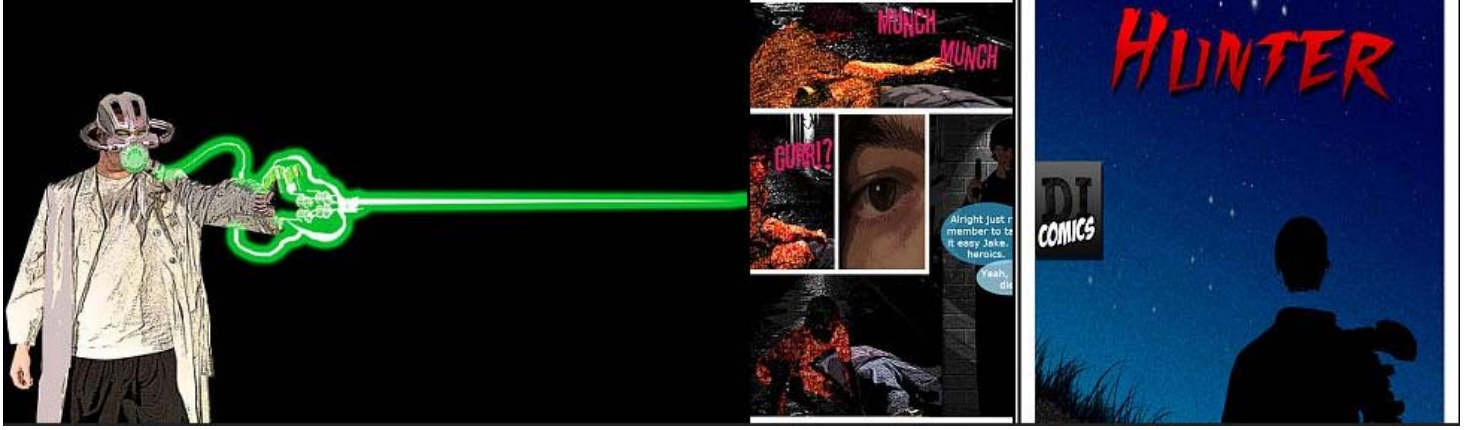


## Digital Photo Graphic Novels with Adobe Photoshop



A friend recently sent me a link to an online comic book called <http://www.nightzero.com/>. I was so inspired by the idea I talked with my Digital Imaging students and they liked the idea of making their own digital comic books. Now we are using this technique in our digital signage system to educate our peers about important topics like [recycling](#).

Your students will love creating graphic novels with their digital cameras and a little Photoshop magic. This project is a great way to incorporate reading, writing and team work into your graphic design curriculum.

### Learning Resources

Since all my lessons are online you can immediately start using these lessons with your students or share them with the faculty at our school/district. I encourage you to personally take on projects that allow you to practice these techniques. Continue to read some of the excellent books that cover these amazing software applications, explore the many online resources and learn from your students as they push the limits. I have included a list of my favorite online learning resources.

When you attend my workshop I give you a DVD and handouts that contain a bunch of sample files that you are welcome to use while you practice the techniques in the workshop. I encourage you to start with these files and then experiment with the same techniques on your own images.

**Introduction –**

Comic books, graphic novels and Marvel movies are currently popular among students. Using this graphic style to communicate is appealing to many students. It is a great way to visually represent what students know or what to communicate. It is also more likely to catch student's interest and a visual graphic containing key information can be easier for many students to remember. When you combine this with the team work, research, reading and writing skills that are woven into this highly motivating projects the educational value is significant.

**Examples**

- Mount Si High School Photographic Novels
- Recycling Ad for digital signage
- Mother's Day Card

**Reading**

- Comics & Graphic Novels: Seeing the Meaning: Janice Biebrich
- Graphic Novels: Library of the School of Education
- Comic Life: If you don't have Adobe Photoshop or just don't want to bother learning/teaching how to use it there is a great program specifically designed to create comic. It is not free but very reasonably priced and available on both Mac/PC platforms. There web site has some great ways to use this technique in the classroom.

