Hello Emanata Editor!

These guidelines are here to promote smooth editing and printing processes. Please refer to these guidelines when editing your contributors' comics.

General Guidelines:

- As a comic anthology, all submissions must be identifiable to the casual viewer as a comic. Collages, storyboards, and zine-style narratives are unable to be included.
- All comics must pertain to the theme.
- The title must be visible on the first page of each comic.
- Minimum one (1) page, maximum four (4) pages (title pages are included in the maximum number of pages).
- All comics must be black and white or grayscale. No color is permitted.
- Some variation of "The End" (Fin, End, etc.) must be included on the final page of each comic.

Title Page:

A title page is NOT REQUIRED. If your contributor chooses to include a title page, it will count towards the final page count of their comic (maximum four [4] pages). If your contributor chooses not to include a title page, the title of their comic MUST appear on the FIRST PAGE of their comic.

End:

"The End" or another variation (Fin, End, etc.) MUST appear on the FINAL PAGE of your contributor's comic. This can be a whole panel, a balloon, or just text.

Page Specifications for Digital Artists:

Please refer to the image on page two (2) of this document for digital page specifications. Alt text for this image is available on page three (3) of this document.

Emanata Page Specifications

This file is 300dpi.

The safety zone is 5 inches by 8 inches.
The trim is 5.25 inches by 8.25 inches.
The bleed is 5.5 inches by 8.5 inches.

Your panels should be drawn within the white box. Ideally, your panels are flush (or very close) to the purple.

Printers are not perfect. To account for this, we keep all important aspects of the comic within a safety zone. This way, even if the paper is trimmed incorrectly, only the margins are cut (instead of your artwork).

The trim is the white margin around any comic. This is the area that is liable to be mis-cut during printing. You can pretty much ignore it.

Finally, we have the "bleed". This is the gray area. You should only be drawing in this space if you want panel that goes to the very edge of the page. If you only drew your art to the purple line, but the paper was trimmed incorrectly, there would be a white border around your art.

Alt text:
Emanata Page Specifications
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Page Specifications for Traditional Artists:

Traditional artists must use 11” x 17” paper for their comic. The bleed for this size of paper is 0.5” around the edges, with the trim being 1” around the edges including the bleed. Scans for Pencils submissions, Inks submissions, Tones submissions, and Final submissions must be done using a scanning machine. Phone scanning is NOT ALLOWED after Scripts and Thumbnails submissions. All scans after Scripts and Thumbnails submissions must be 300 dpi.

Please continue to page four (4) of this document for the step-by-step process of editing a comic for Emanata.

EDITING A COMIC: STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Scripts & Thumbnails (Due October 18th, 2025 – NO EXTENSIONS!)

Thumbnails are a bare-bones draft of a comic. It is normal for them to resemble sketches more than a final product – characters and the environment can be drawn as outlines and text does not need to appear. Your contributor should include text boxes/balloon placement, panel shapes, and figure positions/poses in their thumbnails.

Your contributor's script should be a separate page from their thumbnails and should include all text that they plan to include in their comic. This includes their title, any narration, anything that is said by their characters, and their end note. Their script should be formatted similarly to that of a play, including stage directions. In other words, all actions in their comic should be described in the script. All contributors have been advised to include more detail in their script if their thumbnails are very loose in detail and vice versa.

What (and what not) to look for:

- Don't worry about file specs at this stage, other than ensuring that both your contributor's thumbnails and their script are submitted as PDFs.
- Comment on anything that isn't clear. For example, if a lack of detail makes it difficult to decipher your contributor's thumbnails, make note of that in your feedback.
- Figure anatomy does not need to be addressed at this stage.
- Make note if you are having difficulty deciphering your contributor's story. While detailed imagery is not important at this stage, the plot of their story should be fully developed and shown either through their thumbnails or their script (or, better yet, both).
- Please contact the Senior Editor (kalafutjs@vcu.edu) and/or Editor-in-Chief (perlowhr@vcu.edu) if you notice ANY hateful or discriminatory imagery or language present in your contributor's comic at ANY time. When in doubt, CONTACT US.

Your contributor is allowed to change the content of their comic between the Scripts & Thumbnails deadline and the Pencils deadline, and it has been made clear in the Contributor Guidelines that each contributor must contact their editor before doing so. If your contributor changes their content drastically, you may ask them to submit a new set of thumbnails and/or script. Disagreement between artist and editor regarding the feasibility of any changes should be presented to the Senior Editor (kalafutjs@vcu.edu).

Pencils (Due November 22nd, 2025 – Regular 2-Day Extensions Available, 7-Day Extensions Available at the Discretion of the Senior Editor [kalafutjs@vcu.edu])

The Pencils stage is where your contributor should flesh out their comic. Their characters, the environment, and text boxes/balloons should all be positioned here as they wish to have them positioned in their final product. All text should appear on the page at this stage, though its size, font, and otherwise style do not have to be set in stone. Character designs do not have to be fully fleshed out, but your contributor has been advised to have a grasp on what they want their characters to look like. Your contributor is not required to submit a script at or after this stage. FILE SPECS MUST BE ADHERED TO FROM THIS POINT FORWARD.

Transmitting information should be the main goal of your contributor's pencils, rather than perfecting their illustrations.

What (and what not) to look for:

- Check all file specs (correct file size, PDF format, title present, end note present) and make note of anything incorrect.
- This is the stage where you should note any underdeveloped anatomy in your contributor's comic.

Your contributor is allowed to change their text, character designs, and environment between the Pencils deadline and the Inks deadline, and it has been made clear in the Contributor Guidelines that each contributor must contact their editor before doing so. Again, any disagreement between artist and editor regarding the feasibility of changes being made should be presented to the Senior Editor.

Inks (Due January 17th, 2026 – Regular 2-Day Extensions Available, 7-Day Extensions Available at the Discretion of the Senior Editor)

Inks are where your contributor's line art should be finalized. The form and placement of all characters, environments, panels, text, and text boxes/balloons should all appear here as they wish to have them appear in their final product.

For traditional artists, inks should be drawn using black ink. Inks drawn using pencil are NOT ALLOWED.

Text should be present and its size, font, and otherwise style should be finalized. Text can either be hand-lettered or typed, and must be legible.

What (and what not) to look for:

- If your contributor is hand-lettering their text, make note of any instances where the text is difficult to decipher.
- If your contributor is not hand-lettering their text, make note of the legibility of their typeface and encourage them to change it if it is difficult to read.