

**Handout from *Reading Between the Panels:
Using Graphic Novels to Teach Comprehension***
NCRA March, 2010

by Julie Sartorius & Jeanne Swafford
For more information: swaffordj@uncw.edu

Graphic Novel Titles, Teacher Resources, Websites

Azuma, Kiyohio. (2009). *Yotsuba&! (Vol. 6)*. NY: Yen Press. (Grades 2-4)



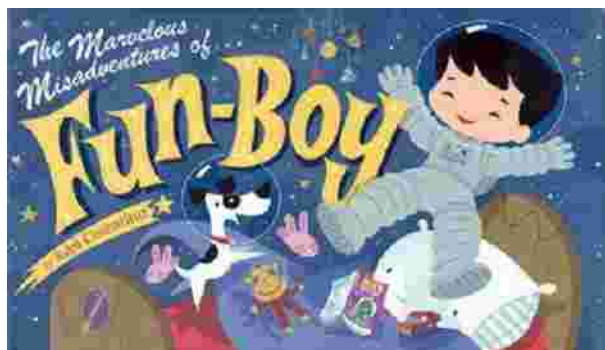
Japanese manga. Translated into English but uses the traditional manga format: read back to front, right to left. Because each volume is a collection of stories, originally published in a monthly magazine, you can read a single story in any volume and understand the story. Yotsuba (Pronunciation: Yoh (Yo) Tsoo (tsu) Bah (ba) is the young girl featured in the stories. Title of each volume refers to Yotsuba and (the title of the story). So in this volume, one of the stories is “Yotsuba and Recycling.” Titles of stories in this volume: Recycling, Bicycles, Pottering Around, Friday, Milk, Deliveries, This is the sixth of 7 volumes. The stories (and books) do not have to be read in sequence. These are available online at: <http://koiwai.biz/> The stories are listed as chapters, from the most recent to oldest. The stories are also downloadable.

Barshow, Ruth McNally. (2009). *Ellie McDoodle: New kid in school*. NY: Bloomsbury. (Grades 3-6)



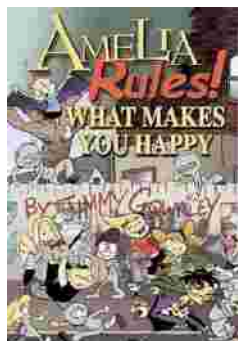
Ellie is an eleven-year-old girl who is the new girl in school. She misses her friends and doodles and writes in her journal (sketch diary) to work through the problems and issues she faces. Includes an interview with the author, which is accompanied by her sketches. Provides tips about how to keep a sketch diary. Great to use as a model for journaling that emphasizes drawing (representing) as well as writing. Integrates visual elements that resonate with so many children. Capitalizes on combining visual and verbal communication. There are 2 other books about Ellie. Resembles *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Jeffrey Kinney) in terms of its format. Visit the author/illustrator’s website at <http://www.ruthexpress.com/>

Cosentino, Ralph. *The Marvelous Misadventures of Fun-Boy*. NY: Viking. (PK-3)



This book is a collection of 4-panel comics about Fun-Boy and his many (mis) adventures. The only words used in the stories are titles, words representing sounds, and words on environmental print. A book coming soon: *Fun-Boy: Battle in Space!*
Excerpts from this book used in the NCRA presentation.

Gownley, Jimmy. (2002). *Amelia Rules! What Makes You Happy*. NY: iBooks. (Grades 4-6)



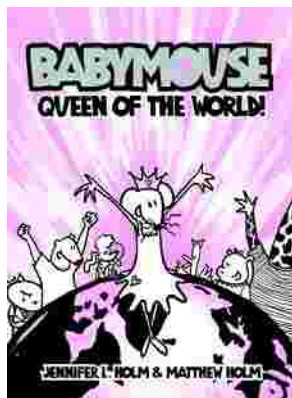
Nine-year-old Amelia is the protagonist in this 6-book series that features the trials and tribulations of girls about this age. This particular book is the second in the series. <http://www.ameliarules.com/home.php/>

Hayes, Geoffrey. *Benny & Penny in The Big No-No!* NY: Toon Books. (Grades K-2)



Easy-to-read graphic novel. Benny and Penny are brother and sister. This story tells of their antics as Benny looks for his pail, which he is sure the new kid next door has taken. Penny reminds Benny that taking others' toys, going over the fence into another's yard, and other antics are "big no-no's." In the end, everything is resolved and they all become friends. . There are several Benny and Penny books.
Winner of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award in 2010