**Notes**

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## Planning

The planning process is a critical step in creating a great product. I will share with you the process and documents that my students used to create their photographic novels in both Acrobat and Word format so you can change them for your needs.

### Introduction - 3-4 periods

I like to start by having my students read some comic books or graphic novels. I got a bunch of comics for a couple bucks from a local shop and our librarian gave me a cart full of graphic novels. I asked students to complete this **Comic Story Form:** [Word](#).

The next day we discussed the stories characters, plot devices and graphic storytelling techniques (dynamic poses, exaggeration, word/thought/action bubbles). I like to have students use sticky notes to highlight things they want to share or come back to later.

The following day we each student wrote their own story outline using the **Story Development Form:** [Word](#). Then we each read our stories and selected a few to create.

**\*Alternative:** I am currently working with another class designing ads from our [digital signage system](#). These ads will highlight topics important to our students and administration. We started with recycling and the prevention of spreading germs. We started with a day of researching the topic and creating a **Treatment:** [Word](#). The next day we reviewed the comics/graphic novels and discussed the graphic storytelling techniques (dynamic poses, exaggeration, word/thought/action bubbles).

### Planning Documents

The planning stage took my classes about a week to complete. We started by discussing the Roles: [Word](#) | [Pdf](#) each person would fill. Then we went to the lunch room to creating our draft layouts.

- Directions: [Word](#) | [Pdf](#)
- Treatment: [Word](#)
- Roles: [Word](#) | [Pdf](#)
- Pre Production Handout: [Pdf](#) - give students this handout and review it prior to the draft layout stage.
- Sketches or draft layout -: I like to give students 11" x 17" sheets of paper for this part of the process. These documents are very important and will take time to create and then proof. I like to have my students number their pages and write lots of notes about props, costume, lighting, background images, names of actors and other important things on these sheets. I give each group a 3 ring binder to keep all their documents and these are stored in a cupboard in my room.
- Group Feedback: [Word](#) | [Pdf](#) - This document can be used after the draft layout is created or the draft Photoshop documents.
- Production Schedule: [Word](#) | [Pdf](#)
- Script Form: [Word](#)



# Photography

This can be really fun part of the process but if you are not careful it will suck up massive amounts of time. Setup a schedule that includes time for the students to review how to operate the cameras you plan to use, create/gather props and practice shooting dynamic angles/poses.

## Simple Background

When you plan to select the character and put them on top of a different background it is a good idea to shoot against a solid color wall or hang a sheet from the ceiling. If you have a video program at your high school they may have a green/blue screen wall that would work well but you really don't need anything fancy.

## Story Background

Sometimes you can find backgrounds at your school or in your community that fit your story. Try to make arrangements prior to your shooting day for this location. Think about issues like lighting, weather, and other classes using this location.



## Exaggeration

You can make your graphics more dynamic by changing the way you photograph your subject. This [tutorial on exaggeration \(3:37\)](#) will show you an [example](#) and some Photoshop techniques for taking it a step farther.

## Lighting

You can do some really cool things with cheap shop light. Remember holding that flashlight under your chin when you were telling ghost stories around the camp fire? If your classroom is too dark try going outside.

## Notes

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# Comic Technique

The organizer allows you to upload your photographs and video to the web so you can share them with others or access them from any computer connected to the Internet. You must have an online account so follow the instructions below to set this up.

## Comic Techniques

We are going to practice the techniques below on a couple images designed for the recycle ad. You will find the images in the photos/recycle folder.

- Selection/Layers (9:12) – The professionals always label and organize their layers  
\*\*You can skip these if you already know how to select objects by using the bottle and bin examples in the folder
- Comic Techniques 1 (5:01)
  - Smart Object
  - Stroke (inside/outside/center) and thickness
  - Filters - Artistic/Poster Edge
- Action Bubble and Warp Text (3:11)
- Final Touches - Sketch - Halftone Pattern (3:29)- I like to do this to the entire images once I finish.
- Comic Technique 2 (7:28)
  - Threshold Adjustment Layer
  - Close and fill or blend

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# Page Layout

In this section I will show you how to setup your page and layout your panels. I have some pre-designed templates or you can start from scratch.

