Comic book lesson plans for elementary school

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Six comic lesson plans for grades 2–5, each a one-page plan and a student sheet: parts of a comic, a 4-panel retell, sequencing, sound words, a report, manga.

Peabody's classroom comic kit has six lesson plans for grades 2 to 5. Each one prints on two pages: a plan for the teacher on one page, then one student sheet. They cover the parts of a comic, a four-panel retell, sequencing, sound words, a graphic novel book report and reading manga right to left. The kit is free through the end of 2026, with no sign-in, and the student sheets print blank.

Comic sites sell lesson libraries to schools. These are our own, written to run in one class period with a pencil and a printer.

The six lessons

- Lesson: The parts of a comic · Grades: 2–5 · Time: 30–40 min · The student sheet: Label six numbered parts on a comic page
- Lesson: A 4-panel retell · Grades: 2–4 · Time: 40–45 min · The student sheet: A planner: sketch four moments, one line under each
- Lesson: Sequencing: panels in order · Grades: 2–5 · Time: 35–45 min · The student sheet: Six steps to draw, cut apart and swap
- Lesson: Sound words and onomatopoeia · Grades: 2–5 · Time: 30–40 min · The student sheet: A table: the word, what made it, the word drawn
- Lesson: A comic book report · Grades: 2–5 · Time: 45 min, or two short sessions · The student sheet: A graphic novel book report template
- Lesson: Reading right to left (manga) · Grades: 3–5 · Time: 30 min · The student sheet: Number the panels in comic order, then manga order

Every plan has the same parts: a goal, materials, numbered steps, a quick check at the end, a line of extra help, a stretch for students who finish early, and the standards it touches, listed by their public Common Core codes (for example CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7).

What each lesson does

The parts of a comic. Students learn six words: panel, gutter, speech bubble, thought bubble, caption and sound word. The class finds each on one page shown large. Students label a sheet, check it with a partner, then glue a cut-out bubble onto a blank strip and say which part it is. The check is quick: point at a part, and students hold up its number on their fingers.

A 4-panel retell. After a story read in class, the question is: if you had only four pictures, which four would you pick? The class lists every moment and circles four, a start, a problem, the

biggest moment and the end. Leaving things out is the hard part, and the lesson says so. Partners retell the story from each other's planners. If a partner gets lost, a panel is missing.

Sequencing. Pairs get an envelope of cut-up panels from one short strip and put it back in order, whispering their reasons. The class shares the clues: where a character stands, what changes in the background, words like "then" and "after". Each student then draws six steps of something they know well, like making toast or a seed growing, cuts them apart, and swaps.

Sound words. The teacher makes three sounds (a clap, a tap, a crumple) and the class spells them. There is no one right spelling. Students look at how comics draw a crash or a drip, then fill a table and invent one new sound word for something nobody has named yet.

A comic book report. Students bring a graphic novel they have finished. The template asks for the title, the author and illustrator, the series and book number, a favourite panel redrawn their own way, who is in it, what happened, and one last question: would you read the next one? Yes, no or maybe, and why.

Reading right to left. A student is handed a right-to-left manga and asked to open it to page one. The class watches what happens, then works out why. The sheet has the same page layout twice: number it in comic order, then in manga order. The plan includes the answer key.

Printing a class set

The templates the lessons use come from our printable comic templates, and each plan lists which ones to print. Every lesson page has a button that prints the student sheet alone. In the print box, set the copies to 30 for a class set, and keep the size at 100%.

Nothing about a student is typed, kept or sent. The sheets print blank, and names go on with a pencil.

Before the lesson

Students who have never read a comic closely may need the words first. Our parts of a comic page draws a page and names ten parts, from panel to splash panel, with each one read aloud. For the manga lesson, the manga starter path walks a child through it in five steps. And if a class wants to talk about what kind of book they are reading, comic, graphic novel or manga sets out the difference.

Students who finish early can make a comic in the Comic Studio, which needs no account and keeps the comic on the device.

Questions grown-ups ask

What grades are the comic lesson plans for?

Grades 2 to 5. Four lessons fit all of grades 2 to 5, the four-panel retell is for grades 2 to 4, and the manga lesson is for grades 3 to 5. Each lesson has a line of extra help and a stretch, so one plan can work across a mixed class.

How long does each comic lesson take?

Between 30 and 45 minutes. The book report can be split into two short sessions.

Do the lessons list standards?

Yes. Each plan names the Common Core standards it touches by their public codes, such as CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7. We list the codes only, not the standards' words.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026. Our library has stories for every reader in a class, including the very first ones.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/comic-book-lesson-plans-elementary