Holm, Jennifer & Holm, Matthew. *Babymouse* series. (Grades 1-4)



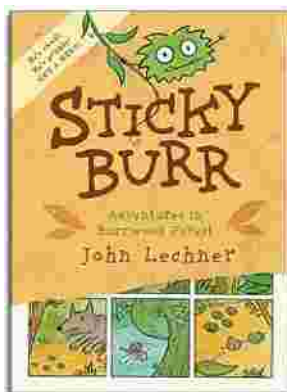
Babymouse is definitely queen of her own world. Each story, set in a situation with her friends, soon turns to what Babymouse imagines will happen and her role as being the super terrific Babymouse.

http://www.jenniferholm.com/02_mybooks/11_babymouse.html Author homepage

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/babymouse/homepage.htm>

Babymouse homepage. Includes information about graphic novels

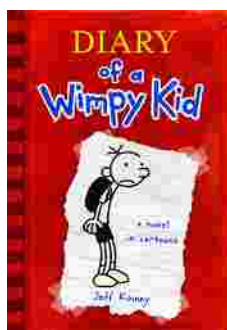
Lechner, John. (2007). *Sticky Burr: Adventures in Burrwood Forest*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press. (Grades 1-3)



Sticky Burr is more interested in painting and music than other antics the other burrs participate in. His friend, Mossy Burr, encourages him to do what he enjoys rather than succumbing to peer pressure. The book combines frames, speech bubbles, and interjects information al text on some pages.

www.stickyburr.com (2 books in the series thus far). *The Prickly Peril*

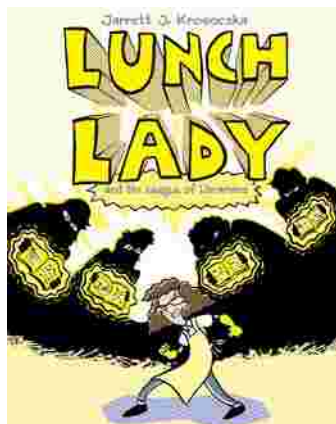
Kinney, J. (2007). *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: A Novel in Cartoons*. NY: Amulet Books. (Grades 3-6)



This book does not look like traditional graphica because it does not have panels. Rather it uses sketches that look similar to comics and running text that looks like a child's writing. It's very similar to Ellie McDoodle (see book above by Barshow). There are several books in this humorous series.

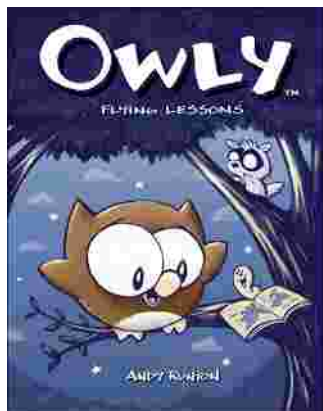
<http://www.wimpykid.com/>

Krosoczka, Jarrett J. (2009). *Lunch Lady and the League of Librarians*. NY: Alfred E. Knopf. (Grades 2-6)



The Lunch Lady is the heroine in this chapter book and others in the series. In this book, the librarians plot to destroy a new game system they think is going to corrupt children and keep them from reading. The lunch lady, her co-workers, and a group of students learn about the plot. They team up and use cafeteria food and cooking utensils to foil the plot, while the librarians use the characters in library books. The Lunch Ladies and the students defeat the librarians. Although the game system is not destroyed, the group comes up with a compromise. As children wait to play on the computer, they read books in the library. There are 7 titles in the series at this time. Visit www.randomhouse.com/kids for other titles.

Runton, Andy. (2005). *Owly: Flying Lessons* (Volume 3). Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions.

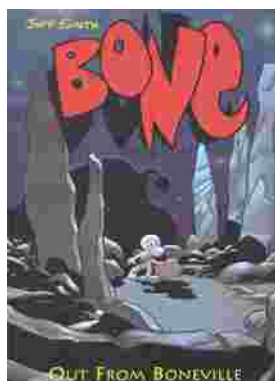


There are 10 Owly titles available at this time. This wordless graphic novel begins with Owly planting a plant in the forest. His friends, worm and butterfly are with him. As Owly and worm head home, a creature swooshes by and startles Owly. They want to know what the creature is so they do a little research at the nursery, where there's an expert (raccoon) and shelves of books. They decide it's a flying squirrel and then discover that owls are animal they fear the most. The quest through the rest of the book is to convince the flying squirrel that Owly can be his friend. An interesting feature of this book is how the author uses symbols, rather than words, in speech bubbles. Rather than telling what the characters are saying, their thoughts are

represented by pictures or symbols. At first, it was a little difficult to figure out what "words" were represented in the speech bubbles. But as the book continues, it becomes easier because the reader can figure out the pattern that's used throughout. It's a long but is a quick read.

