



making COMICS

From:
*Making Comics:
Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels*
(Steve McCloud)



**Comic is a
secret language.**

**Dominating it means being creative
and knowing how to write
and how to illustrate.**



the importance of
WORDS

objectives

1

Readers have to understand what we are telling them.

2

Readers have to be interested enough in what we are telling them so they won't leave the comic half read.



decissions to make

Once we have a good story to tell, we need to make decision about five important items:

1 The moment.

2 The framing.

3 The image.

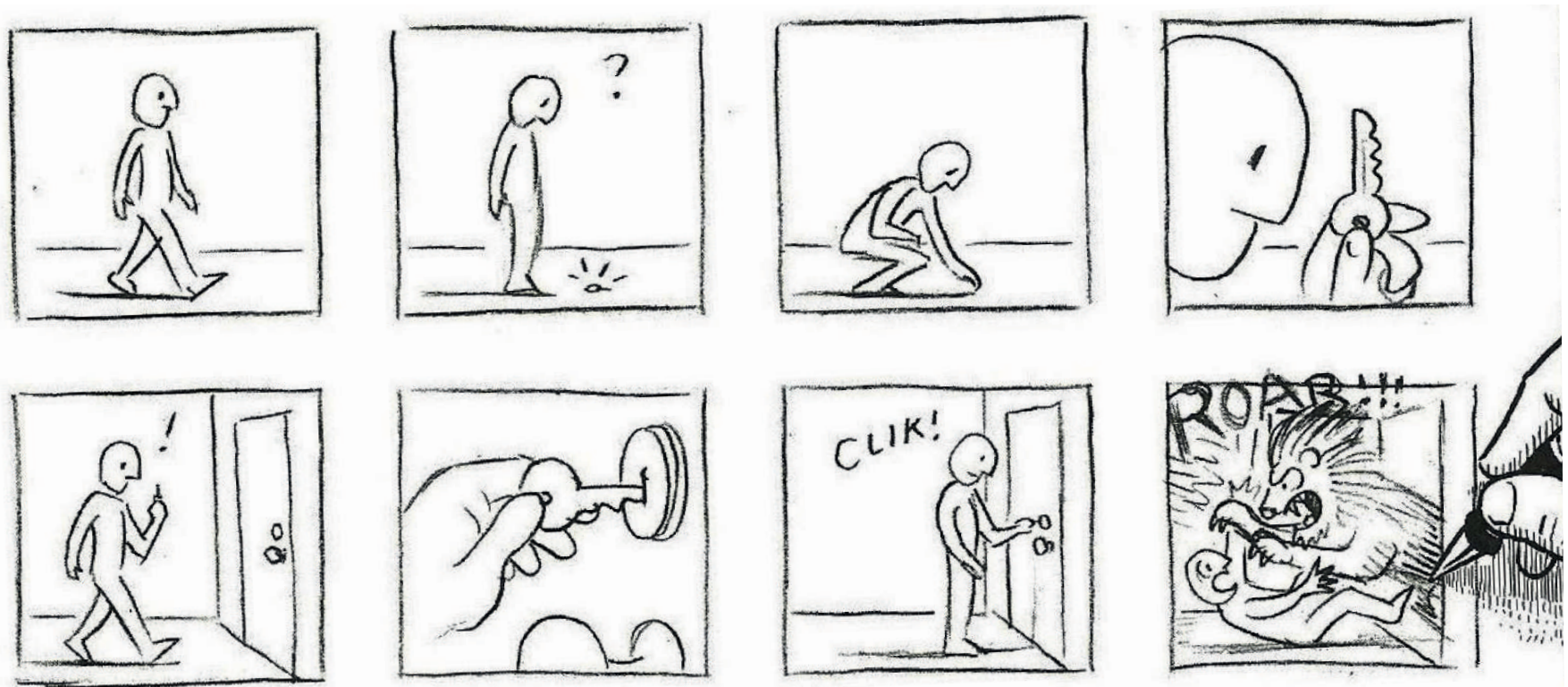
4 The words.

5 The flow.



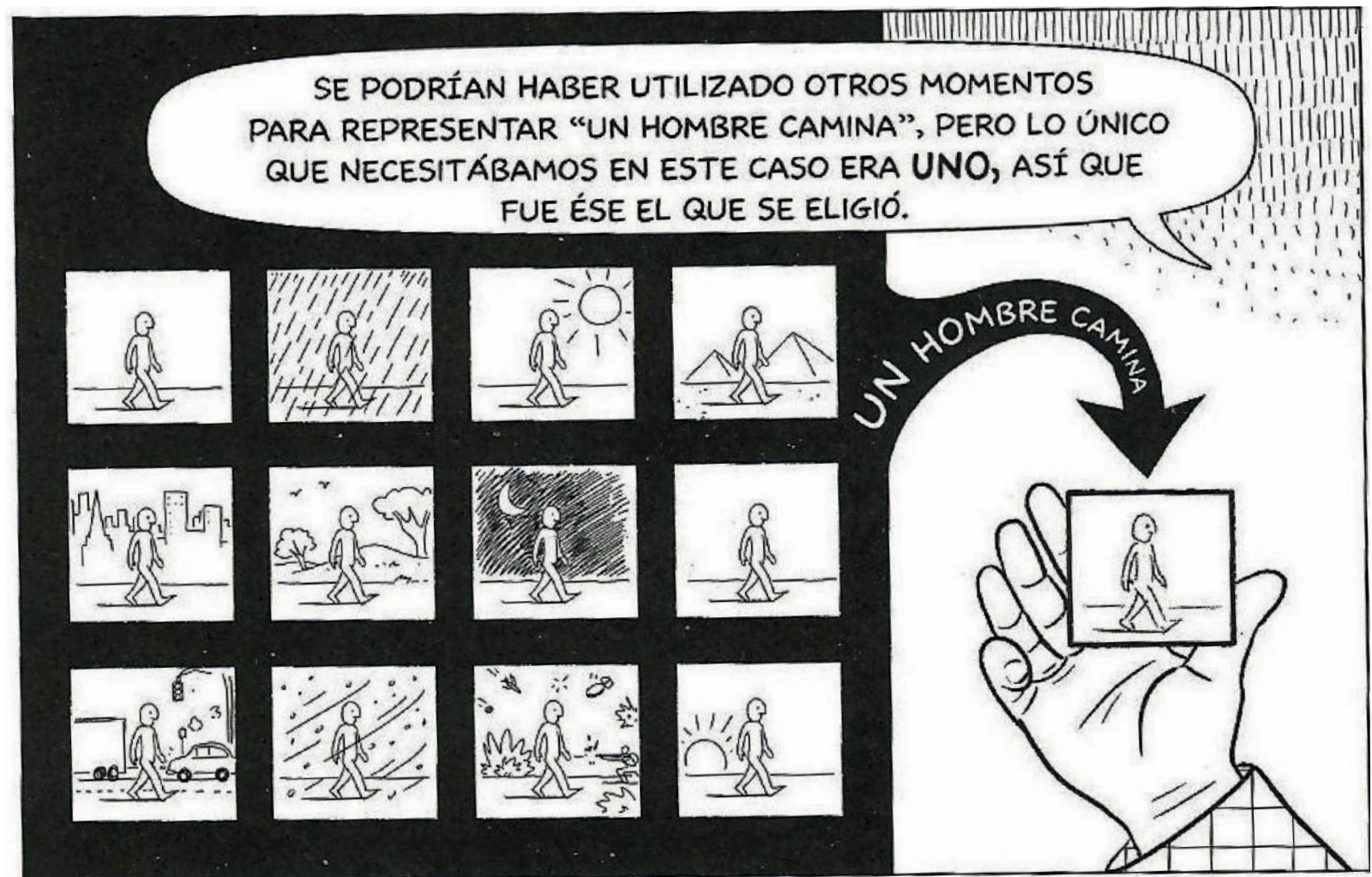
deciding **THE MOMENT**

We need to decide which moments we should include or discard.



A man is walking, finds a key, opens a door... and a lion appears behind the door!

Who should choose those moments that are more important and understandable for our readers.



