outsider	Someone who does not belong to a particular group, organization, or place

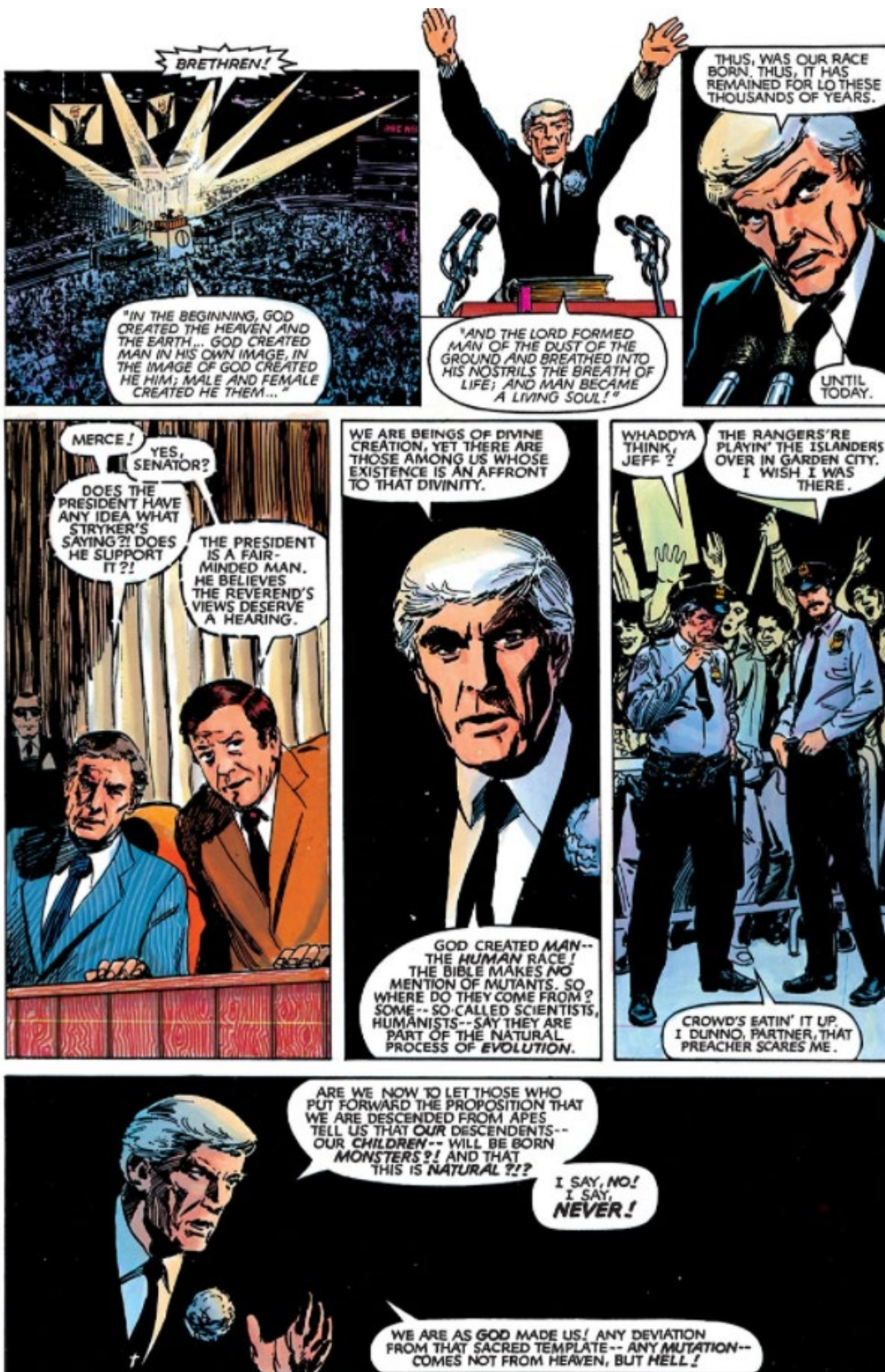


Word	Definition
Respect	<p>a. Politeness, honor, and care shown towards someone or something that is considered important</p> <p>b. The feeling you show when you accept that different customs or cultures are different from your own and behave towards them in a way that would not cause offence</p>
Superior	A superior person believes that or acts as if they are better than other people
Tolerance	Willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them
Underclass	A group of people with a lower social and economic position than any of the other classes of society

