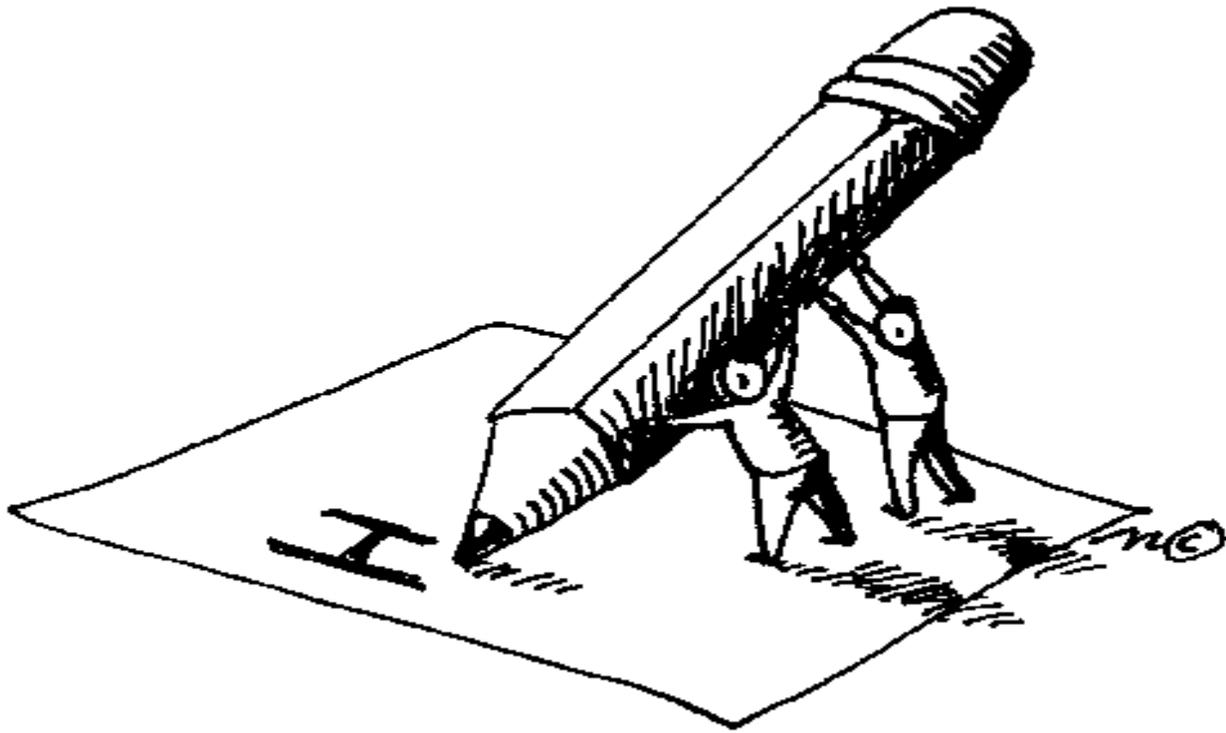




**Writing Graphic Novels  
Junior Writing Lessons and Worksheets**



## INTRODUCTION

We decided to develop a course on graphic novel writing in order to capitalize on the popularity of graphic novels among junior-aged students. We found that any good writing program must incorporate a reading program as well. And so, these lessons include a book report assignment, a reading portfolio log and management tools as well as several lessons where the teacher and the class cooperate to interpret a popular children's novel into a graphic novel.

### Graphic Novels

Graphic novels are a relatively new phenomenon. It has really been in the last ten years that teachers and librarians are realizing the lure of graphic novels to elementary school students and their usefulness in the classroom.

It could be argued that “graphics” were the original form of reading. Early cave drawing show animals that were hunted in prehistoric times. Since then, art historians will tell us that the visual has been a universal tool for depicting messages across cultures.

In the last ten years, the publication of graphic novels has created a whole new genre. These books are similar to the comic books of a generation ago. They are generally longer, book-length works that center on a huge range of books – rewritten classics to non-fiction depictions of new global issues in science and social studies.

Graphic novels are important because they provide reading material that motivates students. The authors created an extended silent reading program for students and many students enjoyed the graphic novels offered so much that they gave up recesses to complete the reading.