deciding **THE FRAMING**

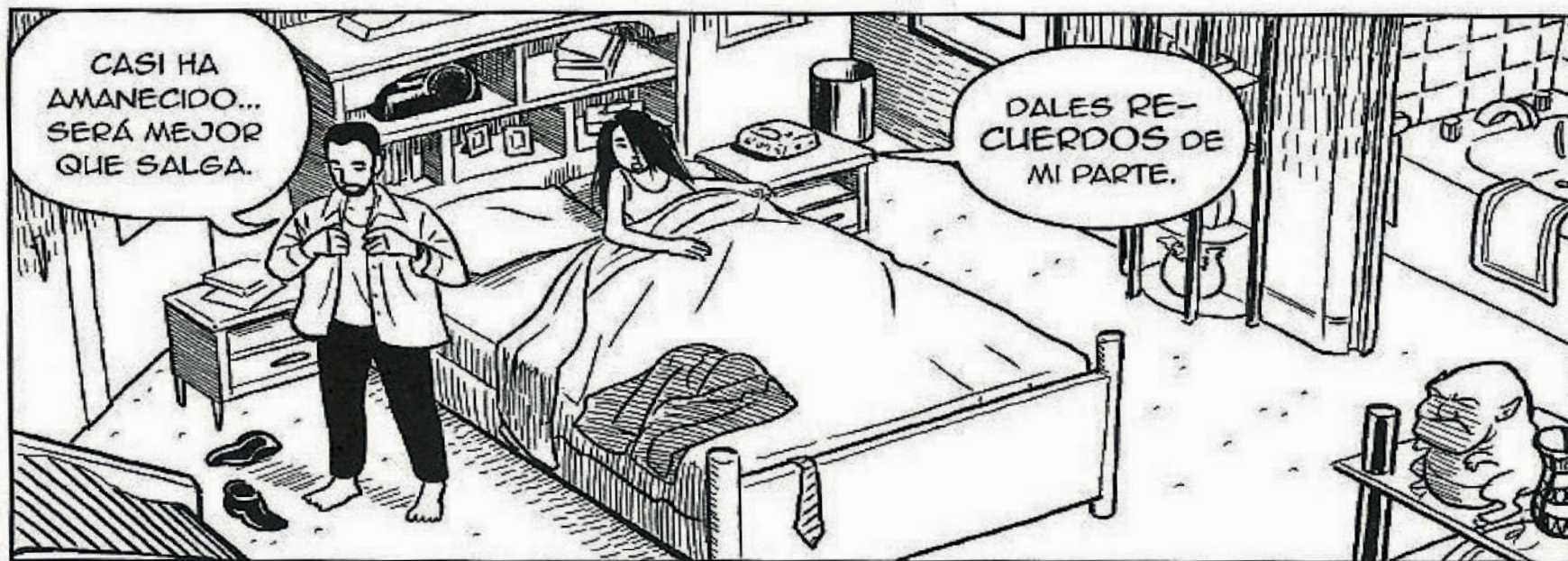
We need to decide **how to show the action**: whether it is better showing a detail or to go far away in order to show where the action is happening.



That means dedicing the distance, angle and, to sum up, **where to "cut"**.



Each type of shot and camera angle makes the reader perceive and feel the scene in a different way.



deciding **THE IMAGE**

We need to decide **how to represent** objects, characters and surroundings inside the framing in a **clear** way.



No matter what your style is, what it is important is to communicate in a **FAST, CLEAR and ATTRACTIVE** way.

It is much more than "having a cool style".
It means studying:

1 Anatomy: postures and expressions.

2 Gestures: emotions and attitudes.

3 Knowing that a little detail can prepare the reader for something important that is going to happen at any moment.



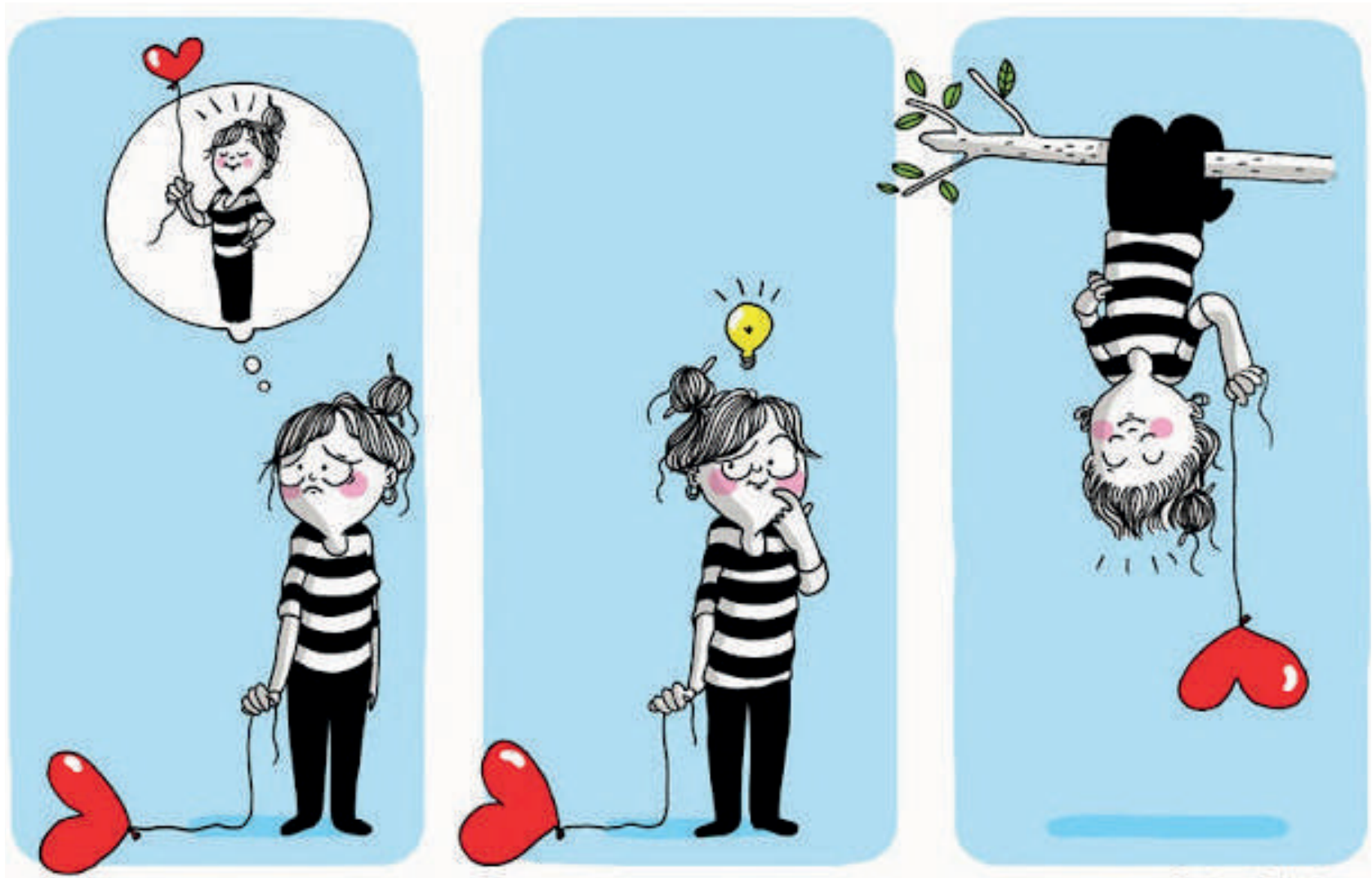


deciding **THE WORDS**



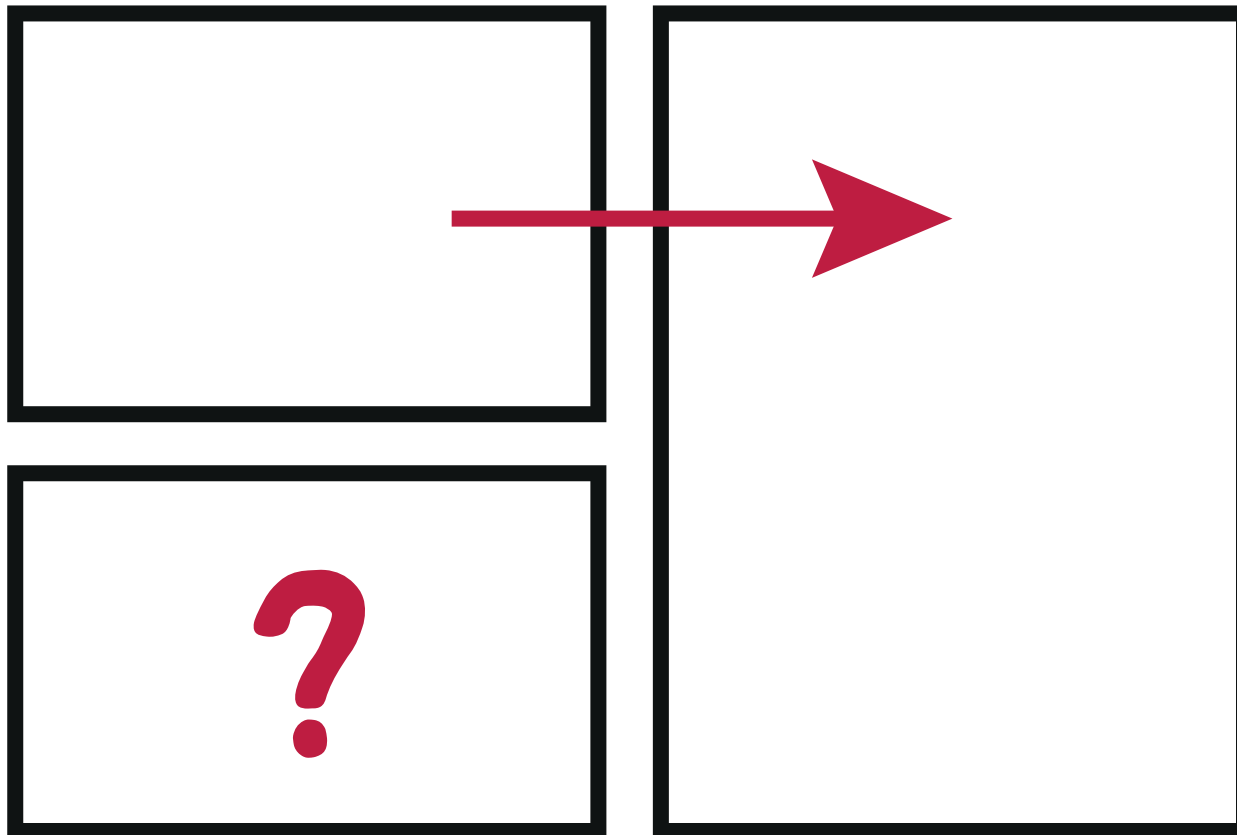
We need to choose words which add **valuable information** and **work properly with the images** that surround them.

