



Bridging thought/speech, reading and writing across the curriculum for EAL learners at different stages in their acquisition of English

Creating comics using Comic Life 3 <https://plasq.com>

Jenkins (1994) asserts that *'reading can have an effect on writing...studies by Heard (1989) and Harwayne (1992) indicate that student writing is affected by instruction in the use of reading material as a writing model.'*

*'Creating comics in the classroom provides an opportunity to integrate visual thinking and verbal thinking skills, and thus build on students' strengths in each area to develop their strengths in the other', Combs (2003).*

*'In 2009, CBP was implemented in Imperial Valley, California through a grant from the US Department of Education. Imperial County--with one of the highest rates of English language learners and highest rates of unemployment in the US--used CBP as a tool for building English proficiency and overall academic skills. An independent evaluation showed that students who participated in CBP demonstrated significant gains in their test scores', (Comic Book Project, 2009)*

## Introduction

Some initial considerations – why comics?

Comics:

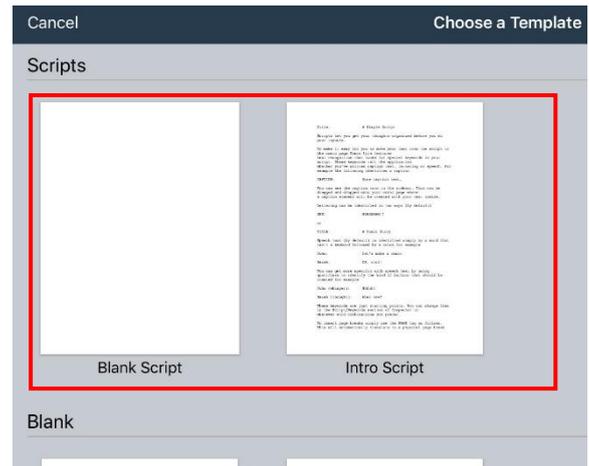
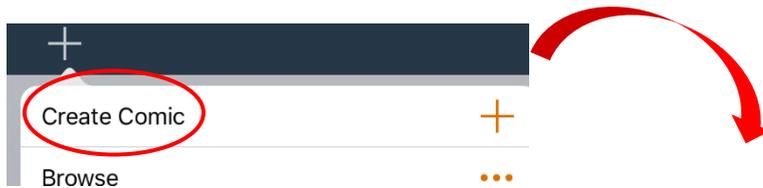
- often transcend cultural boundaries
- can augment the interdependent nature of reading and writing
- can be created in any language
- exhibit strong 'narratives', whether fiction or non-fiction
- require pupils to consider characterisation, setting and plot
- provide a link between thought/speech and the written word
- can be related to any curriculum area

Comics provide a framework into which images and short chunks of text can be placed to support wider learning in any curriculum context. A comic could, for example, be based on a scene from a book or play, a current event or a scene drawn from a historical context. Equally, the comic could be non-fiction, like an information text or a news report. It could combine features of narrative within a non-fiction framework – for example, characters discussing the pros and cons of nuclear energy.

Comic creation supports reluctant writers and/or those who struggle to write cohesively and at length. Captions that set the scene and accentuate the visuals necessarily only require short phrases or single sentences. Chunks of language composed within speech and thought bubbles have a more direct connection with thinking and direct speech. In both cases this supports emergent writers of EAL.

Comics can also act as a bridge to more formal prose where some of the language and content can be 'rehearsed' in a more accessible framework first. Pupils could share their creations with peers, providing another opportunity to revisit curriculum content and model language pertinent to the genre and text-type.