What does a graphic novel look like and what is its appeal? Essentially, graphic novel stories are told in a format called “sequential art: the combination of text, panels, and images” which requires the reader to read text and analyze images to interpret the story (Brenner, 2006, p. 123). Graphic novel readers have learned to understand print, but can also decode facial and body expressions, the symbolic meanings of certain images and postures, metaphors and similes, and other social and literary nuances teenagers are mastering as they move from childhood to maturity.

Graphic novels offer visual clues along with narration to tell a story. They are filled with figurative language. Reading idioms, onomatopoeia, metaphors and similes in context helps students become aware of the true meaning of such phrases. Graphic novels can also help improve reading development for students struggling with language acquisition, as the illustrations provide contextual clues to the meaning of the narrative. When graphic novels are made available to young people, even classified as “poor readers” willingly and enthusiastically gravitate towards these books. Providing students with diverse reading materials, including graphic novels, can help them become lifelong readers.

A word of caution must be noted. Some graphic novels contain adult language and content. Librarians and teachers would be wise to rely on graphic novels by trusted publishers, like scholastic, and those reviewed by colleagues in journals such as the Library Journal.

## **How to Use these Lessons and Worksheets**

As classroom teachers ourselves, we decided that scripted lesson plans are cumbersome and need interpretation in order to be used in the classroom. We decided to give short teacher instruction that deal with the purpose of the lesson and general overviews on how lessons should be delivered. The authors believe this format provides information and resources to classroom teachers but still allows teachers to use their own styles to deliver the lessons. It is also mindful that teachers are continually monitoring and adjusting their lessons to suit the needs of their students.

We also organized the lessons under ten headings. The lessons included in this unit are complete. We recognize that classroom teachers will choose which lessons (any or all) suit their needs. We organized the lessons under ten heading in order to make the teacher's perusal of the lessons easier.

Please find the worksheets after the lessons. We organized this for ease of use as well. Teachers may choose to use the lessons and worksheets as prescribed or may choose to pick among the worksheets in order to meet their own agendas.

## **Graphic Novels Clubs**

We created a graphic novel club in our school in addition to the teaching of graphic novels taught in class. We wanted to meet the interests of students as well as addressing some of the extended lessons found here. All lessons have been student-tested.

## **A Note on Technology:**

We used Comic Life, Bitstrips and Xtranormal.com for technological interpretations of graphic novels. We found that due to limited computer access, this was best completed in the after school graphic novel club.

## Why Should Teachers Use Reading and Writing of Graphic Novels in the Classroom:

- Deal with the difficult events/themes common to academic environments.
- They facilitate the introduction of abstract topics (power struggle, political change). These abstract topics help to maximize ‘intellectual time’ in the basic writing classroom.
- They illustrate how narrative can be built and how characters can be presented.
- More readily prompt discussions.
- Critical thinking takes place in the classroom and on paper.
- Students are not reliant on one interpretation of the story— they can read images and/or text.
- Discussions can engage potentially more students.
- There is more sense of the class group as a community because no one is at a disadvantage in the process –some have ‘read’ the pictures, some the text.
- Help teach students to ‘read’ the world, and reading allows students to verbalize their ideas.
- Graphic novels can be used as a writing tool in pre-writing.
- Students can use the comic book/storyboard approach themselves.
- They’ll know that no one can possibly describe *everything*. They have to (and can) leave some interpretation to the audience

Lesson	Purpose	Outline of lesson
1	Getting started	Introduce graphic novels allow students to peruse several graphic novels
<b>Reading Graphic Novels</b>		
2	Reading Graphic Novels	Set up a Friday Graphic Novels Reading Program We used classroom and school library books plus graphic novels borrowed from the public library for this program. Motivation for reading these books was so strong that we sometimes extended the silent reading period to 45 minutes.
3	Graphic Novels Reading Portfolio	See attached form to review the reading portfolio program set up in each classroom.
4	Assign book report	We provided a number of graphic novels (from our own collections, the school library and the public library) and had students read them and complete simple book reports.  Handout attached.  The purpose of this lesson is to have the students become familiar with graphic novels and to have them use one graphic novel as a model to base their own on.
5	Present book reports	Have students present their book reports .  During the presentations, keep a tally of different action words used, number of characters and the way setting was depicted (shown not described)

