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Section I. Project Overview

**Making Comics Worldwide
Project:** Comic Relief Project
Subjects: English Language Arts
Grade Level: 9th Grade (High School)

24 PROJECT TIME 24 HOURS MINIMUM NEEDED

Project Idea
In the span of 24 hours of class time, students in groups of four will create a four-page comic and supporting personal essay that highlights a current event from the news headlines of today. Resulting comics will then be part of a published book entitled "Comic Relief" that will exist digitally and in print.

How is this applicable?
Students are saturated with news stories that aim to sensationalize the truth. In the Comic Relief Project, students will be tasked with examining these stories critically and interviewing a member of the community about their perspective. Students will then take an excerpt from the interview and create a four-page comic. By reinterpreting news stories into comics, students will demonstrate understanding, compassion, and empathy to the interviewees as well as the participants in the original news story.

Deliverables:
★ Each student will produce a page of comic art that fits into a four page story.

★ Each student will complete a written reflection to be attached to the comic.

★ The entire class will produce an comic anthology that will be printed as a zine.

Why comics?
Illustration is one of the most basic forms of communication known. Before we speak, we see and understand symbols through their abstract visual forms. When combining pictures with words we increase our ability to communicate ideas, emotions, and concepts. Studies have shown an increase in literacy and expression when students work with comic book illustration.

Essential Questions
★ *How do current events impact our everyday life?*
★ *How can art have an impact on how people understand current events?*

Budget*

★ **$502.27***

**To see a breakdown of costs regarding the construction of the project go to page 39.*

Common Core Standards Addressed

The Comic Relief Project teaches students the following English Language Arts Writing content and skills, as outlined by the Common Core, and how to apply them in a real world scenario:

STANDARD #	STATE STANDARD
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.C	Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Section II. 8 Essential Elements of PBL

1. Significant Content

The Comic Relief Project teaches students how to identify important themes of current events through critically examining the perspectives from the news/journalism, community members and themselves, and how to draw relevant connections between different points of view. Students will create original comic book sequences based on professional examples and present them in a medium that mirrors industry standards. This project addresses Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for reading, research, writing, speaking and listening and gives students the opportunity to apply English in an authentic, real-world context (see the complete list of CCSS on page 3 above).

2. 21st Century Competencies

This project builds students' competency in critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Students must think critically as they interview subjects and represent the interviews within their finished product. Students work in teams to draft, critique and revise their original comic composition. Each student develops important leadership skills in the daily team-based activities. In the final presentation of work, students present their original comic art in an authentic public event, attended by family and the community members that participated in the interviews.

3. In-Depth Inquiry

This project is not meant to be a quick, "fun" way for students to learn basic english writing skills, journalistic storytelling, or comic art. It is, however, intended for students to pursue deep questions about themselves, their communities, and the news media that influence them. Students can only complete this project upon transforming multiple layers of research into various forms of art and writing.

4. Driving Question

The Driving Question for this project may be crafted by the students and teacher working together after the Entry Event, but it will be based on the question, "*How do current events impact our everyday life*?" The question frames the students' research and writing, and is open-ended. While there is no single "right answer," the question lends itself to many unique interpretations that students will use to develop deep, research-based writing, and personal lessons that extend beyond the walls of the classroom.

5. Need to Know

As students discover relevant comic journalism influence and conduct interviews with community members, they have a compelling reason to learn the content and skills inherent in this project. Furthermore, the public presentation of the final pieces of comic art drives students to become invested in learning a range of English language arts content and skills.

6. Voice & Choice

This project culminates with an unveiling of a published book of comic representations of the interviews conducted as well as a gallery walk of the final pages of art. The students share their personal, creative work using their voices by having scheduled panel presentations of their work in front of an audience. Leading up to this event, students decide which community members to interview based on their connections to the subject matter outlined in the chosen news story.

7. Critique & Revision

At several checkpoints during the project, students receive feedback from the teacher and from their peers regarding the effectiveness of their research and the progression of their original comic art. Students are asked to revisit work based on successes and perceived areas for growth. As students reflect on their work, they are also required to continue to better define their concept of the type of art they are creating. Ultimately, this leads to a rubric for assessment that is partly created by the students.

8. Public Audience

This project culminates with a public presentation of the Comic Relief Project at a mini comic convention hosted by the students. At the convention, the students present their final comic pages in a gallery as well as sell/distribute copies of the final book. The audience will consist of family and the community members that the students chose to study. Midway through the project, students write personal letters to the community members involved in the project, inviting them to the final presentation of their work.

Section III. Teaching Comic Relief Project

Students complete the Comic Relief Project by following a recommended set of activities in the order below. Within these set activities, however, there will be variation in the timing and in the way students complete them.

The sequence of instructional activities is described below. This sequence is based on pilot testing in school classrooms. Although changes may be necessary to meet time constraints, address the needs of specific student populations, or include additional instructional materials and learning opportunities, we strongly encourage teachers to adhere to the sequence of activities as closely as possible — at least for the first several times the project is taught. Each step is discussed in more detail in the following section, the Step-by-Step Teaching Guide.

Sequence of the Project

Preparing The Project

0 Teacher prepares for successful project implementation

Launching The Project

1 Students participate in entry event designed to share stories of media influence.

2 Students share reflections on how the news/media has affected their lives.

3 Teacher breaks down the project explaining the essential question, the deliverables, and the outcome expectation of student work.

4 Students generate a "need to know" list with the teacher.

Scaffolding & Managing The Project

5 Students read and discuss "Definitions & Attributes of Comics Journalism" document.

6 In groups of four, as predetermined by the teacher, students choose news story to investigate based on predetermined options allocated by the teacher.

7 In groups, students research the news media story they have been assigned to.

8 Students share how the assigned story has affected them after reading and researching.

9 Teacher shares the model comic that is provided in this document (or completes their own).

10 Student groups make arrangements with community members to conduct interview.

11 Interviews are conducted by the groups and subsequently transcribed by the groups.

12 Sections of the interviews are chosen and formatted into comic script form by student groups using the Scriptwriting Worksheet

13 Students design a character for their final comic by completing the Character Design Sheet

14 Thumbnail Worksheets are completed by each student.

15 Groups go through a thumbnail critique and decide on final four page comic layout.

16 Teacher conducts overview of Hand-Lettering Tutorial with the class. Students practice lettering.

17 Students, individually, complete first draft of the final comic page using the "Draft 2 Pencils Worksheet".

18 Students go through a critique of their pencils and once approved, begin inking their final draft.

19 Students write a reflection of the process according to the Final Reflection Guidelines. Each reflection is to be printed in the final comic publication.

