COMIC CREATORS' GUIDE

826 michigan

Techniques we use to make comics

Comic Forms

What are the different parts of a comic panel?

Words in Comics

How do comic creators use words on the page to create emotion?

Questions we ask as writers and creators

Color & Weight

How do colors help tell a story?

Capturing an Image

How do comic creators focus on different parts of a character to tell a story?

How to Use This Guide!

Comic creators always think about how words and images work together on the page to tell a story. You can use the techniques in this guide to practice as you work on drafting and creating your own comic or graphic novel!

Read the guide with a friend or someone in your family and talk about what you notice in the pages of the example graphic novels and comics. We have highlighted four big ideas about making comics for you here, and you will likely notice many other moves these comic creators make to bring their stories to life. You can try them out in your own creation and keep the ones you like!

FRAME

GUTTER

GUTTER

HEEELP! OH MY GOD HELP MEEEEE!
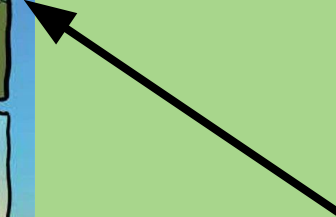
I'M TRAPPED!

From *Anya's Ghost* by Vera Brosgol

FRAME

PANELS

GUTTER

BLEED

From *Lumberjanes* by Shannon Watters, Grace Ellis, Brooklyn A. Allen and Noelle Stevenson

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

- Frame (shape, style, width)

- Panels (shape, size, and number of panels on the page)

- Gutter (how big is the space between panels?)

- Bleed (do any images extend to or beyond the page's edge?)
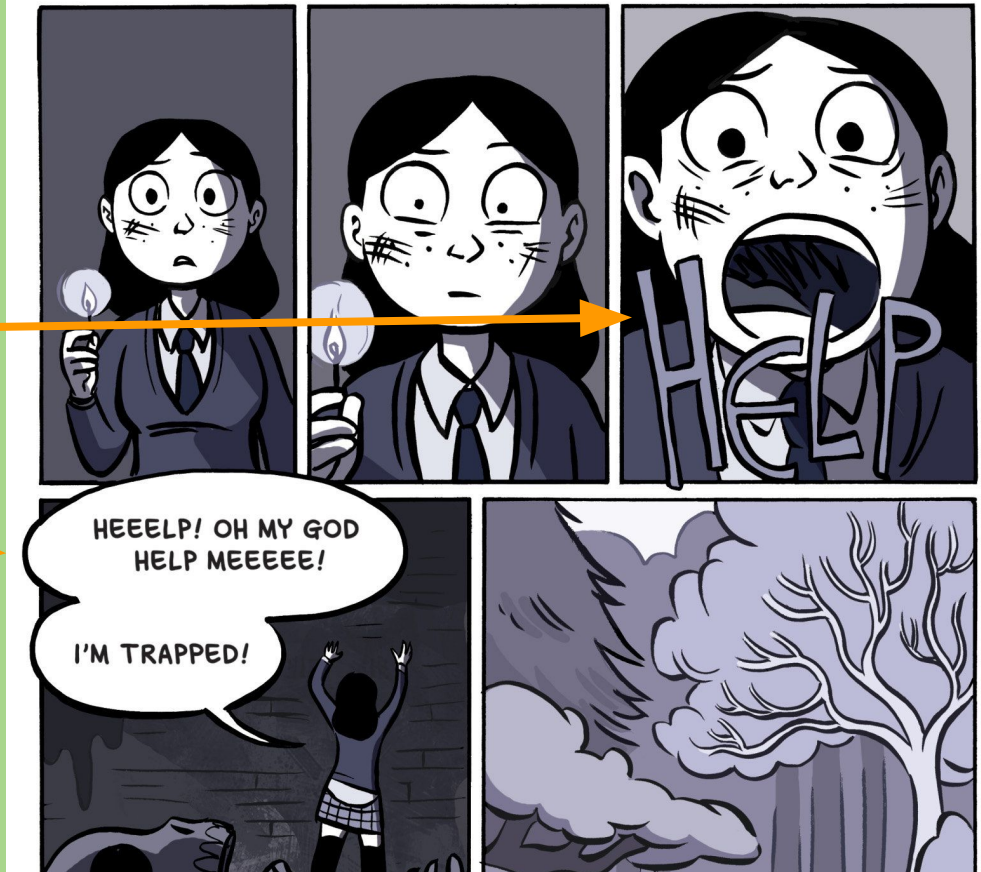

