BEANO – HOW TO CREATE A COMIC

Teacher Notes

EPISODE ONE: CREATING COMIC CHARACTERS

This is the first video in the series and is designed to be watched first, but you can watch the videos in any order you wish. The aim here is for each student to create their own comic book character, the video serves as a guide for how to get started.

Click here to watch this clip:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/english-ks2-beano-creating-comic-characters/zyj39ty

There are four parts within the video:

PART 1: Brain cloud

PART 2: Stick person

PART 3: Detailed character

PART 4: Name your creation

PART 1: BRAIN CLOUD

In this section children explore creating characters through exploring their personalities and interests. This can then be used as a guide to explore what their character might think or do in any situation.

Task: Brain cloud

In this task, the children are encouraged to ask their characters questions, which they then answer to create a thought balloon. Provide your children with a brain cloud/ thought balloon, like below. A printable version is available here: https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/teach/beano/2-beano-create-comic-thought-balloon.pdf
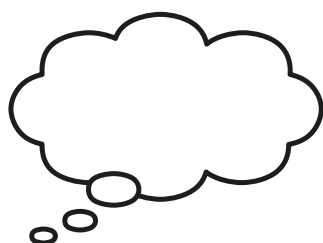
Start by coming up with a list of questions as a class, e.g. 'What is your favourite food?', 'Do you have any hobbies?', 'Do you have any bad habits?

Model how to record answers in your thought balloon, e.g. "I like cheese!", "I pick my nose" (see video). Encourage children to come up with a range of funny/silly answers and share ideas as a class.

Ideas for differentiation:

You might provide younger children with a list of questions to answer or challenge older children to explore deeper aspects of character, which can then be shown through their drawings in Parts 2 and 3.

This could also be extended into a writing opportunity. Younger children might record using simple sentences and conjunctions (because, and so), whereas older children could use a range of conjunctions to explain their ideas. Children in Upper Key Stage 2 could be encouraged to use sophisticated vocabulary and punctuations e.g. semicolons and brackets/dashes for parenthesis.

PART 2: STICK PERSON

In this section, children begin to create their characters, using a stick person as a guide. It doesn't have to be a stick person; it could be a stick alien, a stick animal, a stick creature, a stick anything!

Task: Stick person

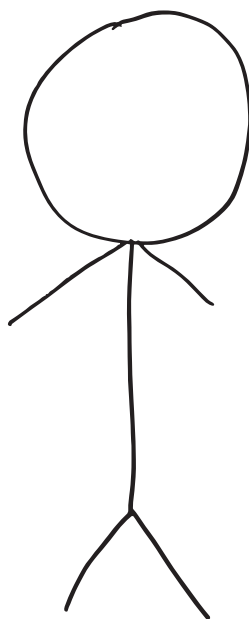In this task, children create their character, using a stick person as a guide.

Model how to draw a simple stick person before children draw their own.

Add details such as hair, clothes and accessories. Encourage children to be creative with the accessories they add. Could they add accessories which are important or special to them?

Ideas for differentiation:

You might provide younger children with a blank stick person, which they can add further detail to - example below. A printable version is available here: https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/teach/beano/1-beano-create-comic-stick-person.pdf

PART 3: DETAILED CHARACTER

In this section, children are encouraged to add detail to explore their character further and create a more developed character. They begin by exploring different head shapes (as creative as possible) before adding eyes and eyebrows to show emotion then completing their facial features.

Task: Detailed character

In this task, children add detail to their stick character through exploring head shape and facial features. First, model choosing a head shape (circle, triangle, square, even a fried egg!). Encourage children to be as creative as possible!

Next, choose an eye shape. Encourage children to use their eye shape to show emotion e.g. angry eyes, sad eyes. Remember to leave space for the eyebrows!

Then, children 'pick a nose' using letters of the alphabet and a mouth using emojis as inspiration. Encourage children to make the expression they want to create before drawing, the sillier the better!

Finally, children can explore adding further detail using different media, for example, charcoal, paint or even clay!

Ideas for differentiation:

You might provide a head shape for less confident artists, or support with drawing when completing the task. Children who are more confident should be encouraged to explore a range of different head shapes and facial expressions, before choosing their favourite. A printable version of head shapes is available here:
https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/teach/beano/3-beano-create-comic-head-shapes.pdf
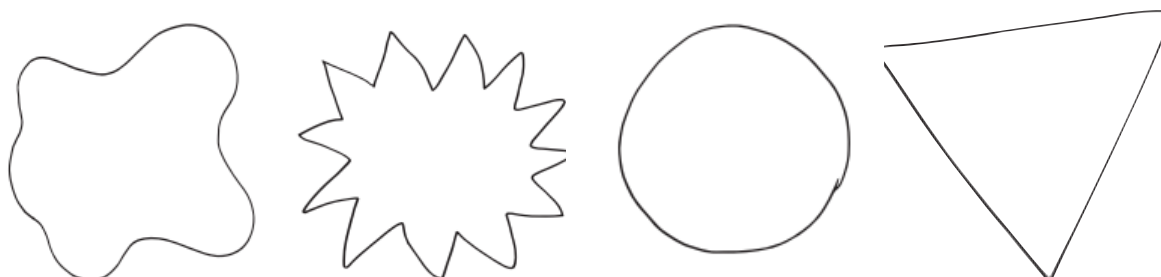
PART 4: NAME YOUR CREATION

