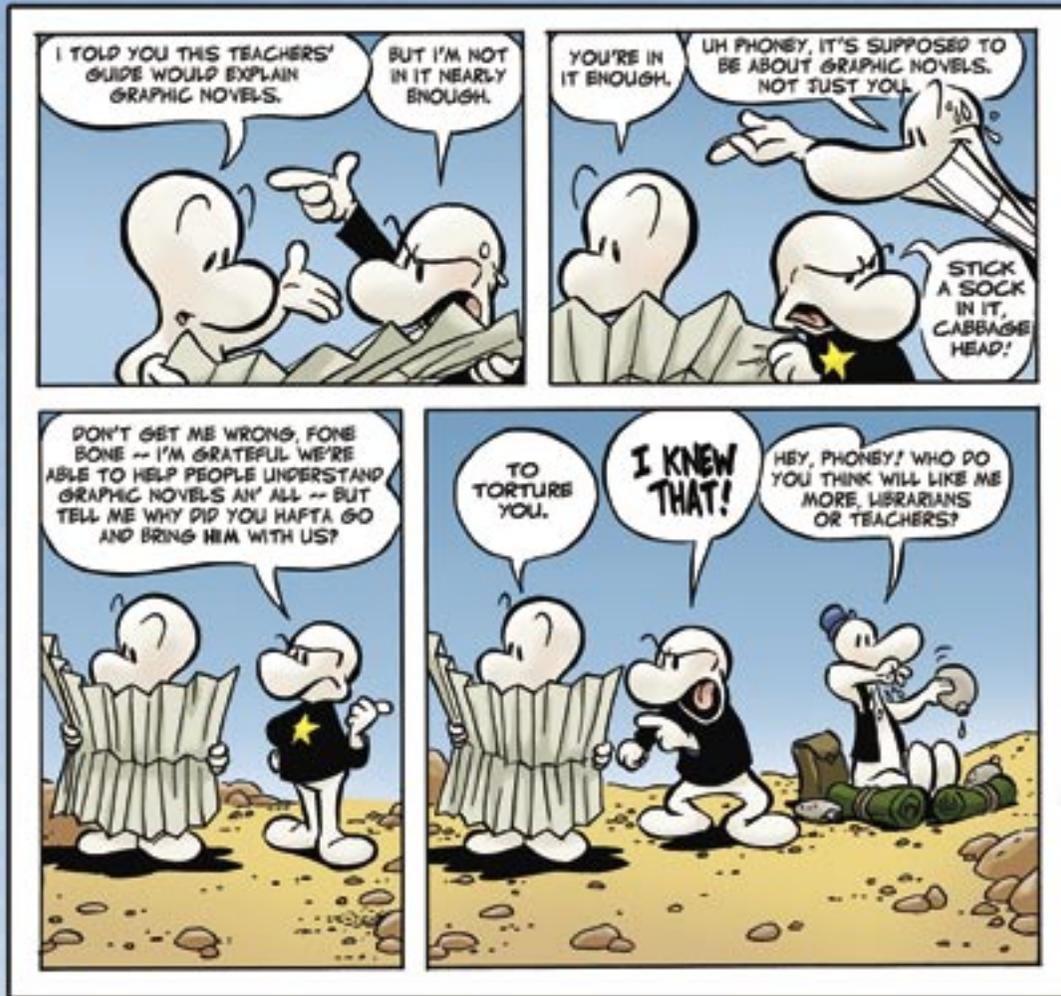


Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom

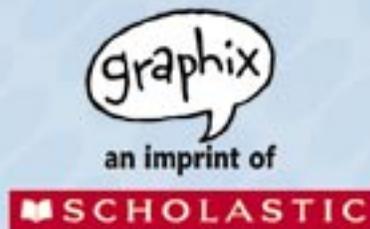
including **BONE** by Jeff Smith

A guide for Teachers and Librarians



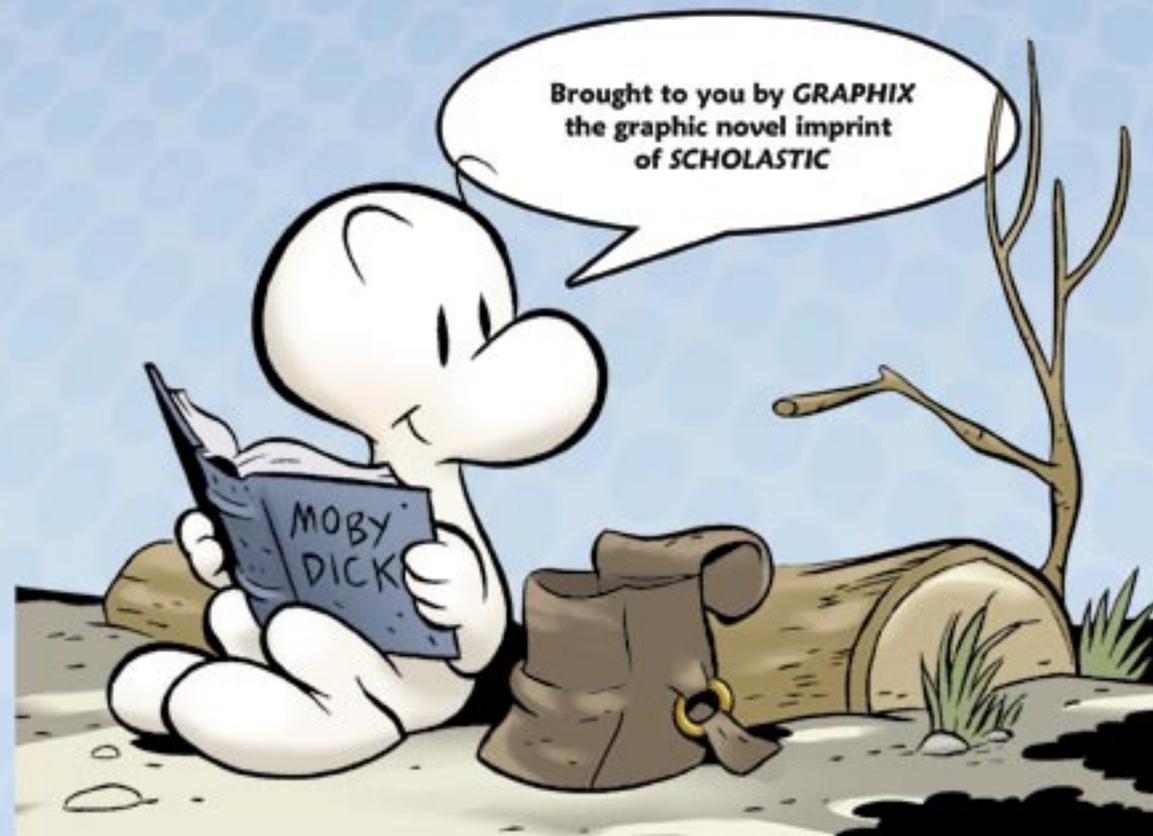
“Jeff Smith’s Bone series...is a true accomplishment. Not only is it a terrific graphic-novel series, but it’s a superb example of storytelling.”

—School Library Journal



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Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom A Guide for Teachers and Librarians

Graphic novels are hot! No longer an underground movement appealing to a small following of enthusiasts, graphic novels have emerged as a growing segment of book publishing, and have become accepted by librarians and educators as mainstream literature for children and young adults — literature that powerfully motivates kids to read. At Scholastic we're leading the way with our new Graphix imprint launched in Spring 2005.

Are graphic novels for you? Should you be taking a more serious look at this format? How might graphic novels fit into your curriculum and your classroom? What are some specific ideas for how to do this, using Scholastic's new editions of *Bone* by Jeff Smith?

Want to know more? If so, this guide — co-written by a school librarian and a public librarian who are both well-known experts in the field — is for you!