Assessing Student Work

20 Students and teacher develop rubric for final presentation that includes showcasing their final pieces and selling the comic at a mini-comic convention.

21 Students and Teacher plan mini-comic convention for unveiling of work.

22 Students and Teacher host mini-comic convention.

24 Students and Teacher reflect on the Comic Relief Project presentations and project.

Step-By-Step Teaching Guide

Preparing The Project

0 Teacher prepares for successful project implementation

A successful project requires that teachers prepare, plan and communicate before the project begins. For the purposes of this project, we recommend doing the project in its entirety before starting the project with students. Although it takes time, doing this will make the project much more meaningful for you and your students, and provides you with first-hand knowledge of potential hurdles and opportunities for success.

> To learn how to implement a project, take classes at **PBLU.org**, and earn certification as a PBL Teacher if you try this project with students!

Doing the project yourself includes these steps:

➡ Identify a news media story that you find relevant. Select a community member who is significant in your life whose perspective on this story you would like to make the focus of your project. During this step, make notes so you can show students how you chose the community member to conduct your interview with. Choosing the community member to conduct your interview should be a meaningful process. Take time to make sure that this is someone who most likely has something valuable to say about the news story selected and is a person that you value in your own life.

➡ Reach out to the selected person and schedule a time to conduct the interview with them. Make sure you record the interview for transcription. Once the interview is complete, take some time to transcribe the interview. Make sure to transcribe the interview as honestly and accurately as you can.

➡ Go through the process of completing a page of your comic. This will include writing a script, designing the character, thumbnailing for the page, and then using the tutorials and procedures attached to create a page of your final comic. Optionally, you can complete all four pages of the comic script in order to simulate the experience of what an entire group will accomplish. However, this is optional because no one student will ever complete that much work during the timespan of the project.

➡ Upon completion of your page of comic art, write a reflection according to the reflection guidelines on page 33. Both the reflection and the comic should be ready to show the class when the project is introduced.

Additional Planning Tips

- Document your process. Take pictures of your interview and the stages of making your comic, and include these and your script, final artwork, and reflection in Google Presentation to show the class at the launch of the project.
- Reserve a space where you can show your presentation at the launch of the project, on an overhead projector.
- Print/prepare all the assembled readings and worksheets to distribute during the launch of the project.

Launching The Project

1   **Students participate in Entry Event designed to share stories of media influence.**

To begin to engage students in comic journalism and news/media, use one of the following Entry Events:

Field Trip

Possible field trip destinations:

➡ If possible take your students to an **art museum** that is displaying comic art. Suitable museums might be the Museum of Comic & Comic Art in New York or the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco. Local and regional comic art museums can be found. Make sure that whatever art museum you are visiting has an exhibit or display specifically about comic art.

➡ Another idea is to arrange a visit to a **comic shop**. Reach out to the owner and specifically ask them if they are interested in having their store be used as an educational venue. A lot of local comic shops are locally owned by comic enthusiasts who would love to share their venue with new crops of comic enthusiasts.

➡ A **library** can be an invaluable place for students to become exposed to comic books. A good deal of public libraries have comics that students can borrow. Getting the students acquainted with the library borrowing system can be a great way to continue their education after the project has completed. *A library might also be a good place to schedule a guest speaker to meet you and your class.*

➡ One other idea is to schedule a visit to a **local newspaper**. Even though this project has a comic focus, it also has a focus in journalism. Visiting a news paper and discussing journalistic ethics with a local news branch can serve to heighten the meaningful work your students are about to embark on.

Things to remember:

Spend time before the field trip to discuss the purpose of the field trip and prepare them for what to look for. During the field trip, have students take notes and photographs to help them remember highlights from their experience to share the next day.

Guest Speaker

➡ Invite a guest speaker who is either a **comic artist**, a **comic journalist**, a **journalist**, or has worked with the news media in some way. The guest speaker could be someone who has interacted with the news and understands the need to help the public have their voices heard. When they visit, ask them to discuss how they select stories and accurately report the events.

Video or Website

➡ Identify various media (e.g. web sites, video, newspapers) about selected current events and use them to launch a discussion about the story and how it has influenced the students, and what it makes them think or feel.

Guiding Questions for Entry Event

No matter what kind of entry event you select, conclude your event by asking students to reflect on the following questions

- What makes an event or person newsworthy?
- Why is media created?
- What are the most important qualities of media makers (journalists, reporters, illustrators, etc.)?
- How does the news affect you?

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2 **Students share reflections on how the news/media has affected their lives.**

Use the worksheet on **Current Events and Me** to help students reflect on how they interact with current events and how the media impacts their lives.

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3 **Teacher breaks down the project explaining the essential question, the deliverables, and the outcome expectation of student work.**

Explain the upcoming project to the students. Lead them in a discussion about what could be a driving question for them to answer. Write the driving question together.

Sample driving question:

➡️ *How can comic journalism have an impact on how people understand current events?*

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4 **Students generate a "need to know" list with the teacher.**

Ask students what they would need to successfully complete the project and answer the driving question. Students should form questions in small groups, and then share out to the whole class. As the project has many different facets, you can break the "need to know" list into several sections.

⚙ Scaffolding & Managing The Project

5   **Students read and discuss "Definitions & Attributes of Comics Journalism" document.**

Use the **Definitions & Attributes of Comics Journalism** worksheet to help students engage with the media form that they will create during the project.

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6   **In groups of four, as predetermined by the teacher, students choose news story to investigate based on predetermined options allocated by the teacher.**

Use the **Choosing My News Story** worksheet to help students identify a current event to use as the basis of their journalistic investigation. Students should be instructed to follow the turn-taking protocol on their worksheet so that all students have an opportunity to contribute their ideas to the group.

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7   **In groups, students research the news media story they have been assigned to.**

Place students in pairs and explain that they will be researching their selected story to find out more information about it. The **Tips for Researching** worksheet help to scaffold the research process, as well as provides a tool for students to organize their new understandings, and keep a record of the sources that they referenced.

