



COMIC BOOK WORKSHOP

PRESENTATION:

We believe that experimentation is the best way to discover an artistic discipline. Practising allows you to move on to discovery and reading. And, finally, that everyone can write and draw, in their own style and with their own skills.

Reading comics (and/or manga) is still very popular with teenagers and is often at the heart of what younger children learn.

Taking part in a comic strip workshop means meeting an author, discovering his or her world, and immersing yourself in it through exercises and instructions that can be adapted to suit the age group.

Comic book creation workshops also give participants the chance to take their work home with them. Their work can then be shared with family and friends. It also allows the participants to work on the creation of characters, short stories, dialogues.

Aims:

- Creating characters, very short story
- Draw (even if you think you can't !)
- Eventually meet an author and talk about their work

For whom?

- Pupils aged 6 and over (school, college, high school)
- Young people outside school (aged 6 and over)

Where?

- In class
- In a library
- In a bookshop

Organised/requested by?

- A teacher in a school
- A librarian
- A bookseller



With whom?

- A comic book author (if possible, and if your class has the budget, consider setting aside a honorarium for the author.)
- The workshop can also be animated by the professor or the librarian, but it's preferable to count on an author's expertise.

Duration:

- 2h or 3h

Size:

- Ideally 15 to 18 participants maximum

Notes:

It's important to remember that this workshop does not require any prior drawing skills. The theme and the purpose of the workshop can be adapted to the age range of the participants.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS AND THEMES

1. MATERIALS:

- Sheets of paper (it may be useful to prepare sheets with pre-printed waffle irons, or strips of 3 squares), coloured pencils, rulers, erasers.
- A flipchart or blackboard is also essential for writing instructions and making a few sketches

2. THEMES:

This workshop can be an opportunity to express oneself on important themes today, and at the heart of the European Union project:

- living together: by choosing to work on comics about people who live together, regardless of their differences. And to work on comics where friendship is a central part of the plot.
- ecology: by choosing to work on comics about global warming, wildlife and characters who defend nature and the environment.
- health: by choosing to work on comics about preventing certain risks linked, for example, to unhealthy eating, overuse of screens, or sports.



COURSE OF THE SESSION

1. INTRODUCTION

In case a professional mediator (an author) runs the workshop, it could be interesting to start the session with Q&A about his/her work. Thus, the participants could have the opportunity to better know the person with whom they are going to work and have fun.

Examples of questions that could be asked:

- What training did you have to become a comic book author?
- How did you hear about this profession?
- How do you choose the stories you write about?
- Where do you get your inspiration from?
- How did you find your own “style”?
- Is it hard to be published and to live from your work?

In case the animator is not a professional, the session could start with a presentation of comic books found in the school library, or in library or bookshop. These books can also be selected in link with a specific theme (friendship, ecology, health).

If your audience is not familiar with comic books, you can introduce them to the work of some authors. The works selected below deal specifically with the theme of friendship:

- *Les Sisters* by William Maury and Christophe Cazenove (6 yo +)
- *Ariol* by Emmanuel Guibert (6 yo +)
- *Asterix et Obelix* by Uderzo (6 yo +)
- *Chien pourri* by Colas Gutman and Marc Boutavant (8 yo +)
- *Snoopy and Peanuts* by Charles M. Schulz (9 yo +)
- *Mia & co* by Vanyda (11 yo +)

2. SCENARIO INSTRUCTIONS:

The facilitator (an author, a teacher, a librarian) can impose a specific theme and scenario instructions to the participants.

Scenarios about friendship:

You can ask the participants to write a scene about friendship including characters from the comic books cited above. For example:

- Create another school situation based on the universe and the characters from *Ariol* or *Les Sisters*
- Create a new character that could be part of a group of friends inside *Ariol* or *Les Sisters*
- Work on the continuation of a comic book page (not knowing the following pages), or a continuation of the entire comic book, by asking the participants to write a scene involving multiple friend characters.

“Wheel of fortune” scenario:

To add more fun in the workshop, the participants can be asked to use a “wheel of fortune” to select the details of their scenarios.

Here are some examples of different choices per question:

■ the genre:

Comedy, tragedy, fantastic, fantasy, romance, historic ...

■ the main character:

A kid, an adult, an animal, a robot, a plant/tree, an object ...

■ the set:

A forest, a house, a school, a street, a beach ...

