Comics Workshop For Teens
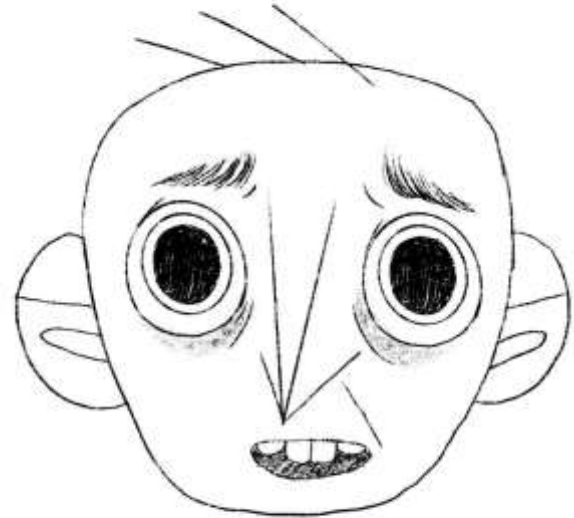
Part 2

The Character
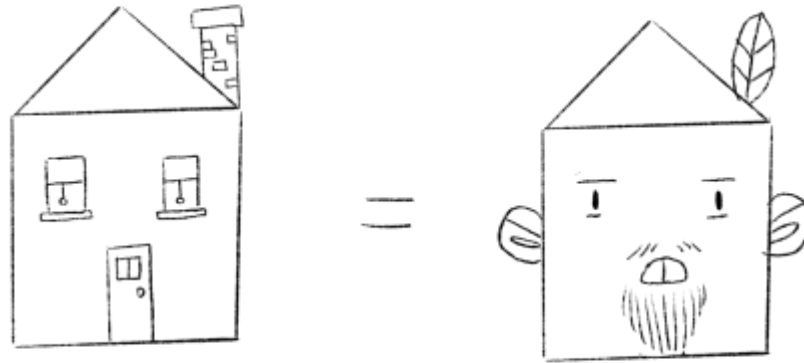
Faces

- Usually the most important part of the character.

- What we focus on, see first, and know it's somebody specific.
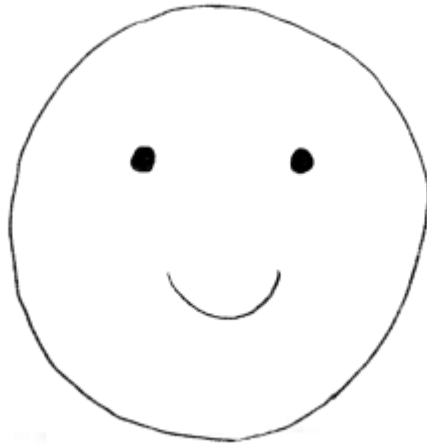
Where We See Faces

- Humans see faces in everything, so we often project human-like qualities to animals or objects.

Smiley Faces (or Emojis)

- This is how we see abstract dots and lines to be a person's face!
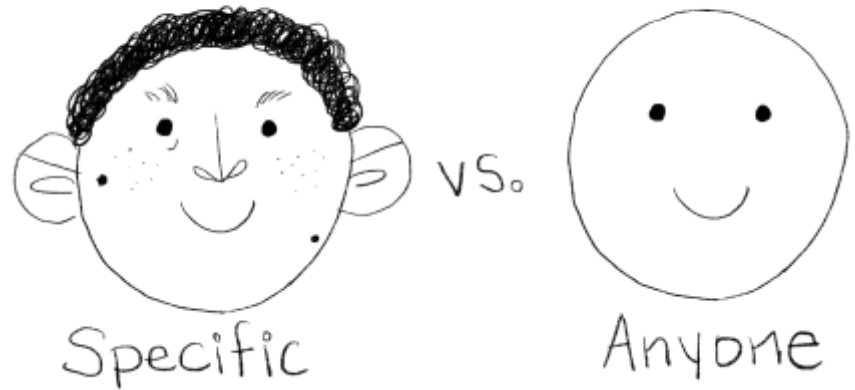
Adding More Details to the Face

Details vs Smiley Face

- A smiley face can be anyone, which is more relatable.

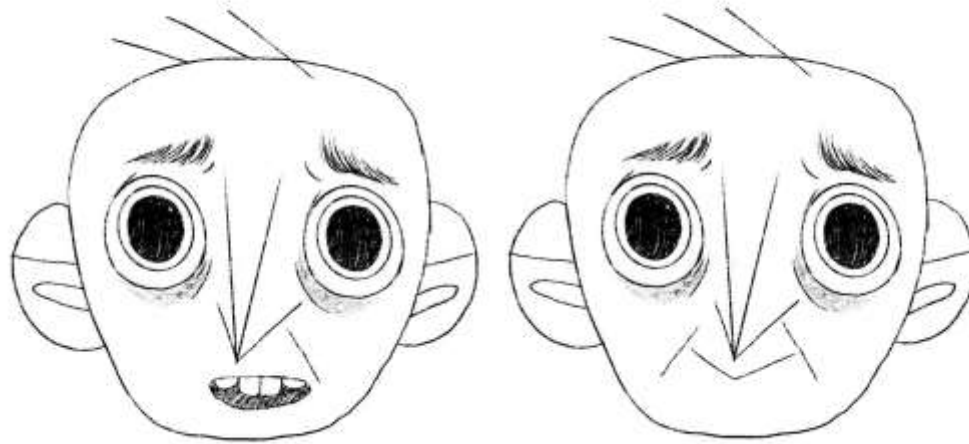- A more detailed faces is someone specific.

