

# ***Comic Strips... Newspaper Capers***

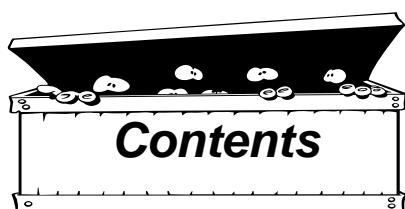
***...Using newspaper comic strips  
in classroom instruction***



***by  
John Guenther, Ed. D.  
and  
Ann West, M.S. Ed.***

***(Put Newspaper Logo Here)***

## Comic Strips...Newspaper Capers



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## **Introduction**

- At an increasing rate, educators at all levels and in all subject areas are discovering the positive benefits of using the daily newspaper in their classrooms. Educationally sound newspaper activities are supplementing the use of more traditional text material. As a resource, the newspaper is relevant, comprehensive, colorful, up-to-date, inexpensive and motivating.
- The newspaper's value as an aid to "life-long learning" is rarely questioned by educators who recognize the need to bridge the gap between the four walls of the classroom and the real world of adult life. Although all sections of a newspaper can be used as an aid to learning, the section that may in all likelihood have the most appeal is the comic strip section.
- The immense popularity of the comics provides us with a unique opportunity to "use what the students use" as part of the teaching-learning process. More specifically, newspaper comic strips are a valuable learning aid because...
  - ...they are a real part of the student's culture and, as such, are intrinsically motivating; they are read by a majority of students and adults.
  - ...they reflect our culture and mirror the issues and events of our daily lives; they provide a sense of involvement in the drama of today's world.
  - ...they are interesting, easy to read, compact in thought, simple and colorful; they include subject matter that deals with a full range of human emotions.
  - ...they are informative, consumable and universally available.
  - ...they help bridge the gap between the visual medium of television and conventional print material.
  - ...they appeal to all ages and levels of American society.
- As with the use of all teaching aids, our goals and objectives must determine the validity of using comic strips in the classroom. It makes sense, in any event, to consider the use of any resource that is relevant to students and might motivate them to learn.
- This book contains 69 comic strip activity sheets and 41 supplemental activities. Each activity has a clearly defined purpose and statement of student perceived outcomes. Some activities are interrelated, whereas others are independent. Some activities provide for enrichment experiences, while others are best for remediation or additional practice. The 69 activity sheets are supplemented by 40 activity cards. Categorized in the table of contents under *Comic Strip Understandings, Values and Human Behavior, Social Problems and Issues, Language Arts Foundations and Creative Writing/Development*, the activity pages and supplemental activities provide a comprehensive package for teacher selection.
- The activities are designed for students in grades four through twelve. All activities use the comic strips as the resource and are written to employ a variety of instructional strategies. Though comprehensive, the activities in this guide are just a beginning for the creative teacher.

### **The Authors**

#### **About the authors:**

Prior to his death, John Guenther was a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Kansas, Lawrence. He was actively involved in newspapers in education consulting as a trainer of teachers, as author of curriculum guides and articles on the topic and as member of the national NIE advisory board.

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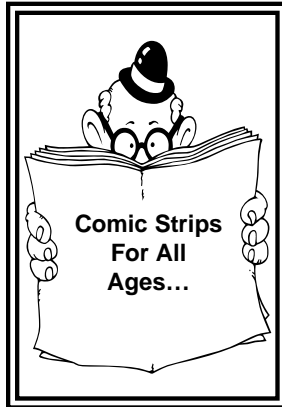
## ***Program Implementation***

There is no set strategy for implementing this comic strip program of activities. You should utilize the strategies that have proven successful for you in the past. It is hoped that the following suggestions, combined with your own ideas, may prove of value in designing a learning program focused on the use of newspaper comic strips.

1. Administer *The Great Comic Strip Survey* (page 80) to your students prior to using comic strips in your classroom studies. Their answers will be interesting and will help you plan your lessons.
2. Review the activity sheets and activity cards in the program.
3. Before implementing the program, collect as many newspaper comic strips as possible. There are over 300 syndicated comic strips.
4. The activities can be used in a variety of ways. Comic strips, for example, can be used to decorate creative and colorful learning centers, bulletin boards or notebooks.
5. If possible, prepare a comic strip bulletin board to create interest in your program. Some of the program activities ask students to display their work.
6. Consider how you will secure copies of newspaper comic strips for use with your students.
7. All activities are designed to be used with any newspaper's comic strips. Since there is a great deal of variation in the comic strips included in different newspapers, none of the activities is tied to a specific comic strip. You may want to add activities or tailor certain activities to your local newspaper.
8. No particular method of teaching is prescribed for using the program activities. All activity sheets are written directly to the student, so that the activities can be used independently by individual students, in cooperative learning or as whole class activities.
9. It is assumed that not all students will complete all activities. Giving the students some options or choices is strongly recommended.
10. The program can be used on a supplementary basis throughout the school year or can be organized into more specific units of instruction.
11. Every activity sheet can serve as a springboard for additional activities. You may, for example, want students to compare their responses on the activity sheets with the responses of other students or the total class.
12. Arrange for the delivery of newspapers to your school. The activities are designed with the understanding that, in general, each student will have access to their own set of newspaper comic strips—and other parts of the newspaper.

***The program activity sheets are designed to be photocopied for classroom use. Any other use is expressly restricted according to existing copyright laws.***

**Interest In The Comic Strips**



Many people who read newspapers also read the comic strips. Each reader, of course, may have different comic strips that they read on a regular basis. Some comic strips appeal to different age groups. Some, however, may appeal to all age groups. As readers grow older, sometimes their interest in certain comic strips change. Some adult readers continue to read comic strips that they have read since childhood. One thing you can be sure of is that newspapers are very careful when they make changes in the comic strips, since many readers have favorites that they have read for years.

- Look at the comic strips in your newspaper to decide which comic strips would be most likely to appeal to the different groups identified on the chart below.
- Write the name of each comic strip and place an **X** in the column(s) to identify which groups might likely read each comic strip you listed. You may believe, for example, that a comic strip would appeal to more than one group. Some comic strips may have a broad appeal to various age groups.

Comic Strip Name	Children	Teens	Adults	Men	Women

Topic: Reading Comic Strips



**Why Read Newspaper Comic Strips?**

Through the years, newspaper comic strips have remained popular with readers of newspapers. Some people who read comic strips would not watch a Saturday morning cartoon show under any circumstances. Have you ever wondered why comic strips are so popular?

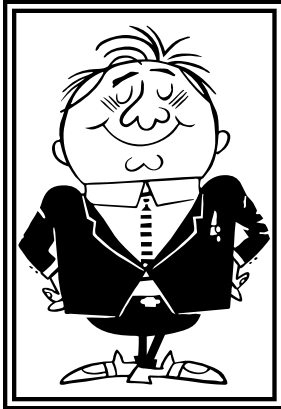
- Using your imagination, list in the space below at least five reasons why people might read the comics. You might find it helpful to ask some adults why they do or do not read the comics.
- Compare your list with those of your classmates. What, if anything, did they list that you did not include?



**Five Reasons Why I Think People Read Comic Strips**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Topic: Character Popularity



**Most And Least Popular Comic Characters**

People may choose to read comic strips, short stories or novels or watch their favorite television shows, movies or plays for entertainment. Whatever the choice of entertainment, some characters or players are likely to be more popular than others. Can you think of certain comic strip characters that are your most and least favorite?

- Clip pictures of any five comic characters from your newspaper. Paste each picture in any order in the space below. (Do not use more than two characters from the same comic strip.)
- Ask three of your classmates to rank each character pictured in order of popularity to them. (1-most popular; 5-least popular)
- Write a paragraph about what you discovered about your classmates' opinions on the back of this page or on a separate sheet of paper.

Character Picture & Name	<u>Student #1 Rankings</u>	<u>Student #2 Rankings</u>	<u>Student #3 Rankings</u>
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Topic: Making Choices



**Determine The Fate Of Certain Comic Strips**

Newspapers must often make serious decisions about the use of space in their newspapers. The number of comic strips carried in a newspaper may depend upon the newspaper's budget to buy certain comic strips and the availability of space in the newspaper for comic strips. If you have an opportunity to look at different newspapers, you may discover many different comic strips, as well as a great difference in the amount of space devoted to comic strips.

- Assume that due to a severe shortage of newsprint, your newspaper must reduce the number of comic strips it prints by 50%.
- Determine which comic strips must be eliminated by working in small groups (your own version of a newspaper's editors' meeting).
- As a group, you must come to an agreement on the fate of each comic strip. Will it be eliminated or retained? You must, as any editors would, make your decisions based upon your readers, not upon your personal taste. Remember that newspapers must try to satisfy readers with different interests and tastes.
- List the title of each of your newspaper's comic strips below and place an **X** in the appropriate column to reflect your group's decision.
- On a separate sheet of paper, each group member should explain how and why the group arrived at their decisions.

Comic Strip Name	Retain	Delete	Comic Strip Name	Retain	Delete



Topic: Scope Of Comics



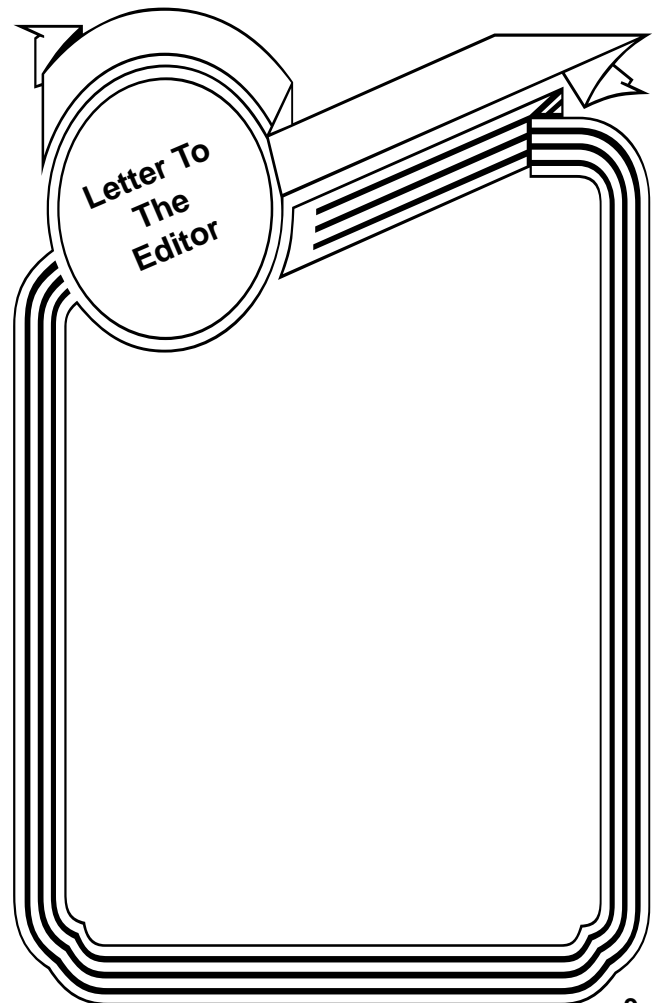
### Hundreds Of Comics From Which To Choose

A quick glance at comic strips in different newspapers will give us an idea that there are many comic strips available for publication in a newspaper. We also must realize that very few comic strips approach the popularity of some old, longtime favorites.

- Examine the comics in at least three other newspapers.
- List below a few of the comic strips that appear in your newspaper that do not appear in another newspaper.
- List also some comic strips that appear in the other newspaper that are not in your newspaper.
- Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper requesting that consideration be given to including some other comic strips that are not now in your newspaper. Be sure to explain why you think these comic strips should be included, other than the fact that *you* like them.

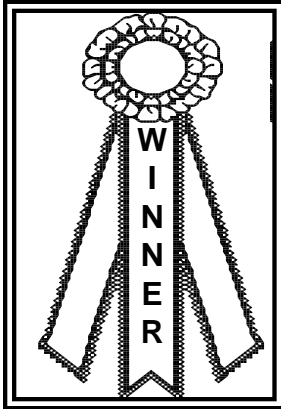
Comic Strips In My Newspaper

Comic Strips In The Other Newspaper




Letter To The Editor

### Members Of A Comic Strip Hall Of Fame



Certain comic strip characters are likely to be the first we call to mind when we are asked to select significant characters that most people would know. For whatever reasons, these comic strip characters are likely to live on in our imaginations for a long time and may hold a special place in the hearts of readers of newspapers around the world.

- Using your newspaper's comic strips, select at least ten characters who you would like to nominate for a comic strip Hall of Fame.
- List in the space provided the comic strip character's name, a brief description and the reason why you are "nominating" this character for such an honor.



## COMICS HALL OF FAME


<u>Character</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Reason For Selection For This Honor</u>



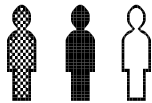
### Statements Of Opinion About Comic Strips

Even though comic strips are a form of entertainment, there are sometimes a number of issues related to comic strips. These issues may be of concern to readers, since newspaper management listens to public opinion in deciding which comic strips to include and which to exclude from the newspaper. What is being said about *your* favorite comic strip may someday have bearing on whether or not this comic strip continues to be printed by your newspaper.

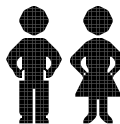
- In the following boxes are some opinions that have been stated about comic strips.
- Read each statement and write a brief paragraph to show whether you agree or disagree with what is said. Give examples to support your opinion.



