

# COMIC BOOKS & LITERACY

POWER UP YOUR GRANT-WRITING FOR GRAPHIC NOVELS! DEFEND YOUR COLLECTION CHOICES! BATTLE FOR WHAT YOUR READERS LOVE!

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This research was compiled by ABDO staff to share why you need Spotlight comic books & graphic novels in your library or classroom. Text is also available in easy to cut-and-paste e-versions at [www.abdopublishing.com](http://www.abdopublishing.com). See individual series listings for our Age-Appropriate and Young Adult categories.

## COMIC BOOKS & GETTING BOYS TO READ

“Boys are more inclined to read graphic novels and comic books...Boys tend to resist stories about girls, whereas girls do not tend to resist stories about boys.”

“There was also a substantial interest on the part of many boys in comic strips, cartoons, comic books, and graphic novels...and the visuals symbolically helped develop meaning.”

— From the “Choice” list and “A Focus on Immediate Experience” chapter in *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men*, by Michael W. Smith and Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, 2002

## COMIC BOOKS & VOCABULARY-BUILDING & FLUENCY PRACTICE

“Comic book reading and other kinds of light reading may serve as an important bridge from everyday ‘conversational’ language’ to what Cummins (1991) terms ‘academic language.’ This view is supported by studies showing that comic book texts contain more rare words than ordinary conversation does (Hayes and Ahrens, 1988), as well as case histories of readers who credit comic books with providing them with the linguistic basis for reading more difficult texts...”

— *Comic Book Reading, Reading Enjoyment, and Pleasure Reading Among Middle Class and Chapter (Title) I Middle School Students*, Joanne Ujjiie and Stephen D. Krashen, 1996

“If an 8-year-old and his friends are holding a Hulk book, and they’re asking me what ‘impervious’ means and what ‘gamma radiation’ is, then in my opinion they are on their way to becoming great readers of any text.”

“When these comic characters appear in movies, the voice of the villain and the hero are incredibly expressive and distinct - even iconic. The deep breathing of Darth Vader, the growl of the Green Goblin, the crazed inflections of the Joker...Young readers know these sounds, and educators can use them to teach fun, fluent, and expressive reading during read-aloud time with comic books. Encourage students to try out their own villain and hero voices, and then bring that drama and skill to more traditional books.”

— Dan Verdick, *Reading is a Superpower! Using Comic Books & Graphic Novels in Your Library*, [www.abdopublishing.com](http://www.abdopublishing.com), 2008

## SPOTLIGHT – THE LEADER IN LICENSED COMICS FOR EDUCATION

Spotlight, a division of ABDO, was launched in 2006 and published the first “education editions” of comic books in partnership with the world’s leading comic book publishers. This innovative publishing strategy was profiled by *Publishers Weekly* in an article called “ABDO Brings Comics to Schools” and in the *School Library Journal* interview with Jim Abdo, “Spotlight on Media Ties.” Spotlight’s education editions are high-quality, stripped of advertisements, and printed with reinforced bindings to withstand the circulation they receive among students.

Each Spotlight series features updated stories for today’s readers and the world’s most popular comics heroes, including Spider-Man, The Hulk, the X-men, Wolverine, the Fantastic Four, and more. Also available are education editions of popular movie comic adaptations, like adventures with Indiana Jones, Transformers, or the entire Star Wars saga. Spotlight has both age-appropriate and YA comic book editions to choose from, too. To order, get a free catalog, or for more information call toll-free 1-877-877-5939 or visit [www.abdopublishing.com](http://www.abdopublishing.com)

# COMIC BOOKS & LITERACY

## COMIC BOOKS & BUILDING READING SKILLS

“Comic books are a frequent choice of people who grow up to become fluent readers.”

— *Voices of Readers: How We Come to Love Books*, Carlson & Sherrill. National Council of Teachers of English, 1998

“I would go so far as to say if you have a child who is struggling with reading, connect him or her with comics.”

— *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, 6th ed. Trelease. Penguin, 2006

“...the children talked at length about the way they shared stories with friends, swapped comics on a regular basis, and debated the merits of different characters.”

— “The motivating power of comic books: Insights from Archie comic readers.” *The Reading Teacher*, International Reading Association, 2003

“...there are multiple studies to suggest that students who read comics go on to read more, and to read more varied literature.”

— James “Bucky” Carter, Asst. Professor of English education, University of TX, El Paso. Keynote speaker, 2009 “Graphica in Education” Conference. Quoted in *Education Week*, Vol. 28 No. 21. 2009

“Teachers need to find a place in their classrooms for comic books and graphic novels because it is sound practice to do so...”

— James “Bucky” Carter, Chapter 3, “Comics, the Canon, and the Classroom,” from *Teaching Visual Literacy: Using Comic Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Cartoons, and More to Develop Comprehension and Thinking Skills*, Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher, Editors, 2008

“...educators are using the medium [comic books] for a variety of purposes, including as a bridge to full literacy for English-language learners and struggling readers; a tool for discussing sensitive social issues; a subject for lessons on visual literacy; a vehicle for ethics discussion in classes with gifted students; and a means for nurturing creativity in after-school programs.”