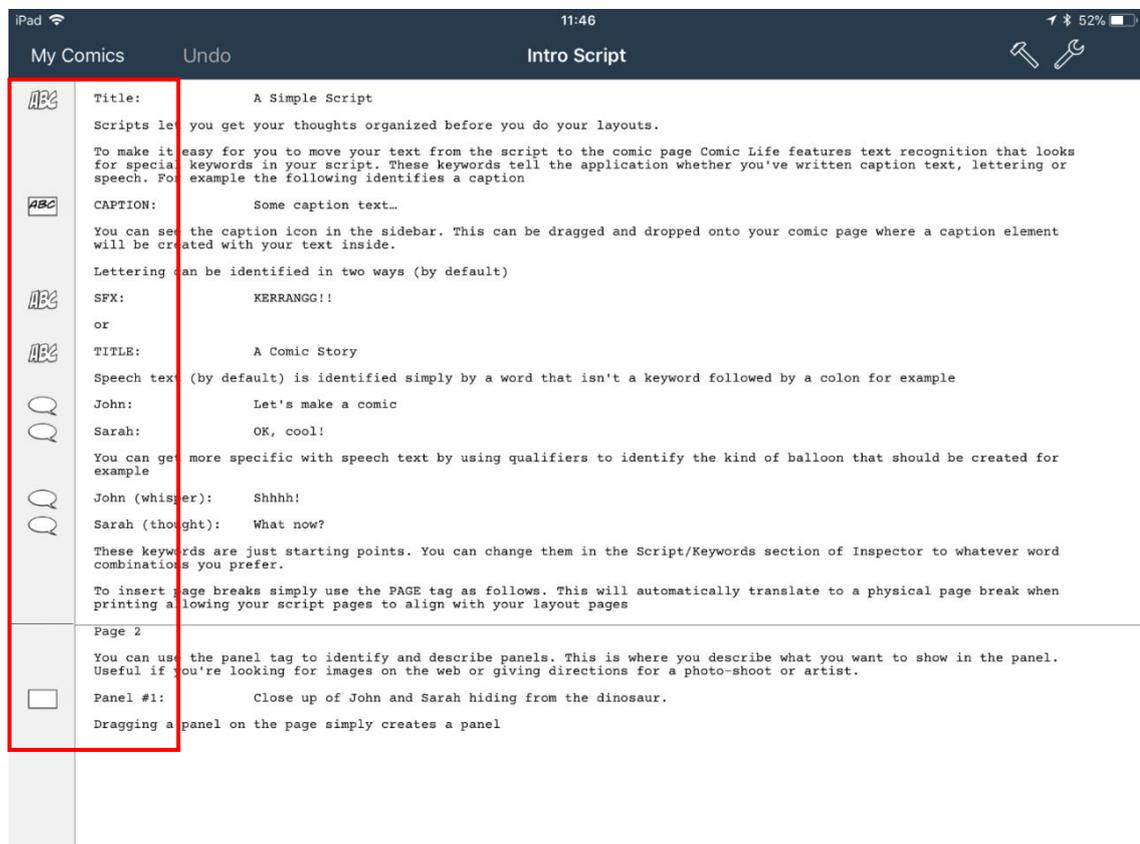
## Script editor



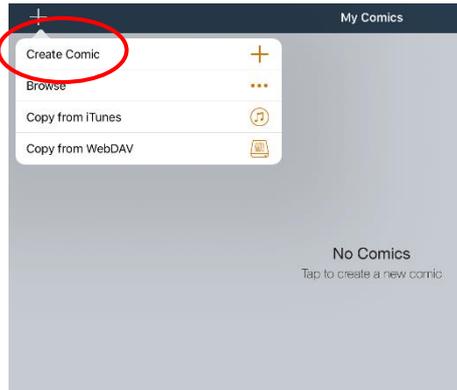
The script editor is not a requirement for producing a new comic. However, it is a perfect tool to help design the layout of a new comic creation. This could be done in any language initially and then copied into a new project and translated into English. For those beyond new-to English (EAL learners in EAL Bands B and above) could develop in English-only (or a combination of English and L1).

The script editor helps cement the relationship between thinking/talking and composing short chunks of language. It is a way to support writing for individuals who are not quite ready for extensive prose. The script editor encourages narrative flow and a written layout like a playscript. Specific mark-up language (indicated below in the red rectangle) needs to be observed so that when the script is used as the basis of a new project the various entities are created on screen via drag-and-drop interactions.

Scripts can be saved, copied into new projects or exported, providing an assessment opportunity. Scripts could also be critiqued by peers/practitioners and redrafted if needed.

