

# Fun with the Funnies



“Before he opened this he had a farm.”

No Newspaper?

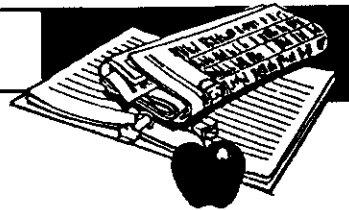


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NEWSPAPERS  
IN  
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**The  
Independent**

LEANNAH LESLIE, Newspaper in Education Coordinator  
THE INDEPENDENT  
226 Seventeenth Street, P.O. Box 311  
Ashland, KY 41105-0311  
(606) 326-2683 or 1-800-955-5860  
Fax: (606) 326-2678



## FUN WITH THE FUNNIES

Although a newspaper comic strip may include several frames, the comic strip writer is trying to give only one main idea to the readers. The cartoonist uses his character to carry his message for him. Sometimes the message is humorous and sometimes it is serious. Select five comic strips and write the main idea that the writer is trying to communicate to the reader. Write only one sentence for each strip. Then state whether the message is funny or serious.



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Pretend that each comic strip must have a headline that summarizes the most important information about the comic strip story. Select at least five strips and write a headline for each one.

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Select a comic strip character to interview. Pretend they will answer any question asked. Develop some questions to ask the character and write out what you believe would be an appropriate answer for each question.

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Select a comic strip from your newspaper and white out the words in the balloons. Create a story by writing your own words in the balloons. The story can be serious or funny.

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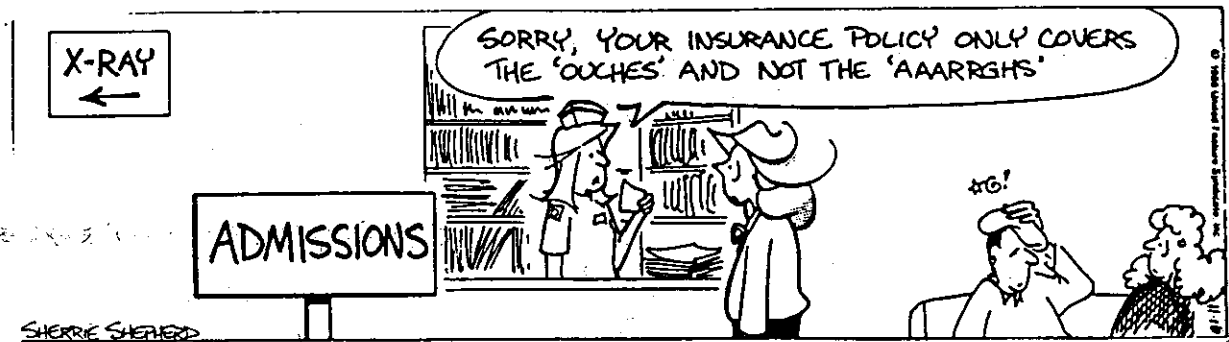
Read a comic strip that tells a story. Now pretend you are a reporter and write a news story about this comic strip. After you have written the story, add a headline.



Do any comic characters remind you of your friends or family? Make a list of these characters and tell who they remind you of and why.

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Comics often reflect current social problems. Clip comics that show a certain problem and discuss. Find articles from the newspaper on the same topic.



\* Advanced students only! \* Pick a comic strip and translate the dialogue into the foreign language that you are studying.

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Divide the class into small groups and have each group act out a comic strip. Emphasize voices, facial expressions and movements.

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Make a new comic strip by cutting out several characters from different strips and combining them into one comic strip. Mount your new creation on poster board.

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Give students an allotted amount of time to read the comics. Ask students specific questions based on the comics to see how detailed their reading has been.

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Write a letter to your favorite comic strip artist or comic strip character.

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Find all the compound words in the comics and underline them. Draw a line dividing the parts of the compound words.

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Make a list of words that have been invented for a comic strip.



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Select three comic strips from the newspaper. Underline all the nouns, circle all the adjectives.

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Analyze the personality of a comic strip character. What are his strong and his weak points ?

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Write an obituary for your favorite comic character.

---

Cut out all the comic characters from the daily paper. Classify the characters into different groups. (i.e. adults vs, children, animals vs. humans )



# The Independent



Find at least five examples of comic strip characters who are facing various problems. Some problems might involve jobs, weather, money or broken pens ! Identify the problem in each of the five comic strips.

