

Comics Workshop For Teens

Part 3
The Comic



What Are Comics?

- Comics combine art (and often word) together in order to give information.
- This is known as sequential art.
- A single panel comic is technically a cartoon.
- The history of comics goes back hundreds of years, such as ancient Egyptian wall paintings.



What Makes Comics Useful?

- Comics can use cartoons as **icons** to make giving information, or telling a story, easier.
- Comics also use **symbols** to help the reader understand what is happening.
- Keeping simple help comics be a universal way to communicate.



Comic Panels

Dividing the Page

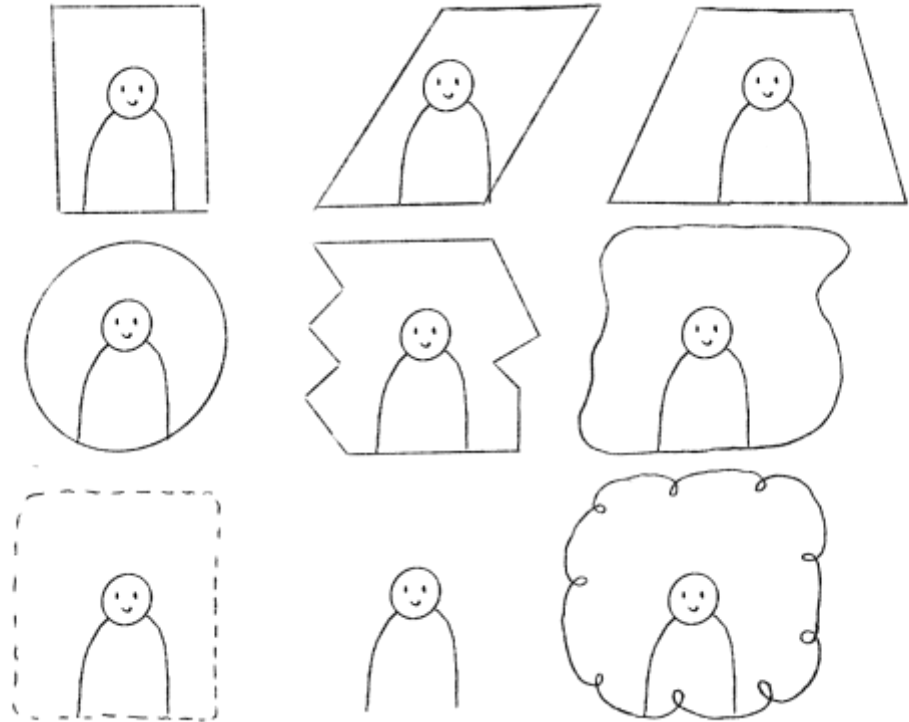
Comic Panels

- Comic panels are a single frame or drawing among many others.
- They tell a story through a series of pictures and text.
- They are like a snapshot from a camera or a frame in a movie—a single moment in time.
- Some panels include more than just one snapshot of time but are less common.



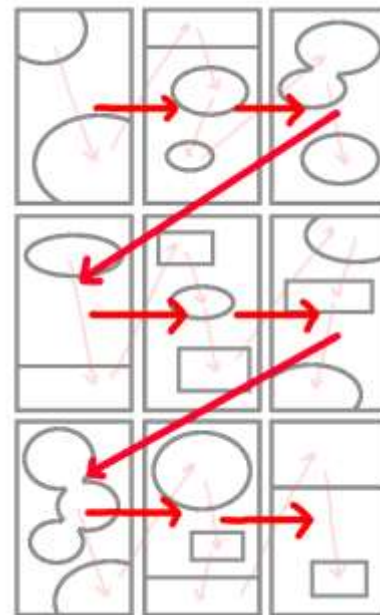
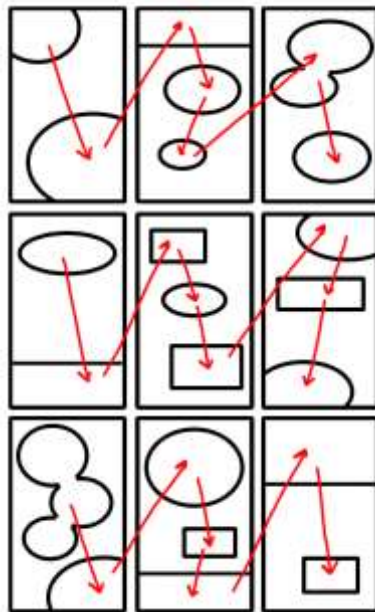
Example Panels

- Panels can be any size or shape.
- Some panels have no edges and can overlap each other.
- People or things inside the panel can overlap or go outside the panel.
- Panels can take up more than one page.



