

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!



(c) 2010, Barbara Slate. All rights reserved.

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](http://www.barbaraslate.com)

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.

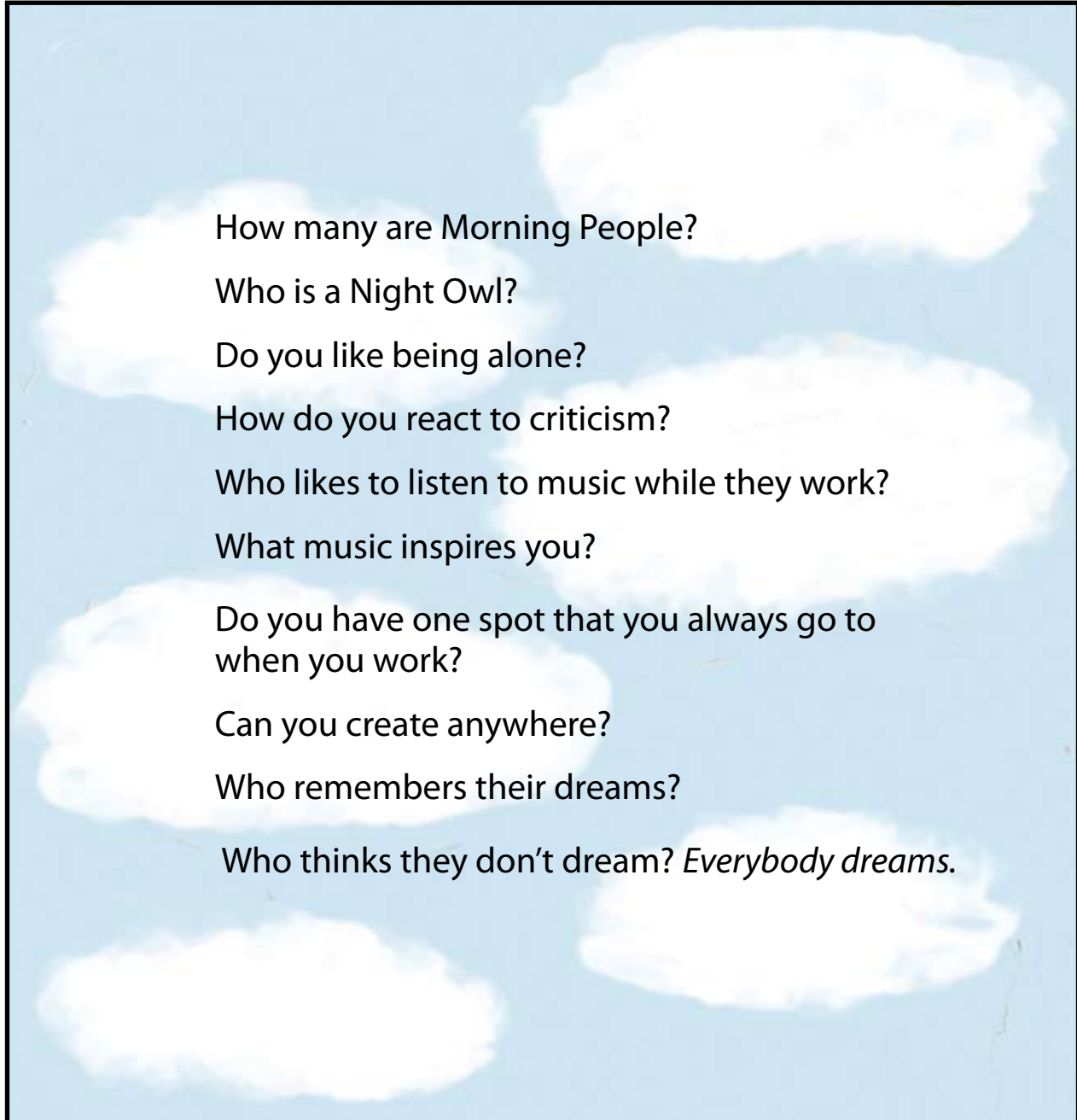
Each step is a building block to create a finished work of art (*a double page spread*) to be shown at the Graphic Novel Show (p. 38). The show does not *have* to go on, but displaying the student's work is a way to get parents, students, faculty and the local press to look at art and see the creative 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:



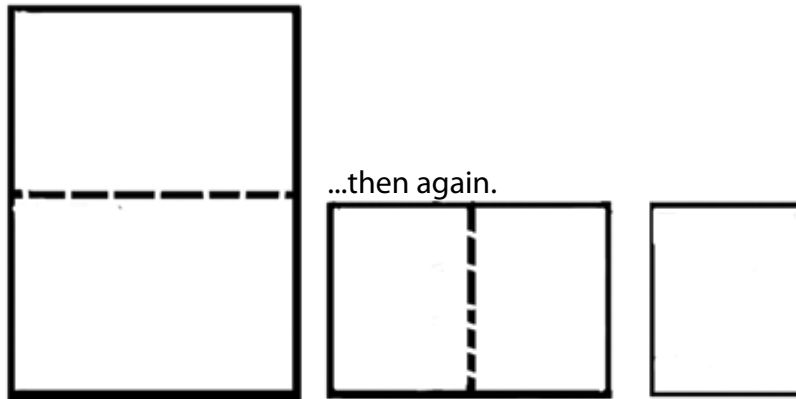
There are endless questions you can ask! Most students like talking about their process. Try to spend more than ten minutes, unless you are planning to do more than 8 sessions. In which case, you will most likely enjoy lively and enlightening conversations!

**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.

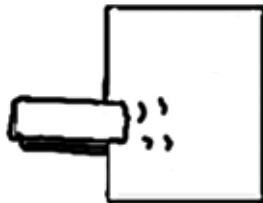
### Creative Tip 2. *Keep a journal*

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

Fold paper in half



...then again.



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.*

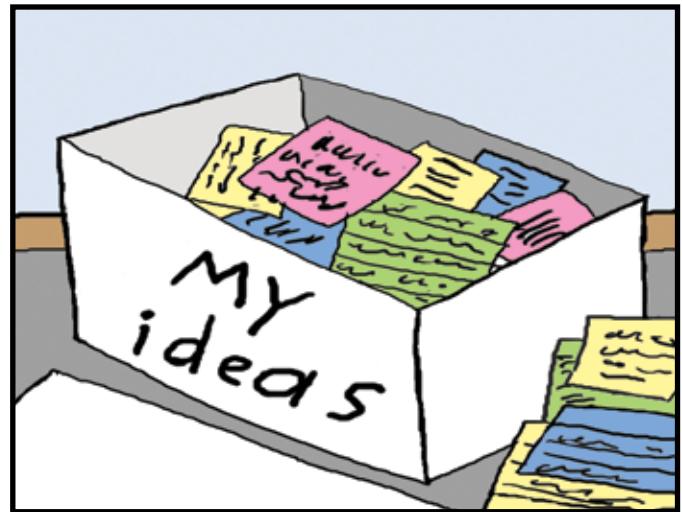
**YOU ASK:**

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:**

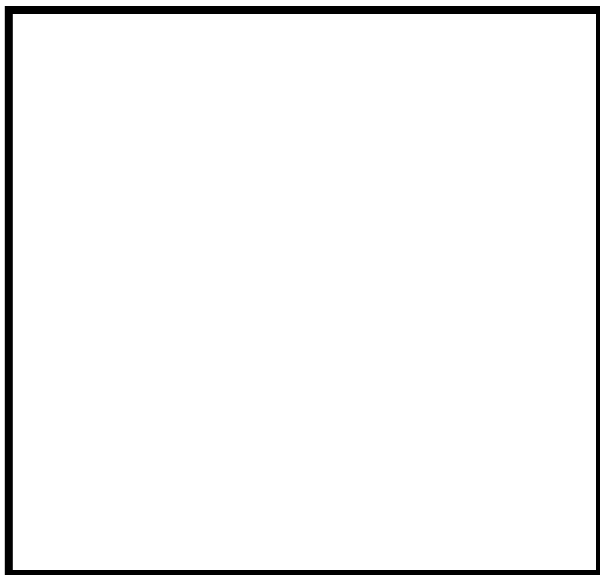
What does *your* moment of inspiration feel like?