In this section, children explore onomatopoeia, alliteration and rhyme before coming up with a list of potential names for their character. Children learn that the best character names reveal backstory, personality and talent e.g. 'Billy Whizz' and use this as inspiration for their own character name.

Task: Name your creation

In this task, children explore a range of techniques before coming up with a name for their character.

Present children with a range of names from the Beano e.g. 'Roger the Dodger', 'Billy Whizz', 'Desperate Dan' and 'Dennis the Menace'.
What do these names tell us about the characters? Why do they make effective names? Reveal that they explore backstory, personality and/or talent.

Explore onomatopoeia and alliteration as a class. *What do these terms mean? How can we use them to create names?*

Next, explore 'Roger the Dodger' and 'Dennis the Menace'. *What technique has been used here? Can we come up with our own?*

Come up with a list of examples as a class e.g. 'Wendy Whoosh', 'Silly Sarah', 'Mean Mark.'

Encourage children to use one from the list already created or come up with their own to name their character.

Ideas for differentiation: Younger children might stick to adding adjectives, or using alliteration as a challenge. Older children should be encouraged to use onomatopoeia or rhymes.

EPISODE TWO: CREATING COMIC WORLDS

This video, the second in the series, aims to create a comic book setting, or paracosm, for the characters to live in. It is useful, although not essential, to have watched episode one first, so that each student has had a chance to create their own comic book character.

Click here to watch this clip:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/english-ks2-beano-constructing-comic-worlds/z9pwxg8

PART 1: Create a map

PART 2: Add daft details

PART 3: Add sounds

PART 1: CREATE A MAP

In this section, children are split into groups of three or four to begin to create a setting for their comics. Each group will have a set of characters which they can put together into an imaginary friendship group.

Task: Create a map

In this task, children explore the meaning of 'paracosm' before creating a map to show the setting of their story.

Split the children into groups of three or four. They could introduce their characters and get to know their groups' characters in order to begin to think about the kind of world they might create. Introduce the word 'paracosm' and share definition: a detailed imaginary world, involving humans, animals and maybe even fantasy creations. *Can children think of any paracosms?*

What do we mean by a map? What would we expect to see on a map? Link this discussion to the children's geography learning (KS1 might discuss a map of their local area for example, whereas Upper Key Stage 2 might think about grid references and symbols).

Explain that it doesn't have to be a map of a specific area, but any location. Encourage children to think about historical settings they may have studied (e.g. Stone Age, Ancient Egypt, Roman Britain). Explain that these could all be paracosms for your comic.

Children work together in groups to create a map for their paracosm, using their characters and previous learning as inspiration. Explain that children need to include the houses that each of the characters live in, a school if appropriate, some shops maybe and other people's houses/places of work.

Ideas for differentiation: Children may need a partially completed map to add details to. Encourage older children to add as much detail as possible, perhaps including symbols and a grid in order to develop links to the Geography curriculum.

PART 2: ADD DAFT DETAILS

In this section, the children work in groups to develop their maps further by adding fun details to their map. They are encouraged to name the streets, the shops and the school. They are taught to use real life as inspiration for their map, then exaggerate in order to create a comic world. In groups, children add at least 10 details to their map.

Task: Add daft details

Explore the 'daft details' discussed in the video. *Can children come up with any of their own?* Encourage children to think about what they see on their way to and from school, then model how to exaggerate these to create comic-style images. Allow children time to practise sketching details in their sketchbooks before adding their own 'daft details' to their maps.

Next, children add detail to their maps by naming places, roads and landmarks.

Focus on the example in the video: Wood Lane. *Why is this not the best choice for a comic? Why is cotton candy crescent better?* Link back to alliteration as discussed in episode one.

PART 3: SOUNDSCAPE

In this section, children explore the sounds around them. They then use onomatopoeia to describe familiar sounds before adding soundscapes to their maps.

Task: Soundscape

In this task, children add sound to their maps.

Ask children to close their eyes. *What sounds can you hear?* Create a mind map as a class. *How could we recreate these sounds in our classroom?*

Link back to onomatopoeia as discussed in episode one. Ask children to make up their own onomatopoeias for the sounds around them.

Next, ask children to add a soundscape to their map by drawing in details that make noises and then drawing the noises themselves. If there is a pond, for example, draw in the sounds of the water SPLOSHing.