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8   **Students share how the assigned story has affected them after reading and researching.**

Instruct students to write a short reflection about their thoughts and feelings after completing their research. Then arrange the students in groups of three so that they can share their selected story and their reflection with one another. When the groups have finished sharing, ask the students to share a small part of their group conversation with the class. You can generate a list of the feelings and thoughts that the stories evoked to get a sense of learning about current events can influence our thoughts and feelings.

For a structure of student-led group conversation, see the **Facilitating Student Discussions** handout in Teacher Materials.

9   **Teacher shares the model comic that is provided in this document (or completes their own).**

Explain to students that they will need to find a community member with whom to conduct an interview about their opinions for their comic journalism assignment.

Explain the process that you went through in interviewing someone that was meaningful to you, and show them the comic that you created as a model of what the students will do next. Ask students to analyze the comic that you created to generate a list of criteria for their final project.

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10   **Student groups make arrangements with community members to conduct interview.**

Distribute copies of the **Conducting My Interview** worksheet to students. Explain to students that they need to identify someone in the community that might be affected by their news story. Instruct them to first brainstorm as many people as they can think to interview, and then they should select one person that they feel would be the best candidate.

Students should then compose a formal email to request a time for an interview. Students who struggle with formal writing may need a scaffold to help them compose the letter, while other students may want to compose the letter in their own personal style.

Work with the students to develop a clear timeline for when the interviews need to be complete. Review the **Tips for Interviewing** worksheet with the class. You can also practice demonstrating the "Do's and Don't's" of interviewing in class. Instruct students to generate at least five strong questions for their interviews and write them on their worksheet.

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11   **Interviews are conducted by the groups and subsequently transcribed by the groups.**

Explain to students how to transcribe their interviews for accuracy and honesty. Facilitate a pair/share about transcription around the question, "Why is it important to be accurate in transcription?" Students can divide the interview into sections so that they can each work to transcribe a smaller portion of the interview.

After the entire interview has been transcribed, a session of critique on the written transcriptions will help students spot errors or parts of the interview that they may have heard incorrectly.

12 **Sections of the interviews are chosen and formatted into comic script form by student groups using the Scriptwriting Worksheet**

Instruct students to identify 16-20 sentences in their interview that best capture the perspective of their interviewee. If students are having a difficult time identifying the best section, you might introduce a short gallery critique so that other groups can review their selections and the class can work together to help each other find the best sections.

When the groups have each selected their section, distribute copies of the **Scriptwriting Worksheet**. Explain to the students that they need to create a script for their comic. Present the script requirements to the students, and ask students to identify why each parameter is important for comics journalism.

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13 **Students design a character for their final comic by completing the Character Design Sheet**

Distribute copies of the **Character Design Sheet**. Instruct students to work together to complete the worksheet in all of the perspectives. This is an important step for artists that struggle with self-confidence. Encourage the students to help one another to understand how to draw the character accurately, but also reassure them that the characters can look a little different. The groups will want the "best" artist to lead the character design, but remind them that all members of the group should feel comfortable and happy with their drawings.

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14 **Thumbnail Worksheets are completed by each student.**

Distribute the **Thumbnail Worksheets**. Instruct students to complete the worksheet, but not to spend too much time on the artwork. The thumbnails draft is important for laying out the components of the comic.

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15 **Groups go through a thumbnail critique and decide on final four page comic layout.**

Lead a gallery critique for the students to review one another's thumbnails. Critique is meant to ensure that students understand the essential requirements for their art work before starting on their first draft of pencils. Use the **Critique Worksheet: Round 1** to help students assess one another's pages.

After the critique, students should identify one or two corrections to make to their page before working on their first draft of pencils.

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16 **Teacher conducts overview of Hand-Lettering Tutorial with the class. Students practice lettering.**

Instruct the students on the basics of Hand-Lettering by showing the tutorial to the class. Students should work in pairs (so they can share rulers and pens) while working on the lettering for their comic.

17 **Students, individually, complete first draft of the final comic page using the "Draft 2 Pencils Worksheet".**

Distribute copies of the **Draft 2 Pencils Worksheet**. Students work individually to complete the second draft of their pencils.

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18 **Students go through a critique of their pencils and once approved, begin inking their final draft.**

Lead a second critique of their pencils. Students should create a list of one or two corrections to make to their artwork before inking their final pages.

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19 **Students write a reflection of the process according to the Final Reflection Guidelines. Each reflection is to be printed in the final comic publication.**

Distribute copies of the **Final Reflection Guidelines**. Students should reflect on the process of the comic, including researching and learning about the current events. Depending on the length of their reflections, you can include their entire reflection or excerpts alongside their pages in the final comic publication.

⚙ Assessing & Showcasing Student Work

20 **Students and teacher develop a rubric for final presentation that includes showcasing their final pieces and selling the comic at a mini-comic convention.**

Facilitate a discussion with students to decide what features are most important for presenting their final work. Examples of this might be that each group of students creates a short presentation about their current event, their interview, and the process of creating the artwork. Students should understand the qualities of a professional presentation. Instruct students to work together to decide how to present their final work at the mini-comic convention.

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21 **Students and Teacher plan mini-comic convention for unveiling of work.**

Include the students in planning this showcase of comics journalism. Invite students to imagine the evening and dream up their own designs.

➡ What does the convention look like?
➡ How is the artwork displayed?
➡ What does it sound like?
➡ Where will the audience be? How will they interact with the artwork?
➡ Who will be there?
➡ What is the lighting like?
➡ Where will the presentations be?

You may choose to host your mini-comic convention in the school, or in a venue in your community. Ensure that there is adequate space for your attendees, and that you have a clear layout for the audience to interact with the students and their artwork.

As you plan the event, it may be helpful to assign the students to specific positions to support the coordination of different aspects of the convention. Each team should have a clear task. For example, you might form groups around

- ➡ **Marketing:** Create and hang posters promoting the Comic-Con
- ➡ **Audio**: Set up and test the PA system and microphones, and troubleshoot them throughout the night.
- ➡ **Cafe/Hospitality**: Set up a welcome area and refreshments for the audience.
- ➡ **Venue Management**: Set up the artwork and organise the physical space of the venue.
- ➡ **Invitations**: Create postcards or letters to invite people to attend the event. Manage a list of RSVPs.
- ➡ **Program Team**: Create a program for the evening describing the agenda for the event, and highlighting the different publications on display.
- ➡ **Production Team**: Work to assemble the final books.
- ➡ **Sales Team**: Design signage to communicate the prices of the books, and is in charge of selling and distributing the final books.
- ➡ **Event Coordinator**: Communicate with all of the teams to ensure every team accomplishes all of their goals.