— *Education Week*, “Eye on Research: Scholars See Comics as No Laughing Matter,” 2/2009

## COMIC BOOKS & TITLE I STUDENTS

**“[Study comparing 7th grade boys in a middle class school to 7th grade boys in a low-income Title I school with 82% Title I students, and 28% classified as Limited English Proficient]**

For both groups, those who read more comic books did more pleasure reading, liked to read more, and tended to read more books. These results show that comic book reading certainly does not inhibit other kinds of reading, and is consistent with the hypothesis that comic book reading facilitates heavier reading.”

— *Comic Book Reading, Reading Enjoyment, and Pleasure Reading Among Middle Class and Chapter (Title) I Middle School Students*, Joanne Ujiie and Stephen D. Krashen, 1996

## COMIC BOOKS & A GROUND-BREAKING PRESIDENT

“...in addition to collecting Spider-Man comics, Obama would sometimes draw the hero in class.”

— *New York Post*, January 2009

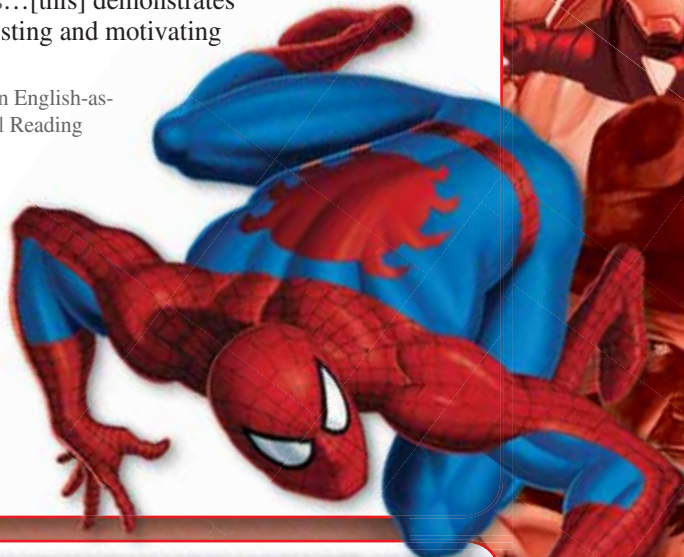
## COMIC BOOKS & ESL/ELL READERS

“The students, primarily English-language learners, were able to make use of this medium [comics] in order to learn new reading practices. The teacher used the comics to teach multiple aspects of various reading processes...[this] demonstrates their use as instructional texts, because comics provide interesting and motivating material as well as visual support for literacy learning.”

— “Using Comics as Read-Alouds: Insights on Reading Instruction from an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Classroom.” *The Reading Teacher*, International Reading Association, October 2003

“One of the ways that ESL/ELL teachers can increase the amount of time their students read is by using comics and graphic novels, which can be especially useful in second language classrooms. Not only can they provide language learners with contextualized comprehensible input, they can also engage the learner and lead him or her to explore more graphic novels or books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading materials.”

— Justine Derrick, *The Internet TESL Journal* (Teachers of English as a Second Language), Vol. XIV, No. 7, July 2008



## COMIC BOOKS & SPECIAL EDUCATION - AUTISM, AD/HD, DYSLEXIA, & MORE

“Reading material that is high interest and rich in pictorial clues, such as comic books, can help the [AD/HD or autistic] child associate meaning with what is being read.”

— *Visual Perception Problems in Children with AD/HD, Autism, and Other Learning Disabilities*, Lisa A. Kurtz, 2006

“Proponents of comics in the classroom say that they can lure struggling readers who may be intimidated by pages crammed with text...with their visual cues and panel-by-panel sequencing [comics] are uniquely situated to reinforce key elements of literacy...”

— Adrienne Edwards, *Dyslexia Tutor*, [www.dyslexia.wordpress.com](http://www.dyslexia.wordpress.com)

“One reason for providing visual supports is that many learners labeled with disabilities are clearly visual learners and are thus best able to understand and remember content when they can see it graphically represented in some way...Students who are deaf or hard of hearing...some with autism report that pictures are the very way in which they understand and derive meaning from the world.”

— Paula Kluth, Chapter 9, “It Was Always the Pictures...” from *Teaching Visual Literacy: Using Comic Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Cartoons, and More to Develop Comprehension and Thinking Skills*, Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher, Editors, 2008

## COMIC BOOKS & FAMOUS WRITERS

“As a child, I had the largest comic collection in my neighborhood, as did Stephen Krashen, Cynthia Rylant, John Updike, and Ray Bradbury.”

— *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, 6th ed. Trelease, 2006

## COMIC BOOKS & A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

“My father was the headmaster of a Methodist primary school...one of the things I am very grateful to him for is that, contrary to conventional educational principles, he allowed me to read comics. I think that is how I developed my love for English and reading.”

— Bishop Desmond Tutu, noted author and recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize