

# Comics Workshop For Teens

Live on Zoom



## Upcoming Virtual Teen Programs:

- Virtual Escape Room – All November!
- Digital Art for Teens – Dec. 3
- Food Fridays – Dec. 11th, Jan. 22
- Organize Your Life - Dec. 30
- Virtual Board Game Night – Jan. 26



# Things to Note!

- There is no right way or wrong way in comics.
- We're going fast, so no masterpieces here!
- Any and all questions are welcome!

# Comic Basics

Panels, Speech Bubbles, and More!

# What Are Comics?

- Comics combine art and word together in order to give information/tell a story.
- Comics are sequential art where time is an important component.
- A single panel comic is technically a cartoon.
- Comics use panels, speech bubbles, and other symbols to communicate more clearly to the reader.

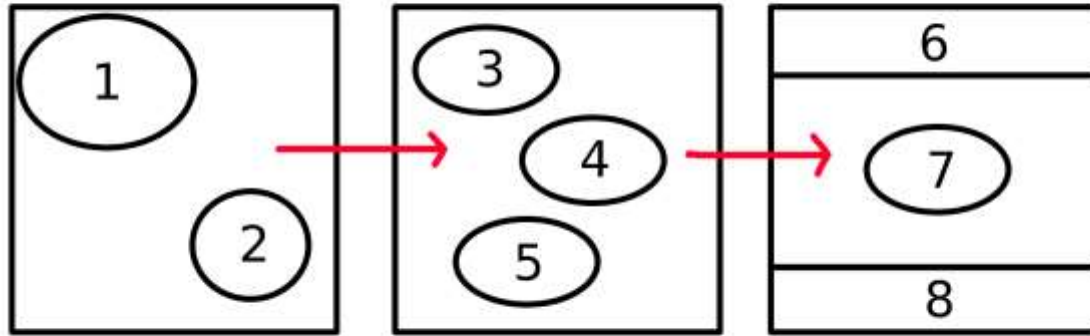


# Comic Panels

- Comic panels are a single frame or drawing among many others.
- They are like a camera snapshot or a frame in a movie—a single moment in time.

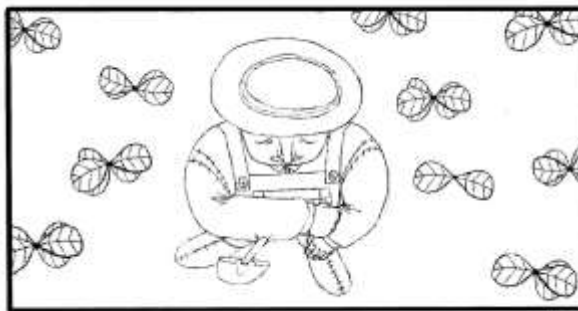
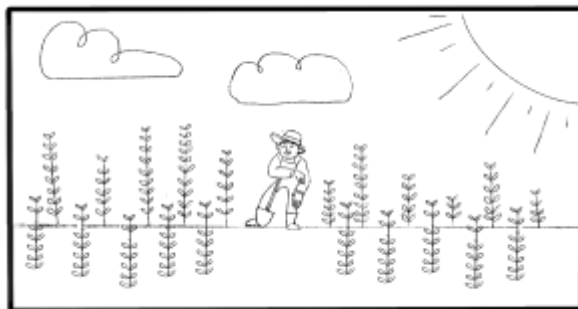


# Reading Comic Panels



Left to right, top to bottom.

# Moving Your "Camera"





# The Gutter

- The gutter is the space between panels.
- The gutter usually tells us there is a passage of time (seconds, minutes, years, millenia...)
- Anything can happen between two panels! Your mind fills in the blanks (or makes the murder).



*Understanding Comics by  
Scott McCloud*

# Comic Panel Editing

- Also like a movie, you can use the panels, perspectives, and gutter to change the pace of your comic.
- Think about how each frame transitions to a new one.



*Understanding Comics* by  
Scott McCloud

# Speech Bubbles

- Speech bubbles show who is speaking (or thinking) inside or outside the panel.



