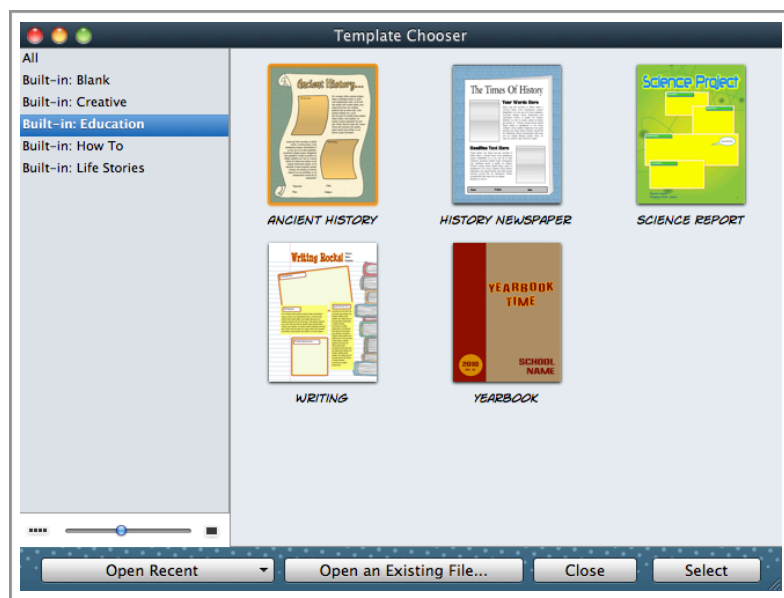# Getting started with Comic Life

The Comic Templates Window

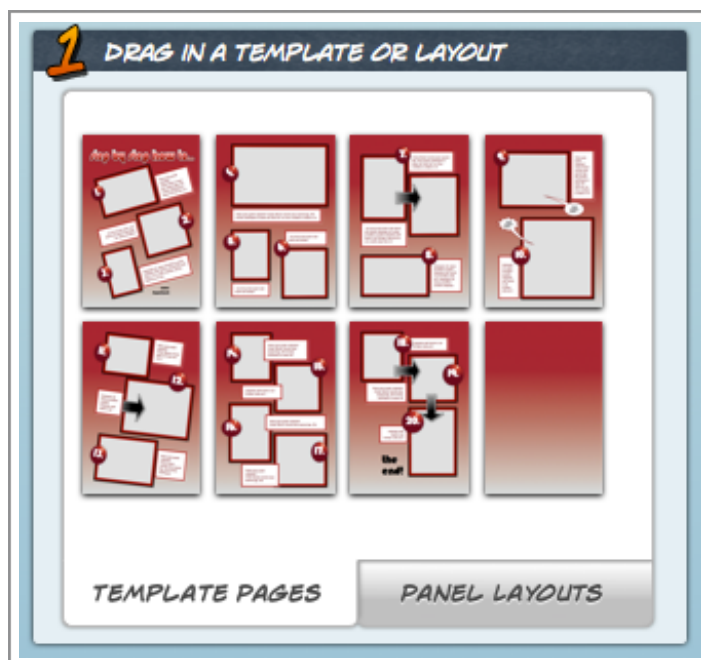You can choose from a variety of templates when you launch Comic Life…

The Comic Life Window

The Comic Life application is divided into several different areas. You simply drag and drop the elements you wish to use in your project onto the working area.
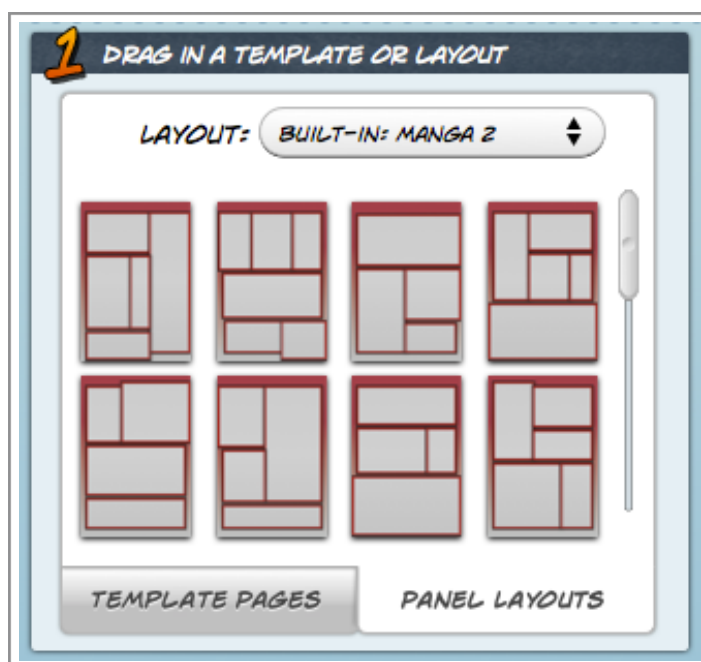
Page Templates