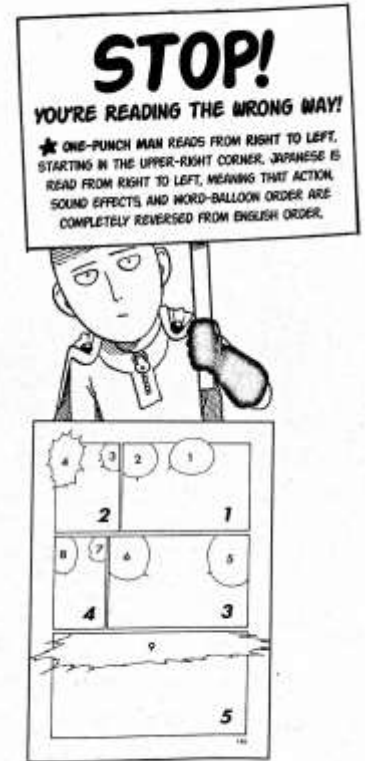
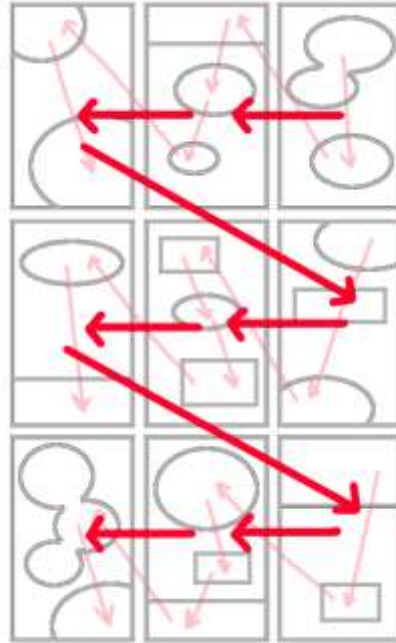
Reading Comic Panels

- Comics are read from left to right, top to bottom.
- Speech bubbles in each panel work the same way.
- Usually it follows a "Z" pattern.



Reading Manga Panels

- Manga, however, is read from right to left, top to bottom!
- Some manga volumes have a helpful guide at the end of the book.

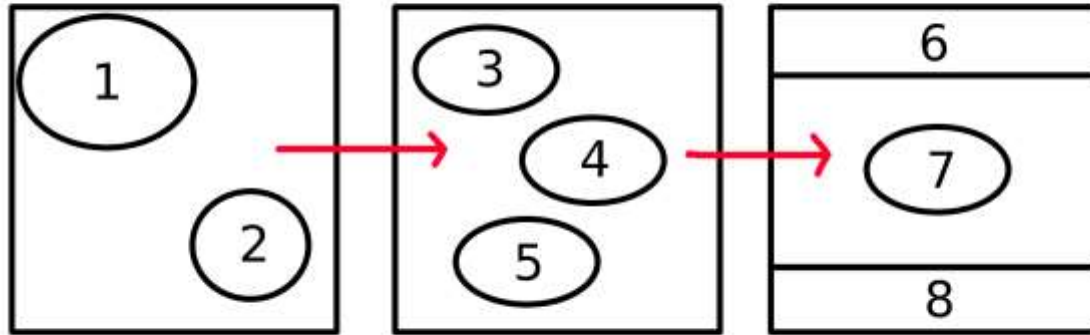


Why is this Important?

- Having an easy-to-read comic makes for a better reading experience.
- A simple layout will be more boring, but you won't lose your readers.
- A more complicated layout will be more exciting but can be harder to read.

