



COMIC-ZINE WORKSHOP

CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL 2020

Welcome to this comic workshop delivered on-line by Children Services at Cork City Libraries. In this workshop facilitated by Fiona Boniwell, you will learn about making a comic at home. You'll follow a process based on that used by professional comic artists and adapted to make it easy for you to make your own comics with whatever you have available to you.

WORKSHOP PLAYLIST

- Part One: Writing
- Part Two: Research and planning your comic
- Part Three: Drawing your comic pages
- Part Four: Finalising your artwork

THINGS YOU'LL NEED:

- Paper and/or notebook
- Pencils, erasers, sharpeners etc
- Rulers
- Colours (Optional)
- Curiosity (imperative!)**



INTRODUCTION // WHAT IS A COMIC?

There are many answers but to put it simply, comics are stories using images as well as words to tell a story or communicate information. Comics are a great way to tell stories. In comics, pictures do a lot of the talking so the words don't have to. BUT. You still need words...sometimes.

PICTURES | PANELS

A comic story is generally divided up into pictures known as panels. What may require a paragraph to say in a piece of prose, can be shown in an illustration within a panel in a comic story. The panel can show the character, where they are and what time of day it is, before you even need to think about writing anything.

WORDS | LETTERING

Not all comics need words however, when they do, they use certain tools to get the story across to the reader successfully. Comics have their own special way of showing us when someone is talking and thinking: speech and thought bubbles. Sound effects are for noises which appear in lettering. The style of lettering visually matches the sound they represent. Last but not least, caption boxes are used to say anything that cannot be shown in pictures, speech and thought bubbles or sound effects. Sometimes the captions will be used for narration and sometimes for background information.

OVERVIEW // STEPS TO CREATING A GREAT COMIC

- Write a story outline based on your own idea, a given theme or adapting something that already exists such as song or fairy tale.
- Turn the story into a script. How?
- Decide how many panels (pictures) you need per page for a one to two page story.
- I needed seven panels for each page of mine.
- Decide what to draw in each panel. Describe who is in each, what they are doing and if it's important, what time of day it is...stuff like that.
- If there are people in the pictures/panels, do they say or think anything? If so, write down the name of the character and what they are saying/thinking.
- If there are sound effects, write them down.
- Do a little 'thumbnail' sketch of your comic.
- Lightly draw out your panels using a ruler and 2H or HB pencil.
- Remember to include a margin all the way around your panels plus gutters (space between panels; 2-3mm is good).
- If you are using pen, ink your panels before you start to pencil your illustrations so you won't lose them if you have to erase pencil.
- Lightly and loosely sketch in all of your drawings for each panel along with any speech bubbles, sound effects and captions.
- When you're happy with your drawing, go over your outlines in pen, or more neatly with whatever materials you would like to use.
- If scanning your work, save it as a JPG or TIFF at 300DPI.

