

# How to make your own comic story

A cartoon tells a joke with one picture, a comic tells a story in a series of pictures.



Summer camp in Scotland



It can be a long story in a comic book, a short story or a joke in a comic strip (but it can be serious, it needn't be funny). Start with a comic strip and if you enjoy making it, you can go on and make a longer comic.

So what do you have to think about before you start to make your own comic?



## 1 The story:

It can be a simple story. Don't have too many people in it.



## 2 The people:

Think about things that make them different from each other

- a) in how they look and
  - b) in their character,
- so that your readers can recognize them easily in the pictures. Your 'people' can be real or aliens, modern or historical – they can even be animals.



### 3 The scenes:

Try to think of the story in scenes so that something happens in every picture. Try to tell the story in pictures without too many words. Don't have too many things happening in it. One action per picture is enough.



5. When Jaden and Chloé left the café, Chloé said she wanted to go to the movies.

### 4 The words:

There are two ways of using words in a comic.

- a) In a box or empty space in a picture at the top or bottom. You can use this to tell your readers when something happens, or to lead into the next picture:

*The next day ... / Later that evening ... / But ...*

- b) Use speech bubbles<sup>1</sup> to show what the people are saying. Make sure that the bubble for the first speaker is on the left: Readers look at the speech bubble on the left first and read from left to right. Don't put too many words into a speech bubble; you need space for the pictures!



<sup>1</sup>speech bubble ['spi:tʃ ,bʌbl] – Sprechblase

## 5 The pictures:

Use different ways of looking at the same scene, especially if your story stays in the same place with the same people for several pictures. Look at some of your favourite comic strips to see the ways the pictures are put together. Also think about the way a film director uses different shots in a film.

- a) You may want to start with a general picture to show where the people are. You can put in the first speech bubble coming from a small figure at the back or side of the scene.



- b) In the next picture you can show this figure and the people near him or her.

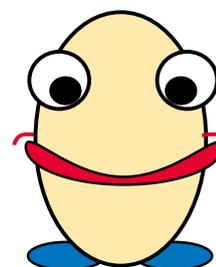


- c) After that, you could show just the face of a person who is talking, or show his / her reaction to something that was said in the picture before.



## 6 Drawing the pictures:

You needn't be good at drawing, but it helps! Remember that you needn't put in all the details in every picture. Sometimes you don't need any details at all, just the characters. If you aren't very good at drawing, try to make a comic strip with matchstick men<sup>2</sup> or any other simple figures.



## 7 Have fun:

Make the comic strip interesting for your readers. And have fun doing it!

<sup>2</sup>matchstick men ['mætʃstɪk ,mæn] – Strichmännchen