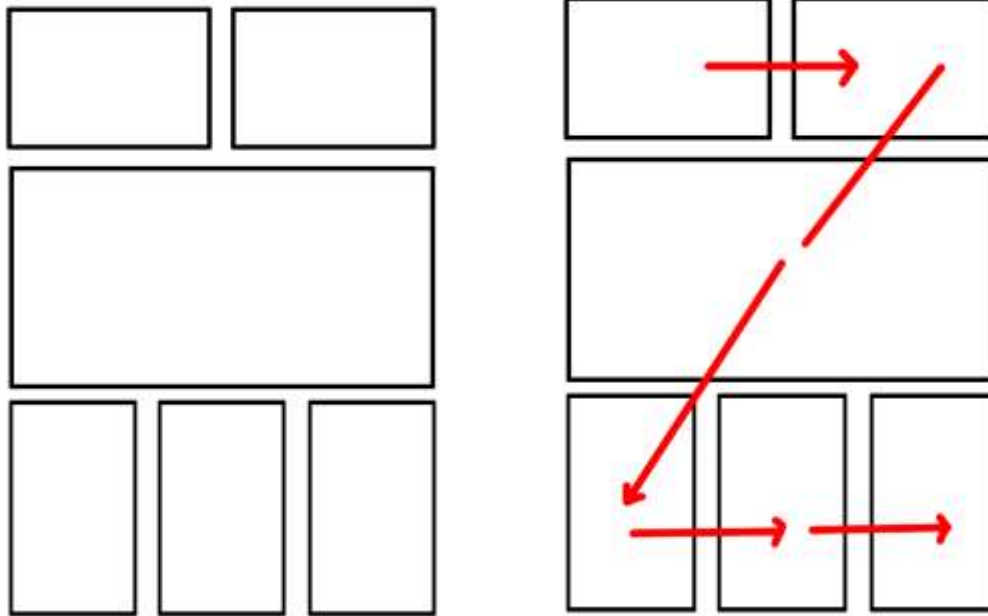


Example Comic – Comic Strip



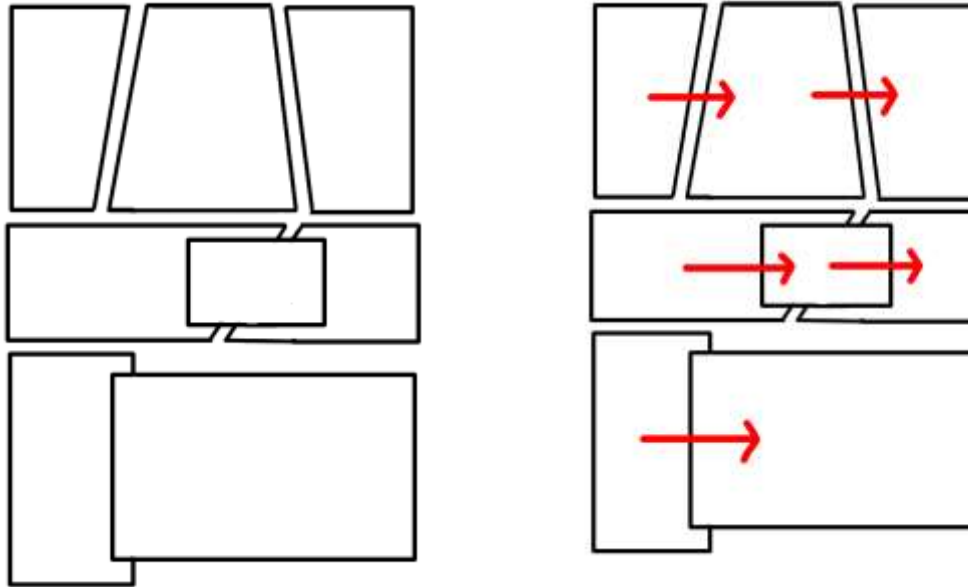
Comic strips are typically
the easiest format to follow.

Example Comic - Simple



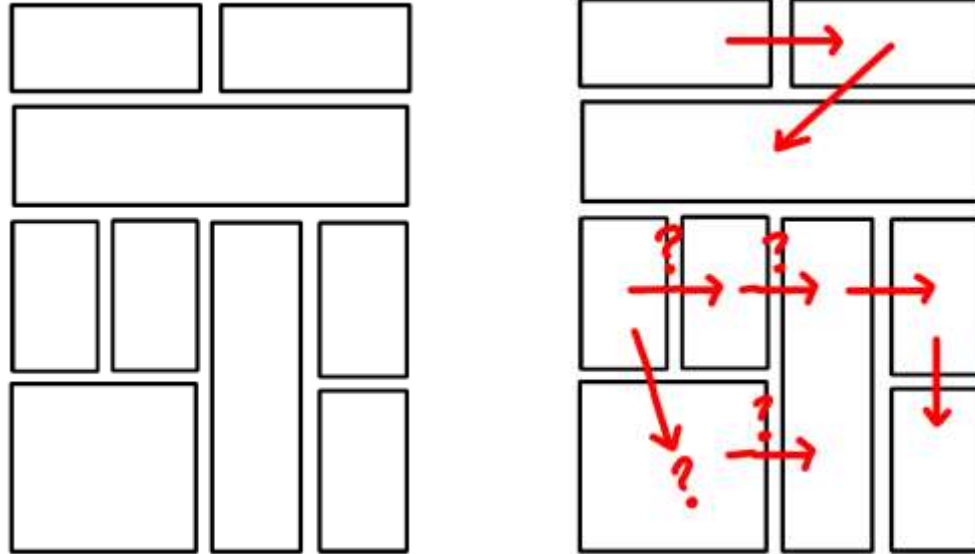
A simple layout will usually follow a straightforward "Z" pattern.

Example Comic - Complex



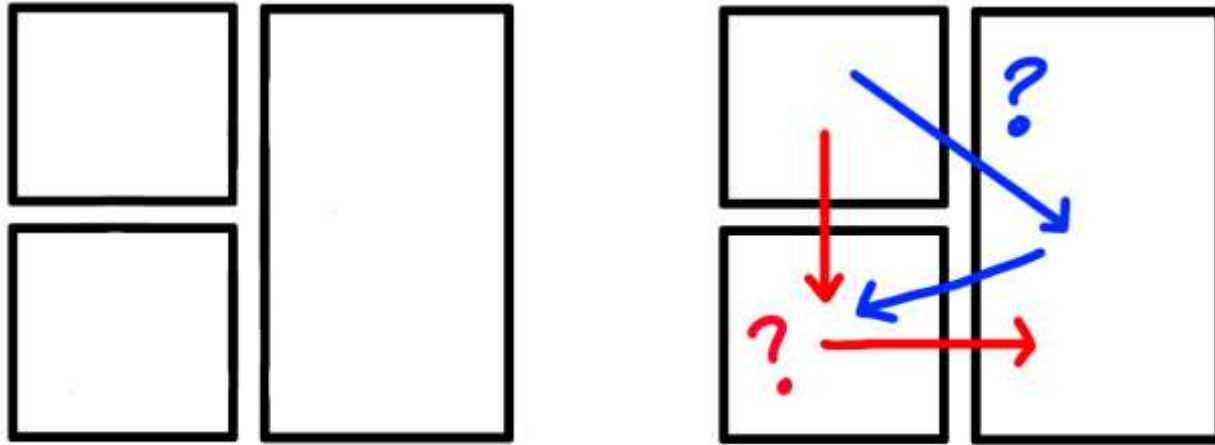
To make a layout more complex, you can offset, overlap, and change the size of the panels.

Example Comic – Confusing?



Some layouts can be harder to follow
and readers can get lost.

The Common Culprit



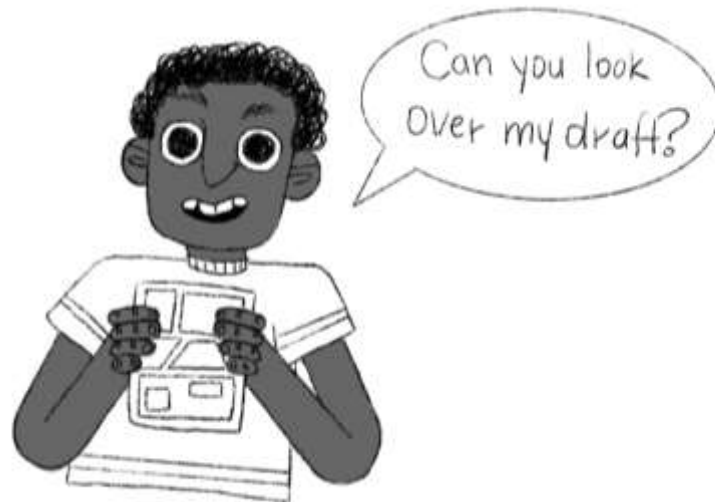
This is often the layout that can become confusing.

Which way would you read this?

There are studies all about how people read different comic layouts, it's quite interesting!

