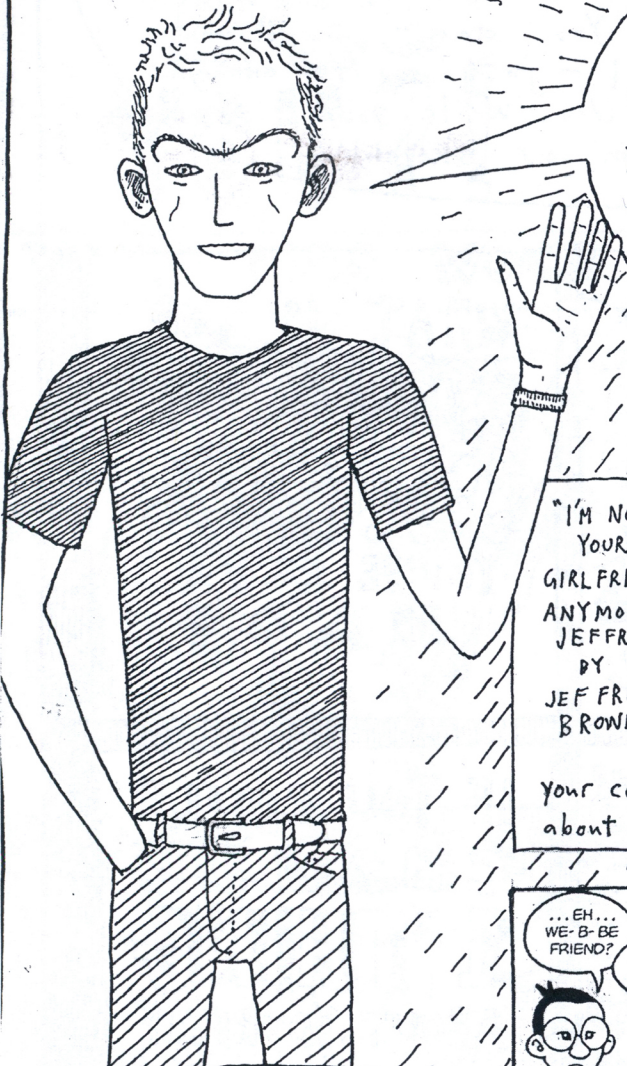


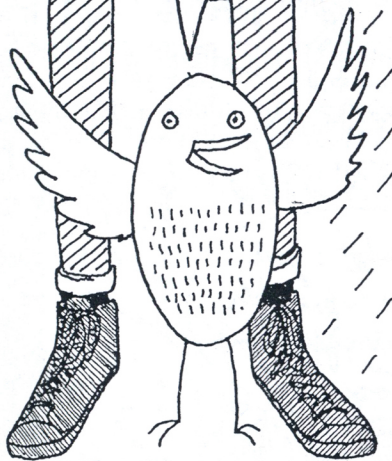
# MAKING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL COMIX

## STORIES ABOUT YOU!

Comics are not just about superheros or funny animals and they are NOT just for boys! Go into any public library or bookstore and you'll find comics (or "graphic novels") that range from telling historical epics to intimate autobiography. The comics medium is a wonderful way to communicate ideas or tell stories that you want to tell. And I think that you have a great story to tell! So let's learn how to tell it in comics!



I'm the encouragement bird!  
You're awesome!



"I'M NOT YOUR GIRLFRIEND ANYMORE JEFFREY"  
BY JEFFREY BROWN.

WE MAKE SUSHI TOGETHER

Your comic can be about anything!  
about a relationship...

BISCOTTI, SHORTBREADS, BANANA CAKES ...  
does it taste good?  
is this edible?  
i can't tell any more

JULIE DOUCET #4

or food!!!

...EH... WE-B-BE FRIENDS?  
I HAVE ENOUGH FRIENDS.

"AMERICAN BORN CHINESE"  
BY GENE LUEN YANG

it can be about making friends - in Manga Style!

IS THIS GOOD?  
DOES THIS SUCK?

LYNDA BARRY - Amazing.

or about questioning yourself or about your overactive imagination...