Set clear deadlines for each team, and check in with students to make sure that everything is designed, printed, and ready for the convention. This might be a good time to design a progress chart for each team, and facilitate regular check-ins to make sure that the whole team is ready for exhibition.

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22 **Students and Teacher host mini-comic convention.**

The presentation of the students' artwork and the perspectives of the community displayed in their comics is a time to celebrate learning and connections. This is a time for students to demonstrate their personal, artistic, and intellectual growth.

Invite the audience to interact with the students' work and the important current events that are discussed in the final comics.

23 **Students and Teacher reflect on the Comic Relief Project presentations and project.**

Since the mini-comic convention is also a part of answering the driving question, invite the students to reflect on how comics journalism had an impact on how people understand current events.

➡ How did comics journalism impact my own understanding of current events?

➡ How did comics journalism impact our audience?

➡ What was their reaction to our comics?

➡ What did we hear people say about the stories?

➡ How did it impact the person who I interviewed?

➡ What was their reaction to my final artwork?

➡ What did they say?

Extensions to the Project

- **Digitally Coloring Your Pages in GIMP (Or Photoshop)**
  - ➡️ **Why You Would Want To Consider This:** Making Comics Worldwide ([MakingComics.com](#)) is dedicated to teaching the world how to make comics for little to no cost. For that reason we have constructed a three part tutorial series that is designed to teacher people of all ages how to color comic pages, exactly like the ones in this project, in GIMP. GIMP is a free and open source Adobe Photoshop alternative that is a standard part of the Linux open source operating system. Because GIMP is also available for MacOSX and Windows computers, it means that all of your students can download and use GIMP immediately for free. Read more about comic book coloring with GIMP software by visiting: http://tinyurl.com/MCWGimpTutorial

  - ➡️ **Pitfalls:** Adding digital coloring to this project will increase the amount of steps needed to complete the project. This can increase the time to complete the project up to 6-10 more hours. This project was designed to be completed by students without the assistance of a computer, which is one of the strengths of the project. Adding technology to the student workload can result in more frustration for the student participants.

- **Automated Comic Software - Comic Life**
  - ➡️ **Why You Would Want To Consider This:** Adding an automated program, like [Comic Life](#), can make the comic creation process easier to teach in class. It has the ability to automate the creation process and guide students through the process of laying a page of art out to be read as a comic.

  - ➡️ **Pitfalls:** The issue with software like Comic Life is that it makes all the student work look like it was created in a sub-par work environment. Usually this is evident in the final work *looking* as if it was produced by an auto generator as opposed to the careful hand of an artist. This project, and the adjacent materials, were designed to support student work so that they can create comics more like a professional comic artist would.

- **Original Comic Scripts and Characters**
  - ➡️ **Why You Would Want To Consider This:** Allow students to write creative, fictional scripts based on the perspectives that they learned about through their research and interviews. Students can learn about plot and story structure, character development, and how to connect current events to inspire creative stories. This allows the students another layer of creative interpretation, and could help them connect more meaningfully to current events.

  - ➡️ **Pitfalls:** It will be more time-consuming to have students create original stories, and it is difficult for students to understand how to pace a story for comic art. Beware that students will use "quick" transitions like, "Five years later…" and avoid going into detail. You can help them by creating some parameters, such as: "Stories must include three or fewer characters, one setting, and must take place during a 24-hour period."

Section IV. Student Handouts

➡ Definition & Attributes Of Comic Journalism

➡ Current Events & Me Worksheet

➡ Choosing My News Story

➡ Tips For Researching

➡ Conducting My Interview

➡ Tips For Interviewing

➡ Critique Worksheet: Round 1

➡ Critique Worksheet: Round 2

➡ Draft Requirements Checklist

➡ Script-Writing Worksheet

➡ Character Design Worksheet

➡ Thumbnailing Worksheet

➡ Pencils, Letters & Inks Worksheet

➡ Final Reflection Worksheet

Definition & Attributes Of Comic Journalism
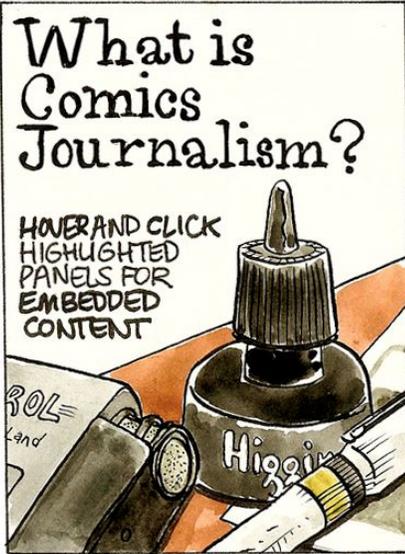
What is Comics Journalism?

Comic books, cartoons, and graphic novels are all forms of art that tell stories through a series of pictures and words. Journalism is a process of bringing news to an audience. When you combine the two you arrive at Comics Journalism.

Comics Journalism is often confused with political cartooning which is a comic form aimed at poking satirical fun at current events. Comics Journalism differs from political cartoons in its aim. Comics Journalism focuses on telling news stories in a panel-to-panel sequence. It often covers controversial topics like human trafficking in Nepal or the Bosnian War.

Click here to read a comic by Dan Archer about the history of Comics Journalism.

Notable Comics Journalism Resources

THE NIB
Medium.com/the-nib
The Nib is a brand new comics journalism site operated by Medium.com. Updates daily.

CARTOON MOVEMENT
CartoonMovement.com
The Cartoon Movement is a community of international editorial cartoonists and fans of political satire.

ARCHCOMIX
Archcomix.com
Dan Archer is one of the leading comic journalists in the industry.

Why Is Comics Journalism Important?