■ the incident:

A fall, an encounter with another character, an “encounter” with an object ...

■ color instructions:

No color, use the color red, the color green, the colour yellow, the color blue ...

■ dialogue instructions:

No dialogues, one character only can speak, multiple characters can speak ...

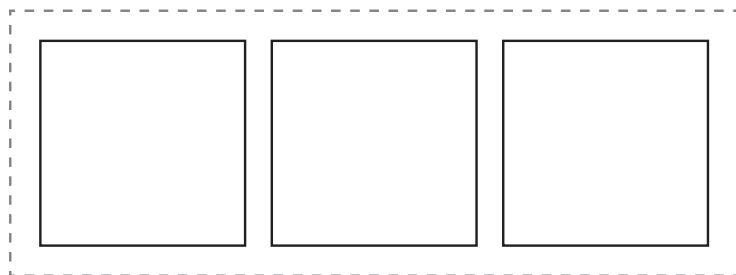
By experience, we know that the participants of this type of workshops enjoy having instructions and constraints so that they can focus on the narrative aspects of their work.

3. FORMAL INSTRUCTIONS:

To start with, the facilitator can draw a very ‘basic’ character on the board in the form of a ‘stick figure’ to show everyone that anyone can draw a character. This first step can be proposed to groups of any age range.

Then the facilitator explains the goal of the workshop. Participants may be asked to work on different formats of comic strips:

■ a three-frame strip



This format is ideal as an introduction to comics, as it allows you to work on a short situation. The first frame presents a character in an environment. The second frame features an ‘incident’ or a gag. The third and final panel concludes the sketch.

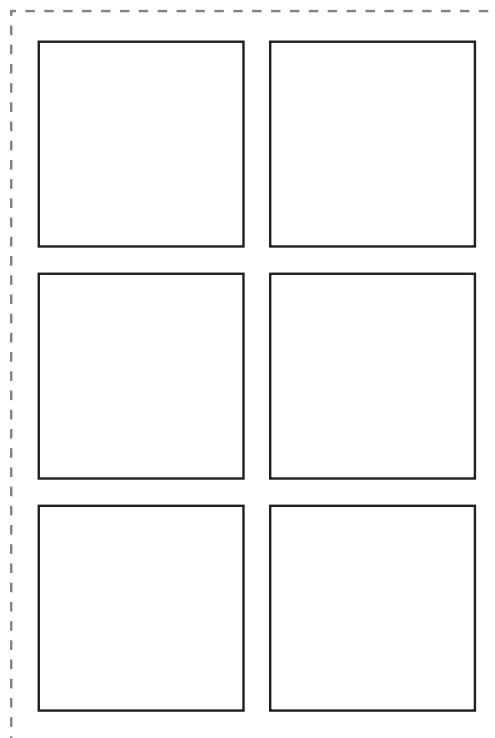
The first part of the workshop could be dedicated to the creation of a three-frame strip in order to give some confidence to the participants, and to force them to be concise.

■ a six-frame “waffle” page

Working on a six-frame page (or a bit less or more, feel free to adapt the template to the participants will) allows the participants to take more time on the narrative aspect (developing dialogues, including another incident or gag).

■ exquisite cadaver

At some point, the workshop may also drift towards the creation of an exquisite cadaver. To enable the participants to work together, one starts the story in the first square, then another continues it in the next square, and so on.



4. CONCLUSION

Each participant can present their work and creative choices to the rest of the group. If time allows, during the workshop or afterwards, the organisers can scan the work to edit and print a collection of all the drawings.

An exhibition can also be organised so that parents and friends can see and admire the work done during the workshop. The exhibition can be held in the school, the library or the bookshop. A comic book author can be invited to the exhibition, and a jury can name the works they enjoy the most, leading to giving some gifts (books !) to their authors.

Bonus!

If time permits, you can also work with the participants on their own signature. Comic book authors always have a personal and creative signature that you can find at the end of their stories. Sometimes a letter is extended, stylized, or combined with a small drawing. For example, someone might turn the dot over the letter “i” into a heart or a small flower, or stretch the tail of a letter like “y” into a decorative line.

This could become a short discussion and creative activity with the class. Participants could look at examples of artists’ signatures (including comic artists) and then design their own personal signature. In the end, they could sign their comics or illustrations with their newly invented signature.