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Look at the television schedule. Select a show that would be successful as a comic strip. Design a sample comic strip or frames.

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You can probably write a good ending for a comic strip. Select a comic strip and write out the words in the last frame. Add your own ending instead.



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Select one comic character. You have \$400.00 to spend on the character. From the newspaper advertisements select items that the character would want.

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Pretend that one comic strip family invites another one to dinner. What would the characters talk about. Write a paragraph describing this dinner party and what would you serve.

Study a cartoon frame for a moment. Quickly think up an excuse to explain the question or situation. Then read to see how the cartoonist explained the situation.



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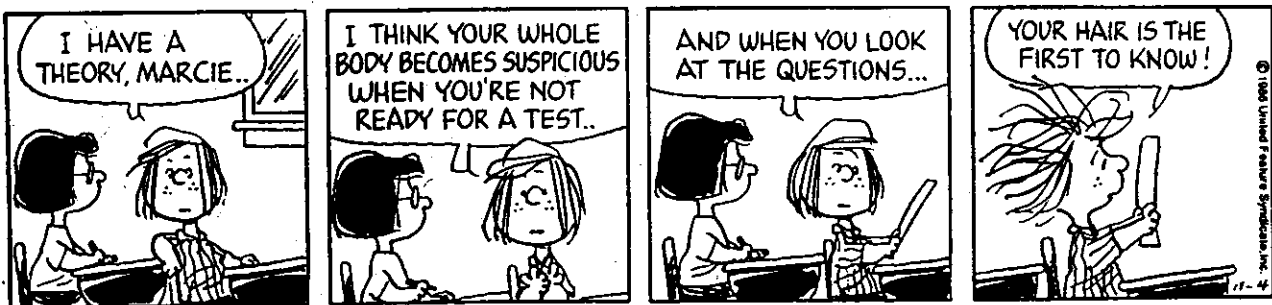
Clip out a cartoon character. Look into the future. What will that character be like in 10 years ?

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Choose two comic characters to compare and contrast. How are they alike and how are they different?

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If you need a special friend, which comic character would you turn to?



Often comics have a wacky wisdom that doesn't really make sense. Find examples of wacky wisdom in the comics. Clip these comics out.



Cut out a picture excerpt from a comic strip. Make up the remainder of the comics. What will happen next ? Share your story with a classmate.



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Cut out the comic panels and mix up the strips. Have a classmate rearrange the strips in the correct order.

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Comic strips sometimes stereotype groups or individuals. For example, women are sometimes shown cooking at home in the kitchen. Find out least five examples of stereotyping in the comic strips.

---

Have a comic scavenger hunt ! Find the following:

- a happy face
- name of a cartoonist
- question mark
- pet
- method of transportation
- made up word
- compound word
- a worker

**COMIC STRIP SYMBOLS**

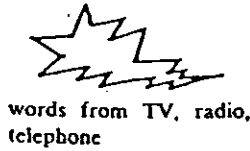
Many ideas in comic strips are communicated without the use of words. Here are some common comic strip symbols and their usual meanings.



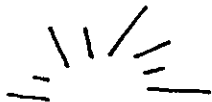
confused



in love



words from TV, radio, telephone



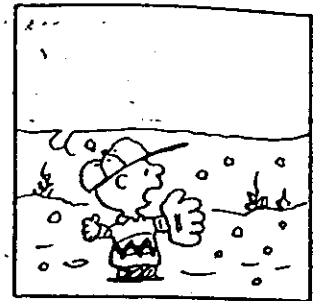
shiny or bright



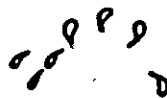
thinking



sleeping



shivering



hot or relieved



an idea



gloomy or sad



dazed or hit



unprintable

There are certain keys to comic strip facial expressions, too. Here are but a few.

Angry

Happy

Tired or ill

Confused

eyebrows



eyes



mouths



Now, put them together, and here's what you get.



Shella Madsen and Bette Gould, authors of *The Teacher's Book of Lists*, from which this article was excerpted, are former teachers, now educational consultants. The book is scheduled for publication by Goodyear Publishing, Inc., this month.

