

**CARTOONISTS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
JOIN THE
INTERNATIONAL
CARTOONIST
CONSPIRACY**

The International Cartoonist Conspiracy is a group of amateur and professional cartoonists organized around the common goal of drawing more comics, more often and more better. Membership is open to all cartoonists regardless of gender, race, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, attractiveness, wit, or talent. Only the desire to produce comics is necessary.

Get more information at www.cartoonistconspiracy.com



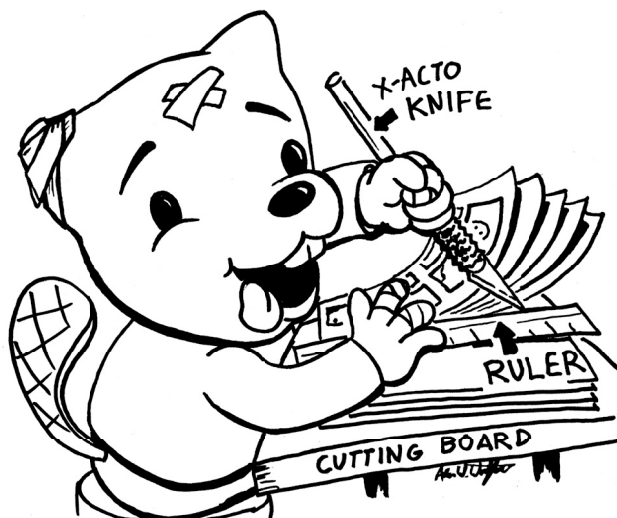
**THE CARTOONIST CONSPIRACY LI'L LIBRARY VOLUME 1:
HOW TO MAKE MINI-COMICS** is copyright 2007 by the International Cartoonist Conspiracy and is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 2.5 License. It may be reproduced and distributed freely.

Cover by Steven Stwalley www.stwalley.com



STEP 7: CUT YOUR PAGES

Once you have all your copies, you may need to cut your books in half (like this example) or smaller. Most copy shops offer a self-serve cutting board. Most cutting boards won't give you very satisfying results cutting more than 5 or so sheets at a time... the more sheets you jam in the more your cuts are going to miss the mark on some of the sheets. Patience with this pays off. It's also a good way to keep all of your fingers.



Adam Wirtzfeld www.wrenchintheworks.com

MAKING A MINI-COMIC

Tools: Scissors, Tape, Rubber Cement, White Out, Copier, Cutting Board, Stapler



STEP 1: PLAN YOUR COMIC

Plan out your page layout, and how you want the format to come together. Do you want to do an 8 page xeroxed comic? A 16 page silkscreened booklet? A 200 page epic the size of a postage stamp? It's good to figure out how you're going to put it together before you get started.

You'll probably want to lay out a template of the pages before you draw... and one way to work is drawing directly on a template. Keep in mind that if you do this, artwork will not appear as crisp as it would if you worked at a larger size and then reduced it. However, this is the fastest way to work.

You'll want to number your pages to keep track of the order... if you don't want numbers on the final comic, you can use a non photo blue pencil, which will not reproduce when copied. Fortunately, there is no compelling evidence that these pencils interfere with human reproduction.

Bob Lipski www.updowninthecomic.com

AN INTRODUCTION

Mini-comics are small, hand-made booklets of cartoons. Along with zines, their birth was fueled initially by the popularization of the photocopier in the 70's and 80's. Mini-comics are commonly considered to be a good starting point for new cartoonists trying to break into the cartooning field... their hand-made nature makes it easy for anyone to produce one on a limited budget. Many seasoned cartoonists continue to produce mini-comics as well... once you've experienced the rush of holding a cool little comic book you just created yourself, it's a hard habit to give up.



WHY WOULD I WANT TO MAKE A MINI-COMIC?

- 1) It's fun, fast and easy.
- 2) It's a relatively inexpensive way to get your work out to an audience.
- 3) You have complete creative control over content and format.
- 4) Mini-comics have a rich tradition of artistic experimentation both with content and format that the artistically adventurous find appealing.
- 5) With a little luck, you can buy a cup of coffee with the profits.

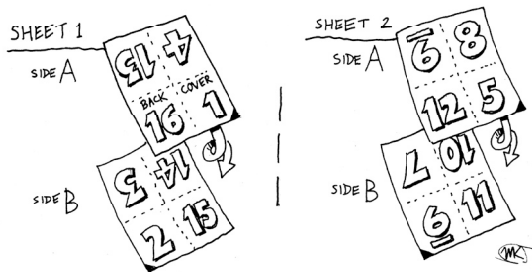
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Eric Lappegard www.ericlapppegard.com

Page numbering can get confusing, especially with longer comics, since the page layout is not sequential until it is made into a booklet. For example, here is the page layout of an 8-page mini-comic.



Here is the page layout of a 16-page mini-comic.



A simple way to figure out page layouts is to number them from the beginning and end at the same time. Number the first page, and then number the last page opposite it. Then number the second page on the back of the first, and the second from last page on the back of the last, and continue this process through however many pages your comic is going to be. Your page count must be divisible by four, since each folded sheet will make four pages.

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Max Konardy www.maxeem.com

STEP 10: DISTRIBUTING YOUR MINI-COMICS

If you're proud of your work, you'll want to share it. If you have good local comic stores, they should carry your comics... talk to the person behind the counter to learn their policies are. As far as getting your work seen in other communities goes, here are some of the better-known mini-comics distributors you could send it to:

Bodega Distribution bodegadistribution.com

Cold Cut coldcut.com

Global Hobo www.slowwave.com/globalhobo

Poopsheet Foundation poopsheetfoundation.com

USS Catastrophe usscatastrophe.com

Also, make sure to check out the Mini Comix Co-op at minicomixcoop.com. If you send them 10 copies of your mini-comic and a large SASE, you'll receive 10 different mini-comics in return.



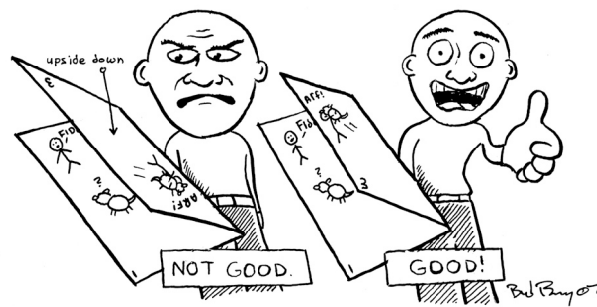
Bob Lipski www.uptownlightcomic.com

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STEP 6: MAKE YOUR COPIES

OK... you're ready... time to make your copies. Try to get your head around the quirks of the particular copier you are using... make sure the scanning bed is clean and your copies don't have streaking or other marks from the machine. Play with the brightness settings to get the look you want.

You'll especially want to learn how to feed the pages so the correct pages appear right-side up on the backs of each other. Use the 1:2 (double-sided) option on the copier to print on the back and front of your output. You'll want to run one copy through before doing the whole stack to make sure you have it right, and you aren't printing anything upside-down.



Pay attention while copying to see if the machine's toner is getting low... if your book has a lot of black in it, toner can get eaten up faster than popcorn in a coop full of movie-loving chickens. It's a good thing this comic isn't called *How to Make Metaphors*, isn't it?

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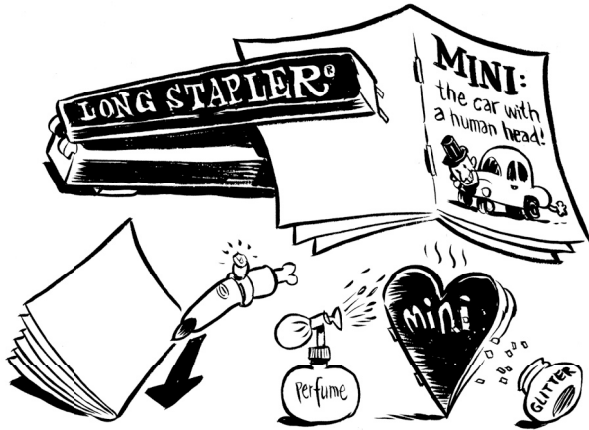
Bud Burg www.mac.com/budburg www.meatstandgronk.com www.musclesandfighths.com www.create-a-comic.com

STEP 9: STAPLING, FOLDING, AND FINISHING

Collating is often done at the same time as stapling and folding... this stuff is a lot faster if you do it with a group of people. Get your friends to make some mini-comics too, and you can all have a collating party, which is more fun than it sounds, even though drinking and collating is not at all recommended.

It's easier and more accurate if you staple your pages before folding them. Long staplers work best for stapling. You can get a tight and accurate fold by running the back of your fingernail over a loose fold.

Add any finishing touches like hand-coloring, perfume, or glitter-glue and you're done! Congratulations, you're now a published cartoonist! Fame and fortune awaits! Where it awaits I have no idea, but nice work on that there cute l'il booklet, pardner.



