LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this guide, students will:

• Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop over the course of the story.

• Discover the multiple jobs involved in the creation of a comic.

• Explore how the composition and layout of drawings on a page effect a story.
1. ABOUT THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL AND COMICS RESOURCE

This teacher’s resource is an introduction to the process of making comic books and graphic novels. Comic books and graphic novels fuse multiple art disciplines into a completed work of art. In the creation of a comic book or graphic novel, visual art and creative writing are joined. In this resource, you'll find three different artworks, with introductions to the artists and a glossary of terms related to comic books. This resource can help K–12 teachers create short, modifiable lessons for their students. The language and themes in some artworks may be most appropriate for grades 6–12.

2. ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

This collection consists of original comic book and graphic novel art created by artists and distributed by publishers. The collection offers the unique opportunity to compare the artist's draft to the final, published comic book or graphic novel. Students can see where artists added dialogue, corrected mistakes, or changed direction. Through this collection students are introduced to art, writing, and storytelling.

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### 4. PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>Have students write a story</td>
<td>With the intent of turning it into a comic book.</td>
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<td>Have students create a superhero of their own</td>
<td>Ask them to draw their superhero and write a paragraph or short story about their powers and origin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss the different jobs and roles</td>
<td>That are required for the creation of a comic book. Have students elaborate on what skill each person would need to excel at to be effective.</td>
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### 5. VOCABULARY

- **Colorist**
  The colorist adds color to the black and white pages created by both the penciller and inker.

- **Comic Book**
  A paper or digital publication that tells a story through artwork and writing.

- **Graphic Novel**
  A broadly used term that describes comic books collected in a single volume or a story or miniseries collected in a volume or multiple volumes. Graphic novels are usually longer, larger, and printed on higher quality paper than comic books.

- **Inker**
  The inker adds ink to the lines drawn by the penciller. This adds highlights and deep blacks to the artwork.

- **Page**
  The main media on which comics are created. The entirety of a comic is drawn on multiple pages, either a physical piece of paper or a digital canvas.

- **Panel**
  The sectioned areas on a page where the action or story is drawn. The story advances through the artwork, events, and action in the panels.

- **Penciller**
  The artist that draws the figures, forms, and superheroes on the page. Some pencillers are exacting in the artwork they draw on the page, others rely on the inker to help shape the figures and forms.

- **Writer**
  The person creating the story and the narrative of a comic book or graphic novel. Usually, the writer is the first person involved in the creative process of making a comic book or graphic novel.
Brad Walker, the penciller of this image, is an artist for both Marvel and DC comics. He attended the Savannah College of Art and Design and received a degree in Sequential Art. Andrew Hennessey, the inker, is a frequent collaborator with Brad Walker, working on the titles *Sinestro*, *Aquaman*, *The Demon*, *Titans*, and *Detective Comics*.

This page from the comic is based upon the *Avengers, Age of Ultron* in which Iron Man creates a global defense program called Ultron. Ultron concludes that to save Earth he must eradicate humanity. This page from the comic shows Captain America, Thor, the Hulk, and Iron Man fighting Ultron. The artists made a deliberate decision about how to lay out the comic book panels: the slanted panels add to the frenetic pace of the scenes. Backgrounds and layouts of the page help tell the story as much as the writing and figures. All of these elements are utilized on the page to make a cohesive story and work of art.

The *Avengers* page is laid out in four panels that are slanted to show the fast pace of the battle. How would you lay out a page to convey different kinds of action: a celebration, a classroom, the cafeteria, a suspenseful moment, something scary, or a peaceful scene?

This page is an unfinished product where the colorist hasn’t added color yet. If you were the colorist, what colors would you choose for the page? Discuss your color choices with your classmates and why you chose those colors.

Write dialogue or add onomatopoeic effects to this page. Be creative and have fun.

GUIDING QUESTIONS
Look at Captain America's gear. The artist chooses to place Captain America in gear that Corporal Newman would have seen as a child. How do these two pages change if we place them in the Vietnam era, or World War II?

