



Streamlined Literacy Adventure:

“Holy Reading, Batman!”

Make your own comic, and read some too!

Aventura de alfabetización: ¡Sea un superhéroe en la biblioteca con novelas gráficas y cómics!

Age Range: K + up

Group Size: flexible

Time Range: 45-90 min



Adventure Goals:

Our goal in every adventure is for children to have fun with books and reading!
Additional participant goals for this Literacy Adventure:

- Explore comics and graphic novels.
- Write and illustrate a comic story.



Adventure Outline:

Graphic novels integrate words and pictures in dynamic ways to tell stories that motivate striving and reluctant readers, foster visual literacy, and develop critical thinking skills.

1. [Hook: My Favorite Character](#) Talk about our favorite cartoon and/or comic characters
2. [Getting Started: Graphic Novel Read-Aloud](#) Read a comic or graphic novel together
3. [Book Browsing Time: Talking Comics](#) Explore graphic novels and comics to read and check-out
4. [Activity: Creating Comics](#) Create our own short comics to take home
5. [Wrap-Up/Share](#): Share the comic you created



Supplies:

- A variety of graphic novels and comics for book browsing. See: [Graphic Novel Suggestions](#)
- A graphic novel or comic read-aloud. See: [Graphic Novel Suggestions](#)
- A short comic strip that you enjoy
- Whiteboard or flipchart paper for group brainstorming
- Copies of [3-panel](#) and [6-Panel](#) comic templates
- Pencils
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Optional: Superhero or other comic-related costume materials such as capes, masks, or other props.



Considerations for Planning

- Where will participants sit during the read-aloud so that they can all see?
- Where will they write their comics?
- How will supplies be distributed?
- For the graphic novel read-aloud consider:
 - Are the images big enough for everyone to see? If not, do you have access to an overhead projector or document camera?
 - If you are reading a short selection, could you make copies for participants to follow along with? Note: In general it is considered fair use to copy 1 chapter or 10% of pages, whichever is longer. For more copyright and fair use guidance see [Education World: Is Fair Use License to Steal?](#)
 - If you have access to downloadable ebooks and a projector, consider projecting an ebook version or a freely available webcomic.



ICON KEY



KEY ELEMENT



TIP



KEY STRATEGY

Adventure Plan

1. Hook: My Favorite Character! (5 min)

Briefly tell the group about your favorite cartoon or comic character making sure to tell them why the character is your favorite. Consider sharing a comic featuring the character or another piece of fun realia (actual objects).



TIP: Modeling your thinking process for children through verbalization helps them to understand and analyze their own thinking processes.

“Comic” in Spanish = *el cómic/ el dibujo animado*

“Character” in Spanish = *el personaje*

“Cartoon” in Spanish = *la caricatura*



Let’s Think About This!: Favorite character think, pair, share!

Think: Ask participants to think about their favorite characters. Write the question, “Who is your favorite comic or cartoon character? What do you like most about them?” on the whiteboard or flipchart paper. Give participants about 1 minute of thinking time before having them pair up.

Pair: Help participants pair up with their neighbor, a friend, or a family member. Give them a minute to take turns sharing their favorite character. Invite participants to speak in whatever language feels most comfortable to them. Write up and read aloud a couple of sentence prompts for the group to use if they need help getting started.

Sentence Prompts:

- My favorite character is
 - *Mi personaje favorito es...*
- They are my favorite character because
 - *Es mi personaje favorito porque...*



TIP: Sentence prompts give structure that supports young children, reluctant speakers, and those learning English to share their ideas. You can allow participants to **alter and/or deviate from these prompts depending on their need.**

Share: If time, call the group back together. Invite pairs to share what they talked about.

- Encourage participants to expand upon their ideas as needed. Use the sentence prompts to guide participants to provide details.
- Try to enhance language without making participants feel corrected. Things to try: validating individual views; connecting observations; restating with rich vocabulary; and pointing out differences of opinion.



2. Getting Started: Graphic Novel Read-Aloud (10 min)

Read a short graphic novel, selection from a graphic novel, or a comic aloud to the group.

Before Reading: Show a page from the book that contains common graphic novel elements such as: balloons, panels, or emanata (lines and squiggles that emanate from a cartoon character or object to indicate any of a variety of feelings and states of being).

- Draw attention to the balloons and panels on the page. Invite participants to tell what they know about these different elements.

“Graphic Novel” in Spanish = *la novela gráfica*

“Balloons” in Spanish = *los globos*

“Panels” in Spanish = *los paneles*

While Reading:

- Act it out! Use different voices for characters and emphasize sound effects. Have participants help you with the sound effects.
- Use your finger to show how to read panels from left to right and top to bottom.
- Talk about the pictures and make predictions about what will happen next.

Caregiver Literacy Message (share if caregivers are present): Asking kids open-ended questions helps them develop critical thinking and communication skills. Open-ended questions are ones that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” so they encourage kids to use their vocabulary to respond.