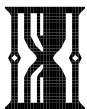
**Comic strips contain too much violence.**




**Comic strips should include more minorities.**



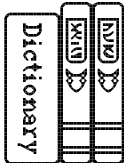
**Comic strips stereotype men and women.**



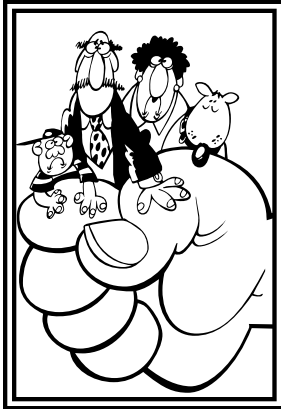
**Comic strips are an outdated form of entertainment.**



**Comic strips are a bad influence on children.**



**Comic strips contain only simple words and are easy to understand.**



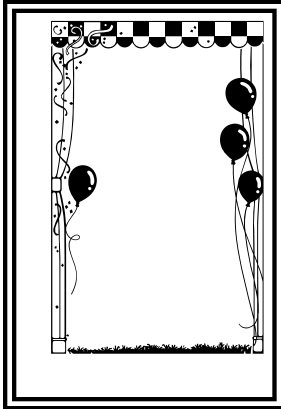
**Classify Comics By Similarities And Differences**

Reading the comic strips would not be much fun if they were all alike. In fact, if anything characterizes the comics, it might be the incredible differences that exist from one comic to the next. Some comics might be intended to be a series of serious, though fictional, situations. Other comics may be intended to make the reader laugh, or simply smile. The variety of comics offers readers the opportunity to select what most pleases them for leisure time reading.

- Examine the comic strips in your newspaper and note the great variety of strips that are available.
- Select five characteristics that you believe could be used to classify comic strips as to their similarities and differences. You might choose, for example, to select characteristics (categories) like type of setting or use of animal characters. List the characteristics across the top of the chart, to use as categories.
- Classify the comic strips from one issue of your newspaper. Place a checkmark (✓) in the appropriate categories for each comic strip you classify.

Comic Strip Title	Characteristics (As Categories)										
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Topic: Types of Humor

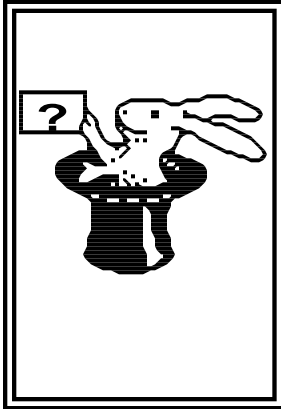


Now That's Funny!

Comic strips are not necessarily funny. Some deal with serious themes while others are like soap operas. For those comics that are intended to be funny, however, the humor that is used may be classified according to various types of humor used. Whether exaggeration or a pun is the style of humor used, the intended result is to bring a smile to the reader who expects to be entertained by the comic strip.

- For this activity, you may have to do additional research on the various types of humor, prior to completing the tasks below. Use your school's library to conduct your research in the different types of humor.
- Using your newspaper's comic strips, try to find at least one example of each of the types of humor listed below.
- Place the title of the comic strip in the appropriate place in the chart below. Be ready to explain each of your responses.

<i>Type of Humor</i>	<i>Comic Strip Title</i>	<i>Example &amp; Explanation of Humor Used</i>
<b>Slapstick</b>		
<b>Wit</b>		
<b>Irony</b>		
<b>Satire</b>		
<b>Pun</b>		
<b>Understatement</b>		
<b>Exaggeration</b>		
<b>Other</b>		



### Comic Strip Q & A

Comic strips are an important part of our culture. Since most comic strips are syndicated, the comics you enjoy are likely read by millions of other people throughout the country (and the world)! Once that readers become familiar with a comic strip, the characters and their habits, the setting and the general theme of that strip become information with which we can easily identify and relate.

- Use several issues of your newspaper's comic strips to develop a short quiz on the basics of comic strips. These questions should be prepared and exchanged with your classmates to test their comic strip I.Q.'s!
- Using the comic strips, develop 10 questions and place them in the chart below. Be sure to write out the expected answer for each question. Develop your questions to test the general knowledge of your classmates. Do not use questions that a person could not answer unless they had read the comic strip on a particular day. For example, do not ask "What did Garfield have for breakfast in last Wednesday's strip?" Perhaps a more suitable question might be, "What comic strip cat loves lasagna?"

<b>C. S. I. Q.*</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
<small>*COMIC STRIP INTELLIGENCE QUIZ</small>	

<b>The Answers (According To Me)</b>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.





Topic: Settings



Once Upon A Time And Far Away

The settings in comic strips have been selected by their creators for a reason. Often, the comic strip setting is a necessary background for the development of a character and that character's culture. It might be difficult to characterize Dagwood Bumstead if we couldn't witness his work habits in the office and his reactions to life at home and in his neighborhood. Comic strip settings may consist of a general time, place and culture. Once that we understand the setting of a comic strip, we are more likely to understand the meaning of the comic strip.

- Examine the comic strips in several different issues of your newspaper.
- Select six comic strips and identify the general setting of each, including time, place and culture (if possible). Questions to consider: *Does the comic strip take place in the city or the country? Does the comic strip take place in modern times or in a place in history? Does the comic strip occur in a wealthy, middle-class or poor neighborhood?*
- Complete the chart below to show your understanding of the various comic strip settings.

<p><b>Comic Strip Title</b></p> 	<p><b>Time</b></p> 	<p><b>Place</b></p> 	<p><b>Cultural Description</b></p> 
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			



### What's Your Line?

Comic strips usually reflect real life. To make a comic strip more lifelike, many of the characters are given careers or occupations similar to those we see around us each day. Whether a student or an office worker, a homemaker or doctor, characters often are placed in occupations with which we can relate. These occupations help to tell the story of the comic strip and aid us in understanding the characters in the comic strips. Sometimes we understand best those characters who have jobs or occupations similar to those in real life.

- Read the comic strips in your newspaper to determine, if possible, the career or job of several of the characters.
- Fill in the chart below with your discoveries.
- Select one of the characters and write a brief job description of that character in the space below. Try to include an estimate of the character's salary, education, experience and job potential (Is there any future in this line of work?).
- Present your job description to your class.

Comic Strip Character	Job, Occupation or Career
<i>Example: Popeye</i>	<i>Sailor</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Job Description**





### Changing Times

Many comic strips, like most other things in our lives, change with the passage of time. Many comic strips do not last very long, while others continue to be popular for years and years. Comic strip changes can include differences in the comics included in your newspaper from past years as well as changes in the story themes of the various comics.

- Examine comic strips from the past and present. (You may have to use the library to find newspaper comic strips as they appeared in the past.)
- Use the space below to note the changes that you see in specific comic strips and in comic strips in general. Consider not only the changes in the types of comics, but what the characters say and do.
- In the space provided, create a feature story about how comic strips have changed over the years.

**Notes on Comic Strips**

[Large empty rectangular box for notes]

## *Feature This!*

[Series of horizontal lines for writing a feature story]



### Really, Now!

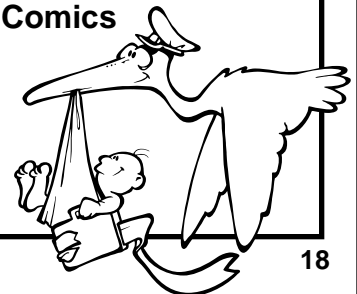
Comic strips often reflect actions or events that happen in real life. For instance, a comic strip character may have behavior and grade problems in school. This same situation is realistic, in that it really can happen in real life (we may know someone who really does have behavior or grade problems in school). In fact, one reason why comics are so popular is because we can easily identify with many of the fictional characters or events.

- Read the comic strips to identify six events or actions that could have happened in real life. Write a description of each example in the space below.
- Can you find a few examples of some things that happen in the comics that could not happen in real life? If so, make note of those situations below.

### Evidence Of Realism In Comic Strips

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

### A Few Examples Of Unrealistic Happenings In The Comics





### This Really Happened To Me!

Each of us has probably read a comic strip and found the event illustrated in the comic to be of particular interest because it is something that actually happened to us or to someone that we know. This means that we can *relate* to the events that happened in the comic strip. Much of our daily lives might make good comic strip material. A daily reader of the comic strips would likely verify this.

- Skim the comic strips in several newspapers. Look for events or situations that happened in the comic strips that actually happened to you or someone you know.
- Cite each event you found in the space below and briefly explain how you can relate to the strip, or in other words, explain a similar event that happened to you.

## You've Got To Believe Me, These Things From The Comic Strips Happened To Me, Too!

Comic Strip  
& Event

What Happened  
To Me!









### Comic Characters...So Much Like Us

To a certain extent, comic strip characters are like us. They often reveal general traits of human nature that we display from time to time. The traits may include behaviors like honesty, greed, laziness, selfishness, anger, etc. These character traits make fictional comic strip characters more human and more believable to the comic strip reader. Sometimes we know exactly what a comic strip character is feeling, since we can identify with some of the behaviors the character exhibits.

- Using the comic strips in your local newspaper, see if you can identify five traits of human nature displayed by comic strip characters.
- List in the chart below each comic strip character you find displaying the trait. Briefly explain each selection.
- In the blank spaces under *Character Traits*, identify other traits of human behavior you find and the characters that exhibited each behavior.

Character Traits (Human Nature)	Character(s)	Explanation
 <b>Anger</b>		
 <b>Greed</b>		
 <b>Surprise</b>		
 <b>Stress</b>		



**Searching For Clues About Life On Earth**

Comic strips can reflect the culture of various nations. Comic strips in our country contain clues about what life is like here. Have you ever considered what our comic strips reveal about us? If you were a visitor to Earth that could interpret our language and the only resource for clues to life on Earth were the comic strips from one edition of the newspaper, what kinds of impressions would you develop about life on Earth?

- Using the comics as your source, what hypotheses, impressions or conclusions can you develop to describe life on Earth?
- Record your ideas below.

*Report...Life On Earth*



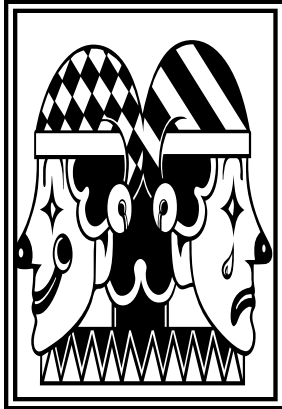
**I Can Identify With That One!**

Comic strip characters are given human characteristics that may help readers identify with certain characters personally. Certain characters may assist us in reflecting on what we are like as individuals. Like many comic strip characters, we have strengths and weaknesses, good and bad habits and certain attitudes and changing moods. Even though we may identify with certain characters who are much like us, we can identify with other comic strip characters when they reflect human characteristics like those in other people we may know.

- After reading the comic strips in your newspaper for several days, select three comic strip characters that are similar to you, and three characters that are quite different from you.
- Clip a picture of each character (six, altogether), paste these pictures in the appropriate boxes on the chart below. Explain each of your choices in two or three sentences.

Characters Similar To Me		Characters Different From Me	
Character	Why Like Me	Character	Why Unlike Me

Topic: Different Roles



Purposes of Different Character Roles

Various roles must be filled by comic strip characters, just as if they were playing a role on stage. As each comic strip character fulfills a certain role, we play certain roles each day of our lives. Some of us assume in one day, for example, the roles of sibling, student, son or daughter, athlete, group leader, worker or loyal friend. Comic strip characters play similar roles to fulfill the comic strip creator's intended purpose in getting across a message in each comic strip.

- Select five comic strips from your local newspaper. Describe the different roles of one of the major characters from each comic strip.
- Indicate why or why not the roles played by comic characters are similar to the roles played by real people.

