

Telling Tales

EDUCATOR'S

GUIDE



J. TORRES

PRESENTATION - EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

J. Torres won the Shuster Award for Outstanding Writer for his work on *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*, *Love as a Foreign Language* and *Teen Titans Go*. He is also the writer of the Eisner Award nominated *Alison Dare*, and the YALSA listed *Days Like This* and *Lola: A Ghost Story*. Other comic book credits include *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, *Legion of Super-Heroes in the 31st Century*, *Ninja Scroll*, *Wonder Girl*, *Wonder Woman*, and *WALL-E: Recharge*.

1. J. Torres described the different elements of a comic page, starting with the panels that show where the scenes in our story take place. The page is divided into panels so that we can add detail to our story, showing our characters in ACTION by drawing pictures or illustrations. J. described different ways of drawing the action in the panels by using terms we might hear when filming a video: Close-Up shot; Medium shot; Widescreen shot.

Q. Which is your favourite type of shot? Which of these panels is your favourite picture? Do you think this page needs more panels, fewer panels, or is it just right?

Activity: Using the sample page from *Planet Hockey*, see if you can match the panel with the type of shot J. Torres asked the illustrator to draw. The first example is done for you.

Reflection: If there were no words on this page, would you still understand what was going on? Can you think of other examples where we use only pictures to communicate? You think of examples of other languages that use alphabets different from what we use for French or English?

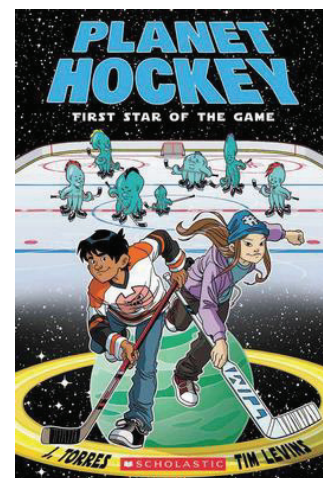
BASIC ACTIVITY IDEA

Planet Hockey describes an outer space hockey league whose players are aliens of all shapes—several with hidden powers.

Q. If you were to invent an intergalactic sports league, what would the sport be? What are the rules of the game? What would the aliens who played the sport look like?

Activity: Draw a picture of one of the aliens in your intergalactic sports league. Be sure to describe one of their special skills and the sport they play.

Reflection: Does describing the sport the alien plays and their special skill help you imagine other details about them? Does it reveal parts of their personality?



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2. Although illustrations (pictures) are the main feature of graphic novels, novelists like J. Torres still use words to tell their story. J. explained that words that appear in the panels are described in three ways:

- **Captions**— This is also called **narration**. A narrator is an off-screen storyteller who adds background information and helps set the scene for the action.
- **Word Balloon**— This is where we put the words our characters speak. These words are also called **dialogue**.
- **SFX (Sound Effects)**— These are background sounds like “SPLAT!” We use these effects to add detail and interest to the action in our panels.

Q. J. has used one sound effect to draw attention to the robot referee calling a penalty. Would adding sound effects to the other panels make the story even more interesting?

Activity: Using the sample page from Planet Hockey, try adding your own sound effects to the rest of the panels. Use different font styles, colours, shapes and words to try to describe the sounds you imagine.

Reflection: Do special **sound effects** add helpful detail to the story? Can you think of examples of how we use sound effects when we tell a story to a friend? If we were turning this graphic story into an audio book for a podcast, what household items might we use to create our sound effects?

3. J. Torres explained that his role as a graphic novel author is to write the **script for the story that includes all the detail the **illustrator** will need to draw the pictures that bring his story to life.**

Q. Who do you think has the more important role in creating graphic novels? The author who writes the story or the illustrator who draws the pictures for it?

Activity: Using the 9-panel Planet Hockey page as your inspiration, imagine what happens next in the story by writing the script and then illustrating your own 5-panel comic page.

Bonus Activity: Give your script to a classmate to see how they illustrate your story using only your **directions, captions, panel descriptions, word balloons** and **sound effects** to guide them.

Reflection: Now that you have completed this activity, has your opinion changed about whether the author or the illustrator is more important in the creation of a graphic novel?