Specific vs. Anyone

Face Shapes

- Just like in real life, people's faces come in all shapes and sizes.

- Try to experiment and see what random shapes you make!

Circle   Square   Triangle

Other Shapes

Expressions

- Facial expressions tell us someone's emotions or how someone is feeling.

Types of Facial Expressions

Happy   Sad   Angry   Laughing
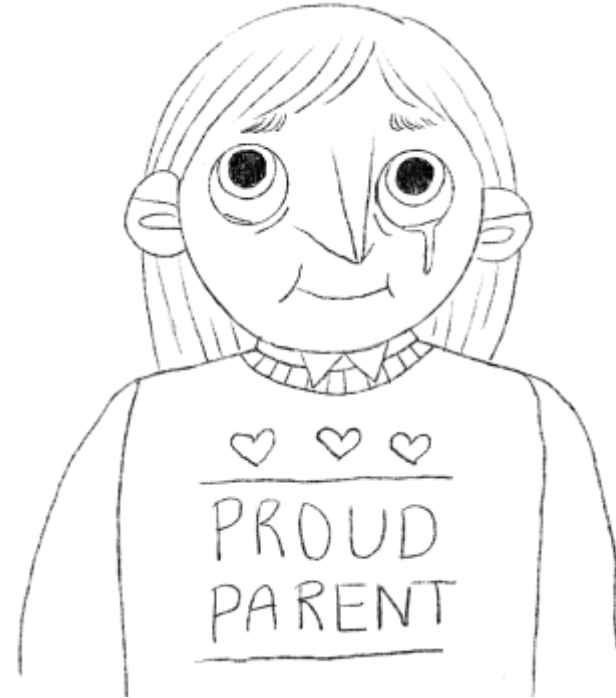
Neutral   Surprised   Tired   Confused

Example Complex Expression

- Imagine a parent at their child's graduation.

- They are happy for the moment, but sad because their child will be leaving home soon.

Complex Expressions (or Face Math)

- Expressions can be combined to create new, complex ones.

- Some complex expressions can have different amounts (like 25% sad and 75% angry).
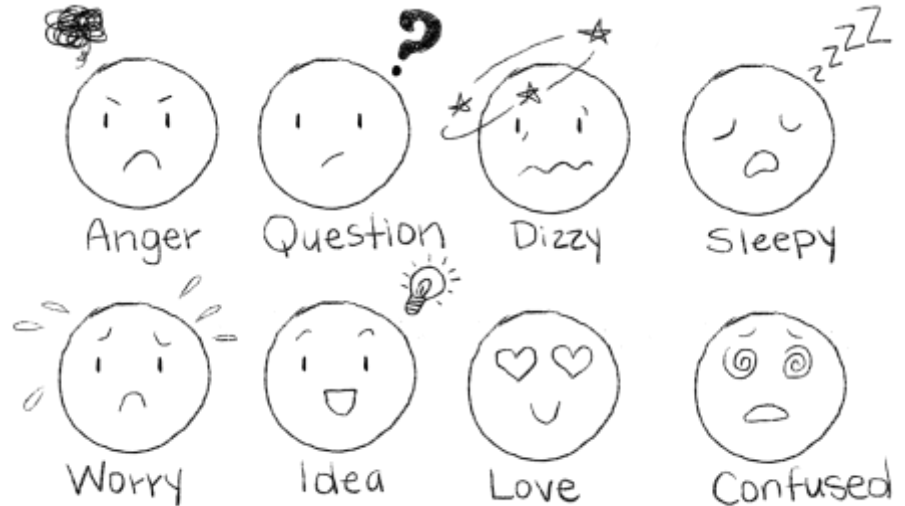

