

MARK THURMAN / EMILY HEARN

Get
GRAPHIC!

Using storyboards to write and draw
picture books, graphic novels,
or comic strips

© Hawker Brownlow Education

CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Stage 1: Read, Read, Read 6

Stage 2: Invent Your Plot 10

- Character Sketches 12
- Character Development 14
- Let's Get Serious—Research! 16
- Plotting the Plot 18

Stage 3: Drawing by Drawing 20

- Points of View 20
 - Horizontal 22
- Drawing in Layers 22
- Foreground, Midground,
Background 24
- Bird's-Eye View 26
- Ant's-Eye View 28
- Drawing Bodies and Heads 30
- Close-Up 32
- Extreme Close-Up 34
- Drawing a Room 38
- Drawing a House 40
- The Rough Sketch 42
- Thinking in Thumbnails 44

Stage 4: Storyboarding 46

- Materials You'll Need 47
- From Thumbnails... 48
- ...To Storyboard 49
- Storyboarding a Graphic Novel
or Comic 50
- Using a Storyboard 52
- Editing Your Storyboard 53

Stage 5: Book Mock-Up 54

- Materials You'll Need 55
- Design a Visual Surprise 57
- Editing Your Book Mock-Up 57
- Illustration Styles 58
- Planning Design and Type 59

Stage 6: A Full-Color Book 60

- Materials You'll Need 60
- Shading for Reality 62
- Light and Shadow 64

**Stage 7: Using Collage Illustration for
a Picture Book 66**

- Cut-and-Paste Collage 66
- Materials You'll Need 67
- Fun-Tastic Collages 68
- Cutouts for Starters 69
- Cut-and-Paste with Patterned Paper 70
- Simple Cutout Shapes 71
- Faces with Cutouts and Markers 72
- Special Effects with Cutouts 73
- Cutout Letters and Numbers 74
- Hand-Made Patterned Papers 75

Stage 8: It's a Book! 76

- Writing Your Story 76
- Editing Your Story 76
- Lettering Styles 77
- Your Book Title and Cover 78
- Designing a Cover 78
- Materials You'll Need 79
- Finishing Touches 80
- Sharing 81

The Way an Artist Speaks 82

- Important Words 82
- Illustration Ideas 83

Storyboard Templates 87

Index 92

INTRODUCTION

Storyboarding isn't the way books are written. Our adaptation of the animator's "map" is an educational tool, pure and simple. It works at its richest with kids nurtured on storytelling and process writing. Already in love with words, they enjoy discrimination in their use.

Based on our experience in numerous elementary and secondary school classrooms, *Get Graphic!* introduces the power of a storyboard in all stages of the creative process — from brainstorming ideas, to using thumbnail sketches to develop, revise, and finalize stories. It offers critical information that will direct students to thoughtful writing and exciting illustrations. It will also encourage them to consider design as an essential feature of original picture books, graphic novels, or comic books.

A powerful technique for encouraging students to show action that peaks and resolves, storyboards free young writers to focus on language and build skills connected to highly visual media where words, few but apt, must resonate. Focusing on the visual helps students appreciate how pictures affect the viewer emotionally. It makes students more aware of how TV, computer games, and all forms of media strive to influence them with words and visuals.

Get Graphic! builds on student fascination with new media. It describes good principles of design and encourages students to create and place characters in action that propels the plot along. Step-by-step instructions lead students to generate action-filled pages and streamlined plots for their own unique and personalized stories and books.

We want students to share our fun with story and design and color. We know they enjoy drawing and writing their own picture books, graphic novels, and comic strips, because we have cabinets bulging with photocopies, none of them substitutes for the colored, textured, subtle, poetic works that the young authors invariably want to keep. We don't ask for and haven't been offered a single one. Unspoken thanks.

Plenty of work lies ahead for student and teacher alike, and we wish you the same marvelous enjoyment that storyboarding projects have given us.

Eight Stages to a Book

A storyboard is what you see on pages 88–92. It is a series of white panels divided by black lines, each numbered panel representing a page of the planned book. In other words, a writer's and illustrator's storyboard is a kind of map or miniature plan of a book.

Eight stages carry the author/illustrator from stimulus to the moment when photo and biography are pasted on the inside or outside of the back cover of the completed book. Done!

