

**GET
GRAPHIC!**



Illustrations from left to right: Ricity Stich and the Delatinous Eoo © 2017 by Ben Costa & James Parks; 5 Words © 2018 by Antzu Pantzu, LLC; Lucy & Andy Weenderma © 2016 by Jeffrey Brown; Hio © 2016 by Judd Winick; Babyhouse © 2015 by Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm; The Cardboard Kingdom © 2018 by Chad Sell

GRAPHIC NOVEL EDUCATORS' GUIDE

GET GRAPHIC!

INTRODUCTION

Graphic novels have grown in popularity over the past decade or two. Once a niche format, they are an increasingly important component of classroom and library collections. Adaptations of traditional texts such as *The City of Ember* and *The Golden Compass* are joining the stories of Babymouse, Hilo, Lucy & Andy, and other characters from graphic novel series. Today graphic novels receive some of the highest awards in the industry, including the Newbery and Printz Medals from the American Library Association. Graphic novels can provide enjoyable and informative reading experiences for a wide range of readers.

WHAT IS A GRAPHIC NOVEL?

Graphic novels are an extension of comic books. They tell stories using pictures in sequence, panels, speech balloons, text boxes, and other conventions of the comic book form. The key difference between illustrated books, picture books, and graphic novels is that graphic novels are generally longer and are not serialized the way comics are. Graphic novels have a more developed narrative than picture books; additionally, they differ from illustrated chapter books because the illustrations are an integral component of the story. Because graphic novels rely heavily on illustration to propel the narrative, they can be a great primer for struggling readers.

WHY USE GRAPHIC NOVELS IN THE CLASSROOM?

Like any traditional novel, a graphic novel tells a story. The literary elements of traditional stories are present: plot, character, setting, theme, and narrative arc. Figurative language, symbolism, and other literary devices are also present. As teaching tools, graphic novels offer educators the same possibilities as traditional texts.

The scaffolding of illustration in addition to the text will make some abstract concepts more concrete. This may mean that concepts such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism can be more readily identified and understood. Graphic novels can also be used for independent reading and as part of book talks and displays. Graphic novel adaptations of traditional texts such as *The City of Ember* and *The Golden Compass* can be offered as alternative selections for students, especially those who may not be able to access a more traditional text. Finally, graphic novels can be used to develop skills in visual literacy.

HOW TO READ A GRAPHIC NOVEL

Do not assume that all readers will know how to read a graphic novel. Educators should take some time to go over the structure of the format. The discussion questions on page 4 will help your students get the most out of any graphic novel.

HEAR FROM EDUCATORS WHO LOVE GRAPHIC NOVELS

“Graphic novels are beloved by children of all ages, but they have proven to be an effective, engaging, and exciting format for my growing readers. They are complex, multilayered stories that invite readers to imagine and infer. I find time and time again that graphic novels offer the hook some young people need to fall in love with reading.”

—Aliza Werner, third-grade teacher

“Graphic novels . . . get kids excited about reading. They are the best of both worlds—text and visuals that are not picture books. Kids want to read graphic novels over and over again. Want a sight? Just watch them salivate when they hear another book in a series will be released soon.”

—Stacey Rattner, K–5 librarian



Important elements of **GRAPHIC NOVELS**



1. Color can be used in a variety of ways in graphic novels. *The City of Ember* graphic novel uses darker tones to help project a somber mood, while *The Sand Warrior* uses light colors to create an almost ethereal world. Color also plays an active role in the storytelling. The color in Hilo changes when he is having a flashback. Here are a few questions to consider along with readers:

- Which colors are predominant?
- What might the colors represent?
- What would happen if different colors were used?
- Why did the artist choose to use the colors they did? Describe the mood created.

2. Line is a component of the art in a graphic novel, and the direction of a line (horizontal, diagonal, vertical) can imply different things. A diagonal line might indicate movement or loss of balance. A horizontal line could mean rest or peace or calm, while a vertical line could indicate not just height but strength. Readers should be able to determine if the direction of an illustration or a panel or even a page is horizontal, vertical, or diagonal and why. Here are a few questions to consider along with readers:

- Are lines thin or thick? Light or dark?
- How does the artist use lines to draw the readers' eyes in a certain direction?
- How are lines used to frame the panels or to separate the white space from the text and illustrations?

3. Composition is how the illustration is put together (composed). Size and placement are two critical components of composition, so think about these questions in your exploration with readers:

- What is in the center of each panel? At the top? At the bottom? What might the placement of objects signify?