# Special Speech Bubbles

- Most speech bubbles are round, but there are a few kinds that have special uses or meanings:



Thinking or  
Dreaming



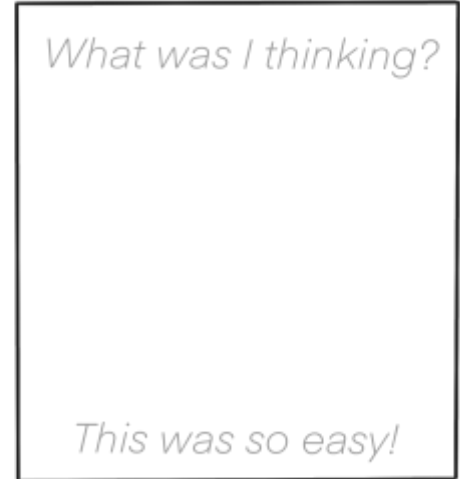
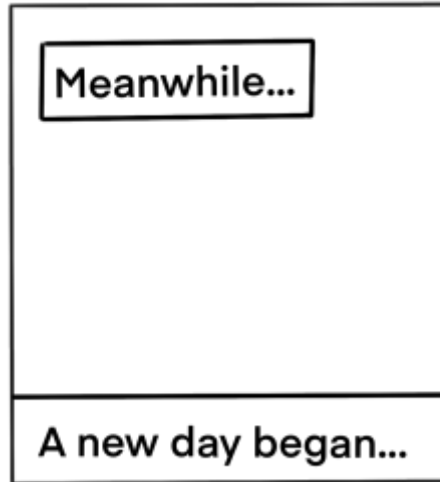
Shouting  
or a Loud Noise



Multiple Lines  
of Dialogue

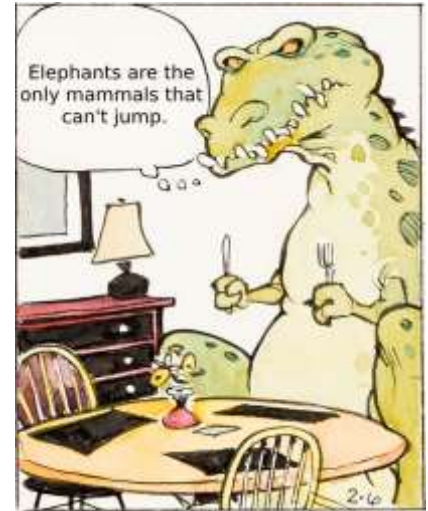
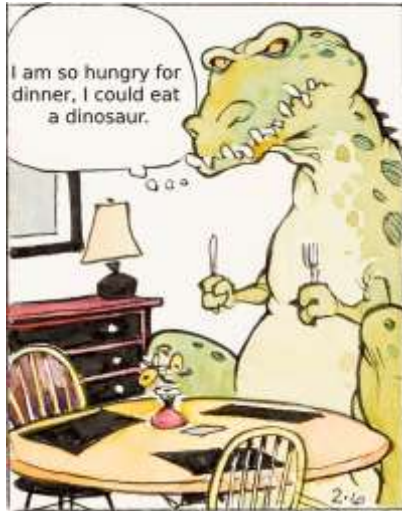
# Narration Speech Bubbles

- Some speech bubbles are square or have no border.
- Usually these are for an outside narrator or the inner thoughts of a character.



# Text-Image Relationship

- Text relationships can either be redundant, contrasting, complementary, or unrelated.*

