

COMIC BOOKS

Overview

Comic books are a great way for reluctant and unconfident writers to tell a story. It can simply be images, or can include very small amounts of writing. This session will explore a few very different ways to tell an image-based story. It is a great way to help slowly build writing confidence and stamina in manageable steps.

Intro

With a comic children can tell a story through pictures. Children can add some little captions to help the reader know what's happening and some speech bubbles to make the characters talk. Make creating image-based stories a regular activity for reluctant or unconfident writers so that children can build up the amount of writing they include as they are ready. As an extra challenge (once children are ready) they can put together sentences describing their pictures as a very short written story.

What you need

- (Optional) some example comics to look at
- Resources to create the images (depending on the type of comic you may need paper and pencils, or a camera, printer and/or computer).

What to do

Step 1 (Optional): Look at some example comics

Step 2: Plan a comic using the ideas and examples

Step 3: Draw out/put together comic and any written additions

Step 1(Optional): Look at some example comics

Look at some comic stories like in The Beano or a Marvel comic. Use some of those characters to tell your own version of a story. If you don't have physical comics, you can find some examples online. One place you can look is The Beano archives:

<https://www.beano.com/categories/archive-comic-strips>

Notice how the illustrator shows what is happening through each picture. Discuss any words they use to help tell the story.

Step 2: Plan a comic

Children plan ideas for their comic strip. There are different ways to tell a story through images.

Here are some ideas:

- Draw a traditional comic strip like The Beano. Children can use story ideas and characters from comic strips they have read if they are struggling to come up with their own ideas.
- Take photos to use as the pictures. These can be of places, people (with their permission), or objects.
- Make scenes with Lego. Take a photo, print it, then add a caption to it. Alternatively just create it on a computer.
- Go out on a walk or day trip and children take photos as you go. They then make the pictures into a comic strip telling the story of the trip. They can always add some made-up extras – did a giant bird swoop out of the tree and carry off their brother?
- Look at photos you have of family and friends. Children choose some they think they could use as part of a story. They put the photos in an order and add captions to them to tell a story. They could add in images from the internet if they need extras to make their story work. Some plot ideas:
 - *Is your dad secretly an alien come to do tests on planet earth?*
 - *Is your dog a secret agent?*
 - *Did that statue you're stood next to in a photograph come to life and take you on an adventure?*

Step 3: Put together a comic strip

Children can now put together their comic strip by drawing it out of printing off pictures. They could do it all on a computer if they prefer.

Writing for a purpose is a great motivator. Suggest making the comic as a gift for someone or as a project to make your family photo album more interesting!

Challenge: Add some writing

It's easy to add small amounts of writing to the images. Children can add short captions or speech bubbles to their pictures or photos to help tell the story. These can just be a word or two. They can also add sound effect words (onomatopoeia) such as bang and crash. This will help build their writing confidence and stamina.

Extra writing challenge: Short written story

When children feel ready, they can write a short sentence or two that describes each photo. They do this for each picture then put all the sentences together as a very short story. See if it makes sense when they read it without the pictures. You can always break this down into separate sessions if that is more manageable. Write a sentence for an image in each session. You could also scribe some or all of it for them.