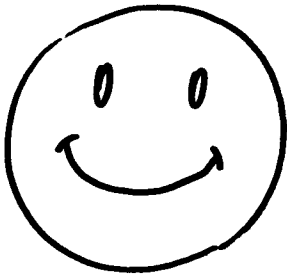


Comics are a means of telling stories. Through consecutive pictures, we show characters and the things they think, say, and do. Comic drawings don't have to be perfect. They can be very simple. As with the writing, what matters is that they be legible.

The following exercises can help any student become a cartoonist. Depending on the age and size of the class, you might allow two or three class periods to work your way through these. Work in pencil and eraser, so you can make changes and corrections along the way.

Part One: FACES.

1a. You CAN draw a happy face.

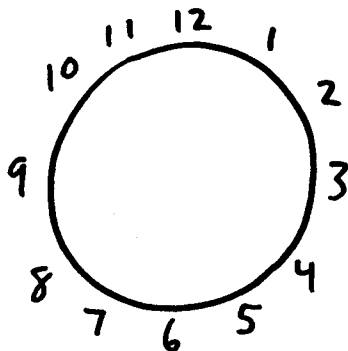


1b. Now draw some faces where the features are grouped to one side of the circle.



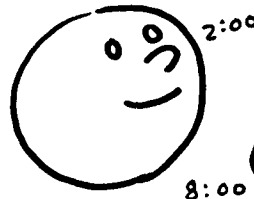
This is called a "Quarter Turn" or "Three Quarter" view. (This is different from a profile, where you see just one eye and half a mouth.)

1c. Imagine the numbers on a clock. Try drawing 1/4 turn faces facing each of the numbers.



If you can draw 1/4 turn faces and bodies, you'll be able to draw any character doing any action.

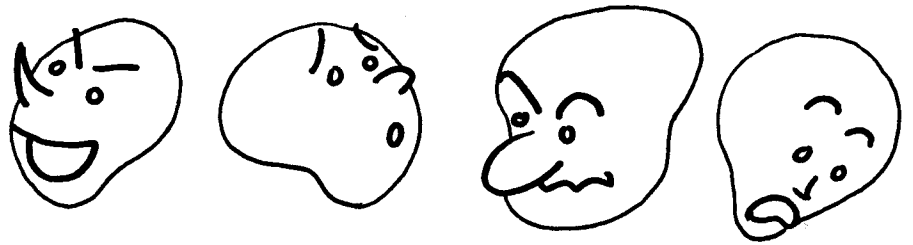
2a. Let's add a nose. The nose tends to point to the number the face is facing. Cartoon noses can be round or pointy, big or small.



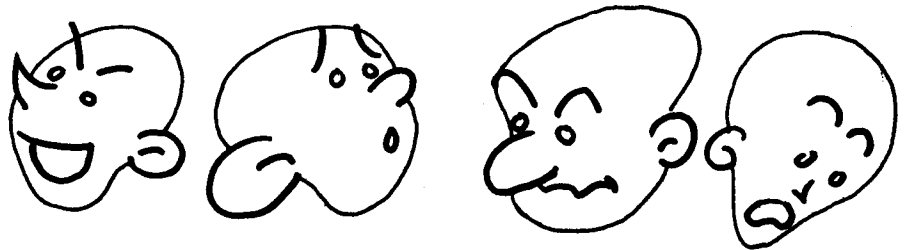
2b. Let's change the expression. Expressions are made primarily by combining different mouths and eyebrows.



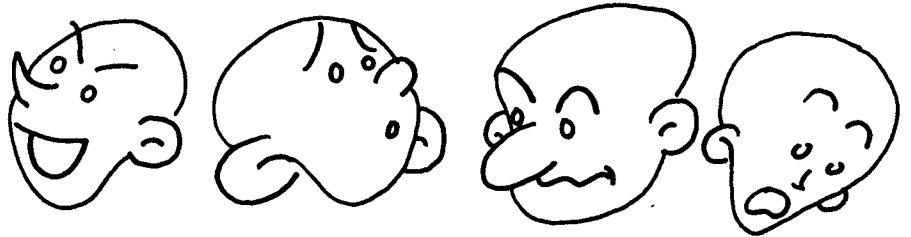
2c. Let's change the head. Circles are fine, but what other roundish shapes can we think of? (egg, bean, peanut, pear...)



2d. Let's add ears. The close ear crosses in front of the outline for the back of the head, some distance from the eye. Erase the line where it falls behind the ear.



Depending how big the ears are and how much the head is turned, the faraway ear might be hidden behind the head, or maybe we see a glimpse of it sticking out from behind.