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Coming July 2006

Breaking Up: A Fashion High Graphic Novel

by Aimee Friedman,
illustrated by Christine Norrie

A high school melodrama about four best friends at an urban high school for the arts, illustrated with flair by Christine Norrie, the artist of *Hopeless Savages* and *Crush*. This graphic novel tale of romance, double-crossing, secrets, and social climbing will dazzle readers with its stylish evocation of teen life in glamorous Silver City.

Coming September 2007

The Last Unicorn

by Peter S. Beagle

Author Peter S. Beagle adapts his fantasy classic about a magical unicorn, a hapless magician, and a hard-edged maiden into a gorgeous graphic novel. *The Last Unicorn* has been continually in print for nearly 40 years, is voted in the top five of all-time best fantasy novels, and is a favorite of Tolkien fans.

All ages

Coming Soon!

Goosebumps

adapted from the books by R.L. Stine

Based on the scariest bestsellers ever! Each *Goosebumps* graphic novel will feature three stories, adapted by three different artists. Three new volumes will be released each year.

Romeo & Juliet

adapted and with essays by Tina Packer,
director of Shakespeare & Company, author of *Tales From Shakespeare*

The Seventh Voyage

adapted and illustrated by John J Muth
Caught in a time warp, a hapless astronaut meets his past and future selves as they attempt to fix their broken rocket ship.

The Woodland Chronicles

written and illustrated by Greg Ruth
Fifty years ago a boy named Walt disappeared. Strange woodland creatures seem to be responsible. Can 12-year-old Nathan Superb solve the mystery and save the world from a cataclysmic battle?



For more information about Scholastic's Graphix imprint, visit

www.scholastic.com/graphix

For information about the *Bone* books published by Scholastic, visit

www.scholastic.com/bone

1

An Overview of Graphic Novels

What are graphic novels?

“Graphic novel” is a term used by librarians, educators, and booksellers to indicate a publishing format — books written and illustrated in the style of a comic book.

The term “graphic novel” was first popularized by Will Eisner to distinguish his book *A Contract with God* (1978) from collections of newspaper comic strips. He described graphic novels as consisting of “sequential art” — a series of illustrations which, when viewed in order, tell a story. Although today’s graphic novels are a recent phenomenon, this basic way of storytelling has been used in various forms for centuries — early cave drawings, hieroglyphics, and medieval tapestries like the famous Bayeux Tapestry can be thought of as stories told in pictures. The term graphic novel is now generally used to describe any book in a comic format that resembles a novel in length and narrative development. Award-winning, critically acclaimed graphic novels such as *Bone*, *Persepolis*, *Maus*, and *The Tale of One Bad Rat* are prime examples of this new type of contemporary literature.



Are graphic novels suitable for the young, and how do I evaluate them?

Some parents, educators, and librarians may associate the term “graphic novels” with content that includes violence, adult language, and sexually provocative images. Although there are many comics and graphic novels that contain these elements, there is also a growing body of graphic novels that are free of such content and are suitable for all ages, including children. Reviews of graphic novels appear regularly in *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *Voice of Youth Advocates*, *Library Media Connection*, *Publishers Weekly*, and other journals. By reading these reviews; seeking the advice of trusted retailers, wholesalers, and publishers; and by previewing materials prior to circulation, you should be able to build a collection that is suited to your audience. It is the goal of Scholastic’s Graphix imprint to increase the range and variety of graphic novels published for children.



What are the best Web sites for finding out about graphic novels?

Comic Books for Young Adults: A Guide for Librarians
<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/lml/comics/pages/index.html>

No Flying, No Tights: A Web site Reviewing Graphic Novels for Teens
www.noflyingnotights.com

Recommended Graphic Novels for Public Libraries
<http://my.voyager.net/~sraiteri/graphicnovels.htm>



What are some of the best books about graphic novels for youth librarians and teachers?



The Public Librarian's Guide to Graphic Novels,
published by Book Wholesalers, Inc.

The 101 Best Graphic Novels,
by Steve Weiner, published by NBM.