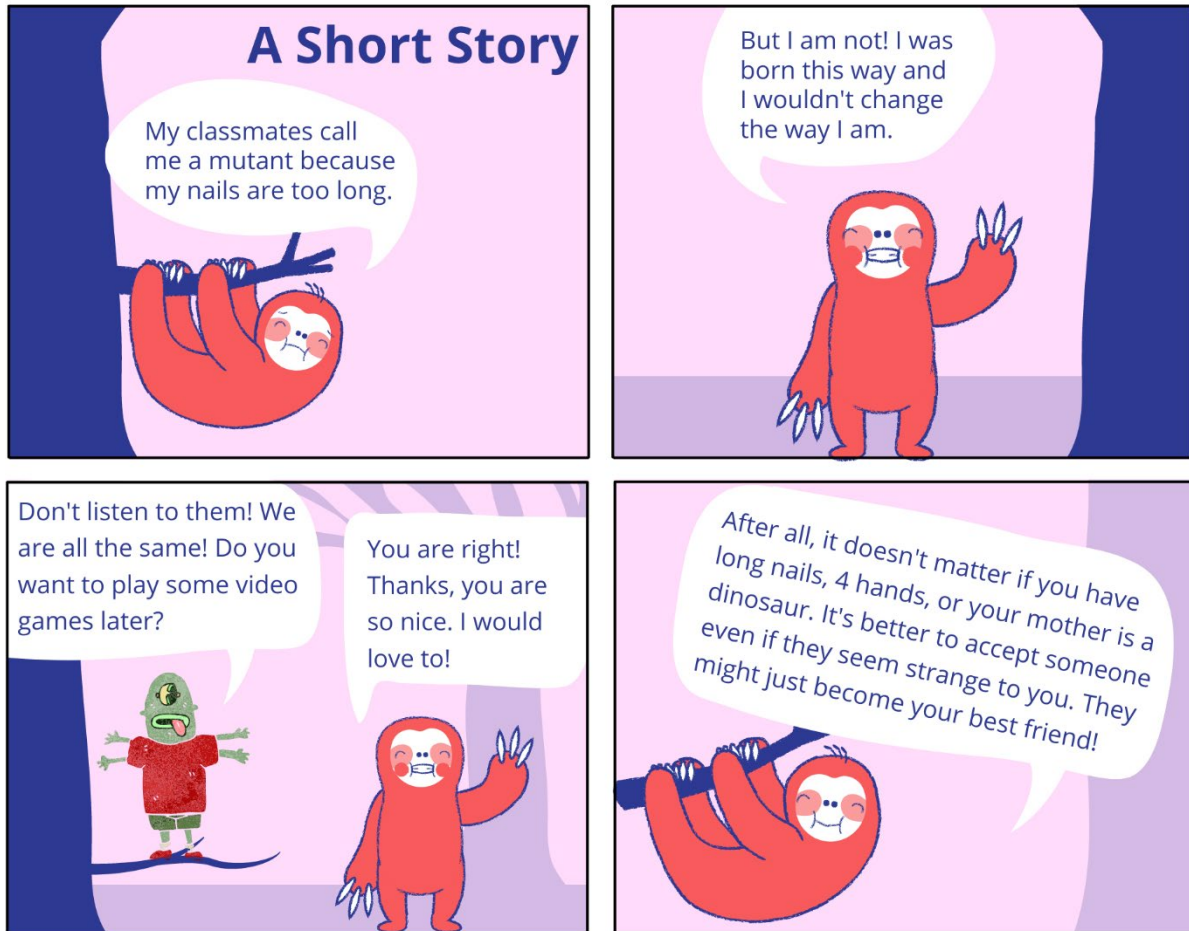
Definitions adapted from the Cambridge Dictionary dictionary.cambridge.org/

TASK 2: Read the text in each comic strip to understand some of the moments where the mutants face discrimination and/or are disrespected.





TASK 3: View this comic strip to end the lesson



EXERCISE 1: True or False ("T" or "F")

1. Religion often leads people to fight to prove that their beliefs are better than others'.
2. When a person is of different color or background they should not have the same rights as others.
3. William Stryker was a good friend of the X-MEN and did not want to harm them.
4. When someone does not agree with you they are automatically a bad person.
5. All people are different and unique. Loving and caring for each other is what is most important, not faith, race, class or gender.



EXERCISE 2: Writing Sentences

Write 3 sentences using words from the list from STEP 1 in the space below. Use words in the correct verb tense and adjust accordingly. The sentences can be separate from each other or combined.

EXERCISE 3: Superpowers

If you could be a 'mutant' in the Marvel Universe, what superpower would you like to have? Why did you choose that superpower? Write your answer in the space below.



III. Modification and Differentiation ideas

- If your class is more advanced, you can help students formulate more complex sentences using more vocabulary on the subject.
- You can also extend the discussion on allegories if you think that students are able to grasp the concept.
- You can also introduce metaphors as they are closely related to allegories and they can also be associated to the message conveyed in the X-MEN comic.

IV. References

Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (2021), Cambridge University Press.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Canva (2021) <https://www.canva.com>

Claremont, C. and Anderson B.E. (1982) X-MEN: God Loves, Man Kills. New York, N.Y., Marvel Comics Group.

Sellars, J. (2017) "Comics in the Classroom: Building reading comprehension and literary analysis – with help from the X-MEN", Harvard Graduate School of Education, <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/12/comics-classroom>