Choose one of the many comic page styles and page templates. Drag and drop the page template on to the working area. You can use as many different page templates as you wish. There are a variety of templates for you to explore and each has a rich array of page templates.
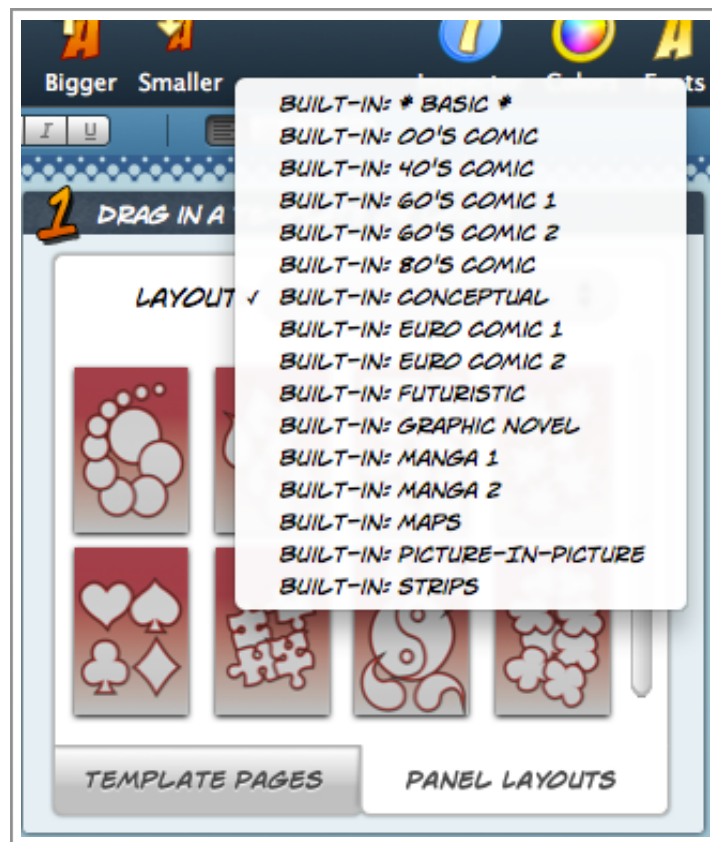

Panel Layouts

Choose one of the many panel layouts from the drop down menu. Drag and drop the panel layouts on to the working area. You can use a wide variety of panel layouts.

The application allows you to choose from panel layouts based on both traditional and contemporary comic book styles.
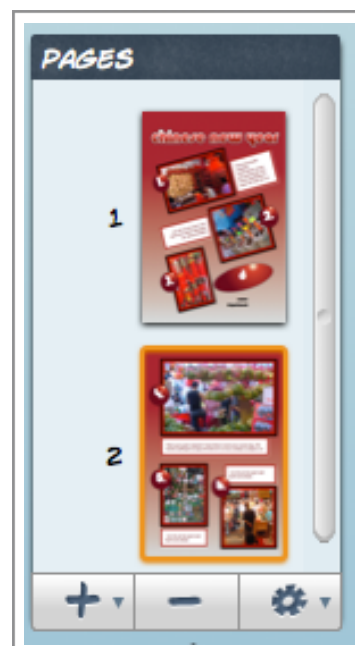

Working with page templates

In order to manage the individual pages in your Comic Life project you need to select Show Pages and Styles from the View menu.

