

Oral History Comics/Zines



Activity Description:

Sharing stories is one of the many ways that we can learn more about the people in our lives and the contributions that they make to our communities! In this activity, we will interview someone in your life who you admire and create a comic about the story/stories they share.

Purpose of Activity:

- Encourage creative thinking through creative constraints (material, size, prompt)
- Synthesize learning from observing and interpreting artist's work by reflecting on the work's themes and its connections to the "personal"
- Encourage children to imagine their own art interacting with the world around them (connection between decorating and wearing tote bags in public and Wilfred's public art)

Quick Guide:

Preparation Time: 20 min

Learning Time: 30-60 min

Age Range: 5th-8th

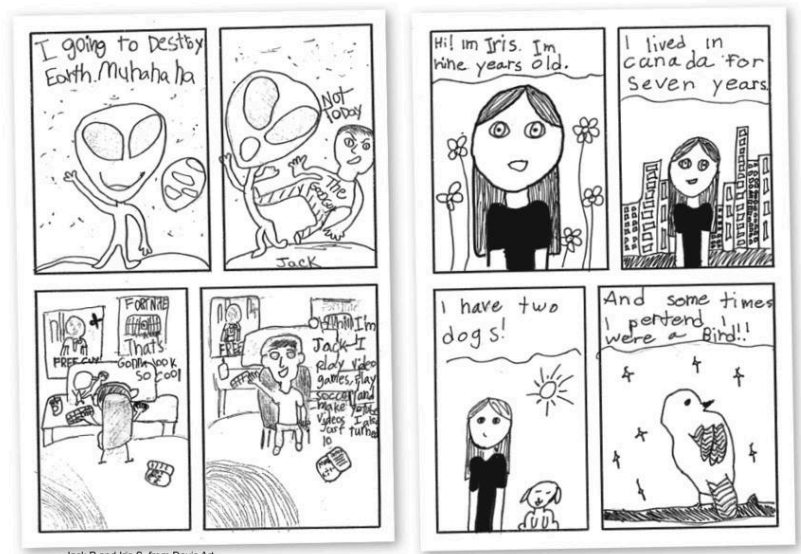
Materials List:

Interview:

- Computer/tablet/phone (if interview is over the phone or virtual)
- Interview questions
- Recording device (optional)
- Pen and paper for notetaking (optional)

Comic Creation:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Pens
- Post-Its



Optional:

- Markers
- Colored pencils

Setup:

Brainstorm sheet printed

Comic strip templates printed

Activity Directions:

Interview:

1. Identify an older family member or close friend to interview and get permission to interview them. An individual who is close in age to the interviewer is also possible. Interviewer must have permission from their parent/guardian and their interviewee.
2. Schedule a time to talk to your selected interviewee. You can connect with them in-person, over the phone, or through video chat.
3. Choose at least 5 questions from a list (or make your own) to use for the interview.
4. When you talk to your interviewee, make sure to have your list of questions in front of you.
 - a. Tip: Ask open-ended questions, rather than simple “yes” or “no” questions.
 - b. Tip: Ask them follow-up questions to their responses to foster a conversation! For example, if you ask, “Did you have any pets growing up?” and they respond, “Yes,” consider asking them questions about their pet. *Ex. What kind of animal were they? What was their name? What is your favorite memory of this pet?*
5. Optional: Audio record the interview using a smartphone or tablet device so you can refer back to the interview while creating your comic. Make sure the interviewee has consented to audio recording.

Comic Creation:

- Elements of a comic:
 - **Parallel narratives** -- comic artists often tell two stories at the same time, one through words and one through illustrations
 - **Characters + situations** -- can be based on real life OR “fantastic realism” (like in slide 1 with a regular-looking girl defying gravity) OR be completely made up
 - **Words/dialogue** -- conversation bubbles, thought bubbles, 3rd person narration, or no words at all
 - **Illustration** -- how is action shown? What styles, techniques, and tools are used for drawing?

1. Using the Brainstorm Sheet, take 6–8 minutes to write or sketch moments from the story/stories that your interviewee shared during the interview.
2. Select one story from your Brainstorm Sheet to focus on for your comic.
3. Using post-its, sketch a draft of the comic strip. Each panel of the comic will be drawn on each post-it.
4. Once the images are sketched out, draft any words/dialogue they want to incorporate. Perhaps, it's dialogue from the interview itself.
 - a. *Note: Many comic artists find it easier to do this as two separate steps – 1) nail down sketches of the unfolding situation, & then 2) figure out the words.*
 - b. Comic Artists can iterate as many times as they need until they have 4 post-it sketches they like + 4 separate post-its of words/dialogue.
5. Once the draft is complete, select a comic strip template and create the comic
 - a. Tip: Lightly sketch the images and words in pencil first before adding colored pencil, pen, or marker to the comic strip
 - b. Tip: This is not about perfection, this is about play! This is an exercise in storytelling and having fun during the creation process.
6. When your comic is complete, share it with your interviewee!

Guiding Questions/Prompts:

Interview Question Ideas:

Questions for Anyone:

- What is your most cherished family tradition? Why is it important to you?
- What is your proudest moment?
- Tell me the story behind your name. Who/what were you named after?
- What does community mean to you?
- What do you like to do for fun? Why are those activities important to you?
- What traits do you look for in a friend?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Who is someone that you look up to? Why do you look up to them?

Questions for Adults:

- What was it like when you went to school?
- What did you do for fun when you were my age?
- Who did you grow up with? What was that like?
- Where did you live? How did your family come to live there?
- Who was/were your role model(s) growing up?
- What were your favorite subjects in school and why?
- What advice would you give to someone my age?

Story Brainstorm

What stories/moments from your interview stood out to you? Spend 6-8 minutes jotting down words, symbols, drawings, etc. from those stories. Then, select your favorite story to focus on for your comic strip.

