Make Your Child a Hero

Production Phase

After you have the narrative and graphics of your child's story, it is time to integrate the visuals into the narrative. My grandchildren's books involved very simple layouts. No bleeds, no two-page spreads, no text over visuals. Generally, I placed text on one page and an illustration on the facing page. If you want to add text on the same page as a graphic, type over graphics, or include features other than my simple layouts, there are a number of online tutoring options to show you how to do it.

If you are comfortable working with digital images downloaded from your camera or online resources, or are creating your own artwork and digitizing it, drawing directly on your computer screen, or performing some other electronic magic, you can skip this entire post and just do your thing.

For those who need tech help, **Derek Murphy** has several YouTube videos, ranging from basic to fairly sophisticated techniques of document enhancing and formatting. His video, "How to Add Images and Graphics into a Book in MS Word," demonstrates some professional-looking sophisticated options for adding graphics into a children's book. **AleeMicro** has a short, simple YouTube video, "How to Insert an Image into a Word Document," that demonstrates how to integrate a graphic and how to manipulate the graphic within any text document. **Rebecca Johnson**, with Lifewire, recently updated a similar video, "Insert Pictures and Clip Art in Microsoft Word." Her site references the latest versions of Word as well as earlier versions. I'm sure there are many more YouTube aids of this sort for PC and for Mac. (Sorry, Mac folks, for so little information for you, but I have no knowledge of Macs. I'm sure there are similar resources out there for you, and Mac has a much better reputation for ease of operation with text and graphics than Microsoft.)

When I did the layout for my first grandson's books, I used a physical cut and paste method to visualize the final look of each story. I saved the graphics and narrative in separate files and then printed each file and laid out the sheets of paper how I wanted them to appear on each page of the book. Since I was working with custom-made drawings rather than photos, I scanned the images and sent them to my computer. (If you don't know how to do that, take your photo card or paper images and a flash drive or your laptop computer to an office supply store like Staples or Office Max where they can scan and load your pictures for you).

 I matched up the pictures with the narrative pieces as a mock-up design layout. That way, it was easy to see whether text should be placed on the same page as the picture or if text should be on a facing

page when I could physically paste it in. With the first book, I simply printed the pictures file and the narrative file and slapped them together. With the second book, I elevated my game a little by doing the same layout of separate files for text and graphics, but created a third file to electronically compile the book. I also added text to a picture page in this book. Using the "Insert" option on the Ribbon in Microsoft Word (for PCs) I copied my pictures and text into the new "Complete Book" computer file. For me, it would have been too confusing to visualize and execute the mechanics of the layout initially on the computer. Making separate visual and text files and then copying them into a third book compilation file worked for me.

But this was a learning process. At first, I had a hard time controlling size, shape, and placement of the copied images. Images were indenting where I didn't want them to indent; they were splitting and gobbling up text and distorting like carnival house mirrors when I tried to move them. An online search told me how to make images behave, as I've highlighted below:

To RESTORE an imported graphic to its <u>original size,</u> press CTRL and double click the graphic.

To RESIZE an imported graphic (make it bigger or smaller) and keep in its ORIGINAL PROPROTIONS, drag a corner handle.

To resize an imported graphic and change its proportions, drag a middle handle.

I figured things out the hard way rather than viewing a few comprehensive tutorials first and going from there.

Final copies of the books were printed it on a heavy matte poster paper, both for the look and heft of the paper. (If I were to do it again, I'd probably use double-sided glossy photo paper, available from a mega-camera/photo supply store like Looking Glass in Berkeley). After I had the pages assembled in order, I had the books spiral bound at office supply stores.

What to do now: Compile your book and make your child a hero!