Your pages appear as thumbnails on the left hand side of the screen. You can shift pages up and down to change their order. Each page consists of one or more cartoon panels.

You can add additional pages with specific layouts as well as deleting pages.

You can also copy and save page styles.

Working with Images

You can import digital images and live video captures into your project.

Choose from iPhoto, the "Finder" on a Mac, local directories on a PC or a video capture source for your images.

Simply drag and drop the images directly onto a panel or a page template.

Remember, locate and select the desired image from an image library in iPhoto (on a Mac) or explore the folders on your computer.

They will appear as thumbnails in the image pane.

Working with cartoon panels and images

You can simply drag and drop an image onto a cartoon panel or simply onto a template. You can resize the image to match the panel or even enlarge the image so that unimportant areas of the photograph are not visible. This is known as cropping. You can then focus on an important subject in the image.

In the example below the cartoon panel is selected. The large circular handle at the top of the cartoon panel allows you to rotate the panel on its axis. The square handles located on the corners and sides of the cartoon panel allow you to resize the panel.

In the second example below the image is selected. The large circular handle at the top of the image allows you to rotate the image on its axis. The square handles located on the corners and sides of the image allow you to resize the image.
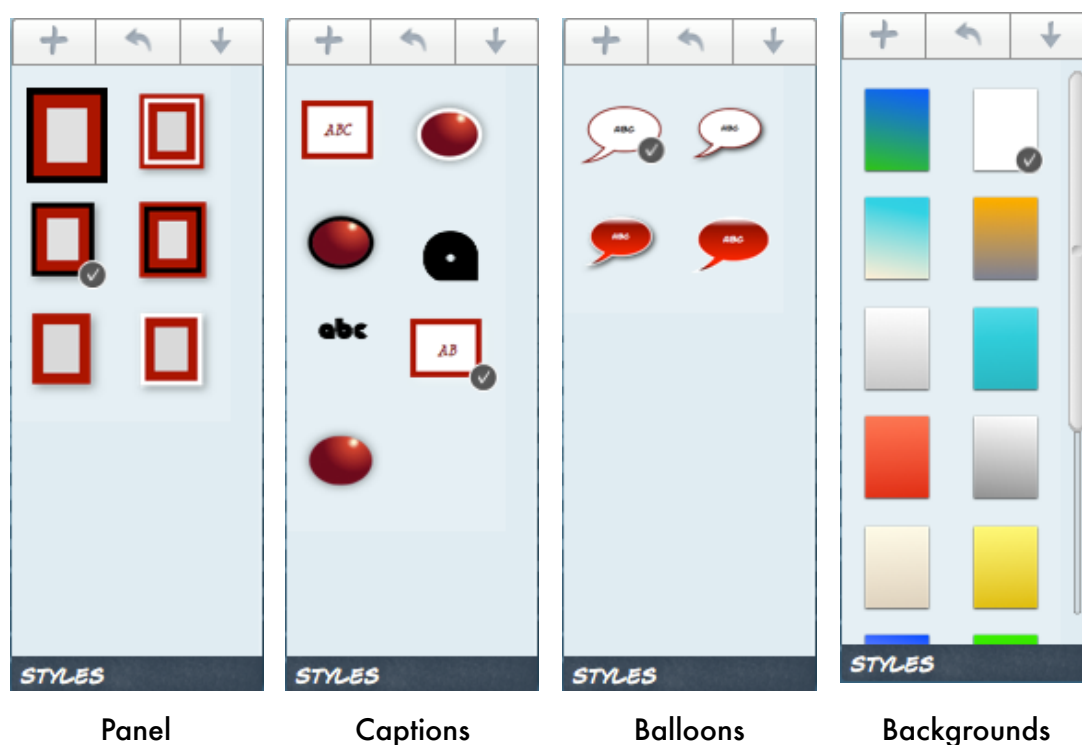

You may notice that the selection rectangle and the handles seem to *extend beyond* the borders of the image. This is due to the fact that cartoon panels enclose the image and through resizing you are able to *crop* the image and, as a result, highlight, specific subject matter within the image.