**Comic Character**

**Description of Roles**

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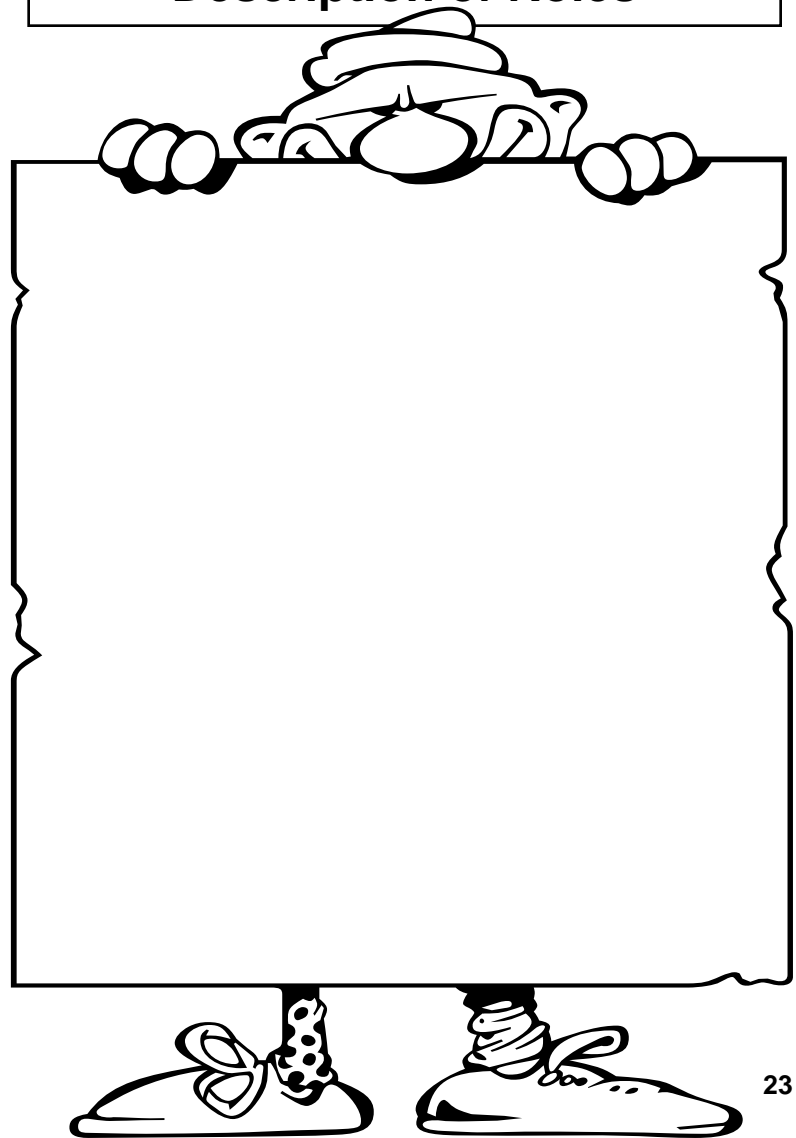
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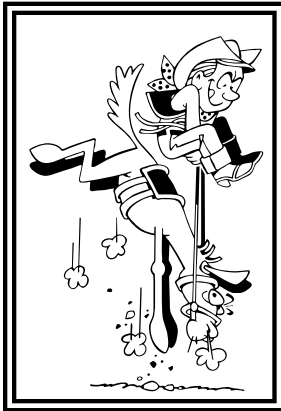


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**A Wide Range Of Character Traits**

Each of us may, at any particular moment, demonstrate a wide range of character traits. The same is true of comic strip characters. Children in comic strips, for example, may undergo dramatic changes which take them from "devil" to "angel" in a good moment. Like comic strip characters, we exhibit ever changing characteristics as well. The changes in characters in the comic strips help to make them more believable.

- Identify any one or more comic strip characters who have demonstrated the trait listed on the chart below.
- In the space provided, briefly describe the situation involving each character trait.

Trait	Character	Situation
Clumsy		
Intelligent		
Sensitive		
Clever		
Happy		
Sad		
Aggressive		
Shy		
Angry		
Confused		
Friendly		
Loyal		
Mischievous		
Curious		
Fearful		
Apathetic		
Apologetic		



Topic: Communication



**Actions Can Speak Louder Than Words**

We communicate with each other by what we say and write. We also communicate non-verbally through gestures, facial expressions and posture. In the comic strips in your newspaper, you will likely see evidence of non-verbal communication among the characters and with the reader. The cartoonist must sometimes rely on special techniques in art to communicate with a reader, since a message is often limited because of the space allotted in a comic strip.

- Examine the comic strips in your newspaper and identify examples of how gestures and facial expressions are used by characters to express emotions and feelings.
- Clip your examples and paste them in the appropriate spaces on the chart below.
- Briefly describe the emotion or feeling being displayed.



Character	Feeling/Emotion



### Underlying Meanings In Comic Strips

The story line of most comic strips may not seem to have much of a purpose other than to entertain us. Although not openly stated, some comics may have an underlying meaning. *Dick Tracy*, for example, may contain the message that "crime does not pay." By looking beyond the surface entertainment value of comic strips, a reader may be surprised just how many comic strips carry underlying messages for the reader.

- Read your favorite comic strips, searching for underlying meanings or messages.
- Record in the notebook below the comic strip title and its underlying meaning.

<i>Comic Strip</i>	<i>Underlying Message</i>

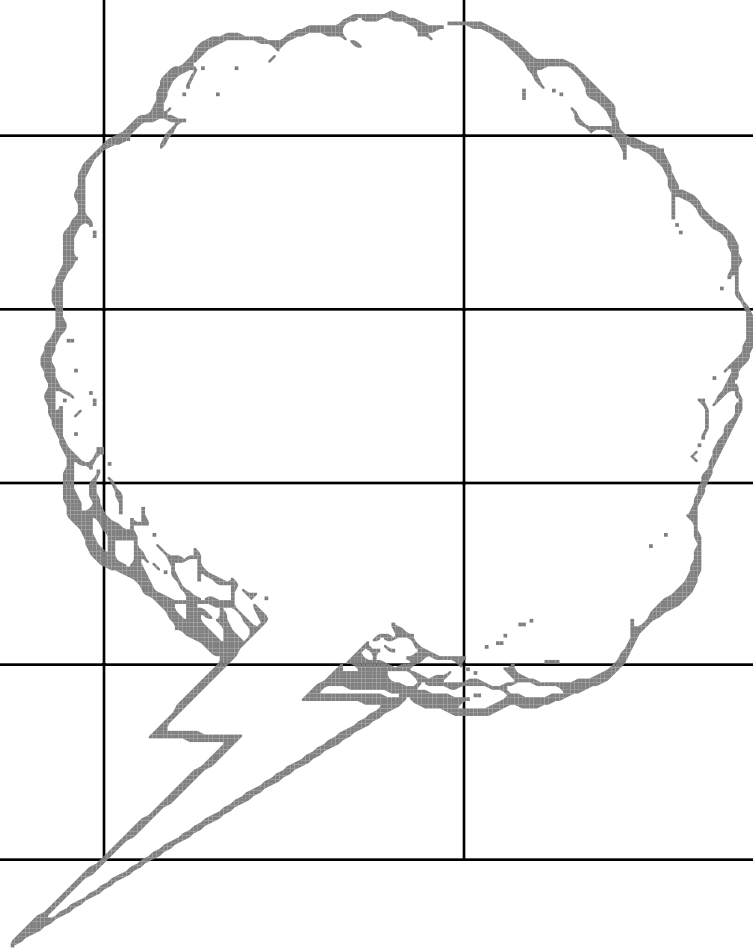


**Conflict...A Common Element Of Comic Strips**

Whether humorous or serious, numerous examples of conflict between individuals and/or groups are found in the comic strips. Conflict is, in fact, a common element of many comic strips. Conflicts in comic strips may be seen, for example, between mother-daughter, sisters-brothers, teachers-students, bosses-employees and kids-parents. Some of the conflict in comic strips may be less obvious; some comic strips make reference to the larger conflicts of man vs. nature, man vs. himself, etc.

- Search through the comic strips in your local newspaper.
- Identify five examples of conflict in the comic strips.
- Record your findings in the chart below.
- Think about why conflict is an important part of many comic strips.

Characters Involved In Conflict	Description Of The Conflict	If And How The Conflict Was Resolved





**Comic Strips Often Contain Stereotypes**

Comic strips are often criticized for stereotyping certain individuals or groups. For example, some women are often portrayed as nagging housewives, or farmers may be viewed as simple-minded or unsophisticated. Stereotypes (a standardized image or idea held by or applied to members of a certain group) may be used in comic strips to quickly portray a character. Whether the image or stereotype is "positive" or "negative" is up to a reader to decide.

- Find two examples of stereotypes used in your local newspaper's comic strips.
- Identify the comic strip, the character or characters involved and describe what the stereotype situation is.

Stereotype #1		
<u>Comic Strip</u>	<u>Character(s)</u>	<u>Description of Stereotype</u>

Stereotype #2		
<u>Comic Strip</u>	<u>Character(s)</u>	<u>Description of Stereotype</u>



- After reviewing the comic strips in your newspaper, do you think comic strips stereotype individuals/groups often? Discuss with the rest of your classmates if comic strip stereotypes are fair/unfair. What do you think?

Topic: Current Issues



### Comic Strip Characters And Contemporary Topics

Comic strips often comment or refer to current issues and events in the real world. Concerns about politics, personal relationships, social welfare and the environment sometimes arise even in the comic strips. More specifically, comics may use current topics as a focus for a message. These topics may range from retirement to trying to cope with the world as a child. Whether serious or humorous, comics will likely contain current topics to attract the reader's attention.

- Read the comic strips in your newspaper to identify some of the current topics that we may deal with in our lives.
- In the spaces below, record the name of each comic strip and the current topic it contains.

Comic Strip	Current Topic
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

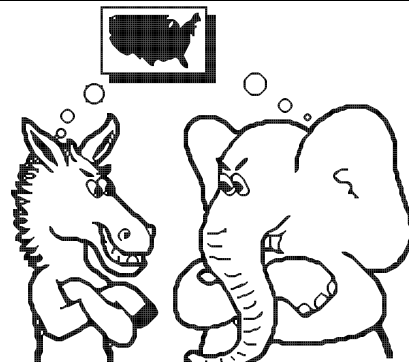
Topic: Issues Dialogue



Comic Characters Discuss Current Issues

Comic characters often discuss current issues in your newspaper's comic strips. Often the cartoonist's feelings about these issues are expressed through the characters created in the comic strip. What would it be like if you were able to communicate your views and opinions about current issues through the voices of comic strip characters?

- Think about two current issues that are important or of interest to you.
- Clip two comic strips from your local newspaper and paste them in the spaces below.
- Erase the dialogue in the comic strips you selected.
- Write your own dialogue for the characters to comment on the issues you thought about in the first step of this activity.



Topic: News Summary



**Comic Strip Characters Summarize News Events**

**The news section(s) of your newspaper reports what is happening in the world. It is important to be able to quickly summarize and understand what has happened. These news stories may contain information that may have an immediate effect on your family, your friends and/or your community.**

- Skim through the news stories in one edition of your local newspaper. Select a story that is of interest to you.
- Read the article, clip it out and attach it to this activity page.
- Clip and paste comic characters in the spaces below. Arrange the characters so that they may summarize, through dialogue you create, the attached news story. (You may use the dialogue balloons from the original comic strip—just erase the original dialogue.)

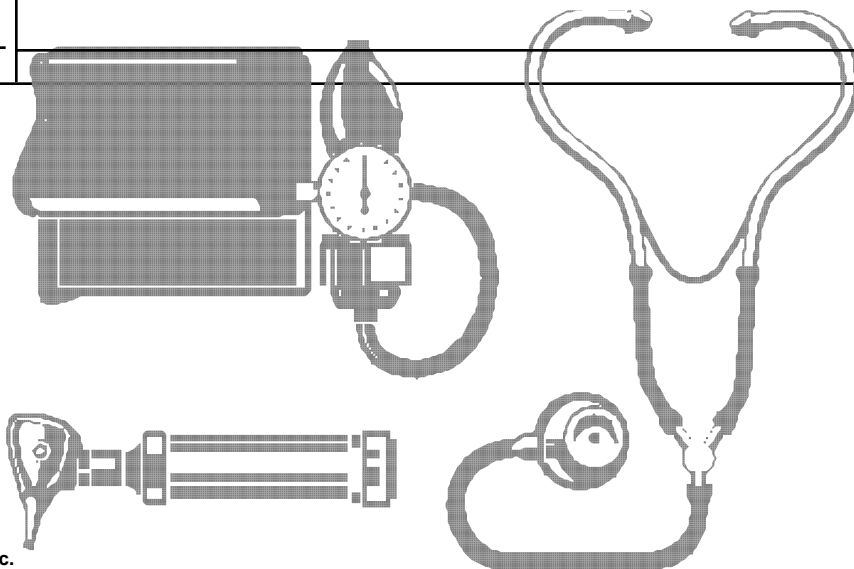


### Health-Related Issues In Comic Strips

A great deal of attention is currently focused on health. Though good health has always been a concern to us, more recent trends in maintaining good health can be seen throughout the newspaper. Even the comic strips in your newspaper may often deal with issues related to health.

- Read the comic strips in several different editions of your local newspaper to identify five examples from the comics which are related to good/poor health. (Some of your examples will very likely come from the personal habits displayed by the comic strip characters.)
- Use the chart below to list your examples and to describe the health-related situation from the comic strips.

Comic Strip	Health-Related Situation





Topic: Controversy



### Different Opinions On Important Issues

All issues involve differences of opinion. Controversial issues include nuclear defense, abortion, capital punishment, civil rights, the environment, the Federal budget, etc. Sometimes differences of opinion may be seen in the comic strips in your local newspaper. This ingredient often provides the important element of conflict, which makes any story or comic strip more interesting.

- Select an issue of interest or concern to you.
- Choose two of your favorite comic strips and erase the wording in the balloons.
- Pretend that the comic strip characters are discussing this issue. Use your imagination and fill in the empty balloons with what you would like for the characters to say about the issue. What the characters say should reflect your opinion.

Topic: Social Problems



Social Problems As Seen Through The Comics

Comic strips in the newspaper frequently use the problems of our society as a theme. The problems may be treated seriously or with humor. In either case, the reader is made aware of the problem. Though many social problems may remain the same for many years (hunger, unemployment, disease), some social problems can be viewed as a sign of contemporary times (high divorce rates, homelessness, drug abuse).

- Read the comic strips in your local newspaper for several days.
- Identify five social problems that are used as themes for comic strips.
- List and briefly describe each problem. Include a description about how you feel about each of the social problems focused on in the comic strips.

Comic Strip	Social Problem	How You Feel About The Problem





### Comic Strip Characters Speak Out!

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the press. The newspaper has the right to publish the news and express opinions about important issues. Opinions are generally found in the editorial pages. The comic strips, however, reflect all kinds of opinions, values and attitudes.

- Use the comic strips from several editions of your local newspaper to identify five or more expressions of opinion from comic strip characters. These opinions can be on a variety of issues. Try to avoid using the same comic strip more than once.