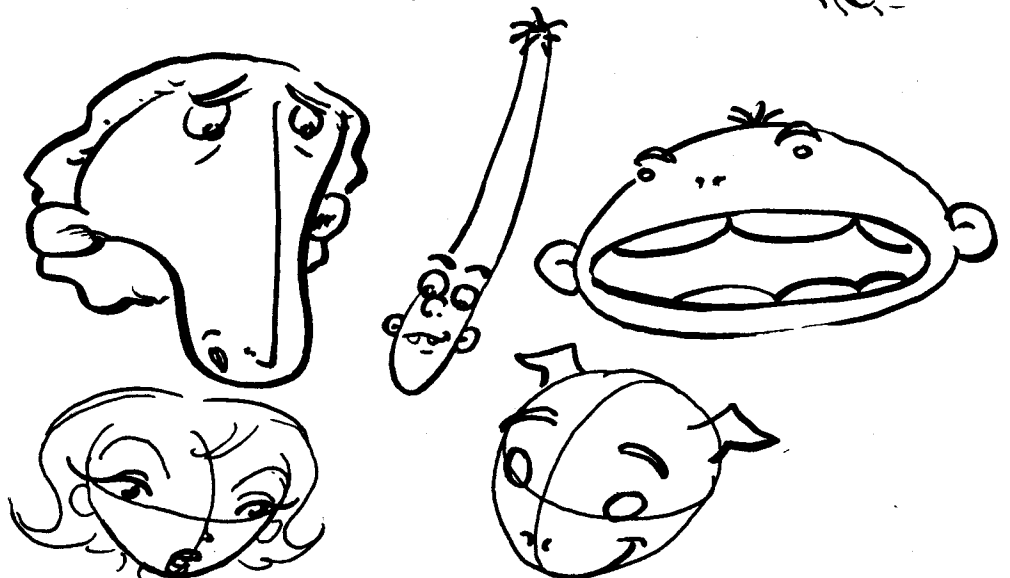


2e. What else can we add to decorate the faces? hair? lips? teeth? eyelashes? eyeballs? You decide when it's finished.



3. Practice making up cartoon faces. If you draw the head shape before you start the quarter turn face, you can play with spacing and sizes: high eyes and low mouth, tiny eyes and huge mouth, etc.

Many artists use sketch guidelines to aim their quarter turn heads.



Part Two: BODIES.

Cartoon bodies are bendy. Curvy lines are better than straight lines. More curvy is better than less curvy.

4a. Toward the back of the head, draw a curvy line like a stretched out letter "S", so the head looks like a balloon with a string. At the end of the string, draw a foot (a foot can be any shape-- bean, maraca, wedge,...). Add a curved line for the second leg, like a stretched out letter "C". Two more "C" curves below the head establish the arms.



4b. There are many ways to draw hands. Here's a favorite:

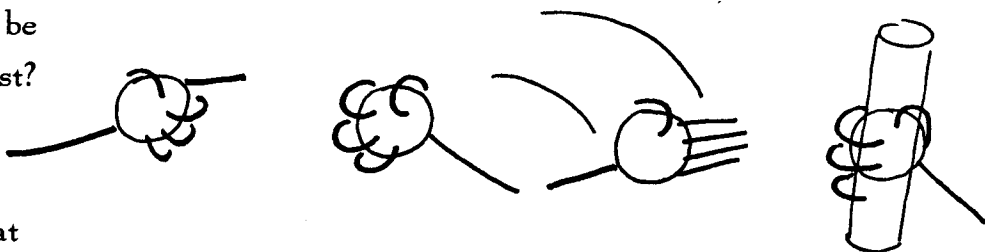
A: Draw a circle to describe the palm.



B: Add little lines for fingers and thumb.



C: What do you want the hands to be doing? Pointing? Making a fist? Karate chop? Holding an object?



4c. The body can be any shape that starts at the arms, ends at the legs, and bends along the string line. Arms, legs, neck, and fingers can be fattened by drawing a second line parallel to the first. How close together or far apart the two lines are determines how fat or skinny the character will be.

4d. Now let's add clothing. If the buttons and belt are off toward one side of the body shape, you'll have a quarter turn body. Use overlapping to show which arm & leg are the near ones & which the far.



4e. Clean up time. Erase the lines you wouldn't really see: sketch lines you used to figure things out, and body parts that fall behind clothes or other parts.

5. For action poses, we can add motion lines or speed lines trailing behind the characters.

6. To begin the background, draw a floor line or sky line above and behind the character's feet. The character's shadow touches her to the ground, or shows how high off the ground she is. Other objects on the ground are drawn higher and smaller as they are farther away.

7. To show talking or thinking, write the words legibly, then enclose them in a "balloon"-- an oval for speech or a cloud for thought. The "stem" or "pointer" points toward the mouth from speech balloons, and the brain from thought balloons.