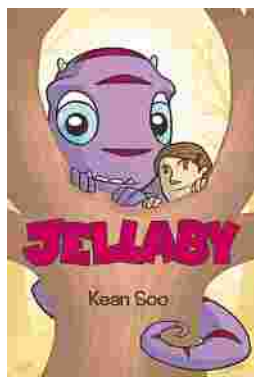
It's a sweet story that K-5 students will enjoy. Go to the author's website for more information: www.andyrunton.com

Smith, Jeff. *Bone* series. NY: Scholastic.



Fanciful stories about Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, and Smiley Bone, cousins who journey through different parts of the kingdom, usually fighting foes without the violence of graphic novels. There are scary characters that the three must face but always for a good cause. Currently there are 9 books in the series and *Rose: A Prequel*. These books are easier to understand if the volumes are read in sequence. Grades 5 and up. <http://www.scholastic.com/bone/> This website includes descriptions of the books, games, freebies, and an interview with the author.

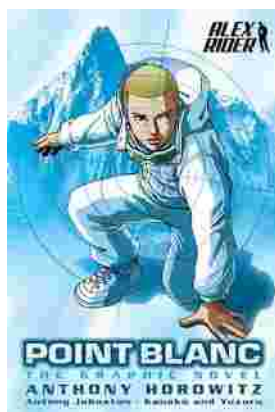
Soo, Lean. (2008). *Jellaby*. NY: Hyperion Books for Children. (Grades 1-3)



Jellaby is a friendly purple monster (a cross between a salamander and a kimodo dragon but with wings) who is lost. The story is about a school-aged girl (Portia) who befriends the monster and tries to help him find his home. Portia, her friend Jason, and Jellaby have many adventures as they try to help Jellaby and in the end, Jellaby protects them too. Appropriate for student in grades 1-6. The story is continued in the next book, *Jellaby: Monster in the City*. For Jellaby shorts and the first book online, go to <http://www.secretfriendsociety.com/archive.php?cat=2>

Books originally published in linear text and adapted into graphic novels

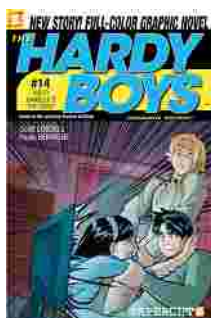
Horowitz, Anthony. (2007). *Point Blanc* (Part of Alex Rider series). Adapted by Anthony Johnston: script writer for this book. Illustrations by Kanako Damerum & Yuzuru Takasaki. NY: Philomel Books. (Grades 4-6)



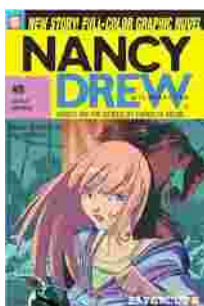
Popular book turned into a graphic novel. Action-packed. Teen-aged spy, Alex Rider, is sent to an exclusive, private boys' school (Point Blanc) to unravel the mystery and possible connection of the deaths of two of the wealthiest men in the world. The only connection seems to be that their sons were both sent to the same school to be rehabilitated. This book has some violence, but for a good cause—to save the world from an evil man who is basically a white supremacist. It ends with a cliff hanger that will undoubtedly leave readers wanting to read the next book. (Students often enjoy reading the original text and the graphic novel because the stories are told in such different ways. At the present time, there are two adaptations of the books in graphic novel form. For more information about books featuring Alex Rider, an interview of the author, and more,

visit <http://www.alexrideradventures.com/books.html>.