*Getting Graphic! Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy with
Preteens and Teens*, by Michele Gorman, published by Linworth Publishing.

*Graphic Novels 101: Selecting and Using Graphic Novels to Promote
Literacy for Children and Young Adults — A Resource Guide for School
Librarians and Educators*, by Philip Crawford, published by Hi Willow Publishing.

Graphic Novels in Your Media Center: A Definitive Guide,
by Allyson A.W. Lyga and Barry Lyga, published by Libraries Unlimited.

2

Answering Your Questions about Graphic Novels

Do graphic novels promote literacy?



Graphic novels powerfully attract kids and motivate them to read. Many public librarians have built up graphic novel collections and have seen circulation figures soar. School librarians and educators have reported outstanding success getting kids to read with graphic novels, citing particularly their popularity with reluctant readers, especially boys — a group traditionally difficult to reach. At the same time, graphic novels with rich, complex plots and narrative structures can also be satisfying to advanced readers.

Graphic novels can also help improve reading development for students struggling with language acquisition, as the illustrations provide contextual clues to the meaning of the written narrative. When graphic novels are made available to young people, even those deemed “poor readers” willingly and enthusiastically gravitate towards these books. Providing young people with diverse reading materials, including graphic novels, can help them become lifelong readers.

Are graphic novels “real books”?

Some parents and educators may feel that graphic novels are not the “type of reading material” that will help young people grow as readers — they may dismiss graphic novels as inferior literature or as “not real books.” However, quality graphic novels have increasingly come to be accepted by librarians and educators as a method of storytelling on a par with novels, picture books, movies, or audiobooks. The excellent graphic novels that are available today are linguistically appropriate reading material demanding many of the same skills that are needed to

understand traditional works of prose fiction. They require readers to be actively engaged in the process of decoding and comprehending a range of literary devices, including narrative structures, metaphor and symbolism, point of view, and the use of puns and alliteration, intertextuality, and inference. Reading graphic novels can help students develop the critical skills necessary to read more challenging works, including the classics.



Do graphic novels have a place in the curriculum?

Many educators have reported great success when they have integrated graphic novels into their curriculum, especially in the areas of English, science, social studies, and art. Teachers are discovering that graphic novels — just like traditional forms of literature — can be useful tools for helping students critically examine aspects of history, science, literature, and art.



3

Introduction to *Bone* by Jeff Smith

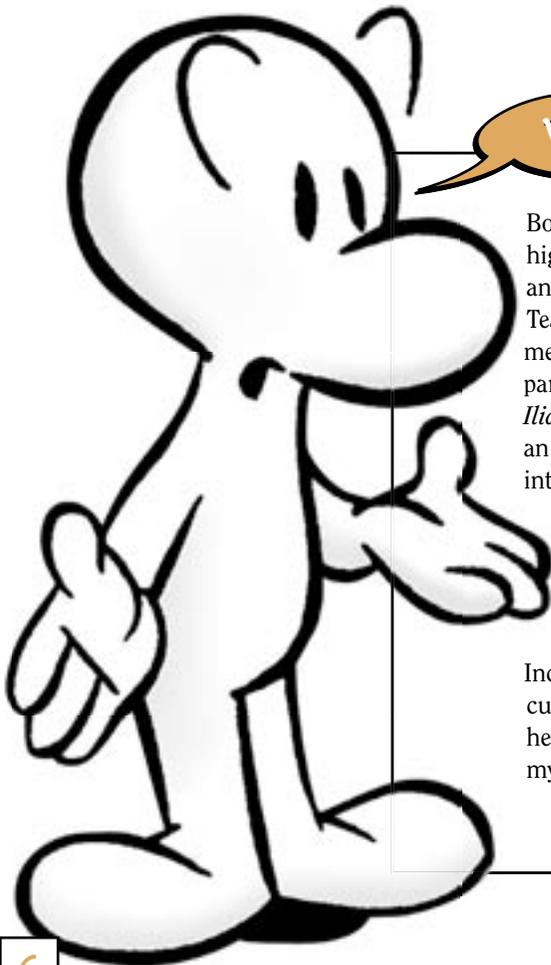
What is *Bone*?