**The McGolfball Family** By Kevin Donoghue



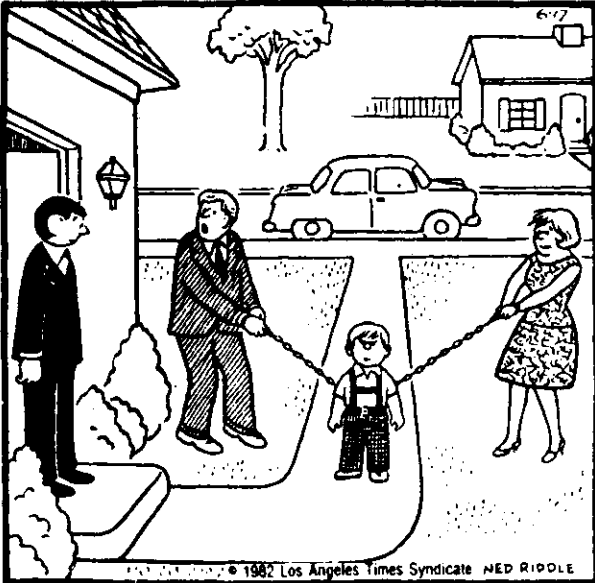
# Baffling Behavior

**Objective:** To study odd, seemingly silly and unethical behavioral patterns to reach conclusions as to why people behave the way they do

**Activity:** Select comic situations in which the behavior of the characters involved doesn't seem sensible, normal or ethical. Ask leading questions as to why the characters are behaving as they are and try to answer them.

MR. TWEEDY

By Ned Riddle



"We hated bringing him along, but finding babysitters these days is tough."

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1. Why are both these parents holding onto their son?
2. Why do they have trouble getting baby sitters?
3. How do you think Mr. Tweedy feels?
4. What are some of the things that might happen inside Mr. Tweedy's home?

PRISCILLA'S POP By Al Vermeer



© 1982 NEA Inc.

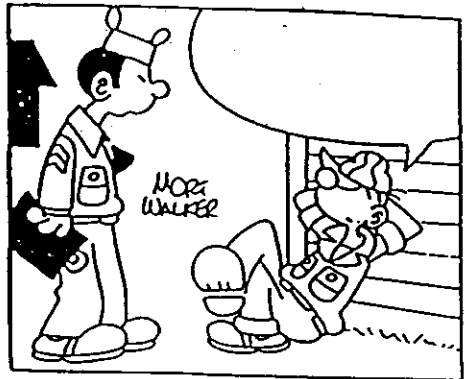
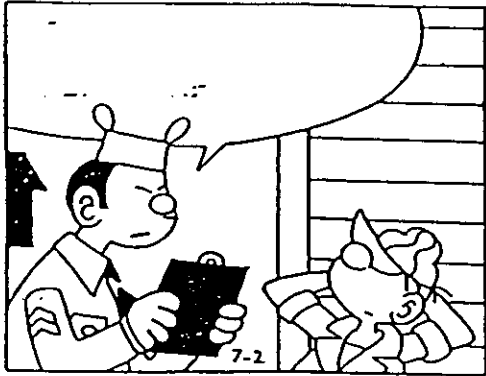
1. Why is Priscilla's pop so worried about losing his hair?
2. Why does he cry when Priscilla hugs him and says that the family will love him no matter what?
3. Does becoming bald necessarily change the personality and basic character of a person?
4. How does society feel about bald-headed people?

Continued

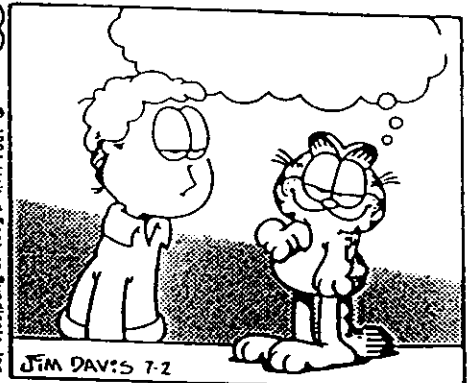
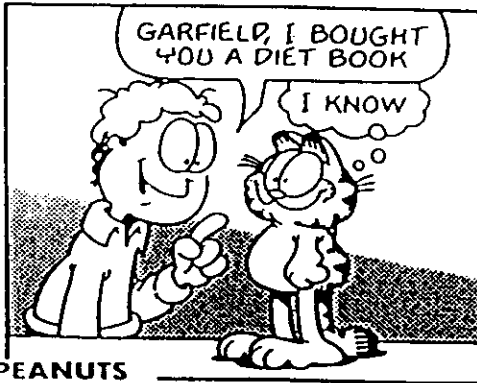
You can write a good ending for a comic strip. Select a comic strip and white out the words in the frame. Add your own ending instead.



