How to create a graphic novel with ChatGPT

A practical guide from the first idea to a finished book

You can use ChatGPT to develop a story, write a panel script, design characters, create illustrations and help assemble a graphic novel. You do not need to code. You do need to make decisions, inspect the results and keep the approved work organized.

If you already have a written story, you can give it to ChatGPT and ask for a first graphic novel draft. Start with the shortcut on page 2. If you are developing a new idea, begin with the planning steps on page 3. In either case, refine a short sample before producing the finished book.

Your role in the process

You are the author and director. ChatGPT can suggest alternatives and produce drafts, but you decide what belongs in the book. A page is approved only when you have read it, checked the art and saved the correct version.

Choose where to begin

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What you need

Start with an idea or manuscript, a ChatGPT account with image generation available, and a place to save your files. Feature availability and image limits depend on your account and workspace. [3] For a book you intend to print, plan to use a page layout tool or a designer for final production.

The prompts in this guide are starting points. Replace the bracketed details with your own. No special prompting vocabulary is required.

If you already have a written story

The simplest starting point is to give ChatGPT your story and ask it to turn it into a graphic novel. You do not have to convert the prose into a panel script yourself. ChatGPT can propose page breaks, panel layouts, dialogue and illustrations, giving you a first version to react to.

Treat that adaptation as a starting point. Seeing the story in comic form can help you decide what works, what is missing and what needs to change. You can then revise the characters, artwork, pacing and words together.

Give ChatGPT the story

Upload the manuscript or paste the text into the conversation. Say who the book is for and mention any scenes, jokes or lines that must stay. Include any character images or style references you already have. If you have no visual direction yet, ask ChatGPT to make a consistent initial choice that you can change after seeing it.

Prompt to copy

> I have attached my story. Turn it into a first draft of a graphic novel for [audience]. Use the manuscript as the source and preserve the main events, character voices, tone and important jokes.
>
> Make the initial decisions about page breaks, panels, dialogue, captions and visual storytelling. Turn descriptions into pictures where possible. Use [preferred style], or choose a consistent provisional style if I have not specified one.
>
> Create an illustrated version of the opening scene as a starting point for us to review. I want to see the comic pages, not only a written plan. Flag any substantial additions, cuts or changes to the order of events. After we review the opening, continue adapting the story in manageable sections.

Use the first draft to guide your revisions

Read the pages alongside the original story. Check whether the characters sound right, the action is clear and the best moments survived. Give concrete feedback: “Keep this dialogue,” “Restore the joke you cut,” “This needs another panel,” or “Make the child look older.”

You can set the whole book as the goal while producing and reviewing it in sections. Once the initial direction works, save the approved character designs and style, then use the later sections of this guide to improve consistency, lettering and production.

Keep the original: Save the manuscript unchanged alongside the adaptation. It remains the reference for checking what was preserved, shortened or lost.

1 Set up the project and define the book

Open ChatGPT and create a project named after your book. Projects keep related chats, uploaded files and project instructions together. [1] Add your manuscript or notes if you have them. Keep one clearly labeled current version of each important reference.

Use separate conversations for story development, character design and chapter production. Keep one active production conversation for any given page range, so two conversations do not create competing versions. Before starting a new chapter, provide its script and the references it needs.

Write a short creative brief

If you began by adapting an existing story, ask ChatGPT to extract this brief from the manuscript and your first draft. You can record the decisions already made without starting the story again.

- Reader: age range, reading level and the experience you want to give them.
- Story: the main character, what they want, what stands in their way and what could go wrong.
- Tone: funny, frightening, warm, adventurous or a specific combination.
- Scope: a short standalone story, a full book or the beginning of a series.
- Boundaries: subjects, scenes, dialogue and character traits you want to preserve.

For example: “A humorous adventure for ages 8–12 about two cousins trying to get home after opening a mysterious book. Each attempted escape creates a new problem. Keep the children resourceful and the danger understandable.”

Prompt to copy

> Help me develop a graphic novel for [audience]. My starting idea is [idea]. The tone should be [tone]. These elements must stay: [list]. Ask me up to five questions that will materially improve the story. Then create a one page creative brief. Identify decisions still open. Do not write the full book or create images yet.

Add a few standing instructions

Tell ChatGPT to distinguish suggestions from approved decisions, preserve your chosen character voices and flag contradictions. Ask it to propose changes to established facts before applying them. Keep these instructions brief enough to review and update.

Save before moving on: Keep the approved brief as a separate file. If you revise it later, date the new version and identify what changed.