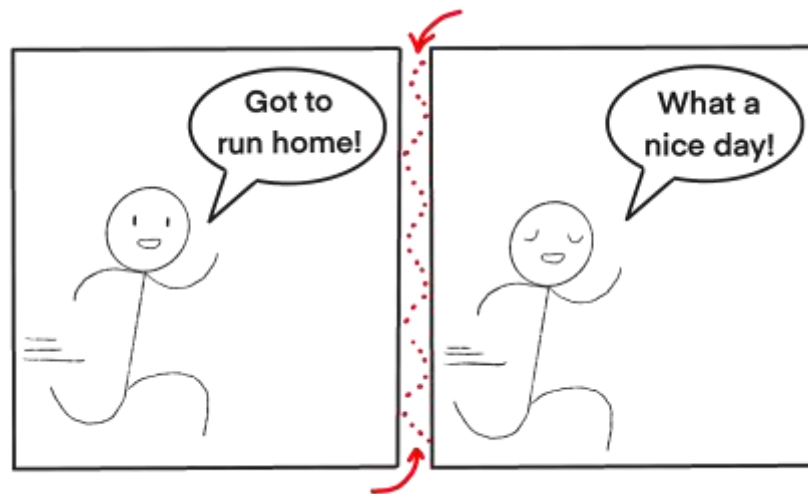
Comic Layout – Does It Work?

- If you're not sure your comic is easy enough to follow, ask friends and family what they think!



The Gutter

- The gutter is the space between panels.
- It can be any color, so you can get creative!
- The gutter helps us know that each panel is happening at a different time.
- The gutter is almost magical—anything can happen between two panels! Your mind fills in the blanks.



This is the gutter. It's magical.

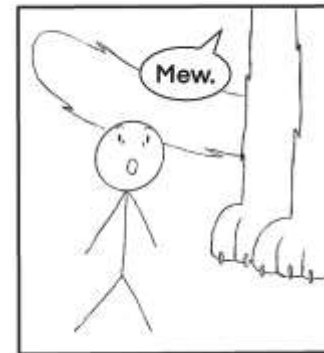
The Magic of the Gutter – What Happens?

- Look at this comic strip. What do you think happens in between?



The Magic of the Gutter – What Happens?

- Here are two different versions of the same comic.
- You can make anything happen in the middle.
- Think about what you need to show and what you can leave out.
- More panels makes the comic move slower.

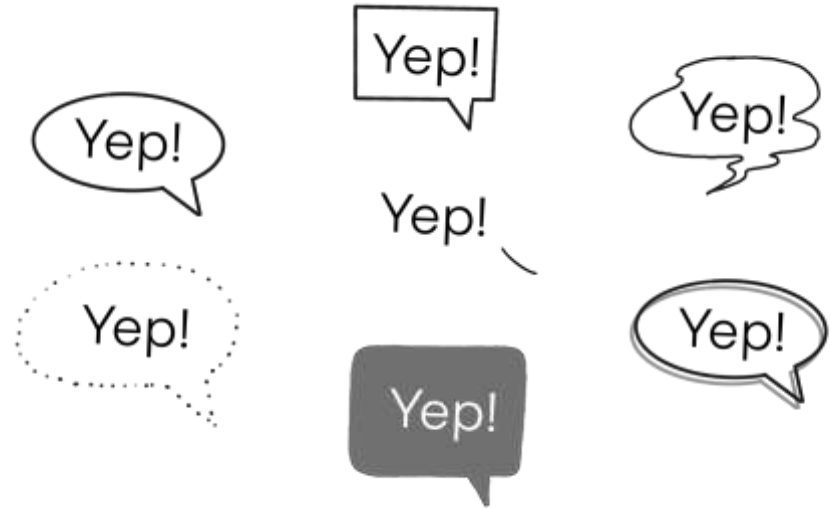


Comic Effects

Speech Bubbles, Sound Effects, and Motion

Speech Bubbles

- Speech bubbles show us what someone is saying.
- If you have a script, you can just put the dialogue into speech bubbles.
- They are not actually in the scene, unless they break the fourth wall for comedic effect.



Speech Bubble Tails

- The tails point to who is talking, which is usually in the same panel.
- A tail may point to someone in a different frame to add a little mystery or when someone is coming into the scene.
- Try to not cross your tail over each other.



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.

Meanwhile...

A new day began...

What was I thinking?

This was so easy!

Style and Speech Bubbles

- Speech bubbles can have different styles depending on the character or the genre of the comic.
- You can do the same with the style of the text.
- You can never go wrong with normal, round speech bubbles, though!