Happy + Surprised = Happy Surprise

Angry + Laughing = Evil Laugh
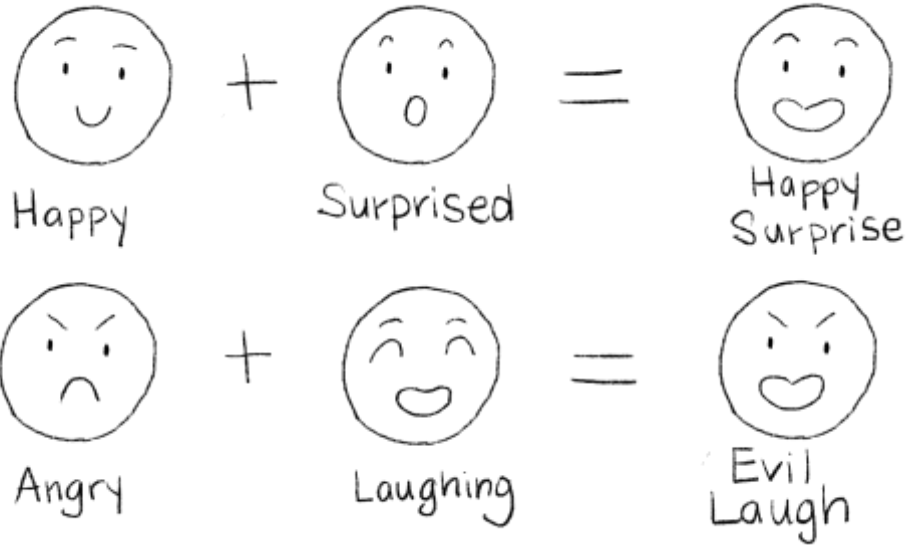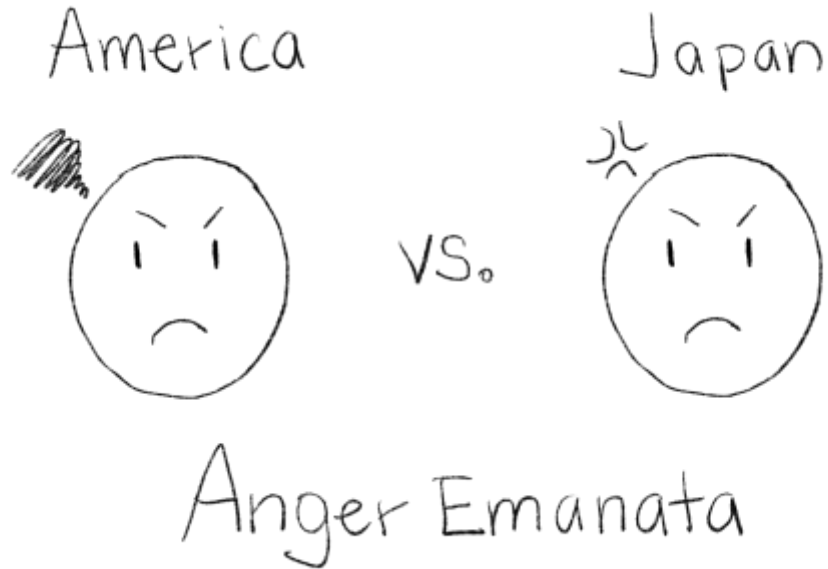
Big vs Small Expressions

Emanata

- Emanata are symbols that help show how a character is feeling.

- They don't exist in real life but make them easier to understand.

Emanata in Other Countries

- Emanata can change based on the country the comic is made in.

- America and Japan often have different emanata for the same emotion.

America   Japan

vs.

Anger Emanata

Practice in the Mirror

- If you don't know what a face looks like, take a picture or look in a mirror!

- Simplify what you see into shapes you can draw.

- It looks silly, but it is super helpful.
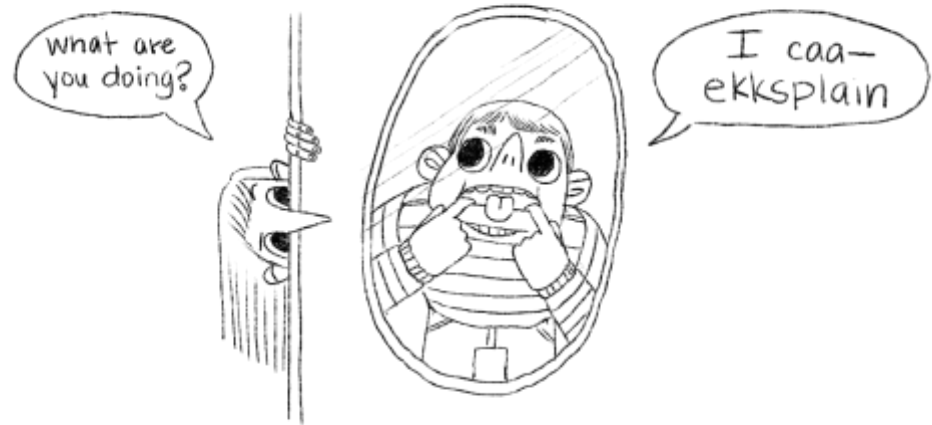
Poses

- Poses are how a character stands, sits, or how their body moves.

- Poses show what someone is doing and can even show how they are feeling.

Face vs Pose Emotions

- Think of a gardener, who is so happy to be done working.

- If you see their face, you know they are happy.

- But if you see their pose, you know they are tired too.

- You don't get the whole story from just the face alone.

