

I shudder at the thought of having to compete with a whole new gaggle of graphic novel creators! I tremble because if anyone can bring out the writer and artist hidden within society's somnambulant psyche it's the titanically talented Barbara Slate. So please don't read this book. I have a family to support!

Stan Lee,
Chairman, POW! Entertainment and Chairman Emeritus, Marvel Entertainment

YOU CAN DO A GRAPHIC NOVEL



BARBARA SLATE

Teacher's Guide

Whether you are an English, Creative Writing or Art teacher, Librarian, Scout Leader, or Parent, **YOU** can help encourage your students, child or troops to do a graphic novel. And maybe even do one yourself!

This is a sample of the Teacher's Guide to
YOU CAN DO A GRAPHIC NOVEL.
The complete guide will be available soon.



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This publication contains the opinions and ideas of its author. It is intended to be helpful and informative on the subject matter and to be used as a teacher's companion to YOU CAN DO A GRAPHIC NOVEL. It is given free of charge with the understanding that the author is not rendering professional services in the book. If the reader requires personal assistance or advice, please contact the author @ www.barbaraslate.com

Barbara says ...



Everything is process. Learning about themselves will take a lifetime, but students get a head start if they begin to understand their own process. Not only is it important creatively, but also on a daily basis.

Teacher's Guide to

You can do a

Graphic Novel

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Contents

Why graphic novels?	8
The Top Ten graphic novel questions	10
Teacher's Guide Overview	12
STEP ONE The Creative Process	14
STEP TWO Story	18
STEP THREE A Successful Story	20
STEP FOUR Creating a Character	24
Everybody works differently	29
STEP FIVE See as if for the first time	30
STEP SIX The Plotline	32
STEP SEVEN Writing	36
STEP EIGHT Layout	40
In Conclusion	44
The graphic novel art show	45

Since you are already reading this, then chances are great that you are a believer in the importance of graphic novels. But just in case you need some ammunition with a principal, spouse, boss, who thinks comics are a waste of time, bad for the environment or just plain dopey, here are some facts to sway the nonbeliever.



Today it is a career path. School systems are incorporating graphic novels as part of their curriculum. Learning how to create a Graphic novel is a powerful tool for advertising, movie making, and many other creative fields that involve sequential art.



Creating characters and story lines is empowering. It keeps teenagers focused on ideas. They are masters of this universe.



Teens who do graphic novels develop skills in logic, teamwork, problem solving, and completing a task. They also form strong bonds with each other and create a community within a school.



The more they write and draw, the better they get. Being an artist is cool. It helps with self-esteem.



Creating Graphic Novels is therapeutic. Teens learn to express thoughts and feelings. A teenager at the drawing board instead of *being* bored is a beautiful thing.

The Top 10 Graphic Novel Questions

1. What is a Graphic Novel?

A Graphic Novel is a Comic Book only longer. The big difference is that when you write a comic book, it is usually put out in monthly installments. In graphic novel form, the book is complete. Whatever you call it, it's simply storytelling with the art *advancing* the story, rather than illustrating the text, as in the classic storybook.

2. Do you have to know how to draw to do a graphic novel?

You do not have to know how to draw, but you do need to find your unique style. The art in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, one of the most popular graphic novels out today, is all stick figures. It's the *combination* of art style and writing that is unique to graphic novels.

3. Which comes first, art or story?

It doesn't matter. Everybody works differently. Some start with story, others with art, and still others write and draw at the same time. The idea is to just get going.

4. How do I get started?

Doodle.

5. What is more important, Art or Story?

This is one of those questions that you can debate forever and still not come up with the answer. Of course you need a good story because nobody likes a boring one, and you need interesting art to keep the reader intrigued. It's the chicken and the egg all over again.

6. Can I make a living doing graphic novels?

Today more than ever. But it still isn't easy. Of course talent is important, but willing to get your work out there and show it to the world is what is going to give you a real shot.

Knowing how to do a graphic novel expands into other fields such as advertising, movie making and TV writing.

7. Any creative tips?

Never leave home without a pencil and paper. You never know where or when inspiration will come.

8. How do you know what to write about?

Write what you *know* about.

9. How do you break into the business?

Going to a Comic book convention is a good start. There, you can talk to professionals and get your portfolio evaluated. Get connected through your local libraries, art teachers, events around town.