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.

it doesn't matter if you draw simply like this - or if you're the best drawer in the universe who cares?!

it can be about coming to terms with your cultural heritage like

MARJANE SARTRAPIS PERSEPOLIS

I realized I don't think I have ever talked to Katie Matthews. Ever.

or teen ANGST! whatever!

JILLIAN TATAKI "SKIN"

the possibilities are endless!!!





The first thing you'll need is an idea! This is often the hardest part so to help you out here are 9 questions that might spark an idea. You don't have to answer all of them. You can make up your own. You don't have to write a novel - just write enough to spark an idea. Write your answers in your sketchbook.

WHAT IS THE MOST EMBARRASSING THING THAT'S EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

HAVE YOU EVER GOT INTO REALLY BIG TROUBLE?

WHAT IS THE STRANGEST DREAM YOU'VE EVER HAD?

WHAT IS YOUR COVID LIFE LIKE? WANT TO VENT? HOW HAS THIS CRAZY PANDEMIC CHANGED YOU OR YOUR LIFE?

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON OR A PERSON WHO HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON YOU

IF YOU COULD CHANGE 1 THING ABOUT YOURSELF WHAT WOULD IT BE?

DID YOU EVER GET HURT REALLY BAD? INJURED? BROKEN BONES? WHAT HAPPENED?

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN REALLY SCARED? WHAT WERE YOU SO AFRAID OF?

DO YOU HAVE ANY REALLY GREAT BIRTHDAY, HALLOWEEN OR CHRISTMAS STORIES?

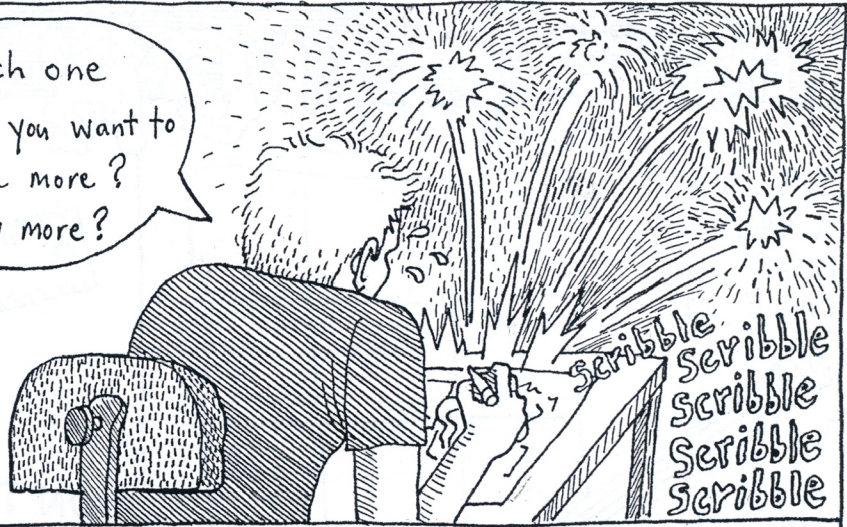
Remember: you can come up with your own questions too!



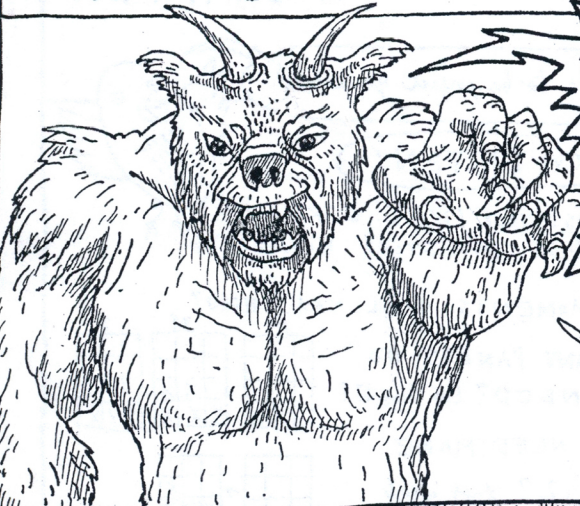


WHICH ONE  
**GRAB**  
YOU?!