Dynamic vs Static Pose

- Static poses are ones that don't move much. They are good for small, quiet moments, like:
  - Standing
  - Sitting

- Dynamic poses are exciting and have action. They are found often in superhero comics, like:
  - Jumping
  - Running

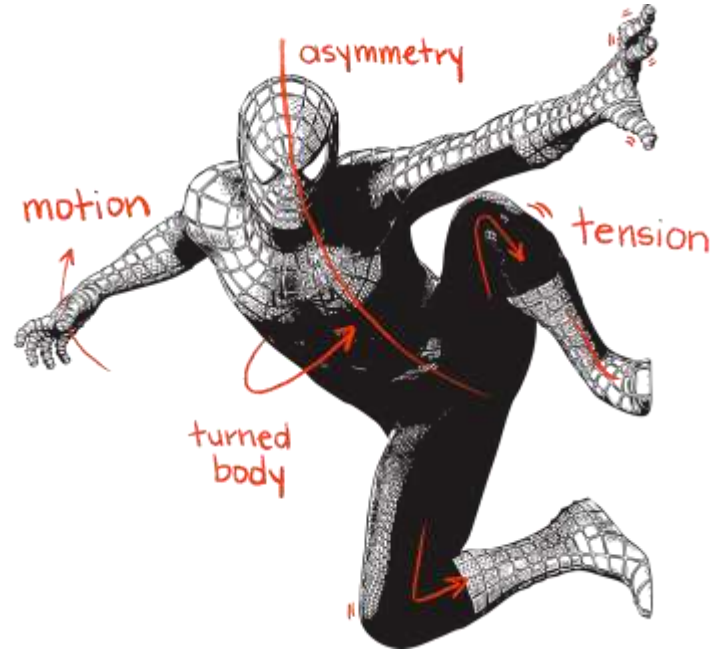# Spiderman – Dynamic vs Static

Dynamic

Static

More on Dynamic Poses

- Dynamic poses usually:
  - Are asymmetrical (uneven)
  - Show tension or motion
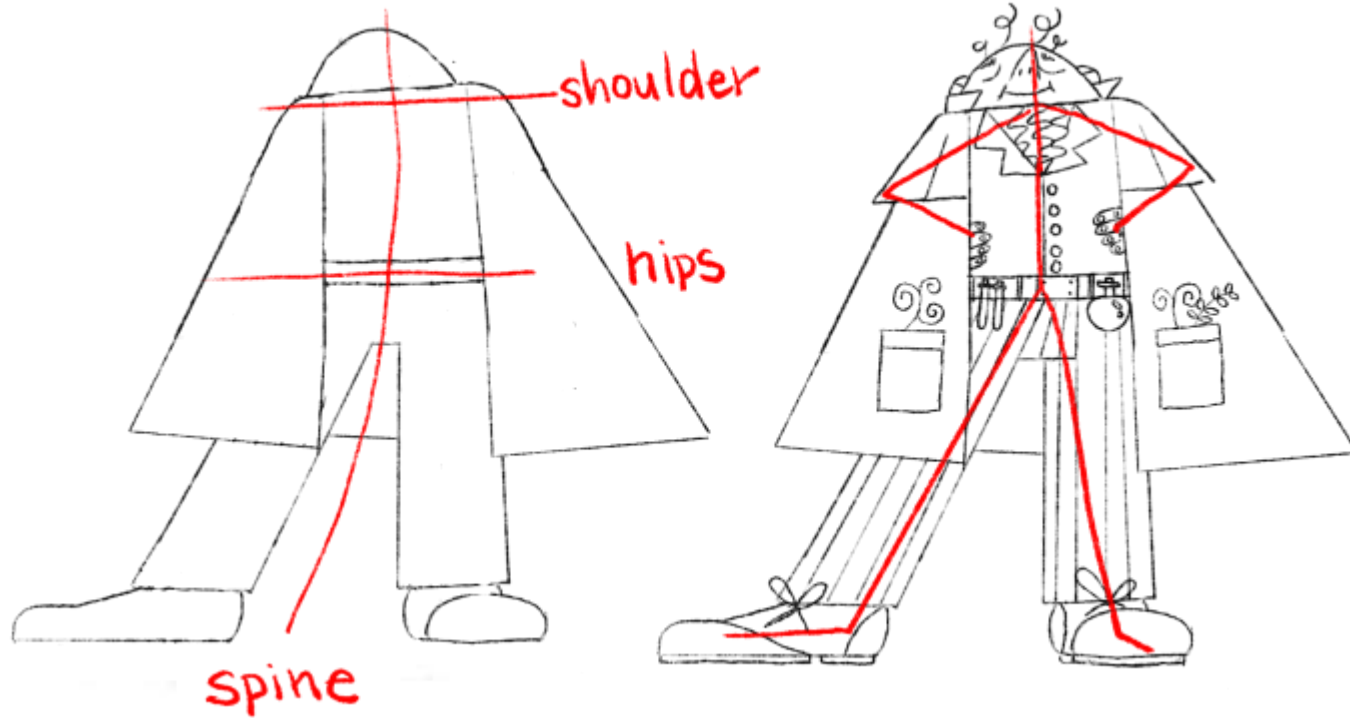 - Have more diagonal lines
  - The body is turned

Squash and Stretch

- Squash and stretch is a common practice in both cartooning and animation.

- You take the simple shapes your character is made of and exaggerate them like you would a ball of putty.

