

Integrated Writing Task

- *Read this text for 3 minutes only.*

The “comics medium” includes newspaper comic strips such as *Dennis the Menace* and comic books such as *Spider-Man*. Scholars around the world agree that comics are a uniquely American art form.

The first commercially successful comic strip was *Hogan’s Alley*, a comic strip from the 1890s. *Hogan’s Alley* featured the Yellow Kid, the world’s first popular cartoon character. This strip and its character marked the beginning of comics and was American in every respect. Set in a low-income neighborhood in New York City, *Hogan’s Alley* dealt with the lives of ordinary Americans. It was written and drawn by American cartoonist R.F. Outcault. Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, two famous and influential American publishers, printed the comic strip in their newspapers.

The first popular comic book in the world was also American. *Action Comics*, a series that is still in print today, was initially released in 1938. It featured Superman, the world’s first superhero. Like *Hogan’s Alley*, *Superman* was American-created. Americans invented comic strips, and Americans have exported their unique art form to the rest of the world. Japanese comics, called *manga*, were inspired by the comics that Americans brought to Japan after World War II. Popular European comics series such as *Smurfs* and *Asterix* are influenced by Disney comic books. Today, American-created Disney comic characters are more popular in Europe than ever.

The comics medium started in America. While it has spread around the world, even comics that aren’t created by Americans have an undeniable American influence. This is why so many art and literature scholars recognize the comic strip as a truly American art form.

- *After 3 minutes, listen to the audio ‘Extradoc_integrated writing_1’*
- *After listening, you have 20 minutes to respond to the following:*

Summarize the main points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they challenge the specific points made in the reading passage. You have 20 minutes to plan and write your response. Your response will be judged on the basis of the quality of your writing and how well your response presents the points in the lecture and their relationship to the reading passage.

- *You may refer to the text during your writing.*