Analyzing the Text		
6	Review the tally information gathered	<p>As a class review the data collected and come to some generalizations about graphic novels</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Setting was referred to with a few words: “ New York City”, “lunchroom”, “the next day”. Setting was mostly provided for in visuals.</p> <p>Conversation was the main form of text writing.</p> <p>Most fiction was in narrative form. Generally, the use of a single narrator or an omniscient narrator was about equally prevalent.</p> <p>Post these in the class for students to refer to when writing their own graphic novel.</p>
7 and 8	Analyzing student use of Narrative Writing	<p>Graphic Novels (fictional) demand narrative writing be more “alive” than what we regularly see from students narratives.</p> <p>Have students write a short story describing their first day of school.</p> <p>Collect the narratives and read them for action-packed writing only.</p> <p>Create a list of writing problems that this form of writing takes on in your classroom (either with the students or without.).</p> <p>Much of the narrative writing that students produce is characterised by a flat, lifeless style that lacks reader appeal and offers little satisfaction to the writer.</p> <p><u>The type of problems prevalent in student writing may be:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We don't SEE the character(s), the action or the setting. 'Word pictures' are lacking.</li> <li>2. Conversation is either absent of limited and/or unnatural.</li> <li>3. Character feelings are not shown. We don't see the character as a real person.</li> <li>4. There is no plot. The main character does not have a problem. There are no plot hooks.</li> <li>5. The writer's voice is absent. The writing is timid and reserved, making the style uninteresting.</li> <li>6. Titles, lead sentences and character names are uninviting.</li> <li>7. There are gaps in the story. Necessary details are missing. They're in the child's head.</li> <li>8. There are no surprises. There is no cheekiness, no fun.</li> <li>9. Sentences are too long. There are too many 'and thens'.</li> <li>10. Story ending is flat, often finishing with a sentence such as 'And then I woke up.'</li> </ol>

9 and 10	Using the analysis of student writing to inspire better use of narratives	<p>Discuss the need to create a list of traits that good narrative writing has – the teacher may choose to read aloud selections from the students' work, her own classroom library or other material.</p> <p>Have students generate ideas about narratives they like.</p> <p><b>Possible List</b></p> <p><b>Word Pictures</b> Word pictures SHOW us the character, the action, the setting. The writer needs to write in pictures, so the reader can SEE the story. 'Show me – don't tell me' is the motto for word pictures.</p> <p><b>Conversation</b> Conversation should bring life to the character giving it. Again do not describe the character's trait, show them.</p> <p><b>Character Feelings</b> Find stories which don't show feelings and discuss how the characters are likely to be feeling. Even one feeling in a story is powerful</p>
11 and 12	Provide a Checklist/rubric to help student groups edit stories from lesson 8	<p>In lesson 8 students wrote a short narrative on their first day of school. The past five lessons have been gathering information and experience on good narrative writing. Have students work in groups on a selected set of criteria to edit their original narrative.</p> <p>We didn't provide a rubric here, as we found that student generated checklists driven by the work completed in previous lessons is the best fit for improving this writing situation.</p>
<b>Mechanics and Form of Graphic Novels</b>		
13 and 14	The Mechanics of Story Writing: choosing a title, a character name and leading into action	<p><b>Titles, Lead Sentences, Character Names</b></p> <p><b>Titles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Encourage children to choose a title after they have finished their first draft. Suggest – a word, a question, a phrase from the story, an ambiguous title.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Sentences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ask students to find lead sentences they like and share them with the class, saying why they are effective.</li> <li>· Discuss the use of various lead sentences in writing. Did these sentences interest the student? Why?</li> <li>· Suggest students avoid leads that are long descriptions, negative statements or action that has nothing to do with the story. Starting with action is always a better hook.</li> </ul> <p><b>Character Names</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Encourage students to use made up names in their writing. They'll have great fun doing this.</li> </ul>
15	Action Writing	<p>Using the worksheet attached show students how to revise a passive sentence into a more action filled sentence.</p> <p>The teacher can have the class work in groups to revise sentences so that the action is more prominent.</p>

