



LESSON CONTENT TEMPLATE

 <p>Erasmus+</p>	<p>Project funded by: Erasmus+ / Key Action 2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Knowledge Alliances.</p>
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1. Comic Course

Topic 1___Lesson _2

Name: From strip to page

Obectives

In this lesson, we will learn and understand the functionality of composition, the use of the grid as a narrative tool

To understand

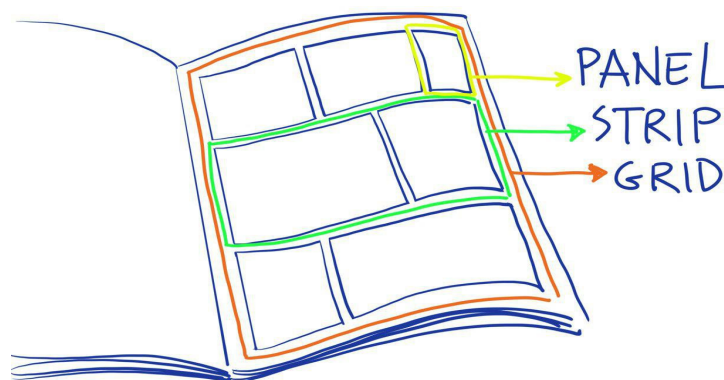
Let's give some definitions of a comic's elements

Panel is the single box, rectangular or square, which contains image and text together.

Strip is the set of several panels, from a minimum of two to a maximum of X (depending on the size of the page) arranged on the same horizontal line.

Grid is the composition of several strips within the page.

The grid has several compositional possibilities, it can have 6 panels, on three strips or 8 on four strips, or even two panels, one on top of the other.



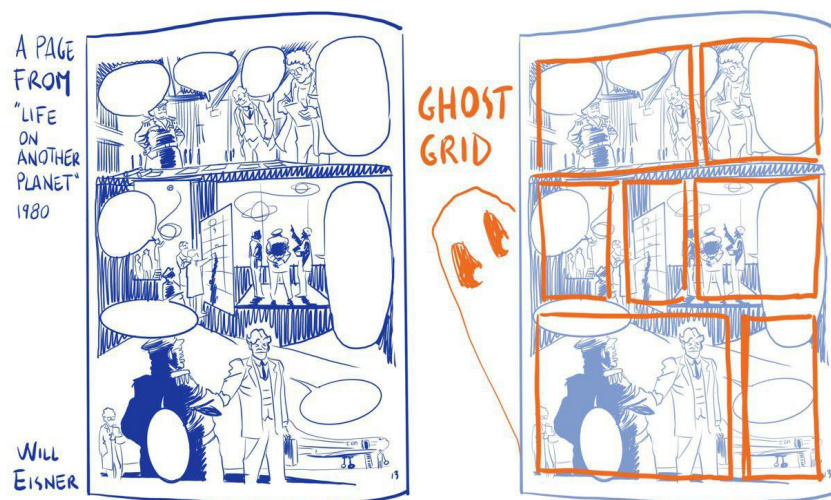
An example: Publishers have often imposed standards, both in the formats and obviously in the grid, in order to maintain maximum clarity and reach the widest possible audience.

This is the case of the Italian company Sergio Bonelli Editore, which invented a six-panel grid, influencing the entire Italian market. A standard grid that was created not by choice but by technical requirements related to printing.

Ghost grid

The master Will Eisner showed how there are no rigid rules on grid composition, the important thing is clarity in communication. Despite the absolute freedom and lack of defined contours for the panels, legibility is not lost. This is because there is a kind of "ghost" grid imprinted in the minds of authors and readers; another element of their secret pact. Looking closer we can see that there are seven panels on the page, arranged in three strips.

Eisner was the precursor of the American school of comics, which often moves into the territory of the ghost grid. Especially with the use of images that come out of the panel frame.