Bone — an award-winning, critically acclaimed graphic novel series that has been described as Pogo meets *The Lord of the Rings* — tells about the adventures of three cousins: **Fone Bone** (good, kind, brave, and loving), **Smiley Bone** (the Harpo Marx-type funny guy), and **Phoney Bone** (greedy and scheming). In the first of the nine volumes, *Out from Boneville*, the three cousins are lost in a vast uncharted desert after having been banished from their home of Boneville. Fone Bone finds his way into a deep, forested valley filled with wonderful and terrifying creatures. Eventually, he’s reunited with his two cousins at a farmstead run by tough Gran’mma Ben and her spirited granddaughter Thorn. But little do the Bones know, there are dark forces conspiring against them, and their adventures are only just beginning.



What is the story behind the publishing of Bone?

The author/artist of *Bone*, Jeff Smith, runs a company called Cartoon Books and lives in Columbus, Ohio, with his wife and business partner, Vijaya Iyer. After starting his career drawing comic strips in newspapers and starting his own animation studio, Jeff Smith started self-publishing *Bone* in 1991. He says it's the book he always longed to read when he was nine — a giant comic book saga that had all the plot and character-journey elements of a long, satisfying novel like *Moby Dick* or *The Odyssey*. Since then, *Bone* has won many awards and has been published in sixteen languages. In 2004, Scholastic acquired the rights to publish *Bone* in its new graphic novel imprint, Graphix. Previously illustrated in black-and-white, *Bone* is now being reissued by Scholastic in full color, in nine volumes released at six-month intervals, published simultaneously in hardcover and paperback.



Why teach Bone?

Bone is a wonderfully entertaining, humorous work of high fantasy that can also be studied and discussed as an epic adventure with many parallels to mythology. Teaching these elements of literature through the medium of a graphic novel, and discussing the parallels between *Bone* and other epics such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, will provide teachers with an opportunity to introduce “something different” into the curriculum. Using graphic novels alongside traditional works of literature can elicit renewed interest in these topics, and motivate those students who may have had little interest in reading and studying literature.

Including *Bone* in the English/Language Arts curriculum can provide teachers with a tool for helping students identify elements of classical mythology, the heroic quest, and cultural references.

For example:

The journey home

The three Bone cousins did not deliberately set out to have an adventure. Like Odysseus leaving Troy in *The Odyssey*, all they really want to do is return home. Their entire adventure is actually a long detour on the road home.

The unlikely hero

Like Bilbo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings*, or Harry Potter in the *Harry Potter* books, Fone Bone starts out as just an ordinary person with no pretensions of being a hero. When he is thrust into extraordinary circumstances, his qualities of humility, goodness, and courage eventually make him a hero despite himself.

The hero's quest

The heroic journey — or quest — that the Bone cousins embark on is symbolic of the search for self. Compare their quest to that of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* or Bilbo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings*. Joseph Campbell's seminal book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, talks about the five steps of a heroic quest. How are the experiences of the Bone cousins similar or different?

The unknown destiny

Like King Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex*, or Aragorn in *The Lord of the Rings*, or heroes in other timeless fairy tales, young Thorn is in a long line of heroines and heroes who are raised either unaware of the destiny they are born into, or far from the kingdom they will someday rule.

The mentor wizard figure

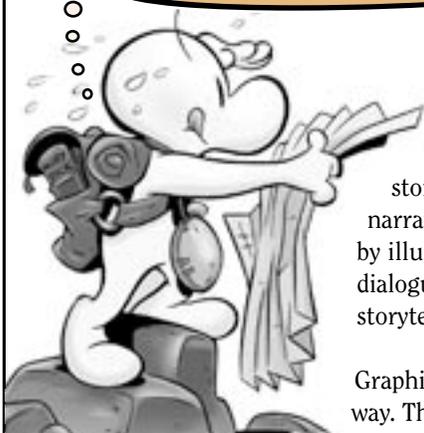
Merlin from the Arthurian legends, Gandalf from *The Lord of the Rings*, and Dumbledore from *Harry Potter* represent classic wizard figures. Students can compare and contrast them with Great Red Dragon, the mentor wizard figure in *Bone* — a cigar-smoking dragon who is only visible to a select few.