16	Transition terms	<p>Most students use terms such as “and then” or “next”</p> <p>In graphic novels, students will be using fewer words and so, must use words more effectively.</p> <p>Teachers can put a sample piece of writing with many instances of “and then” and have students generate better transition words (just then, immediately, before I knew it)</p> <p>Create a list of transition words to post in the classroom for student use after students complete the attached worksheet.</p>
17	Using words as actions	<p>Describe for students the need to use efficient language in graphic novels. (Recall the information from the book reports completed earlier).</p> <p>Allow the students to work in team to come up with a list of at least ten action words.</p> <p>Compile the words in a larger class list and post in the classroom for</p>
<b>Using a Read-Aloud Novel or Short Story to Model Graphic Novel Writing</b>		
18 -25	Model a graphic novel reinterpretation of a short story or fairy tale.	<p>Using the book Junie B Jones Graduates by Barbara Park.</p> <p>The teacher reads the novel aloud and writes a short three sentence summary of each chapter.</p> <p>The teacher draws a working sketch of Junie B Jones (retelling the story is more important at this point than creating good art work – that comes later)</p> <p>The teacher and the class decide what to throw out from the original novel (not every incident needs to be repeated or explained to the same length in this new text format)</p> <p>The teacher introduces story boards to the students</p>
<b>The mechanics of Drawing the Graphic Novel</b>		
26	draft	<p><b>Start by penciling the entire page.</b> Draw lightly and erase with a good eraser. Be as sketchy or precise as you want. You should pencil in the text for each panel as well.</p>
27	Inking	<p><b>Once you're happy with the penciling, begin the inking phase.</b> Use a good black pen or marker. Have different tips for different line widths. An alternative method is brush and ink, which is more challenging, but enables a different style. Good use of inking can make your drawings seem dimensional and bold.</p>
28	Making sense of the spacing	<p>Provide a sheet of clear overhead paper for this activity.</p> <p>Students can use trial and error to see what fits onto their paper before writing on the final copy.</p> <p>Note: large writing is better for graphic novels. The reader does not want to struggle with being able to read the word because of size or legibility. If using computer software, remember simple fonts are best.</p>

29	Putting summaries to work	<p>Use the summaries written from the class reading of Junie B Jones to review whether important elements of the story have been met.</p> <p>Have groups meet to read the summaries and brain storm ways of depicting the action.</p> <p>Have groups present to the class and create a class list of strategies to depict action for a graphic novel.</p>
30		
<b>Storyboards</b>		
31	Modeling how to reinterpret a novel for a graphic novel production	<p>Storyboards: storyboards are drafts of the graphic novel. For our purposes, there are few words on the storyboards. We are looking to create an overall picture of the action of the graphic novel. We wish to direct the writing in later lessons. For now, the class created chapter summaries and the storyboards are our goal.</p> <p>The author/illustrator gets a sense of how many panels she/he will need and can spend time arranging and rearranging his panels.</p> <p>Note: we had the students use larger photocopy paper (11 X 14)</p>
32	Present story boards	<p>Have students present their story boards to the class. Have the class write on sticky notes, comments and suggestions. When the presentation is finished, the presenting student will have several sticky notes to read and consider.</p>
33	Making changes to the story board	<p>Students can make changes to their storyboards by cutting out the panels they wish to keep.</p> <p>Students should then work on individual panels where changes can be made.</p> <p>The panels can then be glued to a new sheet of paper for a completed story board.</p>
34	Students write their own story boards	<p>Comic frames are traditionally used to illustrate a story in a short, concise format. In this lesson, students use a six-paneled comic strip frame to create a story map, summarizing a book or story that they've read. Each panel retells a particular detail or explains a literary element (such as setting or character) from the story.</p>
35	Using words as illustrations	<p>Review some online resources to see how certain words can be an illustration of the events. "POW" from the batman TV serial is an example.</p>
<b>Dialogue</b>		
36	Dialogue	<p>One of the most important things to get right in a graphic novel is its dialogue. It is through dialogue that you give life to your characters and through dialogue that tell your story.</p> <p>Use a newspaper to find several short comic strips. Photocopy the comic or strips (you'll want at least a few pages — a whole</p>