**WHAT THEY LEARN:**

To pay attention to their process.

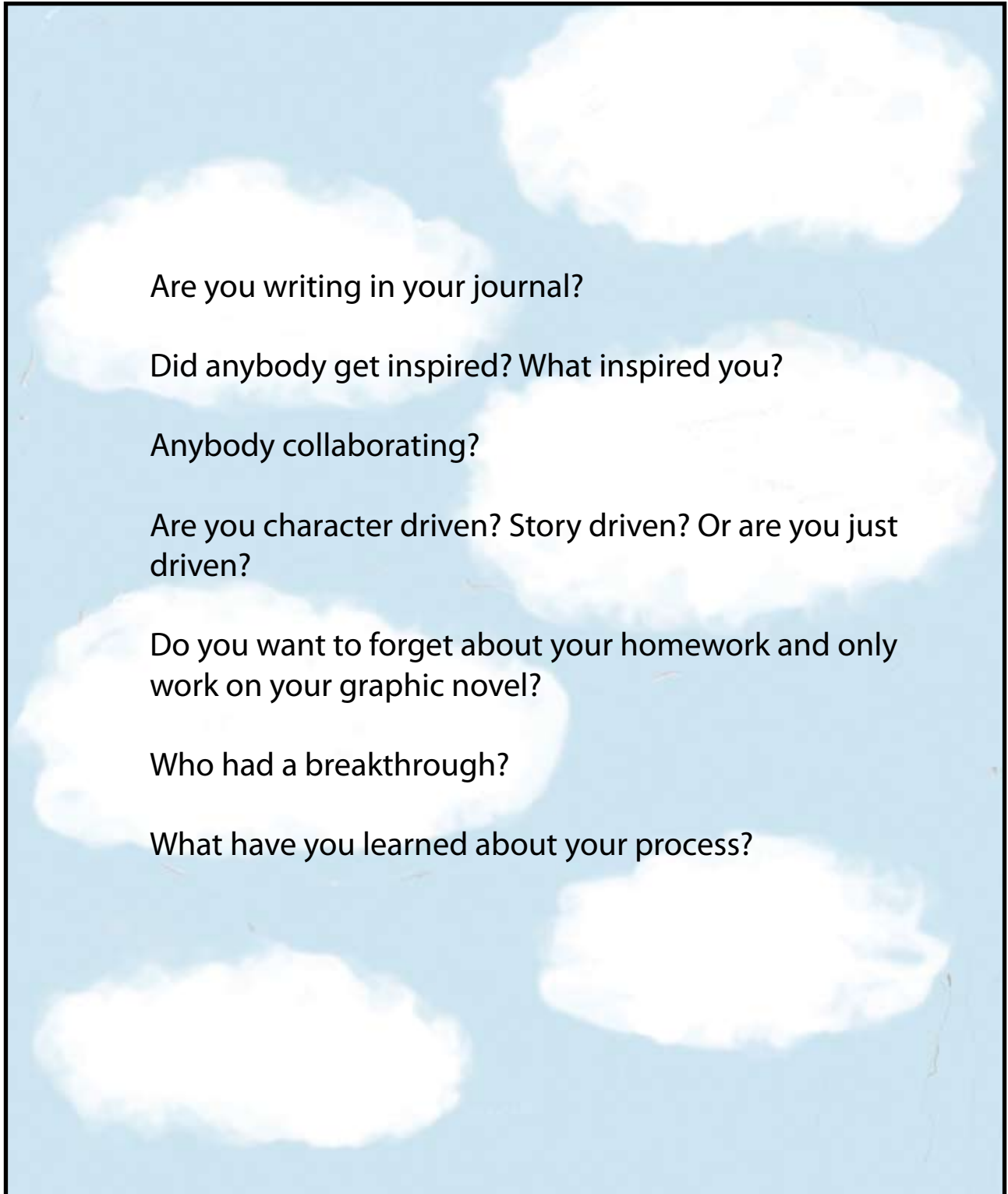
**REMEMBER:**

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.



Before you begin Step Two ...

**YOU ASK:**



These are suggested questions. You may want to add your own. Spend about 10 minutes unless you are planning more than 8 sessions.

## STEP TWO

### Story

**YOU ASK:** How many of you like a boring story?  
Of course, **Nobody likes a boring story.**

**YOU ASK:** Would somebody tell a boring story?  
If nobody volunteers, YOU tell one. (See below for my boring story.)



I got up, brushed my teeth, got dressed, made my breakfast, toast and coffee with a little milk in the coffee and oh! I almost forgot, a little sugar too and then I sat down at my kitchen table and ate, and when I was finished, got in my car and went to the gas station for gas and drove--

**TIP:** The more boring your story, the better. Many students will be inspired by your boring story and will tell their own. YOU yawn and compliment their boring stories. This can be fun but don't let it go on too long because *it* can get boring!

**STUDENTS READ:** Chapter One, pages 3-16 from YCDAGN. This should take about 10 minutes. When they are finished, the students continue to write, draw or doodle.

**YOU ASK:** What does every story have to have?  
*Beginning, middle, end and twist. The twist is the surprise,... the unexpected.*

**YOU ASK:** Can somebody tell a good story in 3 to 5 sentences?

**TIP:** This is much more difficult than telling a boring one. If you get volunteers, look for the beginning, middle, end and twist. *This may be the most difficult part of a graphic novel!* If the student does not have a story, they continue to think about it for the following weeks.

**HOMEWORK:** Reread Chapter One. Think of a story, with a beginning, middle, end and twist. Write it in the journal.

**WHAT THEY LEARN:** It's easy to tell a boring story but not so easy to tell a good one.

Before you begin Step Three ...

**YOU ASK:**

What have you learned about your process?

Are you writing in your journal?

Did anybody get inspired? What inspired you?

Any ideas come to you in your dreams?

Do you know the twist in your story?

Do you want to forget about your homework  
and only work on your graphic novel?

Who had a breakthrough?

Who remembers their dreams?

Is anybody stuck on what to write?

Who started their story?

Try to spend no more than ten minutes, unless you are planning to do twelve sessions or more!

## STEP THREE

# A Successful Story

Make copies of the following two pages to do in class, at home, or both.

### STUDENTS READ:

Chapter One, pages 6, 7, and 15 from YCDAGN. When they are finished, the students continue to write, draw or doodle.

### YOU SUGGEST:

A movie or story that most or all the class has read/seen. Analyze the story, picking out each event. The students can keep their books open to pages 6-7.

### YOU ASK:

What is the Beginning of the movie/book?

What is the Rising Action?

**TIP:** There usually are three events that happen during the Rising Action, leading to the Climax. Try to find those events.)

What is the Climax?

What is the Falling Action?

What is the Resolution?

What is the Ending?

### YOU SUGGEST:

The same movie or story that most or all the class has read/seen. The students can keep their books open to page 15.

### YOU ASK:

Who is the Protagonist?

Who is the Antagonist?

What is the Conflict in the story?

What is the plot?

What is the theme of the story?

What is the setting?

**WHAT THEY LEARN:** How to identify the structure of a story. Learn the parts of a successful story.

Write the plan for your story. (See page 7 in *You Can Do A Graphic Novel* Whatever you don't know on these 2 pages, leave blank and fill in as you get to know your story.)