- This works for both faces and poses to get a certain emotion or movement.
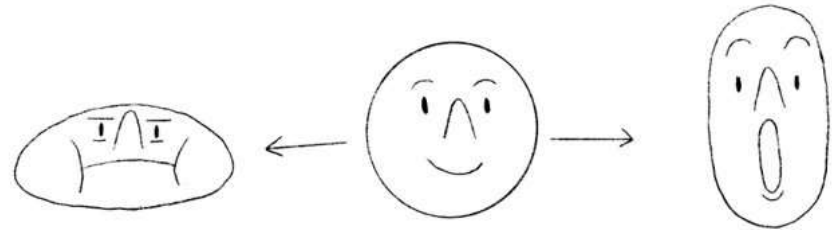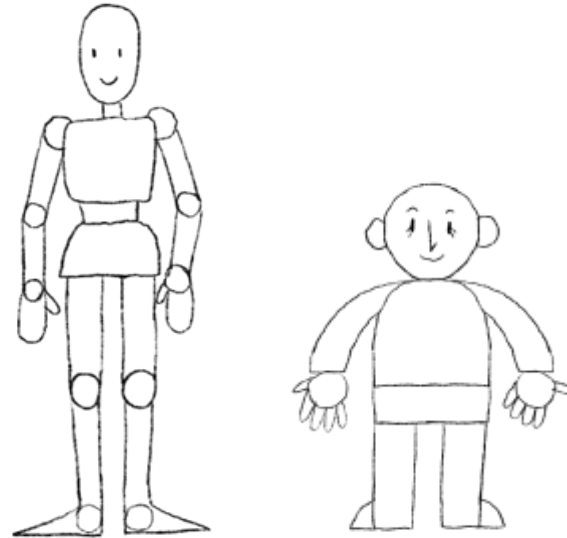
Line of Action
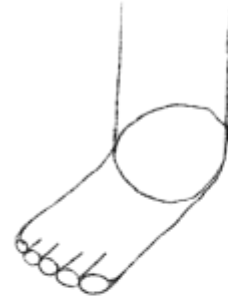
Stick People Are Great!

Simple Shapes

- Like faces, bodies can be broken down into simple shapes.

- Try using simple shapes as an outline and then fill in the details later.

More Simple Shapes

- Simple shapes are useful for complex things, like hands and feet.
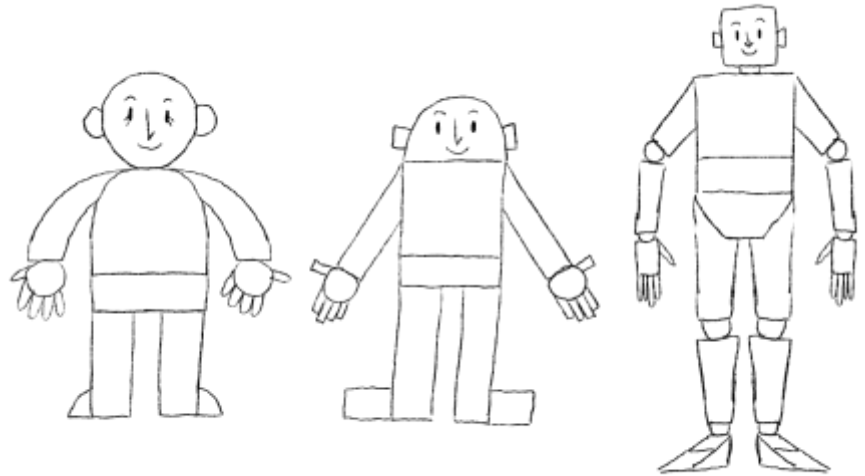
Simple Shapes and Depth

- Simple shapes can be used to help create depth in your characters.

- Think of simple 3D shapes, like spheres, cylinders, and cubes to build each part of the body.

Different Body Shapes

- Characters come in all shapes and sizes, just like people in real life!

- Test out some different shapes and see what kinds of characters you can make.

Body Shapes and Character

- Shape can also hint at what a character is like.