		<p>comic's worth would be useful) and blank out all the text, captions as well as speech bubbles.</p> <p>Have students practice using only dialogue to make sense of the pictures in the comic strips provided.</p> <p>Note: Re-write the dialogue as if the characters were students' own creations. Don't try to use the characters as created by the writer, but pretend they are entirely different people. Try to give each character his or her own way of speaking — given enough dialogue students should be able to tell which character is which just by what they say. Students may have to be careful about exaggerating the differences between characters' speech at first; the differences should mostly be subtle.</p> <p>Note: this task grew out of weekly writing assignment borrowed from another teacher. She assigned a Far Side cartoon without the caption weekly to the students. Their task was to write a funny caption for the drawing and also explain their reasoning for writing that caption.</p>
37	Dialogue presentations	<p>Have students post re-written comics on the wall and mingle to read other students' work.</p> <p>Discuss: Notice how the visuals of the comic effect any possible interpretations of what is happening. Did you find it difficult to make up new text? Think about what this means for text without pictures (short stories and novels). How can you create visuals using text only? What might gestures and actions interspersed with dialogue add to the meaning of the dialogue and/or to the progression of the story?</p>
38	Writing dialogue	<p>Have students write a conversation using only dialogue. Have other students guess where and when the conversation is taking place.</p> <p>Inferencing: students read between the lines to figure out what is happening.</p> <p>A graphic novel leaves a lot of the action to be interpreted by the reader. So do not spoon-feed your readers with too much screenplay.</p>
<b>Figurative Language</b>		
39	Quick descriptions	<p>Metaphors and Similes:</p> <p>Discuss: 1. What are some ways authors write to make their details more vivid? 2. What are some good describing words to describe a (list something)? 3. How can we write things to show comparisons?</p>
40	Metaphors and Similes	<p>In graphic novels, using metaphors and similes especially in narration, helps to keep the action moving and portray setting, character's frame of mind and description.</p>

		<p><b>Simile:</b>  <b>"an explicit likening of one thing to another"</b> (<i>Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary</i>)</p> <p><b>Metaphor:</b>  "a figure of speech by which <b>a thing is spoken of as being that which is only resembles</b>, as when a ferocious man is called a tiger" (<i>Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary</i>)</p> <p>Step 1 -- In a column on the left, place the first half of well known similes and metaphors with an answer place and question number before them (i.e. "_____ 1. Happy as ...")</p> <p>Step 2 -- In a column on the right, place the second halves of the similes and metaphors with answer letters in front of them in a random order (i.e. - A. "a clam")</p>
41	Creating new metaphors and similes	<p>Discuss the use of image language such as metaphors and similes with students. Now that they have experience with the definitions and purposes of metaphors and similes, students should have more to say on this topic.</p> <p>Many metaphors and similes have lost their impact because they are overly familiar to us. Creating new ones is the goal of this exercise.</p> <p>Teachers can create their own metaphors and similes with the class or use the list below to examine the impact of this visual language.</p> <p><u>Directions:</u> Identify each as a metaphor or simile. Then, explain the meaning.</p> <p>Her hair was golden silk streaming in the afternoon breeze  The algebra question <math>x+16=30</math> is a sharp object jiggling around in my brain  Jordan walked like an monkey on parade  Jan's broken nose swelled up like a big red clown nose  Tim was as tall as the CN Tower  Carrying my book bag was like dragging around a bag of boulders  Jordan's reply was burning hot and crispy  Michael is the lion king of his class  She danced like she was trying to stomp on rabid squirrels  John is the Sidney Crosby of his hockey team</p>
42	<p>The Place of Figurative Language in Graphic Novels:</p> <p>Metaphors, Similes and Onomatopoeia</p>	<p>Figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, are used in graphic novels to create immediate visuals and describe.</p> <p>Another type of figurative language that can be useful in graphic novels is onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is the literary device that relies on words that imitate the sound that they name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite students to brainstorm a lit of sound words, recording their responses on the board.</li> <li>• Once it's clear that students understand the literary device, ask</li> </ul>

		<p>them to hypothesize why graphic novel writers use it in their writing.</p> <p>Examples: tinkle, growl, crash, pop, crunch, click, tick tock, etc</p> <p>Note: Interestingly, many of the students found the onomatopoeia words to be most useful with characters that were animals!</p>
<b>Creating Characters</b>		
43	Characters	<p>How to Create Characters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are asked to draw themselves in a cartoon format. Cartooning is taught via website and with trial and error.  <a href="http://www.drawingnow.com/how-to-draw-cartoons.html">http://www.drawingnow.com/how-to-draw-cartoons.html</a>  <a href="http://www.how-to-draw-cartoons-online.com/cartoon-animals.html">http://www.how-to-draw-cartoons-online.com/cartoon-animals.html</a></li> </ul>
44	Creating A Character of Yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students start with a simple stick drawing of a boy or girl. Have students add details that will begin to “flesh out” the character and give him some identifying traits (glasses, hat, Leafs jersey)  Practise! Practise! Practise!</li> </ul> <p>Note: In any given class there will be some students who are more accomplished drawers and others who are struggling with drawing. Drawing is a skill that progresses with practise. Assign 15 minutes of doodling a night to help those struggling students.</p>
45	Yourself with Extra Powers?	<p>Since graphic novels involve action and can take the form of fantasy, it may be a motivator for students to assign the character of themselves with extra powers.</p> <p>Some extra powers:</p> <p>x-ray vision,  speed,  ability to transform into an animal,  photographic memory,</p> <p>Note: Students may want to give their characters a trait that causes them as much trouble as it does advantage. Perhaps someone with X-ray vision is unable to be certain technology. This character would then have to overcome his inability to use cell-phones and email.</p>
46	Use a List of Questions to complete more complex characters	<p>After a character has been created and the character's extra powers have been determined, it is time to complete a character checklist.</p> <p>Character checklists let the author know about the character so that he or she may add in extra distinguishing characteristics into the story.</p>

