

Visuals for Big Ideas

Using Graphics for Storytelling

Lesson plan prepared by Chenise Hache for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Grade 3+

Subject Areas

- Visual Arts
- Student/Study Skills
- Personal Development
- Presentations
- Storytelling

Introduction

Visual storytelling is a great way to represent your thoughts and ideas in a simple, concise, and effective way. You can say a lot without saying anything at all using simple graphic techniques to represent people, thoughts, conflicts, or goals: the sky's the limit! This lesson plan offers a few simple techniques to get you started on your own path to graphic recording.



Annie Pootoogook, *Showing a Drawing*, 2001-2002. Wax pastel and ink on Ragston paper, 66.0 x 50.9 cm. Purchased with funds provided by the Exxon Mobil Corporation, 2007

Set Up

A flat space to draw: table, wall space, or floor.

Materials

- Any paper, preferably BIG, for example: postal wrap or flip chart paper.
- Markers [black, gray, and red recommended] but any other writing instrument would do.
- Painters' Tape

Steps

I'm going to share a handful of quick tips and techniques that you can use and modify to fit most ideas. You can build on these of course, but this should give you a baseline to work from.



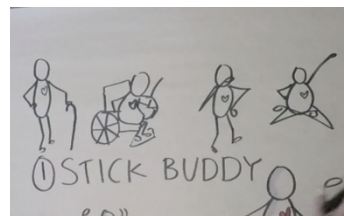
1) A Stick Buddy

A stick buddy is the cornerstone of all graphics because usually when humans are talking about big ideas or stories, we like to involve ourselves in some way, so we need to learn how to represent ourselves and our friends.

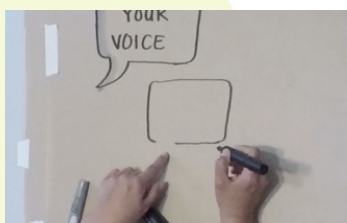
Start with a circle for the head. Give your buddy a body, any shape will do! Add arms: Make a V shape for elbows. Add leg: come out on an angle, bend at the knee, then add a little foot. To give your buddy 3D dimension, pick a side of the figure and add grey along the inside of the outline.



Add some shadow for the Buddy to stand on too! Bring your Buddy to life with a heart, this is a great spot to use your accent colour. This is one way you can add some soul and personality.

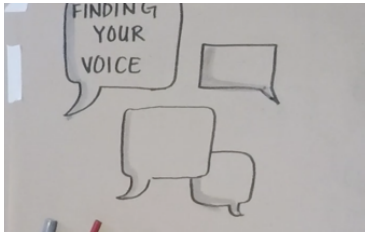


Some more buddy examples with a cane, wheelchair, thinking pose, and cross-legged position.



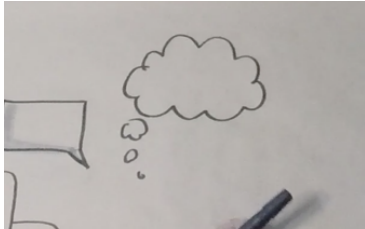
2) Finding your Voice: Thoughts and Expressions

Now that we have a buddy, we need to give them a voice. We can do this through speech and thought bubbles.



Speech bubbles:

Draw a square with round or sharp corners, almost connected all the way. Draw a tail, or curved v shape, in the direction of the speaker. You can also layer them; this works great for conversations between two Buddies. Remember the drop-shadow technique – including them will elevate your images.



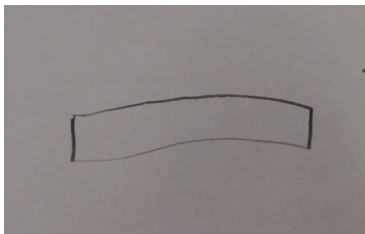
Thought bubbles:

Draw the shape of a cloud. Draw a few mini-clouds in the direction of the speaker, they should become smaller and smaller each time.



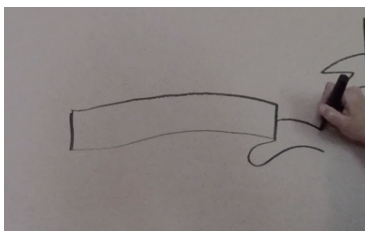
Using your words:

Sometimes, we want to give our Buddies specific voices. This can be extended through signs that are held by hands or on sticks, as well as word bubbles with text. Writing in capital letters will make your message clear, quick, and easy for someone to understand.



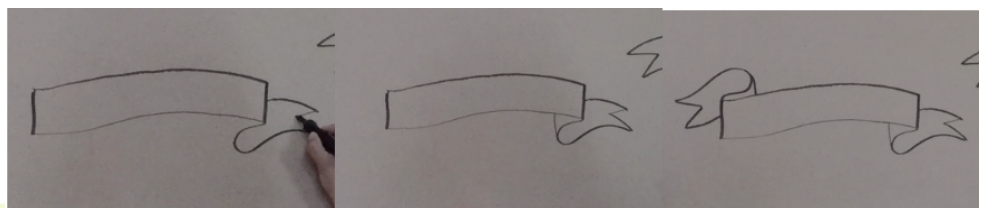
3) Banners

Start with 2 lines, as wide and tall as you could like your banner to be. Connect the bottom two lines with a wavy line. Mirror this wavy line as you connect the top two lines to make it look like an equal ribbon.



To create the flowing tail: let's start on our right side. we're going to bring our line in like the top of an "S", and loosely curve out. Then, we will go halfway up the side of the banner and match the shape underneath once more.

To create a dovetail edge to your banner, draw a dot halfway in between draw a little dot, and then connect them to the ends of your lines beneath. Suddenly, it looks 3D! To show you how to do the tail on the left side, we will draw it on the top to create a more dynamic banner.





The final step, is to add text to highlight titles and themes in your story

4) Using your New Skills!

You can practice your graphic skills by asking a friend or family member to try to tell you a story and capturing it as quickly as you can, or by using it as a tool to visual your own goals or notes that you want to take.

Resources

- <http://bravespace.ca/>
- <https://www.imagethink.net/what-is-graphic-recording-a-quick-guide/>