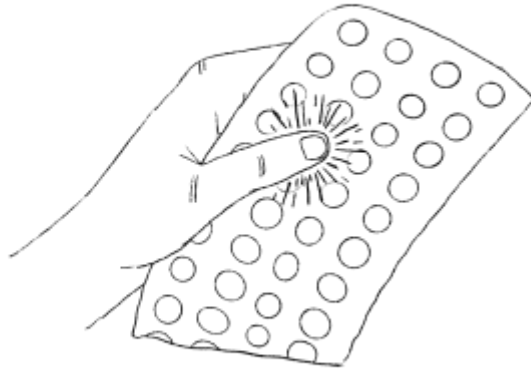


Artwork by Bill Watterson

# Types of Sound Effects



Text and/or  
Speech  
Bubbles



Motion Lines



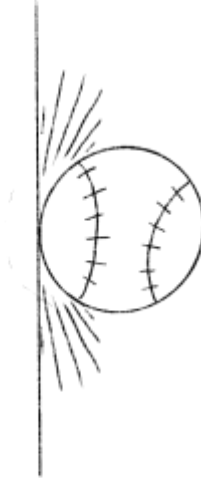
Motion Lines  
and Text

# Motion Lines

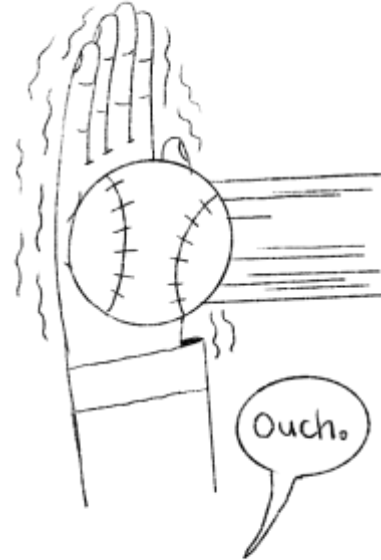
- Motion lines help show action or fast movement.



Movement



Impact



Vibration



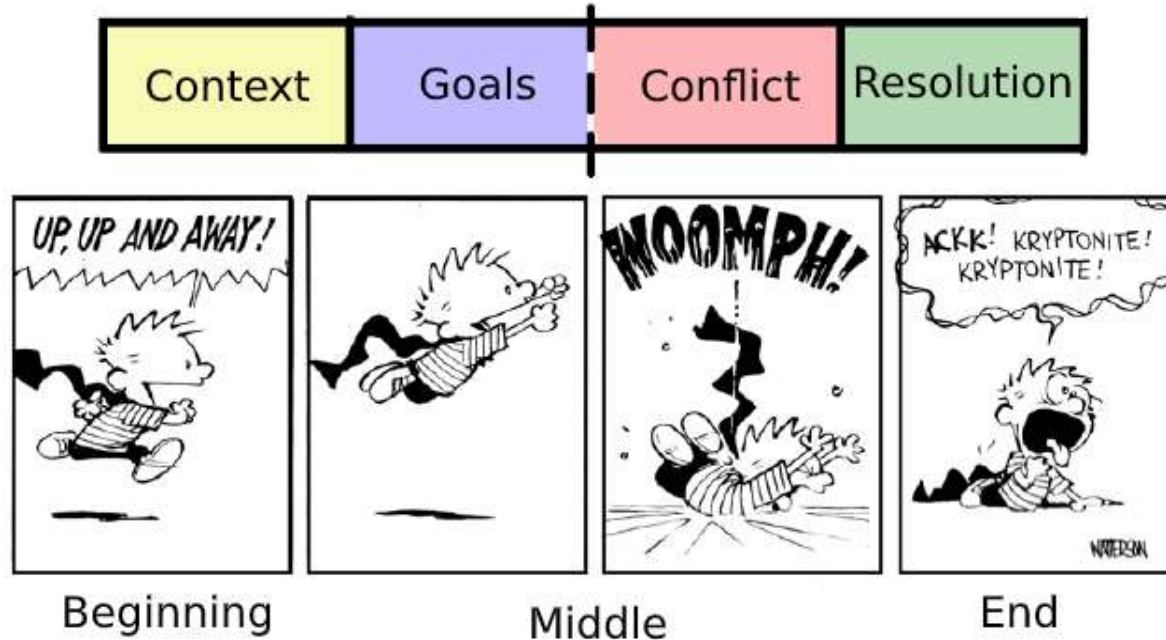
# The Parts of a Story

The Three Act Structure

# The Three Act Structure

- The Beginning – The Context
  - The "set up" and background information
  - The Who, What, Where, When, and Why
- The Middle – The Goals and Conflict
  - The main action and events along the way
  - The How
- The End – The Resolution
  - Solving the problem and what happens afterwards