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Kevin Cannon www.kevincannon.org www.bigtimeatic.com

BUT IS IT ART?

Don't you hate that clueless question?

Mini-comic artists embrace experimentation, and mini-comics come in all sizes and shapes. Many have been far smaller than this one, and many have been larger. The most common format is probably twice this size (5.5"x8.5"). This mini-comic is printed in a typical and traditional mini-comics format (two sheets of paper xeroxed on both sides and folded and stapled into 16 4.25"x5.5" pages).



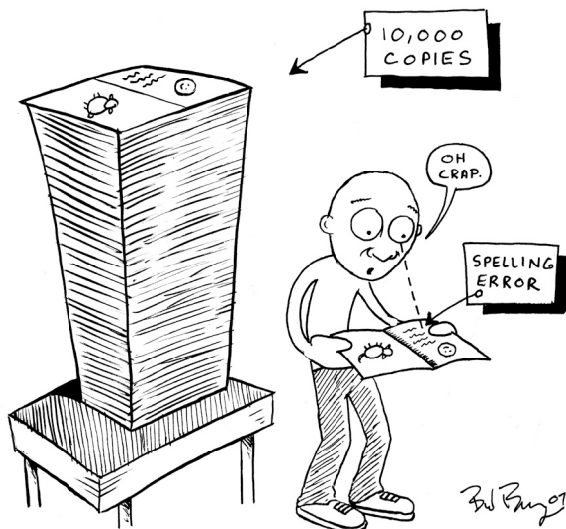
Although the typical mini-comic is a booklet xeroxed on printer paper, cut, folded and stapled, there really isn't a typical mini-comic. There have been mini-comic scrolls, accordions, and posters... there have been mini-comics silkscreened, rubber stamped, mimeographed, hand-drawn, and printed in invisible ink. The fetishistic hand-made nature of the mini-comic object is often more important than the contents of the mini-comic itself. That said, the contents also cover anything you can imagine... autobiography, humor, mystery, action, dog grooming... dog grooming, mostly.

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Dank! www.comicspace.com/staplegenius www.alteredesthetics.com/danko

STEP 5: MAKE A DUMMY COPY

When you are satisfied with how your pages look, you'll want to start printing your books. Before you print ALL of your books, print ONE of them... a "dummy" copy. Many copiers offer a "sample" button for this purpose. Print one, cut it, fold it and staple it. Pick it up in your hot, excited hands and take a look through it... are all the pages in the right order? Is anything upside-down? Is there an ugly blotch on the copier that is showing up on all of your copies? Better to notice this stuff before you print 100 copies with that ugly blotch, or you, my friend, will be the "dummy."



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Bud Burgoy web.mac.com/budburgoy www.meatfislandgronk.com www.musclesandfights.com www.create-a-comic.com

STEP 2: FORMAT YOUR ARTWORK

Draw your comic, using whatever materials you choose. Make sure your artwork is the appropriate proportion for your pages. For example, a typical sheet of printer paper is 8.5"x11." A typical mini-comic page is a fourth of that size, 4.25"x5.5." However, the proportions of the pages are the same, so you can work at 8.5"x11" and it will reduce nicely down and fit on your 4.25"x5.5" pages.



One thing you'll probably want to keep in mind when drawing your pages is to leave a gutter (empty space) around the artwork on the pages of at least a quarter inch. Copiers don't generally print on the edges of pages, and hand trimming pages doesn't always produce a perfectly consistent cut line, so you will appreciate the "wobble room" of some empty space.

If you want to have your artwork go right to the edge of the pages ("bleed"), you can do so by cutting the finished books to the edge of the gutter with a cutting board... keep in mind this is very labor intensive, though! In fact, it's just the sort of obsessive-compulsive task that many mini-comics artists adore!

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Zander Cannon www.bigtimeatic.com

MAKING COMICS

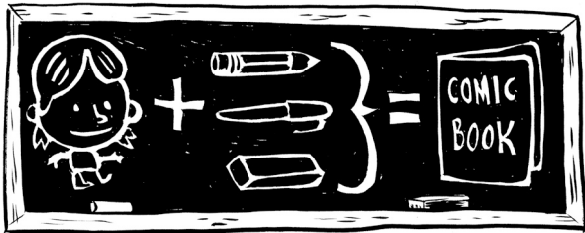
It is beyond the scope of this booklet to provide a lesson on the art of writing and drawing comics. At a basic level, it is very easy though. Whatever tools you are comfortable with for making marks on paper will do the trick. At the bare minimum, you'll want a pencil and paper. A pen, eraser and whiteout is nice.