Beginning:

Rising Action:

Climax:

Falling Action:

Resolution:

Ending:

Answer these questions about your story.

(See page 15 in *You Can Do A Graphic Novel*)

Who is your **Protagonist**?

Who is your **Antagonist**?

What is the **Conflict** in your story?

What is your **plot**?

What is the **theme** of your story?

What is the **setting**?

## STEP FOUR

# Creating a Character

Make copies of the next four pages. Do not hand them out yet.

### YOU ASK:

Who has a plot for their story?

Do you know your Protagonist? Antagonist?

What's your character's name?

Where is your character from?

What is your character's biggest fear?

Favorite music?

Does your character have super powers?

Any Side-kicks? Pets? Siblings?

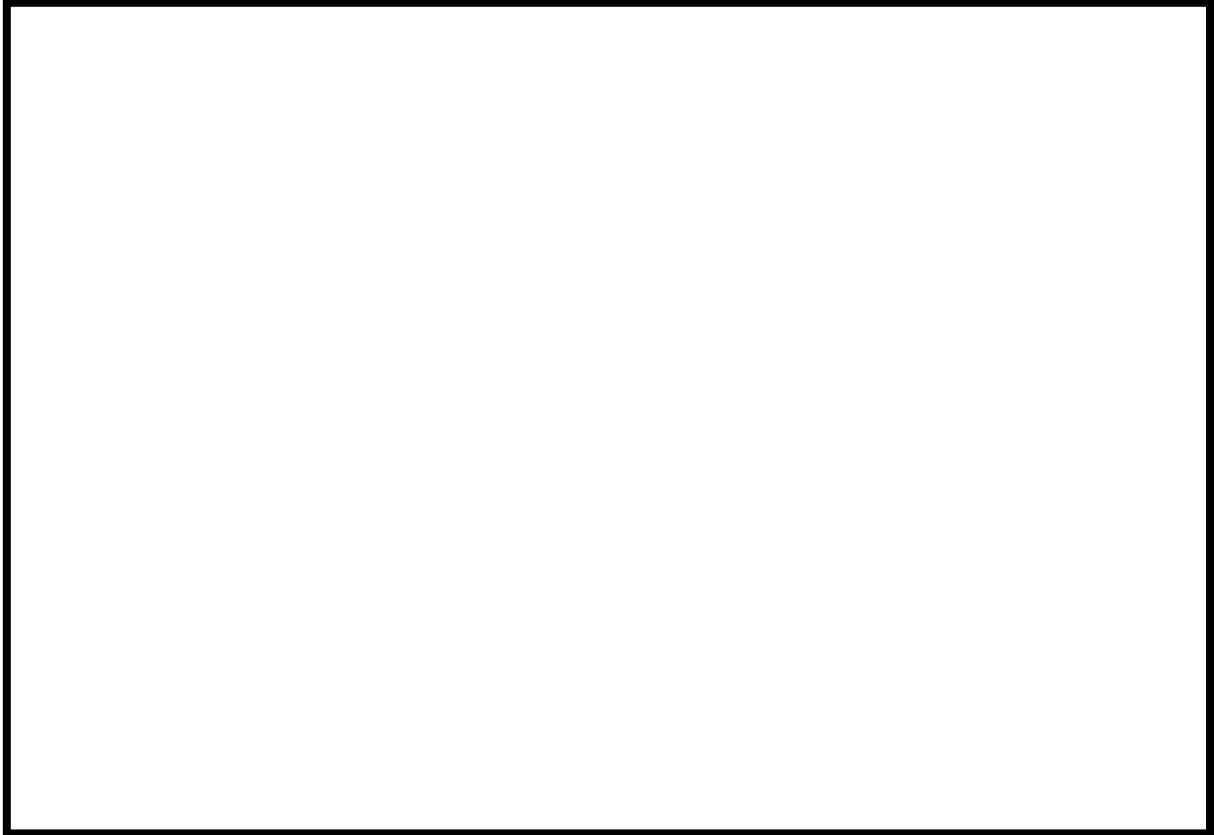
### STUDENTS READ:

Chapter Five, Creating Characters, pages 55-67 from YCDAGN. This should take about 10 minutes. Then hand out the copies. They can start writing and drawing in class and then continue at home.

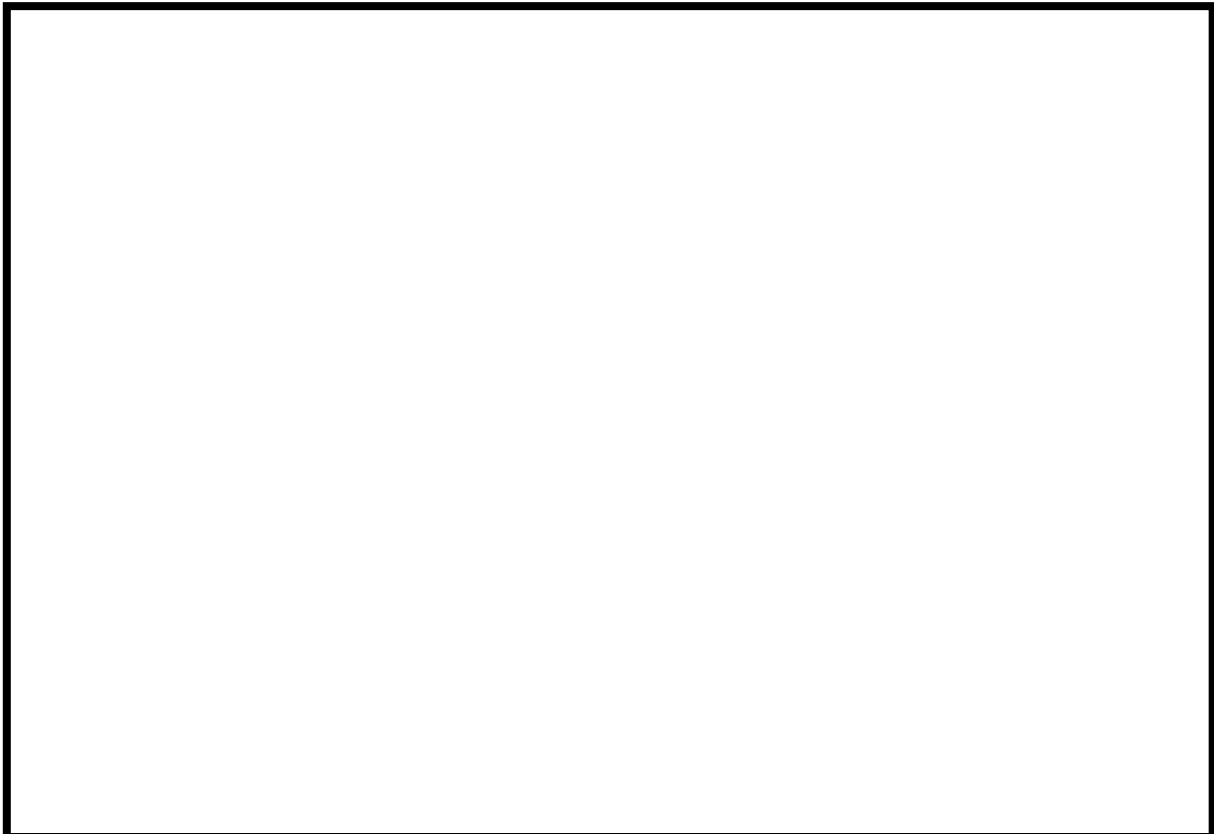
### ALERT:

When I first started teaching, I was shocked when so many of my students (most from loving homes) created characters with tragic stories of deceased parents. Then I realized that they just wanted independence for their main character!

Draw your Protagonist and Antagonist (See page 15.) Stick figures are fine.