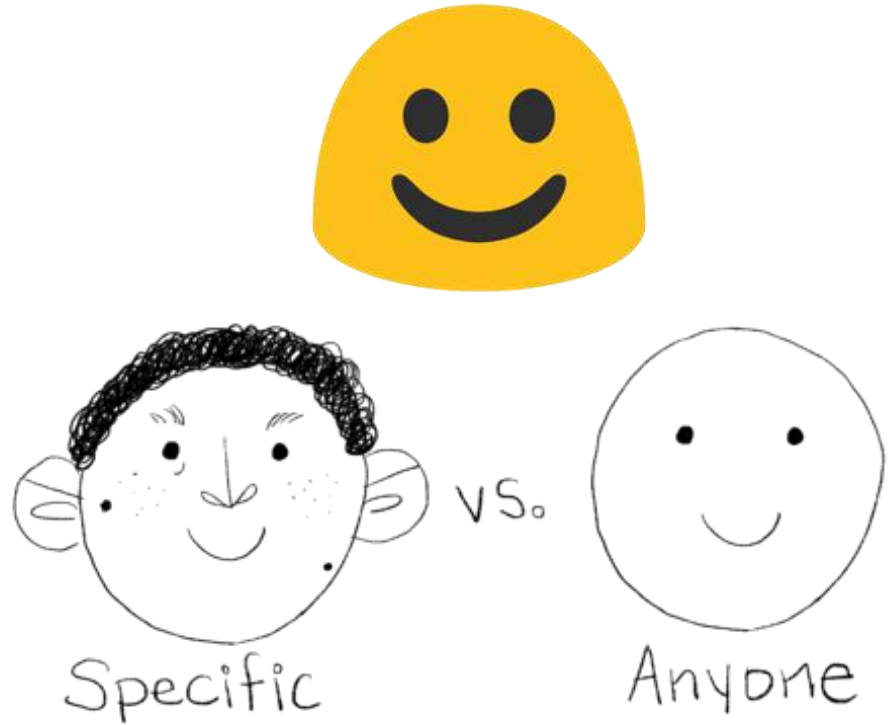
# Three Act Comic Strip



# Basic Comic Characters

# Faces

- What we focus on, see first, and how we know someone.
- Faces can be as simple as a smiley face, which is basically an emoji!
- More details makes them someone specific. This affects how relatable your character is.