Which one  
makes you want to  
write more?  
draw more?



## WHICH IDEA WOULD BE THE MOST FUN TO DRAW?



WOULD YOU RATHER DRAW A  
COMIC ABOUT MONSTERS  
CHASING YOU IN A DREAM  
OR A COMIC ABOUT HAVING  
TEA WITH YOUR GRAMMA?



Psst - I love my  
granma but  
monsters are  
SOOOO much  
fun to draw!



does the  
little bird  
say dear!

Can you remember  
any specific dialogue  
about your real  
life story?

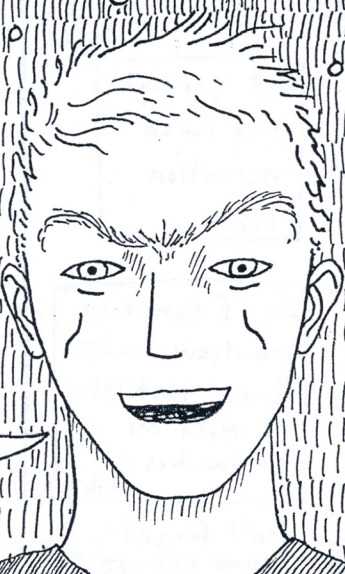
You could do something  
fun like turn  
everyone into an  
animal!

How will your  
comic start?  
think about it  
like a movie -  
what's the opening  
scene?

What'll be most  
**FUN**  
to draw?

Any really **BIG**,  
important parts  
of the story?  
what do you want to focus on?

Once you've  
decided - it's time to  
**THINK** About your  
COMIC!

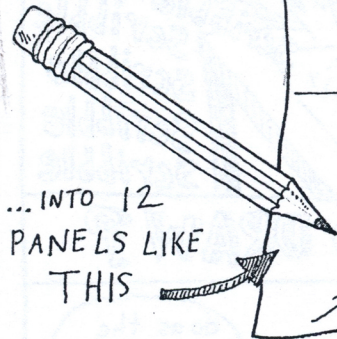


I'm SOOO  
Excited!



# THE ROUGH DRAFT!

1ST: TAKE A SHEET OF PAPER AND DIVIDE IT...



...INTO 12 PANELS LIKE THIS



DON'T USE A RULER BUDDY!  
IT'S JUST A ROUGH DRAFT!

not everything has to be perfect you know!



Start drawing your comic with stick figures - TRUST me it's all you need right now

More on these little guys next page!



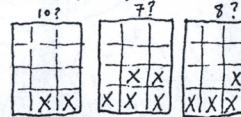
Pat pat pat

NOW LISTEN:

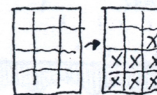
THIS IS JUST YOUR FIRST VERSION - JUST GET YOUR STORY DOWN!

WHAT MOMENTS WILL YOU SHOW?

HOW MANY PANELS DO YOU NEED? less than 12?



DO YOU NEED MORE THAN 12? just grab an extra sheet of paper!



DON'T WORRY ABOUT FANCY DRAWING! No shading + not too much detail!



FOCUS ON STORYTELLING!



## A BRIEF WORD ABOUT WORDS IN COMICS:

To tell a story you might need a dialogue balloon like this one

OR thought balloons

But you might also need narration boxes

Or if something you drew looks funny just label it with an arrow box.

like this...

don't forget sound effects

Just then a mouse ran across the floor!



eeeeek!

MOUSE

skitter skitter skitter



# INTERLUDE: IN PRAISE OF THE HUMBLE STICK FIGURE

How many times have I heard someone say: "I can't even draw a stick figure!"



of course you can!

What's so wrong with stick figures anyway!?

They are simply quick + easy representations of people. They get an idea across.

And really - DRAWING IS JUST about communication and, depending on what you are trying to communicate, stick figures work really well, especially if you are telling a simple (but still really interesting) story.

Mostly people just feel that if they can't make fancy drawings then they shouldn't make art.

Baloney!