PROTAGONIST



ANTAGONIST

## CHARACTER BIBLE

Professionals call *everything you need to know about your character and more!*... the Character Bible. Write about *your* character. You can add more character traits on another sheet of paper. The more you know about your character, the easier it will be for you to write dialog. Do not worry if your bible changes. This one is not written in stone.

**NAME:**

**AGE:**

**SIBLINGS:**

**PARENTS:**

**BACKGROUND:**

**BEST FRIEND: (or sidekick)**

**EDUCATION:**

**OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTIC:**

**BIGGEST FEAR:**

**EMPLOYMENT: (if any)**

**POWERS: (if any)**

**LEISURE ACTIVITIES:**

**CLOTHING STYLE:**

**LOVE LIFE:**

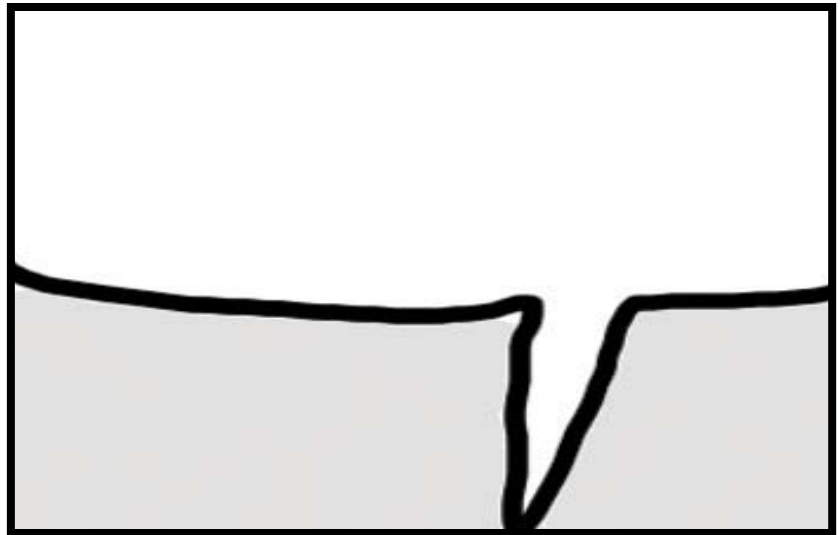
**FAVORITE COLOR:**

**FAVORITE MUSIC:**

**GOAL IN LIFE:**

**PERSONAL MOTTO:**

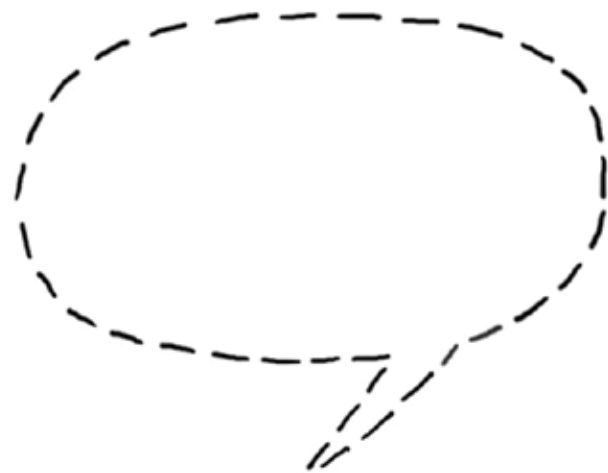
My character would say ...



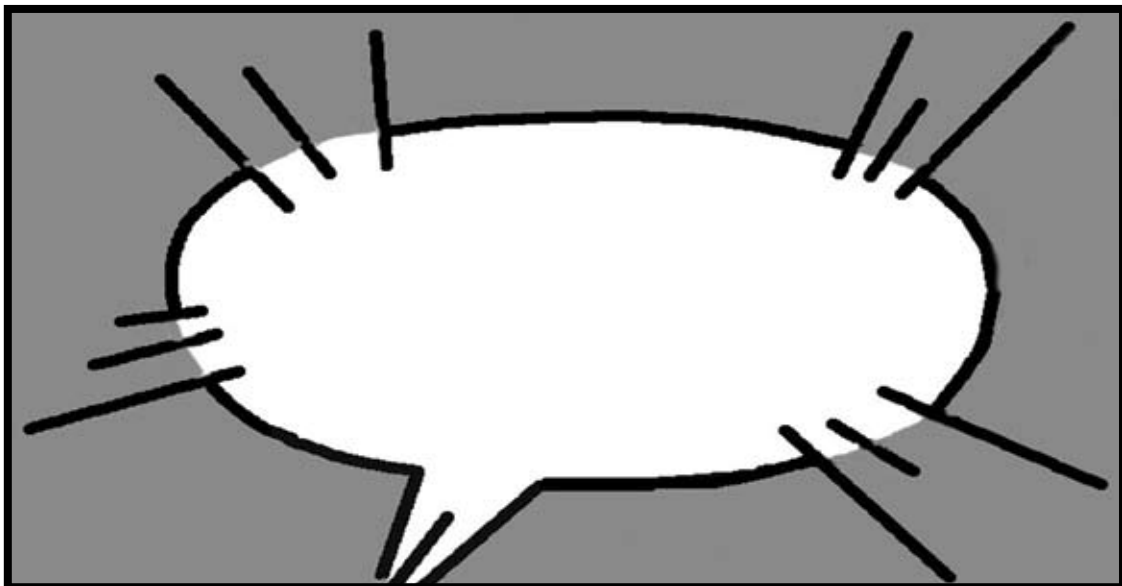
My character would think...



My character would whisper...



My character would shout...



Barbara says ...

## Everybody works differently.



The creative process is different for everyone. Some students may want to do the bible first, others will want to draw the character while still others will go back and forth between writing and drawing. It doesn't matter where they begin as long as they get going.

For those who think they cannot draw:

**YOU SHOW:** The popular graphic novel, *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. (That is all drawn with stick figures.)

**YOU SAY:** Doodle.

**TIP:** Everybody doodles. Ask them to look for doodles in their binders, book jackets, or on scraps of paper at home. In the doodles they may discover a character. Or you may see a doodle that looks interesting. Encourage the student to make a family in that style of doodle!

For those who draw too well: *That is they are perfectionists, and are afraid to make mistakes.*

**YOU SAY:**

Switch hands.

**TIP:** They draw for about five minutes with the opposite hand. Although they may be frustrated, it will help loosen them up.

For those students who have their story (*beginning, middle, end and twist*) and are developing their characters, they may be ready for feedback. Either you or the student shows a character or talks about a part in their story. The classmates react and offer opinions.

**ALERT:** Although most feedback will be helpful, be careful for negative feedback. Although not everyone is going to like the drawings/writings, there is a positive way of giving negative feedback. In the end, it is important to stress that it is up to the artist/writer to take the critique, or reject it. They are the masters of this universe.

Before you begin Step Five ...

**YOU ASK:**

Are you writing in your journal?

Who dreamed about your character?

Is your character talking to you?

Do you know what their voice sounds like?

Is your character taking over your brain?

What is your character's biggest fear?

Do you know the twist in your story?

Did anybody leave home without a pencil and paper?

Who had a breakthrough?

Is anybody stuck on what to write?

## STEP FIVE

# ***See as if for the first time***

### YOU ASK:

Who is from Mars?

*Of course, that question will get some strange looks. Usually several students raise their hands.*

### YOU SAY:

If you are not from Mars, then pretend you are. You have just landed on earth and are seeing things for the first time. Look around the room. Do you see something new? Something you've never seen before? Really look.

### STUDENTS READ:

Pages 18-24 in YCDAGN. This should take about ten minutes. When they are finished, they draw, sketch, doodle.

### PROJECT:

Set up ordinary objects-- Erasers, pencils, vase, books. Have the students draw the objects as if they have never seen them before.