- How do the panels interact with one another?
- Are some elements of the illustrations larger than others? Why or why not?

4. Frames can be used to contain text and illustration and create panels.

- What types of frames are used?
- Do the frames vary throughout the narrative or remain consistent?
- Are there frames within frames? Why?
- If the frames were removed, how might the story change?
- If the art sometimes breaks the borders of the frame, what might the artist be conveying with this technique?

5. In graphic novels, speech balloons contain dialogue and text boxes contain narration. These questions are valuable when talking about the text of graphic novels:

- Does the text appear in black-and-white or color? Are different colors used? If so, why?
- Do the words differ in shape and size?
- How does the illustrator indicate different emotions through the text?
- Consider how the artist has differentiated dialogue and narration. What techniques have they used?

6. Just as the work of Picasso and the cubists differed from the work of Monet and the impressionists, different artists use different approaches in their graphic novels. The following are some questions for discussion:

- What medium is being used? Are illustrations done with colored pencil, watercolors, ink, or something else? How does this affect the narrative? (Sometimes this information can be found on the copyright page of a book.)
- What is the style of the art? Are there elements of techniques such as pointillism, impressionism, or realism? Why do you think the artist chose this style?

PAIR THESE GREAT GRAPHIC NOVELS WITH OTHER TEXTS IN YOUR CLASSROOM.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

While reading *The Odyssey*, have students also read *Rickety Stitch and the Gelatinous Goo Book 1: The Road to Epoli*.

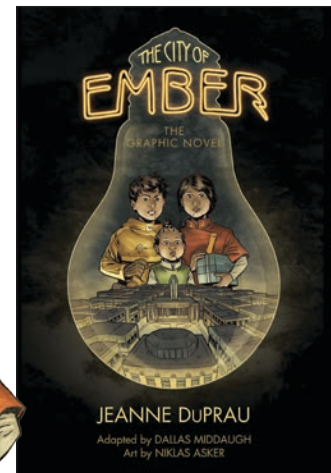
Discuss the elements of the heroic cycle in both texts and analyze similarities, differences, and the overall effect of the texts. Then have students find a modern-day story that fits the archetype of a hero's journey. They should consider heroes from literature, movies, newspapers, magazines, and comics.



DYSTOPIAN SOCIETIES

While reading *The Giver*, have students also read *The City of Ember*.

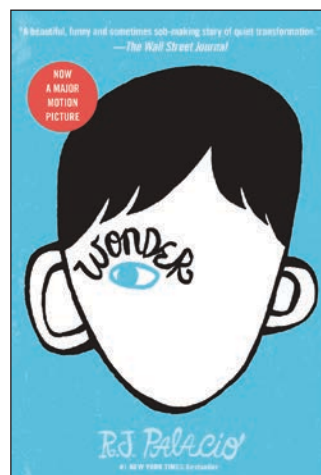
Discuss the ways in which the structures of power affect the main characters in each work. How are these the same or different from our society? Then have students investigate the ways in which their lives would change if they were to enter one of these dystopian societies.



STORIES ABOUT FINDING YOURSELF

While reading *Wonder*, have students also read *The Cardboard Kingdom*.

Discuss the ways in which a person's outward appearance can differ from how they feel on the inside, and how one's outward appearance can shape others' perceptions of them. What is the role dress-up and make-believe play in both stories? Have students draw depictions of both their inner and outer selves. What's different? What's the same?



