



Graphic Novels

Course Syllabus

Welcome to Storybird Creative Courses!

In this online course, writers will have the chance to learn and practice important concepts and skills that will help them create their own graphic novel, no matter their level or ability. *Pashmina* author/illustrator Nidhi Chanani hosts this course in 13 videos and 17 lessons—14 instructional and three assessments.

Storybird has developed this course, along with Nidhi Chanani's input, to align with **Writing, Reading, Speaking, and Listening education standards** that are universally accepted as basic building blocks in a strong English Language Arts foundation. This course can be completed by English students, Art students, or as part of a cross-curricular unit, combining both English and Art. Students can work individually or in collaboration, and the course offers many opportunities for students to work together, for example, in pairs as artist-writer. Lessons can be easily adapted to different learning styles, levels, or abilities, can be paired with other activities, and, while scaffolded, can be broken up and taken in different ways, either as mini-lessons, whole class activities, individual work, or group work. Lessons are easily modified to be completed in a single class period or as a part of a larger unit.

Content

This course contains 14 lessons, 13 videos, 3 quizzes, and 2 writing challenges. Through engaging language, original, hand-drawn comics, graphic organizers, quick activities, downloadable handouts, simple multiple choice quizzes, and writing challenges, the lessons teach and assess the following concepts and skills:

- **Prewriting:** All the things you need to consider when getting started; brainstorming and freewriting techniques, along with guiding questions that ease even beginner writers into the activity
- **Vocabulary terms:** A handy guide of important terms and concepts for writing, illustrating, and creating graphic novels, all collected in one place and downloadable
- **Story Structure:** How to put together your story, using a downloadable story map
- **Figurative language:** How to use imagery and sensory detail to create an immersive environment
- **How to collaborate:** As a skill, working and communicating with an artist to create your vision
- **Self Illustrating:** A simple guide for budding artists for developing your own abilities and applying them to the specific needs of graphic novels

- **Finding your style:** Choosing color choices and creating representative thumbnails
- **Writing your script:** How to effectively use dialogue to tell your story; how to use captions; and how to communicate with your artist, if you are using one, during the script-writing process
- **Mastering words and images:** Using images, words, word placement, bubbling, and lettering to bring life, meaning, and character to your comics
- **Basic sequencing:** Using a specific layout for maximum impact, using a grid and spread, using different borders and gutters, and using open panels, all to enhance the reader's experience
- **Mastering sequencing:** Thinking about narrative pace, practice with sequencing to show time and space, using transitions, namely action, aspect, moments, scene, subject, and artistic concept to create a faster or slower paced story, and to show deeper meaning
- **Publishing:** How to publish your finished product—zines, web-based content, traditional publishing, how to pitch your graphic novel, how to negotiate terms

Goals

By working through this course, your students will be able to:

- Review or learn important terms and concepts that will be used throughout their school years in their own writing, reading, analysis, and discussions. Although a course on graphic novels, many of the terms students will learn are not just specific to this genre and will be helpful in their literature and art studies
- Learn terms specific to graphic novels, a high-interest form of literature for many students
- Read original comics, identify concepts within the comics, and explain how the concepts are used within the comic to add meaning and significance
- Play with different types of language to create different effects, including how words and images look on the page
- Assess and evaluate their own work on key concepts
- Prewrite, brainstorm, draft, and revise short and longer writing in response to activities and challenges
- Read a variety of types of graphic novels and think about how to develop their own style based on their readings
- Practice using technology and learn to be part of a safe online community
- Become acquainted with the publishing world
- Assess their knowledge of the material with three 10-question multiple choice quizzes, easily taken over if student does not obtain a 10/10
- Write a finished graphic novel, using art on Storybird, that requires students to utilize all of the important skills and concepts learned during the course

Rubric

We have developed a [simple rubric](#) that can be used to evaluate student work on Storybird easily and quickly. These rubrics can be adapted to fit your department's, district's, or state's requirements for English Language Arts assignments.

Finally

It is our hope here at Storybird that you will find these lessons thoughtful, fun, and appropriate for your students. They are general enough that they can fit with many different state / district requirements as well as specific enough that they teach universally useful ELA concepts and skills. They are easily adapted and can be done as stand-alone lessons, out of order, or as an entire unit. We hope they enhance your classroom and your curriculum and welcome any feedback you have for us as we continue to develop new content for educators.

[Contact us here](#)