**TIP:** If a student is sketching with their head down, then they are drawing what they *think* they see rather than *what* they see. They should be looking at the objects.

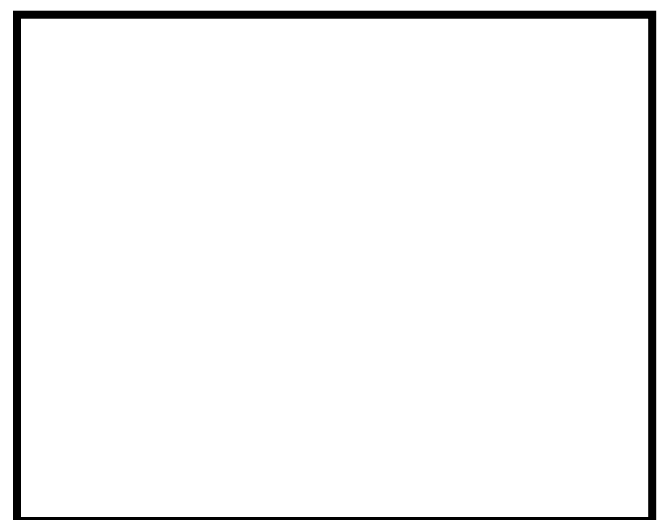
### HOMEWORK:

Continue to see *as if for the first time*. Pass out copies of the following page. This can be done in class, at home, or both.

**WHAT THEY LEARN:** A new way of seeing.

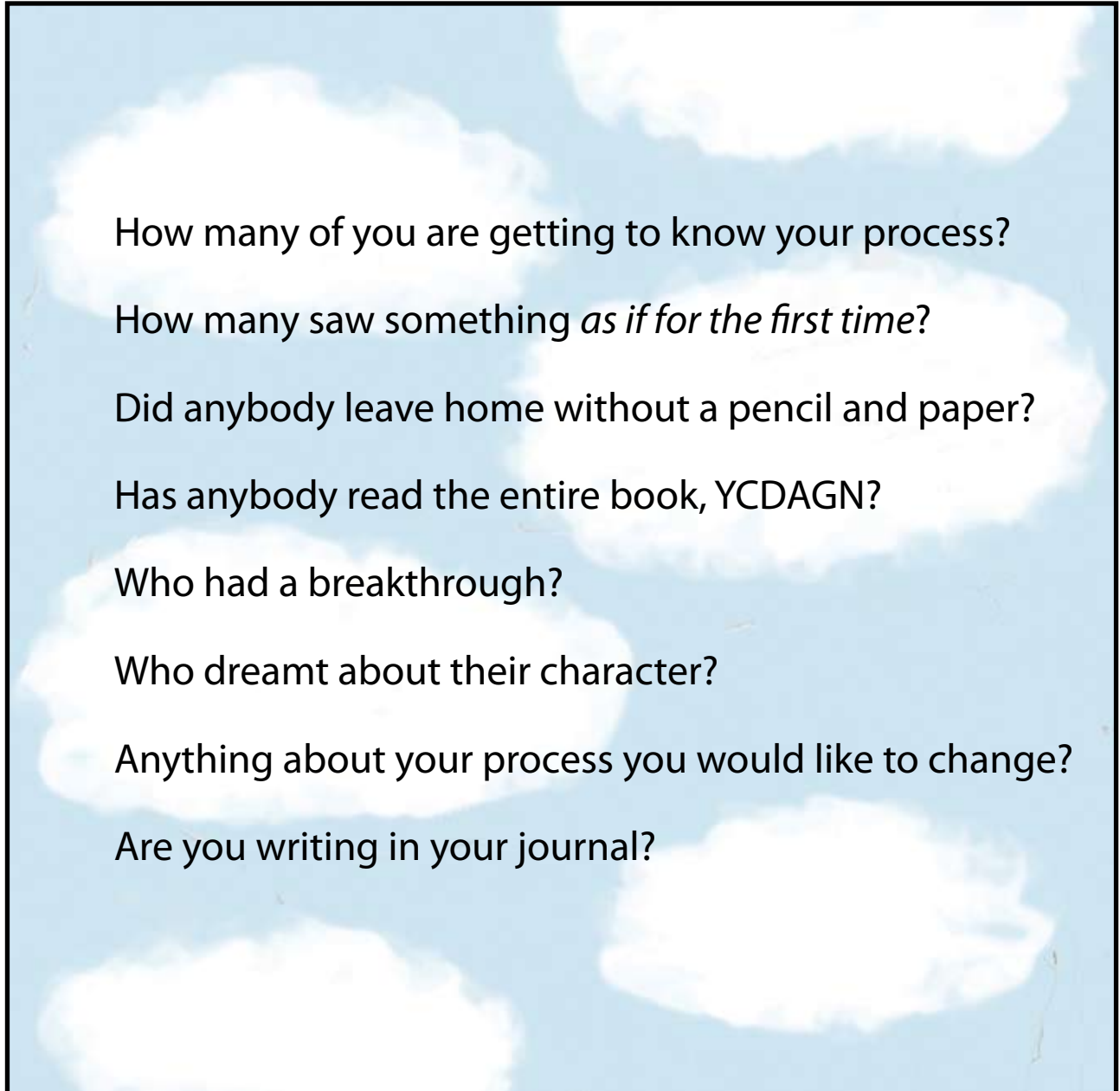


Sketch in a scene of your character getting up in the morning. You can use your own panels or the ones below. You can start from left to right, or right to left if you are drawing Manga. Make your panels sequential. (see page 181) *Stick figures encouraged!*



Before you begin Step Six ...

**YOU ASK:**



These are just several of the endless questions you can ask. You may want to walk around the room and hold up a drawing or talk about something in someone's bible that you found interesting. Spend about 10 minutes unless you are planning more than 8 sessions.

**GOAL:** The students pay attention to their process.

## STEP SIX

# The Plotline

### PROJECT:

Step by step, the students begin to plot. Plotting can be done in class, at home, or both. It can take several sessions, depending on the students and the number of sessions.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:** See pages 74 and 75.

### STUDENTS READ TO THEMSELVES:

Pages 74-86 in YCDAGN.

**ALERT:** Page 78 in YCDAGN. The first sentence says to refer to my Angel Love plotline on pages 100-101. It's really on pages 90-91. (Sorry about that!)

### STUDENTS READ OUT LOUD:

Pages 87-89. Each student reads a Plotting Pointer. Some points will inspire more conversation than others.

Following are suggestions to get the creative juices going:

**Keep the twists and turns coming**

**TIP:** Some students may be frustrated that they don't know where their story is going. See Creative Tip 3, page 27 and Creative Tip: 15 (pages 36 and 37)

**Get feedback**

**YOU ASK:**

How many of you shown your work to parents? Brother? Sister? Dog? Cat?  
Somebody in this room? Anybody want feedback now?

**TIP:** A student may want to get feedback by reading a page or showing their character to the class. It is good to get to everybody, however, if you have a limited amount of time, you may have to go on. Try to get to them next session.

**Have fun!**

**YOU ASK:**

How many are having fun? Who's not having fun?

Barbara says ...



There is no doubt about it, plotting is not easy. Reading and rereading Chapter Six, the Plotting Chapter, will help. Each time, something new will click in. The great thing about learning how to plot is that once the students get it, they will be so grateful to have gotten it!

Plotting is an essential part of doing a graphic novel. The reason plotting is so important is because most students get stuck somewhere in the middle of their stories and get so frustrated, they give up. If the students organize their stories, they have a much greater chance of completing them.

Plotting a story may take years! The student is not expected to have the entire plotline figured out. This exercise is to *understand* how to plot. This is to just get something up on the board. Chances are great that the plotline will change many times before the students complete their graphic novel. *My Angel Love plotline is very different than the actual comic book series.*

Before you begin Step Seven ...