Sometimes, a picture is worth a thousand words so... it could be better to get rid of them if we don't need them.



deciding **THE FLUX**

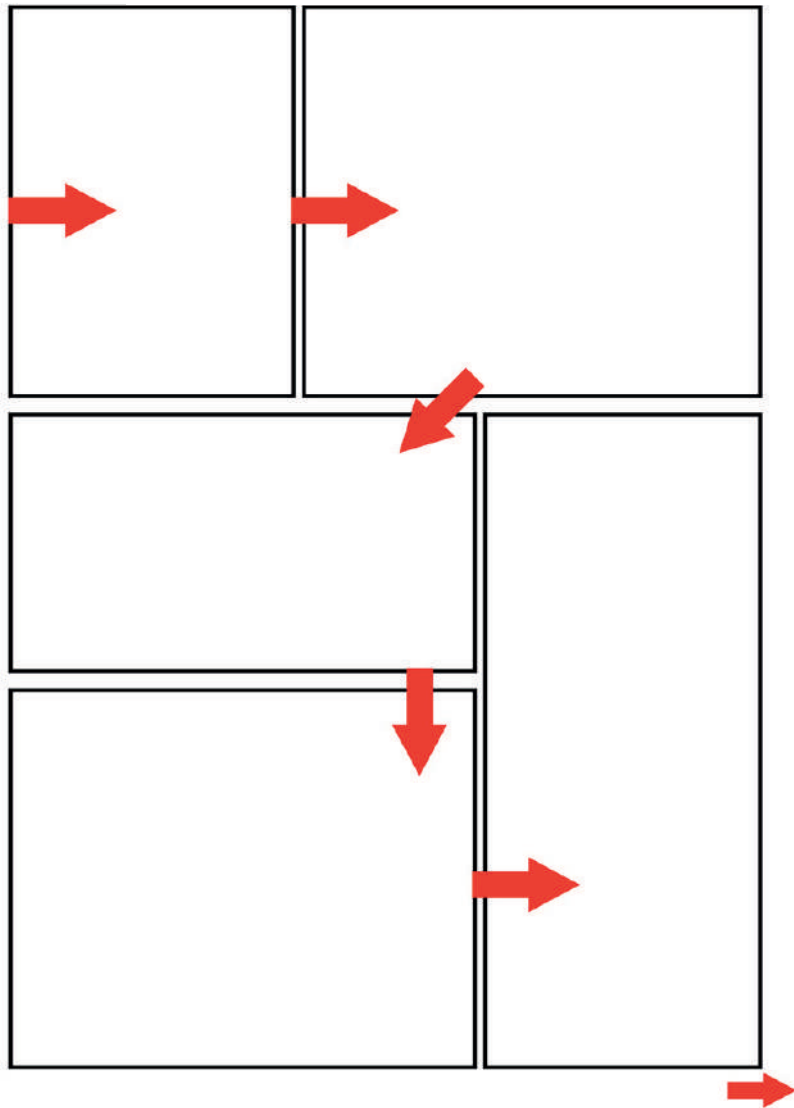
We need to decide how to **guide the sight of our readers** around the page and vignettes.



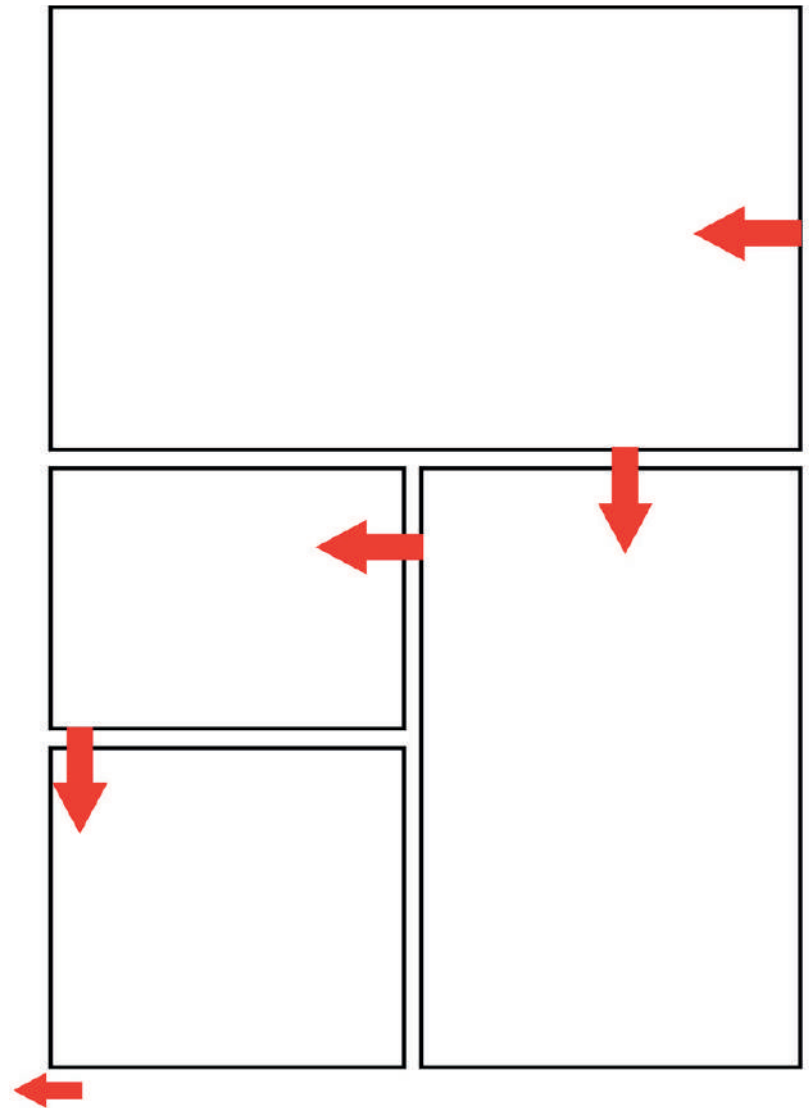
From left to right.

From up top to
bottom.

1 European and american.



2 Manga.



to **sum up...**

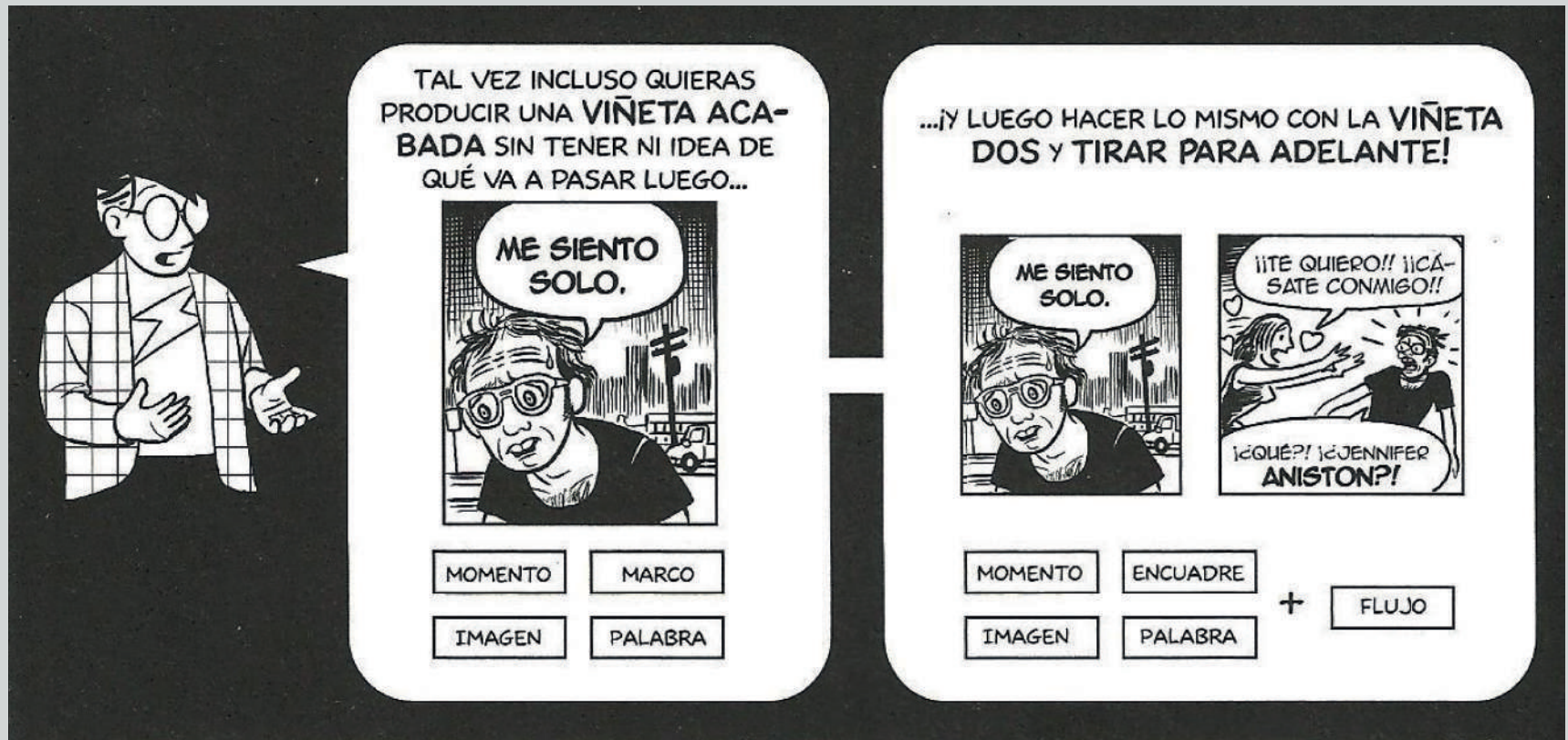
There are different ways to start a comic or manga. You might want to **start sketching...**



Another way is to **start by writing the script**. It can be yours or it can be written by another person, by hand or computer...