Working with styles

You can alter the style of every element in your project. You can change the style of the panels, images, word balloons, lettering and even the actual pages. There are an endless variety of styles.
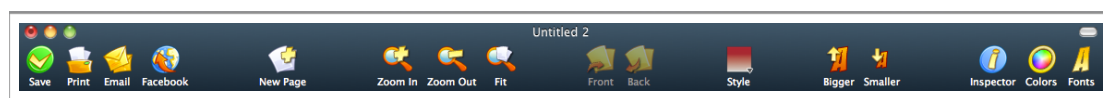
There are specific styles for themes as illustrated with the first three examples below. If you choose not to use a template theme you have access to all the possible styles. That is shown with the fourth example below.

There are a variety of template themes that you could use to give your project a consistent look and feel.

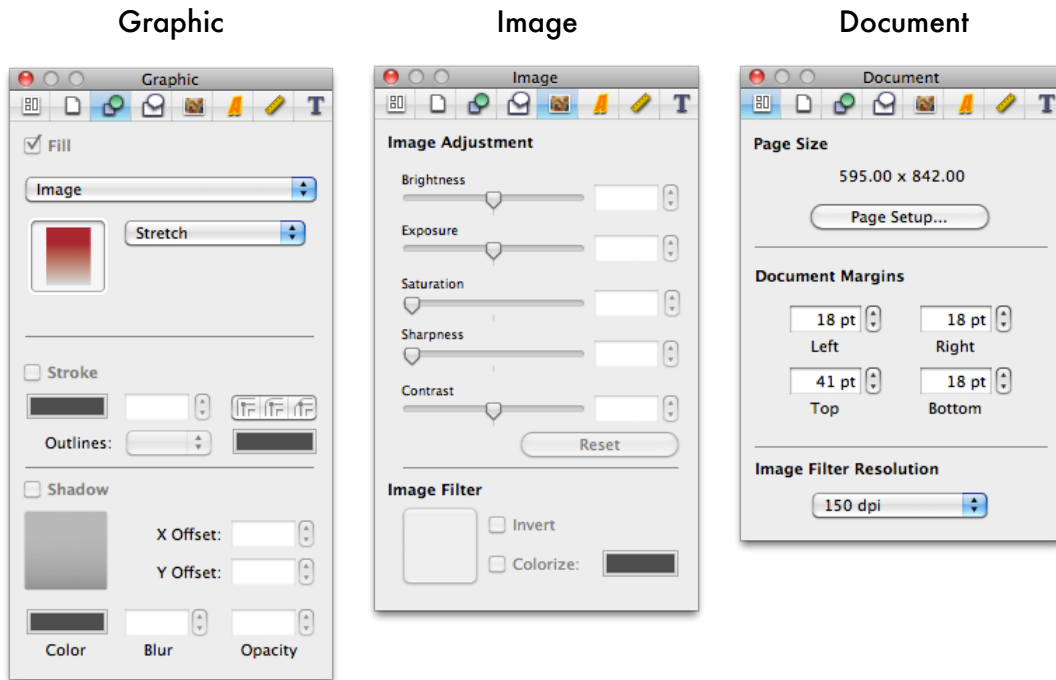| Panel	Captions	Balloons	Backgrounds

The Button Bar

Comic Life features a button bar across the top of the Comic Life window that allows you to access frequently used commands and features with a simple mouse click.

You can zoom into and out of your project, easily alter the size of selected text, change the layering of objects and access palettes such as the Inspector, Colours and Fonts.

The Inspector

You can view the Inspector by clicking on the Inspector button located at the upper right of the Comic Life window. It allows you to alter the settings for a variety of features including documents, graphics, balloons, captions, text, images, lettering, embedded files, colour and alignment. Three examples are illustrated below.