**YOU ASK:**

Did anybody get inspired?

Did you dream about your characters?

Have your characters started talking to you?

Do you want to forget about your homework and only work on your graphic novel?

Who's collaborating?

Who had a breakthrough?

What have you learned about your process?

Did anybody leave home without a pencil and paper?

Do you know the twist to your story?

Did you take the pop quiz?

Who got feedback about their work?

How many saw something *as if for the first time*?

## STEP SEVEN

# WRITING

### YOU SAY:

Close your eyes. Try to block out any sounds, thoughts, or voices in your head. *Give that about 20 seconds.* Now, picture your character. What is he/she/it saying? What does the voice sound like?

### STUDENTS READ:

Pages 93-99. This should take about 10 minutes. Make copies of the next two pages to be used in class, at home, or both.

**READ OUT LOUD:** Each student reads a writing tip. (Pages 100-109)

**TIP:** Some of these tips are much longer than others so you may want to divide it between two or three students. As always, the students are encouraged to be sketching or doodling. Some tips will inspire more conversation than others. You may not get through all the tips. If that is true, then the student reads them for homework.

Following are suggestions to get the creative juices flowing.

**Writing Tip:** Ask how your character is feeling

### YOU ASK:

Have you ever felt two emotions at once? Three? Can you name them?

**Writing Tip:** Write a script.

If the student is a writer, collaborating with an artist, then the writer is encouraged to write a one page script (see pages 106-107). The artist then draws from the script.

**Writing Tip:**

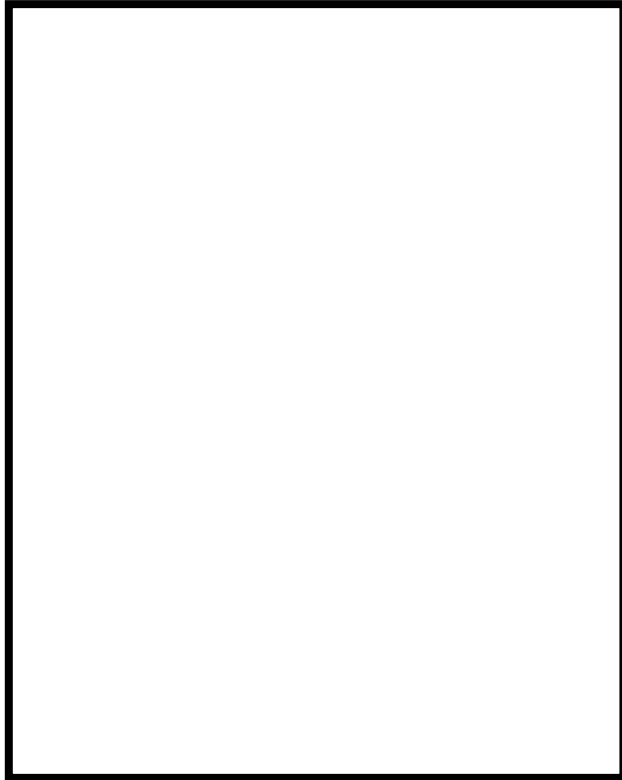
### YOU ASK:

Who hates to make mistakes? Are you a perfectionist?

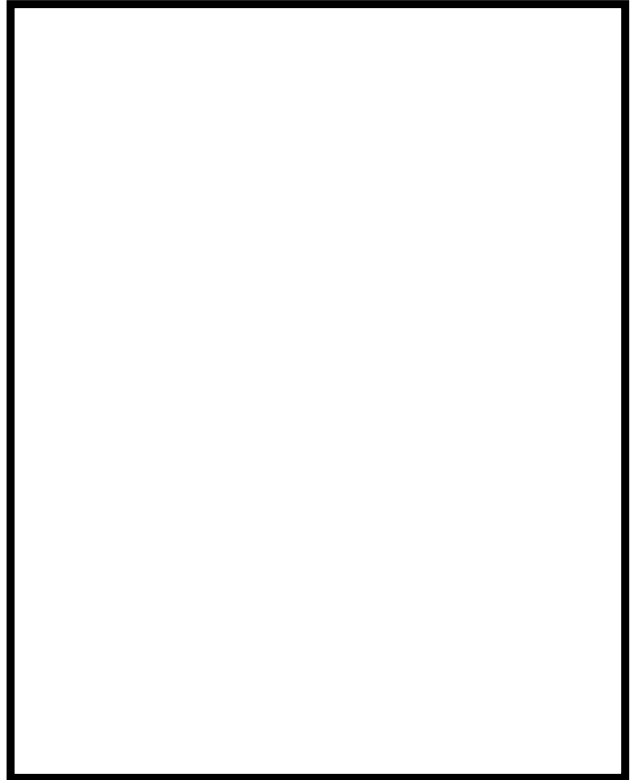
In the top panel, write a Narrative Voice (See Pages 98 and 99) In the bottom panel, select a scene from your plotline and draw it. *Stick figures encouraged!*

The image shows a large rectangular frame divided into two horizontal panels. The top panel is smaller, and the bottom panel is larger, providing space for writing and drawing.

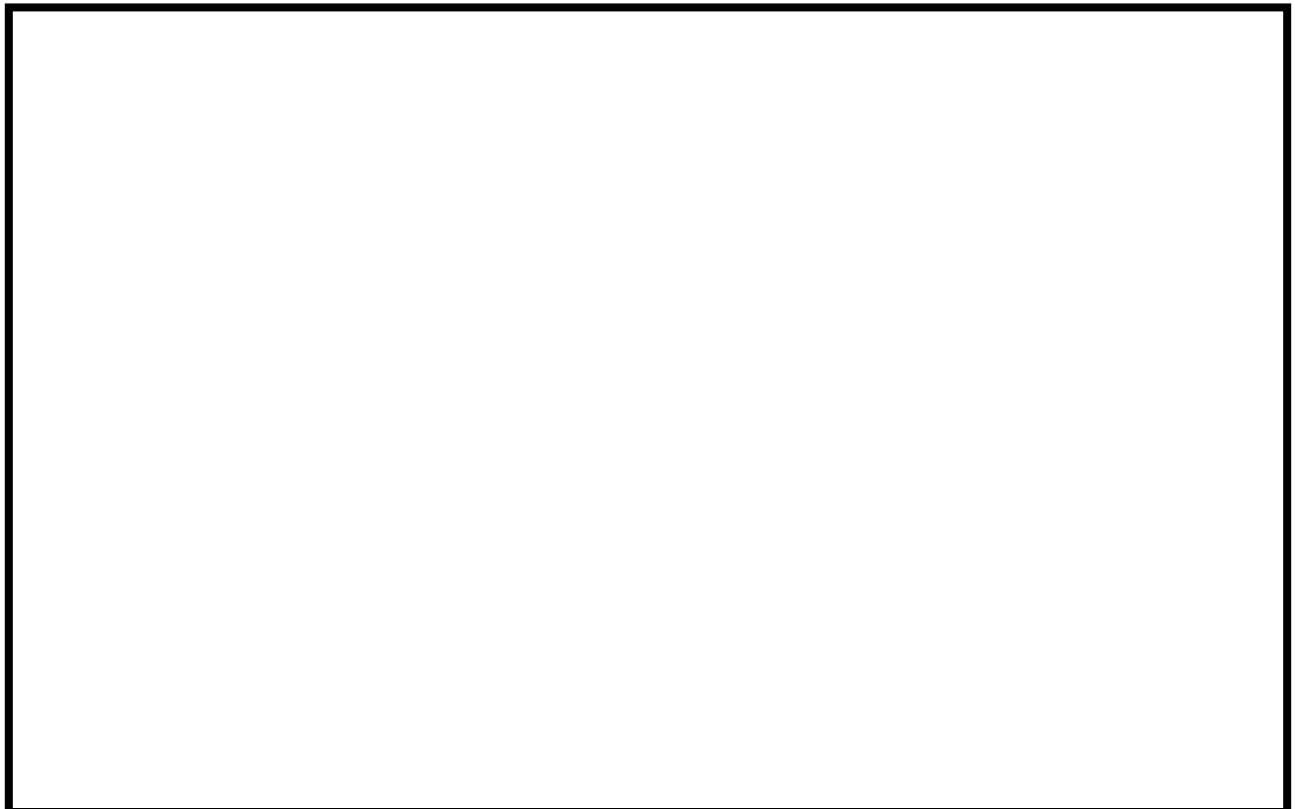
Draw an exterior shot ...