Or you can just draw vignettes one by one and let the story flow.



What is important is not to stop drawing and creating!



stories for

HUMANS

character design

The appearance of our characters depends on our own style and personal taste.

We have to think about three different characteristics:

- 1** Interior life.
- 2** Visual distinguish.
- 3** Expressive features.



personality

It means creating characters with **their own ideas, feelings, tastes, problems, family, money, education level...**



You should always have in mind **what do they want.**

There are **three archetypes** that you can follow...
But you should try to avoid stereotypes.

1 The wise man.

2 The hero.

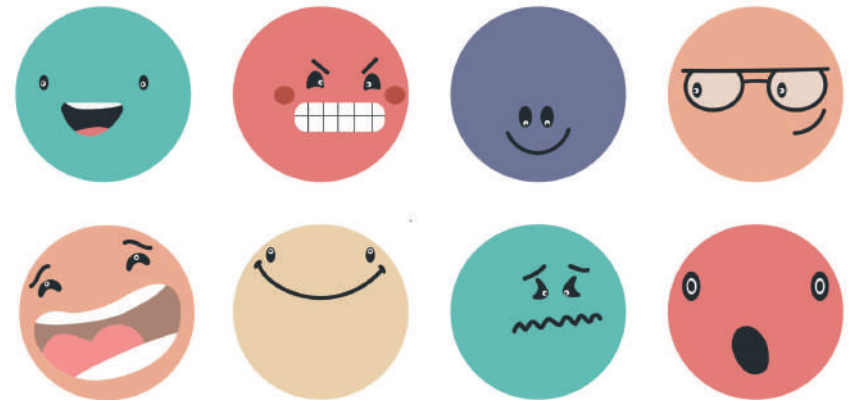
3 The liar.



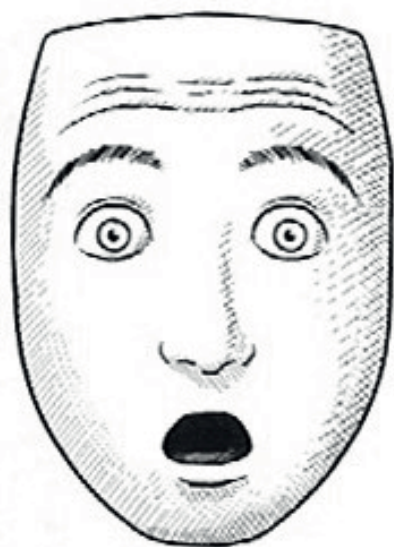
Facial expressions

Our characteres should show **different basic human emotions** that we can summarize in 6:

ANGER
DISGUST
FEAR
JOY
SADNESS
SURPRISE



It's true, there are much more emotions... but we can represent them by mixing or altering those six.



SURPRISE



ANGER



DISGUST



SADNESS



FEAR



JOY

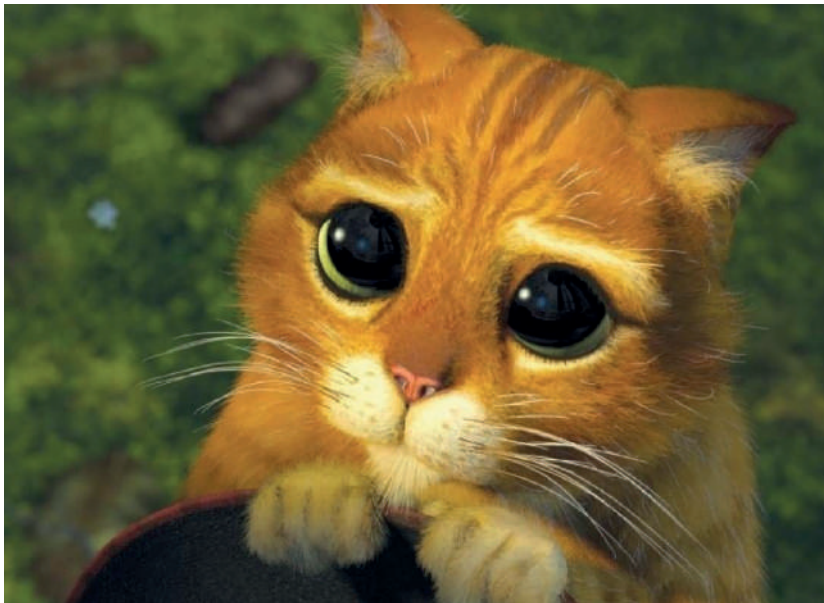
With these facial expressions we try to show our readers what is happening in our character's mind in that exact moment.



Just take a mirror and have a look at yourself... There are a lot of expressions that are shown even though you don't want to.

body language

Body language can tell your readers who a character is even before he/she start talking. Body language and facial expressions work together to express the same feelings and emotions.



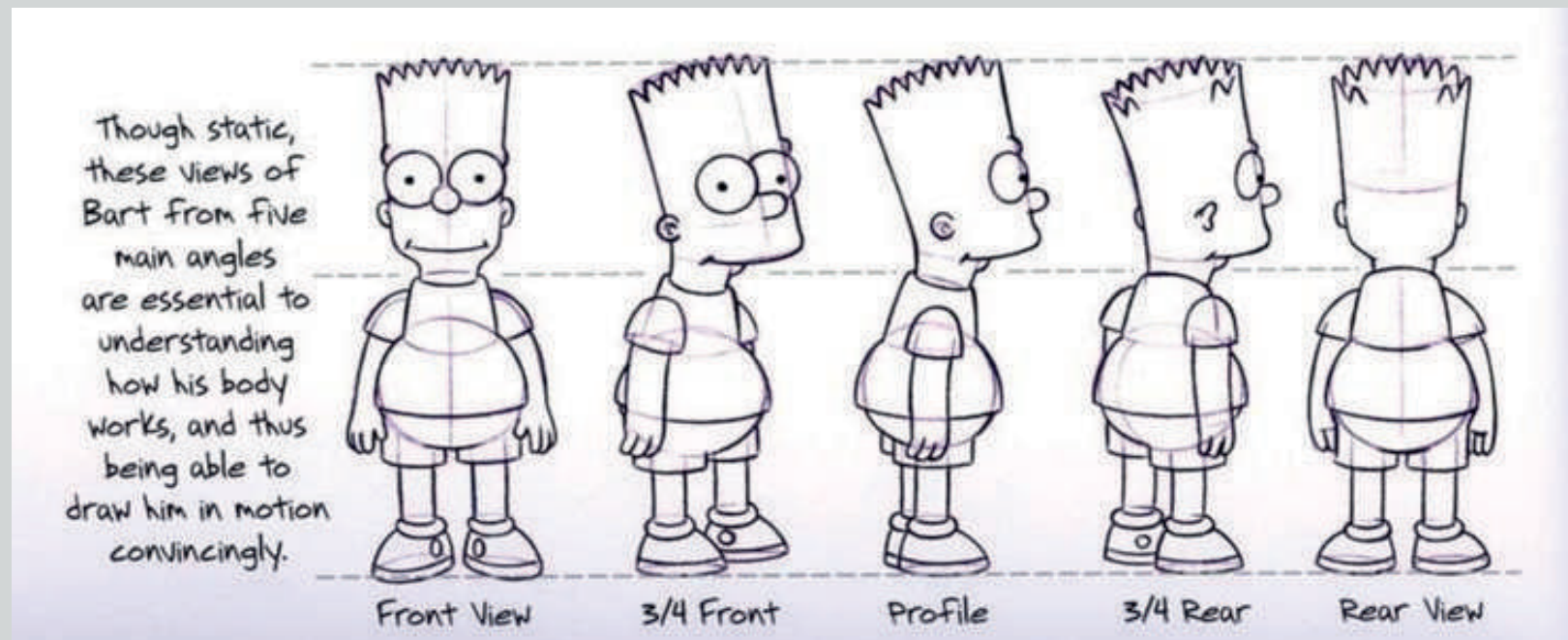
HERO: Chin up, chest out, arched back.



If you want to show distance or discomfort:
serious face, crossed arms, distance.

