

**Time Required:** One 40-minute class period

**Materials:** sample comic strips, Student Worksheet 1 *Comic Design: Story and Character Creation*, Student Worksheet 2 *Comic Design: Drawing and Coloring Your Comic Strip*, blank paper, pens/pencils

### LESSON STEPS

- 1 Invite students to name some famous comic strip characters. Answers may include Garfield, Charlie Brown, Calvin and Hobbes, Dennis the Menace, etc. Then ask students to think about why these characters are so memorable. Some students may talk about the characters being funny or sarcastic, while others may talk about how long the characters have been around.
- 2 Tell students that creating a good comic strip is often related to good characters. As Walt Disney said: "I try to build a full personality for each of our cartoon characters." Tell students that by giving characters a personality they can make their comic strips more successful and enjoyable.
- 3 Have students look at Part II of Student Worksheet 1. Tell them to create two main characters for their comic strip. Have students look over their topic, story arc, and scene from Part I to help determine which character(s) would work best in the comic strip. For example, if they chose the topic of sports, their story could be about a baseball game, and the scene could be a baseball stadium, then their characters could be baseball players or fans.
- 4 After students have thought about their two main characters, tell them to fill out the chart in Part II of the worksheet. In addition to the written description of their characters, encourage students to sketch out an image of each character on the back of the worksheet or on a separate piece of paper.
- 5 Tell students that now that they have developed their story arc, set the scene for the story, and created their characters, they should work on the

text in the comic strip. Tell students that there are many ways to use text in a comic strip. Ask students to name different forms of text that they have seen in comic strips. Answers may include: speech bubbles, thought bubbles, titles, captions, and labels. Tell students that they should use words carefully. Comic strips are very much about the art, so they shouldn't overcrowd their work with too much text! Give students time to write out some possible dialogue and other words for their comic strip.

- 6 Distribute Student Worksheet 2 *Comic Design: Drawing and Coloring Your Comic Strip*. Instruct students to begin sketching out their comic strips in the classroom. Tell them to use the template provided on the worksheet for their final comic strip. Invite students to take their comic strips home to complete them.
- 7 Have students bring in their completed comic strips to share with the class. Collect the completed comic strips and hang them around the classroom.

### Scholar™ by Prismacolor Art Tip:

Adding color will help draw attention to the areas of importance. Sometimes a bright color (like yellow or orange) used behind a character will help define him or her in importance. Certain clothing and colors have defined characters for years...like the black zigzag on Charlie Brown's sweater or detective Dick Tracy's bright yellow trench coat or Spiderman's red bodysuit. Once you establish your costume or look, you will need to stick with it. It will help define your character.