In this story Captain America is dying. Write or draw a short story that is a tribute to Captain America. Lay it out on a comic book page or write a news story or newspaper article that pays tribute. Be creative and experiment with different formats.

Captain America is known for his strength and speed, but also for his character traits. He is honest, brave, and fights until the very end. The writer makes use of these traits to propel the story in *The Chosen*. What character traits are found in most superheroes? What character traits are commonly found in villains? Do any traits overlap between hero and villain? Discuss with your classmates.
Don Kramer became interested in comic art while reading comics as a child. He began his career by traveling to the Chicago Comicon and submitting his work to publishers. He worked on some independent drawing jobs until he was hired by Marvel Comics for *The Thing*. He eventually began working full-time with DC comics on a *Dr. Fate* mini-series. Wayne Faucher is an inker at DC comics. He was raised in Rhode Island and attended Rhode Island School of Design. He is also known for his work with Marvel on the *Spiderman* series.

This page is part of an eight-issue story arc that crossed over into two *Batman* titles, *Batman* and *Detective Comics*. Harvey Dent was the district attorney of Gotham City. After Dent’s face is hideously scarred, he becomes a dangerous criminal, until he is redeemed at the beginning of this story. He receives plastic surgery, mental health help, and becomes an ally of Batman. Batman trusts Dent and leaves Gotham in his care for a year. This page shows Batman thanking Dent for protecting Gotham in his absence. Although Dent performed his duties as protector well, his criminal alter-ego is still present: in the last panel, Dent sees the face of the broken, scarred criminal in the mirror.

In the last panel we see Harvey Dent looking into a mirror. The writer and artist have worked together to show a man that is breaking down mentally. How is it depicted on the page? What other techniques could the writer or the artist have used to the same effect? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.

Think of Batman’s other iconic villains: the Joker, the Penguin, and the Riddler. Replace Two-Face in the story with one of the other villains. How does the story change? What doesn’t change in the story? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.

Imagine if this scene involved a confrontation instead of Batman thanking Dent. Draw or discuss this page. What panels would change? What would the dialogue look like?
7. POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Artists use rulers and straight edges to create the panels on a page. Have students create a comic book page using a ruler. Remember to leave margins on the outside and space between the panels. After students have written a story and made a page during the pre-visit activities, have them complete their story by drawing it out in comic book form.

Return to the superhero that students created during the pre-visit activities. Ask them to create a villain to challenge the superhero. Students could also create a sidekick to help the superhero in his adventures.

The creation of comics is often a collaborative process. Have your students create a comic about life in the classroom. Students can try the different roles of comic book creators, from writer, artist, inker, colorist, and letterer, as part of a group project.

8. STATE STANDARDS

Teachers can adapt the lesson to apply to a number of state standards. We included a few standards that the lesson meets below.

VISUAL ARTS – CREATING

Anchor Standard 1
Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding
Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed.

Essential Question(s)
What conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creativity and innovative thinking? What factors prevent or encourage people to take creative risks? How does collaboration expand the creative process?

IOWA CORE: STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events. (RL.1.7)

Craft and Structure
Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot. (RL.6.5)
### Drawing Words and Writing Pictures
A textbook by Jessica Abel and Matt Madden.

A comprehensive guide on everything needed to create comic books and graphic novels. This includes creative needs such as story, worlds, and artwork as well as physical objects to complete a comic book project.

### Comics in the Curriculum:
https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/comics

An online comics gallery by Columbia University Libraries titled Comics in the Curriculum. Compares and contrasts historical works of art with comic books. Warning: mature content and themes in this gallery.

### Comics Forum:
https://comicsforum.org/

Comics Forum places the educational value of comics as its starting point. The goal is to increase the visibility and accessibility of comics scholarship through an academic conference that brings together scholars, artists, and fans in a spirit of mutual cooperation and development. Updated frequently with postings and articles on comic books.