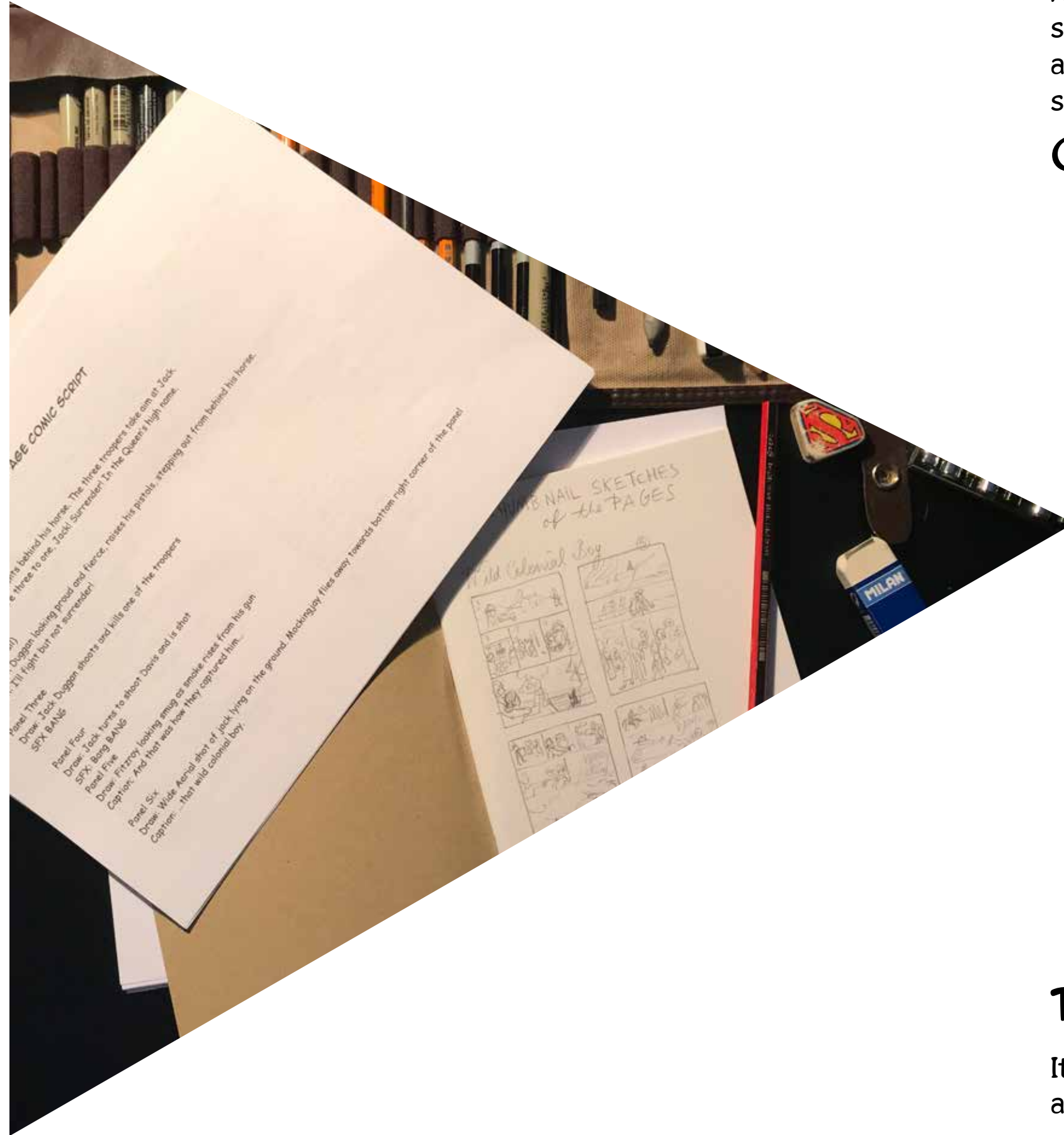
TOP TIPS

It is tempting to get straight to work on drawing your comic and working things out as you go along; however, it is a really good idea to plan what your characters and world are going to look like before you get stuck into your drawing. Do a little research and sketching before you start on your comic pages.

Mark out all of your panel boxes before you start sketching the pictures. When you have all the panels drawn out, start on the art.

For lettering, it's a good idea to write the words BEFORE you draw the bubbles/caption boxes.

That way, your words will fit into their shapes.



PART ONE // WRITING

So we know what a comic script needs but how do you get to the point of writing a script? How do you come up with ideas for a script? Maybe you have been given a them or you have already got loads of ideas but if not, below are a few tips for getting some ideas together so you can jump-start your writing.

WRITING AND ORIGINAL STORY

Brainstorm themes. I like to mind map this. I write the first words which come into my head down, starting in the centre of the page then working my way out, drawing shapes around each word. I might choose themes like: my life; my pet; my day; home; family; pets; fears; what makes me happy...anything to get ideas going. 2020 has seen some dramatic changes to our everyday life so there is A LOT to base a story on their. It's a special event in history so worth documenting in an imaginative way!

SHORT ON IDEAS? TRY REINTERPRETING A STORY YOU ALREADY KNOW

If you struggle to come up with your own ideas, maybe you could take something that already exists. This might appeal to those of you doing this workshop who want to focus on the art. Songs, myths and fairy tales all provide great material for adapting into comic format. Movies are also great sources for ideas. I chose to adapt the folk ballad, The Wild Colonial Boy. The lyrics are very descriptive and evocative. To me it sounds like an epic western.

Once you have your story, you can begin adapting it into a script as shown in the video. I've included the song lyrics I used along with some background about the song and the script I made in this PDF so you can see my basic example.

Whether you write your own story or choose something you already know and would like to reinvent, it's a good idea to divide into sections which will in turn form the basis of your pages – one section of the story=one page. I decided to do a four-page comic therefore looked for four breakpoints in the song/story

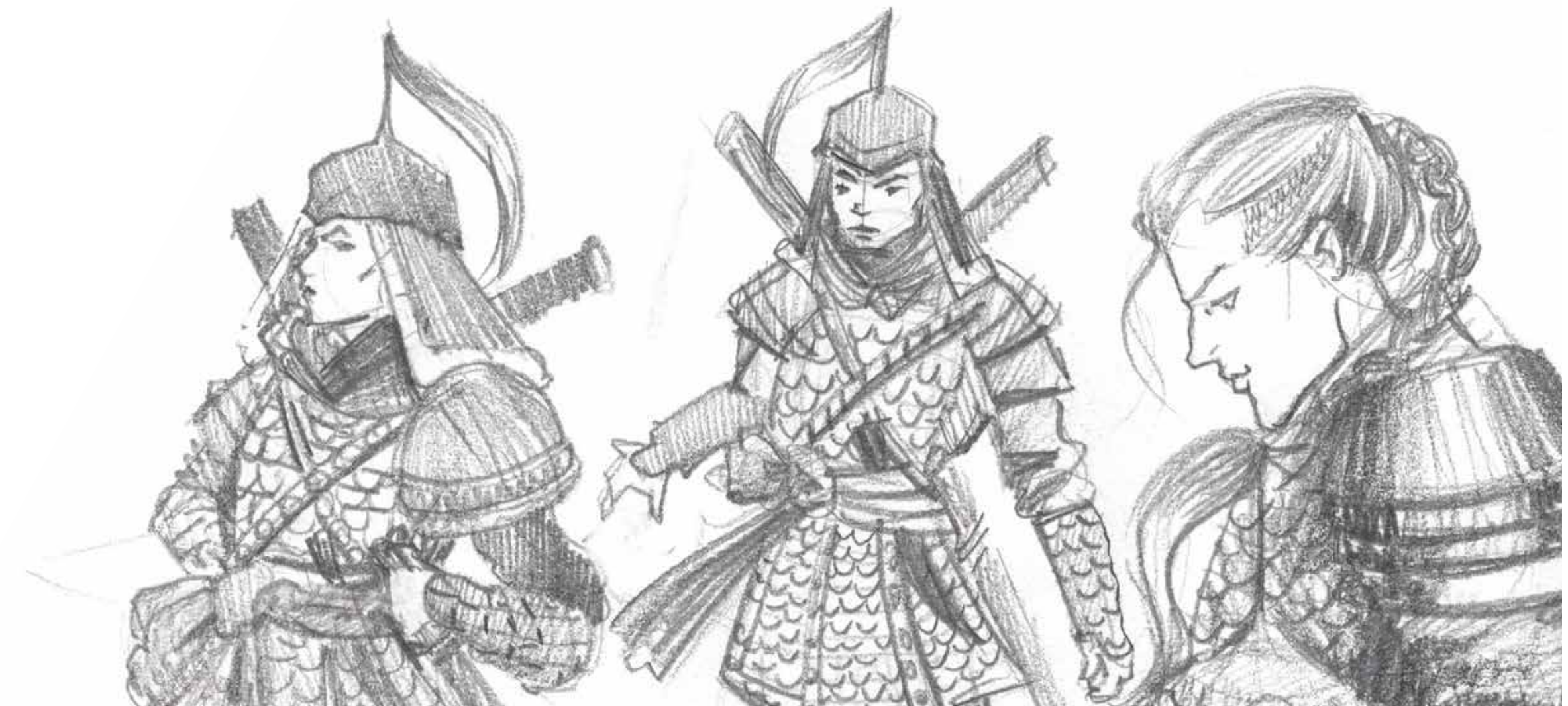
Let's divide it like so:

Page One - Scene Setting: Introduce characters and location

Page Two – A problem occurs

Page Three – The characters have to deal with it

Page Four – Resolving the problem and conclusion (Ending).



PART TWO // RESEARCH AND PLANNING

When you are happy with your script it's time for the art but easy Tiger!! You could just bust straight in and draw your panels but we want to handle this like pro, right? before we do our actual pages, it's a good idea to do some planning and preparation.

RESEARCH

It's worth taking some time to research the world your story takes place in. Mine involves Ireland and Australia in 'olden times'. I chose 1850 as good point in history to place mine. I looked for relevant historical images on the internet that would help me to draw costumes, ships and buildings that would fit the time and locations. Doing this helped me to make a better comic ^-^

Worth noting: the internet is great for research but your library and books are better still. This is because books are subject to stricter rules so you can be more secure in their facts being correct.

SKETCHBOOKS AT THE READY!

When I do my research I also do lots of sketching which helps prepare me to draw the world I want to create quickly and well.

CHARACTER AND SETTING DESIGN

Having done my research, I design my characters and their homes, vehicles, environment...Doing this before I start my panels means I am less likely to change things as I go along without realising it or make mistakes in continuity. When designing your characters, remember to think of simple ways to make your characters easy to recognise and distinguish from each other.

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

Last but not least in the preparation stage, thumbnail sketches. These are small, basic sketches we use to figure out what shape panels to use, how to arrange them, what to draw in them...These help us plan the page and decide on the best layout to tell the story. When drawing these, you want to be constantly referring to your script.





PART THREE // DRAWING

Time to draw yet?! Almost!

DRAWING THE PANELS

Before drawing any pictures, you need to draw out your panels. As in the video, draw a large rectangle then divide that into however many panels you need. Be sure to leave a small space between each panel. If you just draw a line, it may be hard to distinguish between panels when they are full of artwork.

I would recommend you to pencil the panel outlines then go over them in ink. This is so that you don't rub out the panel lines if you need to correct/erase parts of your illustrations.

PENCILING THE ART

When penciling your artwork, it's a good idea to start light and loose. Whether you make mistakes or not, you will want to erase some of your rough sketch lines when you start to refine your artwork. Pencil all the panels on the page before moving onto the next stage of completing your art. I find this helps me to be more efficient and make less mistakes. Also if I have to stop at pencil stage, the page still feels complete. If I complete one panel at a time and have to cut things short, I could have empty panels on the page.

LETTERING

Usually the lettering is done by a separate artist at the end of the comic creation process; however, we are doing all the jobs on our comic, Therefore you should add lettering such as captions, speech bubbles etc at this point too, in pencil. Take your time with it and check it for mistakes before you use pens.

PART FOUR // COMPLETING YOUR ART

At last, time to refine and complete the artwork ^_^

INKING

If you are going to do your artwork in the way I did in the video, I would suggest using a few thicknesses of fine-liner if you have them. If not, don't worry! Just whatever YOU have available ^_^ there aren't any hard and fast rules to what materials you should use.

As before, do your basic outlines across the entire page. When that's done, go through the page looking for places to add accent points or shading if you wish.

If you're sticking with pencil, use this stage to clean up and refine your pencil work.

COLOURS

If you want to use colour, regardless of what material you're using, it is a good tip to work the whole page, one colour at a time as shown in the video. Markers, colouring pencils, watercolours, goache...even collage...all are great options for adding colour to your comic.

Remember that colour can be a great tool for helping your reader identify characters and for setting moods or indicating time-jumps. An commonly used example might be to use colour for present and black and white for the past.

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking part in this workshop! There is so much to learn about making comics and we really only scratched the surface. I hope you get some ideas to help you in creating your own comics to enjoy and share and maybe even sell KERRRR-CHING ^_^



KELLY DUGGAN BOY TERROR S

The Wild Colonial Boy

“The Wild Colonial Boy” is a traditional anonymous Irish-Australian ballad of which there are many different versions, the most prominent being the Irish and Australian versions. The original was about Jack Donahue, an Irish rebel who became a convict, then a bush-ranger and was eventually shot dead by police. This version was outlawed as seditious, so the name in the song was changed to Jack

Doolan. The Irish version is about a Jack Duggan, young emigrant who left the town of Castlemaine, County Kerry, Ireland, for Australia in the early 19th century. According to the song, he spent his time “robbing from the rich to feed the poor”. In the song, Duggan is fatally wounded in an ambush when he is shot in the heart by Fitzroy. (Source: Wikipedia)

Lyrics (Irish Version)

There was a wild colonial boy,

Jack Duggan was his name

He was born and raised in Ireland,

in a place called Castlemaine

He was his father's only son,

his mother's pride and joy

And dearly did his parents love

the wild colonial boy

At the early age of sixteen years,

he left his native home

And to Australia's sunny shore,

he was inclined to roam

He robbed the rich, he helped the poor,

he shot James MacEvoy

A terror to Australia was

the wild colonial boy

One morning on the prairie,

as Jack he rode along

A-listening to the mocking bird,

a-singing a cheerful song

Up stepped a band of troopers:

Kelly, Davis and Fitzroy

They all set out to capture him,

the wild colonial boy

Surrender now, Jack Duggan,

for you see we're three to one.

Surrender in the Queen's high name,

you are a plundering son

Jack drew two pistols from his belt,

he proudly waved them high.

“I'll fight, but not surrender;”

said the wild colonial boy

He fired a shot at Kelly,

which brought him to the ground

And turning round to Davis,

he received a fatal wound

A bullet pierced his proud young heart,

from the pistol of Fitzroy

And that was how they captured him,

the wild colonial Boy.

THE D I R T S

THE WILD COLONIAL BOY // 4-PAGE COMIC

PAGE ONE // 5 PANELS

PANEL ONE

Draw: Jack Duggan as a five-year old boy, playing outside his family's cottage in Ireland.

Caption; There was a wild colonial boy, Jack Duggan was his name.

PANEL TWO

Draw: Jack as a ten year old sitting next to the fire with his mum and dad.

Caption: He was born and raised in Ireland

PANEL THREE

Draw: Sixteen year old Jack helping his dad on the farm

PANEL FOUR

Draw: Jack and Dad sitting down to dinner at the table. Mum giving Jack a big plate of food, arm on his shoulder and beaming at him. He's looking at her and smiling back. Dad grins at them both

PANEL FIVE

Draw: Jack's family at the pier in front of a large sailing vessel. Jack walking up the gang plank looking sad. Mum and Dad waving behind him. Mum waves a white hankie as Dad hugs her close.

Caption: At the early age of sixteen years, he left his native home.

T R I P C S

PAGE TWO // 5 PANELS

PANEL ONE

Draw: Jack Duggan on the deck of a clipper on the ocean

Caption; He To Australia's sunny shore...

PANEL TWO

Draw: Jack arriving in Australia

Caption: ...he was inclined to roam.

PANEL THREE

Draw: Jack outside a shop where a mean shopkeeper won't help a poor widow with a toddler. He now looks like an outlaw.

PANEL FOUR

Draw: Jack pointing a gun at the shopkeeper and gesturing for him to give the woman and child some food.

Caption; He Robbed the rich

PANEL FIVE

Draw: The man giving the woman and child the food. He's scowling at Jack. The woman is smiling at Jack.

Caption: He helped the poor.

T R I B U N E S

Page Three // 7 Panels

Panel One (small)

Draw: Jack Duggan stopping a family being evicted by a mean landlord

Panel Two (small)

Draw: Jack Duggan robbing a stage coach

Panel Three (small)

Draw: Jack Duggan giving the stuff he's robbed to some Aborigines

Panel Four

Draw: Jack Duggan shoots James MacEvoy

Caption; He shot James MacEvoy

Panel Five

Draw: Wanted Poster Jack Duggan

Panel Six (wide)

Draw: Jack Duggan riding his horse out on the prairie in the morning. Mockingbird in the foreground

SFX: Birdsong

Panel Seven (insert)

Draw: Jack Duggan stopping as he sees a band of troopers.

Caption: Kelly, Davis and Fitzroy had been chasing Jack for weeks now...

Speech (Fitzroy): Surrender now, Jack Duggan!

T R I P C S

PAGE FOUR // 6 PANELS

PANEL ONE (SMALL)

Draw: Jack Duggan dismounts behind his horse. The three troopers take aim at Jack.

Speech (Fitzroy): We're three to one, Jack! Surrender! In the Queen's high name.

PANEL TWO (SMALL)

Draw: Jack Duggan looking proud and fierce, raises his pistols, stepping out from behind his horse.

Caption: I'll fight but not surrender!

PANEL THREE

Draw: Jack Duggan shoots and kills one of the troopers.

SFX BANG

PANEL FOUR

Draw: Jack turns to shoot Davis but he is shot in the heart by Fitzroy.

SFX: Bang BANG

PANEL FIVE

Draw: Fitzroy looking smug as smoke rises from his gun

Caption; And that was how they captured him...

PANEL SIX

Draw: Wide Aerial shot of Jack lying on the ground. A mockingjay flies away towards bottom right corner of the panel.

Caption: ...that wild colonial boy.