- Squares could imply strength, while circles may seem more friendly.
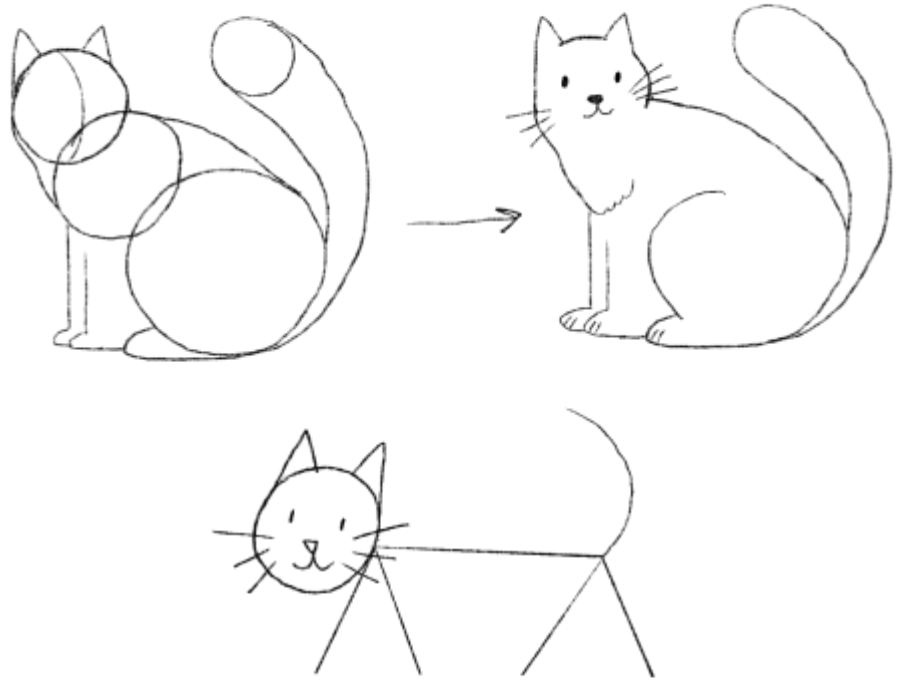

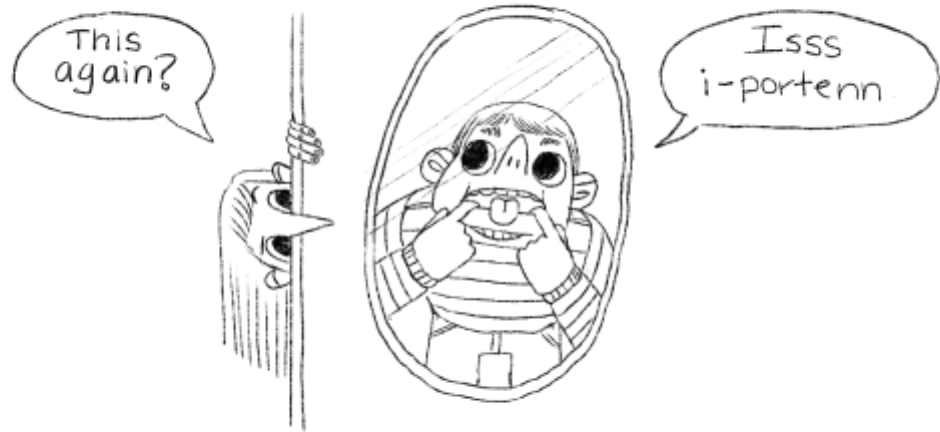Square   Circle   Triangle

Animals

- Animals work the same way!

- Just simplify into shapes you can draw.

- Stick animals work just as well.

Back at the Mirror Again

- Sometimes a pose is too difficult to draw just from your imagination.

- When in doubt, try posing in a mirror or use a camera.

Making Characters – Use What You Know

- Like a story, it's best to use what you know when making your character.

- Or make a character based on things that you would like to learn more about.

- For example, let's say we like fishing, the color green, and NASCAR.

Making Characters – Fishing, Green, NASCAR

Now fisherman
Wants to be in NASCAR

Was in NASCAR
Now fisherwoman

Making Characters – Fishing, Green, NASCAR

Outline Your Character

- What kind of person is your character? What do they look like?
- Make a list of their:
  - Likes and dislikes
  - How they grew up
  - Attitude
  - Goals
  - Anything else important!
- Details about your character may change over time, and that's okay!

More Characters

- Most comics have more than one character.
- These can be:
  - Protagonist, or the hero(ine)
  - Antagonist, or the villain
  - Side Characters
  - Background Characters
- The more important the character, the more details they will need. If they are a background character, they don't need any details.
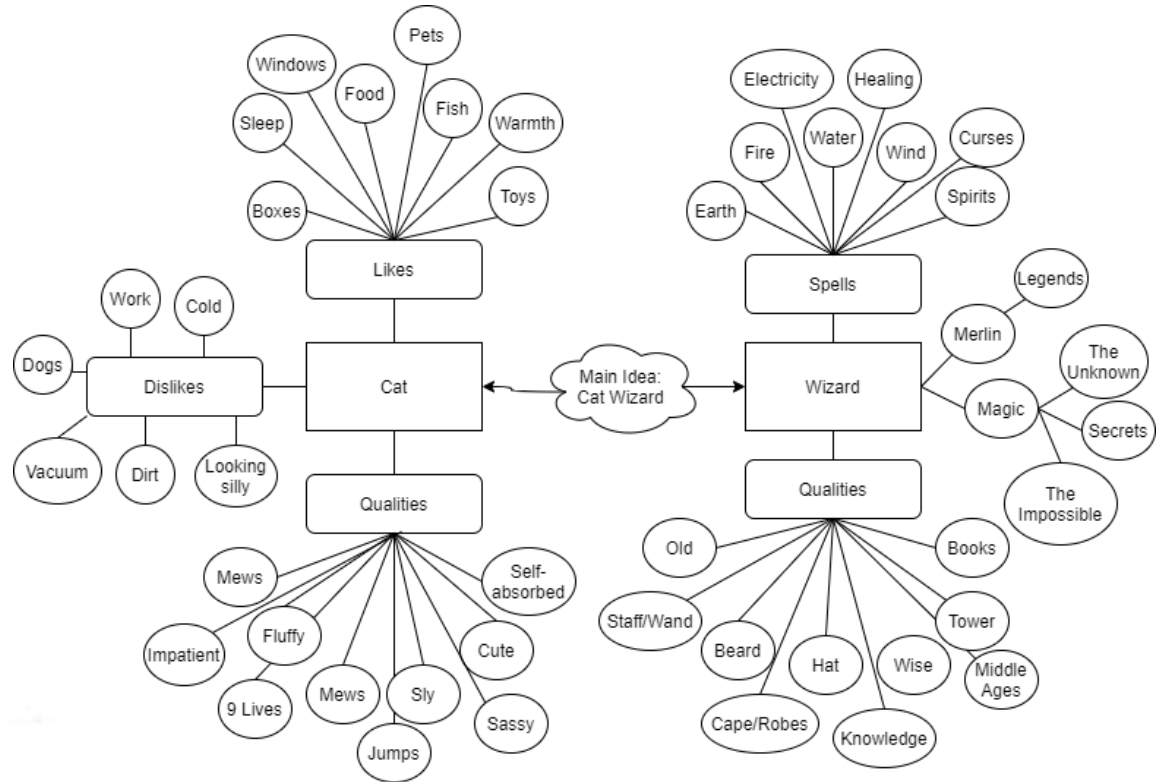
Main Character More Detail