2 Develop the story before the artwork

For a new story, work out the beginning, major turning points and ending before producing finished pages. If you already have an adapted draft, use this section to review its structure. Each chapter needs a goal, an obstacle and a result that changes what happens next. Even a comic adventure needs a reason for the reader to turn the page.

If you are starting with an existing manuscript

Work through a manageable section at a time. Ask ChatGPT to identify the essential action, dialogue, emotional changes and jokes. Then decide what the pictures can carry. A sentence describing a slammed door may become a picture and a sound effect; a funny observation may still deserve a caption.

Keep a list of scenes and lines that must survive the adaptation. Compression can accidentally remove a joke's setup, move an explanation too early or leave a character reacting to something they have not learned yet.

Plan the sequence of scenes

Ask for a chapter outline and then a scene outline. For each scene, record where it happens, what the characters know at the start, what changes and how it ends. Treat the first page count as an estimate. A chase, a conversation and a visual joke need different amounts of space.

Prompt to copy

> Act as a graphic novel story editor. Review this outline for [audience]. Identify weak motivations, slow passages, missing causes and effects, and scenes that explain too much. Protect these moments: [list]. Suggest specific changes and explain the effect on the reader. Then give me a revised scene outline for review. Do not illustrate it.

Keep the reader inside the action

Let a character's immediate problem create the need for background information. In a historical adventure, a child being stopped at a city gate gives the reader a reason to learn the local rules. A long speech before anything happens is harder to sustain.

Ask for alternatives when a scene is weak: three possible openings, two ways to raise the stakes or several punchlines. Choose deliberately. You do not have to accept the first plausible suggestion.

Save before moving on: Approve the story outline, the chapter sequence and the list of moments to preserve. Resolve major structural problems before commissioning finished art.

3 Establish the characters and visual style

Create a story bible: a short reference document containing the facts that define the book. Include character names and ages, relationships, personality, voice, the rules of the world and important recurring objects. Add a visual section for appearance and clothing.

Make character reference sheets

A reference sheet shows the approved version of a character from several angles. Include a full body front view, a side view, a three quarter view and useful expressions. Add a separate lineup to establish relative heights. Check details such as hairstyle, shoes, glasses and the shape of the face before approving it.

Prompt to copy

> Create an original character reference sheet for [name and description]. Show front, side and three quarter views, plus happy, worried, annoyed and surprised expressions. Keep the same age, proportions and outfit throughout. Use a plain background. The required details are [list]. This is a design reference, not a story page.

Describe the style in visible terms

Choose features you can inspect: clean black outlines, flat colors, warm lighting, simple backgrounds, expressive faces or a particular amount of shading. Describe your own visual direction. Save one approved sample page as the style reference for the book.

A useful instruction might be: “Clear black outlines, warm flat colors, expressive faces and backgrounds with only the details needed for the action. Keep silhouettes easy to distinguish. Use the approved reference sheets for faces and clothing.”

Use the actual references

Attach the relevant images when asking for new artwork and explain which defines the character and which defines the style. ChatGPT accepts image inputs for visual context. [4] A written instruction to “use the same character” is less precise than an approved sheet you can compare against.

Track deliberate changes as well. If a coat tears or a character changes clothes, record when it happens and which later pages should show it. Check each new page against the approved references; references guide the result but do not replace review.

Save before moving on: Keep the story bible, approved character sheets, height lineup and style sample together. Clearly label rejected designs so they cannot be mistaken for the current ones.

4 Choose the format and test a short sample

Decide how the book will be read before creating many pages. A printed page and a comic designed for vertical scrolling need different layouts. For print, choose a provisional trim size, color or black and white, reading direction and a general level of detail. Confirm production specifications with the intended printer before making final assets.

Choose how to build the pages

Method	Useful for	Main tradeoff
Generate a complete page with lettering	Testing an idea and seeing a page quickly	A text correction may also change the artwork.
Generate art and add editable lettering	Pages that need careful text revision	Requires a separate lettering or layout step.
Generate panels separately and assemble them	Scenes needing control over individual panels	You must keep scale, lighting and continuity consistent.

Try a complete generated page first if you want the simplest introduction. For sustained book production, test whether separate lettering saves revision time. Editable text lets you change a word or move a balloon without asking for a new painting.

Make three to five representative pages

Include a dialogue scene, an action scene and a page with a visual joke or emotional moment. Use the intended page shape. Test a simple layout, perhaps two or three horizontal rows of panels, then adjust it to the story. A fixed panel count should not force every scene into the same rhythm.