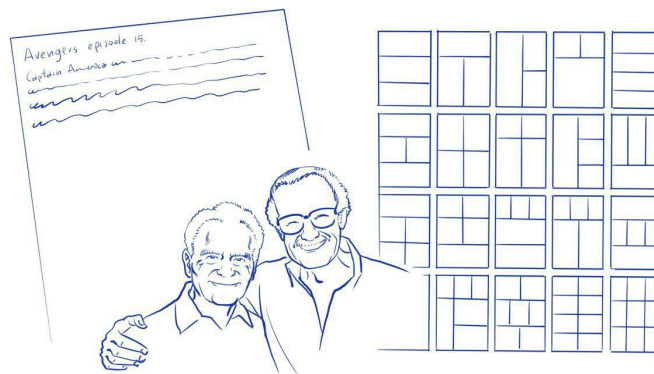
The Marvel method

In the 1960s, the duo Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, within the well-known American publishing house Marvel comics, produced countless stories a week and between the writer (Lee) and the illustrator (Kirby) a working method was created that was able to optimise production times.

The Marvel method. The illustrator constructed the story on the basis of a subject, which saved the writer from writing a script. The story would come back to the

writer almost complete and he would insert the balloons with the dialogues; often starting from a suggestion of the artist.

Jack Kirby used pre-set grids of 4 to 9 panels which he used as a basis for drawing the stories. It's a bit like a ruled sheet of paper on which to write text by hand, with a few exceptions.



The importance of format in storytelling

The space available, together with the typographic technical characteristics, influence the choice of a grid. For example, a medium-sized page, about 17 centimetres wide by 24 centimetres high, is best if it does not contain more than three strips if it is to maintain clear legibility.

Manga, in fact, first printed in thematic anthology magazines of variable size around A5, maintain a grid of three horizontal stripes. Exceptions exist, but readability remains predominant. So much so that the three horizontal stripes are clearly distinguished by a wider white space; even when the stripes have a strong diagonal character.

Another example is that of the Italian Diabolik, a comic strip for adults and printed in a pocket format. The two-panel, vertically arranged grid, which becomes at most four panels in two strips, is a uniqueness due to the reduced format.

Space and time

The grid is not a limitation but a tool on which to draw without losing the thread.

Conventions and inventions

Let's go back to panels for a moment. Generally regular in shape, other times they are more like trapezoids, in other cases they can be round, we can consider them as frames useful to isolate a particular significant moment of the story.

In the more conventional comics the panel frame also has a specific function that the reader immediately recognises. Rounded margins, unlike regular margins, communicate a moment in the past or a flashback.

In the authorial comics, the graphic novel, the panel is subject to re inventions related to the stylistic research of the author, who perhaps goes beyond convention to find new ways of using the shape of the frame.

Space is time

A photo locks a handful of nanoseconds into a picture; we know this especially since smartphones have made us all reporters of our lives. This is why we are used to interpreting an image as a small fragment of time.

Masters of photography are able to capture images that are suspended and that go beyond this conception of time frozen in an image.

As in Painting where several moments can coexist in a single image.

In comics both possibilities exist. In panels several moments can be told simultaneously or a single frame. Different authors and cultures have declined this concept, also because in itself it does not correspond to a precise rule.

Space seems to influence the perception of time in comics. Because if it is true that a small panel seems to describe a moment, a larger one seems to dilate it.

The slash page

In American comics, the 'splash page' means a page containing only one panel, a panel of effect. Usually an action scene or one with a strong emotional charge. How long does the scene depicted on the splash page last?

When we look at the comic page, it is the balloons or rather the words that give a time, which is the time everyone takes to read the text.

If each panel represents a moment, several panels with the same moment represented several times do not necessarily suggest a prolonged perception of time. On the contrary, they risk fragmenting that moment in a schizophrenic way.

Conclusions



If each panel represents a moment, several panels with a representation of the same moment, do not necessarily suggest a prolonged perception of time. On the contrary, they risk fragmenting that moment in a schizophrenic way.