

What is a storic?

A storic is specific type of what is known as a “picture book”, that utilizes the images as an integrated part of the story telling narrative, via the use of comic book methods and rules.

While at first glance not dissimilar from a normal illustrated story, There are many fundamental differences in implementation, as well as narrative structure and reading experience.

Principally, a storic is constructed around the idea that a picture tells a thousand words. So you can use it in place of words and weave it in structurally as a fundamental part of the narrative. As such I have developed ways in which picture and words can work together as one cohesive whole. This is fundamentally different to an already complete narrative work that has been illustrated, as pictures and words must be created together from the start.

This has results in a surprisingly different and engaging reading experience that it is my hope, others may wish to emulate. As such, I have decided to detail the method behind it. To this end, I have listed the rules and guidelines I developed and why.

Writing

When writing a storic, it is important to use place holder images as you write, because what is being depicted and the space it takes up on the page will all affect what it is you write.

- **Use the image, don't repeat it.** *An image tells a thousand words, you don't need to tell the reader what they've already seen in the picture. You can instead expand upon it, or refer to it. Using the image to help you tell the story you want to tell in less words. This can be used to break otherwise complex ideas or motions down into an easy to read and well flowing section of text. It is amazing how much more can be conveyed in a natural way when you just show a characters body language and spend the attention time available to you in that moment to focus the text on other things.*
- **It's easier to change the words than the picture.** *Always consider bending the text to the image and ask if it's really necessary to ask the artist to do it all again... Trust me, there going to be doing at least as much work on those 2 pictures as you did on writing that whole page. Possibly more.*

Sketch as you write

Because the picture is telling part of the narrative, what it depicts changes what should be written, and it's shape and size changes the space in which you have to write it; it is necessary to produce at least a basic sketch of the image while the page is written. A sketch does fine for this purpose, as you can always finish the picture later. However, this does mean more care and planning is required during the writing process. As wholesale change will thus result in more work being lost than would otherwise be the case. Especially if you are using separate people to write and draw.

Blending image to the page

The image should blend with the page to aid the sliding of the eye between text and image and back again. This is especially true on the side where the text will be. To this ends on this side, the image should not extend to the edge of it's canvas, and hide this straight solid edge at all costs. Use instead the edge of objects or characters, with the intervening space either being transient or the colour of the background. **It is VITAL that not a single part of the text side canvas edge of the image be visible as a solid sudden transition.**

Minimum dead space in the image

Images for Storics should be sized and shaped to produce the minimum amount of dead space on the image. If you don't need a background, don't have one, use the canvas as the colour of the sky and put the image edge as close to the character as possible. Because every bit of unnecessary canvas, reduces the space there is for text and forces the image to be shrunk smaller and smaller to fit what space there is.

Image position

In order for the image to work optimally with the text, it is imperative that it is positioned both correctly and consistently. If this means you have to move things around, introduce empty space into a page, or rephrase things to achieve it. Then that is what you simply HAVE to do, as correct position is extremely important.

- **The top of the image should be aligned with the start of where it becomes relevant in the narrative, and should not appear above this point of relevance.** *This is an extension of already understood rules for comic books, and is readily understood by the reader at an instinctive level when applied consistently. The moment you break with this, you will break the readers flow and inject a reading pause of confusion as to what the image is supposed to be relevant to.*
- **The image should be on the same page as all of it's relevant text.** *Nothing causes confusion or annoyance like an image being on the wrong page. As such it is important to make sure the image is on the same page as as much of the relevant text as it is possible to achieve. This is usually relatively easy, as it is unusual for the relevant text to be longer than a coulomb or two. However, avoiding splitting up that coulomb across two pages can sometimes require a bit of creative formatting to achieve.*
- **1-3 images per page.** *Less than one, and you may as well not bother illustrating. More than 3, and you're not leaving a lot of space for text. These images don't have to be character images however.*
- **Avoid placing two images on the same side of the same page one after the other.** *This is an aesthetic choice. And is not a hard and fast rule, but it does look much better when you do it this way.*

Text formatting

- **When next to an image, it is often necessary to have 1.5 or double spacing between different characters lines of dialogue.** *This is due, to the crushed nature of the space. Without this extra gap, the reader may miss the fact it's a different character speaking.*
- **Let alignment flow from one side to the other.** *If an image can't be used to cover a whole Colomb of text, having it slam from one side to the other can be jarring. Especially if the image is still relevant to the text. It can thus be necessary to engage in a bit of creative formatting more reminiscent of poetry than traditional story formatting, to allow the text to flow organically from one state to another.*

Distribute an exported version

Different text editors will display the result of your work differently. Given the utter importance that the images be displayed in the correct place and page, the only ways you can safely distribute your work and know it'll be seen correctly, is if you distribute it as either a .PDF file, or as a bunch of static images.

For .jpg's, I found exporting as a .pdf, then converting that to .jpg via <https://pdftoimage.com/> produced the largest and best images short of using expensive pay software that may not even let you choose image sizes.