# Facial Expressions



Happy



Sad



Angry



Laughing



Neutral



Surprised



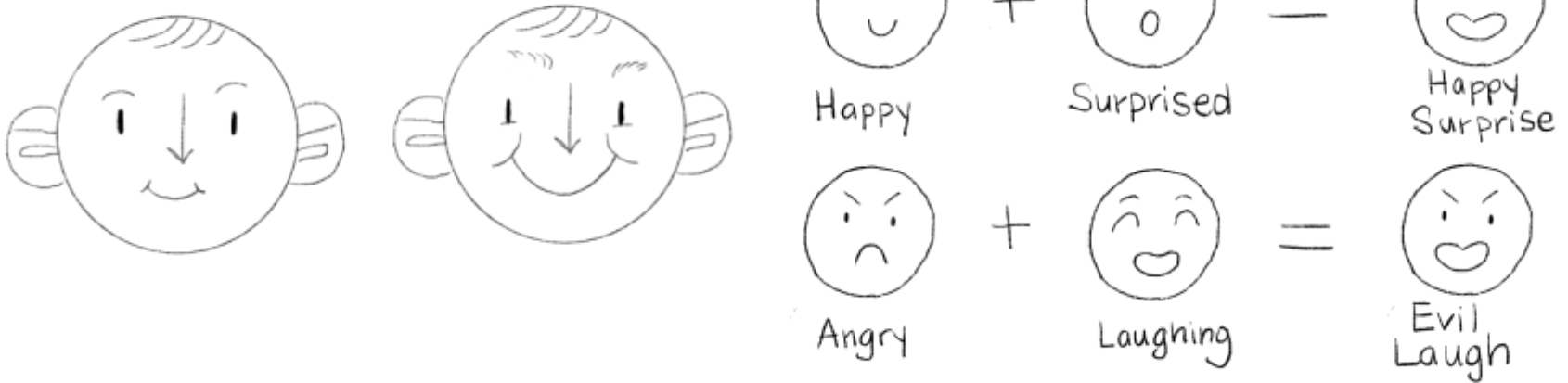
Tired



Confused

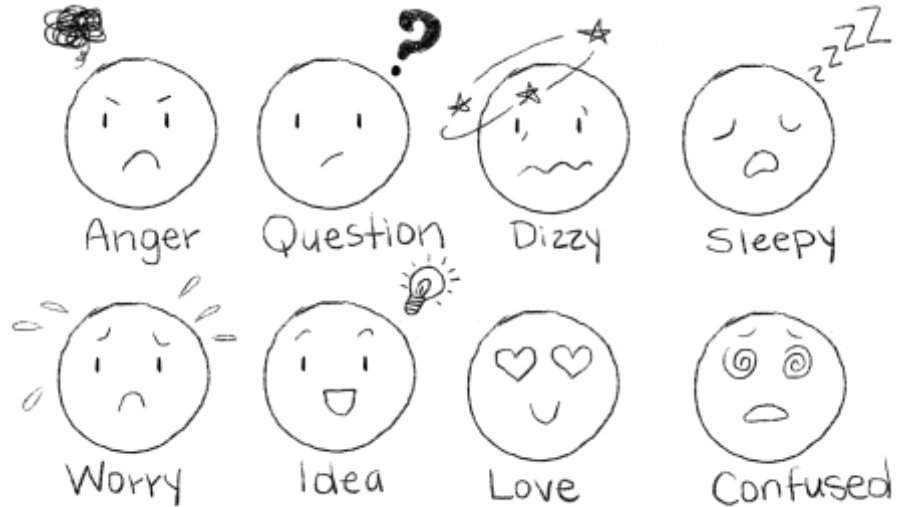
# Exaggerated and Complex Expressions

- Expressions can be combined or exaggerated for various emotions.



# Emanata (Symbols of Emotion)

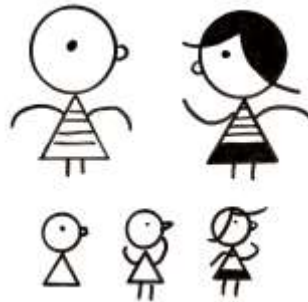
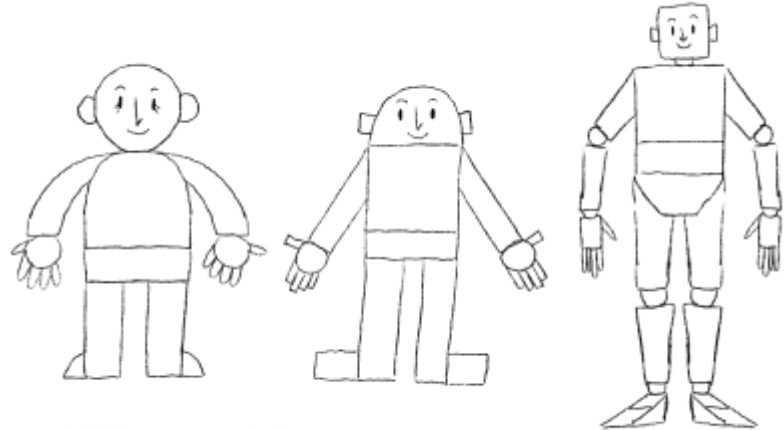
- Emanata are symbols that help the reader understand what a character is feeling.
- Some emanata look different based on the region they're from!





# Simple Shapes

- Faces, bodies, clothing, and accessories can be broken down into simple shapes.
- Stick figures work well too, but don't give as much *character* as do shapes and details.



**Ivan Brunetti Style** –Instead of stick figures, basic body shapes and noodle arms.

# Making Characters – Use What You Know

- Like a story, it's best to use what you know (or want to know/learn) when making characters.
- Keep in mind what you might know or be interested in might be from your unique perspective!



# What if I get stuck?

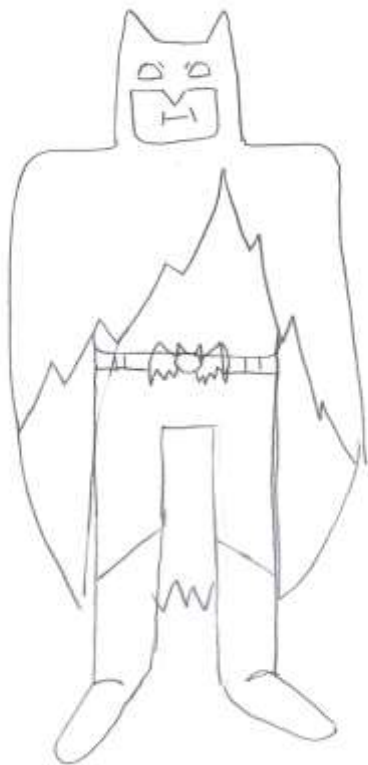
- Keep thinking to yourself, "And then..." or "What if..."
- Keep reading and watching to get inspired.
- Use or create a prompt generator. Write down scenarios, names, and ideas from your everyday life, even if they are totally boring. You can use moments like:
  - Things you've done/want to do
  - Things you've seen/want to see
  - Things you've heard/overheard from other people
  - Things you wonder about/questions
  - Memories/deja vu/interviews