Prompt to copy

> Using the approved references and script, plan a [three to five] page sample. Include dialogue, action and a quiet or comic beat. Propose the panel arrangement for each page. Show where balloons will go and how the eye will move through the page. Begin with layouts for review before finished illustrations.

Evaluate the sample at reading size

Print it at the intended size or view it at the size readers will use. Can you follow the action and read the words comfortably? Do the characters stay recognizable? Does the page feel crowded? Ask another person to read it without an explanation from you.

Track the actual time spent generating and fixing these pages. Use that experience to estimate the rest of the book. Simple rough drawings help when they expose layout problems; they are not automatically faster to generate than finished art.

Save before moving on: Approve the page format, lettering method and sample. Use them as the production standard.

5 Write the script panel by panel

A panel is one framed image in the sequence. A balloon contains speech or thought; a caption holds narration. A graphic novel script tells the artist what the reader sees and the letterer which words appear. For each page, state its purpose and panel arrangement. For each panel, specify one clear moment, the visible action, the speaker and the exact text.

Separate instructions from printed words. Number the panels in reading order. Within a panel, list balloons in the order they should be read. Distinguish spoken dialogue from a character's internal thought. If a beat needs silence, say so.

A worked example

Story beat: Two children must retrieve a key from a goat before a closing door traps them outside. The page must make the obstacle clear, deliver a joke and end with a fresh problem.

Page 7: Four panels in a two by two grid. Read left to right, then top to bottom. The children are outside the door. The goat is beside them with the key hanging visibly from its mouth.

Panel 1: Wide view. The door is sliding shut. Nora, on the left, points to the goat. Sam stands to her right. Nora says, "We need that key." Sam replies, "He knows."

Panel 2: Close view of Sam offering a carrot. The goat turns its head away; the key remains visible. Sam says, "One carrot. Final offer."

Panel 3: The goat grabs the whole bunch of carrots from Sam's other hand. Nora catches the dropped key. No dialogue. Leave room for the visual joke.

Panel 4: Nora reaches the door as it closes. She holds the key up to a lock far above her head. Nora says, "Small problem." Keep the lock and key clearly visible.

The finished drawing should show these actions. It does not need captions repeating them. The next page must address the high lock; otherwise the ending has created a problem that the story ignores.

Prompt to copy

> Convert this scene into a page script for [audience]. For every panel, give the camera view, one visible action and exact lettering in reading order. Preserve [specific dialogue or jokes]. Identify any action that needs more than one panel. Keep instructions separate from words printed on the page. Return the script only.

Save before moving on: Read the dialogue aloud and approve it. Keep the approved script beside the images so you can check every word and speaker.

6 Generate one page with clear instructions

Start with one approved page script. Attach the character sheets, style sample and any location reference needed for that page. Identify each attachment by name or order so its purpose is clear. OpenAI's image guidance recommends precise visual instructions and explicit constraints. [3]

Give the page a complete brief

Include the page identifier, layout, who is present, what just happened and the exact text. If a character is carrying an object or has just lost a shoe, say so. Keep permanent appearance rules in the references and put scene specific details in the current request.

Prompt to copy

> Create page [identifier] of this graphic novel using the attached approved script. Image 1 is [character sheet]; image 2 is [character sheet]; image 3 is the approved style sample.
>
> Use [page shape] with [panel arrangement]. Follow the script's panel and balloon order. The starting situation is [brief continuity note]. Preserve [essential visual details].
>
> Use only the dialogue, captions and sound effects in the approved script. Keep the lettering clear at the intended reading size. Do not turn panel instructions or character labels into printed text.
>
> The page must end with [specific action or reveal]. Generate this page only for review.

If you are adding lettering separately, replace the lettering paragraph with: "Generate the art without text or balloons. Leave the planned areas visually quiet so lettering can be added later. Keep faces and important action clear of those areas."

Review the actual image

First check the page at normal reading size. Then enlarge it and inspect each panel. A convincing overall impression can hide a duplicated hand, a changed face, a missing object or a balloon attached to the wrong character.

Compare the result with the script yourself. ChatGPT can help inspect the page, but its description of what it intended to draw is not proof that the image contains it. If an important detail is unclear, treat it as an issue to resolve.

Record the result before continuing

Mark the page as a draft, approved, or provisional with a named issue. Download the actual image and keep the script that produced it. Avoid generating the next chapter while the basic character design or page method is still changing.

Save before moving on: Keep the best draft even if it needs a small correction. A later attempt may solve one problem and introduce another.

7 Revise pages without losing good work

Give feedback that identifies the page, panel and visible change you want. “Make this better” leaves too many choices open. “In panel 3, move Nora’s first balloon above Sam’s reply” gives a clear correction you can verify.