vs.

BG Character Less Detail

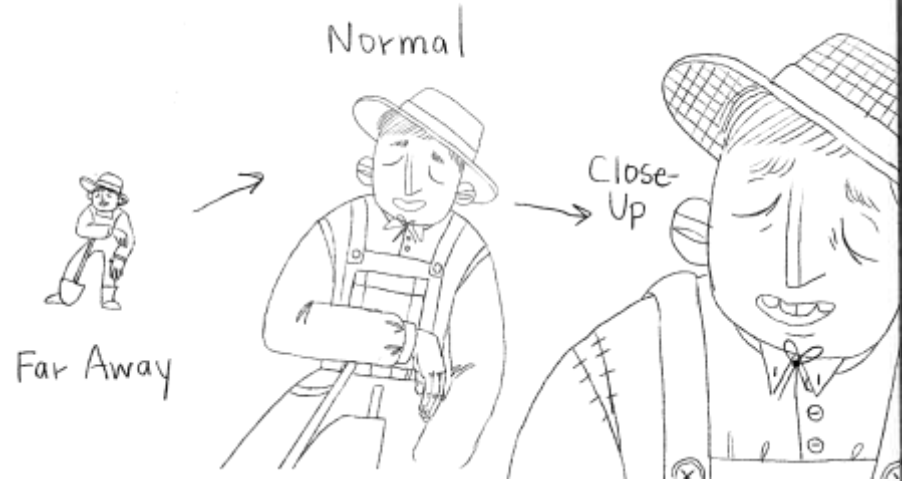# Character Design Tips

For People, Animals, and Creatures

Mind Map and Brainstorming

- Use a mind map to generate ideas and concepts for stories and characters.

Simple vs Complex Design

- Try sticking to a simpler design that is easy to draw many times.

- You can add or take away detail based on how close you see a character.

Line and Color

- The line and colors you choose for a character can say a lot about what they are like.
  - What do they tell about your character?
  - Are they harsh or smooth?
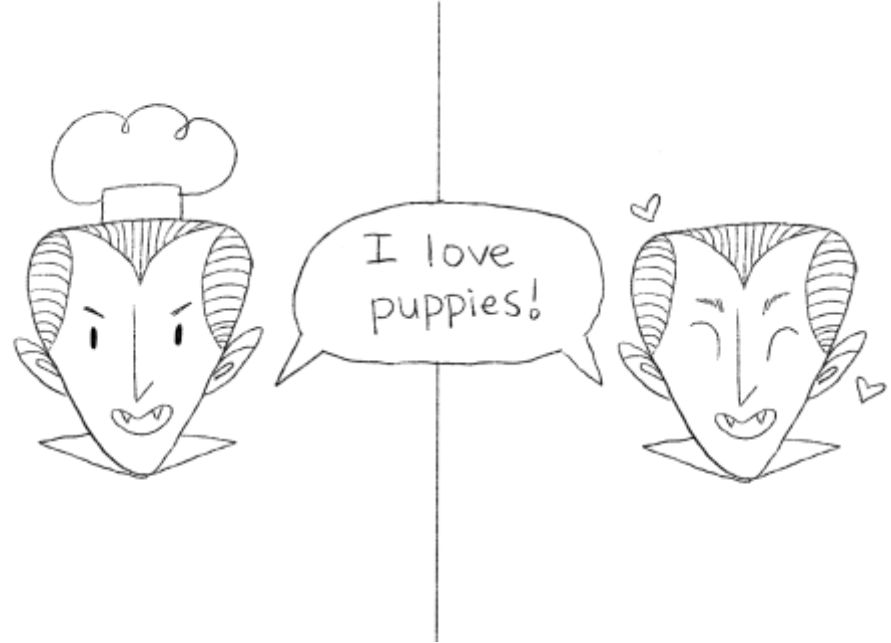 - Is it an intense color or a softer one?