		<p>A list of questions would include:</p> <p>Highest grade complete in school?</p> <p>Names of closest friends.</p> <p>Names of parents?</p> <p>Names of brothers and sisters?</p> <p>Age?</p> <p>Age of siblings?</p> <p>Birth order?</p> <p>etc</p>
	Project Handout	Handout sheet attached for students to work on their graphic novels (or strips)

## Worksheets

### Reading Portfolio Guidelines for Students

Besides reading at least **one** (1) **graphic novel** of your choice each **week**, I will also ask you to assemble a “**Reading Portfolio**” which shows evidence that you've been an active, growing reader in other areas-- *still of your choice*. Be unique---find poems, articles, and pictures that really “speak” to you, your interests, your goals--your dreams.

*By the end of **each week**, you should have **read** the following:*

- 1) At least **two** (2) **nonfiction articles** of different subjects/topics...  
These should be selected from my **online digital anthology**, from **newspapers**, or from **magazines** at home. All readings must be placed in your portfolio. Make copies of them, cut them out, or print them from the web.  
*For example, one student might find **3 article(s)** about the following:*
  - a) a college player being "picked up" by a professional basketball team.
  - b) a 12 year old boy having a successful heart transplant
  - c) a new dirt bike that will be out on the market this summer (extra credit)
- 2) At least **one** (1) **poem** of your choice  
You may select poems from the **library**, a **collection at home**, or from my **online digital anthology**. They should be at least 10 lines long and be of a topic suitable for middle school. The "Chicken Soup" books, for instance, are a great place to find poems which have a lot of meaning and topics that interest young teens.
- 3) At least **one** (1) **photo** of an important **event**, **place**, or **person(s)**-- that's right, I would like you to **read** a photo.  
You'll need a photo from one of the **daily photo sites** or from any place on the web. You may also use **magazines** and **newspapers**. Its subject matter should provide you with a **theme** you can write a lengthy paragraph about. No personal photos for this assignment, please.
- 4) At least one (1) comic strip of your choice. This can be taken from the newspaper, a magazine, online resources or even one made in class by a friend. Read this and evaluate it. Is the comic funny? Who are the intended audience? Would you change this to make it better?

## Reading Portfolio (writing assignment)

### Step 1: A Summary of each Piece

• Write one **paragraph** that **summarizes** the article you've read--*beginning, middle and end*. (You can entitle it "Summary")

### Step 2: A Personal Response for each Piece

Write one **lengthy paragraph** (1/2 page or more) for each *article, poem, comic* and *photo* that shows how you **connect** to the piece. Give the paragraph an appropriate **title**.

Here are some ways of connecting:

- *What does it make me think about?*
- *Why do I like the piece?*
- *Why am I curious about or interested in the subject?*
- *Does it remind me of something?*
- *Why is it memorable, funny, unique, interesting or important?*
- *What themes come out of this piece and why?*
- *What passages, parts, or lines in the piece really stand out and why?*

*Remember all work must be*

- **organized** into a **well written** paragraph that includes a **topic sentence**, **transition words** as well as a **concluding** (wrap-up) **sentence**.
- include supporting **details, reasons, or examples** from the text.
- **proofread**.

A **personalized portfolio folder** will be kept in the classroom or you may keep it. As you locate and read your **two (2) articles, one (1) poem, one (1) comic** and **one (1) photo**, place them in the folder even if you haven't written anything about them yet. Upon writing your paragraphs, **fasten them** to the appropriate article, poem or photo.

