

# Lesson Plan: Visualizing the "Buzz" in Graphic Storytelling

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

**Book:** *Buzzing* by Samuel Sattin and Rye Hickman

**Student:** Kamie (Age 16, Homeschool)

**Time Allotment:** 90 minutes (can be split into two 45-minute sessions)

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## Materials Needed:

- A copy of the graphic novel *Buzzing* by Samuel Sattin
  - Sketchbook or several sheets of blank paper (8.5" x 11" or larger)
  - Pencils and erasers
  - Fine-point black pens or markers (like Micron pens)
  - Colored pencils, markers, or watercolors (Kamie's choice of medium)
  - Optional: A ruler for drawing panel borders
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## 1. Learning Objectives

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

- **Analyze** how visual elements (like color, line style, and panel layout) are used in a graphic novel to represent a character's internal emotional state.
- **Articulate** the central themes of the novel, including neurodiversity, friendship, and self-acceptance, using specific visual and textual evidence from the book.
- **Create** a one-page, multi-panel comic that visually expresses a personal feeling, emotion, or abstract concept, applying techniques observed in *Buzzing*.

## 2. Lesson Activities & Procedure

### Part 1: The Hook & Analysis (Approx. 30 minutes)

#### 1. Opening Discussion (5 minutes):

- Start with a simple question: "Think about a time you felt a strong emotion that was hard to describe with words—like excitement, anxiety, or pure focus. If you had to draw that feeling, what would it look like? What colors or shapes come to mind?"
- Connect this to the main character, Isaac, and the central concept of "the Buzz." How does he experience the world differently?

#### 2. Visual Detective Work (25 minutes):

- Together, turn to a few key pages in *Buzzing* where Isaac's "buzz" is visually represented (e.g., pages where the world shifts, the lettering changes, or the panels become chaotic).
  - **Guided Questions for Analysis:**
    - "Look at the color palette on this page versus the one before it. What does the shift from muted tones to bright, electric colors tell us about what Isaac is feeling?"
    - "How does the artist, Rye Hickman, use lines? Are they smooth and controlled, or jagged and energetic? What does this choice communicate?"
    - "Notice the panel borders. When are they clean and rectangular, and when do they
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break, overlap, or disappear entirely? Why do you think the artist made that choice at that specific moment in the story?"

- "How does the lettering for Isaac's thoughts or the 'buzzing' sound effects differ from the regular dialogue? What effect does that have on you as the reader?"
- Kamie should jot down some notes or sketch small examples of these techniques in her sketchbook. This becomes her "visual toolbox."

## Part 2: Creative Application (Approx. 45 minutes)

### 1. Brainstorming Your "Buzz" (10 minutes):

- **The Task:** "Your goal is to create a one-page, wordless (or nearly wordless) comic of 3-6 panels that visualizes an internal feeling. It doesn't have to be anxiety; it could be creativity, focus, calmness, frustration, or the feeling of getting lost in a good book or video game."
- Kamie will choose her concept and brainstorm visual ideas. Ask prompting questions:
  - What is the "color" of this feeling?
  - What is its "texture" (spiky, smooth, gooey, electric)?
  - How would it change the world around a character? Would things get wavy, sharp, blurry, or hyper-detailed?
  - How would you show the transition into and out of this feeling over several panels?

### 2. Creating the One-Page Comic (35 minutes):

- Kamie will now plan and draw her one-page comic. Encourage her to use the techniques from her "visual toolbox."
- **Steps for Kamie:**
  1. Lightly sketch out the panel layout first. Will they be uniform, or will their shape and size help tell the story?
  2. Sketch the character and the background, focusing on how the "feeling" visually manifests.
  3. Ink the important lines with a fine-point black pen.
  4. Add color purposefully to enhance the emotion. Think about the color theory discussed during the analysis of *Buzzing*.

## Part 3: Share & Reflect (Approx. 15 minutes)

### 1. Author's Chair:

- Kamie shares her comic page and explains her creative choices.
- **Guiding Questions for Reflection:**
  - "Walk me through your panels. What story are you telling about this feeling?"
  - "Which visual technique from *Buzzing* did you find most helpful or inspiring to use in your own work?"
  - "After creating your own visual representation of a feeling, do you have a new appreciation for how the creators of *Buzzing* tackled Isaac's story?"
  - "In what ways does this kind of visual storytelling help us understand and empathize with experiences that aren't our own, like Isaac's experience with Tourette's?"

## 3. Assessment (Formative & Creative)

Kamie's learning will be assessed based on:

- **Class Discussion:** Her ability to identify and explain the visual techniques used in *Buzzing* during the analysis portion of the lesson.
- **One-Page Comic (Primary Assessment):** The comic will be evaluated not on artistic perfection, but on the thoughtful application of graphic novel storytelling techniques.
  - **Clarity of Concept:** Is the chosen emotion or feeling clearly communicated visually?
  - **Use of Visuals:** Did she intentionally use color, line, and/or panel structure to convey

the feeling?

- **Creativity & Effort:** Does the comic show creative thought and purposeful design choices?

#### 4. Extension & Differentiation

- **For Deeper Thematic Study:** Research the real-life experiences of people with Tourette's Syndrome. How does Samuel Sattin's own experience, which inspired the book, align with or differ from other accounts? Write a short reflection.
- **For Advanced Creative Work:** Expand the one-page comic into a three-page short story that gives the feeling more context, showing what triggers it and how the character navigates it.
- **For Media Comparison:** Watch a short animated film that visualizes emotions (e.g., scenes from Pixar's *Inside Out*) and compare the techniques used in animation to those used in the static medium of a graphic novel.