TIP: [See: Talking Points/ Caregiver Messages](#) for more message ideas



3. Book Browsing Time: Talking Comics (10-15 min)

Introduce participants to the selection of comics and graphic novels available for them to browse. If time, pick a couple of graphic novels to book talk. This is a chance to model for participants how to find mentor texts to use when creating their own comics.



TIP: A book talk is a short and informal oral book recommendation you give to participants, or they give to each other, to get them excited about a book!



TIP: Mentor texts help beginning writers and illustrators by providing examples.

Example Mentor Text Talk

Say: I like how when the mouse is struggling to button their coat there are little sweat drops coming off of them so you can really see how hard they are working. I am going to try to use this idea in my comic.



(Image from: *Little Mouse Gets Ready*, Jeff Smith, 2009.)

Open Exploration: Invite participants to select books and browse them either alone or with a caregiver. Invite caregivers to participate by browsing books themselves and/or reading with their child(ren). Walk around and help participants find good books for them. Encourage participants to:

- Try out multiple books to figure out a book that will work for them.
- Look at the style of the illustrations, the way the author uses speech or thought bubbles, and the ways they show action or emotion in the story to get ideas for their own writing.
- Pick a book or two to borrow!

Caregiver Literacy Message (share if caregivers are present): Choice builds engagement! Kids read more and develop lifelong reading habits and strategies when they are allowed to choose their own books.



TIP: See: Talking Points/ Caregiver Messages for more message ideas.

Neighbor Share: Help participants pair up with a neighbor, friend, or family member to share about one of their books. Prompt them to switch roles of who is sharing after about 1 minute. Encourage them to share why someone would want to read the book and/or a favorite panel. Invite participants to speak in whatever language feels most comfortable to them. Write up and read aloud a couple of sentence prompts for the group to use if they need help getting started.

Sentence Prompts:

- I picked....
 - *Yo elegí...*
- You should try this book because....
 - *Debes leer este libro porque...*
- This is my favorite part of the book because....
 - *Esta parte del libro es mi favorita porque...*

4. Activity: Creating Comics (30-40 min)

Guide participants through making their own comics!

Brainstorming:

Lead participants in a conversation about the book you read together at the beginning of the adventure, and the books they browsed. What are the important elements of those stories? Guide participants to identify the following elements and write them on a whiteboard or flipchart paper:

- Character
- Setting (where is the character?)
- Action/problem (what is the character doing?)
- Solution (how does the story end?)
- Go back to each element and have participants brainstorm ideas. (eg. character; dog, setting; park)

“Setting” in Spanish = *el escenario / donde toma lugar*
“Action” in Spanish = *la acción*
“Solution” in Spanish = *la solución*

Writing:

Make sure everyone knows:

- They can work alone or with another person.
- Their story can include words and pictures or just pictures
- Not to worry about spelling all of the words correctly or forming letters perfectly and just to focus on telling the story

Make sure everyone has access to:

- Comic templates
- Plain paper
- Pencils/colored pencils/ markers/ crayons
- OPTIONAL: a computer/device with access to an online comic creation tool to add a fun accessible variation during this activity.

Move around the room and help participants as needed. Encourage participants to develop their story by asking them open-ended questions and prompting them to think creatively about their work. Consider writing these discussion prompts for caregivers to see and use with their young writers :

- Tell me about...
 - *Cuéntame acerca de...*
- I noticed you added...
 - *Me dí cuenta de que...*

- What do you think you could add?
 - *¿Qué más podrías añadir?*
- How would you draw that?
 - *¿Cómo lo dibujarías?*
- What words do you know that describe that?
 - *¿Cuáles palabras conoces que explica tu dibujo?*
- Can you picture it in your head?
 - *¿Puedes hacer un imagen de tu idea en tu mente?*

Caregiver Literacy Message (share if caregivers are present): Children who are learning to speak don't start out talking perfectly, and we don't expect it -- nor do we expect them to keep quiet until they've mastered all the elements of language! Well, it's the same with writing. As kids experiment with expressing their ideas through writing, they won't start out with perfect skills in grammar, spelling, letter formation, and punctuation. But they will start out with enthusiasm, and we adults can keep that enthusiasm and motivation going by responding positively to their writing attempts.



TIP: See: [Talking Points/ Caregiver Messages](#) for more message ideas.



TIP: Encourage participants to look through the books they picked out during book browsing time to get ideas for their comics.

5. Wrap-up/Share: Share Out

Help participants pair up with a neighbor, friend, or family member to share their comics. Let them know they can read their comics aloud to each other or they could exchange comics and read them to themselves. Encourage pairs to share what they liked about each other's stories, any questions they have or things they would add. Write up and read aloud a couple of sentence prompts for the group to use if they need help getting started.