Journalism is only as effective as the lives it touches and transforms. Comic art accesses people who would not normally interact with news media by adding the dimension of illustration and design to the journalistic process. This allows people to connect with the news story in a dramatically different way than if they just had read it in a newspaper in standard written form. Comics can give us access to subtle emotional shifts in the people affected by the events. With the added dimension of internet technologies comics journalism can expand and evolve to include links, videos, animations, and more, making the journalistic process more dynamic than ever before.

Further Resources:

➡ Wikipedia entry on "Comics Journalism"
http://goo.gl/o42Pd0

➡ ComicsJournalism.com

➡ Comic Journalism interview w/ Dan Archer
http://goo.gl/BGPtcJ

➡ Joe Sacco Talk On Comic Journalism
http://goo.gl/GjtrjT

Current Events & Me

What are current events?

How do you learn about current events?
☐ Newspaper
☐ YouTube
☐ Facebook, Twitter, other social media
☐ TV
☐ Radio
☐ Magazines
☐ Friends or Family
☐ Other:_____

What are some stories from current events that you have learned about recently? Tell as much as you can (who, what, when, where, why).

What do you think makes those stories "newsworthy"?

Do you think that stories in current events affect you, your friends, or your family? Why or why not?

Choosing My News Story

For this project, you will become a comic journalist and you will interview someone from your community about their thoughts and feelings on a current event in the news. You can choose any story that appeals to you, but it must meet the following criteria.

1. Current: Your news story should be something that is recent or ongoing. Make sure the date of your news story is within the past two months.
2. Controversial: Your news story should be something that people have different opinions about. Find a story that inspires strong feelings or debate.
3. Important: Your news story should be important to people in your community. Find a story that impacts a lot of people.
4. Interesting: Your news story should be interesting, not only to the people in your community, but to you! Find a story that you think will be fun to investigate.

The headline for my story is:

My news story was published by:

A summary of my news story is:

My news story is current because:

My news story is controversial because:

My news story is important because:

My news story is interesting because:

Tips For Researching

1. Identify your search terms:
2. Enter your search terms into the search bar at Google or Google News
3. Read the headline and the first paragraph. Is this a good match? If so, continue reading. If not, try a different site or article.

Take notes on what you learn and where you found your ideas

Title:	
Name of Author/Source/Site:	Date of Article/Site:
What I learned (Summary/Important Ideas):	

Title:	
Name of Author/Source/Site:	Date of Article/Site:
What I learned (Summary/Important Ideas):	

Title:	
Name of Author/Source/Site:	Date of Article/Site:
What I learned (Summary/Important Ideas):	

Conducting My Interview

The deadline to complete our interview is:

Now that you have selected a news story that is current, controversial, important and interesting, you are ready to plan your interview. In your interview, you will ask your interviewee to read the news story, and then you will ask them questions about how they feel about the story.

> When: Identify a few times when your entire group can meet together to do the interview. The interview should only take about fifteen minutes, but make sure your group can meet for at least thirty minutes to get ready and write notes afterwards.

> Who: Select a person who has strong ideas or feelings and whose opinions you want to learn more about. If possible, interview someone who has a direct connection to your new story.

> How: Write a letter to formally request for an interview. In your letter, explain why you are requesting an interview, and when you would like to conduct the interview. You can send your request in an email. Plan to follow-up with a conversation or a phone call if you do not receive a reply to your email in a day or two.

After you discuss when, who, and how with your group, write down your plan for conducting your interview.

When we will meet to conduct our interview:

Who we chose to interview and why:

Write a draft of an email requesting an interview in the space below.

Tips For Interviewing

Do's & Don'ts

➡️ **Do** begin your interview with greeting and gratitude.

➡️ **Do** ask your interviewee to read your news story before you begin asking questions

➡️ **Do** ask open-ended questions

➡️ **Do** ask follow-up question

➡️ **Do** take notes

➡️ **Do** reflect together immediately after the interview

➡️ **Don't** ask closed (yes-or-no) questions

➡️ **Don't** ask leading questions

Five questions that we plan to ask	Three examples of follow-up questions
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	
5.	

Reflection

Immediately after the interview, take five minutes to individually reflect on what you heard and saw. Share your reflections with your group.

➡️ *Describe or depict the setting and atmosphere of the interview (time of day, feeling of the surroundings)*

➡️ *Make a list of the interesting ideas that I heard in the interview.*

➡️ *Make a list of the emotions that I noticed in the interview.*

➡️ *Did anything interesting or surprising happen in the interview? If so, what?*

Critique Worksheet: Round 1

Peer editors:

1.

2.

3.

What do you like most about my comic?

1.

2.

3.

    1. Can you read my word bubbles easily? Yes   No
       Explain why or why not

    2. Did I include all the important components (visual, word bubble, panels, gutter space)? Yes   No
       Explain why or why not

    3. Does my comic layout make sense when you read it? Yes   No
       Explain why or why not

Please share an idea for how I could make my comic better:

1.

2.

3.

Critique Worksheet: Round 2

Something that I feel I did successfully:

Two things that I would like help with are:

1.	2.

General comments:

Draft Requirements Checklist

Draft 1: Interview, Transcript, Script

☐ News Story Read

☐ Interview Scheduled

☐ Interview Completed

☐ Interview Transcribed

☐ Script Written With All Group Members

☐ Script Read Out Loud With All Group Members

☐ Script Approved By Teacher

Draft 2: Thumbnails & Character Design

☐ Characters Discussed & Assigned To Group Members[1]

☐ Character Design Sheet Completed

☐ Character Design Sheet Approved By All Group Members (and necessary edits implemented)[2]

☐ Character Design Sheet Approved By Teacher

☐ Thumbnail Sheet Completed

☐ Thumbnail Sheet Approved By All Group Members (and necessary edits implemented)

☐ Character Design Sheet Approved By Teacher

Draft 3: Penciling & Lettering

☐ Penciling Tutorial Read

☐ Lettering Tutorial Read

☐ Lettering Lines Added To Page

☐ Lettering Added To Page

☐ Penciling Added To Page (Loosely)

☐ Penciling Shown To Group & Any Corrections In The Art Are Made

☐ Penciling & Lettering Approved By Teacher

Draft 4: Inking & Reflecting

☐ Inking Tutorial Read

☐ Letters Get Inked[3]

☐ Word Bubbles Get Inked

☐ Characters Get Inked

☐ Erase Pencil Lines Lightly

☐ Show Your Group To Get Approval

☐ Submit Final Inks To Teacher

☐ Complete Written Reflection Assignment

☐ Turn In Final Written Reflection To Teacher

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[1] If there is only one character in your comic, like in the comic model, have all group members do their own version of the character then discuss what works and what doesn't from each design. As a group decide on a final design and do a second worksheet so that you can all make sure you can draw the character the same for the final project.