Sound Effects

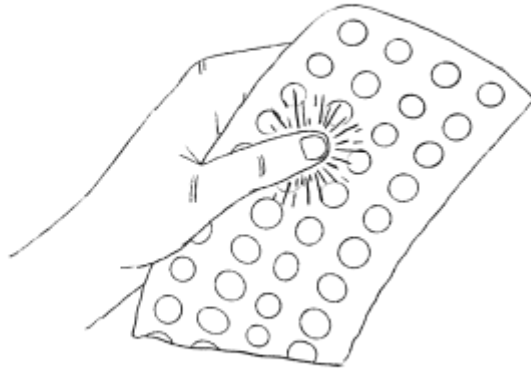
- Sound effect help us hear what's happening in a comic.
- Onomatopoeia is the written word for a sound.
- The text can be stylized to fit the type of sound.



Types of Sound Effects



Text and/or
Speech
Bubbles



Motion Lines



Motion Lines
and Text

Motion Lines

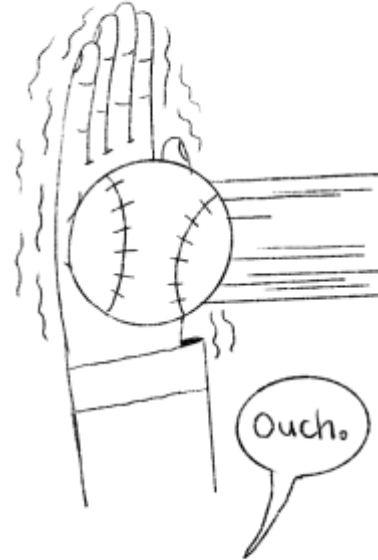
- Motion lines help show action or fast movement.



Movement



Impact



Vibration

Comic Composition

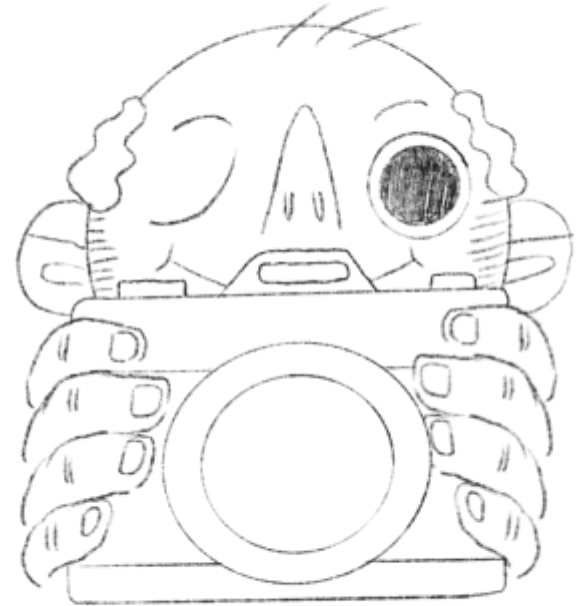
Looking Through The Camera Lens

Composition

- Composition is the way elements of an image are arranged on a page.
- Simply, composition is where you put things on the page and how someone will "read" your drawings.
- Composition includes where you put characters, objects, and the background in your comic.

Moving Your "Camera"

- Composition is like being a director for a movie.
- Think of each panel like holding a camera. You get to decide where everything goes and what your viewer will see.
- The camera can tilt, turn, and move in any direction.