# Comic Exercises

# Characters From Memory

- *Can you picture a well-known character or recognize them when you see them?*
- Try to draw a famous cartoon character from memory with no references in just 2 minutes. Resist the urge to Google or make a stick figure!
- Need some ideas? Try:
  - Batman
  - Charlie Brown
  - Garfield
  - Mickey Mouse
  - SpongeBob

2 min character-Batman



# Quick Characters

- *What's makes a character that character? Is it their hair, their clothing? How are they unique?*
- Now divide another piece paper into six sections as evenly as you can.
- In the first box, draw the same character in just 60 seconds. Again, try to avoid stick figures!
- We'll continue with 45, 30, 20, 10, and 5 seconds.



60 seconds



45 seconds



30 seconds



20 seconds



10 seconds



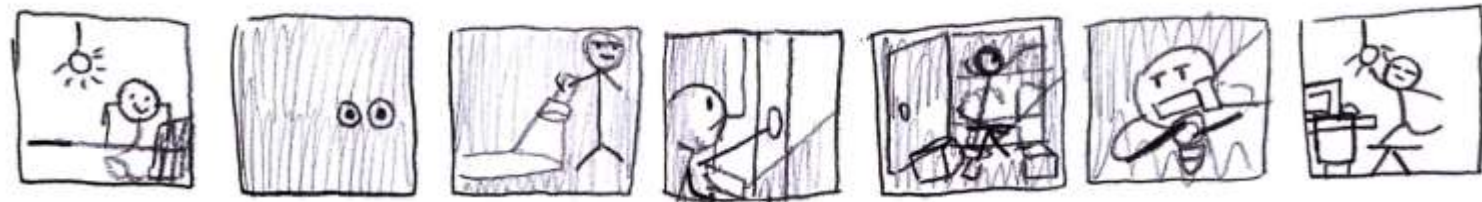
5 seconds



# The Passage of Time

- *You can show a passage of time with different kinds of transitions. The time might be seconds or years between two panels!*
- Draw a simplified comic strip showing a person doing an everyday task, broken down into individual steps. Don't use any words! You can use stick figures and any number of panels in just 6 minutes.
- Need ideas? Try:
  - Getting in the car
  - Getting up for school
  - Changing a lightbulb
  - Making a sandwich

# Passage of Time - changing a lightbulb



# Character, Place, Situation

- *Adding the element of randomness can help with generating ideas—or just warming up.*
- We're going to randomly select a type of character, place, and situation. Your character doesn't have to be human or an animal.
- Take 6 minutes to make a three-panel comic. Try to avoid stick figures as much as possible!

Character, Place, Situation  
(cat) (Library) (Honeymoon)



# Making a Lifetime

- *Let's take some time to explore the same character in the previous exercise.*
- Divide a new piece of paper into four sections as evenly as you can.
- In the first box, draw your character as a newborn in a certain setting. Where was this? Who was there? You have 2 minutes!

# Making a Lifetime... in 8 Minutes!

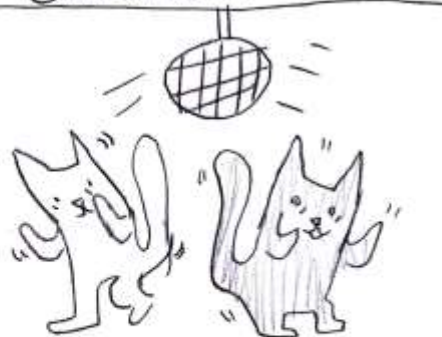
- In the last box, draw the character at the end of their living days. They lived to be old. Who's there? What is happening?
- In the third box, draw your character as an adult in the prime of their life or middle-aged at work. How are they feeling? What are they doing?
- In the second box, draw your character as a young child or teen engaged in an activity. Are they happy? What did you do as a kid/do as a teen?



① Newborn



④ Young



③ Adult



② Elderly