10. Is the creative block real?

Of course it's real. But be careful not to use it as an excuse if you're just being lazy or reaching a difficult time in your story. Sometimes what feels like a creative block is really just you going through your process and getting ready for a breakthrough.

RECOMMENDATION:

Minimum of 6 sessions.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Each student has the book, *You Can Do A Graphic Novel*. (YCDAGN) **You** have this teacher's guide, and plenty of Pencils and Paper. (Make copies of page 11 for those who want to work with panels.)

TIP: Standard 8.5x11 paper is good to use. However, if you can add different kinds of paper-- larger, smaller, some with a grip, newsprint, etc. and also add crayons and colored pencils to the mix, that will help with creativity.

WHAT THEY ACCOMPLISH:

Each student explores their creative process. In doing so, they discover things about themselves that they never knew before.

Each student completes a Bible about their character. A Bible is *Everything you need to know about your character such as name, age, background, powers, fears, etc.*

Students study "How to Plot" their story by color coding.

Each student completes at least a two page layout of a comic book/ graphic novel. (See pages 36-37 in this guide)

Barbara says ...



Everything is process.

Learning about themselves will take a lifetime, but students get a head start if they begin to understand their own process. Not only is it important creatively, but also on a daily basis.

Some students may already have characters and story that they've been working on for years. Others may have sketches, doodles, or writings in their sketchbooks, binders, or heads. They are encouraged to use what ever they have. If they don't draw at all, they can doodle. In the doodles they may discover a character. Except when the student is reading, they are encouraged to be drawing, doodling or writing.

The goal is to complete all eight steps of this guide. You will go at your own pace. If you are planning a 6 session program then you will move faster than you would if you were planning an 8 session one. A 12 session or more allows more time for process. The more time students have to discover their process, create characters, do a plotline, and work on layout, the better.

Each step is a building block to create a finished work of art (*a double page spread*) to be shown at the Graphic Novel Show (p. 38). The show does not *have* to go on, but displaying the student's work is a way to get parents, students, faculty and the local press to look at art and see the creative process at work. Having students' work published in the Newspaper is not only great for their sense of pride and recognition, but also when applying for art school and college. Oh, putting on a show is lots of fun too!



STEP ONE

The Creative Process

YOU ASK:

How many are Morning People?

Who is a Night Owl?

Do you like being alone?

How do you react to criticism?

Who likes to listen to music while they work?

What music inspires you?

Do you have one spot that you always go to when you work?

Can you create anywhere?

Who remembers their dreams?

Who thinks they don't dream? *Everybody dreams.*

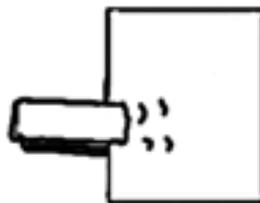
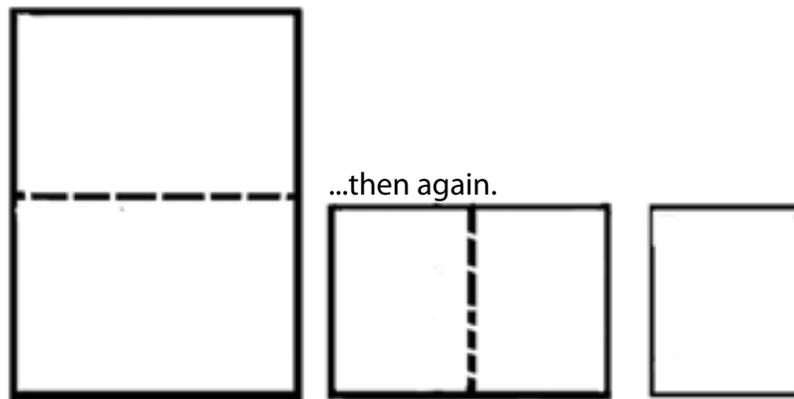
There are endless questions you can ask! Most students like talking about their process. Try to spend more than ten minutes, unless you are planning to do more than 8 sessions. In which case, you will most likely enjoy lively and enlightening conversations!

STUDENTS READ: Open YCDAGN to Chapter Three. Each student reads a creative tip out loud. You have already completed the first tip by asking questions about Process so begin with Creative Tip 2. Some tips will inspire more conversation/projects than others. Following are suggestions to get the creative juices flowing.

