



# *Graphic Novels in the Classroom 6-12*

## Recommended Graphic Novels (Gr. 6–8)

**Anne Frank: The Anne Frank House Authorized Biography.** Jacobson, Sid and Ernie Colon. The historical context of Anne's confinement and the events leading up to and after her death are portrayed beautifully in this well-researched and engaging account. (Hill and Wang, 2010)

**Amulet (Series).** Kibuishi, Kazu. A monster in the basement lures a family into another world. Hooks readers with a blend of fantasy, mystery and high adventure with good action scenes. Characters and setting well developed. Fans of Bone enjoy this series. (Graphix, 2008) Three volumes.

**Artemis Fowl: The Graphic Novel (Series).** Adapted by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin. The bestselling 2001 series about a criminal mastermind reappears as a graphic novel. (Hyperion, 2007).

**Bird and Squirrel.** Burks, James. Bird and Squirrel outwit Cat and become best friends in this zany adventure. Fun art & clever humour. (GRAPHIX, 2012)

**Annie Sullivan and the Trials of Helen Keller.** A surprisingly moving biography of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan. (Disney, Hyperion 2012)

**Bone: Out From Boneville.** Smith, Jeff (Series: Bone). The Bone Cousins leave their home in search of adventure. A humorous, warm fantasy sprinkled with suspense and mystery. **F Smi**

**Bad Island.** TenNapel, Doug. A family is shipwrecked on an island and must quickly discover the truth about its dark secrets in order to survive. Gripping, suspenseful, and explores themes such as relationships, community and good/evil. (GRAPHIX, 2011)

**Cat's Cradle: The Golden Twine,** Rioux, Jo. Suri is an orphan who lives with a travelling circus. She searches for her brother and dreams of becoming a monster tamer, and confronts the strange monsters that lurk nearby. Mystery, action & adventure. Fans of Amulet and Bone will enjoy (Kids Can Press 2012)

**Daisy Cutter,** Kibuishi, Kazu. Daisy Cutter, notorious bandit of the New West, takes one last train heist before leading a normal life (Image Comics, 2004).

**The City of Ember, Jeanne Duprau.** Graphic Adaptation by Middaugh, Dallas, (Random House 2012)

**Chiggers.** Larson, Hope. At summer camp, Abby befriends the girl who seems different and her cabin-mates turn against her. Warm and realistic portrayal of adolescent issues.

**Flight, Volume 1** Kibuishi, Kazu, editor. Collected stories on the single theme of flight, featuring 24 different graphic artists. (GRAPHIX, 2010)

**Ghostopolis.** TenNapel, Doug. A young boy is accidentally sent to the city of Ghosts and discovers powers that he can use to combat the evil ruler. Darker themes and sophisticated imagery make for good classroom discussion. (GRAPHIX, 2010)

**Hereville.** Deutsch, Barry. Welcome to Hereville, home of the first-ever wisecracking, adventure-loving, sword-wielding Orthodox Jewish heroine. A delightful mix of fantasy, adventure, cultural traditions, and preteen commotion (Amulet, 2010)

**Wrinkle in Time: Graphic Novel Adaptation.**, Larson, Hope. A graphic novel adaptation of the classic tale in which Meg Murray and her friends become involved with unearthly strangers and a search for Meg's father, Notable graphic artist.

**Little White Duck: A Childhood in China,** Lui, Na. Graphic memoir set just at the end of the Cultural revolution. The stories capture important history about China under Chairman Mao, but its universal childhood emotions and scenes of daily family life are what will draw readers into this culture different than their own.

**The Lightning Thief.** Riordan. *Graphic Adaptation of the popular adventure series.* (Disney, 2010)

**Zeus: King of the Gods** (Series: The Olympians). O'Connor, George. Vibrant art and thrilling action bring Greek Mythology to life in this well-reviewed series. (First Second, 2010).