## Layout Templates

I have a set of three pdf documents that contain a total of 19 templates but you can also start from scratch.

### Page Layout

- Starting from scratch (7:46) - this one is designed for my workshops
- Starting from a template (5:05)
- Fonts and word bubbles (5:19) Type up your text into a word processor and then copy and paste into Photoshop.  
*\*\*Print a draft of each page and have someone proof it.*
- Backgrounds (5:09) Backgrounds can be hand drawn and scanned. Try using a black sharpe to outline before scanning. You can also use colored pencil or color in Photoshop.
  - Photographs make great backgrounds if you look for contrast with your hero and avoid large areas of black.
  - Gradients - colorful gradients back great backgrounds, especially if your output is a computer screen.

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## Production

Most people want to share their photographs with others. Printing up comic books is a great way to share them but is going to cost you in paper, ink and binding combs. I found the Language Arts Department at my high school had a book binding machine and my PTSA helped me get the binding combs from a local office supply store. Printing in color was quite expensive and we found the pages with lots of black warped even the heavier stock paper we were using.

Sharing the comics online on the other hand was quick and free. Students could then add them to their electronic portfolios or share with distance friends and family.

### Post-Production

- **Printing cost include: binding combs. heavy weight paper, ink**  
We ended up giving each person a color copy of their comic and a photocopied version of the rest of the classes books.
- **Posting to web site release forms - I have every student/parent sign this at the beginning of the semester.**
  - <http://www.shutterfly.com/> - Shutterfly is a photo printing web site but I really like their "share" sites. Here is an example of how my Key Club uses this tool: <http://mshskc.shutterfly.com/>
  - <http://www.weebly.com/> - Weebly is a free web site creation tool that is easy and packed full of features.
  - **Google Sites: If you setup a Gmail account you can create a web site with Google Sites.**

### Documents

- Rubric: Word | Pdf
- Individual Evaluation: Word | Pdf
- How to turn it in: Word | Pdf

## Notes

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## Resources

Links on this page should open in a new window. When you are finished exploring them close the new window.

### Best of the Best

- <http://edexchange.adobe.com/pages/home> - The **Adobe Education Exchange** is a great resource for lessons, tutorials and more.
- <http://tv.adobe.com/product/photoshop/> I used a bunch of tutorials from Adobe TV. This is my new favorite place to learn about Adobe products.
- <http://www.adobe.com/education/> – This site is Adobe’s education support page, with links to class activities, online tutorials, and other handy things. Some of the free tutorials require free registration to use.
- <http://brainbuffet.com/> - This site was created by one of my favorite teachers and is full of great lessons and tutorials that will prepare students for the Adobe Certified Associates exam.

### Other Online Tools

- <http://www.weebly.com/> - Weebly is a free web site creation tool that is easy and packed full of features.
- <http://www.shutterstock.com/> - Shutterstock is a photo printing web site but I really like their "share" sites. Here is an example of how my Key Club uses this tool: <http://mshskc.shutterstock.com/>
- [Google Docs](#): Create, upload/download or share your Word, Excel or PowerPoint documents.
- <http://www.photoshop.com/> - Free online photo storage and editing tool.

### Free Stock Photos

Stock.xchange: <http://www.sxc.hu/>

Pics4Learning: <http://www.pics4learning.com/>

Public Domain Photo Database Photo: <http://www.pdphoto.org/>

Flickr Free Use Group: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/freeuse>

### Government Sites

NOAA: <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/>

National Archives: <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/index.html>

Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html>

American Memory: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

NASA: <http://nix.nasa.gov/>

### Copyright

- [Teaching copyright](#): This spells out some basic mistakes people make when thinking about copyright. **Read this one!**
- [Copyright in an Electronic Environment](#): Make sure to read the fourth bullet about Fair Use online.