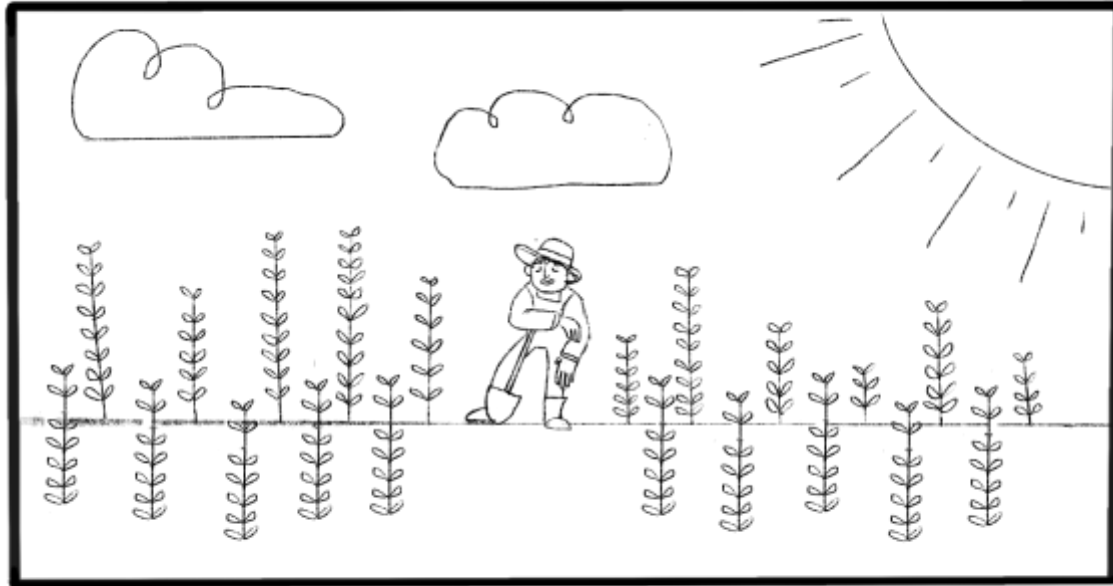


Normal View



A normal front view like this is easy to understand.

Wide Shot (Far Away) View



A wide shot can show a lot of background details.
Characters are smaller and may seem lonely.

Close Up View



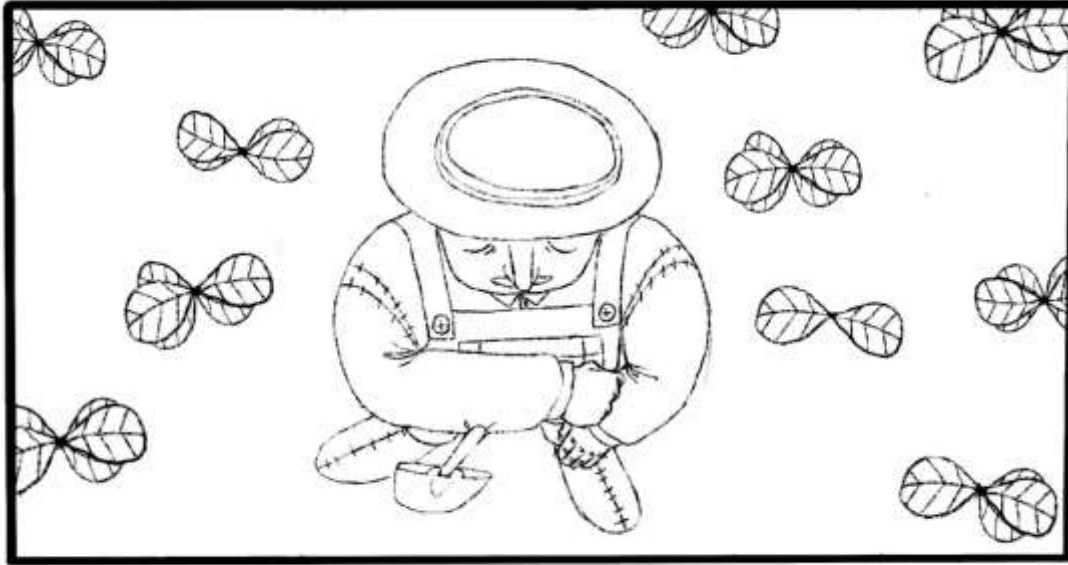
A close up view is very dramatic and shows details.

Upward View



An upward view can make whatever is
in sight seem powerful or huge.

Downward View



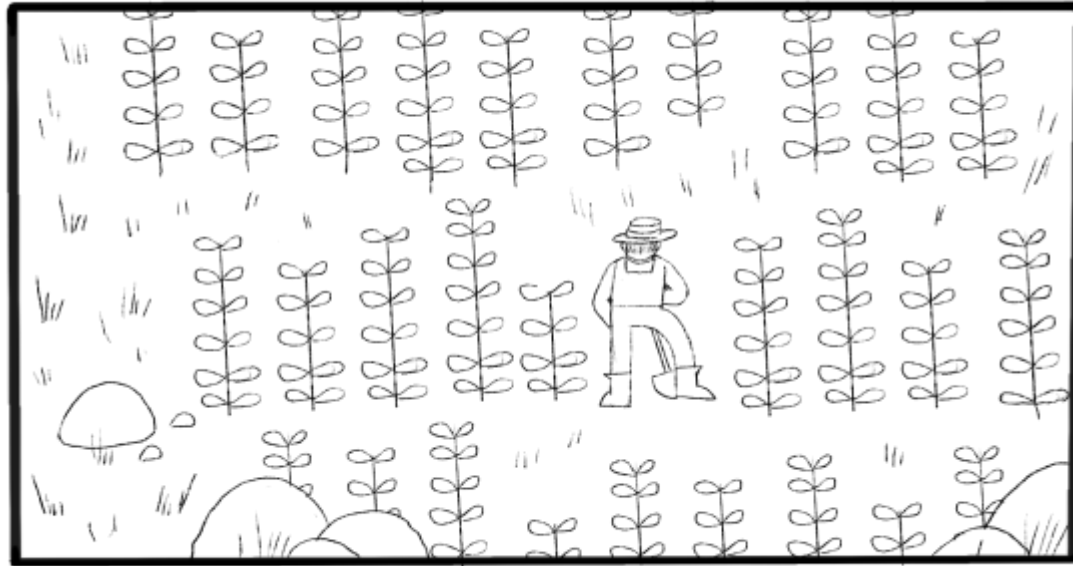
A downward view does the opposite—it can make things seem weaker or humble.