Allusions to American literature and film

Fone Bone's love of the American classic, *Moby Dick*, signals readers that Jeff Smith's cartoon epic is, in a way, a tribute to this epic novel. The experiences of the Bone cousins are reminiscent of Ishmael's journey — when they return home, they bring no worldly goods, only a better understanding of themselves and the world they live in.

When Fone Bone asks Great Red Dragon why he scared some rat creatures away rather than breathing fire on them, he answers, "Never play an ace when a two will do," a nod to the laconic tough-guy Humphrey Bogart movie persona.

Why study graphic novels as a format?



Students can learn much by studying how graphic novels “work,” and comparing them to other forms of storytelling. Novels speak to us usually in a linear written narrative; picture books tell a story with text accompanied by illustrations; film does so with moving images and dialogue; and poetry can communicate on levels that no other storytelling can.

Graphic novels combine all these elements in their own unique way. They are like prose in that they are in a written printed format, but they are also like film in that they tell a story through visual images that, although static, give the impression of movement, accompanied by the characters’ dialogue. The sequential pictures in a graphic novel contain dialogue yet also tell important aspects of the story visually. Readers derive information from facial and bodily expressions, and the composition and viewpoint of the illustrations; and — as in a movie — they can sometimes deduce what happened — but was not explicitly stated — in the interval between one image and the next.

Everyone has had the experience of being so engrossed in a riveting novel that they feel as if they’re watching a movie of the story in their imagination. Graphic novels heighten that experience — they are literature that is actually in a cinematic format, so that as you read it you experience “in real time” everything that happens in it. Finally, graphic novels might also be compared to some works of poetry in the way they can convey intangible feelings through allusion rather than direct description.



Conveying emotion and personality

In *Bone*, Smith conveys a range of emotions and explores diverse personality types with drawings that appear simple but that convey a great deal of information. For example, there's the angry frustration of Phoney Bone when the cousins are arguing over the map early in *Out from Boneville*, conveyed not only by his argumentative dialogue but also by his scrunched eyebrows, impatient gestures, and the beads of sweat flying off of him. Other examples are the dreamy expression on Fone Bone's face when he first meets Thorn, his expression of pride when he shows *Moby Dick* to Thorn, and the happy face Smiley Bone makes as he and Phoney Bone find each other near the end of *Out from Boneville*. In each case, students can analyze how the emotion is conveyed both through the words and the pictures.

Information conveyed through the pictures without words

Near the end of *Out from Boneville*, Fone Bone is so overcome with feelings of love for Thorn that he falls backward off the cow he is riding, and the reader sees hearts floating up from him. This image is humorous in a slapstick way, yet also very touching. Is part of its effectiveness the way in which it is conveyed without words? If Bone were a conventional novel, the author would have to convey the same feelings through written narrative. How would this be different for the reader?

Information conveyed through point of view

In every illustration, the artist chose a particular viewpoint from which to observe the action. How does Jeff Smith make use of this choice? How does he convey information, or a mood, through the composition of each picture? At the very end of *Out from Boneville*, we observe the Bone cousins being happily reunited — from the viewpoint of a hidden, hooded figure looking down on them from the trees. From this we learn that the Bone cousins are being followed — that they are going to be threatened with danger — and that they are unaware of this. The book thus ends on an exciting cliffhanger that makes you want to read more. Compare this to cinematic techniques in many well-known movies. Invite students to find

other examples of where the viewpoint of the picture is critical to the reader's experience of the story.



What are some discussion questions for *Bone #1: Out from Boneville*?