***By the end of each week, you should have 5 paragraphs completed and fastened to each reading piece. These will form the starting point of reading conferences with your teacher.***

# Graphic Novel Book Report Poster

## Tasks:

- Create an appealing cover on your 11x17 poster and color/decorate it.
- Use other sheets of 11x17 paper to design a series of **comic cells** or **strips** which illustrate several important scenes in your book--(beginning, middle and end)
- Reproduce dialogue, thoughts, feelings and narration from the book using thought/speech bubbles and narration captions. (Look at the attached comic book instructions and examples.)

## Requirements/Grade:

The number of cells you design, if done well, can effect your grade:

- 8 or more cells for an A range grade
- 5-7 cells for a B range grade
- 1-4cells for a C range grade

## Conditions:

- Draw cells (at least 3 inches tall by 4 inches wide)
- Fronts only
- Color/Shade all cells and contents
- Include text which makes it clear as to what is happening in the scene(s)

## Materials Needed:

- at least 2 pieces of 11x17 paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Stapler to attach papers

## Design Choices:

- Separate cells each with different scenes
- Groups of cells showing different scenes
- Blend clip art, magazine cuttings neatly with your own drawings.

## Skills:

- Recalling and choosing the most important scenes from your novel.
- Choosing important quotes from characters in those scenes (speech bubbles)
- Choosing important thoughts/feelings from characters (thought bubbles)
- Choosing important narration in each scene (captions)
- Artistically rendering the book/scenes in comic book form (effort is the key!)

**Draft everything in pencil first, then go over in fine point pen or marker.  
In Graphic Novels Neatness Counts!!!**

# Teaching Strategies for Graphic Novels

**Tea Party:** Put bits and pieces of a graphic novel on index cards. Students read their cards and listen to others during the tea party. Afterwards, students discuss various literary elements of the story-plot, character, setting, style, and theme-and record their predictions on a graphic organizer. The next day students read the section in its entirety and revisit the graphic novel to make additions and subtractions.

**Sequencing:** Take panels from a page in a graphic novel and cut them up so that they are out of order. Have students put them in order and justify their choices in writing.

**Cloze Passage:** Erase panels or word bubbles on a page in a graphic novel and have students use context clues to make sense of the story.

**Predicting:** This is a variation of the cloze passage. Have students predict what will happen in the next panel.

**Dialogue:** Erase the text in word bubbles and have students add their own dialogue. Then have them rewrite the story, including the dialogue in quotation marks.

**Cumulative Story:** Erase the text in word bubbles and have students add their own dialogue into the first word balloon and pass it on to the next student. That student fills in the second word balloon and passes it on. This can be a variation on the dialogue activity.

**Panel Storytelling:** Have students practice telling a story in three or four panels. Use websites such as the comic creator on [readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org).

**Summarizing:** Once students become somewhat proficient in panel storytelling, the technique can be used to help them summarize information. A nine panel grid is particularly helpful.

**Reader's Theater:** Have students convert graphic novels to a reader's theater script or vice versa.

**Literature Circles:** This teaching Strategy encourages students to have a choice in what they read for class. It also forces them to take responsibility for their own learning by collaborating on the book discussion.

**Writing/Drawing Collaboration:** Artistic students and literary students can create a comic strip. In a graphic novel, typically one person will write the story, another will draw the art, another will add the color, and yet another will draw the letters in the word balloons.

**Carousel Activity:** Isolate a skill such as symbolism or onomatopoeia. Post examples on butcher paper around the room. Divide students into groups and assign each group to an example. Students respond to the example by writing on the butcher paper. Rotate each of the groups through each example for several minutes.

**Silent Discussion:** This is a variation of the carousel activity. Post examples on butcher paper around the room, but rather than subdividing the students in groups, they are free to move around the room, but they must do so in complete silence. The only

communication takes place on the butcher paper under the examples.

**ABC Book:** This is an assessment tool that requires students to synthesize their knowledge into twenty-six letters of the alphabet.

**Acrostic Poem:** This is an assessment tool that requires students to synthesize their knowledge into an acrostic poem.

**Parallel Timeline:** This is an assessment tool that is particularly effective for Social Studies. Create multiple timelines and place them one under another. This is great for showing things that are happening simultaneously. (e.g. WWII Pacific theater vs. WWII European theater) or for comparison and contrast (George Washington vs. Abraham Lincoln).