Change one thing at a time when possible

Attach the exact version to edit. State the requested change and what should remain fixed. Targeted edits are part of OpenAI’s recommended image workflow. [3] Even a narrow request needs a fresh inspection of the whole page afterward.

Prompt to copy

> Edit the attached page [identifier and version]. In panel [number and location], change [specific detail] to [required result]. Keep the panel arrangement, character appearances, poses, colors and all other lettering unchanged. Do not add dialogue or redraw unrelated panels.

An instruction to preserve everything else is a request, not a guarantee. Compare the result with the previous version. If the edit damages a face, changes a line or loses a prop, keep the earlier version and try a smaller intervention.

Check the lettering as its own task

- Compare every word, name and punctuation mark with the approved script.
- Check which character each balloon belongs to and where its tail points.
- Read balloons in the order your eye naturally finds them.
- Check that thought captions, spoken lines and sound effects look distinct.
- Inspect text at the final reading size, including near the binding and trim.

If the art works but the wording keeps failing, repair the lettering in your layout tool. For repeated attempts that do not improve the page, preserve the best clean version, record the exact unresolved issue and choose a different repair method. A minor issue can remain provisional while other pages proceed.

For editable lettering, place the artwork on a page at its final size in a layout or drawing app. Add balloon shapes and text above the art, keeping them separately editable. Point each tail toward its speaker and leave space around the words. Ask ChatGPT for instructions for the app you use.

Make the revision request measurable

Vague feedback	Specific feedback
The joke is not working.	Keep the setup in panel 1 and move the reveal to panel 3.
Make the character look right.	Match the face and hairstyle to the attached approved sheet.
This is confusing.	Show the key leaving the goat’s mouth before Nora holds it.

Save before moving on: Use a new version number for each revision. Approve the replacement only after checking both the requested fix and the rest of the page.

8 Review chapters as a continuous story

After a short sequence is illustrated, assemble it in reading order. A set of attractive individual pages can still contain an unclear journey, a repeated joke or a missing step in the action. Review each chapter before treating it as finished.

Check what changes between pages

- Track where everyone is standing and how they move between locations.
- Follow objects: who holds the key, bag, book or weapon, and when it changes hands.
- Check clothing, injuries, weather and time of day across adjacent pages.
- Track knowledge: a character should not explain something they have not yet learned.
- Check repeated dialogue, reused reactions and accidental duplicate panels.
- Make sure each problem has a visible outcome and each page turn leads somewhere.

Prompt to copy

> Review these chapter pages in order against the approved script. For each issue, identify the page and panel, describe what the reader actually sees, explain the problem and suggest the smallest useful correction. Check continuity, balloon order, repeated jokes, pacing and missing action. Mark uncertain observations for my inspection. Do not edit the images yet.

Give the reviewer the actual pages at a readable size. A summary of the chapter cannot reveal a balloon pointing at the wrong child. For a long book, review manageable batches, then check the transitions between batches and chapters.

Check facts and cultural details separately

If the story includes history, science, religion or real people, keep a research log. Ask for reliable sources for factual claims and read the relevant sources yourself. Clearly distinguish documented events, tradition and details invented for the story. An illustration can also introduce a factual error through clothing, buildings or objects.

For specialized or culturally sensitive material, ask a knowledgeable reader to review it. Ask readers from the intended age group where they became confused, bored or curious. Those reactions are often more useful than a general verdict that the book is good.

Approve with a clear record

Maintain a short list of unresolved issues. Give each one a page number, an exact description and a status. A page with a known problem stays provisional until the problem is fixed or you deliberately accept it.

Save before moving on: Keep a chapter proof in reading order, the approved page list and the remaining corrections. Check those corrections again during the final review.

9 Save versions and make the work resumable

Keep your own organized copies of the book's files. Conversation history is useful context, but a production record should tell you exactly which image belongs on each page and what remains unfinished. Save work throughout the process.

Use simple folders and filenames

Create folders for the brief and story bible, scripts, character references, page drafts, approved pages and chapter proofs. Use stable identifiers such as CH02_P007. If pagination later changes, keep a list mapping these identifiers to the final page numbers.

A filename such as CH02_P007_v03.png identifies the chapter, page and version. Record its approval status in the page register. A new candidate might be CH02_P007_v04.png. Keep the older approved version until you have inspected and accepted its replacement.