Draw an interior shot ...



Make something POP!



Before you begin Step Eight ...

**YOU ASK:**

Anybody write a script?

Anybody draw from a script?

Did anybody get inspired?

Did you dream about your characters?

Have your characters started talking to you?

Do you want to forget about your homework and only work on your graphic novel?

Who had a breakthrough?

What have you learned about your process?

Did anybody leave home without a pencil and paper?

Who got feedback about their work?

How many saw something *as if for the first time*?

Who wants to show their characters?

## STEP EIGHT

# LAYOUT

Make copies of the following two pages to do in class, at home, or both.

### STUDENTS READ:

Pages 112-121 from YCDAGN. This should take about 10 minutes.

**READ OUT LOUD:** Each student reads a Layout Tip. As always, the students are encouraged to be sketching or doodling. Pass out the following two pages. Some tips will inspire more conversation than others. If they do not finish the tips in class, then they finish at home. Following are suggestions to get the creative juices flowing.

**Layout Tip: Make a Big Splash!**

### YOU ASK:

What is the Splash Page? What is on it? Why is it so important?

**PROJECT:** Create a SPLASH PAGE. (see page 122) See student work on page 152. On this splash page you are immediately drawn into the setting. "The Hidden" is a dark, mysterious story. The mood is set. The splash page on 148 immediately tells the story of a rock band, conflict, and the chance for a big break.

**Dialogue balloons are part of your art.**

### YOU ASK:

Whose handwriting stinks?

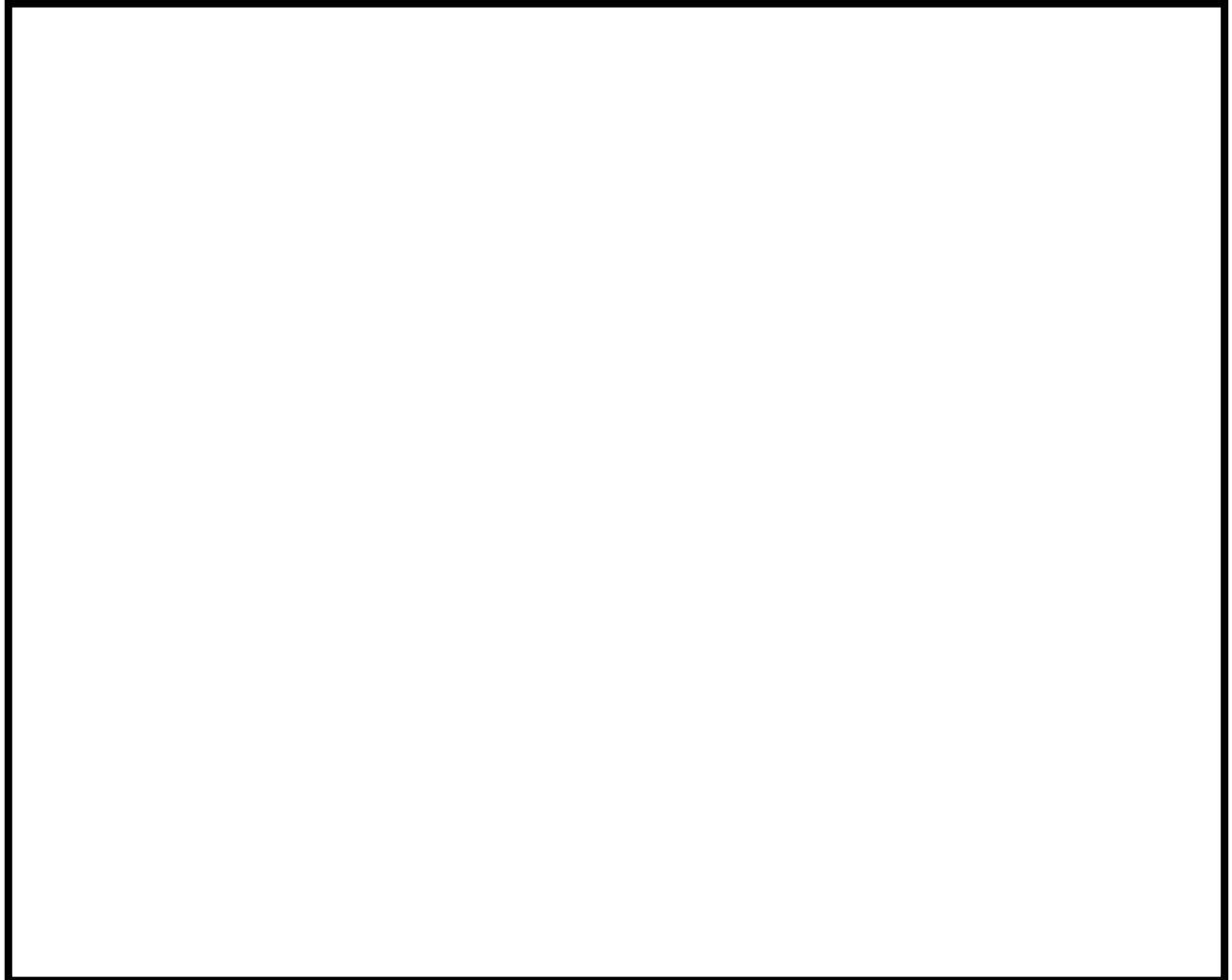
**TIP:** Using a font from the computer is a good idea. Many students get so wrapped up in the drawing and writing, they forget that somebody has to read it!

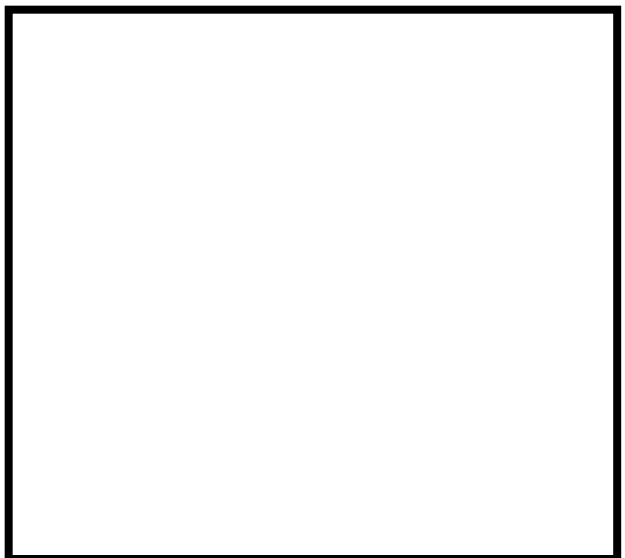
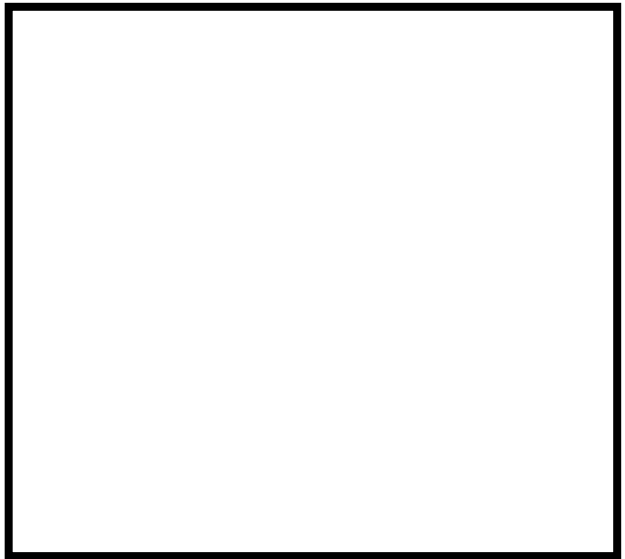
**PROJECT:** Practice, practice practice drawing dialogue balloons!

