

Infographics

Part 2:

Practical Ideas for Your School Library

Annette Lamb and Larry Johnson

Infographics are being created across content areas to share complex ideas in a quick visual format.

How can the power of infographics be put to good use by teacher librarians in the school library? Let's examine practical ways to infuse infographics into the school library collection, activities for twenty-first-century learners, and as part of library marketing and promotion.

INFOGRAPHICS AND THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Although it's possible to locate thousands of infographics using a Google Images search, consider enhancing your library's physical and virtual collection with specific books and websites that incorporate infographics.

PHYSICAL COLLECTION

Many new series books for youth are incorporating infographics as the main approach for conveying information.

The Super Science Infographics series from Learner Publications provides many examples that students can discuss and evaluate. Books include *Solar System*, *Weather and Climate*, *Energy and Waves*, *Forces and Motion*, *Life Science*, and *Natural Disasters*. Owl-kids Books has a similar series focusing on science topics, including such books as *Planet Earth* and *The Natural World* by Jon Richards.

Animal Infographics by Chris Oxlade is one of a number of new books

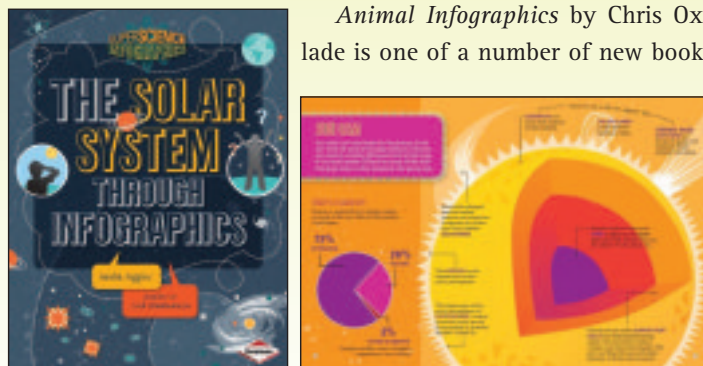


Figure 1a,b. *Super Science Solar System through Infographics* cover and page.

from Capstone's Infographics: Read Me! series focusing on infographics for younger children.



Figure 2a,b. Capstone's Infographics: Read Me! series title *Animal Infographics* cover and page.

The I See What You Mean series from Big Picture Press also weaves infographics throughout the book. Titles include *Human Body* and *Animals*.

Annick Press's *Native Americans: A Visual Exploration* by S. N. Paleja provides a wonderful introduction to American Indians. This engaging book serves as a great starting point for social studies investigations.

A growing number of books are weaving infographics into their informational books. Many of the books in Scholastic's Discover More Readers series contain infographics, along with opportunities for leveled reading.

VIRTUAL COLLECTION

Many online magazines and websites contain collections of infographics designed specifically for youth. The Kids Discover website (<http://goo.gl/4kBvgG>) posts infographics on such topics as Mesopotamia, simple machines, and anatomy.

Many publishers are now incorporating infographics into their publications. For instance, Scholastic's *Scope Magazine* publishes infographics like "The Perfect Meal" (<http://goo.gl/nHK08W>) to jumpstart writing activities. This subscription-based magazine is available in both print and online.

National Geographic is another company that is weaving infographics into their publications and websites. "Change the Course" (<http://goo.gl/mwdnk6>) explores the importance of freshwater sources. Again, both print and online versions are available of many National Geographic publications.

Use virtual infographic collections for inquiry-based learning activities. Ask students to select from the dozens of infographics available at Live-Science (<http://goo.gl/bn-3Vzf>) or History Channel (<http://goo.gl/TQx3bc>). Encourage youth to generate their own questions and fact-check the information on the page.



Figure 3. "The Perfect Meal" from Scholastic's *Scope Magazine*.

INFOGRAPHICS AND THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY LEARNER

When infographics are used in conjunction with activities that require reading and critical thinking, students develop important, transferable skills. The AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner require that students can evaluate, analyze, interpret, and apply information sources including infographics. Develop activities that engage youth in using infographics effectively.