Some stages are deliberately rapid; others, as time-consuming as the writer/illustrator wishes. The eight stages correspond with the chapters in this book:

Stage 1: Read, Read, Read—reading picture books and graphic novels as stimulus

Stage 2: Invent Your Plot—writing the story

Stage 3: Drawing by Drawing—planning drawings

Stage 4: Storyboarding—using a storyboard to lay out the plot (fast pencil)

Stage 5: Book Mock-Up—making a page-by-page rough copy (fast pencil)

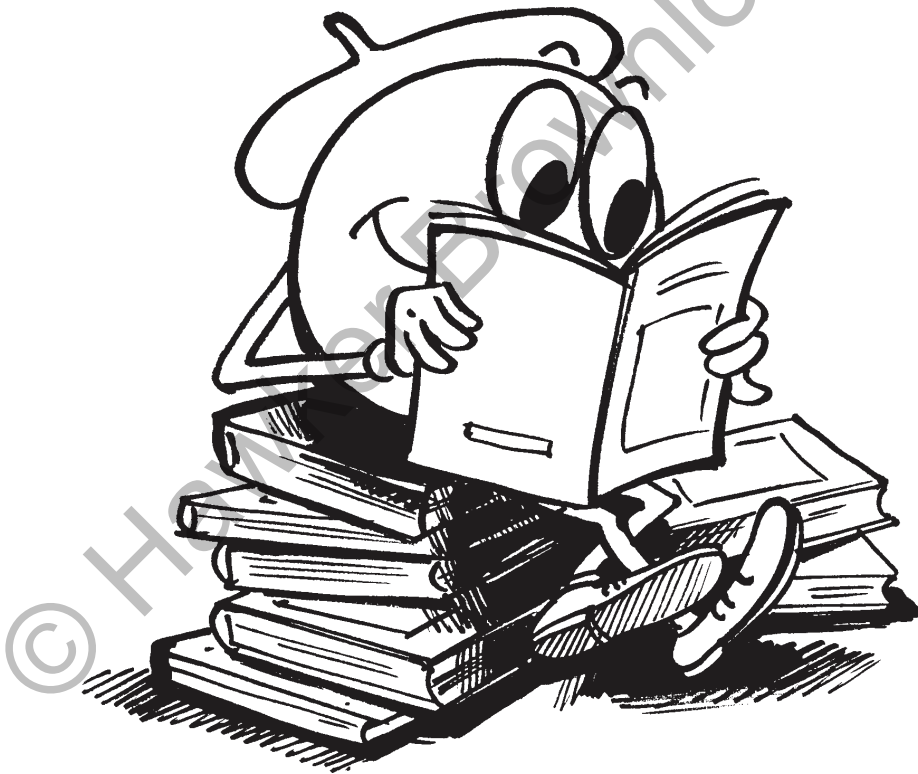
Stage 6: A Full-Color Book—editing the story, color, details, lettering

Stage 7: Using Collage Illustration for a Picture Book—cut-and-paste, collage illustrations

Stage 8: It's a Book!—cover, laminating, binding, sharing

Read, Read, Read

When you want to make a picture book, graphic novel, or comic strip, here's one way to go about it. Begin by reading and looking at lots of books. Some you'll like better than others because everyone chooses differently. And isn't that a good thing? Variety means there is a place for your own story.



Here are some picture books that other kids and librarians have found to be favorites:

Alligator Pie and others by Dennis Lee; illustrated by Frank Newfeld and others.

The Basketball Player and others by Roch Carrier.

Boo Hoo Bird by Jeremy Tankard.

Class Clown and others by Robert Munsch; illustrated by Michael Martchenko and others.

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Dorren Cronin; illustrated by Betty Lewin.

The Day Leo Said I Hate You by Robie Harris; illustrated by Molly Bang.

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Willems.

Franklin Says I Love You and others; by Paulette Bourgeois; illustrated by Brenda Clark.

I'd Really Like to Eat a Child by Sylviane Donnio; illustrated by Dorothee De Monfreid.

I've Walked Alone and others by Barbara Reid.

Jillian Jiggs and the Great Big Snow and others by Phoebe Gilman.

Monkey Business by Wallace Edwards.

Prehistoric Pinkerton by Stephen Kellog.

Scaredy Squirrel by Melanie Watt.

Stella Star of the Sea; Stella Queen of the Snow by Marie-Louise Gay.

Stellaluna by Jannell Cannon.

Zen Shorts by Jon Mukin.

These are popular graphic novels/comic strips and series:

Babymouse Queen of the World by Jennifer and Matthew Holme.

Chiggers by Hope Larson.

John Fuller, the Fog Mound series by Susan Schade.

Johnny Boo: The Best Little Ghost in the World by James Kochalka.

Sardine in Outer Space, the Space Pirates series by Emmanuel Guibert; illustrated by Joann Sfar.

Silly Lily and the Four Seasons: a toon book by Agnes Rosenstiehl.