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Each student is given copies of the following 2 pages. Look at your double page spread as a giant canvas. Take a scene from your plotline and design a page.

Take any scene from your story and create a double page spread. You may use your own panels or the ones below. Ask yourself, *What do I want to achieve?* Visualize your beginning and ending panels. Draw quick sketches to design your layout. TIP: Get 3x5 cards, and quickly sketch your panels. By using cards, you will be able to move your panels around to design your pages.






# The Graphic Novel Show

Below are invitations to a Graphic Novel Exhibition, held at the Columbia County Council on the Arts and the Troy Public Library.

The Columbia County Council on the Arts and the Claverack Library  
present

**The Art of the Graphic Novel: Works in Progress**  
*Directed by Barbara Slate*

Contributing Youth Artists: Lillie Bytheway, Misha Golub, Wren Hoy, Adam Mazzacano,  
Caitlin Mazzacano, Kayla Noonan, Grace Ihlenburg, Alexander Pitman,  
Ian Rasweiler, Nicole Shedrick and Angelica Speer



**Reception: Saturday, May 13, 5 - 7 pm**  
May 13 -27, 2006  
at the Columbia County Council on the Arts  
209 Warren Street, Hudson, NY  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-5 pm

Supported by public funds from the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts,  
administered in Columbia County by the Columbia County Council on the Arts through the Twin Castles Cultural Fund

This show was up for over a month and was their best attended exhibition.


**Troy Public Library**  
Presents A Gallery Showing of

**The Art of the Graphic Novel: Works in Progress**  
Directed by Barbara Slate

**Reception:** Thursday, March 25th, 6:30-7:30 pm  
Troy Public Library  
100 Second Street  
Troy, NY 12180

**Contributing Artists:**

- Morgan Baerga
- Monique Bynuna
- Madeline Canzeri
- Kendra Havenbrook
- Hawah Kamara
- Sanghai Kamara
- Steven Long
- John Mullin
- Maddie Penk-Masucci



Art work by Madeline Canzeri

**Light Refreshments**

for information contact Carol Roberts, Head of Young People's Services  
Phone: 518-274-7071 Fax: 271-9154 [www.thetroylibrary.org](http://www.thetroylibrary.org) [croberts@thetroylibrary.org](mailto:croberts@thetroylibrary.org)

Facing page: Full page newspaper article about the Millerton Library Graphic Novel Show.

# CREATIVE MINDS GET GRAPHIC!

By Cory Allyn - Staff Reporter



Kristen Kelleher draws in the Japanese-based manga style. She began following that art style in the sixth grade and now hopes to make a career in illustration.

MILLERTON — Over the last three Saturdays, the children's section of the North-East Millerton Library has been filled with the sounds of pencils sketching, erasers adjusting and creative minds expounding for those involved with this December's graphic novel workshops.

The sessions were hosted by the library and its Youth Services Coordinator Sarah Bellera and ran by graphic novelist Barbara Slato, who has worked for comic publishers Marvel, DC and Archie.

Graphic novels are full-length books with fully illustrated stories.

The three workshops will culminate in a show at the library on Saturday, Jan. 3. The pool of aspiring artists narrowed to a group of 11 children, ages 8 to 18, engaged with the focus and dedication to put their minds to work, the ability to take constructive criticism on their work and put it to good use and the dedication to put together what is, for some, their first public art show.

Of those 11, three is a wide variety of experiences represented. Kristen Kelleher, 18, started reading graphic novels (specifically those in the Japanese-based manga style) in the sixth grade.

"A friend introduced me and I never stopped liking them," she said.

Kristen, a senior, is currently looking into the Pratt Institute to major in illustration. "I definitely want it to be

my career."

Miscarib, at another table, is another table is Abbygal Hoke's and Daniela Cooper's first experience drawing a story with different panels and narrative.

"I learned that the story is the most important thing," said Abbygal, who is 10. "You don't have to be a good drawer, and I'm not really a good drawer. But I like all of it. We can do whatever we want."

Daniela, who is 11, agreed.

"I thought it would be cool to make something sort of real that had serious issues," she said, working on a story about a man who walks out in the wood and gets lost, a more reality-based approach to graphic novels than the work of the three oldest workshopppers, whose work was all based around the element of fantasy.

Like Jeremy Herz, 12, who is 12, enters into a metaphorical project called "Dinosaurs of the Present" that categorizes different species of dinosaurs he has created based on the premise that dinosaurs never became extinct and have lived and evolved until present day.

"I think along the lines of evolution and talk about it in a way that no one would expect," Jeremy explained. The project was started a year and a half ago and he said he works on it whenever he has the time.

Some goes for Abrius Carpenter, 12, who has been drawing and practicing for

years and years. Abrius, like her friend Kristen, is also heavily influenced by manga and has entered pieces into the Dutchess County Fair before. She is looking at colleges for video game art.

"I'm always astounded to see the talent," Slato said over the phone in between the second and last Saturday workshop. "There are several kids in that class that are 'Wow!' and are really good. But I'm always impressed with all the kids."

With such a wide range, students in the workshop move at their own pace, Slato explained.

"Some kids will simply get 'What is a story?' Some kids will focus up more. But everybody gets something different. Everybody walks away with something."

When asked what one piece of advice she would give to aspiring graphic novelists, Slato couldn't resist it down.

"Practice, practice, practice," she said, before adding, "And keep drawing. Draw what you see, not what you think you see. Be observant. I could go on forever and ever. Maybe Always has a pencil and paper."

The reception for the gallery showing of "The Art of the Graphic Novel: Works in Progress" will be held Saturday, Jan. 3 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the North-East Millerton Library. Slato is directing the show and will be signing copies of her new book, "You Can Do a Graphic Novel."



Jeremy Herz drew "Tyranncaptor," part of his "Dinosaurs in the Present" series, of which he already has 47 entries.

"I learned that the story is the most important thing. You don't have to be a good drawer, but I like all of it. We can do whatever we want."

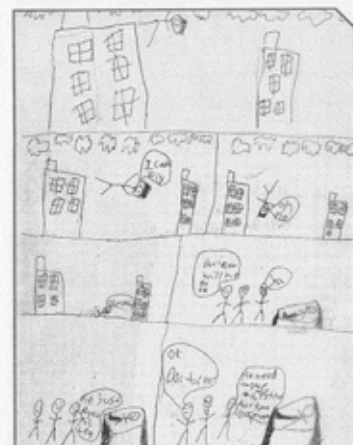
Abbygal Hoke, 10



13-year-old Marc developed a character named Leif.



This graphic novel entitled, "What the Crows Left Behind," was done by Alyson Carpenter. Carpenter said she's been drawing for years, practicing her trade.



12-year-old Zac Cope drew, "Bill, the Crazy Flying Guy," for his graphic novel.



10-year-old Tyler Calabrese created "Steve," who was ready for a little dental advice.



Pictures from the Graphic Novel Exhibitions.





**B**arbara 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.