[2] Remember - that if the character is appearing on any other page that you are not drawing that person needs to be able to draw that character exactly the way you are drawing it for consistency.

[3] The order on this checklist is VERY important.

Script-Writing Worksheet

Refer to **Tutorial 1 - Scriptwriting** for more detailed instructions: http://tinyurl.com/comicscripttutorial

PANEL DESCRIPTION: PANEL **1**
_____

SFX: _____

DIALOGUE: _____

PANEL DESCRIPTION: PANEL **2**
_____

SFX: _____

DIALOGUE: _____

PANEL DESCRIPTION: PANEL **3**
_____

SFX: _____

DIALOGUE: _____

PANEL DESCRIPTION: PANEL **4**
_____

SFX: _____

DIALOGUE: _____

Character Design Worksheet

Refer to **Tutorial 2 - Character Design** for more detailed instructions: http://tinyurl.com/characterdesigntutorial

FRONT VIEW

NOTES _____

RIGHT SIDE VIEW

NOTES _____

LEFT SIDE VIEW

NOTES _____

BACK VIEW

NOTES _____

Thumbnailing Worksheet

Refer to **Tutorial 3 - Thumbnailing** for more detailed instructions: http://tinyurl.com/thumbnailworksheet

1
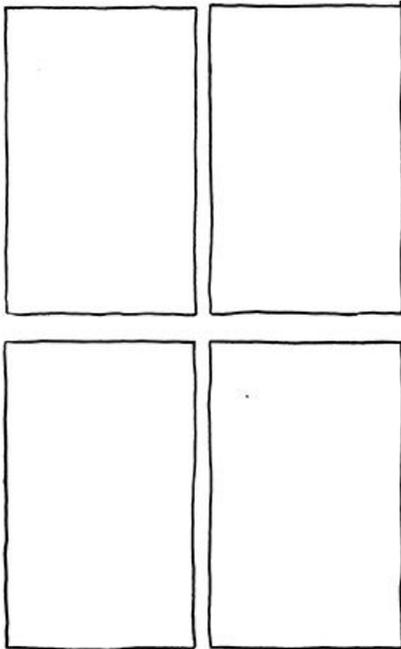
NOTES _____
_____
_____
_____

2
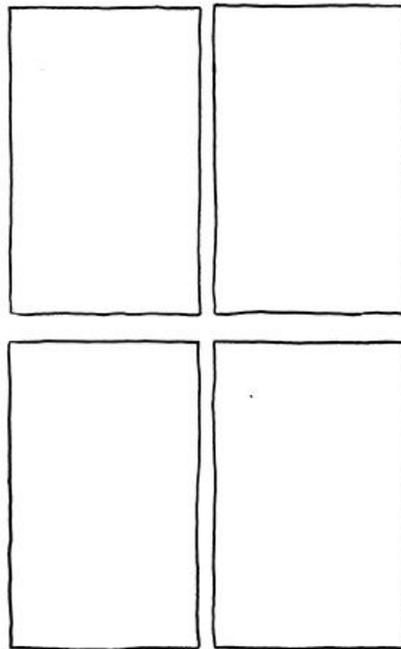
NOTES _____
_____
_____
_____

3
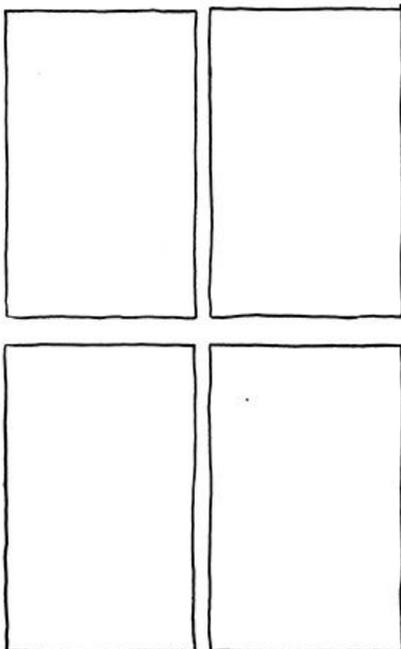
NOTES _____
_____
_____
_____

4
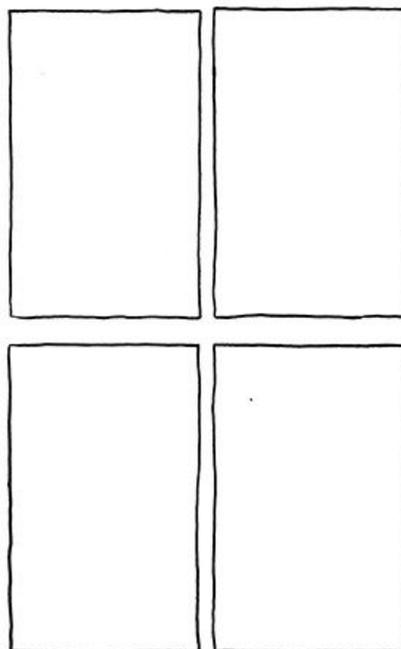
NOTES _____
_____
_____
_____

Pencils, Letters & Inks Worksheet Worksheet

Refer to **Tutorial 4 - Penciling**: http://tinyurl.com/pencilingtutorial & **Tutorial 5 - Lettering**: http://tinyurl.com/letteringtutorial
Refer to **Tutorial 6 - Inking** for more detailed instructions: http://tinyurl.com/inkingtutorial

Final Reflection Worksheet

Your written reflection will be published at the end of your comic pages in our final comic, so make sure to write complete sentences and give reasoning for your answers.