For learning more about the art of making comics, we highly recommend these books:

Making Comics by Scott McCloud
Comics and Sequential Art by Will Eisner

Don't get intimidated if you don't think you are a particularly good writer or a good artist. Comics combine writing and art, and a bad writer or bad artist can still be a good cartoonist. One of the most popular and prolific mini-comics artists of all time, Matt Feazell, uses stick men in all his comics. The only way to get good at something is to practice... writing, drawing and cartooning are all learned skills that anyone can do.

The rule of thumb for drawing comics (or making any kind of art) is **USE WHAT WORKS**.



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Kevin Cannon www.kevincannon.org www.bigtimeattic.com

STEP 8: COLLATE YOUR MINI-COMICS

Next, you'll want to put the pages of your booklets in the correct order (this is called "collating"). To collate, put each page set in a stack of the same page set. Then put the next page set in a stack next to that, and the next page set by that stack, and so on. Once you have your stacks of pages, put your books together by grabbing one page set off of each pile and putting them together in order, repeating until your piles disappear. And you thought that would take Preparation H!



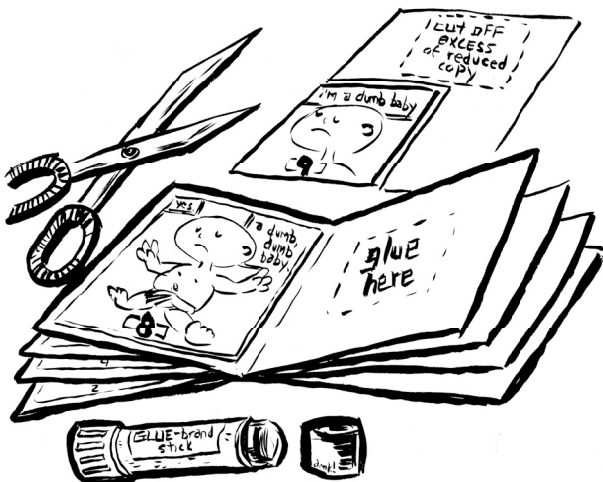
Adam Wirtzfeld www.wrenchintheworks.com

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STEP 3: LAY OUT YOUR PAGES

Lay out the artwork on your page template. Laying out on a computer is great if you know how, but the typical mini-comic is pretty low-tech. Usually, mini-comics are laid out at the copy shop.

To lay out your comic, reduce the artwork to the size you want on your pages (assuming you didn't draw directly on a template) and cut the artwork out and adhere it to the appropriate numbered page on the template using a glue stick or rubber cement. Rubber cement can also be used to simulate a realistic booger, only one that bounces really well.



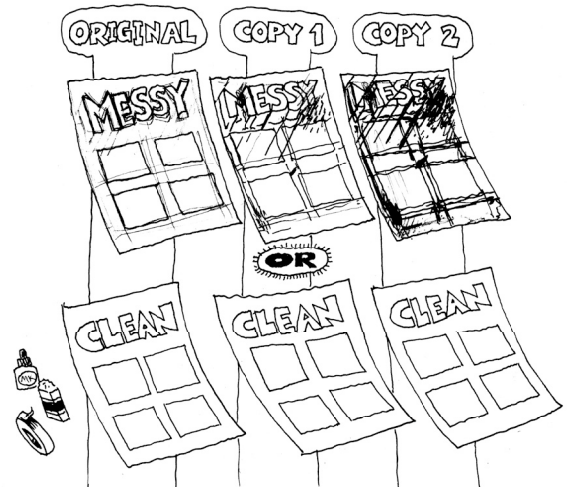
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Dank! www.comicspace.com/staplegenius www.alteredesthetics.com/danno

STEP 4: CLEAN UP YOUR PAGES

Once you get your pages laid out, you'll probably want to copy them again and clean them up before making your final copies. This way you can touch up any lines that show up in the copying that you may not want there... often the cut edges of artwork will show up and you can cover these on the copies with whiteout.

Keep in mind, however, that each generation you copy, the artwork loses resolution... a copy of a copy of a copy gets muddier and muddier and muddier, so the fewer times you have to make copies between your original artwork and the final publication, the better. Unless, of course, you like muddy, in which case copy and copy and copy away!



Max Korardy www.maxeem.com

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