**Around the World.** Phelan, Matt. Phelan weaves a single fictional tale around three real-life figures who became caught up in the late nineteenth century obsession with circumnavigating the globe. He explores their attempts and motives in a multi-layered, perceptive story. (Candlewick, 2011)

**Smile.** Telgemeier, From sixth grade through tenth, Raina copes with a variety of dental problems that affect her appearance and how she feels about herself. Charming look at the awkward teenage years. (Graphix, 2010)

**Drama.** Telgemeier, Callie rides an emotional roller coaster while serving on the stage crew for a middle school production of Moon over Mississippi as various relationships start and end, and others never quite get going. (2012)

**Laika.** Abadzis, Nick. The beautiful and heartbreaking story of the stray dog that became part of the Russian Space Program, and was never intended to return. Explores the bond between humans and animals and captures a small piece of the Soviet era. (First Second, 2007)

**Inchiro** Inzana, Ryan. A Japanese-American boy returns to Japan to see his grandfather and gets sucked down a monster hole into the land of the gods. Adventurous search for identity.

**Into the Volcano.** Woods, Don. A Hawaiian adventure rich in danger and suspense. Three siblings become trapped in a volcano. Blue Sky Press, 2008.

**Cardboard.** TenNapel, Doug. A cardboard box is the worst birthday present ever, but Cam uses it to create a cardboard man. When the creature magically comes to life, the neighbourhood bully gets involved and sets a course for destruction. Characters are complex and the art is fascinating. GRAPHIX 2012.

**Friends with Boys.** Hicks, Faith Erin. A homeschooled girl has enough trouble adapting to middle school even without the melancholy ghost who has followed her since childhood. First Second, 2012.

**Primates: the Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Birute Galdikas.** Brief but engaging look at the three women brought together by Louis Leakey to study chimpanzees. (First Second, 2013).

**T-Minus.** Ottaviani, Jim. In graphic novel format, presents the story of two world superpowers racing to land a man on the moon, and the people who worked on the project. Aladdin, 2009.

**The Storm in the Barn.** Phelan, Matt. The dust bowl setting comes alive in this richly visual story set in 1930's Kansas. A young boy discovers that the shadowy figure lurking in the barn is really the rain. Winner of the Scott O'Dell award for Historical Fiction.

**The Unsinkable Walker Bean.** A young boy is caught up in an ancient curse that sends him to face pirates and sea-witches in an enticing high seas adventure. (First Second, 2010)

**The Invention of Hugo Cabaret** . Selznick, Brian. Technically a huge picture book, owing to its separate text and illustrations. The award-winning, 550 page adventure tells of an orphan who hides in a train station in 1930's Paris and guards his father's secret contraption. Now a major film.

**Rapunzel's Revenge.** Hale, Shannon and Dean Hale. The classic "Damsel in Distress" tale reinvented. Rapunzel escapes confinement, tricks her handsome rescuer, and discovers a wild west world of outlaws and dust outside the castle walls. Highly engaging example of a fractured fairy tale. A second book called **Calamity Jack** is equally appealing.

**Who is AC?** Larson, Hope. A teenage superhero gets her powers through her cell phone and must battle evil powers that travel through cyberspace. Thought-provoking. (Antheum, 2013)

## Recommended Graphic Novels (Gr. 9–12)

**Anya's Ghost.** Brosgol, Vera. A Russian-immigrant teen is desperate to fit in at her new boarding school. She befriends a ghost but soon realizes her new friend's motives are sinister and frightening. Spooky and gripping with themes of self-acceptance.

**The Arrival.** Shaun Tan. A Wordless telling of an immigrant's first experiences in a new world. Captures the complexity of the experience with emotional depth and prompts avid discussions about imagery. Poignant in a nation built by immigrants.

**The Eternal Smile: Three Stories.** Yan, Gene Luen & Derek Kirk Kim. Three distinct stories explore themes of fantasy and how we use it to escape the drudgery of our everyday lives. Fascinating art stylized to match the setting and theme. Rich opportunity for discussion with its hidden layers and use of satire.