**A Moment in Time:** Another assessment tool with social studies applications. Draw a literary (or historical) character and label the parts of the character with captions which explain their significance.

**Collage:** Synthesize a topic solely in terms of images. For example, A World War II collage would simply have a title, but then could include an image of Uncle Sam, an image of various battle scenes, a map, or other relevant issues.

*Note "Teaching Strategies for Graphic Novels" sheet is adapted from: "The Best Graphic Novels for Young Adults and How to Use Them in Your Program (Grades 6-12)" Created by Jonathan Hunt for the Institute for Educational Development.*

## Elements of the Story

**plot** — the primary sequence of events that setup or tell a story

**character** — a person, persona, or identity within a fiction story

**setting** — where the events of the story take place

**conflict** — the tension, disagreement, or discord that occurs in a story

**rising action** — the action or events in the story that stem from the primary conflict and lead to the climax

**climax** — the point of greatest intensity in a story, a culminating point, usually led up to by rising action and followed by a resolution

**resolution** — the final outcome to solve or address the conflict

**symbols** — an iconic representation that stands for something larger than itself

**theme** — a main idea or emphasized aspect of a story

**foreshadowing** — a moment in the story when the reader feels like something to happen later in the story is alluded to or referenced

# WRITE A COMIC OR GRAPHIC NOVEL: Culminating Project

## A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words...

Comic books and graphic novels are visual representations of stories or information. We have learned that comic books and graphic novels have specialized conventions, like speech bubbles for dialogue, boxes for images and words, and minimal text overall. They need to be read differently, as the pictures lead the reader, rather than the words.

### Think About

- what makes a good comic.
- what scene in this chapter would be interesting in comic form.
- what sort of illustrations and/or points of view would be most effective.

For this project, you are the author hired to re-write a book in graphic novel format. You may find your choice of book is too long, and so you may talk to the teacher about writing an excerpt of the book (choosing an exciting part and writing that as a graphic novel) or writing a summary of the book in graphic novel form.

- Try to space them out so they are visually appealing, and remember to add a title and your name.
- Don't worry if your drawing skills are not your strongest asset...just do your best.
- Your pictures should ideally demonstrate more than one point of view or perspective, and don't forget to add the necessary text and dialogue in the correct manner!
  
- Use a storyboard, like the one below, to draft your graphic novel.

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### Rubric for Graphic Novel (except/summary) Final Project

<i>Content</i>	<i>Images</i>	<i>Transitions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of plot shine, leading the reader on an enjoyable journey through a series of events.</li> <li>• Details are precise and adequate, vividly SHOWING the events.</li> <li>• Story is told with exactly the right amount of detail throughout. Not too short, not too long</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pictures relate directly to life story and enhance storytelling.</li> <li>• Pictures are placed in a logical order and follow the progression of the story.</li> <li>• Pictures cover 90% of each page.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Connective tissue” is used to effectively transition between life events throughout storytelling.</li> <li>• Transitions enhance the mood, tone, and flow of the presentation.</li> </ul>
Score 1, 2, 3, 4 (circle one)  Multiply by 4  Total ____/16__	Score 1, 2, 3, 4 (circle one)  Multiply by 2  Total ____/8__	Score 1, 2, 3, 4 ( circle one)  Multiply by 2  Total ____/8__
Student Name _____ Grade _____ /32		

## Web Resources for Teachers

No Flying, No Tights: A Website Reviewing Graphic Novels for Teens, by Robin Brenner

[www.noflyingnotights.com](http://www.noflyingnotights.com)

Sidekicks—Robin Brenner's Web site reviewing graphic novels for younger readers

[www.noflyingnotights.com/sidekicks](http://www.noflyingnotights.com/sidekicks)

SUNY Buffalo Graphic Novel Resources for Teachers and Librarians

[library.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/graphicnovels/](http://library.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/graphicnovels/)

Classical Comics—this site has many useful links

[www.classicalcomics.com/links.html](http://www.classicalcomics.com/links.html)

Education World—article titled "Eek! Comics in the Classroom!"

[www.education-world.com/a\\_curr/profdev/profdev105.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev105.shtml)

Parents' Choice—article on how comics make kids smarter

[www.parents-choice.org/article.cfm?art\\_id=140&the\\_page=reading\\_list](http://www.parents-choice.org/article.cfm?art_id=140&the_page=reading_list)

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