<i>Comic Strip</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Expression Of Opinion</i>

**Topic: Parts Of Speech**

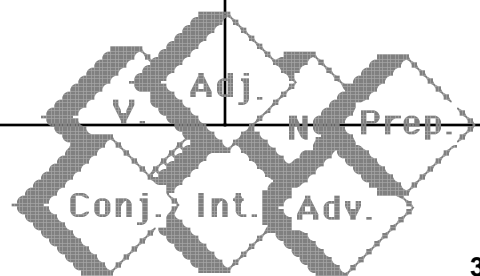


**Parts Of Speech In Action**

As with any form of written or oral expression, the sentences that we use are made up of various parts of speech. Comic strips contain the various parts of speech in sentences used to communicate the message of the strip. Parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, interjections, prepositions and conjunctions form each of the words in our sentence structure. Each word in the English language fits in one of these categories. You'll find an interesting array of word use in the comic strips in your local newspaper.

- Select any five comic strips from your newspaper that have a reasonable amount of dialogue.
- Determine which words are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Place your responses in the chart below.

Comic Strip	Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs

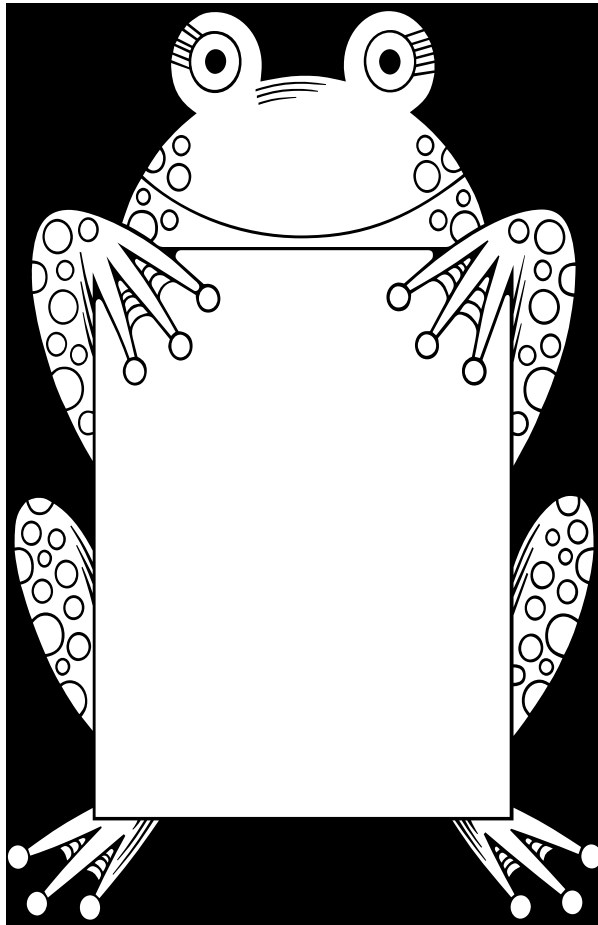




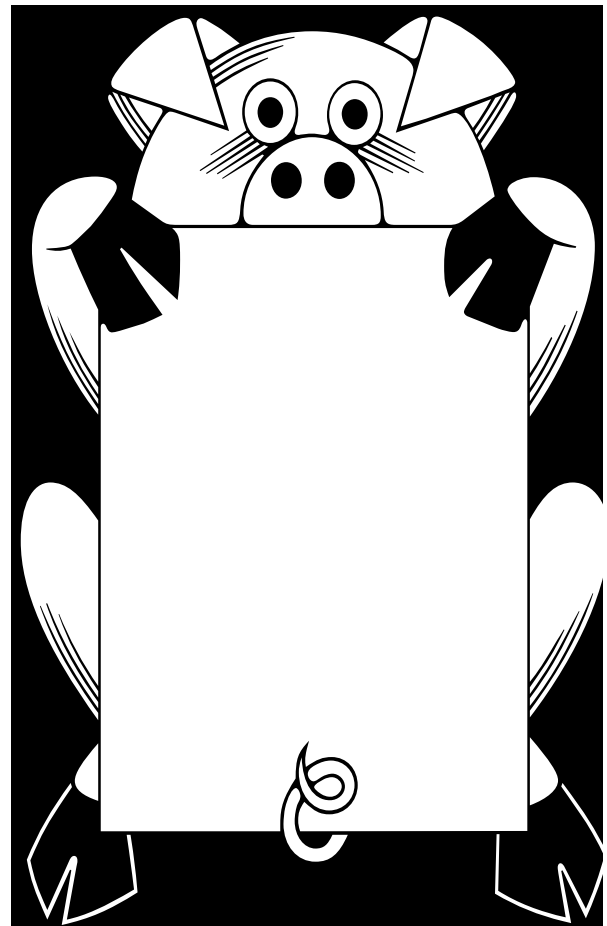
### Describing Comic Strip Characters

Any story will include a certain number of characters or players of roles. Each has individual characteristics which are important to the overall theme of the story. The characteristics include what a character is like, how a character lives and the strengths and weaknesses of the character. Comic strips, like any other story, will develop a character by what the character does, what the character says and how others react to the specific character.

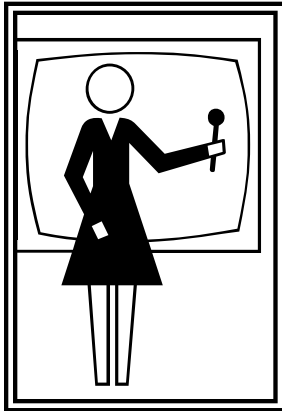
- Select two comic strip characters from your newspaper.
- Write a one-paragraph description of each character. It may be helpful to assume that you are describing the character to someone who is not familiar with the comic strip.



**Character Description #1**



**Character Description #2**



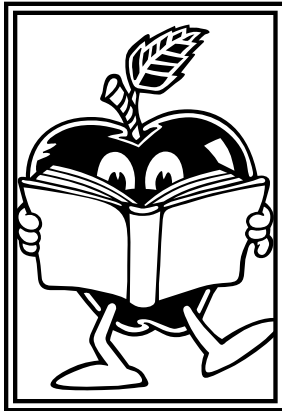
**Developing Insight About Comic Strip Characters**

Newspaper reporters rely upon interviews of various people in order to develop a story fully or to gain insight about a person. If comic strip readers were allowed to "step into" the comics to interview the characters, they might gain additional insight about characters by finding out their points of view about certain events, issues, other characters, etc.

- Assume that you have been given the opportunity to actually interview two comic strip characters. You can ask them any questions you wish. Your questions, however, should provide some insights about the characters and their roles in the comics.
- In the spaces below, list the questions you would like to ask each of the characters. Using your imagination, indicate how you believe the characters might respond to each of your questions.

Character Name _____	
<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Questions...</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible Responses...</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">!</p>

Character Name _____	
<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Questions...</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible Responses...</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">!</p>



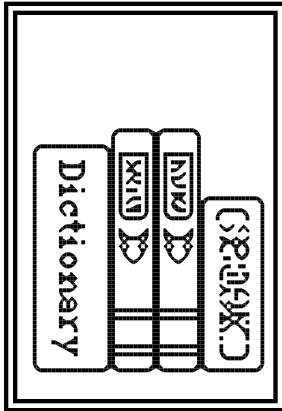
### Adjectives That Describe Comic Characters

Adjectives are words that we use to qualify or limit a noun. Adjectives are words like *funny, silly, dull, smart, incredible, purple, small and aggressive*. Words like these may be used to describe, or modify, a variety of nouns. These nouns might identify people, places, events and things. Careful selection of adjectives can help a writer develop a clear mental image for a reader.

- Identify ten comic strip characters from your local newspaper and place the names of each of the characters on the chart below.
- Select three adjectives that accurately describe each of the characters listed. Try to avoid using the same adjectives to describe the characters. (You may want to use a thesaurus to complete this activity.)

Character	Three Adjectives To Describe The Character
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____





### What's Another Word For That?

A synonym is a word that has the same, or nearly the same meaning as another word. Knowing synonyms, or how to find them in reference books, is important to anyone who writes. Synonyms help writers add variety to their words, making their writing more lively. Synonyms also can help a writer be more concise, selecting just the right word to express thoughts. Comics contain words for which there are a variety of synonyms.

- Select any two comic strips from your newspaper.
- For each comic strip, select several words and substitute synonyms of your choice.
- Clip and paste the comic strips in the spaces below. Write your synonyms above the strip, drawing a line to that word which it replaces.

#### Comic Strip #1

#### Comic Strip #2



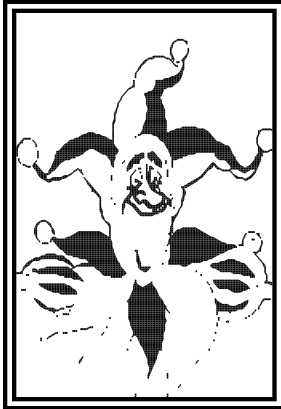


**Comprehending New Words In The Comic Strips**

Contrary to common belief, the vocabulary used in comic strips is not always simple. There may be words that appear in the comics that are unfamiliar to many readers. Surprisingly, some words may even be a challenge to highly capable adult readers. As with any written communication, it is important for a reader to comprehend the meanings of the words to fully understand or appreciate the message.

- Examine several past and current issues of your newspaper's comic strips.
- Identify ten words that were unfamiliar to you.
- List each word, the comic strip where you found the word and the most appropriate dictionary definition for the word—depending on how it was used in the comic strip.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Comic Strip Title</u>	<u>Definition Of The Word</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



### I Ain't Got No Bad Grammar

Forms of bad grammar are often intentionally used by comic strip writers. Bad grammar can, at times, be humorous or it can serve to help develop a character. Use of poor grammar by a character may be a clue that the character lacks education or is easily influenced by those speakers with whom he associates. Comic strips often contain poor grammar or certain dialects that appear to be bad grammar.

- Read several editions of your local newspaper to find comic strips which contain examples of poor grammar.
- List the examples you found below and correct the grammatical error.
- Briefly explain why you think the cartoonist chose this wording, rather than making the character's words grammatically correct.

**Here's The Bad  
Grammar I Found**

**Here's The Correct  
Way To Say It**

**Here's Why The  
Cartoonist Used It**

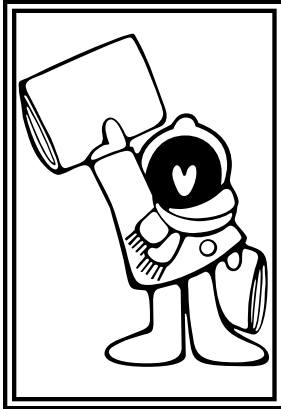


**What's The Big Idea?**

Understanding the main idea of each sentence we read is an extremely important step in comprehending written communications. Whether using one frame or several, the creator of a newspaper comic strip is trying to communicate one main idea to the reader. Even if the comic strip is a serial, or continuing story, each day a new idea is presented in the strip to the reader.

- Select any ten comic strips from your local newspaper.
- Write (in one sentence) the main idea that each comic strip creator is trying to communicate to the reader.
- Compare your responses with others who chose some of the same strips and discuss the differences. Do different readers get different ideas from the same comic strips?

<i>Date</i>	<i>Comic Strip</i>	<i>Main Idea</i>

**Topic: Headlines****Comic Strips Make Headlines**

News stories have headlines that communicate in a very few words what the story is about. A headline has characteristics that makes it unique from the rest of the news story. A headline is written in large, bold print. It usually contains four to seven words which provide a concise idea of what the story is about. A headline should attract attention to a news story. The writing of headlines is a very specialized job on most newspaper staffs. Often, the reporter of a news story does not write the headline. A copy editor often bears this responsibility.

- Assume that each comic strip is to have a headline that summarizes the most important information of the day's comic strip story.
- Select five comic strips and write an appropriate headline for each one. Examine headlines in your newspaper to familiarize yourself with how most headlines are written.

#1 Comic Strip Title...

Date...

Headline:

#2 Comic Strip Title...

Date...

Headline:

#3 Comic Strip Title...

Date...

Headline:

#4 Comic Strip Title...

Date...

Headline:

#5 Comic Strip Title...

Date...

Headline:

Topic: Story Elements



Novels, Short Stories and Comic Strips

Comic strips have the same basic elements as novels and short stories. These elements include a plot, characters, a setting (place, time & atmosphere), action (usually some type of conflict) and a theme. Though comic strips are much shorter than stories and novels, a reader can find the basic story elements in comic strips.

- Select one continuous story comic strip and describe the basic story elements in it. Use the chart below to respond.

A large rectangular form with a decorative border. The border consists of a wide, dark band with a white checkerboard pattern. Inside this band is a white border with a row of white stars. The central area is a white rectangle containing the following labels and lines for text entry:

- Comic Strip Title \_\_\_\_\_
- Plot Description \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Major Characters \_\_\_\_\_
- Setting \_\_\_\_\_
- Theme \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic: Fact Or Opinion**



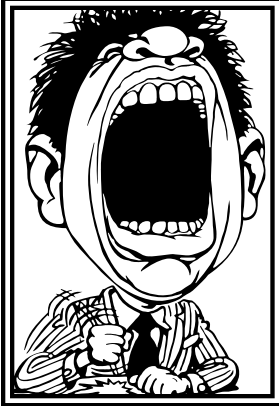
**Is That A Fact?**

Comic strip characters, like all of us, communicate with each other through statements of fact and opinion. The comic strips are, of course, make believe and not real. Many comments that characters make can, nevertheless, be classified as statements of fact or opinion. The statements of opinion often give us a clearer idea about the character and how and what that character thinks.