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Art © 2012 by Niklas Asker

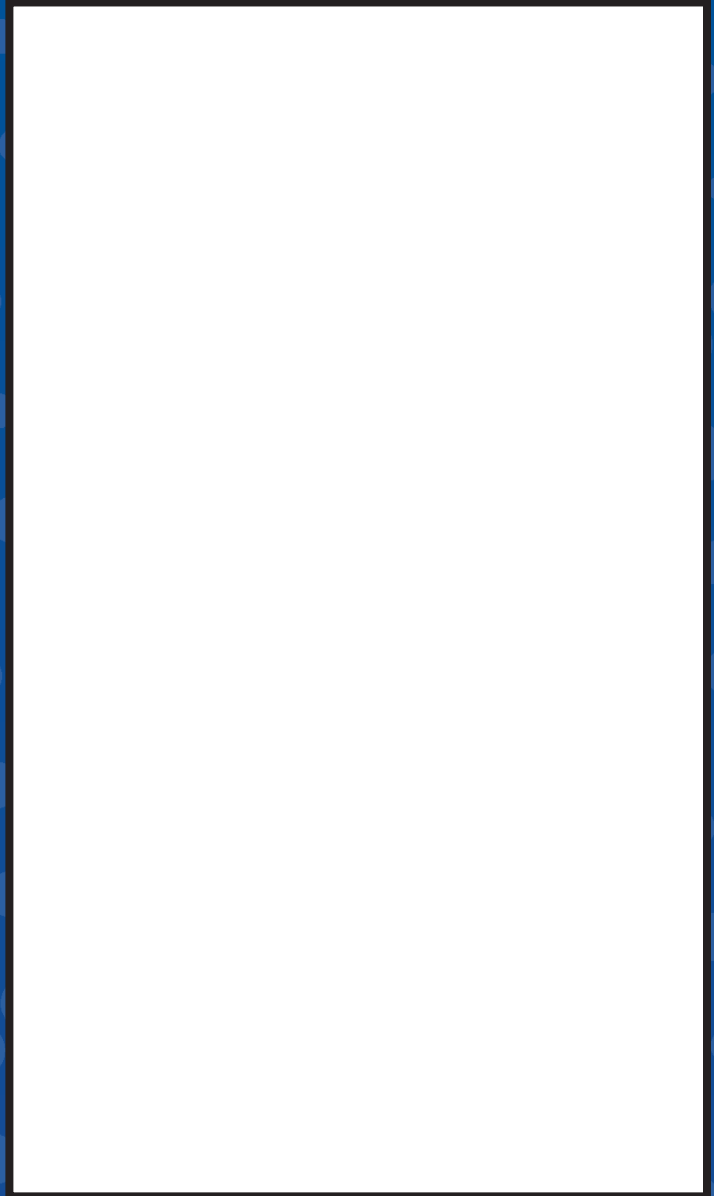
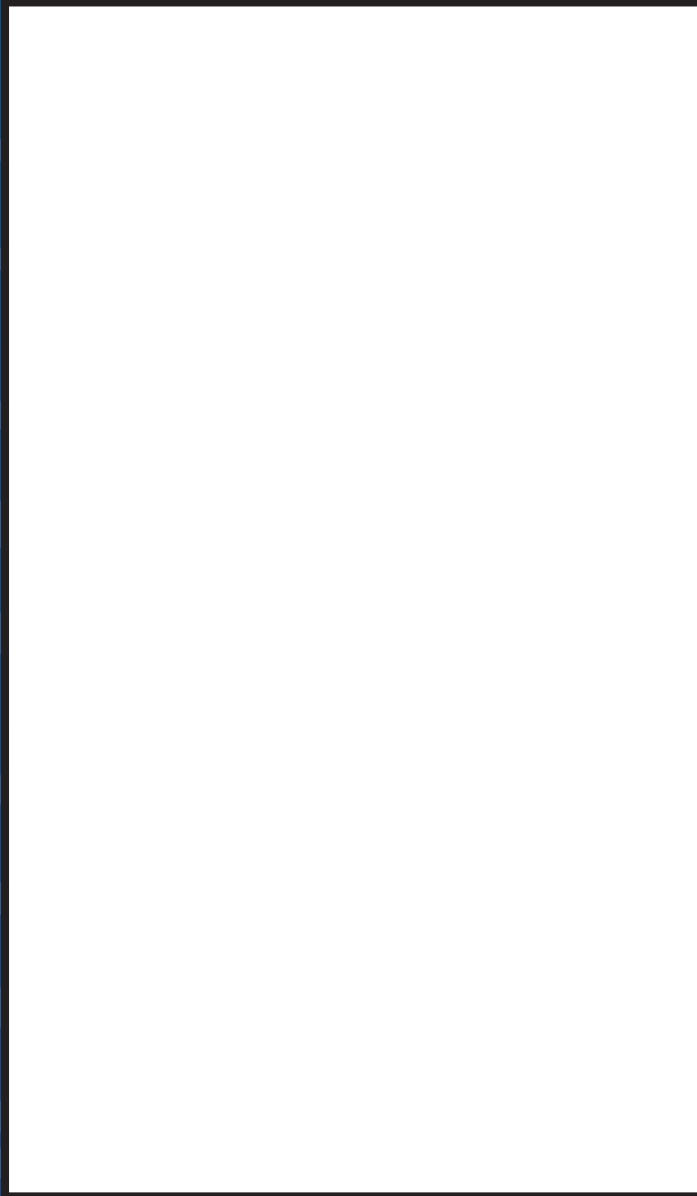
Art © 2018 by Chad Sell



Make Your Own Graphic Novel

DRAW YOUR HEROES!