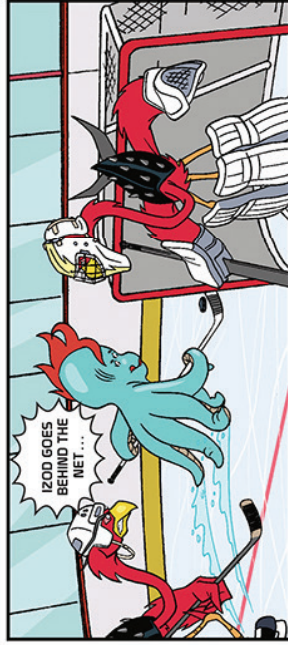
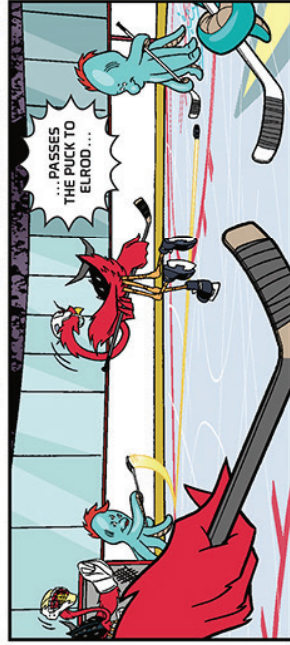
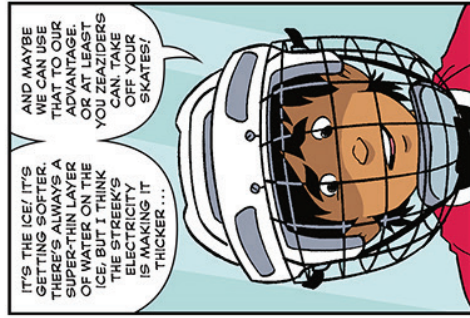
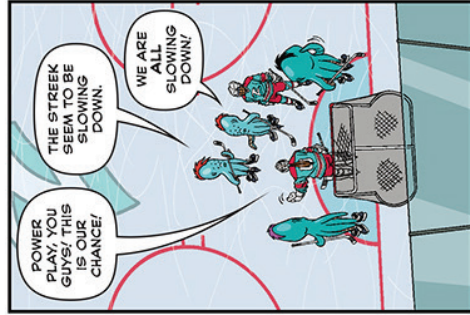
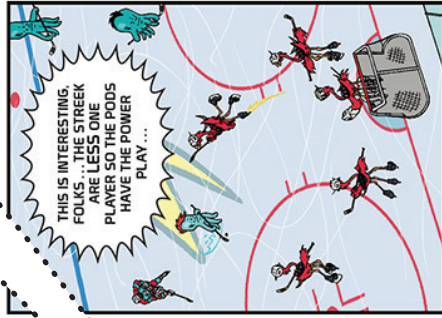
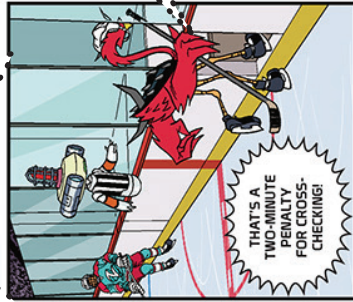
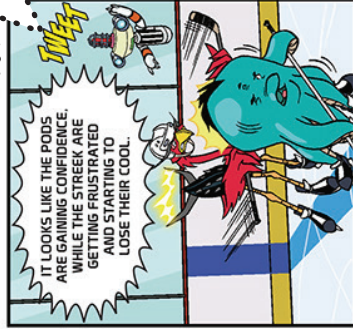
ACTIVITY SHEET #1

SFX Sound Effects

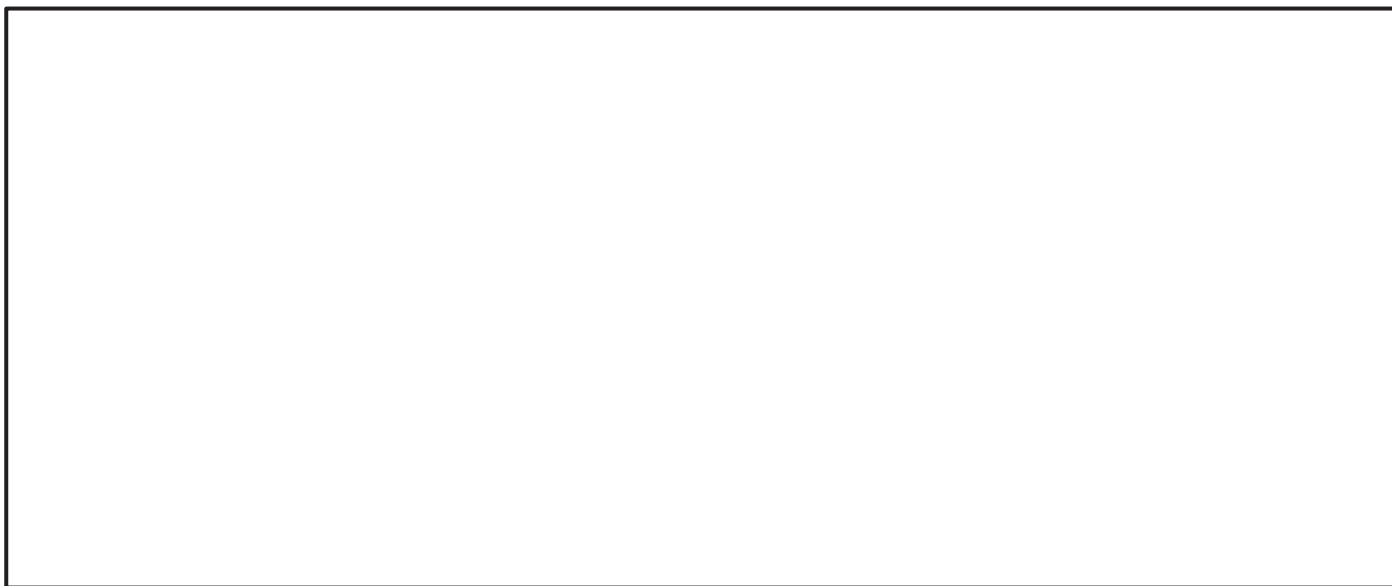
Panel

Medium Shot

Caption / Narrator



ACTIVITY SHEET #2 - 5 PANEL COMIC PAGE



ACTIVITY SHEET #3

Script Format- 5 Panels

Panel # 1

Direction: (describe the scene and what is about to happen in the story)

Type of Shot: (describe whether it is a medium, closeup or widescreen shot- let the illustrator know what to focus on)

Caption: (write exactly what the narrator should say- if it is nothing, then write, "No Caption".)

Word Balloon: (write exactly what each character who appears in the panel says- if it is nothing, then write "No Dialogue")

Sound Effects: (describe to the illustrator the background sound you would like them to illustrate- e.g. "Splat!!")

Repeat this format for panels 2-5.

ACTIVITY SHEET



A decorative border of stylized leaves and vines surrounds the entire page. The leaves are simple line drawings, some pointing upwards and others downwards, creating a continuous pattern.

ACTIVITY SHEET



ACTIVITY SHEET