Sentence Prompts:

- I really liked the part where...
 - *Me gustó mucho la parte donde...*
- Tell me more about...
 - *Dime más acerca de...*
- What is your favorite part of the story?

- *¿Qué es tu parte favorita de tu cuento?*
- What would you like to add to your story?
 - *¿Qué más quieres incluir?*

Take Home: Invite participants to take home more comic templates so they can continue writing, and remind everyone (if applicable) that the books they browsed are available to borrow.



I hope everybody had fun today reading and creating! Now, at the end of an adventure, I like to ask these three very important questions. I'll give you a hint: the answer to these questions is always... ¡Que sí! Or Yes!

1. Are we happy to help you find good books to read? (Yes!)
¿Nos gusta ayudarte a encontrar buenos libros para leer? (¡Que sí!)
2. Do we love to talk about books with you? (Yes!)
¿Nos gusta conversar sobre los libros contigo? (¡Que sí!)
3. Is all reading good reading? (Yes!)
¿Toda lectura es buena lectura? (¡Que sí!)



Variations and Extended Learning

Please see [Streamlined VEL: “Holy Reading, Batman!”](#) for a wide variety of research-supported tips for engaging participants of various ages, cultures, languages and abilities.

Tips include: Ways to shorten or extend the program; ways to work with pairs and with groups of different sizes, ages, and language mixes; additional activities; discussion ideas and sentence prompts; DIY stations and other passive program ideas; vocabulary extension activities; what to do if participants finish early; ideas for K-3 storytimes; and suggestions for family engagement.

Please see [Extended Literacy Adventure: “Holy Reading, Batman!”](#) for a more detailed plan, including a complete script with more supporting information.



Comic/Graphic Novel Suggestions

There are many great series available for young readers. Here are a few suggestions to get started:

Print Collections:

- [Bean Dog and Nugget \(series\)](#), Charise Mericle Harper. 2013
- [Diario de Nikki \(series\)](#), Rachel Renee Russell. 2015
- [Duck, Duck, Porcupine \(series\)](#), Salina Yoon. 2017
- [Guinea Pig: Pet Shop Private Eye \(series\)](#), Colleen Venable. 2010
- [Little Robot](#), Ben Hatke. 2015
- [Marina Está En La Luna](#), Rubén Varillas Fernández. 2012
- [Owly \(series\)](#), Andy Runton. 2004
- [Nursery Rhyme Comics: 50 Timeless Rhymes from 50 Celebrated Cartoonists](#). 2011
- [¡Sonrie!](#), Raina Telgemeier. 2016
- TOON Books- Any of the TOON books would make fine choices but here are a few favorites:
 - [A Trip to the Bottom of the World with Mouse](#), Frank Viva. 2016
 - [Benjamin Bear in Fuzzy Thinking](#), Phillipe Coudray. 2015
 - [Buenas noches, Planeta : un libro Toon](#), Liniers. 2017
 - [Escrito y Dibujado por Enriqueta](#), Liniers. 2018
 - [Flop to the Top](#), Eleanor Davis. 2015
 - [La Matadragones : Cuentos de Latinoamérica](#), Jaime Hernandez, 2017
 - [Something’s Fishy](#), Kevin McCloskey. 2017

- [Where's Halmoni](#), Julie Kim. 2017

Webcomic Resources:

Kidjutsu: www.kidjutsu.com

GoComics Kids and Teens: <https://www.gocomics.com/comics/kids-teens>

Supporting Research

- **Library & Afterschool Program Models: Key Finding 1:** Libraries are experts at making reading fun.
- **Library & Afterschool Program Models: Key Finding 2:** Centering books & reading in programming improves children’s attitudes toward reading & books.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 11:** Teaching oracy is instrumental to better reading and writing.
- **Equity: Key Finding 7:** Latino families from a range of backgrounds have a preference for activities that build and maintain cohesion within the family.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 12:** Opportunities for oral language are essential for reading development in the second Language.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 17:** Translanguaging acknowledges and utilizes the bilingual child’s complex language repertoire as a resource.
- **Child Social Emotional Development: Key Finding 1:** “Self-distancing,” by dressing up as a character, can help kids focus on task at hand.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 6:** Interactive read alouds increase reading engagement, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- **Library & Afterschool Program Models: Key Finding 10:** Encouraging joint media engagement between children, caregivers and educators increases literacy benefits of digital tools.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 5:** Access, choice and time reading and discussing engaging text increase reading achievement.
- **Library & Afterschool Program Models: Key Finding 17:** Since writing is key to reading/ literacy, libraries should offer playful creative writing programming for K-3 kids.

Credits



Creative Commons License

Fostering Readers by [Deborah Gitlitz, Jen Burkart, Kari Kunst, Kelli Scardina, NPC Research, OregonASK, and Washington County Cooperative Library Services](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).



Fostering Readers is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the State Library of Oregon.