- Examine the comic strips in your newspaper for a few days.
- Use the chart below to record ten statements of fact and ten statements of opinion made by characters. Include the name of the character by each statement.

CHARACTER	STATEMENT OF FACT	CHARACTER	STATEMENT OF OPINION
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	
5.		5.	
6.		6.	
7.		7.	
8.		8.	
9.		9.	
10.		10.	

**Topic: Personal Opinion**



**Editorializing With The Comic Strips**

Your newspaper's editorials provide a forum for the expression of personal opinion. The editorials may be very serious or they may involve a lighthearted look at various aspects of our lives. By reading editorials in the newspaper, we see examples of how various opinions can be expressed. The comic strips can make a good topic for an editorial of your own.

- Examine the editorials in several editions of your newspaper.
- Assume that you have been given the task of writing an editorial about the comic strips. This editorial will express your opinion about some aspect of the comic strips. The choice of topic is up to you.
- Develop a title for your editorial and write the title and editorial in the space below. Be prepared to read your editorial aloud.

**Editorial**

---

A large rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the editorial text. It is connected to the 'Editorial' title box above it by a horizontal line.



### Translating Comics Into News

The comic strips contain the basic elements that are included in most news stories. Each comic strip usually contains answers to the five W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why)—the elements of the lead paragraph of news stories. Comics can take on a news format when rewritten with the five W's in mind.

- Read the major news stories in at least one issue of your newspaper.
- Assume that you're a news reporter assigned to cover the story being told in a comic strip. Your story should be written in a news format with a headline. Write the story in the space below.



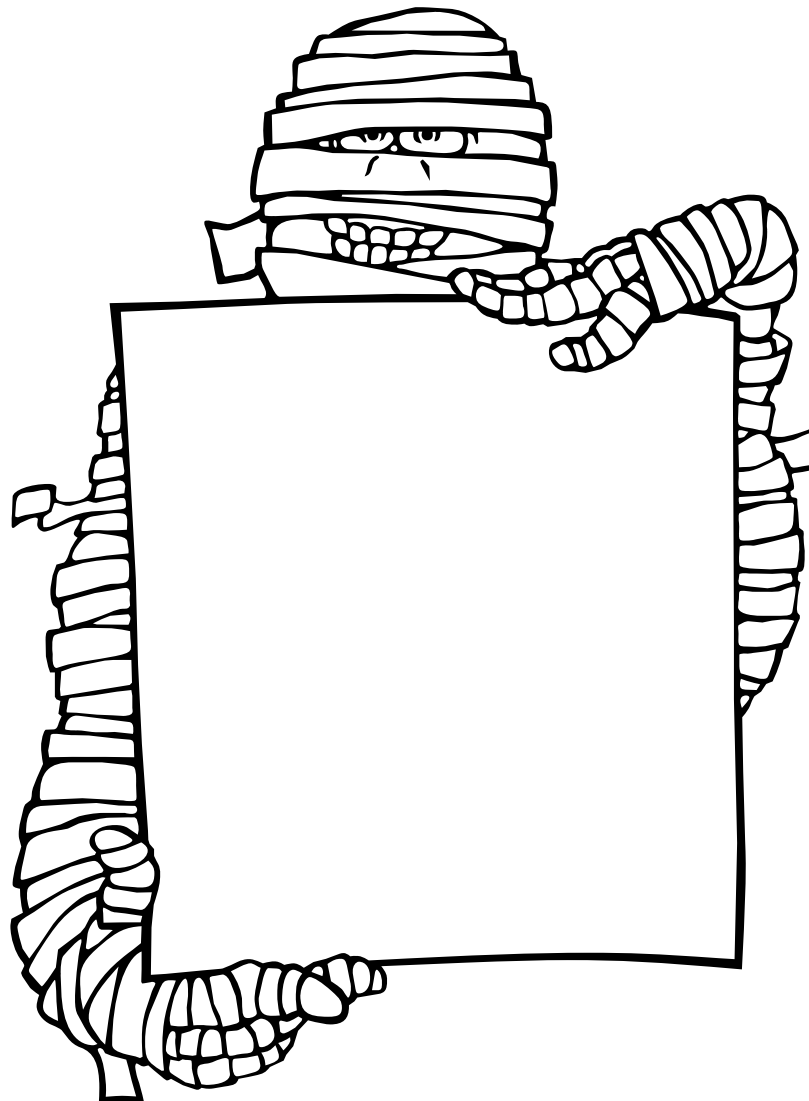




### Telegram From Mummy?

Telegrams are used to send messages in as few words as possible. Since each word costs money, it is important to keep the message as short as possible. Writing a telegram is similar to writing a headline, though a telegram is likely to be longer than most headlines.

- Select any comic strip. In ten words or less, write a telegram to communicate the story being told in the comic strip. You do not need to use complete sentences.



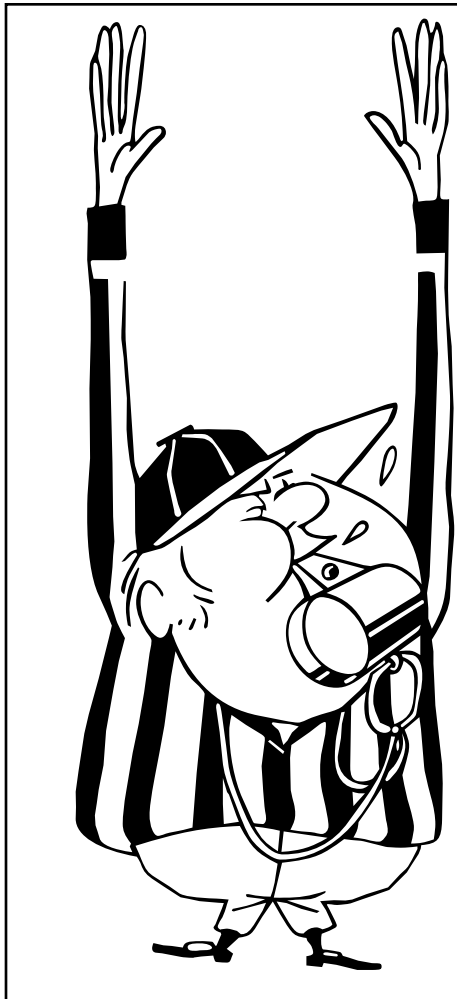
Topic: Importance Of Comics



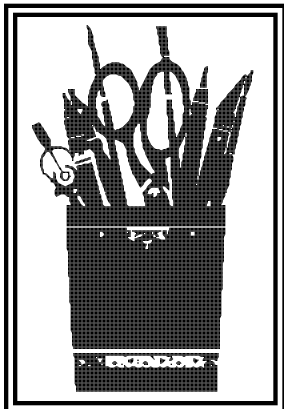
**No, You Can't Take That Away From Me!**

What would happen if the comic strips disappeared from your newspaper, never to be seen again? Although we would survive if there weren't any comic strips, many people would feel that something was missing in their lives. We look to the comic strips for entertainment and reflection on our daily lives.

- Assume that due to increased costs your newspaper has announced that it will discontinue publishing comic strips.
- Write a letter to the editor expressing your views on the newspaper's decision. (You may want to read actual letters to the editor to get an idea about how your letter will be written.) Try to include supporting details for your point of view.



**Take Time Out To Save The Comics!  
Here's My Letter To The Editor...**



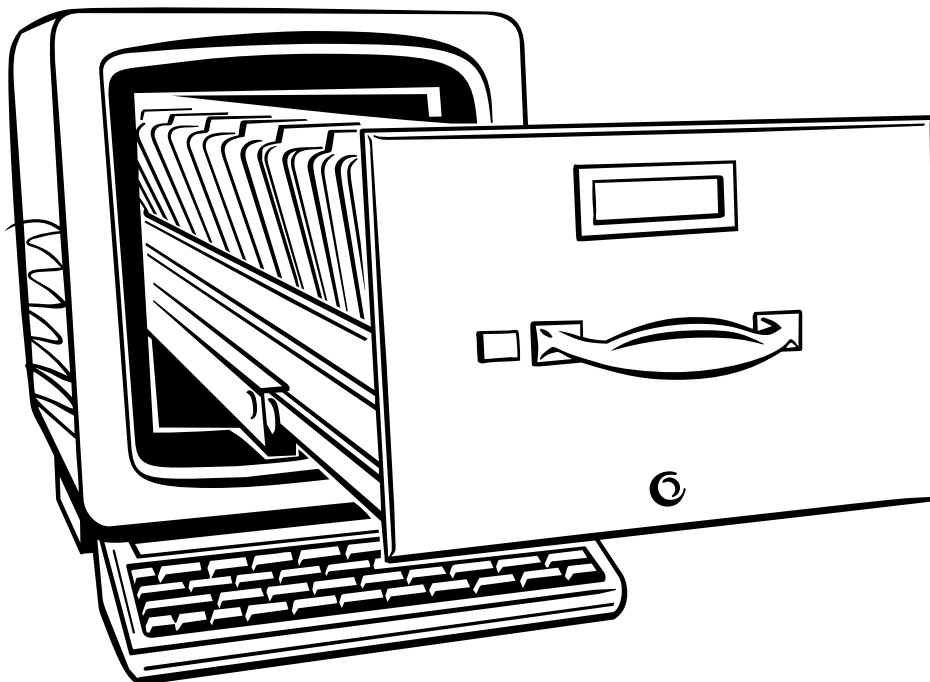
### That Would Make A Great Story!

There are a number of topics, either humorous or serious, that would likely make a worthy story line or subject for a new comic strip. Possibly, there may be an area which the comics in your newspaper do not cover, though there may be an interest in this area. Newspapers select the comic strips from a variety of comics offered through syndicates.

- Identify three topics or subjects that you believe might make an interesting comic strip.
- In the space below, describe these topics and what kind of story line each topic might have.

### Three Great Ideas For Comic Strip Topics...

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Topic: Main Character**



**Who Are We And What Are We Like?**

We are often able to identify with comic strips because they may remind us of ourselves. By reflecting on yourself, your friends, your family, your school, your hobbies and interests, etc., you soon can realize that you and those you know might make a good topic for a comic strip. Creating a comic strip about yourself and your life will provide good insight into your daily life.

- Visualize yourself as the main character in a comic strip. As the main character, describe what you would be like.
- What other characters would you use?
- What would be the setting and the general story theme of your comic strip?
- In the space below, provide an example of one story for your comic strip.

**Describe Yourself As The Main Character...**

**The Setting...**

**Other Characters...**

**General Story Line...**

**Example Of One Comic Strip, Starring Me, Of Course...**



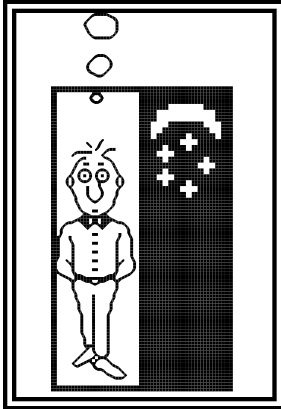
### Community Reactions To Comic Strip Characters

If you read the comic strips on a regular basis, you may regard the various characters as old friends. New comic strips and new characters are sometimes hard to accept, at first. We often regard them as strangers who have moved into our cozy neighborhood. Newspapers often hear from many readers if a decision is made to stop carrying a certain comic strip or to carry a new comic strip.

- After reading the comic strips in your newspaper, develop five situations involving comic strip characters and your community. For example, how would people in your community react if *Hagar* moved next door or if *Dick Tracy* joined the community police force.
- Using the space below, list three situations and describe how you believe your community would react to each situation.

Character Situation	Community Reaction



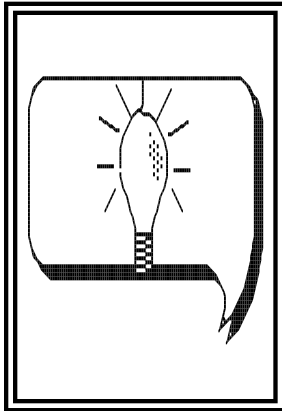


**Multicultural Appeal**

Comic strips are closely related to a specific culture. What comic strip characters say and do in our newspapers does not necessarily mean that people in other countries would understand the stories in our comics even if they could read the English language. Likewise, we might not understand the humor in cartoons from other countries. *Humor* takes on many different forms in other countries.

- Examine the comic strips in your newspaper.
- Select two comic strips which you believe would be popular (or the humor understandable) in other countries and two comic strips which you believe would not be popular.
- Describe the reasons why you made your particular selections.