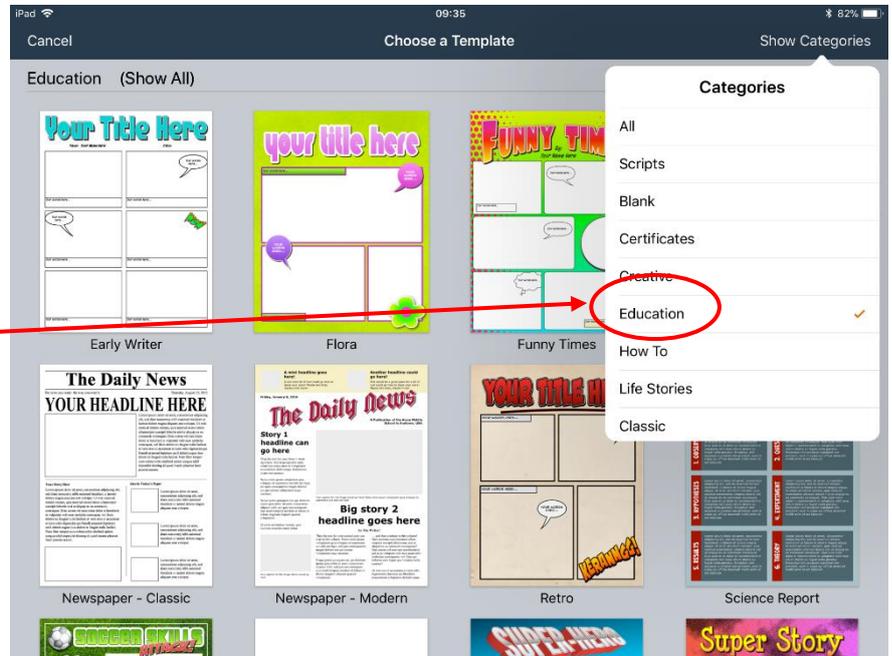


# Getting started

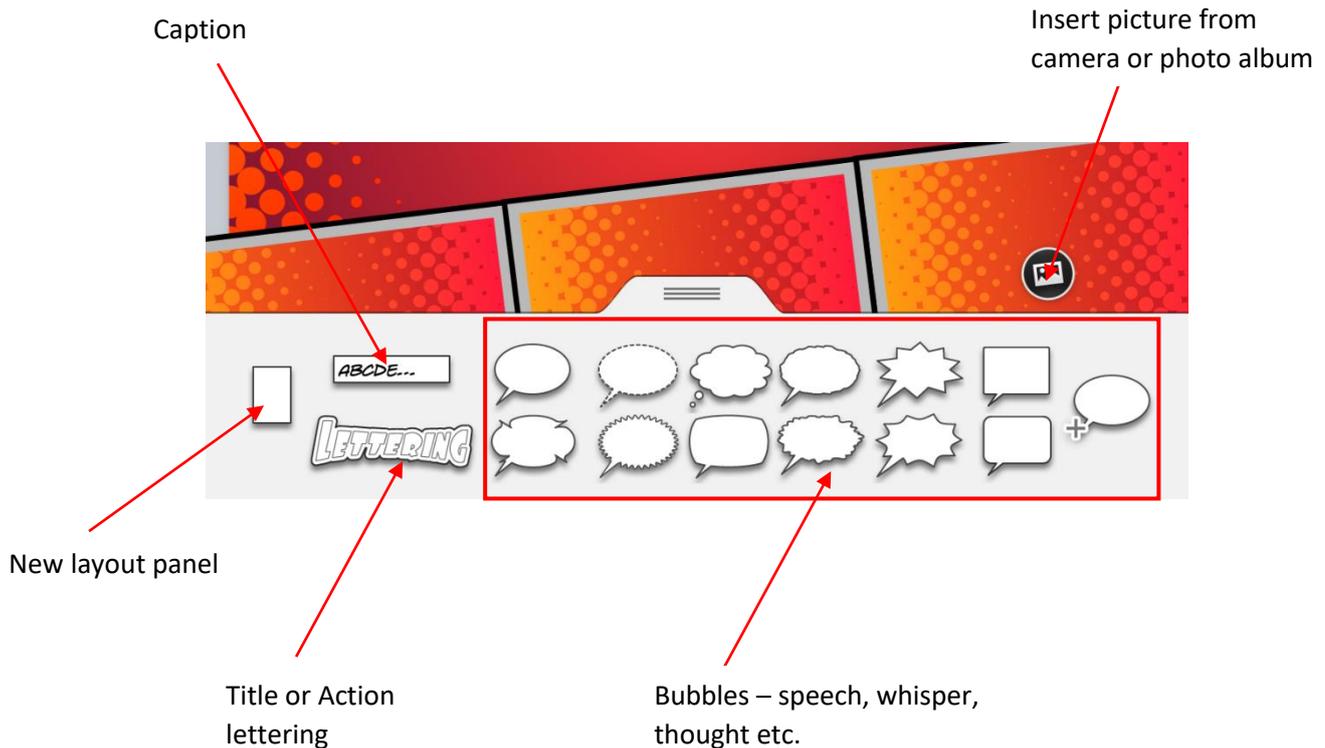


To start, click 'Create comic' and then choose from a blank comic, a script (as above) or a template layout (as below)

You can filter templates according to a category like 'Education'