"Line-less"

- You can also avoid using lines with color, value, and texture.

- Put dark and light values next to each other to create depth or shapes (where lines used to do the job).

Opposites

- Opposite characteristics can help make your character unexpected.

- Like a vampire that eats puppies vs a vampire that runs a puppy daycare.

Silhouettes

- A silhouette is an outline of a character.
- A strong silhouette can make your character recognizable.
- Ask yourself:
  - Does a certain shape stand out?
  - Can I tell it's only that character?
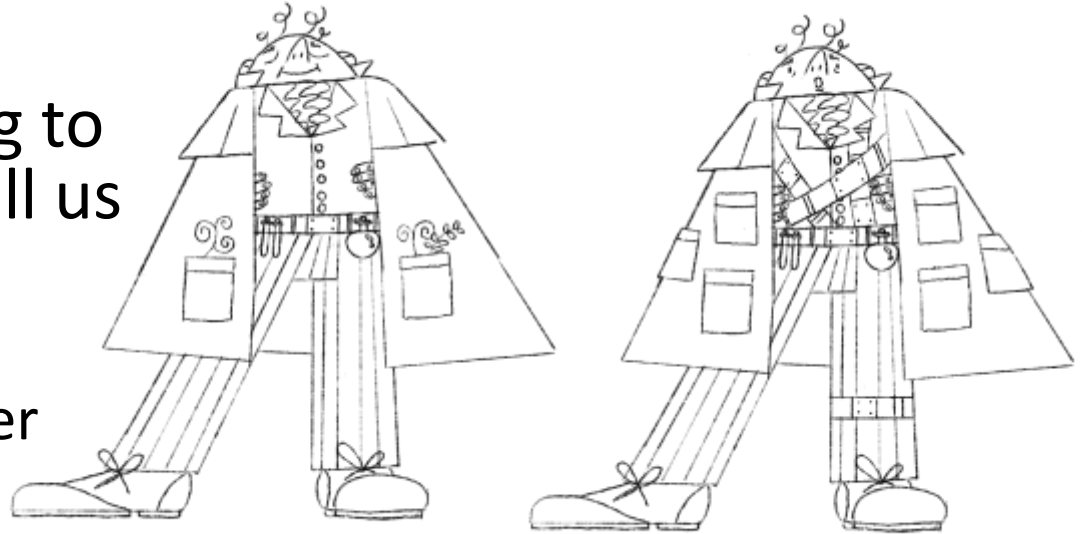 - Does it have an organic or mechanical outline?
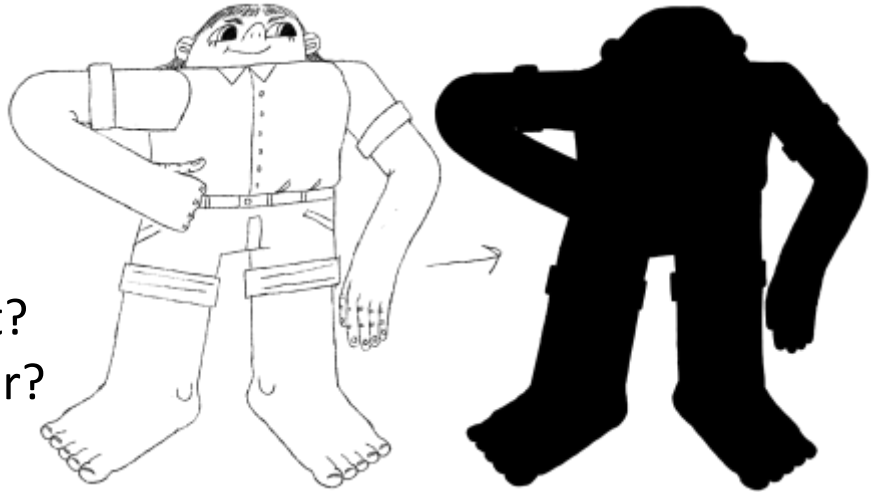
Can you name these characters?

Costume Design Purpose

- It's good for a character's clothing to have purpose or tell us more about the character.
  - Does that character need ten belts?
  - Do they tell us about this character?

Making Your Character Distinct

- You can use many characteristics to help make your character unique, including:
  - Physical Features
  - Clothing
  - Hairstyle
  - Poses
  - Expressions

Characters Change Over Time

- It happens, even for the professionals!

Characters Turnaround

- Turnarounds are a reference tool to help artists keep their characters consistent (or on model).
- Each view of the character is drawn out with lines keeping everything the same size:
    - Front, back, and side views
    - Quarter, overhead, and angled views
    - Various poses and expressions
- You can draw close-up details and information, too!

Example Character Turnaround & Details