WOULD BE POPULAR	WOULD NOT BE POPULAR
<p>Comic Strip: _____</p> <p>Reasons:</p>	<p>Comic Strip: _____</p> <p>Reasons:</p>
<p>Comic Strip: _____</p> <p>Reasons:</p>	<p>Comic Strip: _____</p> <p>Reasons:</p>

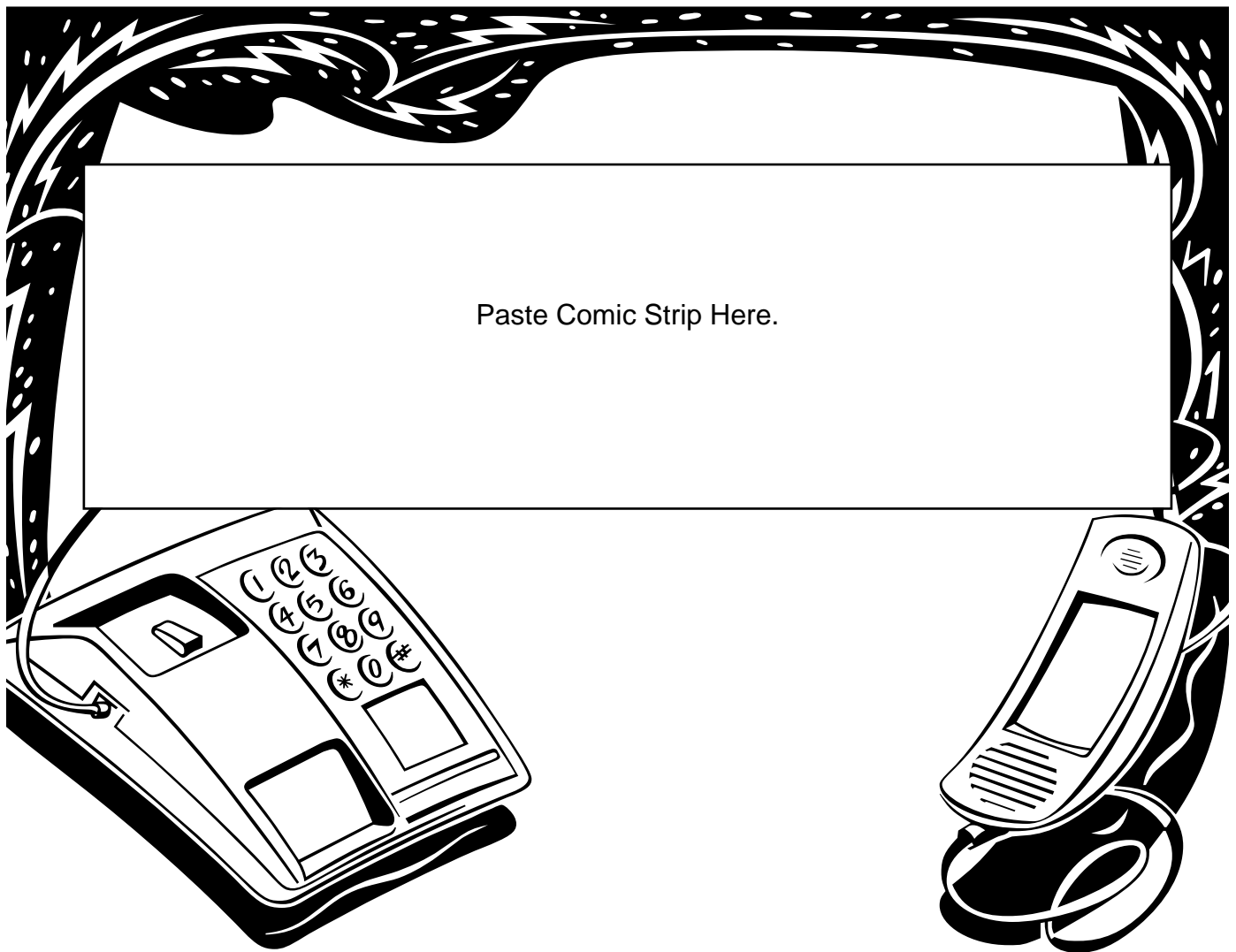


### Conversational Changes

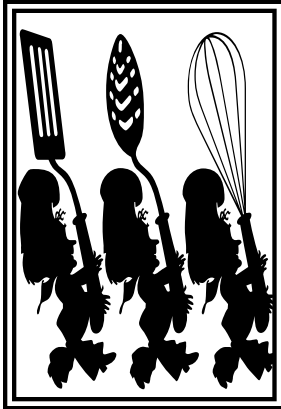
Comic strip dialogue is usually communicated through balloons. These balloons make it possible to determine which character is saying (or thinking) something. The comic strip cartoonist relies upon a combination of words and pictures (art) to tell a story, but more than one story can be told by using different words in the balloons.

- Clip one comic strip from your newspaper.
- Erase the wording in the balloons and paste the comic strip in the space provided below.
- Develop your own story by substituting your words for those that have been erased. Try to select words that still would be appropriate for the art used in the comic strip. As with any comic strip, your story may be funny or serious.

Paste Comic Strip Here.



Topic: *Mixing Components*



**Scrambling To Create A New Comic Strip**

If you examine your newspaper's comic strips very closely, you will notice an incredible variety of characters, settings and stories. On rare occasions, some comic strips make reference to other comic strips or even have guest "cameo" appearances from other comic strip characters. If this situation were the rule, rather than the exception, it might be interesting to see how different comic strip characters would react to each other.

- Develop one new comic strip by using the different components of the comic strips published by your newspaper.
- Complete the chart below to profile your new comic strip. Using your characters, setting and story idea, clip and paste the various characters and their new dialogue and story in the comic strip space.

**Main Characters (At Least 4)**

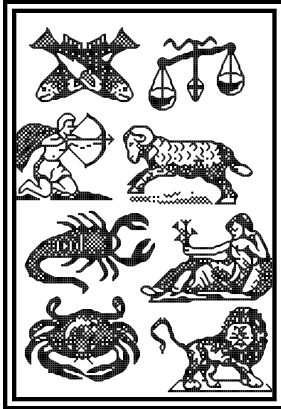
**Setting**

**New Story Idea & Comic Strip Title**

Create Your New Strip Here.



Topic: Horoscopes



Events In The Lives Of Comic Strip Characters

Many people read the horoscopes in their newspaper each day for entertainment (some may even read these for guidance). It may be possible to make an educated guess about which *sign* (Pisces, Aries, Capricorn, etc.) a comic strip character could be by comparing the events in the life of a character with the horoscopes given for a particular day.

- Read the horoscope in your newspaper for a few days. Try to find examples of predictions written in the horoscopes that could be applied to what happened to comic strip characters on the same day.
- Clip two horoscopes and two comic strips that seem to "match." Be sure to explain which character your selected horoscope seems to be about.
- Clip one other comic strip and create a horoscope for one of the characters on back.

Comic Strip #1

Paste Newspaper Horoscope Here.

Horoscope For: \_\_\_\_\_

Comic Strip #2

Paste Newspaper Horoscope Here.

Horoscope For: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: Advertising



### Ads Appeal To Comic Strip Characters

As we read the newspaper, we find various advertisements that are of interest to us. Much of the advertising considers a *target audience*, or group of people to whom certain products might appeal most. Considering the personalities and characteristics of some of our favorite comic strip characters, some of these advertisements might even appeal to them.

- Select any three characters from your newspaper's comic strips and identify an ad that you believe would be of interest to each character. You may select advertising from the retail ads in your newspaper or from the classified advertising section. Clip and paste each ad in the spaces below. (If there is not enough space for the ad, clip it and attach it to this activity sheet.)
- Explain your advertising selection for each character.

<p><b>Character:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Advertising Example:</b></p> <p>Paste Ad Here</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b></p>	<p><b>Character:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Advertising Example:</b></p> <p>Paste Ad Here</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b></p>	<p><b>Character:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Advertising Example:</b></p> <p>Paste Ad Here</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b></p>
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### Careers That Would Make Good Comic Strips

A few comic strips have story themes that relate to the jobs or careers of the main characters. *Brenda Starr*, *Dick Tracy*, *Shoe* and *Tank McNamara* are some obvious examples of this. It is likely that there are several professions or jobs that would make good comic strip story lines.

- Think of a job or career that you believe would make a story theme for a comic strip.
- Give a name to the new comic strip, identify an appropriate setting and describe the general story or theme and the main characters.

**Comic Strip Title:**

**Description Of Story/Theme:**

**Description Of Main Characters:**

**Setting For Comic Strip Story:**

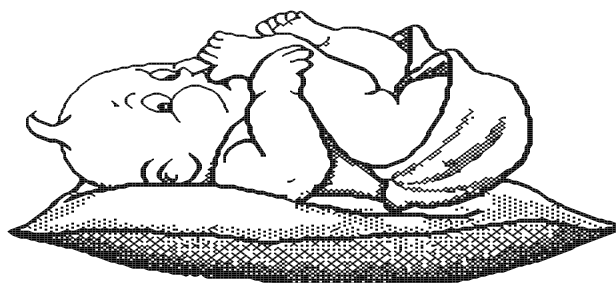


**The Contributions Of New Characters To A Comic Strip**

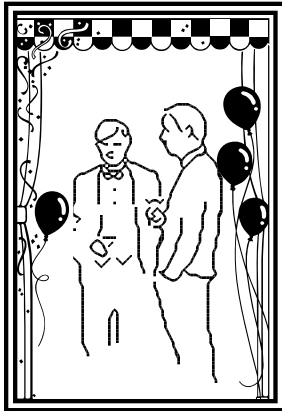
Characters in comic strips have been known to vanish, only to reappear later. Occasionally, a comic strip creator will introduce a new character to add variety or provide another point of view. Some comic strips have very few characters, while others have many. Each character should add something of interest to the comic strip.

- Choose three comic strips that you enjoy.
- Keeping the type of story and present characters in mind, create a new character for each comic strip.
- In the space below, identify the comic strip, describe the new character and what this character's contributions would be to the comic strip.

Comic Strip	Description of New Character	Contribution(s) To Comic Strip



Topic: *Comic Party*



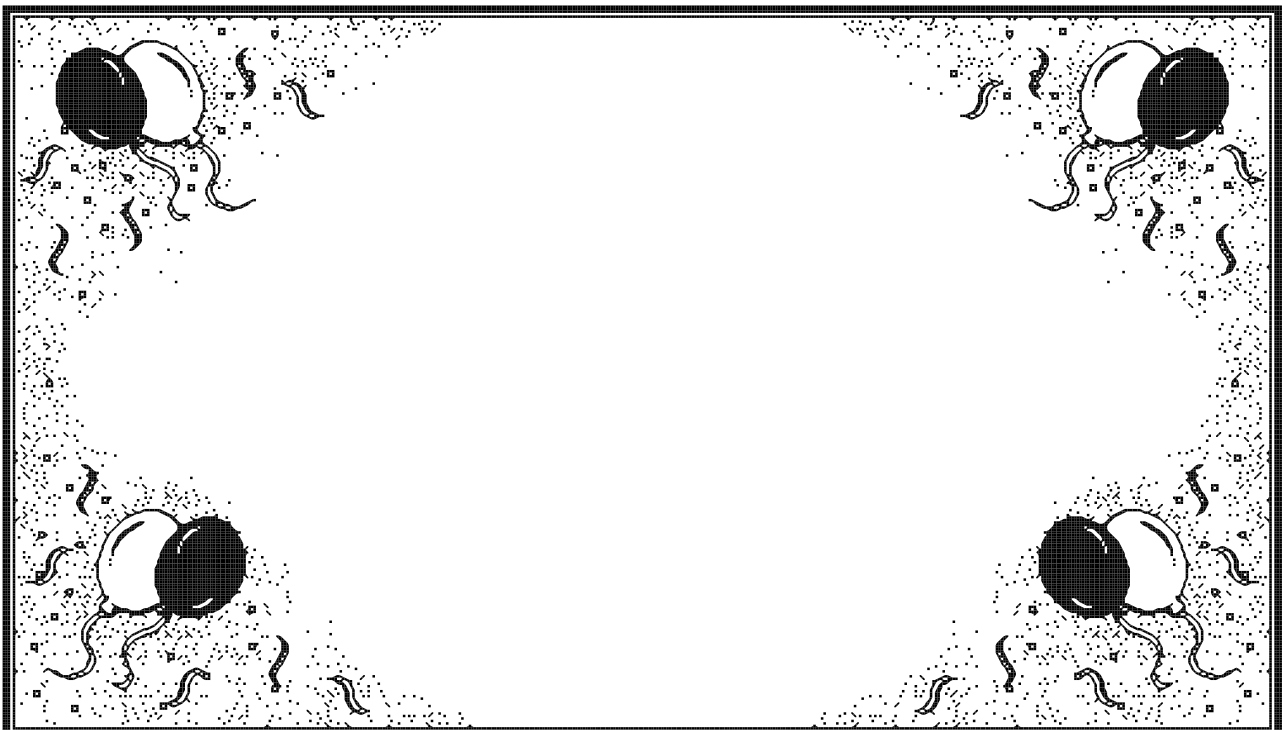
**Know Your Party Guests**

We can often determine what people are like by thinking about the kinds of social activities they enjoy. The same is true of comic strip characters. Though the characters are not real, they often mirror real people that we do know. Acquaintances and activities are both effective in developing a thorough understand of character, even in the comic strips!

- Assume that you are in charge of making arrangements for a party for comic strip characters of your choice.
- Determine what kind of party it will be; make a guest list; select the refreshments and the location. Develop a list of three party games that would be appropriate, considering your guests.
- Prepare an invitation that includes all of the above information, except the guest list. (List the guests to be invited in the space below.)

**Guest List...**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____





**Potential Appeal Of Comics On The Big Screen**

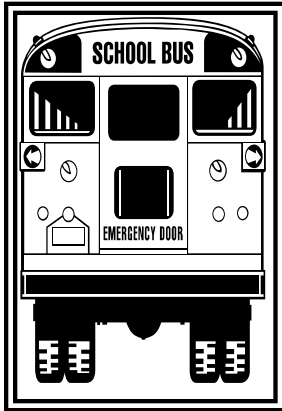
Several successful comic strips have been made into movies and television shows. Some have been animated as cartoons while others have used live actors and settings. *Dick Tracy*, *Peanuts*, *Dennis The Menace*, *Batman* and even *Dagwood and Blondie* have been successfully taken from the printed page and been transformed to real life on the television or the movie screen.

