

Create-A-Comic Websites and Apps

Kids love comics! Recent research shows the educational value of using comics and graphic novels with males, reluctant readers, ESL students, special needs students, and students of different ability levels. Visual literacy is an important component in reading comprehension, and comics are creative tools that can help engage and motivate students. Students can use the same deep, active reading activities (pre-reading, annotating, small group discussion) with comics that they use with print-only books. As students write, an understanding of sequential art can help them create their own methods of organizing and editing their writing, creating sharp, concise text.

Before assigning a comic project to students, give them a brief lesson on the elements of comics, such as panels, gutters, speech bubbles, artist's style, and how the text and art are both crucial to the story.

The media staff is happy to teach this, or take a look at the lessons here:

<http://www.readmeresources.co.uk/>

These Comic Creator websites and apps will have your students creating their own comics in no time:

Comic Life: <http://comiclifecom.com/>

Comic Life, available as a website or an app, lets students create comics using photos and images. Prices for Comic Life 2 and 3 vary, depending on your licensing options. A single-use software license is \$19.95 (a 30 day free trial is available) and the app is \$4.99.

Comic Master: <http://www.comicmaster.org.uk>

This free comic-creator website lets students create their own short comics using backgrounds, characters, props, and dialogue. The site includes lesson plans for teachers to instruct students about the elements and complexity of comics.

Take a look at the “Graphics and Me” lesson plans under Educational Resources.

Make Beliefs Comix: <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix>

Make Beliefs Comix, a free website, allows students to create customizable comic strips, and includes printables, lesson plans, writing prompts, and a teacher resource called “21 Ways to Use makebeliefscomix.com in the Classroom.” A Special Needs Section is designed for students who have Autism, stuttering issues, brain injuries, tumors, and more.

Create a quick 3-panel comic.

Pixton: <http://www.pixton.com/create>

With Pixton, students can express themselves with the creation of intricate, customized comics. The cost varies, depending on the number of students you use it with. Some features are free, and teachers can sign up for a free trial of the Pixton for Schools version.

Click on “More Info” and watch the Overview video.

Professor Garfield’s Comics Lab: http://www.professorgarfield.org/pgf_comics_lab.html

The Professor Garfield Comics Lab provides a variety of templates and activities that enable students in grades 3 – 10 to write, assemble, and print their own comic strips. Professor Garfield’s X-Treme Comics by Pixton has similar features, but is designed for all ages.

Create a login and watch one of the videos of Jim Davis, creator of Garfield, talk about “Writing,” or look at the lesson plans.

Read Write Think Comic Creator:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/comic-creator-30021.html>

Read Write Think’s Comic Creator is a free website that lets children and teens write and publish comics, with lesson plans to help teachers use the comics with writing activities, such as storyboarding, editing, and assessing.

Strip Generator: <http://stripgenerator.com/strip/create>

Strip Generator, a free comic creating community, can be used to create comic strips using characters, props, and text. Students can also post their comics on the website.

Toondoo: <http://www.toondoo.com>

Toondoo’s website bills itself as “The World’s Fastest Way to Create Cartoons” and it is extremely easy to use. It allows students to quickly create detailed, colorful comics, then save, share, and print them.

Create a login and make a 3-panel comic.

Toontastic: <http://launchpadtoys.com/toontastic/>

Toontastic, a website and an app, offers both a free version and an All Access package. Using Toontastic, students can create and animate a story from beginning to end, constructing the setting, conflict, climax, and resolution. The Toontastic website offers a free parent and teacher guide.