

# Lesson Plan: From Page to Panel - Visual Storytelling in *\*Buzz\**

**Subject:** Graphic Novel Study / English Language Arts / Visual Arts

**Student:** Kamie (Age 16)

**Text:** *Buzz* by Samuel Sattin and Rye Hickman

**Focus:** This lesson moves beyond reading comprehension to focus on the creative analysis and application of visual storytelling techniques used in graphic novels. Kamie will analyze how the creators of *Buzz* convey theme and emotion through art and then create her own comic page to demonstrate her understanding.

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## Materials Needed

- A copy of the graphic novel *Buzz* by Samuel Sattin.
  - Plain white paper or a sketchbook.
  - Pencils and erasers for sketching.
  - Fine-tipped black pens or markers for inking.
  - Colored pencils, markers, or watercolors (Kamie's choice).
  - Optional: A tablet with a drawing app if Kamie prefers digital art.
  - A notebook or journal for written reflections.
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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Kamie will be able to:

1. **Analyze** how visual elements (like panel layout, color, and character design) work with text to create meaning and evoke emotion in *Buzz*.
  2. **Apply** these visual storytelling techniques by scripting and illustrating a one-page comic based on a key moment or theme from the novel.
  3. **Justify** her creative choices, connecting them to the techniques used by the author and artist of *Buzz*.
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## Lesson Activities (Approx. 90 minutes)

### Part 1: The Spark - Warm-Up (10 minutes)

The main character, Webster, struggles with feeling like an outcast even before he starts turning into a fly. This story is about transformation and identity.

- **Journal Prompt:** In your notebook, respond to the following question: "If you had to represent your current mood or a strong emotion (like anxiety, excitement, or frustration) using only shapes and colors instead of words, what would it look like? Sketch it out and write a few sentences explaining your choices."
  - **Discussion:** Briefly discuss how artists can tell a story or show a feeling without any words at
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all. This sets the stage for analyzing the artwork in *Buzz*.

## Part 2: Visual Deconstruction - Guided Analysis (20 minutes)

Together, let's become art detectives. We will analyze a specific two-page spread from *Buzz*. A great choice is **pages 46-47**, where Webster's transformation is becoming more pronounced in the bathroom mirror.

As you look at these pages, consider and discuss the following questions:

- **Panel Layout:** How are the panels arranged on the page? Are they all neat squares, or are they different shapes and sizes? What might the jagged or overlapping panels tell us about Webster's state of mind?
- **Color Palette:** What colors dominate the scene? How do the colors shift from the "real world" to what Webster sees in the mirror? What emotions do these colors (like the sickly greens and dark shadows) make you feel?
- **Character Expression & Body Language:** Look closely at Webster's face and posture. How does the artist, Rye Hickman, show his fear and confusion without using many words? Compare his posture to the other students on the page.
- **Text and Image:** How do the thought bubbles ("I'm a monster") work with the images? Would the scene be as powerful with just the text, or just the images? Why?

**Goal:** The goal here is to articulate *how* the creative team uses the graphic novel format to enhance the story's themes of anxiety and monstrous transformation.

## Part 3: The Creator's Studio - Main Activity (45 minutes)

Now it's your turn to be the storyteller! Your task is to create a **new, one-page comic** inspired by *Buzz*. This is not about recreating a page, but about adding to the story's world.

**Choose ONE of the following creative prompts:**

1. **The Unseen Scene:** Find a moment in the book that is described in the text but not shown in a detailed panel. For example, Webster's internal thoughts during a specific class, or a moment of kindness from his friend Emily. Create a full-page comic that brings this unseen moment to life.
2. **A Different Perspective:** Re-imagine a key scene from the book (like the dodgeball game or a confrontation with the bullies) from another character's point of view. How would the bully, Trip, see the events? Or Webster's dad? The panel layouts and colors should reflect *their* emotional perspective.
3. **The Next Chapter:** Imagine a scene that could happen immediately after the book ends. What does Webster's "new normal" look like? Illustrate a one-page snapshot of his life post-transformation.

**Follow these steps:**

1. **Script:** On a separate piece of paper, quickly write out the dialogue and any captions for your page. Keep it simple!
2. **Thumbnail Sketch:** On another piece of paper, draw 3-4 small, rough versions of your page layout. Experiment with different panel shapes and sizes to find the most effective one for your scene's mood.
3. **Pencil & Ink:** Draw your final page in pencil, focusing on character expressions and details. Once you are happy with it, go over the lines in black pen or marker.
4. **Color:** Add color using your chosen materials. Think back to our analysis—how can your color choices add to the emotion of your scene?

## Part 4: Artist's Statement - Wrap-Up & Assessment (15 minutes)

To conclude the lesson, present your finished comic page. As you share it, explain the creative choices you made. This is your "Artist's Statement."

**Address these questions in your explanation:**

- Why did you choose this particular scene or prompt?
  - How did you use panel layout to control the pacing or feeling of the scene?
  - Explain your color choices. How do they reflect the mood or the character's perspective?
  - Which specific technique from *Buzz* (that we discussed or that you noticed on your own) did you try to incorporate into your own work?
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## Assessment

Kamie's understanding will be assessed based on:

- **The Comic Page:** Assessed for its thoughtful application of graphic novel conventions (paneling, color, expression), not just artistic skill. The goal is clear communication of an idea or emotion.
- **The Artist's Statement:** Assessed on her ability to clearly and confidently justify her creative choices, connecting them back to her analysis of *Buzz*. This demonstrates a deep and transferable understanding of visual literacy.

## Differentiation & Extension

- **For Support:** If the one-page comic feels overwhelming, the goal can be modified to a single, powerful panel that captures one key moment or emotion.
- **For Challenge:** Create a three-page sequence instead of a single page, focusing on how to build tension or emotion across multiple pages. Or, write a short analysis comparing the visual style of *Buzz* to another graphic novel she has read.