- Examine all of the comic strips published by your local newspaper.
- Identify five comic strips that you believe would make successful television shows or movies.
- Explain below why each comic strip you chose would make a good movie or television show. Include in each explanation whether you think the best format for the movie or TV show would be animated or with actors/actresses playing the role of characters.



Comic Strip	TV or Movie	Explanation

Topic: Classroom Comics



The Comics Go To School

Some comic strips frequently use incidents related to school as the basis for a story. These comic strips often contain typical, everyday school events as a setting. Often, comic strips with a school setting are popular with students, teachers and other adults because all of us, at one time, have been students. These comic are relevant to us since we may have had similar experiences in school. Classrooms are also a good comic strip setting since the various problems, events and people in the classroom make for some interesting comic comment.

- Assume that you have been given the opportunity to develop a comic strip about your school, classroom and fellow students. The comic strip is to be published by your school newspaper. Think about what the comic strip might be like. It could be funny or serious and could be written as a continuous story. The comic strip must have a title, characters and a story line.
- You do not need to actually draw the comic strip (unless you want to), but you need to think of some story examples that you might use.

**Comic Strip Title...**

**General Story Line...**

**Cast Of Characters...**

**Story Examples...**

**The Final Comic Strip For Publication...**

**Topic: Composite Character**



**The Best Of The Best**

Comic strip characters have a number of different features. Some are strong, some are weak, some live in the past, while others live in the future. One thing is for sure, comic strip readers do have favorite characters, even though these characters might be made better if given some of the assets of other characters.

- Assume that you have been given the opportunity to create a new character by using the different characteristics of existing comic strip characters.
- Identify at least five comic strip characters.
- List a characteristic from each of the five characters that you would use for your composite character.
- Describe your composite character. If you can, draw a picture of your new character.

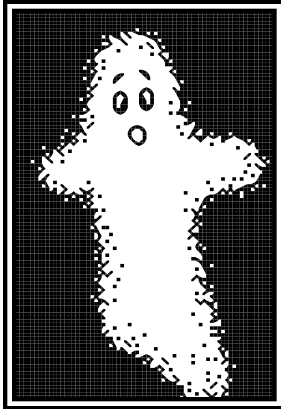
Character	Characteristics For Composite Character

**Description Of Composite Character**

**Drawing Of Composite Character**



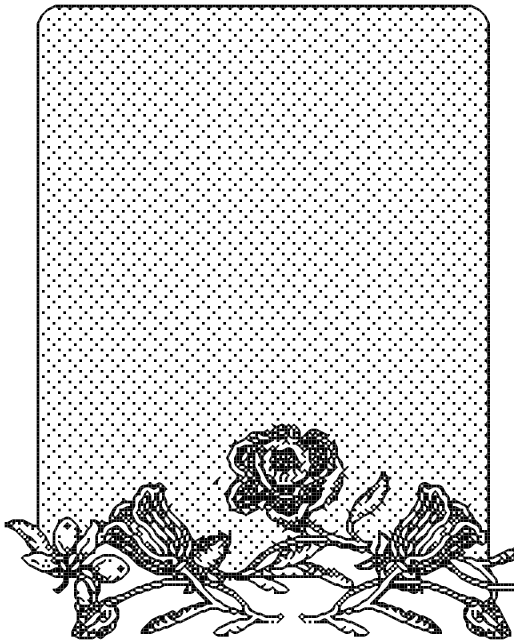




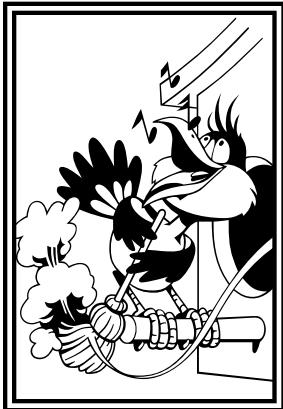
### Writing An Obituary For A Comic Strip Character

The obituaries in newspapers provide sketches of the most important information and accomplishments of individuals who have passed away. Obituary writing must be very precise and accurate, not only out of respect for the deceased and the family, but also because the people most likely to scrutinize the obituary are people who knew well this person and family (their relationships, the correct spelling of the family names, etc.). Obituaries in newspapers of the past were often more detailed—written as a personal history—than they are today.

- Unfortunately, one of your favorite comic strip characters has passed away. You now have the honor of writing the obituary for this character.
- Read the obituaries in your newspaper to see how they are written.
- You may need to do additional research on your character or you may imagine some information about your character, if you wish.
- When you have completed your obituary, write a poetic epitaph on the tombstone below.



**Topic: Entertainment**



**That's An Entertaining Notion!**

The comic strips are a form of entertainment for millions of people each day. Comic strip stories, in addition, often show comic strip characters being entertained themselves. Entertainment is merely anything that gives pleasure to us (or to comic strip characters) during our leisure time. Entertainment does not have to make us laugh to be entertaining. Generally, though, entertainment gives us a moment of distraction from our daily cares.

- After examining the comic strips in the newspaper for a few days, identify some kinds of entertainment enjoyed by comic strip characters.
- In addition to the actual examples you find, select three other comic strip characters and indicate the types of entertainment you find mentioned in other sections of your newspaper that you think they would enjoy.

Comic Strip	Character	Date	Entertainment Examples

**Comic Strip Character:**

**Comic Strip:**

**Possible Entertainment Mentioned In The Newspaper...**

**Comic Strip Character:**

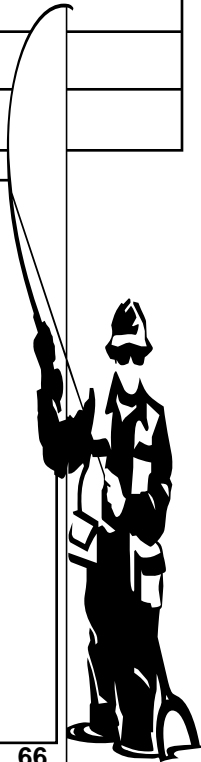
**Comic Strip:**

**Possible Entertainment Mentioned In The Newspaper...**

**Comic Strip Character:**

**Comic Strip:**

**Possible Entertainment Mentioned In The Newspaper...**





### Another Happy Ending?

With a little imagination, it can be easy for a frequent comic strip reader to make an educated guess about what may happen next in a comic strip. Once that we are familiar with a character and we know how they react to certain situations, projecting outcome is not difficult.

- Select three comic strips that use more than one frame to tell a story.
- Erase the wording in the balloons of the last frames and write your own ending.
- Paste the comic strips in the spaces below.

Topic: Giving Advice



**You Want Some Personal Advice?**

Most of us have read the personal advice columns that appear in newspapers. In fact, they are one of the most popular features of most newspapers. Advice columns may be personal, such as *Ann Landers* or *Dear Abby*, or they may deal with a particular concern, such as proper etiquette, consumer complaints or medical problems. Comic strip characters, like any of us, have personal problems and sometimes could use some good advice from an objective observer.

- Select any three comic strip characters. Consider what you know about each character—their weaknesses and personal problems.
- Using the space below, write a sentence or two of advice for each character. You may want to examine the advice column in your newspaper for some assistance in how to write your advice.

Character	Advice
_____	
_____	
_____	



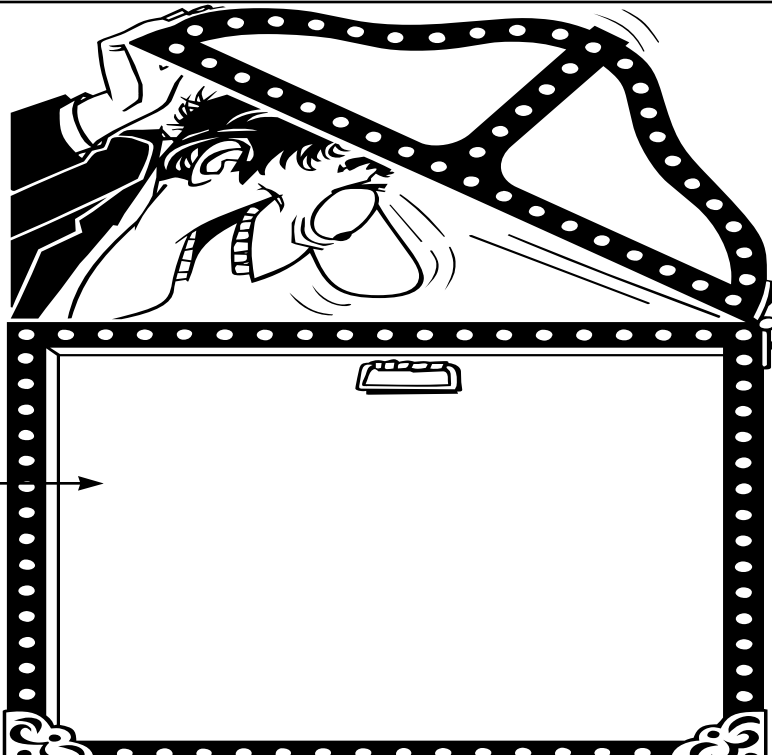
### Adding A Frame To Create A Stronger Story

Most comic strips contain three or four frames. Each frame serves a specific purpose. The writer attempts to tell a story or communicate an idea within the limits of the frames that can be used. Each frame helps to develop this short story to a climactic ending or to communicate the main idea.

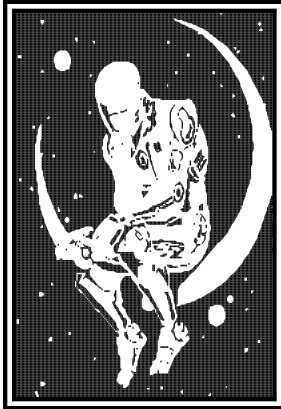
- Assume that you can add an additional frame to the comic strip of your choice. The frame can be anywhere in the sequence. What you include in the frame should relate to and enhance or improve the original comic strip.
- Clip and paste the comic strip in the space below.
- Draw the additional frame, including dialogue, and indicate where in the sequence the frame would be placed.

Paste original comic strip here.

HERE'S MY NEW FRAME  
FOR THE COMIC STRIP...



Create frame here →



### Necessity Is The Mother Of Invention

One way to demonstrate an understanding of comic strip characters is to think about inventions that would help eliminate their weaknesses, correct their problems and make their lives easier. As in real life, we have needs. These needs have encouraged our creativity in developing products and services which serve these needs.

- Select five comic strip characters that you enjoy. Using your imagination and what you know about each character, describe an invention that you believe each character could use.
- If possible, provide a sketch of at least one invention.

Character	Invention

**Here's A Sketch Of One Of My Inventions For A Comic Strip Character**



**Serving Up Something Useful**

An examination of the classified and retail advertisements in your newspaper will reveal an incredible variety of products and services. Though these goods and services are advertised to meet the needs of people, many of them might likely be welcomed additions to the lives of certain comic strip characters.

- Select any five of your favorite comic strip characters. Think about what the characters are like and the goods and services that they might use.
- Identify, in the spaces below, at least one product and one service that each character could/would use.
- All of your selections must be from newspaper ads.

Comic Character	Goods	Services



### That's A Little Hard To Believe

Some comic strips are considered less real than others. They may be unrealistic because of the setting, the characters, the story (dialogue) and the action. By looking through the comic strips in your newspaper, you can easily discover which comic strips seem fairly realistic and which are obviously "far-fetched."

- Using your imagination, develop a comic strip that most people would consider "far-fetched" or total fantasy.
- Create a title for your comic strip and describe the setting, characters and general story line.
- If you want, make a drawing of your main character on the back of this activity sheet.

**Comic Strip Title...**

<b>Description Of Main Character...</b>     	<b>Description Of Other Characters...</b>     
<b>Setting...</b>     	<b>General Story Line...</b>     



Topic: Predicting Outcome



I Can See You Have A Future...

Some comic strips have a complete story each day. Other comic strips have stories that may go on for days or weeks. Comic strips that feature continuing stories tend to make us wonder what will happen next. In some cases, especially if we are familiar with the comic strip, we can accurately predict what will happen next.

- Select a comic strip with a continuing story from your newspaper.
- Clip the comic strip for one day from your newspaper and paste it in the space below.
- Briefly describe what you predict will happen the next day. Compare your prediction with what actually happened. Describe the differences.

**Comic Strip**

Your Prediction...




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Differences Between Your Prediction And What Actually Occurred...

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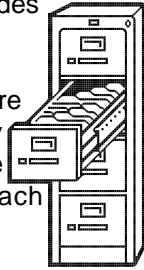
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**Unnecessary**

#70

There are times when a comic strip includes illustrations that are not necessary to the telling of a particular story.

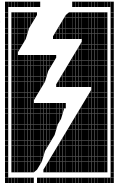
Examine the comic strips in one or more issues of your newspaper. Identify examples of what you believe may be unnecessary detail. Briefly describe each example on a sheet of paper.



**Comic Strip Negatives**

#71

Think about the comic strips and the one comic in particular that you believe is the worst. Briefly, answer these questions about this strip—Why shouldn't people read this comic strip? What especially don't you like about the comic? What would you change about the comic strip if you could? To what audience do you think this comic strip appeals?