Hardy Boys



Nancy Drew

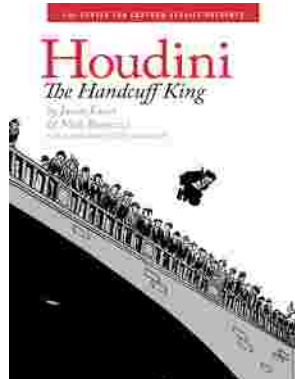


Baby-sitter's Club



Biography, Memoir, Nonfiction

Lutes, Jason & Bertozzi, Nick. (2007). *Houdini: The Handcuff King*. White River Junction, VT: Center for Cartoon Studies. (Grades 4 and up)



This book tells the story of one of Houdini's 1908 famous escapes, when he jumped, handcuffed off the Harvard Bridge into the river. It begins with how he hired people to advertise the event and details his wife's role in his escape. The Introduction to the book provides background information about Houdini and Panel Discussions at the end of the book provide additional information about the events depicted in this book. The print text is easy to read and the topic will interest readers of all ages. Graphics are black, white, and blue.

Ottaviani, Jim & Big Times Attic. (2005). *Bone Sharps, Cowboys and Thunder Lizards: A Tale of Edward Drinker Cope & Othniel Charles Marsh and the Gilded Age of Paleontology*. Ann Arbor, MI: G.T. Labs.

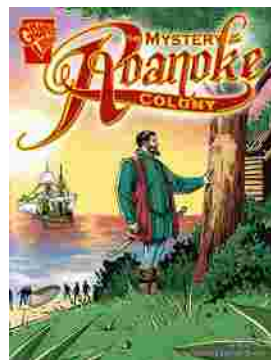


Tells the story of Cope and Marsh who fought over dinosaur bones, during the 1800's in the western part of the United States.

Graphic Library series nonfiction books

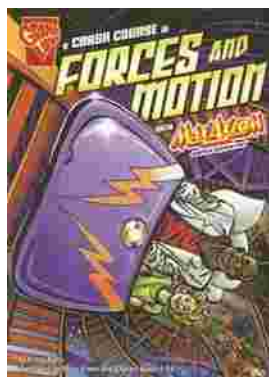
These series are about a 3rd - 4th grade reading level but appeal to middle school students as well. In addition to the series below, the following series are available: Graphic Exhibitions, Disasters in History, and Interactive Kits about different science topics and great people.

<http://www.capstonepub.com/aspx/pcategory.aspx?EntityGUID=dd98b5a7-fd9d-4925-ae3b-a1300fcdd3d0>



Graphic history series

<http://www.capstonepub.com/product/9780736865531>



Graphic science series:

<http://www.capstonepub.com/product/9781429644518>

Max Axiom is the superhero scientist who narrates each book. He is represented as an African American man.

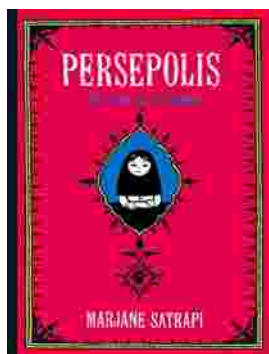


Inventions and Discovery series:

<http://www.capstonepub.com/product/9781429601900>

Award-Winning Graphic Novels

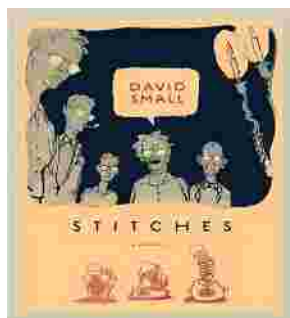
Satrapi, Marjane. (2004). *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. (Young Adult & Adult)



Autobiography about a young girl from age 9-14 during the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Honored by American Library Association (ALA) Best Books for Young Adults and School Library Journal (SLJ) Adult Book for Young Adults. Also several comic book awards.

Small, David. (2009). *Stitches: A Memoir*. W.W. Norton. (Young Adult)

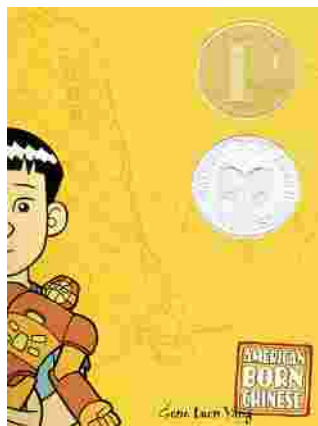


Interview with the author:

http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2009_ypl_small_interv.html

National Book Award for Young People's Literature: Finalist 2010

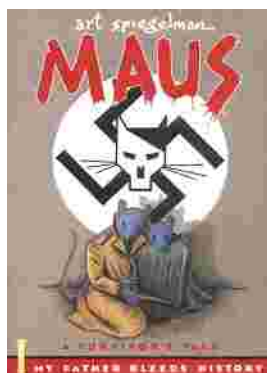
Yang, Gene Luen. (2005). *American Born Chinese* (Young Adult: Middle school and up). NY: First Second :01.