Classic Series

Asterix series by Rene Goscinny; ill. by Albert Uderzo

Tintin series by Hergé

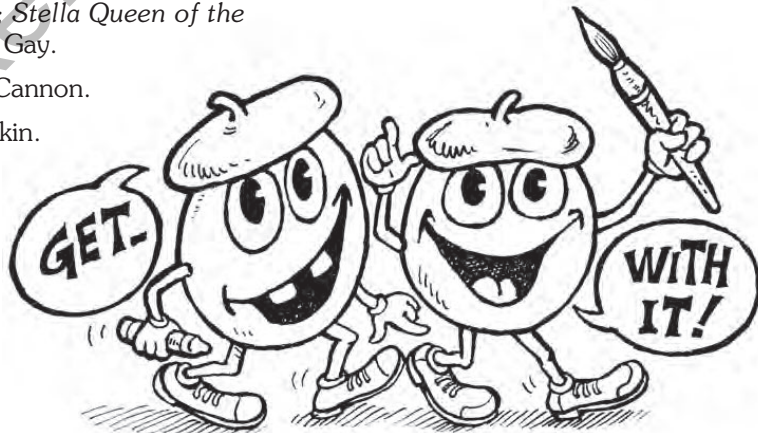
Other Series

The Baby-Sitters Club Graphix series by Ann M. Martin and Raina Telgemeier.

Bone series by Jeff Smith.

Captain Underpants series by Dav Pilkey.

Little Vampire series by Joann Sfar.



More on Reading

- Read and read and read to your children. Choose your own favorites because your enjoyment will be contagious and the publishing market continues to offer new delights.
- Use well-illustrated picture books that are proven favorites with young children to reinforce the concepts you will find in this book. Begin with the classics:

Brown, Margaret Wise; ill. by Clement Hurd. *The Runaway Bunny*.

Gentle, whimsical, magical; two pages of text with black-and-white illustrations alternate with full-color double-page spreads.

Dr. Seuss, any in the series; a couple of examples: *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*.

A classic; an offbeat masterpiece; black-and-white illustrations; color red used for the hat only—must be an important hat?; variety of viewpoints; cartoon style.

Scrambled Eggs Super!

A nonstop series of viewpoints and crazy characters; black-line brush drawings; the colors red, blue, and yellow create dynamic and unusual effects; visual repetition of two eggs/two birds.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*.

Full-color, multimedia collage illustrations; masterful use of bold color, texture, and white space; rhythmic, elegant page design. See also *John Henry, an American Legend* and *Whistle for Willie*.

McKlosky, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal*.

Single-color, dark blue-black illustrations; variety of dynamic viewpoints; illustrations have the expansive and dynamic quality of the outdoors.

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*.

A classic in all respects; gentle yet dynamic, wild and crazy full-color illustrations; minimal text; the story starts with a small frame, centre page, that grows until it covers three double-page spreads where the wild rumpus occurs; illustrations get smaller as the plot goes back to reality; at wake-up time, supper is still hot (no picture).

Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Polar Express*.

Exquisite, full-color, textured, chalk pastel drawings; marvelous viewpoints; traditional text/illustrations, page format; all double-page spreads bordered with a black ink outline. See also *Jumanji*; *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*; *Ben's Dream*; and *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*.

Wildsmith, Brian. *The Circus*.

Bold, dynamic, highly textured, full-color, multimedia collage illustrations. See also *Wild Animals*.



The way we use picture books in workshops may help you adapt your selection to feature the significant concepts. Here are a couple of examples:

- Books like *The Great Big Fire Engine Book* by Tibor Gergely exemplify how action drawing tells a story. Pages should be turned slowly, to the end, without reference to the few words. With a second showing of the book and the reading of the words, children will realize how well-chosen words and devices like sound mimicry evoke a dimension of “you are there” experience impossible to pictures alone.

- When using Joan Hanson’s *I’m Going to Run Away* and Margaret Wise Brown’s *The Runaway Bunny* for contrast, the presenter can make a few quick analyses:

1. Joan Hanson’s occasional use of a double-page spread with one picture across two facing pages can be pointed out: “Soon you’ll be planning pages like these.”
2. Crucial to plot structure is the idea that every story “turns around.” Both books have an obvious, and similar, pivot in the plot.
3. Looking at both books emphasizes the point that there’s no subject under the sun that has not been written; the difference is in how it’s done. Capitalize on this observation by guaranteeing that the way each student writes and illustrates a story is going to make it as different as night and day from anyone else’s.

All good picture books reinforce these concepts. The nub of truth is understood by all children as they cry or laugh with characters in the story. You know many picture books like these that touch on realities beyond realism. Share them with children before turning them loose to write.

- Here are some books recommended for you to read and use in your classroom:

Booth, David and Kathleen Gould Lundy (2007) *In Graphic Detail: using graphic novels in the classroom*. Rubicon.

Carter, James Bucky (ed.) (2007) *Building Literacy Connections with Graphic Novels*. NCTE.

Cary, Stephen (2004) *Going Graphic*. Heinemann.

Frey, Nancy and Douglas Fisher (2008) *Teaching Visual Literacy*. Corwin.

Green, Judy (1999) *The Ultimate Guide to Classroom Publishing*. Pembroke.

Johnson, Paul (2006) *Get Writing*. Pembroke.

Riddle, Johanna (2009) *Engaging the Eye Generation: visual literacy strategies for the K-5 classroom*. Stenhouse.

Thompson, Terry (2008) *Adventures in Graphics: using comics and graphic novels to teach comprehension, 2-6*. Stenhouse.