1. Have you ever been far from home without knowing how you would get back?
What did it feel like?
How did you deal with the situation?
2. When we first meet the Bone cousins, they are running from Boneville. But we don't really know why they are leaving.
How do we find out?
Do we get the whole story?
3. The Bone cousins are very devoted to each other.
What is loyalty?
Would you leave your town with your cousins if you had to?
Under what circumstances?
Is there a limit to loyalty?
4. Who is your favorite Bone cousin? Why?
5. How are the cousins alike? How are they different?
6. At the end of the book, what do you think will happen next?



What are some discussion questions for *Bone #2: The Great Cow Race*?

1. What are Rat Creatures?
What are they afraid of?
2. Why does Lucius wager that Grandma Ben will win the cow race?
3. Smiley Bone acts like he's stupid, but things always seem to go his way.
How come?
4. Thorn thinks she remembers living with dragons. At the end of *The Great Cow Race*, Grandma Ben tells Lucius that the dragon is back.
Is Thorn remembering something that really happened, or something that she dreamed?
5. Fone Bone is afraid of telling Thorn how much he likes her, so he tells her his feelings in a poem.
Are there advantages to telling your feelings on paper rather than face to face?
Have you ever done that?
Was it successful?
6. Grandma Ben tells Lucius that Thorn is "a good judge of character."
What does that mean?



What are some creative writing activities using Bone?

1. A critical moment in *Out from Boneville* is when Fone Bone first meets Thorn. Have students write the story in their own words from that point forward.
What do they think will happen?
If Fone Bone hadn't met Thorn, how would Fone Bone's experience have been different?
2. Write the story from the moment Fone Bone discovers the Mystery Cow scam in *The Great Cow Race*.
If Fone Bone had exposed his cousins, how would the story have been different?
Try writing the story the way you think it would have been with that outcome.
3. Make up a story about life in Boneville before the cousins were chased out, using the information provided in *Out from Boneville* and *The Great Cow Race*, and perhaps adding your own inferences.
4. Some writers describe every detail of an incident, including everything the characters are thinking and feeling. Others provide a bare outline of what happened and let the reader make inferences and "fill in the blanks." Discuss the pros and cons of these approaches.
What impact does each approach have? Take the moment when Fone Bone is so overcome with love for Thorn that he falls backward off his cow, referred to on page nine — an incident that Jeff Smith conveys without a single word. Have students narrate this incident in words, using prose or poetry in a variety of styles, to convey the same feelings that Jeff Smith depicts visually.



5

More about This Teaching Guide

What have the critics said about Bone?

★“Some of the wittiest writing of any children’s literature in recent memory....This is first-class kid lit: exciting, funny, scary, and resonant enough that it will stick with readers for a long time.”

— *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“Both cute and scary.... While children will read Bone for its breathless adventure...older kids and adults will appreciate the themes of blind fanaticism and corrupting power.”

— *Time Magazine*

“A true accomplishment...a superb example of storytelling.”

— *School Library Journal*

“Bone moves from brash humor to gripping adventure in a single panel.”

— *Booklist*

Bone books were selected by the American Library Association as Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults (2002)

“An instantly likable and intermittently hilarious adventure for children with a subtler, grimmer story about power and corruption at its core.”

— *The Washington Post*

How can I order Bone?

The following volumes of Bone by Jeff Smith are available from Scholastic:



Bone #1: Out from Boneville

HC: 0-439-70623-8 • \$18.95
PB: 0-439-70640-8 • \$9.99



Bone #2: The Great Cow Race

HC: 0-439-70624-6 • \$18.95
PB: 0-439-70639-4 • \$9.99



Bone #3: Eyes of the Storm

HC: 0-439-70625-4 • \$18.95
PB: 0-439-70638-6 • \$9.99



Bone #4: The Dragonslayer

(August 2006)
HC: 0-439-70626-2 • \$18.95
PB: 0-439-70637-8 • \$9.99

The books may be ordered from your usual retail bookstore or library wholesaler, or from Scholastic, 2931 East McCarty Street, P.O. Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102 (or call toll-free 1-800-SCHOLASTIC).