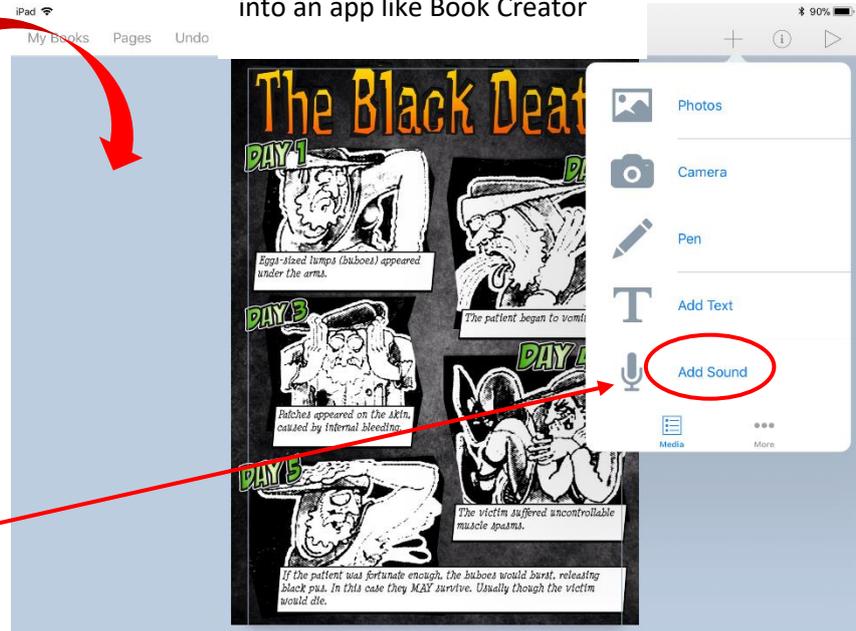
## A choice of tools to develop visual literacy and support writing



# Taking it further – incorporating sound via ‘app smashing’ and other technologies

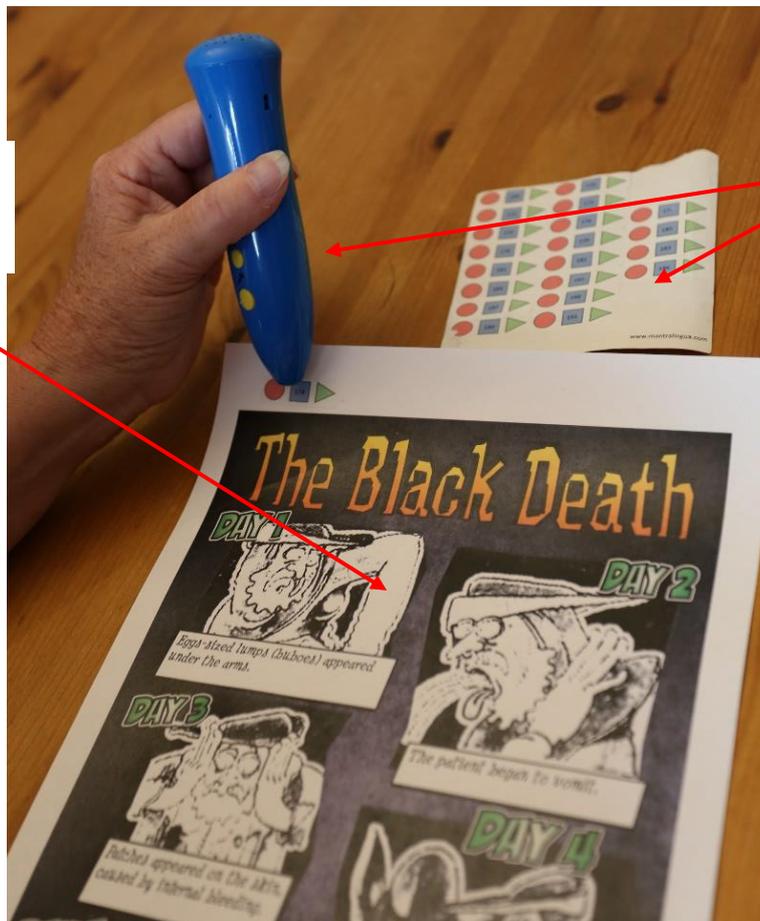


Export the comic and open it into an app like Book Creator



Here you could add audio accompaniment if you so wish

Print out the page(s) of your comic



Record audio using Mantra Lingua's TalkingPEN and associate the recording with Talking Stickers

Comics could be shared with peers for reading and listening to the audio accompaniment

## Links

Book Creator - <https://bookcreator.com>

Mantra Lingua's TalkingPEN - <https://uk.mantralingua.com/products/penpal>

## References

The Comic Book Project (Research Report)

<http://www.comicbookproject.org/picts/usdoe%20report.pdf>

Combs, J. (2023) Creating Comics: Visual and Verbal Thinking in the Ultimate Show and Tell.

[https://www.academia.edu/26025163/Creating\\_Comics\\_Visual\\_and\\_Verbal\\_Thinking\\_in\\_the\\_Ultimate\\_Show\\_and\\_Tell](https://www.academia.edu/26025163/Creating_Comics_Visual_and_Verbal_Thinking_in_the_Ultimate_Show_and_Tell)

Jenkins, L. (1994) The Reading-Writing Connection in the Comic Book Genre: A Case Study of Three Young Writers. Unpublished Master of Education Project, University of British Columbia, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED369070)