

My Simple Show

<https://www.mysimpleshow.com/>

My Simple Show is a video making Web 2.0 tool to make explainer videos. It uses cartoon like images the user can choose. The user can also upload images or photographs for the video. Unlike a comic strip tool or presentation tool, this video tool makes the content come to life with a voice over and the movement of the images.

Ease of use

My Simple Show is easy to use. A video explaining how to create each part of the video appears every time a new video is being made unless the user decides for them to not show up. This video tool provides a template for the user to write a script. The script becomes the voice over in the video. The templates describe what kind of information should go in each place. There are also text examples of what to write. Deciding on images is also made easy because key words are highlighted in the text with matching images appearing in a separate box to choose from.

Site Support

Internet access and a computer is all that is needed to use this tool.

Audience

Students from fourth grade through twelfth grade can use My Simple Show to make videos. Teachers can also use it in lessons.

Educational Version

An educational version is available free of cost. This version allows for up to 50 students with some additional features such as team collaboration, recording a person's voice, and providing background music choices.

Strengths

The ordered stages: draft, write, visualize, and finalize that My Simple Show makes the user go through to create a video is strength. It keeps the development of the video organized for the user. The step by step explanations for each part of the new video and examples in the template are a strength of this tool too.

Weaknesses

Many of the features require the user to have the upgraded version that costs extra money. This tool might be too simple for some users because only hand animations are used. Even though the color of the cartoon sketches can be changed, each sketch can only be one color.

Ideas for Use

Students can create their own video as a final product for an assignment. It could tell about a book character or another person's life for a biography. The video can explain a historical event

or science topic. Teachers can make a video to introduce a topic or idea. They can also use it to flip the classroom, so students can watch the video as homework then discuss it in school the next day.

Piktochart

<https://piktochart.com/>

Piktochart is a presentation Web 2.0 tool used to make visuals such as infographics, slides, and printables. Users can present information in an engaging way by including graphics, maps, charts, photos, and even videos all on one canvas. Unlike a video that moves, Piktochart displays information on a still canvas. This allows the audience to explore the presented information at their own pace and in any order.

Ease of Use

Piktochart is easy to use. Users can click and drag various features onto their visual. There are templates that make creating easy. The templates also offer suggestions of what to add or use in each space such as how many lines of text should be in a certain box or what kind of image works well in an area. A menu bar on the left organizes the features such as graphics, uploads, background, text, color scheme, and tools. Even a graph is easy to create by choosing the kind of graph and filling in the data in the appropriate spaces.

Site Support

Internet access is needed to use this site.

Audience

Piktochart is intended for third grade through twelfth grade. Students and teachers can use it.

Educational Version

There are two educational versions available for purchase: Individual Pro and Classroom Pro. The Individual Pro is \$39.99 for one account for 12 months. The Classroom Pro is \$120.00 for 30 accounts for four months. Both offer additional features such as 600 templates, password protection for published visuals, saving visuals as a PDF, custom color schemes, and animates icons.

Strengths

A strength of this tool is the amount of choice for the user. The user can choose from different layouts, graphs, images, and colors. Sections called blocks can be added or deleted to fit the users' needs. The ability to turn the visual into a slide presentation is also a strength. This feature makes each block a different slide. The option for final products to be shared with a link or saved offline as an image file is also a strength.

Weaknesses

The free version has fewer options than a paid version such as number of templates and access to animated icons.

Ideas for Use

Piktochart can be used by students to make a visual for a biography or book character, present research information, display data, create a comparison chart, or make a timeline. Teachers can use it as a pathfinder for a research paper, a guide for students at a computer center, a class syllabus or daily schedule. Teachers can use Piktochart to present supplemental material for a unit in an organized and engaging manner.

Pixton

<https://www.pixton.com/>

Pixton is a comic Web 2.0 tool that allows users to create a comic strip, story board, or graphic novel one panel at a time. Like Piktochart, these comics are not animated and move like a video tool would allow. The use a comic tool can still be used to explain concepts like My Simple Show versus a display of information like Piktochart.

Ease of Use

Pixton is very user friendly. A menu of self-explanatory buttons appears for each panel to create a story. There is a variety of choices for backgrounds, characters, and props for each panel. Pixton duplicates each panel, so a new panel does not have to be made from scratch. There are many options to manipulate characters to customize the story such as changing the position or facial expression. Items can be easily moved by clicking and dragging them. Comics can be saved for later in Pixton, downloaded, or published online.

Site support

Internet access and a computer is all you need.

Audience

Pixton would be appropriate for students in upper elementary through high school.

Educational version

Pixton offers a subscription version for teachers at an average cost of \$2 per student. This version includes rubrics for assessment.

Strengths

The wide variety of options is a strength of Pixton including in the free version. Another strength is Pixton allows your own images to be uploaded as well as offering creative commons images.

Weaknesses

The user cannot draw on the panel because there is no drawing tool.

Ideas for Use

Pixton can be used to teach sequencing. As students create a comic strip, the panels help them organize the events in order. A teacher can create a comic strip and leave a panel empty, then students need to create a single panel to fill the missing one. This activity teaches sequencing and predicting. Teachers could make a comic strip and leave out the speech bubbles. Students would write the speech bubbles. Since comic strips are short, they can be used for students to summarize stories. Pixton can also be used for students to illustrate and explain science concepts or math word problem.