National Book Award for Young People's Literature: Finalist 2006
Prinz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature
Interview with the author: <http://comicsandbox.blogspot.com/>

Three stories woven into a humorous, yet powerful graphic novel. One story is about a young boy of Asian American descent and his struggles in his middle school, where he is seen as different and is often ostracized by his peers. The second story about the folk hero, Monkey King, and the other story is about a teenager who is embarrassed by his Chinese cousin. Issues include self-acceptance, race, and identity.

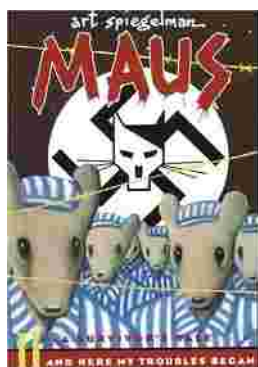
Spiegelman, Art. (1986). *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* (Young Adult and Adult)



Pulitzer Prize: Special Award and Citation 1992

In this book, Art Spiegelman depicts his distant relationship with his father, Vladek. The author tells the story of how his father was able to escape Nazi forces during the Holocaust through their conversations and interwoven flashbacks. This book is recommended for use with high school students and older.

Spiegelman, Art. (1991). *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (Young Adult and Adult)



The sequel to *Maus* tells the story of Vladek, Art Spiegelman's father, and his survival in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. The story is told in Vladek's flashbacks that are prevalent throughout conversations with his son.

Collections of Comics

Fry, M., & Lewis, T. (2006). *Over the hedge: Stuffed Animals*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Collection of *Over the Hedge* comics. Used excerpt in NCRA presentation.

Publishers of Graphic Novels

<http://www.firstsecondbooks.com/> :01 (First Second). Publishes graphic novels middle school – young adult. Titles include *Tiny Tyrant*, *Sardine*, *Robot Dreams* (wordless), and others for older students.

<http://www.scholastic.com/graphix/> A part of Scholastic publishing. Includes titles such as *Bone*, *Baby-sitters Club*, *Goosebumps*, *Amulet*, *Missile Mouse*, and many more.

<http://www.toon-books.com/> Books for students in K-3. The Benny and Penny series is an example of the books published by Toon Books.

Professional Resources for Teachers

Books

Carter, J. B. (Ed.) (2007). *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel*. Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Cary, S. (2004). *Going graphic: Comics at work in the multilingual classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The focus is using graphica with English language learners but the information is useful for all learners. Basic information, rationale for use, and research that supports the use of graphica is described. The second chapter answers teachers' common questions. The third chapter describes activities to use with graphica. Resources complete the book.

Thompson, T. (2008). *Adventures in graphica: Using comics and graphic novels to teach comprehension 2-6*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Great ideas for teaching comprehension and making the transition from comprehension strategies used with graphica to other forms of text.

Articles

Edwards, B. 2009. Motivating middle school readers: The graphic novel link. *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 25(8), p. 56-58.

Edwards encourages teachers to motivate students using texts they are interested in. She states that "reading a graphic novel requires the reader to infer and construct meaning from the visual representations while using the text to develop not only meaning but to foster comprehension." (p. 56). She conducted a study with 148 middle school students

and concluded that reading graphic novels combined with free voluntary reading time was beneficial.

Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2004). Using graphic novels, anime, and the internet in an urban high school. *English Journal*, 93, 19-25.

Describes their use of graphica with 9th graders to scaffold instruction and students' illustrated stories of popular culture.

Harris, V. (2008). Selecting books that children will want to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(5), 426-429.

Graphic novels originated from combining a series of comic books into a longer format. There is such a wide variety of graphic novels that the genre has something to offer every reader. Harris offers suggestions of graphic novels to accommodate all readers across the curriculum.

Lyga, A. A. W. (2006, March). Graphic novels for (really) young readers. *School Library Journal*, 56-61.

Titles appropriate for young readers.

McVicker, C. J. (2007). Comic strips as a text structure for learning to read. *The Reading Teacher* 61(1), 85-88.

As young students learn to read, they gain information from both print and images. When students comprehend content from images, they are applying visual literacy skills. Using comics to develop these skills at an early age will teach children to infer meaning from text and images.

Sanderson, P. (2004). True tales: From bee behavior to the life of Buddha, not all comics are fiction. *School Library Journal*, 50 (8), 14-19.