Creative Tip 2. *Keep a journal*

PROJECT: The students make a journal. They are encouraged to write in their journal about their process.

Fold paper in half



One staple in the spine.
If you don't want to use a stapler, you can improvise.



Sketch a title

HOMEWORK:

YOU SAY:

Discover something about your process that you never knew before.

Write, draw, or do a cartoon of it in your journal. If a student already uses a sketchbook or journal, then they can use it.

Creative Tip 4. *Inspiration is everywhere.*

YOU ASK:

Who has been inspired lately? What inspired you?

Creative Tip 6: *Make lots and lots of mistakes.*

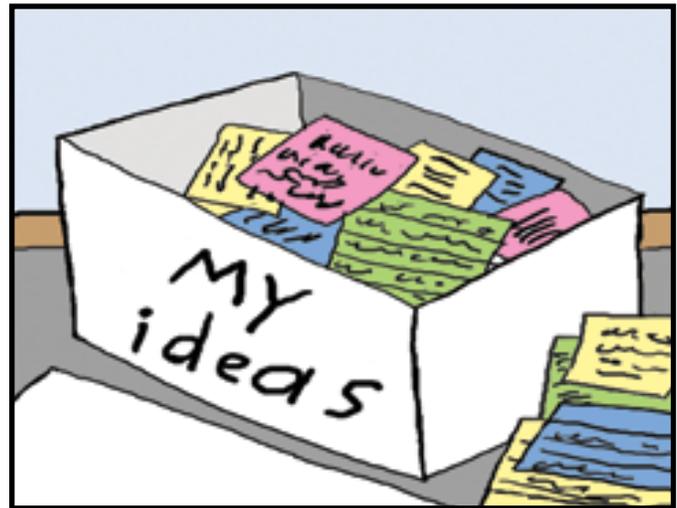
YOU ASK:

Who hates to make mistakes? Are you a perfectionist?

Creative Tip 8: *Don't throw anything away until you are finished with your graphic novel.*

PROJECT:

The students make an Idea box from a shoe, tissue, corrugated, or gift box. This can either be a class project or something they do at home.



Creative Tip 11. *Collaborate*

YOU ASK:

How many like to write? Draw? Both? (*Artists may want to collaborate with writers and writers with artists.*)

Creative Tip 14. *Moment of Inspiration*

YOU ASK:

What does *your* moment of inspiration feel like?

WHAT THEY LEARN:

To pay attention to their process.

REMEMBER:

Always provide plenty of paper and pencils. Some students may already be writing/drawing and others may want to start right away working on their graphic novel. Copy the panels from the next page for them to use. They can work from left to right, or right to left if they are doing the Manga style.



Barbara Slate has done over 300 comic books and graphic novels. She takes you through the process of combining text and images to tell a story, from creating the premise to the finish. You'll learn how to:

- Create characters—everything you need to know about them and more.
- Develop a plotline that holds the reader's attention.
- Lay out your pages to keep the story moving forward.
- Get to know your Process—what works best for *you*.
- Confront the Creative Block. Is it real? If you think you're blocked, how do you get over it?
- Make lots of mistakes.

"Barbara Slate has captured the creative process with all its tortures and delights, and produced a great guidebook to anyone who wants to unleash their inner creativity."

Paul Levitz

President and Publisher, DC Comics

Along with all your art supplies, favorite chair, and a good light over your drawing board, you must keep a copy of Barbara Slate's new book **YOU CAN DO A GRAPHIC NOVEL** close by. Every chapter is a little gem to help any young (or old) artist/writer.

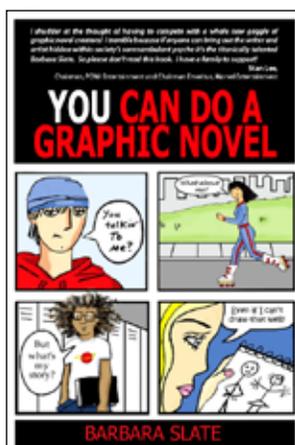
Stan Goldberg

Legendary Artist

"Get ready! Barbara will get your creative juices flowing."

Victor Gorelick

Co-president/Editor-in-chief Archie Comic Publications, Inc.



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where you can

- read some pages from the book
- register for an online course
- see examples of students' work
- find out where Barbara will be teaching
- arrange a teacher training workshop