From *Little Robot* by Ben Hatke

What do the words in black mean? The words in yellow? How do you know?

From *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang

Why would the comic creator use different lettering here

and here?

From *Anya's Ghost* by Vera Brosgol

WHERE DO YOU NOTICE?

- Special effects lettering?

- Speech bubble(s)?

- Thought clouds?

- Other words?

From *Little Robot* by Ben Hatke

COLOR & WEIGHT

Comic creators use color and graphic weight to help tell their stories.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

From *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Graphic Weight:

Pictures that catch your attention more than other pictures, usually using color or shading.

From *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang

Comic creators use color and graphic weight to help tell their stories.

GRAPHIC WEIGHT

- **Dark-toned images** or **high-contrast** images

- A **pattern**

- Colors that are more **brilliant** or **deeper** than others on the page

From *Little Robot* by Ben Hatke

GRAPHIC WEIGHT

- Using **light and dark shades** (especially when the background is dull).

- A **pattern**

- Colors that are more **brilliant** or **deeper** than others on the page

From *Awkward* by Svetlana Chmakova

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Comic creators use color and graphic weight to help tell their stories.

From *Hilda and the Bird Parade* by Luke Pearson

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Comic creators use color and graphic weight to help tell their stories.

From *The Proud Family*, animated TV show by Bruce W. Smith

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Comic creators use color and graphic weight to help tell their stories.

From *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur* by Amy Reeder & Brandon Montclare

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Comic creators use their characters' hands, feet, and faces to help tell the story.

From *Lumberjanes* by Shannon Watters, Grace Ellis, Brooklyn A. Allen and Noelle Stevenson

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

From *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur* by Amy Reeder & Brandon Montclare

How do pictures of the character's hands, feet, and face help us know what is happening here?

Comic creators use their characters' hands, feet, and faces to help tell the story.

From *Moon Girl And Devil Dinosaur: The Beginning* by Amy Reeder, Brandon Montclare, & Natacha Bustos

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Comic creators use their characters' hands, feet, and faces to help tell the story.

From *Pashmina* by Nidhi Chanani

PRACTICE!

1. Draw two boxes on a piece of paper.

2. **Pick two emotions** from the right side of this slide. **Draw your character** experiencing a different emotion in each box.

3. When you're done, we'll **share and guess** which emotion they are showing.

- Joy
- Guilt
- Worry
- Anger
- Nervous
- Excited
- Bored
- Tired
- Grossed out
- Pensive/thinking
- Annoyed
- Laughter
- Embarrassment
- Loved
- Shame
- Thoughtful
- *Create your own!*

Comic creators use their characters' hands, feet, and faces to help tell the story.

Creating Your Comic!

Here are some questions to think about as you sketch and create:

❏ How will you divide up your story into panels? How many panels will you use?

❏ What colors will you use? Will you have a color scheme with only specific colors?

❏ How will you decide what parts of your story will be represented in words and what parts will be represented in pictures?

  ❏ How will you use a variety of captions, speech balloons, and special-effects lettering?

❏ Does your story always need to be in order? Can you use pictures to represent flashbacks or flash-forwards, or pictures of a character's thoughts?

Resources!

Comics and video game programming in Ypsilanti!

www.heronation.org/

Make your own comics online with a free trial!

www.pixton.com/

Writing workshops online!

www.826michigan.org

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