



How to...



WOW!
The biggest comic strip ever made was more than 1,300 feet long.

Draw a comic strip

Follow these steps to tell stories through pictures and words.

Whether you like to read graphic novels or your grandparents have shown you classic Charlie Brown comics, you have probably enjoyed comic strips at some point. A comic strip is a way to tell a story through a series of illustrated pictures and words either in captions or speech bubbles. Making one is a creative way to bring your ideas to life, and it's also fun and easy. Here's how to get started.

Come up with an idea

First, think about what story you want to tell in your comic strip. Many comic strips are funny, although they don't have to be. For your first strip, you probably want to stick to an idea that can be told in three to six frames. Each box with a picture is called a frame. Just like any story, a comic strip should have a beginning, middle, and end. It can help to draft out your words and then make notes about what each picture will be before making your final strip.

Frame it out

Once your story is planned out, use a pencil and ruler to draw boxes for frames on a piece of paper. You can make them any size you want, but if you're using a piece of printer paper it might work to draw three boxes across the top and then create one to two more rows below that (depending on how many frames you need).

Draw your pictures

Use colored pencils or markers to add the pictures for your story to each frame. Since you only have a small space for the image, try to keep it simple. Focus on the main character or object, rather than an intricate background or small details. If you're having trouble drawing something, look at a picture of it and then break it down into simple shapes. For example, most animals can start with an oval for a body and a circle for the head. Then add legs, ears, a tail, and other features.

Don't forget to leave room in each frame for you to include your text (more on that below).

Add words

There are two main ways comic strips typically incorporate words. One is to include speech bubbles—which look like circles that come out of a character's mouth or a cloud above their heads—in the drawings. Another way is to include a caption below each photo that explains what's happening. You can also do a combination of both. Either way, keep your words short and focus on text that adds to the picture instead of just describing it. For example, if you have drawn a picture of your characters eating pizza, you don't need to describe that to readers because they can see it. Maybe you have a character make a joke about the pizza. Or, have the characters talk about what they will do next.



Sketch in pencil first.

4 more ways to learn about comics

Take your skills a step further with these resources.

Watch

Ask an adult to log on to the Dave McDonald Art YouTube channel (tinyurl.com/TWJUS-KidsComics). It gives step-by-step drawing ideas for making a variety of characters, like a sassy duck or a flying robot.



Read

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The book *Let's Make Comics* by comic book author Jess Smart

Smiley offers advice on everything from coming up with ideas to writing captions. It also has activity prompts to get your creative juices flowing.

Use

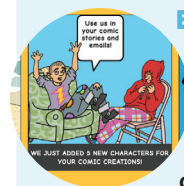
You can also try your hand at making comic strips on an iPad, instead of by hand, with the free app Comics Head. It lets you customize your frame layout, add captions, and even use clip art to help with images.



Browse

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The website [makebeliefscomix.com](https://www.makebeliefscomix.com) is full of comic strip resources. One of the best parts of the site is the comic starts section. It gives you a general theme for a comic strip and then challenges you to come up with a creative way to make it happen.



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