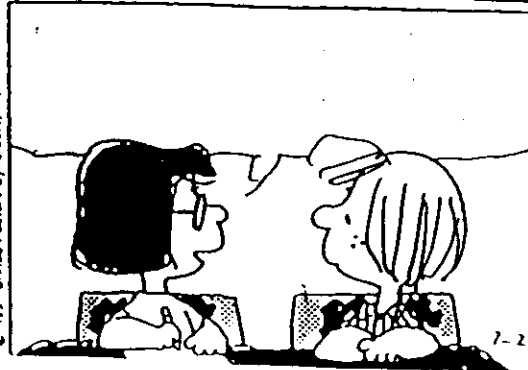
BEEBLE BAILEY



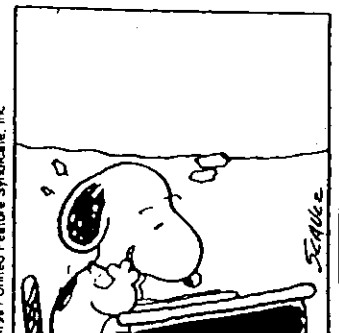
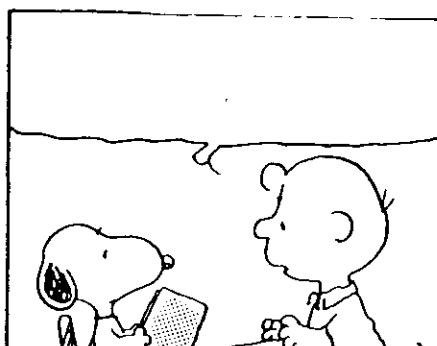
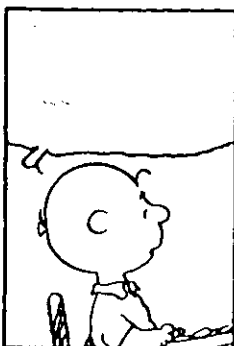
GARFIELD



PEANUTS



PEANUTS



PEANUTS

# Reading with the Comics!

1. Make a new comic strip by cutting out several of the characters from different strips and combining them into one comic strip. Have them tell a story and have the characters carry on a conversation with each other.



2. At the top of a page label five columns: Sight, Sound, Taste, Smell and Touch. Cut out words or pictures from the comics that relate to these five senses and paste them under the proper headings.

3. Using your favorite cartoon characters, create your own comic strips about one of your very worst days or very best days.



4. What does the word "trust" mean? Find an example of one comic character who trusts another. Find an example of a comic strip character who does not trust another character.

5. Cut out the head of a comic strip character leaving a one inch strip of paper on either side of the neck. Wrap the strips around your finger and tape the ends. Use these puppets to create a family. Make up stories using your puppets.

6. Circle all of the contractions in the comics. Beside each contraction, write the two words from which it came.



7. Find examples of interrogative, declaratory, exclamatory, and imperative sentences in the comic strips.

8. Cut out all of the "noisy" words in the comics such as zap, boom, and howl. (These are examples of onomatopoeia.) Use these words in a descriptive paragraph.

9. Using the grocery ads, estimate the cost of feeding Snoopy or another animal in the comics for a week. Or cut from the food ads pictures of food a comic strip family would like to eat.



10. Write a letter to the cartoonist who creates your favorite comic strip or cartoon. Ask your librarian to help you find an address, or check with your local newspaper.

11. Create comic characters and give the characters names. Draw them on paper and put the characters into a comic strip to tell a simple story.

12. Find a cartoon or comic strip that has no words. Try to decide why it is funny. What clues helped you understand the humor?



Now, it's YOUR turn. What other fun activities can you do with the comics?