1. What was the most enjoyable part of the project?

2. What am I the most proud of?

3. What was the most challenging part of the project?

4. What did I learn about current events?

5. How does comic journalism affect the way people understand current events?

Section V. Teacher Materials

➡ Facilitating Student Discussions

➡ Choosing The Right News Story

➡ Project Model In Various Draft Forms

➡ Tutorials Quick Reference

➡ Materials & Budget

➡ Final Assembly Instructions

➡ Appendix

Facilitating Student Discussions

Active Listening Triads

Purpose: Students take turns doing close listening to one another's writing or reflections. They honor one another's ideas by taking active listening notes about the lines that struck them as one student reads aloud. This also helps provide students with authentic audience for in-class writing, as well as gives them an ear for what writing "sounds right." It helps them gain new perspectives on their ideas, as well as develop a sense of voice.

Structure:

Students need:
- Group of 3
- Their writing (shorter pieces or selections work best)
- A blank piece of paper
- Something with which to write

1) AUTHOR reads their writing aloud
AUDIENCE takes notes on lines and phrases that strike them for whatever reason

2) AUDIENCE take turns sharing back the lines that struck them

3) (optional) AUDIENCE poses questions about the writing, or speculates about the meaning of the author's work

4) ROTATE until all authors have presented

Choosing the Right News Story

Depending on the readiness of your students to identify their own news stories, you may want to pre-select stories that address a range of issues in the news right now and that you know have an impact on your students and their community.

If you have access to a computer lab, you can have the students interact with the stories in an online quest. Alternatively, you can have print-outs of the articles and/or excerpts displayed around your classroom.

The best news stories will be current, controversial, important, and interesting.
Current: Select stories about events that occurred recently or are ongoing.
Controversial: Select stories that people have different and strong feelings about. This will aid the students in capturing opinionated interviews.
Important: Select stories that are important to the people in your community, whether because they impact a lot of people, or perhaps impact a few people deeply.
Interesting: Most importantly, select stories that will engage your students and pique their curiosity.

This following list of topics is not exhaustive, but may provide a good starting point for identifying stories that meet the criteria.

❍ Poverty
❍ Disease outbreaks
❍ Renewable energy sources
❍ Finding a cure for _____
❍ Saving _____ from extinction
❍ Reforming the education system
❍ Health care
❍ Homelessness
❍ Drug/Alcohol abuse
❍ Immigration

Project Model In Various Draft Forms

About

In order to ready ourselves for the project, we went ahead and worked through the entire process of creating a four-page comic and used all the worksheets to ensure that we created the comic exactly the way we are asking you to do so in this project. Below, you will see links to all the model documents created for this project. Feel free to print them out or show them to you students digitally. These models were generated as a way to give you a visual guide for the comic creation process.


Transcript Model
http://goo.gl/LdESJf
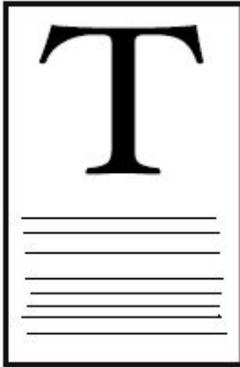
Comic Script Model
http://goo.gl/ySDjQH
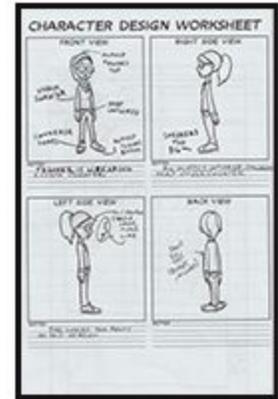
Character Sheet Model
http://goo.gl/J9hPYr
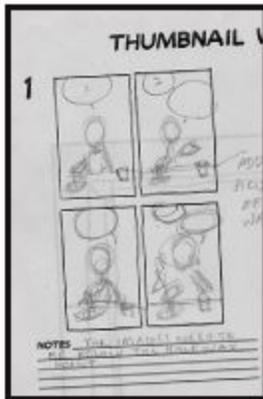
Thumbnail Worksheet Model
http://goo.gl/25pVZ5

Chosen News Media Example

News story for project model:
http://goo.gl/ktjBfM
Headline: DC Ferguson protesters take to Northwest streets
Source: Washington WUSA-9
Description: This news story was in regards to the controversy involved with ongoing protests in the Washington area as an outcome of the DC Ferguson situation. (See wikipedia entry on "2014 Ferguson Unrest" for more details - http://goo.gl/soVq4K). The news story specifically highlighted the tension between the protesters and the block of roadways as a part of their cause, and the resulting public disapproval of said protests due to it.


Final Four Pages Model
http://goo.gl/AfAp4Z

Tutorials Quick Reference

Scriptwriting Tutorial
http://tinyurl.com/comicscripttutorial

Character Design Tutorial
http://tinyurl.com/characterdesigntutorial

Thumbnailing Tutorial
http://tinyurl.com/thumbnailworksheet

Penciling Tutorial
https://goo.gl/pbpVe8

Lettering Tutorial
http://tinyurl.com/letteringtutorial

Inking Tutorial
http://tinyurl.com/inkingtutorial

Scriptwriting Tutorial
http://tinyurl.com/finalassembly

Materials & Budget

Material	Description	Links	Qty.	Cost
2H Pencils, classroom set	We highly recommend you use adequate drawing pencils for this project.	http://goo.gl/KnRKdl	1[4]	$14.30
Micron Size 4 Pen	These pens are to be used only for lettering. Limit one per every two students, or even more than that. *This item is optional, Zebra pens (Below) can also be used for lettering - if they are, make sure that the lettering is inked first when inking the page.*	http://goo.gl/Jnsn2v	25[5]	$105.00
Ruler	A clear, plastic ruler, is recommended for this project so that students can see through the ruler while making lines for their work. Use one ruler per every 2 students.	http://goo.gl/xvx1ur	25[6]	$49.75
Light Box	For the model comic, we used a homemade light box. The light box is optional because you can also use windows with natural lighting behind them in lieu of not having access to a lightbox.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyRcV0F615s	-	-
Jetpens Zebra Inking Pens	The model comic, as well as the tutorial series, was entirely constructed using these pens.	http://goo.gl/ymvfvd	50[7]	$125.00
Adobe Photoshop	Only the teacher needs this. The project works with Creative Suite 6, but any version of Adobe Photoshop will work for this tutorial. You can download a copy of CS2 for free.	http://goo.gl/ZGHgML	1	-[8]
A Photo Scanner	Make sure to use a scanner that can scan in full color. 8.5x11 flatbeds are acceptable.	http://goo.gl/CmjywW	1	$67.99
Copier	Specifically you will need a document printer/copier that can print on both sides of an 8.5x11 piece of standard printer paper.	-	1	-[9]

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[4] This quantity is based on student participation number. Order extras.