Keep a page register

Page	Current file	Status	Open issue
CH02_P007	CH02_P007_v03.png	Approved	None
CH02_P008	CH02_P008_v02.png	Provisional	Panel 2 balloon tail
CH02_P009	None	Not started	Script approved

At the end of a session, update a brief checkpoint with the current source files, last approved page, unresolved issues and next action. Include decisions that changed during the session. Save the checkpoint with the book, not only as a message in the conversation.

Prompt to copy

> Prepare a checkpoint for continuing this book. List the approved references, current script version, accepted page files, provisional pages and exact outstanding corrections. Identify the first unfinished task. Distinguish completed work from proposed work. Do not mark a page approved merely because an image was generated.

Resume from the files

In a new conversation, attach the checkpoint, current references and the pages relevant to the next task. Ask ChatGPT to read them and identify the next unfinished step. If a file is missing or inaccessible, resolve that gap before asking it to recreate anything.

A useful instruction is: "Continue from this checkpoint. Preserve approved pages. Inspect the existing draft of page [identifier] before creating a replacement. Tell me which required files you cannot access."

Before closing a session: Download and open the latest accepted files, confirm their names and keep a second backup. Give each new work request a defined page range and stopping point so completion is easy to verify.

10 Assemble and proof the finished book

Assemble the approved pages using the page register. Keep the editable production file as well as exported copies. ChatGPT can help create files when the necessary tools are available. [2] Inspect the resulting book to confirm that assembly is complete.

Prepare the book for its intended destination

Use your printer's current specifications for trim size, bleed, safe margins, binding allowance, image resolution and PDF export. Bleed is artwork extending beyond the cut edge. Safe margins keep words and important details away from trimming and the binding.

Check the actual pixel dimensions of the artwork. For example, if the specification is 300 pixels per inch, a 7 by 10 inch image needs 2100 by 3000 pixels before any bleed is added. Changing a resolution label alone does not add detail. Judge the result in a proof at the intended size.

Keep balloons and type editable where possible. Make the cover after the interior page count and binding are settled; the full cover may need a back, spine and printer specific template. Add the title page, credits and any other front or back matter deliberately.

Perform a final review in several passes

- Story pass: read the book in order for pacing, logic, character voice and payoff.
- Visual pass: check faces, proportions, recurring objects and style across chapters.
- Text pass: proof every line, speaker, punctuation mark and page number.
- Production pass: check page order, missing or duplicated pages, cropping, margins and image quality.

Revisit the unresolved issue list, including problems from early chapters. Read a digital export on the intended device. For print, order or produce a physical proof and inspect it before approving a larger run.

Keep a complete handoff package

Retain the editable layout, approved art, scripts, references, final reading PDF and the printer export if it differs. Keep records of the sources and permissions associated with reference material and fonts. Before submitting or distributing the book, check the chosen publisher's current submission and AI content disclosure requirements.

Prompt to copy

> Using the approved page register and attached final pages, assemble a review copy in order. Report missing files, duplicates or provisional pages before calling it complete. Keep the original assets. Provide a final checklist of items I must inspect in the export and physical proof.

Finish when: The book has passed the full review, the remaining issues are resolved or explicitly accepted, and the final files are saved and open correctly.

A first conversation you can start today

If you already have a written story, use the adaptation prompt on page 2. If you are starting from an idea, copy the prompt below into a new ChatGPT project and fill in the brackets. Attach any notes and begin with the creative brief.

Starting prompt

> I want to create a graphic novel and need you to guide me through the process in manageable stages.
>
> My intended readers are [audience]. My idea is [premise]. The tone is [tone]. I already have [notes, manuscript, drawings or nothing yet]. The parts that matter most to me are [characters, themes, scenes or jokes].
>
> Help me develop the story, write a panel script, establish character reference sheets and a visual style, and make a short sample before producing the whole book. Explain unfamiliar terms as we use them.
>
> Begin by asking up to five useful questions. Then prepare a one page creative brief and identify the decisions still open. Do not create the full book yet.
>
> As we work, distinguish your suggestions from my approved choices. Preserve the agreed character voices and story facts. Point out continuity problems and weak scenes. Propose changes before replacing approved material.
>
> When we reach illustration, work from the approved script and references. Keep track of page versions and unresolved corrections. At the end of each stage, help me save a clear checkpoint so I can continue later.

Your first useful milestone

Aim for an approved brief, a short outline, character references and three to five pages that someone can read without your explanation. Use the time and corrections from that sample to decide how to produce the rest of the book.

Official guidance for ChatGPT features

The workflow and comic examples in this guide are practical recommendations. The numbered references support the product features described. Feature guidance checked October 30, 2026; screens and availability can change.

[1] Projects and chats

[2] Use ChatGPT

[3] Image generation

[4] Image inputs