Side View



A side view can help you spice up your "camera angles" or hide something that you would see for a normal view.

Diagonal and Bird's Eye View



This type of view can help show a journey
or develop the world a bit more.

Composition & Light

- Light and dark is also important.
- What kind of mood is your comic? Happy? Scary? How dark or light would it be?
- The light and dark of your composition will affect what you focus on:
 - In dark scenes, light stands out.
 - In light scenes, darkness stands out.



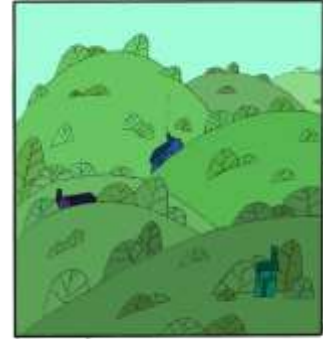
Light Stands Out



Dark Stands Out

Composition & Color

- Some colors have meaning (and depends on culture).
 - Red = dramatic, bold, angry
 - Blue = soothing, cool, sad
- The colors you choose may make your reader feel a certain way.
- Some colors can stand out against others in the same way light and dark values can.
- You can always keep your comic simple with just black and white!



Composition & Reading Direction

- Did you know that the direction you read applies to pictures too?
- A character moving from left to right looks like they are going forward.
- When the opposite happens, it looks like they are going backward or back home.



Forward



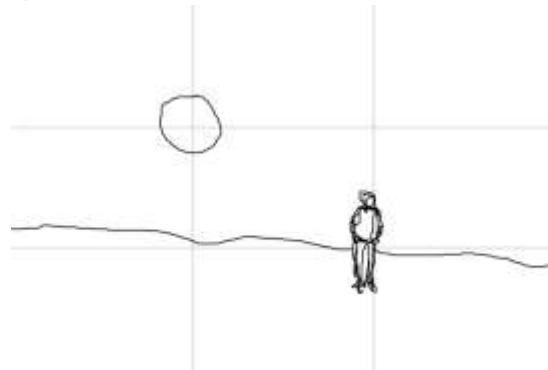
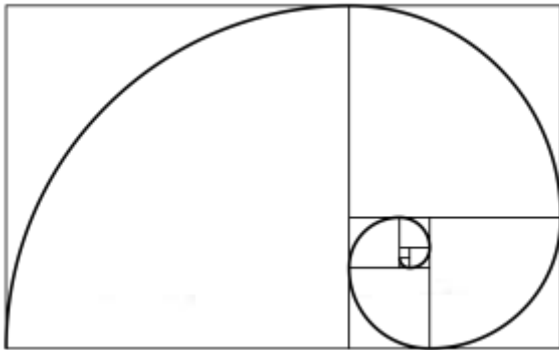
Backward

Composition Questions

- Good questions to ask yourself:
 - What looks balanced/unbalanced?
 - What draws your eye? Is that what you want the focus to be?
 - What would someone else see this for the first time?
 - How would someone feel if they saw this?
 - What do I need to show? How can I make sure the reader understands what I'm showing them?
- You can always have someone look at your rough draft if you're not sure the comic has the effect you want.

About Composition

- There's so much more about composition, but this is a good starting point!
- Look up "The Golden Ratio" and "The Rule of Thirds" for some more concepts!



Thumbnails

- Thumbnails are the next step after creating your comic's script.
- Thumbnails are small, basic sketches that show the basic composition and layout for your panels.
- They have no fine details, only big ideas roughed out.
- These help you know what you will draw before you start your sketches and final comic.
- Thumbnails are used for comics, movies, animated films, and just regular drawings too!

Example Thumbnails

- Simple layout
- Basic shading
- Rough shapes
- Basic text
- Pages numbered
- Movement and emotions
- Cover sketch

