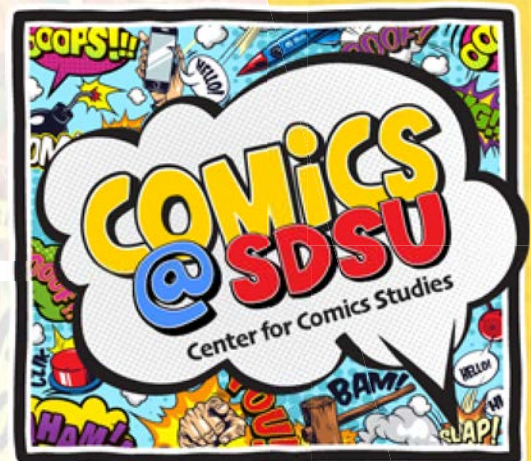


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The Sketchbook

for Teaching Comics and Social Justice

LESSON PLAN FOR:
**"1-6: THE GRAPHIC
NOVEL"**



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Why This Comic for Social Justice?



"1/6: The Graphic Novel" by Alan Jenkins and Gan Golan

A work of speculative fiction, the graphic novel "1/6" asks the question: what if the attack on the U.S. Capitol succeeded?" The January 6, 2021 insurrection was a direct challenge to the nation's commitment to a fair election, equal dignity for all and respect for the truth. Grounded in real events, "1/6" is a work of historical research, a cautionary tale and a call to action.

In the days that followed the attack, a campaign was launched to minimize, excuse and divert blame away from those who planned and perpetrated the events. Propelled by exclusionary rhetoric, the nation witnessed new waves of political violence, hate crimes and anti-democratic efforts across the country. There are also misconceptions and deliberate misinformation about the events and individuals who carried out these actions. The goal of "1/6" is to ensure that these events do not fade from the public memory, and to strengthen our collective commitment to democracy.



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About the Comic



The story traces back-room meetings, white supremacist rallies and the Four Seasons Total Landscaping parking lot to a violent attack on the Capitol that left 140 police officers injured, several Americans dead and shook our nation to its core. The graphic novel includes a wide range of characters from different backgrounds, viewpoints and walks of life. Their thoughts and actions within the story will prompt questions, reactions and opportunities for reflection.

Content Note: As a work about the January 6, 2021 Insurrection, “1/6” depicts both historical and fictional incidents of violence and bigotry. While these elements are rendered tastefully and placed in a larger context of learning, they may be unsettling to some students. This series should be discussed with empathy, sensitivity, and openness, meeting students where they are and addressing their questions and comments with caring and age-appropriate candor.

Drawing on real-life events, “1/6” imagines a world in which the events of January 6, 2021 turned out very differently.



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About the Creators



Alan Jenkins (writer)

Alan Jenkins is an author, law professor, and human rights advocate. He teaches courses on racial justice, strategic communications, and Supreme Court jurisprudence and is a frequent commentator in broadcast and print media. Jenkins' previous positions include president and co-founder of the social justice communication lab, The Opportunity Agenda, director of Human Rights at the Ford Foundation, Assistant to the Solicitor General at the U.S. Department of Justice, and Associate Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense fund.



Will Rosado (penciller/inker)

Will Rosado started his career at Marvel drawing "G.I. JOE!" and at DC as the regular artist on "The New Teen Titans" and "Green Arrow." Additional projects include: "Detective Comics," "Nightwing," "Robin," "Birds of Prey," "Superman," "Flash," and "Deathstroke." He is also the original artist for the Puerto Rican superhero story, "La Borinqueña." Work from this book has been showcased in various exhibitions, most notably at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.



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About the Creators



Gan Golan (writer/artist)

Gan Golan is an activist, illustrator, and New York Times bestselling author who has been working for decades to help movements for human rights, equity and democracy. His critically-acclaimed graphic novel “The Adventures of Unemployed Man” played a role in the Occupy Wall St. movement. He was a lead designer of The People’s Climate March, one of the largest climate mobilizations in history. He is a co-creator of the “Climate Clock,” a global art project that counts down the critical time window remaining for humanity to act on climate.



Karl Moline (penciller/inker)

Karl Moline was an acclaimed artist best known for his co-creation, Melaka Fray (the Vampire Slayer of the future), with Joss Whedon in “Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Fray,” as well as “Route 666.” He worked on a range of other titles, including: “Superboy,” “Supergirl,” “Avengers Arena,” “Avengers Academy,” “Rogue,” “Spider-Man Unlimited,” and “Vampirella.”



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Discussion Questions



1. The United States is a representative democracy. How do the events that take place in “1/6” challenge this form of government?
2. How and/or why should American citizens participate in democracy?
3. What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens and their elected leaders?
4. How was the January 6 insurrection connected to social justice, political and economic issues?
5. What actions do various characters take to protect their understanding of democracy? Do you agree or disagree with their activities?
6. What role does the media play in the story? Consider the function of the television news station and/or social media, how does the information shared impact the actions of various characters?