Hey - if stick figures were good enough for cavemen they're good enough for me!

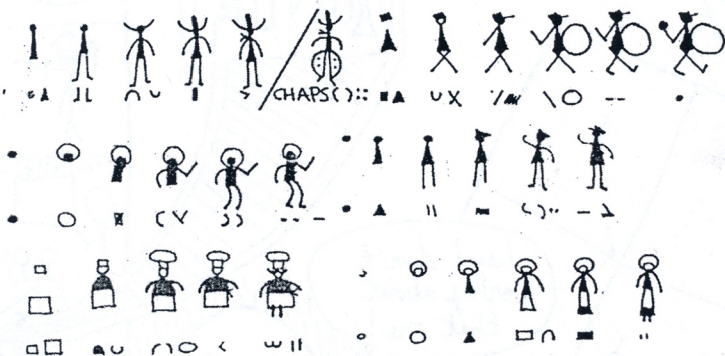


I even think it's ok if you use stick figures for your final copy (more on this later)

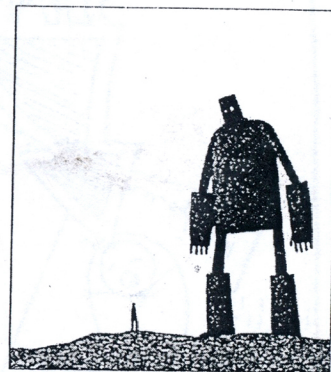
Think about how you can add little details to your stick figures to differentiate between characters and add extra personality. (see examples below)



JOEL PRIDDY.  
From "The Amazing life of Onion Jack"



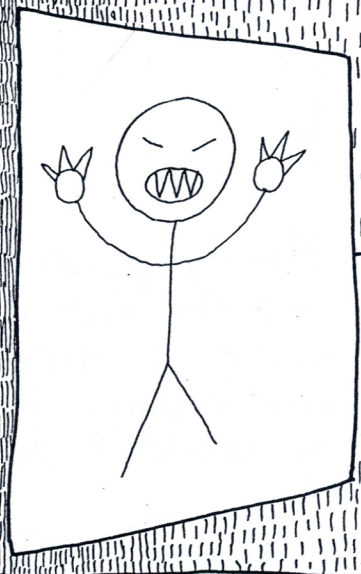
ED EMBERLY  
Children's book illustrator - who developed a whole method of drawing based on simple lines and shapes (+ slight alterations of stick figures)



TOM GAULD  
From: "Our Hero Battles 26 Alphabetized Terrors"



# BACK TO THE ROUGH DRAFT



Most of the details should be in your head. All you should really need is a simple drawing to remind you of what is happening at that point. Any more than that is a lot of work for nothing.

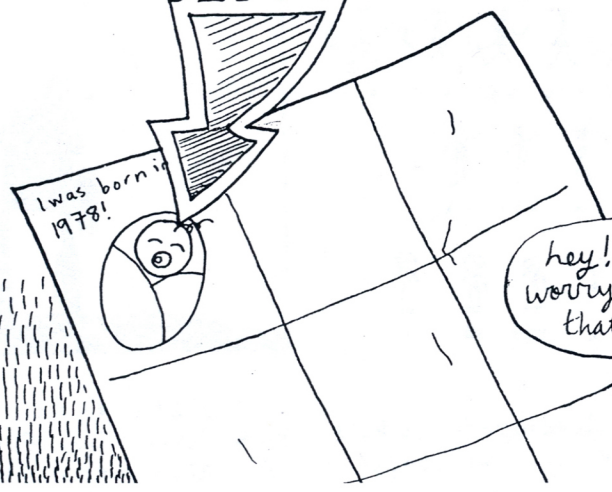
## STILL NOT CONVINCED?

Imagine that you drew this for your 1st draft	and you were pretty pleased about it.	then you had to draw it again for your 2nd draft	and it seems a little anticlimactic	you see: you'll have to refine your comic 3 or 4 times! now go ahead- draw all that detail again for the 3rd time.	This is how you're looking!	and for your 4th draft? This is you...	<b>YOU'RE GOING TO GET BORED WITH YOUR COMIC!</b> - and frustrated!