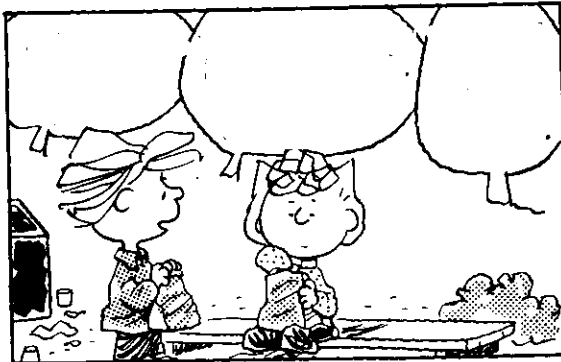
name \_\_\_\_\_

You can write a good ending for a comic strip.  
Add your own ending in the frame.

HI and LOIS



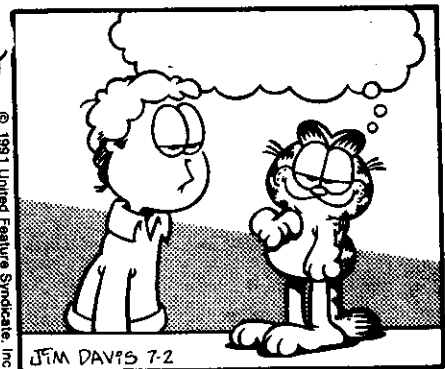
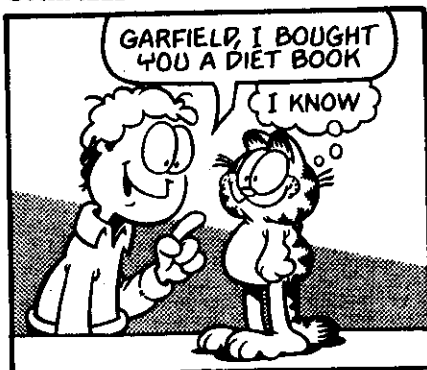
PEANUTS



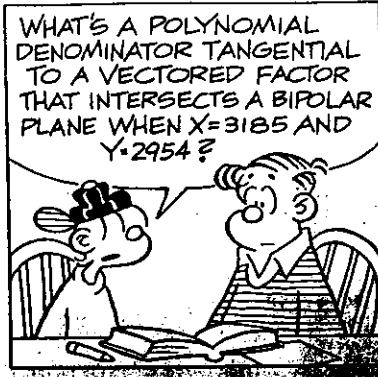
HI and LOIS



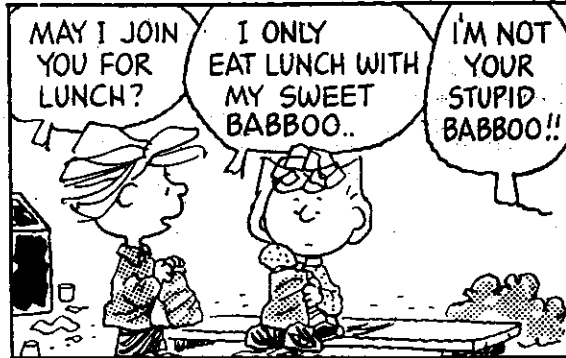
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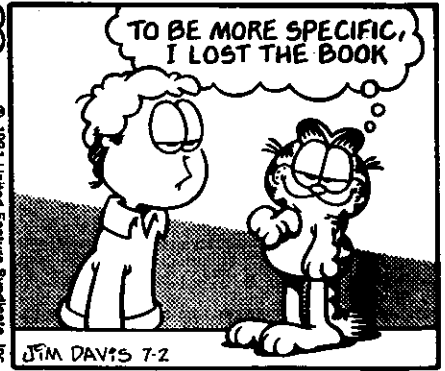
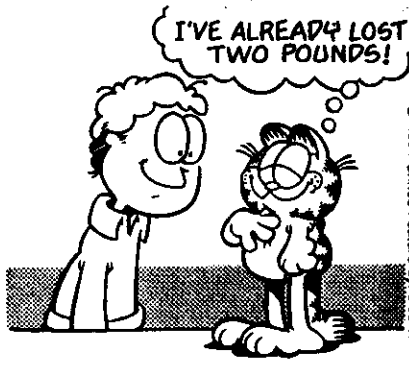
PEANUTS



HI and LOIS



GARFIELD



# X-tra! X-tra!

SHOE By Jeff MacNelly



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## Objectives:

1. To learn the format, terminology and features of a newspaper
2. To put out a classroom specialty newspaper

## Activities:

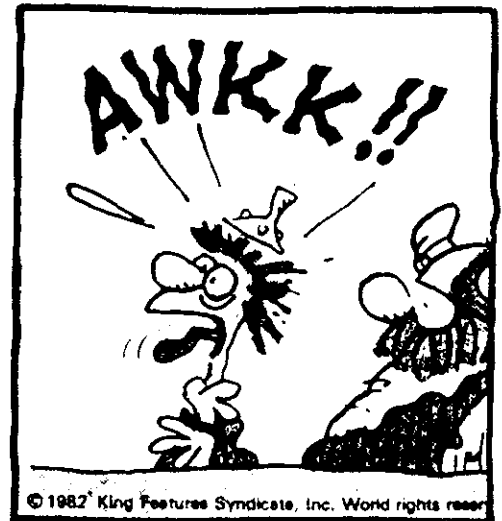
1. Change a comic strip into a newspaper story. Don't forget your 5 Ws and H. Write a headline. If you cut out a picture for this story, write a cutline for it.
2. Help put all the stories together to form a newspaper.

# Yukily Yours

**Objective:** To learn to express personal opinion

**Activities:** Answer the following.

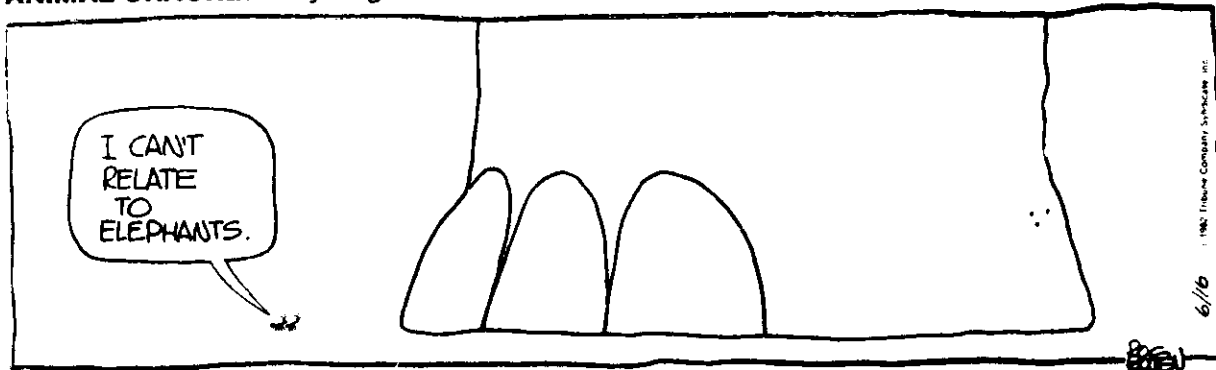
1. What is the most awful comic strip in your newspaper?
2. Why shouldn't people read this comic strip?
3. What especially didn't you like about this comic strip?
4. What were the good features of this strip?
5. What would you change and rewrite if you could?
6. Revise this comic strip.
7. Share your activity with the class.



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# Kinship Keynote

ANIMAL CRACKERS By Rog Bollen



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**Objective:** To develop an awareness of families, their values, their responsibilities and how they function

## Activities:

1. Take a comic character and make a diagram of an imagined family tree. Include pictures.
2. Write five statements telling the role or job of the family within a community.
3. Describe five worthwhile feelings that families sometimes feel toward each other.
4. Write a brief history of this family.

# Libelous Labels

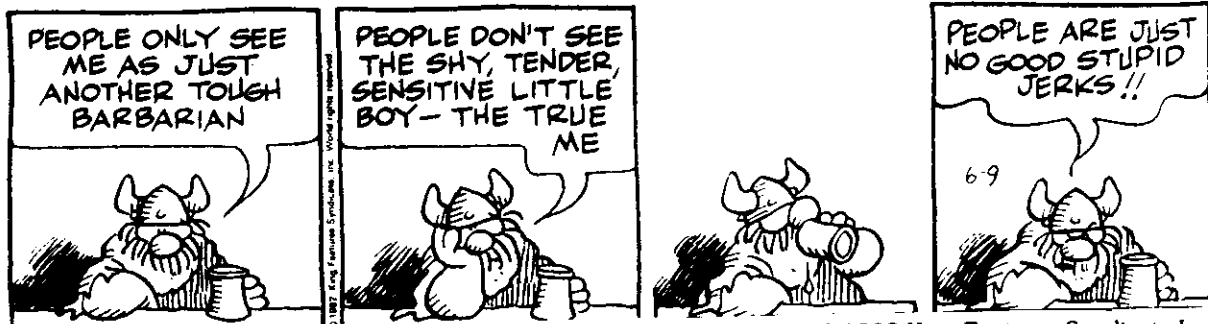
## Objectives:

1. To develop the ability to use good adjectives in descriptions
2. To study and gain insights into characterization

**Activity:** Cut out a comic character. Write the name of this character vertically. Choose words beginning with the letters of that name to describe the character.