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Discussion Questions



7. Issue #2 features the attempt to count the Electoral College ballots during a joint session of Congress on January 6, as well as the attempt to substitute “Fake Electors” for the actual ones. What role does the Electoral College play in selecting the president of the United States? How did the attempt to substitute fake electors threaten the integrity of that process?

8. Some of the characters in “1/6” are misled by misinformation and intentional disinformation. How can everyday people verify that the information they receive is accurate and complete? What harm can false information do to our democracy or society?

9. Issue #2 includes a White Nationalist “Unite the Right” rally that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, 2017 and resulted in the death of a young woman. What is White Nationalism and how does it contrast with the American ideal that we are all created equal?

10. Issue #1 features a repressive authoritarian state that rises in the wake of a successful insurrection, as well as characters resisting that repression. What are the characteristics of authoritarianism? How does it contrast with the tenets of democracy?

11. In Issues #1-3, there are several panels without any text at all. In what ways do the wordless panels invite readers to create their own meaning or to draw their own conclusions?

12. Why do you think the authors chose a graphic novel format to revisit this moment in history? How does the combination of words and images impact your experience or memory of these events?



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Activities and Assignments



Activity #1: Read the Bill of Rights

Break students into small groups. Have students read the document and consider which rights were impacted during the events of “1/6.” Students should match the Bill of Rights Amendments to specific activities from the story. Bring the entire class together afterwards to compare their observations.

Activity #2: Write to your Local Elected Official

Assign an activity in which students write to their local elected official. Develop a list of issues raised within the “1/6” story. Using the [ACLU’s Tips on Writing to Your Elected Officials](#), allow students to select one issue from the group-generated list OR propose an issue of their own to present in the letter. Encourage students to conduct research to support their main points and propose a possible solution.

Activity #3: Free Speech and Censorship

Organize students in pairs of two. Ask students to read the American Library Association’s [First Amendment & Censorship](#) article. First discuss and define the term “censorship.” Next, have one student create a list of reasons why “1/6” should be a banned book based on the reading. Have the other student create a list of reasons why “1/6” should not be a banned book. Consider why or why not this graphic novel might be considered “dangerous”? Reconvene the class and ask each group to present one of the reasons and how/why they came to this conclusion.



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Activities and Assignments



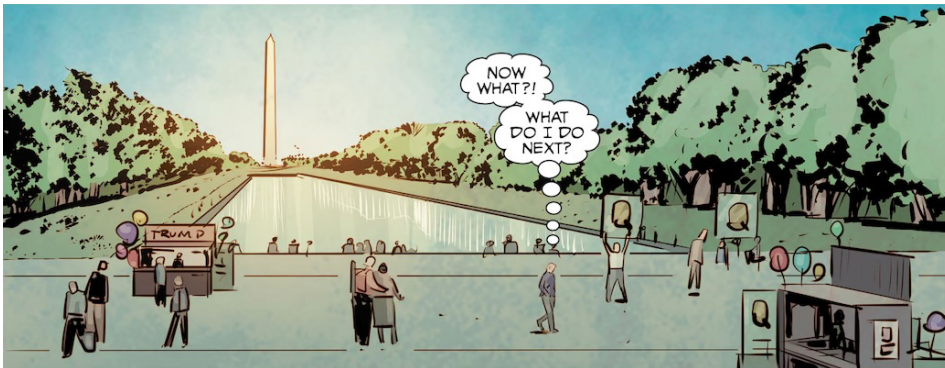
Activity #4: Fact Check

After reading Issues #1-2 of “1/6,” refer to the “documented panels” (these double-lined panels reflect factual events supported by legal documents, sworn testimony, or in journalistic reporting). Have students answer one of the following prompts using the graphic novel and resources provided in the “Additional Reading & Research” section:

- In what ways did misinformation prompt violence?
- How did participants in the activities of “1/6” attempt to stop the certification of the election results?
- Why did participants attempt to install fake electors?

Activity #5: Visualizing the Story

Using Issue #2, break students into small groups. This issue of the graphic novel has three different types of visual panel borders. Have one group only read the “documented panels,” a second group only examine the “speculative panels,” and a third group only review the “fictional panels.” After discussing their individual panels in small groups, bring the entire class together afterwards to discuss how their