The author claims that reading comics can activate both sides of the brain simultaneously by using both words and pictures. Comics have evolved from superheroes to adaptations of classics to nonfiction. Included is a list of classic and recently released nonfiction graphic novels.

Yang, G. (2008). Graphic novels in the classroom. *Language Arts*, 85, 185-192.

Written in a graphic novel format by Yang, a high school computer science teacher and the author of *American Born Chinese*. Makes a case for using graphic novels in classrooms. Recommends books and websites for helping teachers get started.

Websites

<http://sidekicks.noflyingnotights.com/index.html>

Reviews graphic novels for kids and answers frequently asked questions pertaining to graphica

<http://www.readwritethink.org>

Offers lesson and unit plans using comics and graphic novels across grade levels

Glossary of terms:

<http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/public/default.asp?t=1&m=1&c=20&s=177&ai=7155>

<http://toon-books.com/index.php>

Good reference for graphic novels appropriate for early readers. Includes other series, similar to the Benny and Penny books and nonfiction titles as well. *Zig and Wikki* is a science-based nonfiction series.

<http://www.graphicnovelreporter.com/reviews/kids>

A list of titles and reviews of graphic novels for kids. (There is a link for books for teens and adults too.)

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Make your own comics and get story ideas. An added feature is that comics can be written in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Latin. This is a unique feature, beneficial for students learning English or learning a language other than English.

Comic Strip and Animation Creators

<http://www.scholastic.com/captainunderpants/comic.htm>

Create Capt. Underpants comics

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Create your own comic. Also has story ideas.

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interact_index.html

Comic Creator by IRA, NCTE

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

Very easy to use.

<http://www.scholastic.com/captainunderpants/comic.htm>

Create Capt. Underpants comics

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Create your own comic. Also has story ideas.

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interact_index.html

Comic Creator by IRA, NCTE

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

Very easy to use.

<http://goanimate.com/> Animation website used to create the clip at the beginning of the NCRA presentation. Animations can be saved at the website or downloaded for a very small fee.

Graphic Classics

<http://www.graphicclassics.com/>

Stories by Louisa May Alcott, Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Jack London, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, O'Henry, and many more.

Classical Comics publisher. Includes *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Jane Eyre*, *Henry V*, *Macbeth*, *Great Expectations*, *The Christmas Carol*

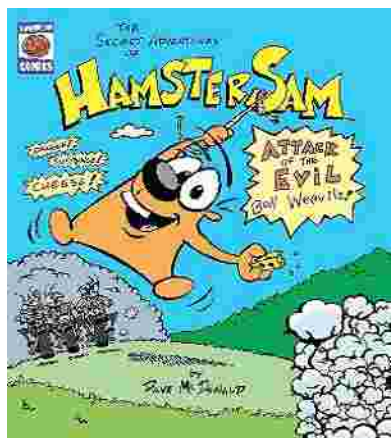
<http://www.classicalcomics.com/index.html>

<http://www.classicalcomics.com/education/index.html>

At this link, you'll see range of reading levels: Orig Text (e.g., Shakespeare's language), Plain Text (today's English), and Quick Text (less text) offered in the publications. There are even versions with blank speech bubbles that students could fill in.

Books & Websites Suggested by Participants in the NCRA Session.

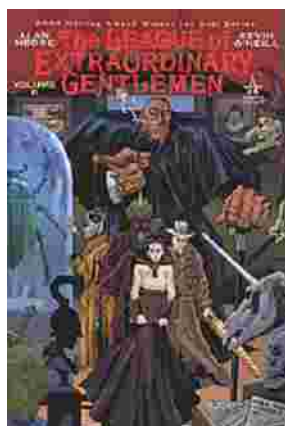
McDonald, Dave. *The Adventures of hamster Sam and the Evil Bollweevils*. Fort Mills, SC: DM



Creative Publishing. Can be linked to South Carolina and North Carolina history (textiles). <http://hamstersam.com/index.html>. Information about the book, cartooning workshops by the author.

Moore, Alan. *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, Vol. II*. (Mature audience)

http://www.dccomics.com/wildstorm/graphic_novels/?gn=2432



This graphic novel and website was recommended by one of the participants in the NCRA presentation. Thanks for the information!

<http://dckids.kidswb.com/>

This website is a part of the DC Comics site. Here you'll find cartoon network comics and books, Batman, and others that your students will be familiar with.