BRAINSTORM DISCUSSIONS

Use an infographic to jumpstart a discussion related to some aspect of digital citizenship or information inquiry. For instance, involve small groups in discussing the Wikipedia infographic at <http://goo.gl/ijiCv1>. Ask them to talk about their own use of print encyclopedia and online reference resources.

FACT-CHECK INFOGRAPHICS

Provide a small group of children with biographies such as *Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman and *Abraham Lincoln* by George Sullivan. Ask them to compare the book with the facts in the Abraham Lincoln infographic at <http://goo.gl/c3DMv1>.

TRACE THE ORIGIN

Teach young people the value of infographics by encouraging students to evaluate and trace the origin of an infographic on a particular subject. For instance, a class reading books about the Holocaust, such as *The War within These Walls* by Aline Sax, might search for an info-

graphic about the Holocaust. Then track the origin of the infographic and speculate on why a particular individual or group might have created it for this topic. For instance, history museums and nonprofit organizations are two groups that have published infographics on this topic.

COMPARE VISUAL PRESENTATION

Involve students in comparing multiple infographics on the same topic. For instance, search for “Mars Rover infographic” to identify more than a dozen different examples. Ask youth to compare the types of information found and the approaches to presenting the information visually. Finally, ask them to write about what they think should go in an effective infographic on the Mars Rover. Use the book *The Mighty Mars Rovers: The Incredible Adventures of Spirit and Opportunity* by Elizabeth Rusch for additional information.

TRACE CHANGE AND MOVEMENT

Many infographics incorporate a chronology to express how something changes or evolves over time. While time lines may be an important element of this type of infographic, other types of visuals may also be used. For instance, a map may be used to trace movement of people or migration patterns of animals. “The Threat of Asian Carp” infographic (<http://goo.gl/ASTFdD>) shows the movement of this invasive species through Chicago’s waterway system. Ask students to brainstorm other types of changes or movements that would be made into infographics.

INNOVATE STUDENT PRODUCTS

Books such as National Geographic’s *Kids United States Atlas* use infographics to display information about states. Weave these ideas into a new approach to the traditional states report assignment. *The Animal Book: A Collection of the Fastest, Fiercest, Toughest, Cleverest, Shyest—and Most Surprising—Animals on Earth* by Steve Jenkins weaves infographics throughout. The illustrations incorporate many different types of charts and graphics, giving students lots of ideas for their own animal projects. This book is also available as an iPad app.

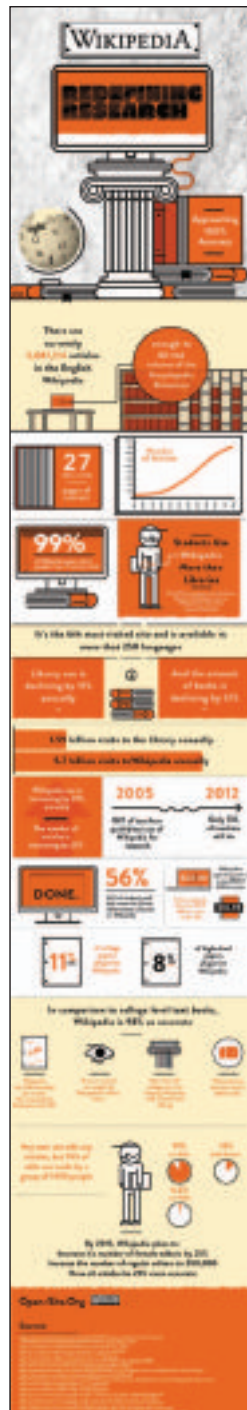


Figure 4. Wikipedia infographic.



Figure 5a,b. The app version of *The Animal Book* by Steve Jenkins.

EXPLORE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Use an infographic to kick off a reading project focusing on intellectual freedom. Explore the “Top Ten Challenged Books” infographic (<http://goo.gl/4cYnTx>), then ask students to read one of the books, write about why they think it’s controversial, and discuss whether they agree with the categories identified in the infographic.