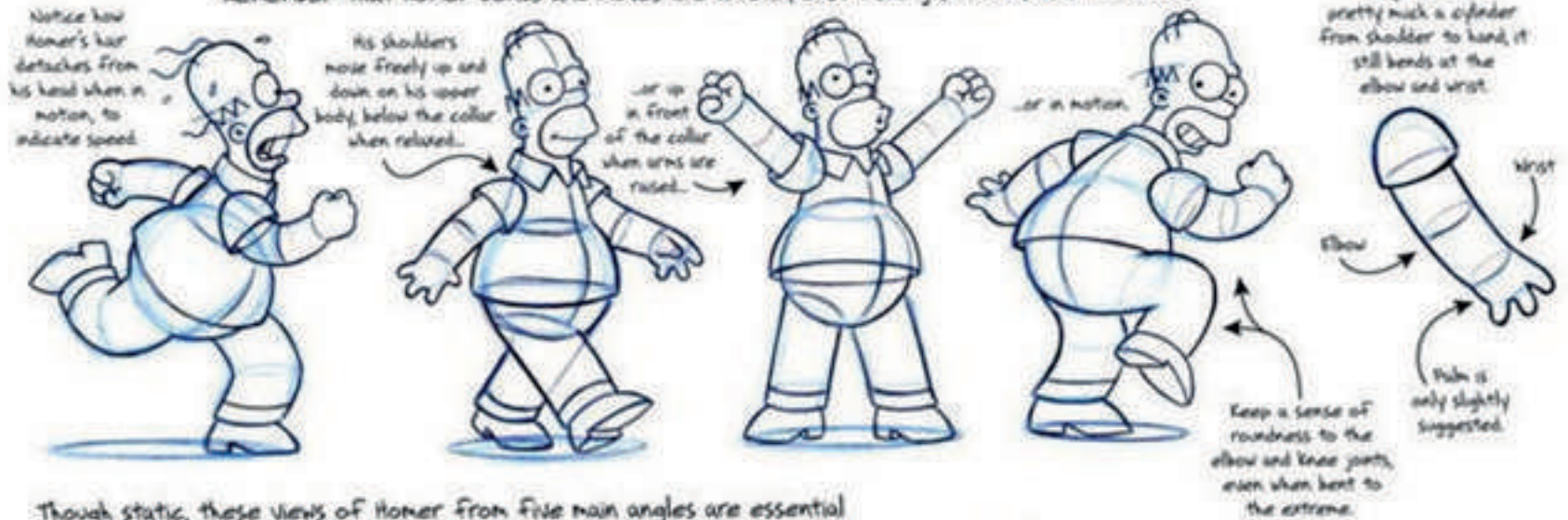
character model sheet

It is recommended to create a **character model sheet** for every character. It is a series of drawings of it including different clothes, facial expressions (with body language), shots and angles, important details...

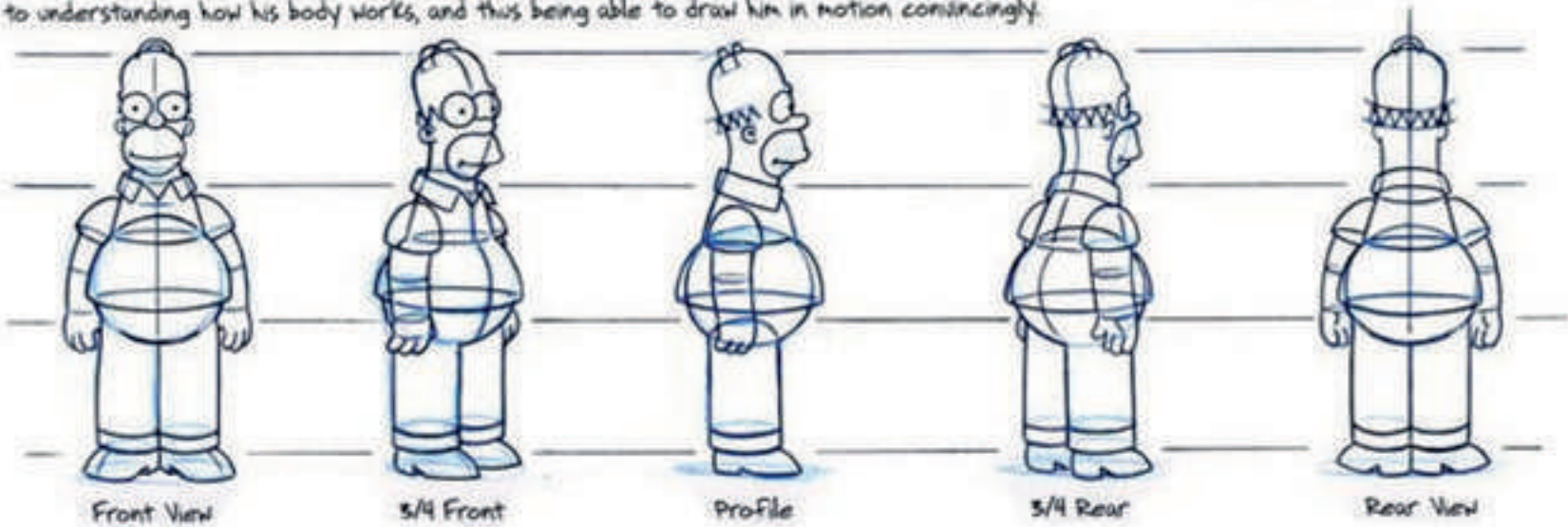


It may sound like an oxymoron, but here's a look at
HOMER IN ACTION

Remember that Homer bends and moves like a real person (he just bends a little more!).



Though static, these views of Homer from five main angles are essential to understanding how his body works, and thus being able to draw him in motion convincingly.



The image features a central yellow speech bubble with a white outline, set against a blue background with a white dotted pattern. The text 'the power of WORDS' is written in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a black outline. The word 'WORDS' is significantly larger and more prominent than 'the power of'. The entire graphic is framed by a white border and surrounded by a background of colorful, radiating lines in shades of pink, green, and orange, creating a dynamic, comic-book-like effect.

the power of
WORDS

it's a matter of balance

Most of good comics have a dynamic balance between drawings and text. Sometimes there are more words, and sometimes there is more text... but **they always work together.**

There are a lot of ways of telling the same story (script), you just have to find yours.



**Bob era un bebe Feliz.
A los 18 anos, Fue a la guerra.
A los 36, compro una casa.
Murio a los 72.**

PODRÍAS ILUSTRAR LOS ACONTECIMIENTOS DE FORMA MUY DIRECTA.



PODRÍAS DIBUJARLO TODO USANDO SÓLO LAS MANOS.



PODRÍAS MOSTRAR A UN **NARRADOR** HABLANDO DIRECTAMENTE CON EL LECTOR.



PODRÍAS INCLUSO ILUSTRARLO COMPLETAMENTE CON **SÍMBOLOS**.



Whatever you do,
remember that
sometimes
a picture is worth a
thousand words.
So... Sometimes it's
better let the images
speak by themselves
and not writing a
word.





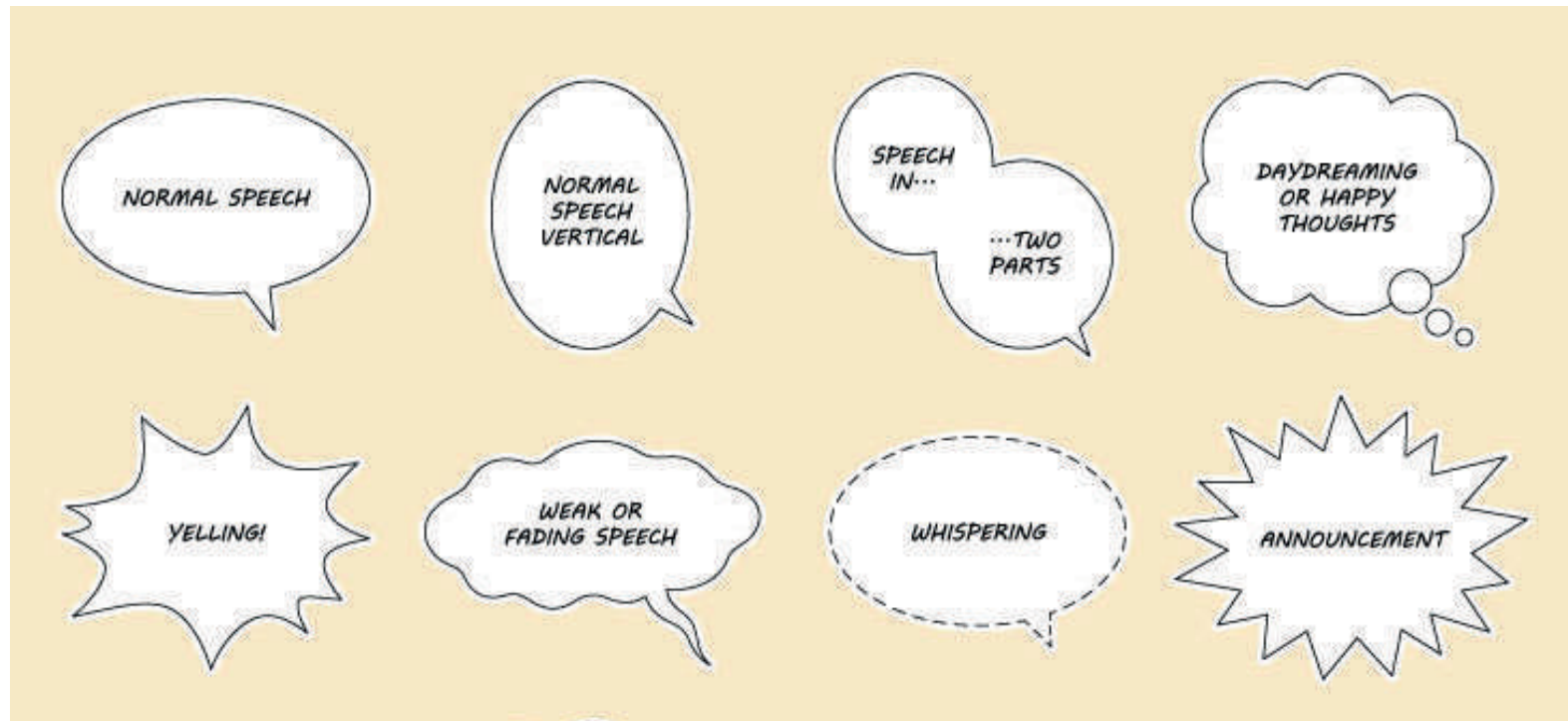
balloons

Their shape and style it's up to you (and, of course, the situation).