You may also order online from the Scholastic Teacher Store.

Watch for further Bone volumes to be published each season.

Who wrote this teaching guide?

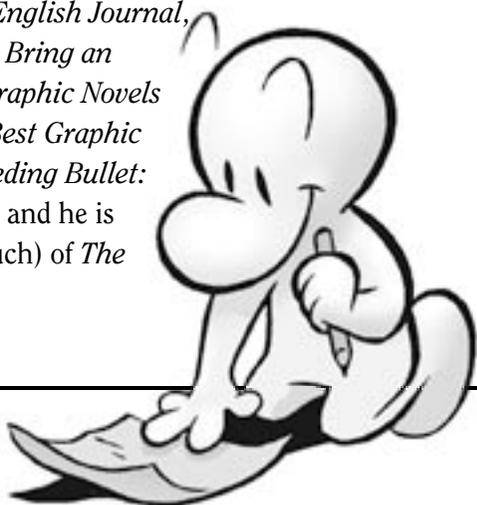
This guide combines the contributions of two authors who are each highly regarded experts in the field of graphic novels for youth librarians and teachers.

Philip Crawford, Library Director for Essex Junction High School in Vermont, contributed primarily to the sections on graphic novels.

He has been a high school English teacher and was a curriculum specialist for the San Francisco Unified School District. He has conducted workshops at numerous conferences, including the American Association of School Librarians, the Vermont Library Association, and the California School Library Association. His column “A Juvenile Miscellany” is published regularly in *Knowledge Quest*, and his book reviews have appeared in *School Library Journal* and *Library Media Connection*. He is the author of *Graphic Novels 101: Selecting and Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy for Children and Young Adults — A Resource Guide for School Librarians and Educators*.

Stephen Weiner, Director of the Maynard Public Library in Maynard, Massachusetts, contributed primarily to the sections on Bone.

He has written about comic art since 1992 and is an expert on Bone. He writes the “Graphic Novel Roundup” column in *School Library Journal*, and has published articles and reviews in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, *Library Journal*, *The Shy Librarian*, *English Journal*, and other journals. His books include *Bring an Author to Your Library* (1993), *100 Graphic Novels for Public Libraries* (1996), *The 101 Best Graphic Novels* (2001), and *Faster than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel* (2003), and he is co-author (with N.C. Christopher Couch) of *The Will Eisner Companion* (2004).



What Other Books Are Being Published in Scholastic's Graphix Imprint?

QUEEN BEE

by Chynna Clugston

A funny, yet stinging, look at the social hive of middle-school girls, where only one "queen bee" can rule! This graphic novel takes the typical American middle-school scene and mixes it up with fresh, manga-style illustrations and super-hero antics.

Chynna Clugston, an Eisner Award nominee, is the creator of the popular Blue Monday and Scooter Girl comic series. She has also worked on Buffy the Vampire Slayer comics and Marvel Comics collections.

Queen Bee #1

Hardcover: 0-439-71572-5 • \$16.99

Paperback: 0-439-70987-3 • \$8.99

Queen Bee #2 (Spring 2007)

Hardcover: 0-439-77610-4 • \$16.99

Paperback: 0-439-77614-7 • \$8.99



The BABY-SITTERS CLUB

by Ann M. Martin
adapted and illustrated by
Raina Telgemeier

Based on Ann M. Martin's bestselling series, America's favorite baby-sitters are back! Raina Telgemeier captures all the drama of the original books in warm, spunky, and hilarious graphic novels.

Brought to life in this vivid new format, the four baby-sitting friends will captivate a whole new generation of readers.



The Baby-sitters Club: Kristy's Great Idea

Hardcover: 0-439-80241-5 • \$16.99

Paperback: 0-439-73933-0 • \$8.99

The Baby-sitters Club: The Truth About Stacey

(November 2006)

Hardcover: 0-439-86724-X • \$16.99

Paperback: 0-439-73936-5 • \$8.99