EPISODE 3: CREATING COMIC STORIES

In this video, the third in the series, children are encouraged to put together what they have learnt so far to create their own comic. First, they create a story using a story mountain structure. Next, they add words and improve their writing using similes and metaphors. Finally, they create their own comic book in eight panels.

Click here to watch this clip:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/english-ks2-beano-creating-comic-stories/z3y2p9q

PART 1: Story mountain

PART 2: Add the words

PART 3: Make it more interesting!

PART 4: Making a comic layout

PART 1: STORY MOUNTAIN

In this section, children create the story for their comic, using a story mountain structure.

Task: Story mountain
In this task, children use a '3 act structure' to create the story for their comic.

Explain that writing a story is a bit like climbing a mountain. At the beginning we need to introduce characters and settings and hook the reader's interest. One way to do this is by using a short sentence! *Can we come up with an example as a class?* E.g. 'Everything changed the day of the food-fight.' Agree on a setting and a hook as a class and add to your story mountain.

In the middle, something happens to your character. *What do you want to happen to your character?* Encourage children to discuss in pairs before sharing their ideas. Agree on an idea as a class and add to your story mountain. At the top of the mountain, there is a dramatic event for your character to overcome. *What could happen to our character? Can we agree on an idea as a class?* Finally, agree on a solution: 'the way down'. Encourage children to think about a range of endings: happy, sad, twist, mysterious or even a cliffhanger.

Provide children with time to create their own story mountain using the structure sheet provided. If children have watched episodes one and two, encourage them to use the character they created and the setting planned in their story.

Ideas for differentiation: You might provide children with an example of comic book story with a child protagonist who has a problem (a grown up who makes an unfair rule), confronts the problem (breaks the rule) and then deals with the consequences of their actions (the punishment for breaking the rule).
A printable version of this is available here:
https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/teach/beano/5-beano-create-comic-3-act-story.pdf

Children could innovate this given story (for example, by changing the rule that is broken and the punishment received) or another familiar story (link to reading curriculum at your school) to support them to create their story mountain.
Printable version here**:** https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/teach/beano/4-beano-create-comic-story-mountain.pdf

PART 2: ADD THE WORDS

In this section, children experiment with using speech bubbles and thought bubbles to add words to their comics.

Task: Add the words

Explain that in the comic world, speech and thought balloons are used to show what characters are saying and thinking.

Another way to tell the story in comics is to use 'Editors captions'. These are text boxes the storyteller puts into the story to introduce new scenes. Clarify the use of an ellipsis. *What is its purpose? How can we use them in comics?* We can use them to show that something is about to happen. We can also use them to show pauses in someone's speech. Come up with some examples as a class.

Explain how we can also use opposites to make our writing more interesting. Link this to synonyms and antonyms.

> *Synonym: a word with the same, or similar meaning.*
> *Antonym: a word with the opposite meaning.*

Explore these definitions then come up with antonyms for a range of feeling words. Use the example in the video - delicious/yuck.

Model how to add speech bubbles and thought bubbles to a character to show a difference between what a character is thinking and what they are feeling.

Finally, provide children with an opportunity to independently experiment using editors captions to introduce scenes, speech balloons to show what they are saying and thought balloons to show what they are thinking.

PART 3: MAKE IT MORE INTERESTING!

In this section, children explore how to use similes and metaphors to make their writing more interesting.

Task: Similes and metaphors

Explore what we mean by similes and metaphors. Simile: when you describe something by comparing it to something else. Metaphor: when you describe something by calling it something else.

Present children with a picture of Gnasher from Dennis the Menace and the following example: 'Gnasher has fur like barbed wire.' As a class, come up with a list of similes and metaphors to describe Gnasher.

Provide children with an opportunity to write out their own list of similes and metaphors to describe the characters in their story.

Ideas for differentiation: Provide younger children and/or lower ability writers with sentence starters e.g. '_____ has fur like _____', '_____'s ears are like' to support them with coming up with their own similes. Next, model turning these into metaphors before children complete their own.

PART 4: MAKING A COMIC LAYOUT

In this section, children are encouraged to put together everything they have learnt in order to create their own comic.

Task: Making a comic layout

Recap what you have learnt so far as a class. Use the summary at the end of the video to support.

Explain that a good way to create a comic is in 8 panels and ask children to make their own comic. First, ask them to draw out the events in panels, before using editors captions, speech balloons and thought balloons to tell the story and adding their own details such as onomatopoeias for sounds.

Use the following tips to support children to create their comics:

- When you make a panel, you should aim for Approx. 1/3 text to 2/3 art.
- Leave some panels with just art and no text.
- The maximum number of words in a single balloon should be around 15

Provide children with a comic book layout, such as the ones below, to help them write their comic. Printable version here:
https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/teach/beano/6-beano-create-comic-layouts.pdf