They can have different shapes: rounded, squared, with thin or thick outline, without outline...).



The most usual way to write down the text in balloons is in capital letters... but this “tradition” is actually changing.



Don't forget that writing down the text using a bigger size and/or bold makes the reader understand that you are shouting!

onomatopoeia

It means **listening something with our eyes.**

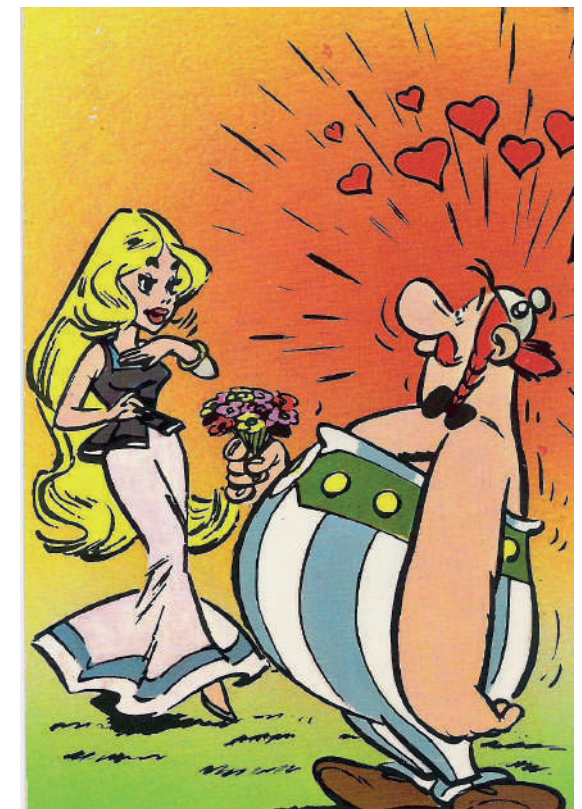
They suggest sounds by using:

- Typography.
- Size.
- Shape.
- Colour.
- Texture.



visual metaphors

Using visual metaphors allows you to draw emotions, feelings, movements or even bad words without having to write a word.



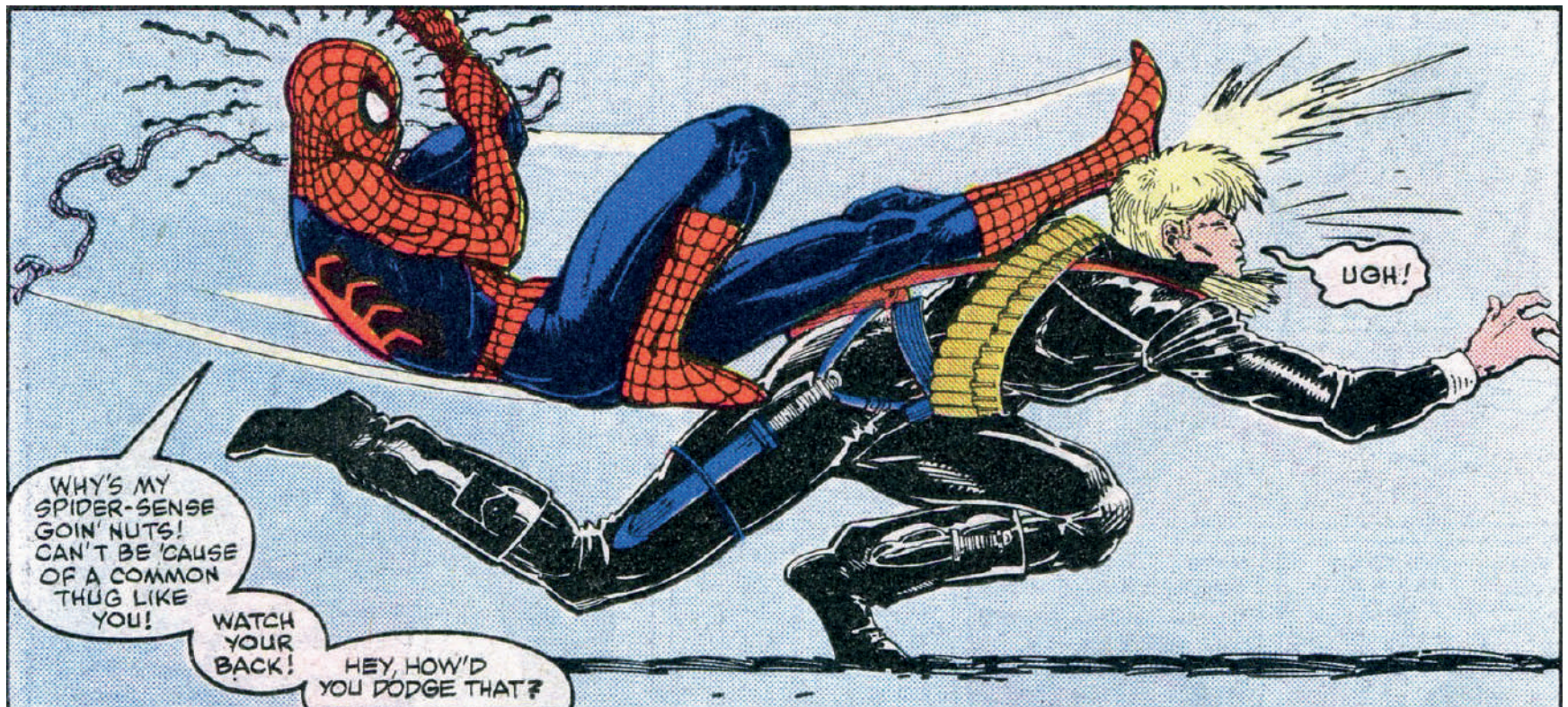


building up a

WORLD

choosing how to show it

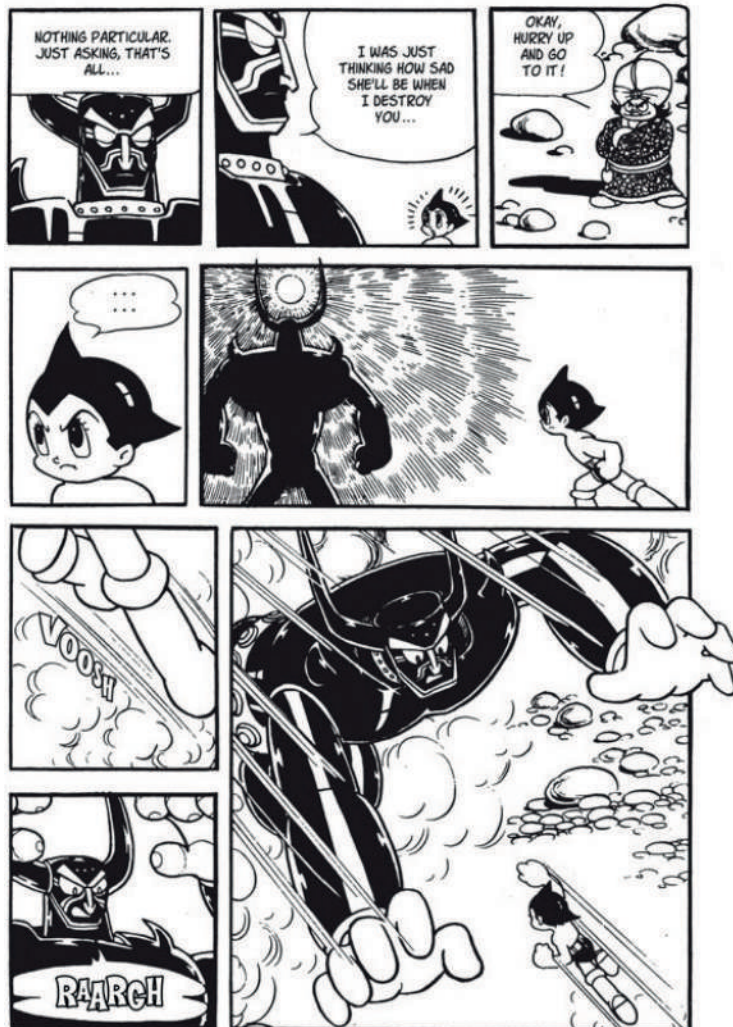
You have to make important decisions on how to introduce the scenario and background to you reader.



Sometimes, a long shot is recommended to start a scene in order to show the reader where we are before getting closer to the character.



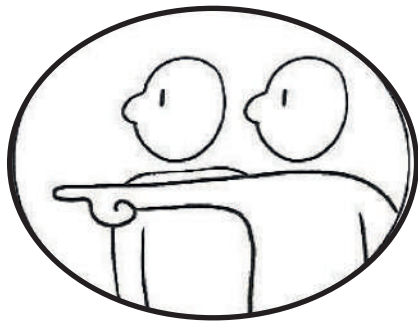
After showing where everything is happening, you can choose closer shots and even using shocking "blood prints".



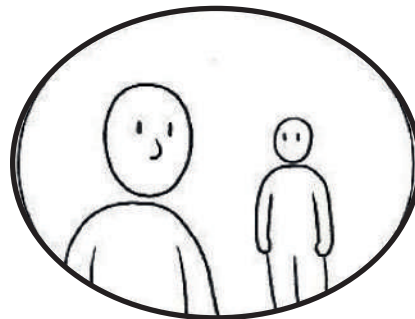
perspective

You don't need to use your ruler and triangles...
In comic and manga, **using perspective means trying to represent a 3D world in a 2D page.**

There are four easy tips that you can use...