Figure out a good place to **START**

AND...

Keep going until you're **DONE!**



hey! don't worry about that one!



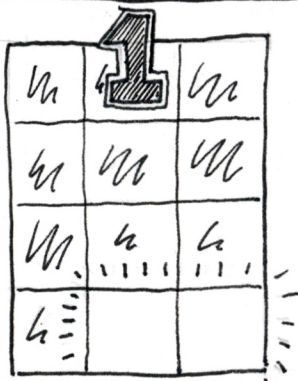
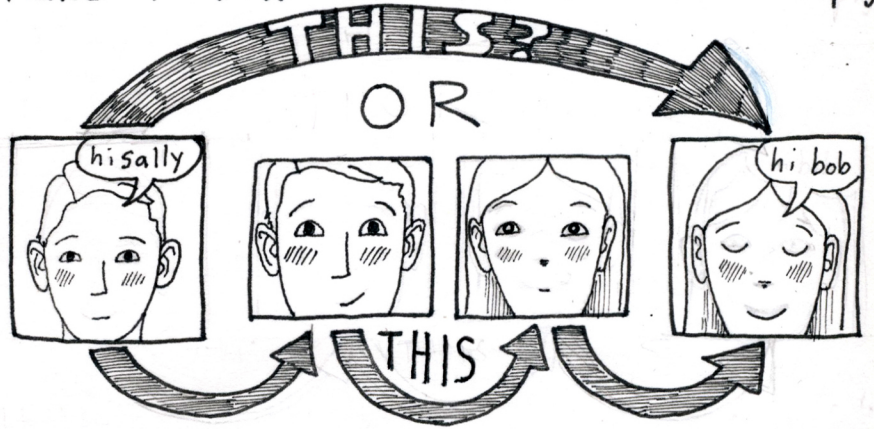


# 2ND DRAFT!

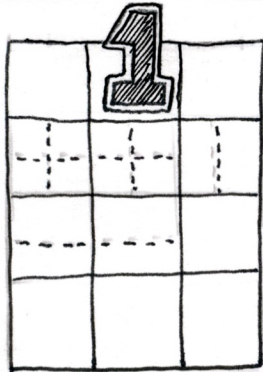
So... Do you have too many panels? or not enough? You need to think about whether or not you can tell your story better with more or fewer pictures and how you can make them fit!



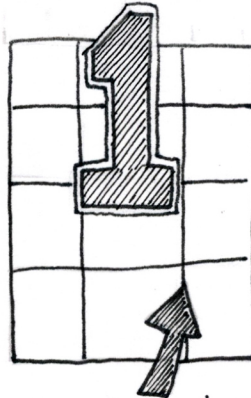
Do you need to add more panels / drawings to make the story make sense? or make it better? or to make it fit on 1 page?



You could just use up left over panels



OR you could make smaller panels + and squeeze more in



OR you could just make it a 2 page comic



don't worry dean - those panels aren't too boring!!



Maybe your story is short and instead of adding more panels you just make some panels bigger - like the ones with the most going on or the most important stuff!



Essentially the 2nd draft is when you figure out what to include and what not to include, how long your story will be and how you will make it fit.

OH YEAH I FORGOT, YOU'VE ALSO GOTTA DECIDE ON A...



REALLY COOL

# TYPE !!

(A BRIEF INTERLUDE TO TALK ABOUT THIS COOL STUFF!)

Try to think up something snazzy to call your comic

THE BORING DAY

Four panels of a comic strip showing sad faces.

And you've got to think about placement! you could put it up top (like on the left) or just in the first panel (handy if you have an extra panel or 2).

WATCHING PAINT DRY

Four panels of a comic strip showing faces watching paint dry.

SO GETTING ZOD

or	you
could	get
really	creative

EXCITED

do whatever you want! who's gonna stop ya?

You can try out lots of different STYLES:

SIMPLE BLOCK

3-D

SCRATCHY

BLOCK

BLOCK

OR

3-D

STROKE

BUBBLE

just a few ideas