APPLY AN INFOGRAPHIC

Ask students to apply something they’ve learned from an infographic. For instance, the “Get More out of Google” infographic (<http://goo.gl/1X71xI>) shares many ideas

for using Google more effectively. Ask students to try out some of the ideas, learn more about Google, then create their own “Google Tips” infographic to share search strategies.

COMPARE IDEAS

Infographics are an effective way to make comparisons. Search for “comparison infographic” in Google Images. You’ll find comparisons of Mac and PC, how cars versus people burn fuel, and eating meat versus fish. Examine a comparison of George Orwell versus Aldous Huxley at <http://goo.gl/z9sisN>. Ask youth to think about other authors and works that could be compared.

Ask students to compare two individuals. For instance, you can locate an infographic comparing Kobe Bryant with Michael Jordan. Books like *Black & White: The Confrontation between Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth and Eugene “Bull” Connor* by Larry Dane Brimner and *Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass: The Story Behind an American Friendship* by Russell Freedman could get some ideas flowing.

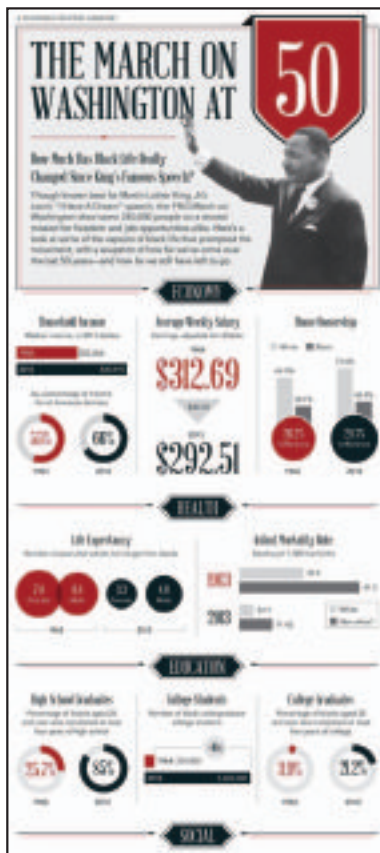


Figure 6. “The March on Washington at 50: Then and Now.”

Making then and now comparisons is another effective approach. For instance, “The March on Washington at 50” infographic (<http://goo.gl/mROhYI>) compares the life of black Americans in 1963 with 2013. Do a search for “then and now infographic” for lots of examples that compare the past with the present.

INFOGRAPHICS IN LIBRARY MARKETING AND PROMOTION

From bulletin boards and displays to handouts and posters, think about how you can use the power of infographics in your school library for marketing and promotion.

DISPLAY IDEAS

The GoodReads website is producing some great infographics related to books and reading, like “Dystopian Books Again Seize Power” (<http://goo.gl/EEd8NZ>). Create a display with the infographic along with the books mentioned in the visual. Check out

other Goodreads infographics at <http://goo.gl/sda9fT>.

Promote reading and encourage youth to explore new genres by integrating infographics into library bulletin boards. For instance, steampunk is hot. Set up a display with new book titles like *Etiquette & Espionage* by Gail Carriger along with recent favorites like *Leviathan* by Scott Westerfeld. Include the “IBM Steampunk” infographic (<http://goo.gl/7aPtIX>) that predicts the popularity of steampunk. Incorporate a survey asking youth whether they think steampunk is “hot” or “not.”

Use an infographic to provide choice in reading. Identify an infographic on different types of music. For instance, begin with the “Hip Hop” infographic (<http://goo.gl/GmafWS>), then share a set of books related to the topic, such as *When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation*

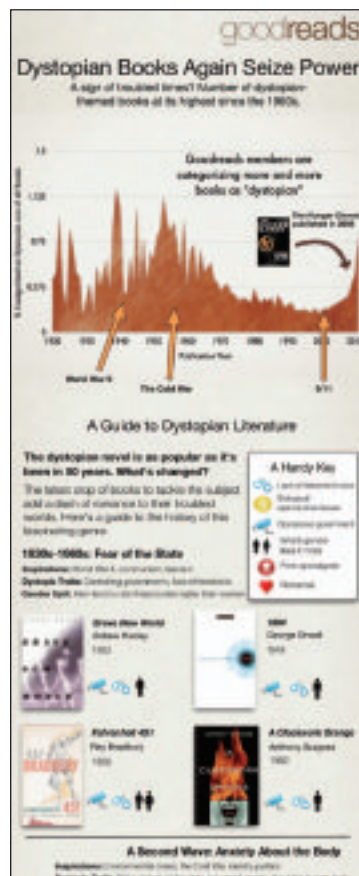


Figure 7. “Dystopian Books Again Seize Power” infographic from GoodReads.