**Vertical Characters**

#72

Write the name of a comic strip character vertically on a sheet of paper. Select an adjective that is descriptive of this character and that begins with each letter of the character's name. Example:

- H-Hungry**
- A-Angry**
- G-Gruesome**
- A-Aggressive**
- R-Rough**



**A Rating System**

#73

Comic strips are not rated for audience suitability, as the movies are. Read the comic strips in one issue of your newspaper. Develop a rating system that could be used with the comics. This rating system should help suggest which comics would be of most interest to newspaper readers of different ages.

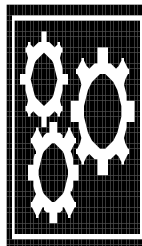


**Comic Concept**

#74

One way to determine how much a person knows about comic strips is to have everyone list the ideas that come to mind when the word "comics" is used. Try to list at least ten ideas that come to mind when you think of comic strips.

Compare your words or ideas with the responses of other students in your class.

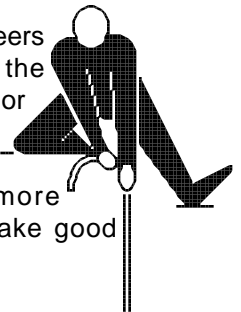


**Help Wanted**

#75

Identify the range of jobs or careers of comic strips characters. List the comic character's name and job or career.

Read the classified ads in your newspaper. Identify one or more careers that you think would make good story material for a comic strip.



**Continued Popularity**

#76

Some comic strips come and go, while others remain popular for years and years.

Select five comic strips that you believe will continue to be popular for a long time. Identify the reasons for your choices.



**Comic Mobile**

#77

Construct a comic strip mobile about a theme related to newspaper comic strips. Likely themes might include a favorite comic strip, comic strips and our culture or what is and isn't funny. You could use a favorite comic strip to illustrate a current social issue or problem.



**Matching Topics**

**#78**

Identify topics such as, stereotyping, justice, poverty and recreation (at least five). Clip examples from the comic strips that relate to each of the topics.

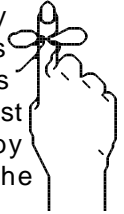
Exchange your list of examples with other students in your class. See if they can identify the topics by the different comic strip examples selected.



**New Year's Resolutions**

**#79**

People often declare how they will change in order to improve their lives. Changes may occur in the form of a New Year's Resolution. Given the good and bad habits of comic strip characters, prepare at least five resolutions that could be listed by different comic characters. Identify the resolution and the character.



**Range Of Emotions**

**#80**

Read the comic strips in a newspaper for at least one week. Identify the wide range of emotions displayed in the comics.

List the different emotions and the characters who experienced these emotions. Briefly describe the role that emotions play in the comic strips.



**Conflicts**

**#81**

Conflict is an important element of any story, even in the comic strips. Skim through the comic strips in your newspaper to locate at least five examples of conflict.

Identify each conflict by type (Man vs. Nature, Man vs. Man, Man vs. Himself). For each Man vs. Man conflict, identify the antagonist and the protagonist.



**Acting It Out**

**#82**

Dramatize or "act out" a comic strip in the form of a short play. You may dramatize an actual comic strip event or write a short play involving comic strip characters. If desired, you could tape record or videotape the comic strip play to share it with the rest of your classmates.

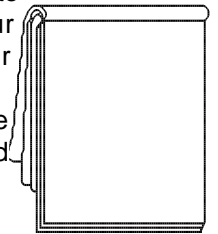


**Short Feature**

**#83**

Assume that you have been asked to write a short feature story for your newspaper on human values or behavior, as seen in the comic strips.

Write your feature by discussing the general values, both negative and positive, seen in the comic strips.

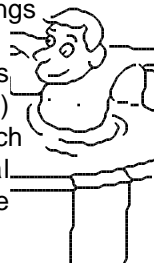


**Typical Behaviors**

**#84**

Comic strips often mirror (or reflect) things we see and experience in real life.

Create a chart of behaviors in various settings (at school, at home, at work) reflected in the comic strips. Identify each character, the setting and the typical behavior that character is exhibiting in the comic strip.

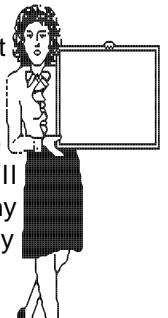


**A Full Page Recommendation**

**#85**

Identify a comic strip that is one that you would recommend as wholesome family reading.

Create a full page ad to promote the reading of this comic strip by all newspaper readers. Include reasons why all should read this comic strip on a daily basis.



**Problems, Problems**

**#86**

Select five comic strips in which the characters are trying to overcome problems.

List the different problems and solutions proposed by the comic strip characters. Discuss other solutions that could have been considered by the comic strip characters in each situation.



**Science In The Comics**

**#87**

There are many examples in the comic strips of how science affects the lives of people.

Examine your newspaper comic strips for several days and write down as many examples as you can of how science affects the lives of comic strip characters.



**Love-Hate Relationships**

**#88**

Social problems on a more personal level, such as relationships between masters and pets, husbands and wives, siblings, friends, etc., often take form as love-hate relationships in the comic strips. From one moment to the next, it is difficult to predict if these relationships will be smooth or rocky. Create a chart of famous comic love-hate relationships, with brief explanations for each.



**Substance Abuse In The Comics?**

**#89**

Though *Mark Trail* set aside his pipe and smoking habit some time ago, other comic strip characters still must mend their ways.

Analyze the contents of comic strips for several days in the newspaper, looking, especially for comic strip characters who are putting their health in danger by substance abuse.

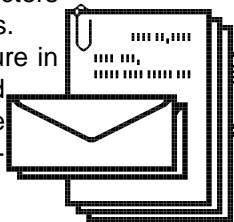


**Peer Pressure**

**#90**

As in real life, comic strips characters also feel pressure from their peers.

Find an example of peer pressure in action in the comic strips and write a letter of advice to the comic strip character experiencing this problem.



**Stressed-Out**

**#91**

Unhealthy lifestyles are often a symptom of deeper problems. People, and characters in the comic strips, might be tempted to select drugs as an unwise solution to their daily problems.

Find examples of comic characters in situations that might lead them to a life of drug abuse. Propose at least three other ways to relieve stress, rather than using drugs to escape.



**Role Models**

**#92**

In a world where greed (and selfishness) often has taken a solid foothold, there are always real people (and even comic strip characters) who rise to the top and display concern for their fellow man. Discuss some of the comic characters that you find that display these attributes. Are they the main characters in the comic strips?

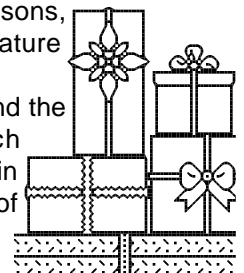


**Holiday Wishes**

**#93**

During the various holiday seasons, special messages are often a feature of the comic strips.

Watch for these messages around the holiday seasons. Record each message (or moral) and explain in a short paragraph the meaning of each message.

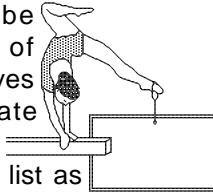


**Renaming Characters**

#94

Comic strip characters can be described by using a number of adjectives. Any one of the adjectives might make a reasonably accurate nickname for the character.

Select five comic characters and list as many new names for each character as you can. Exchange your list with other students.

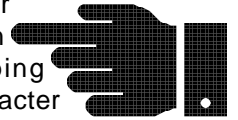


**Lost And Found**

#95

Select two comic characters of interest to you. Using the lost and found ads in your newspaper as examples, write an ad for each character describing things that you believe the character might have lost or found.

Exchange your ads with other students.

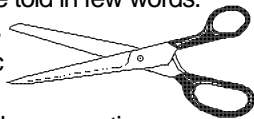


**Comic Contraction**

#96

The story in a comic strip must be told in few words. A cartoonist often abbreviates words in the dialogue of comic strips by using contractions, which save space and present an informal conversation.

Circle the different contractions you can find in one of your newspaper's comic strips. Write out the contractions and the words from which each is formed.



**Sounding Off**

#97

Onomatopoeia, or sound words, like *buzz* and *cuckoo*, are used frequently by comic strip writers.

Examine your newspaper's comics for a few days and identify, if possible, examples of onomatopoeia. List the examples on a separate sheet of paper.



**Idioms Or Slang**

#98

Read the comic strips from several issues of your newspaper.

Identify as many examples as possible of idioms or slang. On a sheet of your own paper list your examples and definitions of idioms and/or slang.



**In The Beginning**

#99

Identify a comic strip character that you find interesting. After you feel you are familiar with the comic strip character and have completed any research necessary, create a birth certificate for the comic character, containing all the information that is usually contained on birth certificates.



**Comic Feature**

#100

Select a character of interest to you and write a brief feature story on why you'd like to be in that particular character's shoes. Explain in your feature story what it would be like to be that character. You must include details to support your ideas.



**Quote Me On That!**

#101

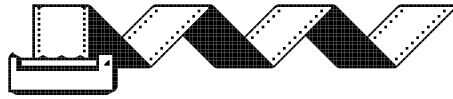
Comic dialogue is usually represented by balloons drawn around the words spoken by characters. In more formal writing, we must indicate actual words spoken by people by using quotation marks.

Select one comic strip and write the dialogue exactly as it appears, except use quotation marks and phrases of attribution, such as, *Snoopy remarked...*

**Comic Rewrite**

**#102**

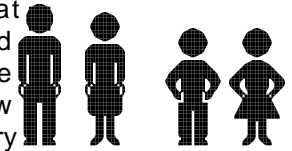
Rewrite the story of one of the comic strips, using words only, for someone who cannot see the illustrations. Be sure to include a description of setting, facial expression and action, as well as any other details illustrated in the strip which are important to the enjoyment of the story.



**Real-Life Links**

**#103**

Select a comic strip that usually reflects families and their living situations. Erase the dialogue and create new dialogue so that the new story relates a recent happening in your own family.



**In Our School**

**#104**

What would it be like if a comic strip character was a student in your school?

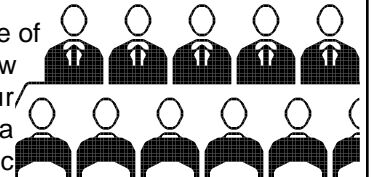
Identify a favorite character and assume that character is a student in your class. As best you can, draw the character and show an activity that might be of interest to this "new" student.



**Comics By Committee**

**#105**

Working as a committee of 3-5 people, create a new comic strip. Using your imagination, write a description of the comic strip, the setting, the main characters and the story line. If you can, sketch what the comic strip might look like.



**A History Lesson**

**#106**

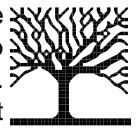
Select a comic strip from your newspaper that you think may have an interesting history. Use the library at school and the public library to conduct your research about the history of this particular strip. Prepare a paper on the topic, focusing on changes that have occurred throughout the years. If you desire, present an oral report to your classmates.



**Laws Of Nature**

**#107**

Read your newspaper's comic strips for a period of one week, or longer if necessary. Locate examples of the actions of comic strip characters that defy the laws of nature. Identify any number of things that could not happen in real life, but happened in the comics.



**Dropped From The Paper**

**#108**

Imagine that there has been an announcement in your newspaper that one of your favorite comic strips will no longer be published in your local paper.

Write a letter of protest to the editor about why you feel that this is a poor decision. Try to support your feelings with facts, rather than emotions.



**Comics Classified**

**#109**

Create a classified advertisement, written in the style of ads in your newspaper, for an item that belongs to a well-known comic strip character (Beetle Bailey's rifle, Dick Tracy's hat, etc.) Present your ad to your classmates and challenge them to guess which comic strip character "placed" the ad.





### A Comic Caper

Following are a number of items or variables that are associated with newspaper comic strips. Your assignment is to read your newspaper's comic strips for one week and then provide an answer identifying the appropriate comic strip. Leave blank any answers that you believe can't be found in the current set of comics published by your newspaper.

Identify a comic strip that...

- 1. Is well-drawn (has good art work) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Is serious and not funny \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Has continuous (serialized) story \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Has a great deal of action \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Has characters that don't grow old \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Is much like the real world \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Will appeal mainly to children \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Has a female as the main character \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Is considered educational \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Is integrated-some use of minority characters \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Will appeal mainly to adults \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Takes place in the past \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Makes use of modern technology \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Will appeal mainly to teenagers \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. Is fanciful and not like the real world \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Has an animal as a main character \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. Stereotypes people and/or animals \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. Uses romance as a story theme \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Uses jobs or careers as a story theme \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. Is no longer funny or relevant \_\_\_\_\_

## The Great Comic Strip Survey

*Please answer all questions. Your honest answers to all questions will be greatly appreciated. This is not a test. There aren't any right or wrong answers to any of the questions.*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Your School \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Grade \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you read the comic strips in your newspaper?

Yes, every day     Yes, 2-3 times a week     Yes, once a week  
 No, never     Hardly ever

2. If you read comic strips at least once a week, please answer the following:

List your five favorite comic strips in order of how much you like them...

First choice \_\_\_\_\_  
Second choice \_\_\_\_\_  
Third choice \_\_\_\_\_  
Fourth choice \_\_\_\_\_  
Fifth choice \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which comic strip do you like the least? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you believe teachers should use newspaper comic strips in their teaching more than they do now?

Yes     No     Not Sure

5. Mark with an **X** each statement below that you think is **true**.

- Comic strip characters never grow old.**
- Comic strips use only easy words.**
- All comic strips are meant to make you laugh.**
- All comic strips tell a continuing story.**
- Comic strip characters' words are always in a balloon.**
- A comic strip always has four panels (frames).**
- All picture panels are the same size within a comic strip.**
- Politics are kept out of the comics.**