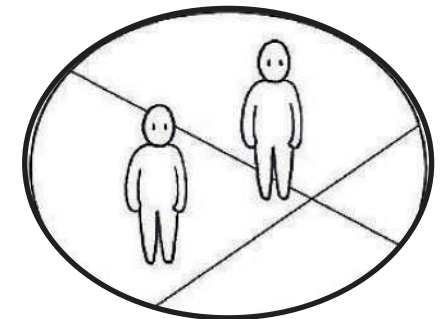
STEPPING ON



SIZE

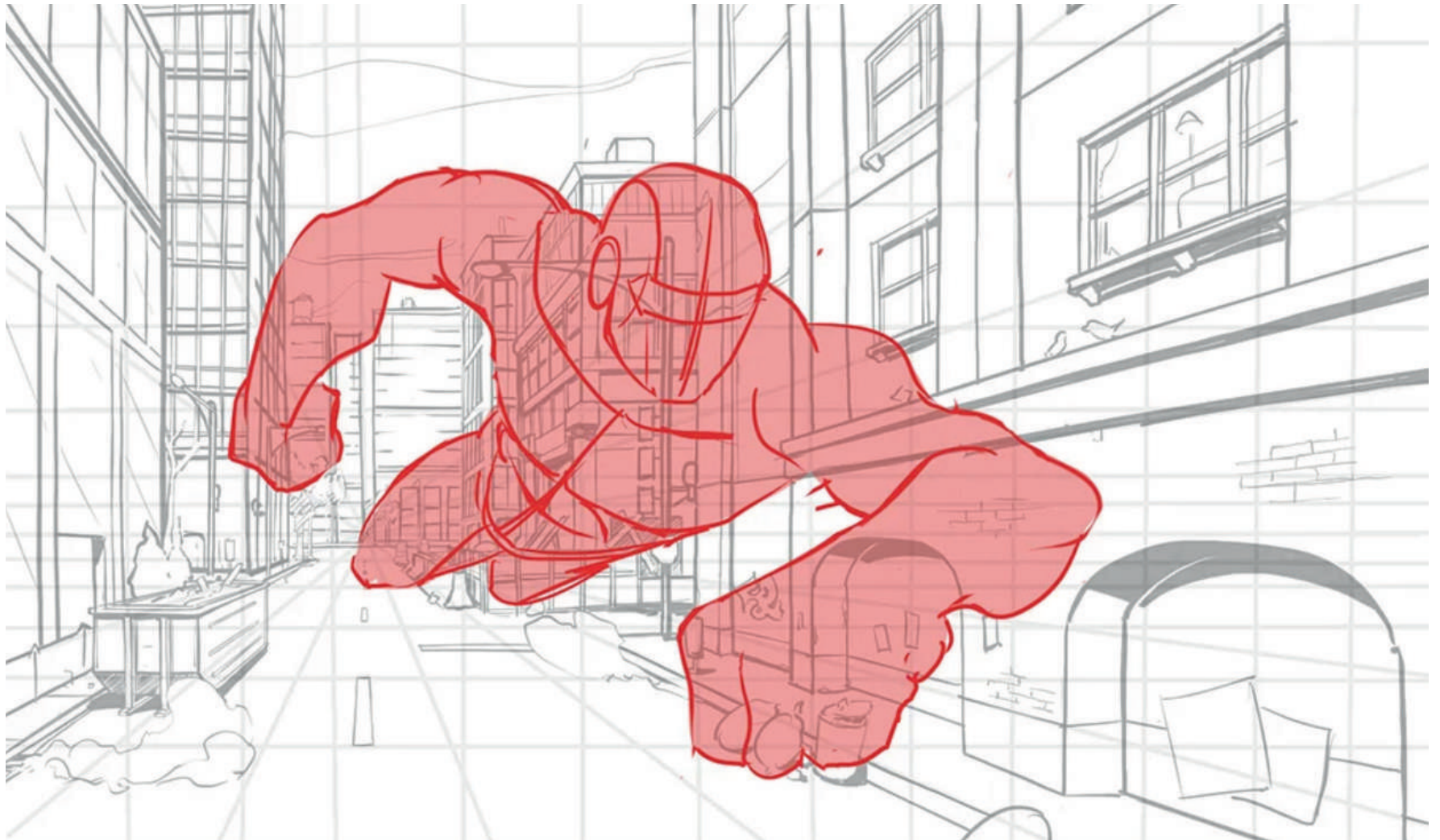


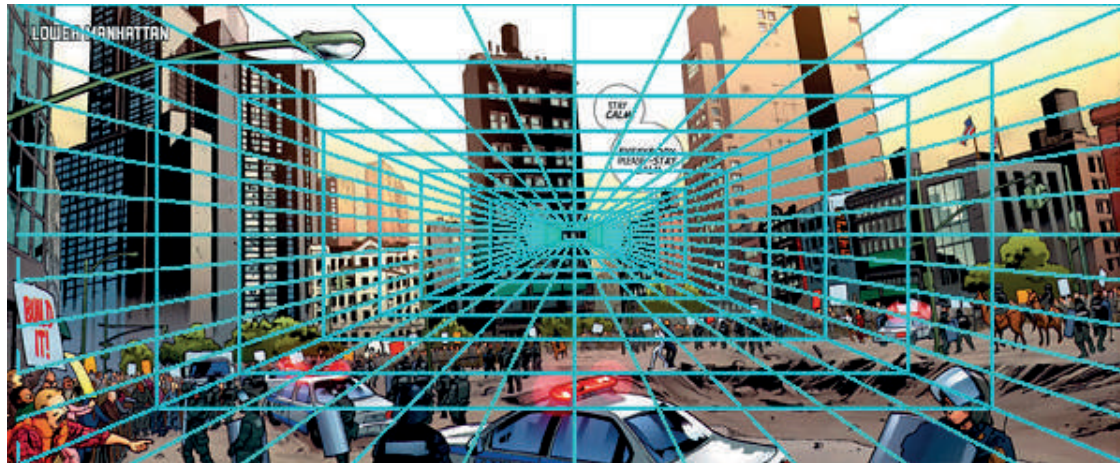
BLUR



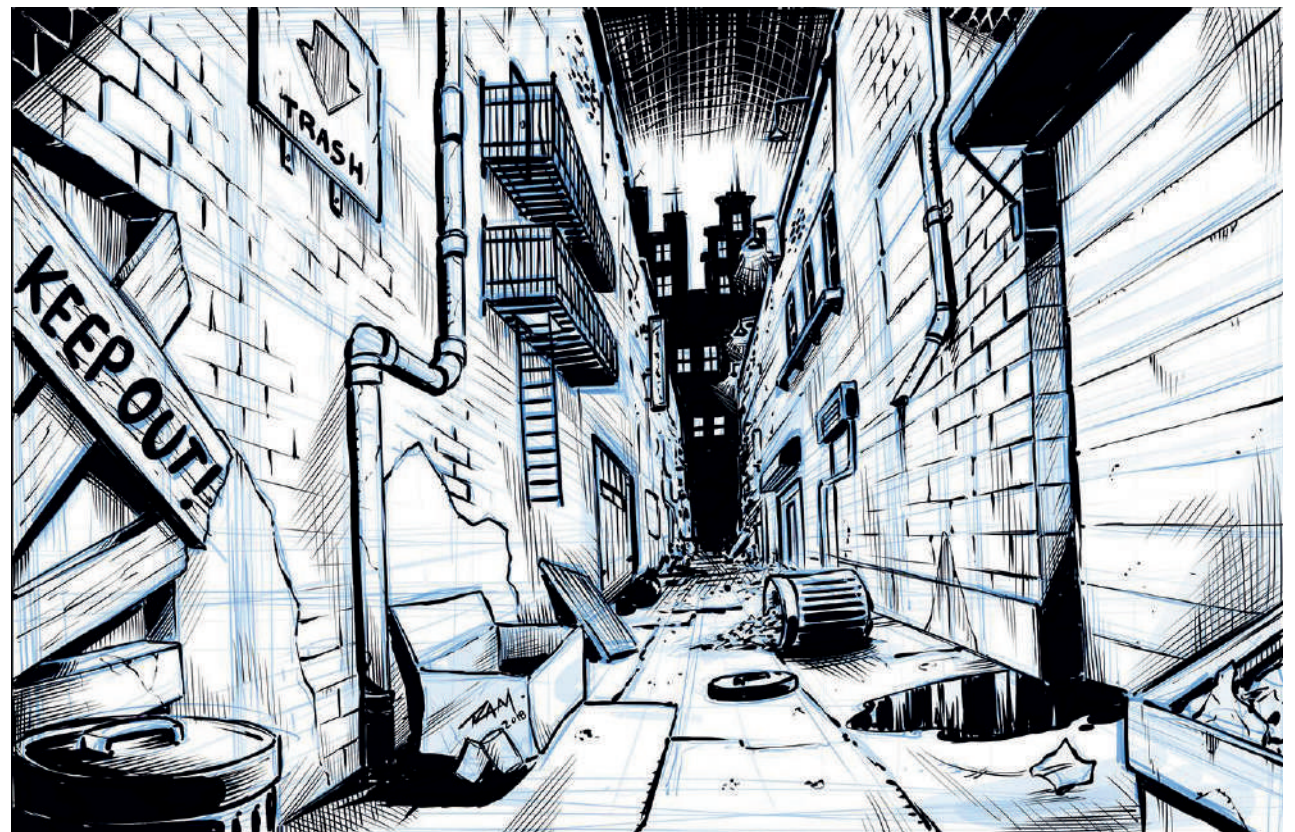
POSITION

But, of course, a proper knowledge of traditional perspective is always helpful.