Figure 8a,b. “The Learning Power of Lego” infographic and *LEGO Play Book* by Daniel Lipkowitz.



Figure 9. "Most Loved Children's Books."

of *Hip Hop* by Laban Carrick Hill. These infographics and book sets could kick off literature circle activities.

Connect books and infographics with hands-on activities. For instance, Legos are popular with youth. Books like *The Lego Ideas Book* and *LEGO Play Book* by Daniel Lipkowitz provide children with lots of ideas. "The Learning Power of Lego" infographic (<http://goo.gl/YcdyDr>) provides background information about Legos. Combine the book and infographic with hands-on Lego activities.

Think about topics that appeal to young adults. For instance, teen boys are often interested in facial hair. Combine *The Facial Hair Handbook* by Jack Passion with the infographic "All You Need to Know about Facial Hair" (<http://goo.gl/XiYPH5>) in a display promoting informational books and leisure reading.

Beyond the walls of your library, post infographics related to reading in the lunchroom, hallways, and teacher's lounge. For instance, "Libraries Are Forever: E-books and Print Books Can Coexist" (<http://goo.gl/vLbfw8>) explores books, reading, and libraries. "Most Loved Children's Books" (<http://goo.gl/RRVF41>) is another infographic that promotes an interest in books and reading.

READ-ALIKE IDEAS

Young people often seek books that are similar to ones they have enjoyed in the past. Think about infographics you could create yourself based on the books in your collection. Consider how you could expand the read-alike idea to create a flowchart. For instance, NPR's "Fantasy vs SciFi" (<http://goo.gl/dFQi8k>) infographic provides a guide to navigating top books. Think about how a flowchart like this could be used to help youth locate a book of interest. You might focus on a type, such as narrative nonfiction, or a genre, such as realistic fiction. How could this approach be used as part of your readers' advisory program?

The "Find Your Next Book" infographic (<http://goo.gl/w6kXbd>) helps children and their parents find good books. Involve classes at different grade levels in creating their own flowcharts based on books at their reading levels.

The EpicReads website takes a slightly different approach to the read-alike poster. The "Like, Try, Why" read-alike posters (<http://goo.gl/UCOEOs>) would be easy to replicate for a variety of genres.

The Lawrence Public Library has a series of read-alike flowcharts (<http://goo.gl/ZDVEhg>) that help young adults pick good books. These flowcharts could be created in a basic software program such as Microsoft Word.

STUDENT PRODUCTIONS

Get young people involved in creating infographics to share in the library. For instance, students could create an infographic for their favorite book. Use some



Figure 10. NPR's "Fantasy vs SciFi" infographic.



Figure 11. Harry Potter infographic.

online examples for ideas such as a Harry Potter infographic (<http://goo.gl/raLFjl>).

Young people love to do research on pets. Rather than a general report on a pet, ask students to focus on a specific aspect of pet care. Use the "Brush Up! Dog Dental Care" infographic (<http://goo.gl/q2EiLy>) to get youth thinking about the options. Hold a pet show in the library where students can share their infographic and the books they read. Invite a speaker to talk about pet care.

CONCLUSION

Infographics have become a popular resource for quickly accessing complex information. Teacher librarians can enhance their physical and virtual collections through incorporating quality materials that incorporate infographics. In addition, our twenty-first-century learners need to be able to effectively use these infographics. Engaging activities that involve students in evaluating, using, and creating their own infographics can enhance their information and technology skills. Finally, infographics provide a wonderful opportunity to enhance library marketing activities through displays, posters, handouts, and other items that incorporate infographics.

Adapted from the professional development workshop Infographics & Inquiry: Practical Ideas for School Libraries.