**Castle Waiting.** Medley, Linda. Rich in Medieval imagery with an entertaining and imaginative cast of Characters. Set in Sleeping Beauty's Castle after she wakes up and runs off with her Prince, leaving three loyal subjects who turn the Castle into something of a refuge for those in need.

**Essex County.** Lemire, Jeff. Rural Canada comes alive with these poignant stories of a small town and the struggles of the families who live there. Top Shelf, 2009.

**Garage Band.** Gipi. Four boys from dysfunctional families come together in a band and contemplate a theft in order to replace broken equipment. Expressive art and complex characters. A Nazi-obsessed character will warrant discussion. Positive reviews from School Library Journal, with an age recommendation of Gr. 8 up. (First Second 2008).

**Maus.** Spiegelman, Art. Must-read graphic biography (Pulitzer Prize winner). The author illustrates the story of his father, a Holocaust survivor using mice to represent the Jews and Cats to represent the Nazis.

**Mercury.** Larson, Hope. Two interconnected stories: Tara, whose Nova Scotia family home has just burnt down, and Josey, Tara's ancestor who was courted by a gold prospector. The stories merge as Tara chooses to search for the gold rumoured to be hidden on the property. Magical realism & a coming of age story. (Atheneum, 2010)

**Northwest Passage.** Chantler, Scott. A James Fenimore Cooper-styled thriller set in remote Rupert's Land, circa 1755. An English-run trading post commanded is overrun in a vicious sneak attack by French mercenaries looking to get rich off the fur trade. Oni Press, 2010.

**Notes for A War Story.** Gipi. Like Stassen's powerful *Deogratias, a Tale of Rwanda* (Roaring Brook, 2006), Gipi reveals the susceptible nature of teenagers during wartime. Highly recommended by School Library Journal for Gr. 11 up.

**Persepolis. v. 1** Satrapi, Marjane (graphic memoir). Recounts the author's life in Tehran during the Ayatollah's revolution. Simple graphics, engaging narrative, and an important look at another culture (Pantheon, 2004).

**The Professor's Daughter** Guibert, Emmanuel. Highly effective art and a tongue-in-cheek plot bring Victorian London to life in this story of a tumultuous courtship between a mummified Imhotep IV and an Egyptologists daughter.

**Stitches.** David Small. Award-winning children's illustrator tells the story of his horrific childhood in a dysfunctional family, and the surgery that left his vocal cords maimed. Disturbing yet told in a powerfully detached manner- a survival story some teens will relish.

**American Born Chinese.** Yang, Gene Luen. 3 engaging stories featuring Chinese-American characters whose experiences connect in a surprising way. Opens cultural discussion and explores themes related to racism, shame and friendship. Winner of the prestigious Printz award for young adult Literature. **F Lue**

#### **Darwin**

**The Plain Janes.** Castellucci, Cecilia. When Jane moves to the suburbs she joins a group of outcasts- all named Jane. They start a secret art club and cause a stir with random displays of public art. Some stereotypical characters, but the main characters and themes are well developed. (DC Comics, 2007)

**Pride of Baghdad,** Vaughan, Brian. Inspired by true events during the Iraqi war. A pride of Lions escapes from the zoo and contemplates the issue freedom at price of security. Allegorical tale with rich, beautiful imagery. (DC Comics), 2006

**The Photographer: Into War-Torn Afghanistan.** Guibert, Emmanuel. Documentary graphic novel describing photojournalist Didier Lefefre's 1986 journey through war-torn Afghanistan, traveling with Doctor's without Borders. (First-Second, 2009)

**V for Vendetta,** Moore, Alan. Set in a totalitarian England, where a lone bomber is bent on destroying the government's grip on society. Lends itself well to classroom study and discussion. Some violence and slight nudity that School Library Journal describes as "fitting well with the Story". There are also numerous examples of classroom use with this title. Parallels to Orwell's 1984.

