

Comic Strip/Graphic Novel/Story Board Process, Components, and Tips

Process and Tips

1. *The first step is to write a **synopsis** of the plot, like an elevator speech, in just one or two sentences.*

2. *Create character profiles:*

How many characters?

Who are they?

What makes them tick?

What is idiosyncratic about the way they look, walk, or fly?

What kind of clothes do they wear?

Where did they come from?

Who do they hang out with?

Do they have a love interest?

Do they have regular jobs?

Who is their nemesis?

Do they have moral values or none at all?

What are their weaknesses and strengths?

3. Write your story:

Where does the story take place (urban/rural/USA/another country/at sea/underwater/outer space)?

What is the history of the event or situation?

When does it take place (past/present/future)?

What happens?

Who does it happen to?

What has occurred to make this situation?

What is the crisis/climax?

What is the falling action?

How is the crisis resolved?

4. Layout your storyboard:

These are going to operate like thumbnails (each like quick 1 minute sketches)

Focus more on the text than the artwork

Who says what to whom?

What action scenes will you include/exclude?

What is the pacing of the story going to be (fast/slow)?

Consider angle or viewpoint in each panel

What part of the story is best in text and what is best represented visually?

Components

Captions—contain information about a scene or character

Comic Strip—is a short work of comics

Comics—sequential art

Credits— names of writers and artists

Dialogue Balloons—communication between characters

Encapsulation—capturing the prime moments in a story

Graphic Novel—a fictional story that is presented in a comic strip format and presented as a book

Gutter—is the space between the two panels

Panel—single scenes that encapsulate particular events that are part of a sequence

Pointers—indicating which characters are speaking

Sound Effects—visual sound cues, e.g. Kapow! Bam!

Splash Page—a large or full-page illustration, that introduces the story. It establishes the time, place, mood, and grabs the readers attention.

Spread—an image that spans more than one page

Story Board—**for movies:** serves as a bridge between the written word and the final cut in a movie and should include the estimated time the segment will take place, camera shot required (e.g. close-up?), and the camera angle. Also, whether it is primary audio, background audio, or secondary audio (voice over or soundtrack).

Thought Balloons—character's thoughts

Tier—a single row of panels

Transitions—**for movies:** used in storyboards for movies, arrows in gutter describing type of transitions, e.g. dissolve, cut