Think of who your main characters are going to be, then draw them in the boxes. Next, answer questions about them so you can get to know them better!



What is this hero's **name**? _____

What is their **favorite color**? _____

What is their **favorite food**? _____

What is their **secret talent**? _____

What is this hero's **name**? _____

What is their **favorite color**? _____

What is their **favorite food**? _____

What is their **secret talent**? _____



Make Your Own Graphic Novel

LET YOUR IMAGINATION RUN WILD!

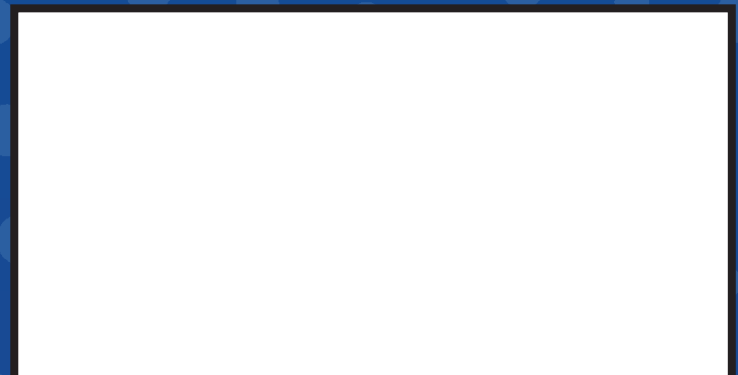
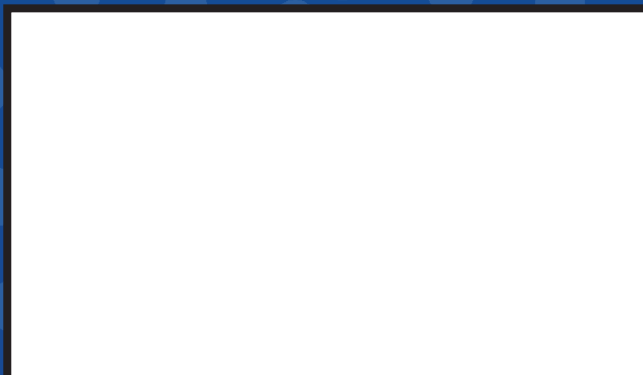
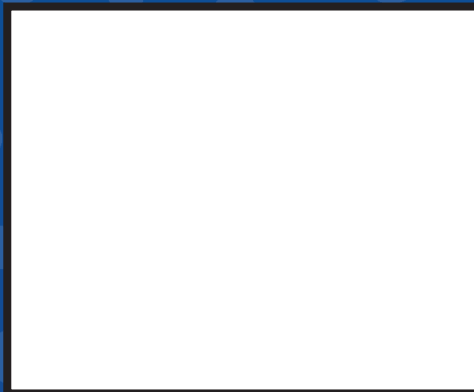
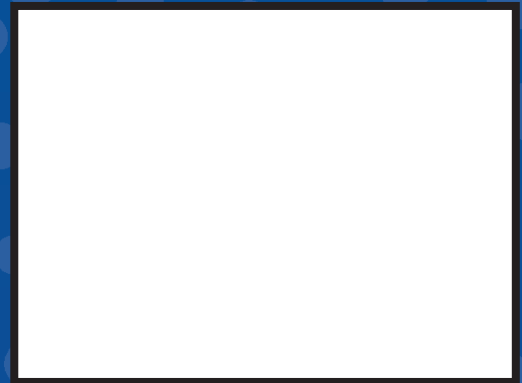
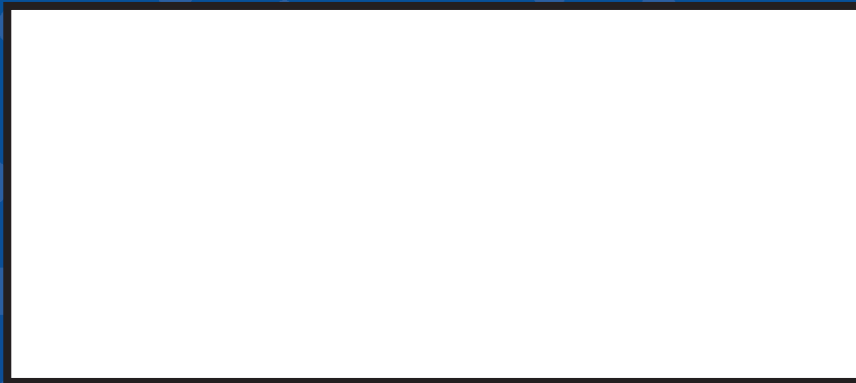
Use a combination of art and words to tell your story! Fill each panel with a different scene, and make sure to include speech bubbles so we'll know which characters are saying what.