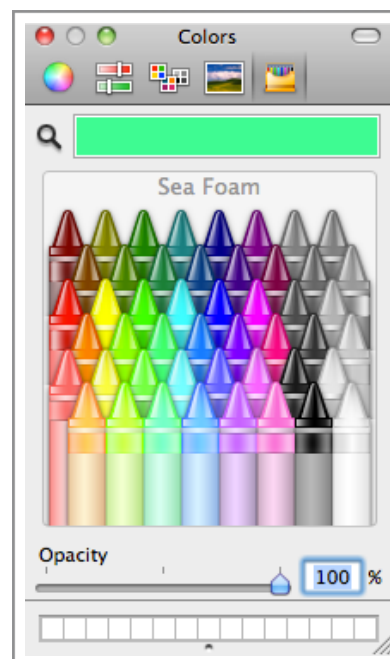Graphic   Image   Document

The Colour Palette

You can view the Colour Palette by clicking on the Colour Palette button located at the upper right of the Comic Life window.
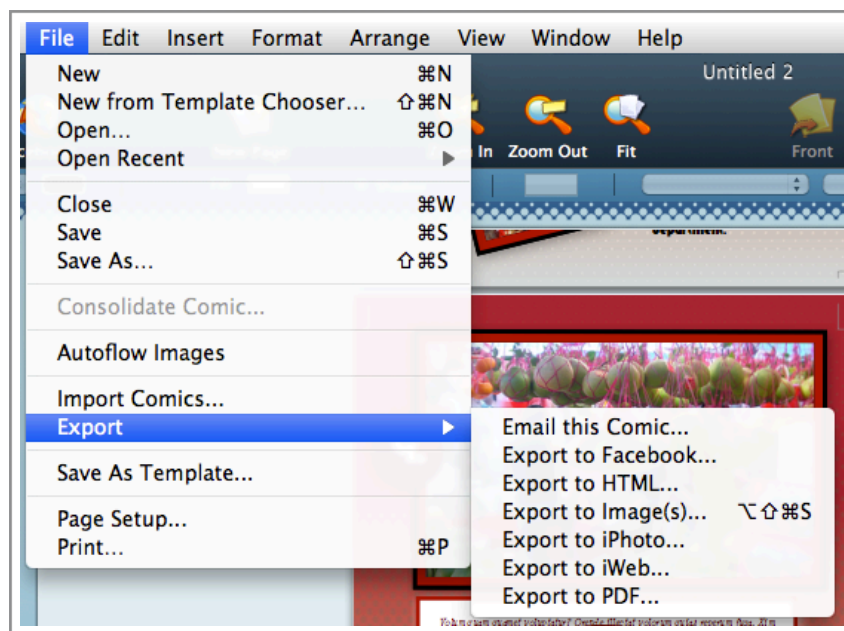
You can view the colour palettes in a variety of formats by clicking on the different choices across the top of the palette window.

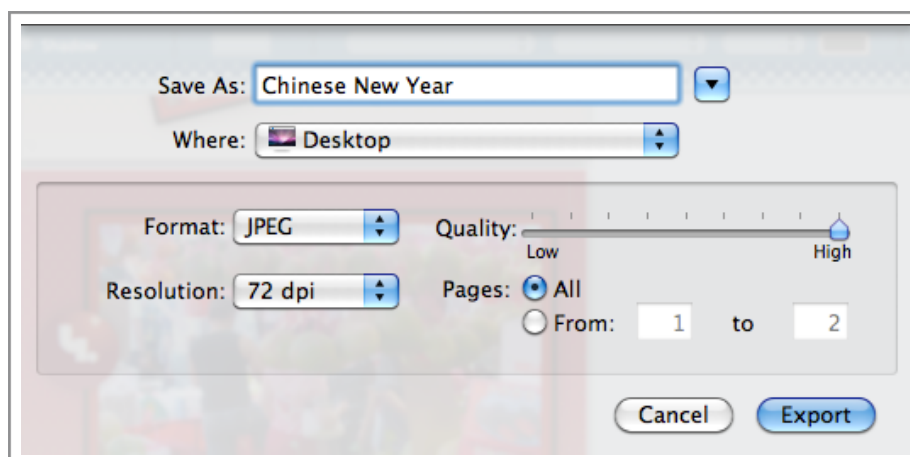It allows you to alter the specific colours of objects and elements in your project.

Exporting your completed project

When you have completed your project you can then choose export from the file menu. You may produce a web site, a collection of images, an iPhoto library or even a Quicktime movie. The export options vary with the Windows version of this application.

A number of the export choices allow you to set specific properties for your published output.

Links

> Comic Life Workshop: http://www.larkin.net.au/blog/2011/02/16/comic-life/