## **Graphic Novels in the AB Social Studies "Literature Connections" Documents**

<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/sslc/html/index.html>

**Gr. 7: Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography.** Brown, Chester. Captures the events leading up to the Red River Resistance and Second Métis Uprising. Building of the CPR, immigration policies, and of course Riel's execution are all covered. The research is evident in the detailed endnotes provided.

**Gr. 8: The Yellow Jar: Two Tales from Japanese Tradition. v. 1.** Atangan, Patrick. Two stories from Japanese tradition, exploring the themes of perseverance, individuality and equality (NBM Publications, 2004).

**Gr. 8: Mesoamerican Myths.** West, David. Three myths are told in graphic format, representing Aztec, Mayan and Mexican Indian. The myths contain some violence (such as beheading), making for some bloody scenes (Rosen Publications, 2006)

**Gr. 8: Elizabeth I : The Life of England's Renaissance Queen.** Shone, Rob. Highlights key events and conditions during her reign, as well as the focus on arts and social reform that shaped the future. Includes historical notes, maps, images. Rosen Central, 2004.

**Gr.9 The Wall.** Sis, Peter. The author tells his story of growing up in Czechoslovakia alongside a timeline of events from the cold war, ending up in the fall of the Wall. Provides insight into growing up in a harsh totalitarian regime (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

**Gr. 9: The Arrival.** Tan, Shaun. Wordless graphic novel depicting a man leaving his family to immigrate to a new world. The pictures are fantastical and bizarre, but readers come to understand that this confusion is not unlike that experienced by many who arrive in a totally new country (Arthur A. Levine Books, 2006).

**10-1, 10-2: Persepolis.** Satrapi, Marjane (graphic memoir). Recounts the author's life in Tehran during the Ayatollah's revolution. Simple graphics, engaging narrative, and an important look at another culture. Good for discussions on identity, human rights and marginalization (Pantheon, 2004).

**10-1, 10-2, 10-4: Sticks and Stones.** Kuper, Peter. Short, wordless graphic novel. A Stone Giant demands the allegiance of all around him. He conquers the nearby wood civilization and plunders its resources, until he is met with resistance and eventual demise. Well-suited to discussions on imperialism and marginalization (Three Rivers Press, 2004)

**10-1: Alia's Mission: Saving the Books of Iraq.** Stamaty, Mark Allan. Briefly tells the story of Alia, the Librarian at the Basra Central Library, and how she smuggled out 3/4 of the 40,000 book collection before the library was bombed in the 2003 war on Iraq (Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

**20-1 Maus.** Spiegelman, Art. Must-read graphic biography (Pulitzer Prize winner- the only graphic novel to receive this honour). The author illustrates the story of his father, a Holocaust survivor, representing the Nazis as cats and the Jewish people as mice. For mature readers (Knopf Doubleday, 1986).

**20-1, 20-2, 20-4 The Wall.** Sis, Peter. The author tells his story of growing up in Czechoslovakia alongside a timeline of events from the cold war, ending up in the fall of the Wall. Provides insight into growing up in a harsh totalitarian regime (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

**30-1 & 30-2: Laika.** Abadzis, Nick. The beautiful and heartbreaking story of the stray dog that became part of the Russian Space Program, and was never intended to return. Explores the bond between humans and animals and captures a small piece of the Soviet era. (First Second, 2007)

**30-1 & 30-2: Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea.** Delisle, Guy. A French-Canadian cartoonist spent two months in Korea in 2001 to supervise the production of a television show. He documents his experiences with humour, yet conveys the bleakness of this totalitarian society (Drawn & Quarterly, 2005).

**30-1 & 30-2: Escape From East Berlin.** Downey, Glen R. Follows the story of a desperate mother and her two children as they try to escape over the Berlin Wall in 1963. Supplementary text and maps. Note: There are violent scenes. (Rubicon Publications, 2007).

Compiled by Beth Cormier, Faculty of Education Curriculum Lab. Updated 2014.