Here are some questions you can answer to help you dream up your perfect story: Will it take place on this planet or another? Are your main characters superheroes or normal kids? What kind of adventure will they go on? Only you know the answers!

Art © 2018 by Chad Sell

**GET
GRAPHIC!**

Write your graphic novel's title here!





Find the perfect graphic-novel series for your reader!



Rickety Stitch AND THE GELATINOUS GOO

by Ben Costa and James Parks

Perfect for fans of *Bone*, *Nimona*, and *Adventure Time*, this series centers around a singing skeleton on a mission to uncover his origins with the help of his gelatinous sidekick.



5 Worlds

by Mark Siegel and Alexis Siegel; illustrated by Xanthe Bouma, Matt Rockefeller, and Boya Sun

5 Worlds. 3 Unlikely Heroes. 1 epic battle for the galaxy! This sci-fi/fantasy series is perfect for fans of *Amulet*, *Star Wars*, and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.



THE CARDBOARD KINGDOM

by Chad Sell & Co.

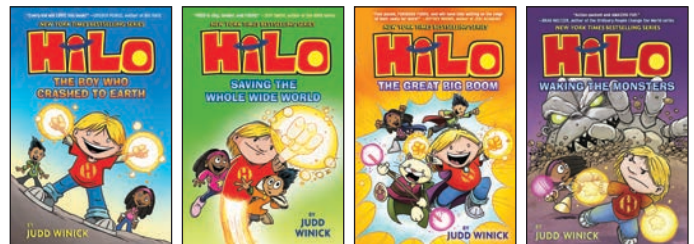
Perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier, *Roller Girl*, and *Awkward*, a neighborhood of kids transform ordinary cardboard into a magical way to navigate their real-world issues.



Hilo

by Judd Winick

Hilo is Dog Man meets Big Nate in outer space! It's a hilarious and action-packed *New York Times* bestselling series!



BABYMOUSE

by Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm

Meet Babymouse in this hilarious, award-winning series. Her dreams are big, her imagination is wild, and her whiskers are always a mess!



LUCY & ANDY NEANDERTHAL

by Jeffrey Brown

A laugh-out-loud graphic-novel series about Neanderthal siblings from the bestselling author of the *Star Wars Jedi Academy* series, *Darth Vader and Son*, and *Vader's Little Princess*.





by Ali-A and Cavan Scott;
illustrated by Aleksandar
Sotirovski

Ali-A, the popular
YouTube gamer, presents
his very own action-
packed graphic novel!



COMICS SQUAD

Edited by Jennifer L. Holm, Matthew Holm, and
Jarrett J. Krosoczka

Three bust-your-gut-laughing graphic novel
anthologies with original contributions from the
most beloved names in graphic novels!



LUNCH LADY by Jarrett J. Krosoczka

Lunch Lady and her assistant, Betty, serve up more
than food to the Breakfast Bunch, a group of friends
who somehow become involved in all sorts of
adventures at school. From substitute teachers who
are really robots to evil librarians and crazed authors,
it's up to the kids and their crime-fighting Lunch Lady
to solve the cases and rescue the school.



squish by Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm

Despite being single-celled organisms, Squish
and his friends attend school, play sports, and
participate in a wide variety of activities. Though
they face obstacles, they always find a solution to
their problems!



TEAM TAEKWONDO

by Master Taekwon Lee and Jeffrey
Nodelman; illustrated by Ethen Beavers

The Team Taekwondo series
combines the appeal of
graphic novels and martial
arts to deliver action-filled,
character-building stories.
Each book also includes
one free lesson at any
participating licensed ATA
Martial Arts location.



Check out these graphic adaptations of some of our favorite novels:

The City of
Ember

by Jeanne DuPrau;
adapted by
Dallas Middaugh;
illustrated by
Niklas Asker



Experience this beloved
classic anew as artist Niklas
Asker faithfully brings to
life the glare of the lamps,
the dinginess of the streets,
and the brilliance of the
first sunrise.

The Golden
Compass

by Philip
Pullman;
adapted by
Stéphane
Melchior and Clément Oubrière



The graphic novel
adaptation of one of
the most celebrated
books of all time is
now complete! This
edition contains all three
volumes—the entire story.