

## Exploring **Text Features** in Graphic Novels

***This reading activity works with graphic "novels"—fiction and nonfiction—that you may have in your ebook library.***

### ***Looking at the elements of graphic novels to understand and create stories.***

Log into VIA from a computer connected to a projector and find a graphic novel in your ebook collection. Together with students, identify the components of a graphic story listed below. Then have students log in and read a graphic novel, looking for examples of each feature, such as panels, pictures, speech bubbles, captions, and sound and action words. Students should also look for elements of nonfiction if they are reading nonfiction in graphic format.

#### ***Features in graphic formats:***

- Panel: a picture box that tells one frame of the story.
- Pictures: the graphic portion of the panel—the actual picture.
- Word boxes: the boxes that tell the reader what is happening in the panel or that give background information, much as a caption would tell about a photo or illustration.
- Speech bubbles: the usually oval-shaped text containers that normally connect to an individual pictured in the frame. While dialogue, or spoken language, is commonly connected to the individual with a line, a thought may be connected to the person with a series of smaller bubbles.
- Sound and action words: usually appear within the picture itself. Common sound and action words include *screech*, *eek*, *click*, *crash*, and *pow*.

Some graphic nonfiction books may contain elements of nonfiction, such as maps, diagrams, and labels. There might be a glossary and/or resources to further explore the topic.

Talk with your class about how all the elements of a graphic story work together. If something were to be omitted, the story would be incomplete.

Have students use the accompanying template or this [Comic Creator](#) to create a story in graphic format—kind of like a comic strip. Encourage them to use all the features they can to create a complete story—real or invented.