Perspective grid.

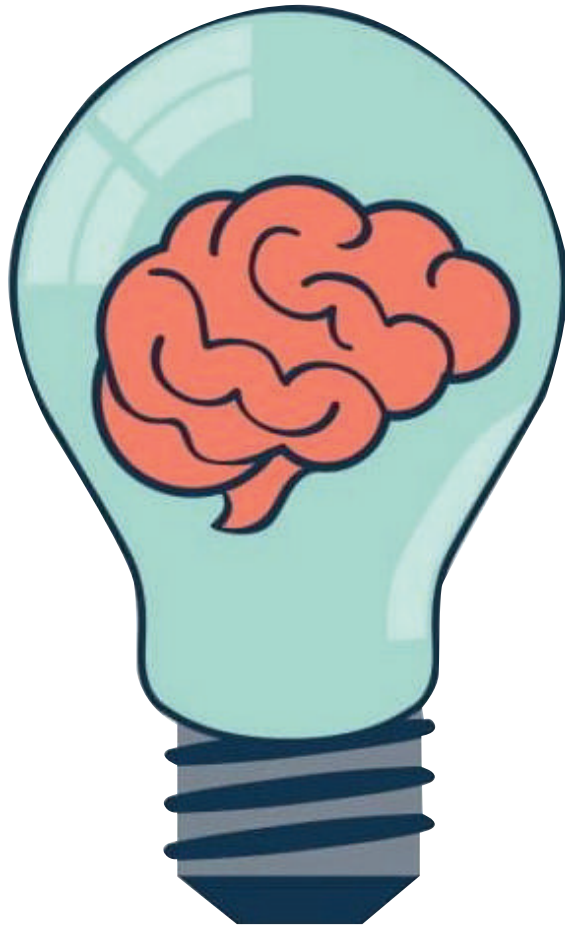


basic

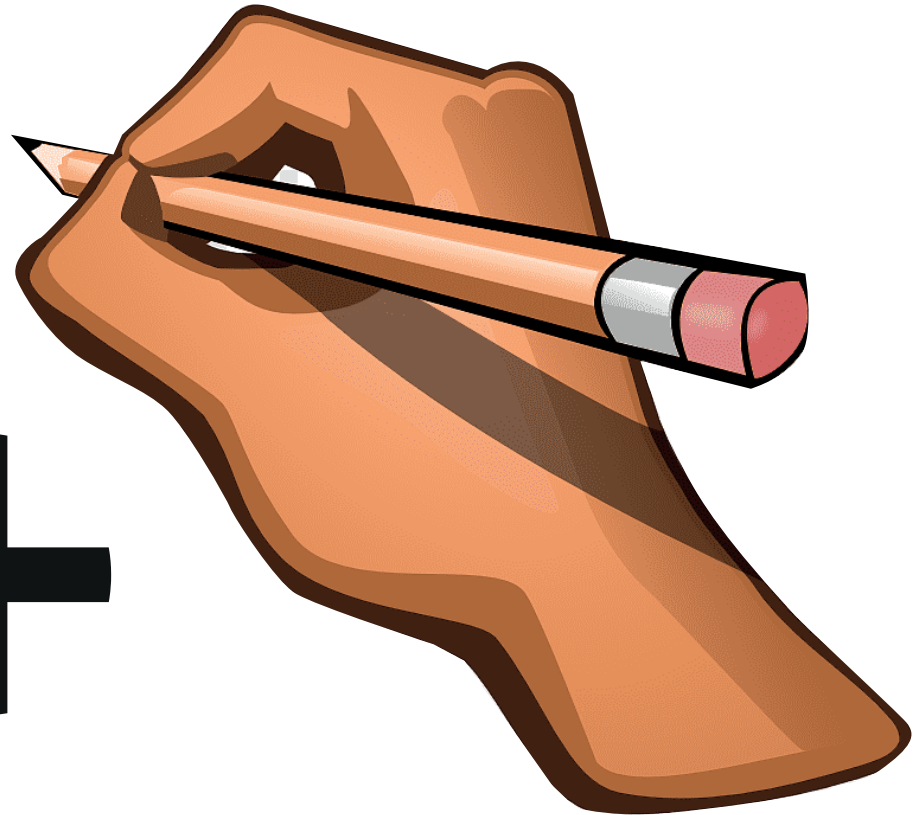
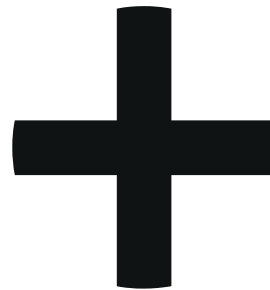
TOOLS



real basic tools



Your MIND



Your HAND

You don't need expensive tools, just **normal sheets of paper and a black fine point.**

MAUS (Art Spiegelman) was drawn using just those two "ingredients"... and it won a Pulitzer prize!



professional tools

- **BRUSHES:** they offer variable, soft lines.
- **BRUSH-PEN:** similar to brushes.
- **NIB PEN:** you can change the nib and the type of line given with it.
- **FINE LINERS:** you can buy them with different thickness.
- **PC.**





some
ADVICE

preparation

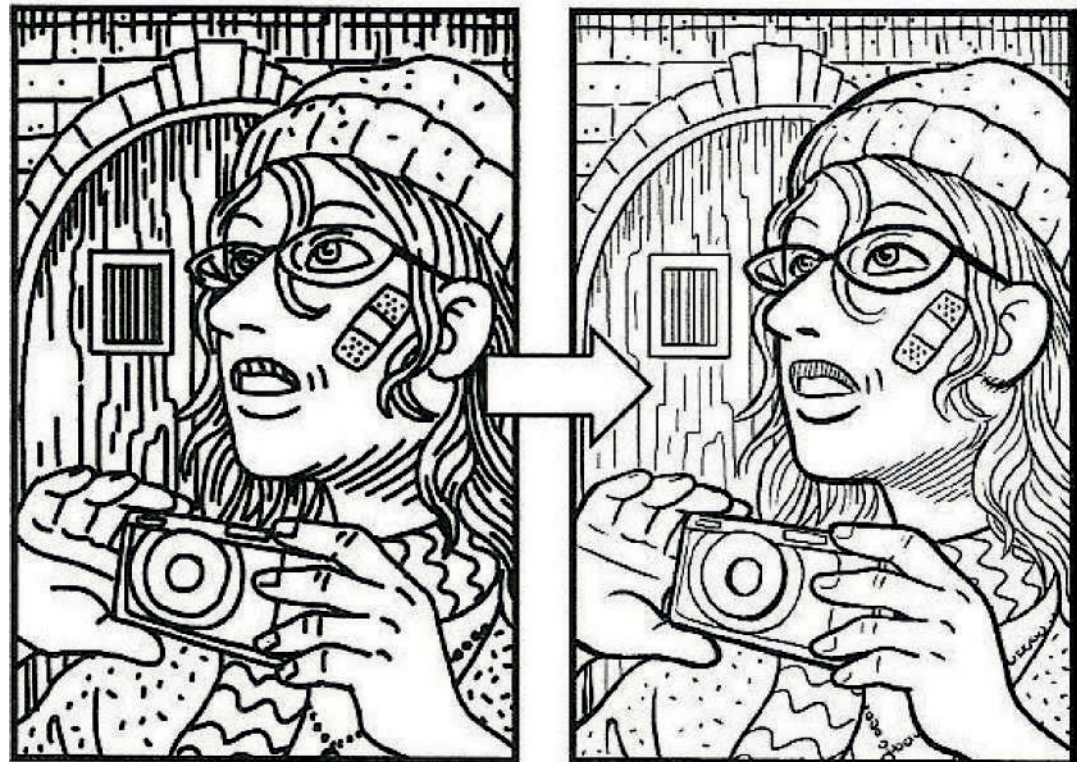
Draw everything by pencil first (sketch).
After that, you can use ink (in any way) or scan it to keep on working on your computer.



Lines

Use different type of lines and thickness.

It's useful to use thicker lines for the outline of every object, and slim lines for what's far away.



intensity

Try to achieve intensity to get reader's attention.

You can use:

- Exaggerated perspectives.
- Variations on the size and shape of the vignettes.
- Virtuous drawing.
- Diagonal compositions.
- Different shots.
- Different angles.

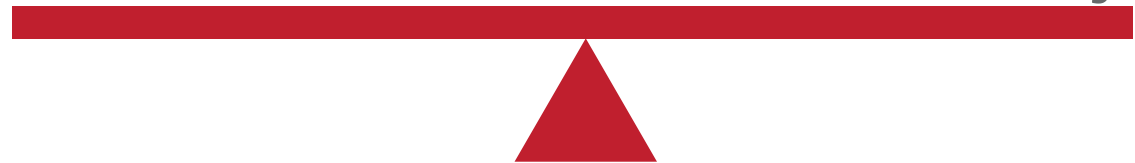
But... be careful! Too much intensity can make the reader to feel lost.



Try to find the balance between intensity and clarity.

Intensity

Clarity



Find your voice

It's always a good idea to start by copying your favourite creators: this allows you to practice and learn about this art.

But in some point **you will have to go one step further and start testing your own style and comic or manga style.**