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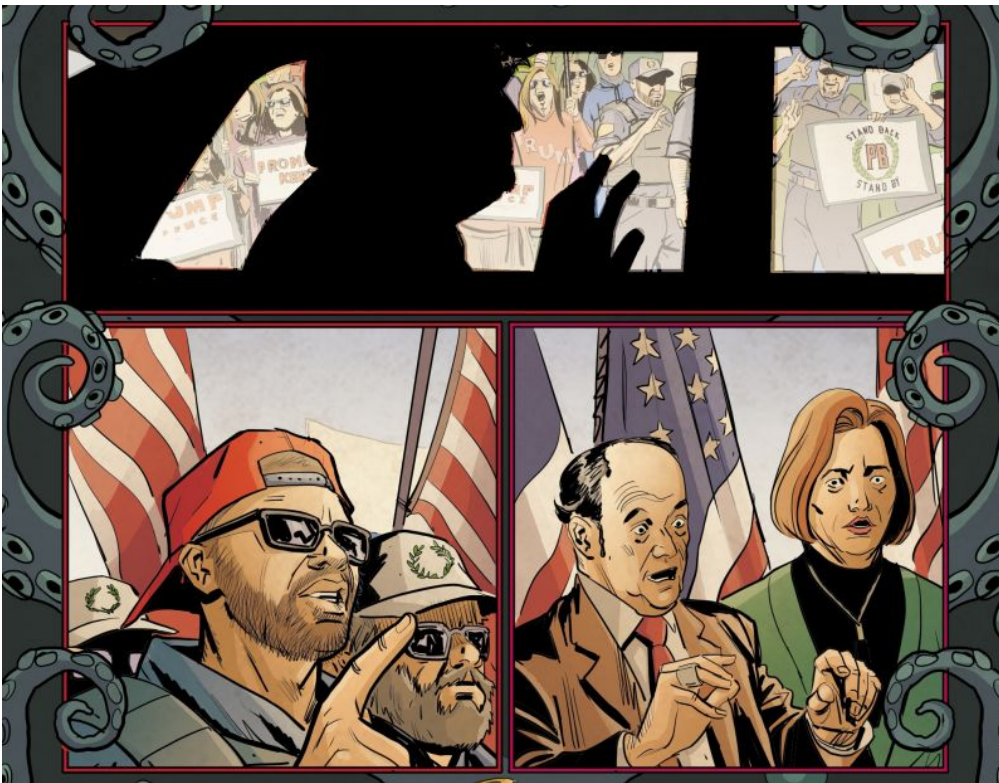
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Activities and Assignments



Activity #6: Generating Dialogue

Select a panel from Issues #1-3 without any text. Allow students to generate their own speech bubbles to accompany the images. Create a classroom gallery using the student work and compare/contrast the different versions of the scene.

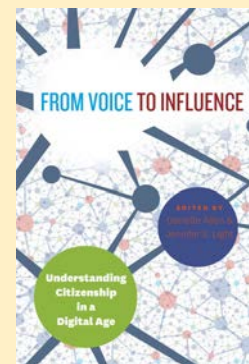


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Additional Reading and Research



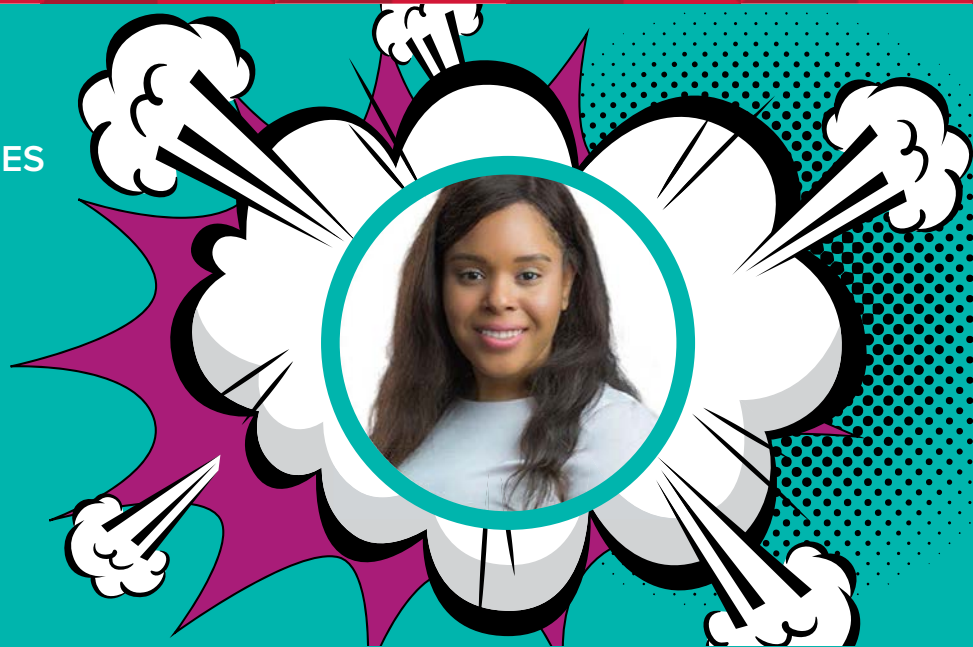
1. Final Report of the Select House Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol
2. American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith
3. Freedom of Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly, and Petition
4. The Civically Engaged Reader
5. From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in a Digital Age



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About the Educator



Kishauna Soljour is an Assistant Professor specializing in Public Humanities and African Diaspora Studies. Prior to joining SDSU, she was an Andrew W. Mellon Public Humanities Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor of History at Sarah Lawrence College.

Dr. Soljour received her Ph.D. in History from Syracuse University in 2019. Her latest publication, "The Search for Truth and Justice: A Diasporic Black Freedom Struggle," examines convergences and divergences in moments of protest across the Black Atlantic diaspora in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Soljour's research and teaching interests include Global, Public and Environmental Humanities. She also teaches a course entitled, "Social Movement, Social Media, Social Justice," that examines the linkages between activism and the impact of media on these social justice efforts.