[5] Based on student population numbers.

[6] Based on student population numbers.

[7] This quantity relates directly to the amount of students completing the project. One per student and we recommend buying at least 5 extra just in case they get stolen or broken.

[8] Talk to the technical support within your school setting before purchasing, they may have school copies of this for you to use.

[9] Your school should supply this. If they do not it is possible to talk to a local printer to complete this, or you can use a service like lulu.com, blurb.com, or a comic-specific on-demand printer like ka-blam.com.

Adjustable Stapler	This will be a key piece of equipment to have so that you can bind your comics properly.	http://goo.gl/RZKWsc	2	$52.20
Staples	These are for the binding of the comics. If you want to have fun, look into buying colored staples.	http://goo.gl/UB7WgG	1	$10.00
Bone Folder	A bone folder will allow you to quickly, and easily, fold your finished comics without ruining your fingers.	http://goo.gl/kGQH7O	3	$17.25
Case of Copy Paper	5000 sheets of paper should easily be enough to cover all of the prints you need to maker, including worksheets, for the entire project.	http://goo.gl/G5Ilxn	1	$50.00
Card Stock	This can be used to make the covers of the comics. The interior pages being made from copy paper, having a thick cover can add a much needed "book" feel to the weight of the final comic print.	http://goo.gl/QWkkg7	1	$10.78

Total Cost of Project: 502.27[10]

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[10] Price of project does not include shipping or tax costs. Price calculation is subject to change with market increases.

Notes On Assembly

Technically the kind of book that you will be constructing for your final comic is called a "zine" (which is a mini-zine). At the end of this process you will either have one book, or a stack of books, like the ones below. At times this walkthrough may seem difficult. It is important that you pay attention to all steps involved in order for your comic to come out printed in the manner it was designed to be.

We would suggest that you actually break up your four page mini-comic sections, created by the student groups, into multiple zines as opposed to printing them all together in one. You are more than welcome to try to fit them all in one zine, but beware that the page count can make it hard to fold the final comic into a book.

This final assembly walkthrough will first talk about how to scan your work. Then we will look at the requirements needed to scan final student worksheets into Photoshop, resize them, and print them so that they can be assembled into your final printed book.

For this tutorial you will need:

➡ **Adobe Photoshop** This tutorial works with Creative Suite 6, but any version of Adobe Photoshop will work for this tutorial. You can download a copy of CS2 for free here: http://goo.gl/ZGHgML

➡ **A Photo Scanner** Make sure to use a scanner that can scan in full color. 8.5x11 flatbeds are ok.

➡ **Copier** Specifically you will need a document printer/copier that can print on both sides of an 8.5x11 piece of standard printer paper.

➡ **Adjustable Stapler** This will be a key piece of equipment to have so that you can bind your comics properly.

➡ **Bone Folder** A bone folder will allow you to quickly, and easily, fold your finished comics without ruining your fingers.

CLICK HERE TO GO TO THE ASSEMBLY TUTORIAL

TheNounProject.com Icons Within This Document:

- "Speech Bubble" Icon by Chris Kerr (http://thenounproject.com/chrisk3rr/)
- "Eye" Icon by Sergi Delgado (http://thenounproject.com/sergidelgado/)
- "Eight Ball" by Ema Dimitrova (http://thenounproject.com/sesisesi)
- "Teaching" by Miki Shoji (http://thenounproject.com/2ku2ku9/)
- "Sequence" by Peipei Feng (http://thenounproject.com/kaipei.feng/)
- "Kitchen" by Arthur Shlain (http://thenounproject.com/ArtZ91/)
- "Fireworks" by TNS (http://thenounproject.com/swissmixz)
- "Gears" by Sebastian Wiercinkski (http://thenounproject.com/term/gears/44569/)
- "Work" by Jaclyne Ooi (http://thenounproject.com/term/work/26704/)
- "Extend" by Danny Amacher (http://thenounproject.com/term/extend/6444/)
- "Publication" by Garrett Knoll (http://thenounproject.com/term/publication/49990/)
- "Newspaper" by Diego Naive (http://thenounproject.com/term/newspaper/23093/)
- "Newspaper" by Arthur Schmidt (http://thenounproject.com/term/newspaper/18205/)
- "News" by Bryan Allen (http://thenounproject.com/term/news/41760/)
- "Question" by Tommy Lau (http://thenounproject.com/term/question/27582/)
- "Resume" by Jaime Carrion (http://thenounproject.com/term/resume/79983/)
- "Flow-Chart" by Alex Kwa (http://thenounproject.com/term/flow-chart/33372/)
- "Pirate" by Paulo Sa Ferreira (http://thenounproject.com/term/pirate/12075/)
- "Sticky-Note" by Julieta Felix (https://thenounproject.com/icon/7161/file-options/)
- "Pencil" by Edward Boatman (http://thenounproject.com/term/pencil/347/)
- "Pen" by Ricardo Moreira (http://thenounproject.com/term/pen/10997/)
- "Typography" by Dan Lowenstein (http://thenounproject.com/term/typography/14495/)
- "Poster" by Irene Hoffman (http://thenounproject.com/term/poster/19817/)
- "Intelligence" by Cole Casper (http://thenounproject.com/term/intelligence/38995/)
- "Presentation" by Joris Hoofendoorn (http://thenounproject.com/term/presentation/3059/)
- "Feedback" by Atilio Baghino (http://thenounproject.com/term/feedback/24575/)
- "Presentation" by Froz (http://thenounproject.com/term/presentation/28971/)
- "Note" by Mundo (http://thenounproject.com/term/note/54998/)
- "Teaching" by Chiara Rossi (http://thenounproject.com/term/teaching/78718/)
- "News" by Bryan Allen (http://thenounproject.com/term/news/41760/)
- "Flow-Chart" by Alex Kwa (http://thenounproject.com/term/flow-chart/33372/)
- "Financial Analysis" by Hunotika (http://thenounproject.com/term/financial-analysis/41949/)
- "Cut Film" by Cezary Lopacinski (http://thenounproject.com/term/cut-film/54604/)