## Example:

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE By Dik Browne



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**H**umble

**A**mple

**G**reedy

**A**dventurous

**R**aucous

# Idiotic Idioms

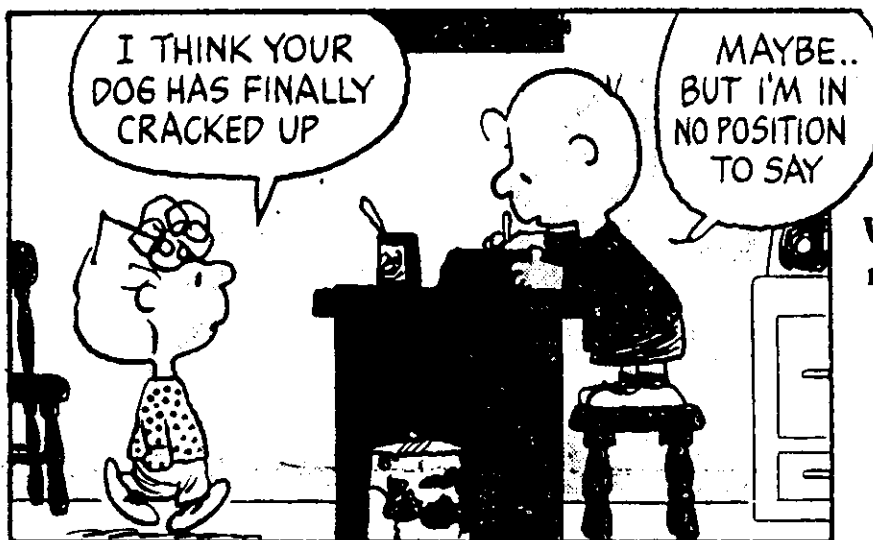
## Objectives:

1. To understand the nuances of language
2. To recognize and comprehend the colloquialisms that make up our language

**Activity:** Cut out at least 10 examples of idioms from the comic strips. Explain what they mean.

**Follow-up:** Make an idiotic idiom booklet in the shape of a large I. Collect idioms on an ongoing basis from all parts of the paper.

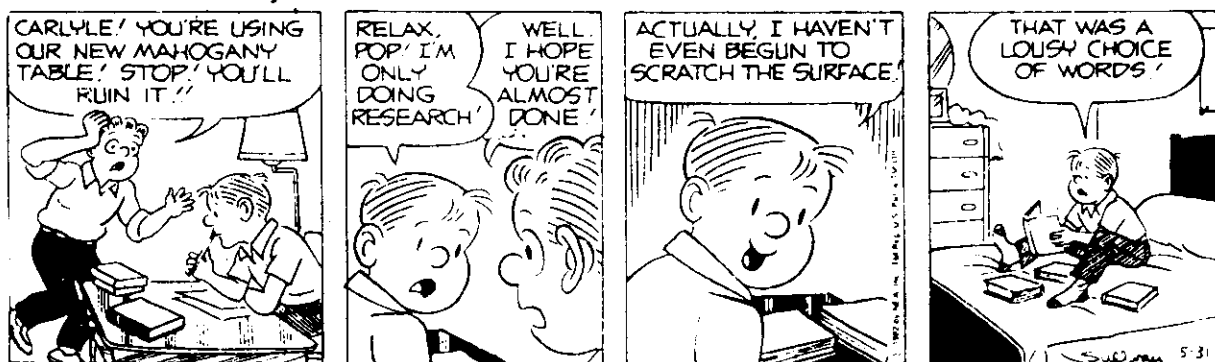
## Examples:



What does “cracked up” mean?

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## PRISCILLA'S POP By Al Vermeer



© 1982 NEA Inc.

What does “I haven’t even begun to scratch the surface” mean?

# Comic Categories

**Objective:** Classifying

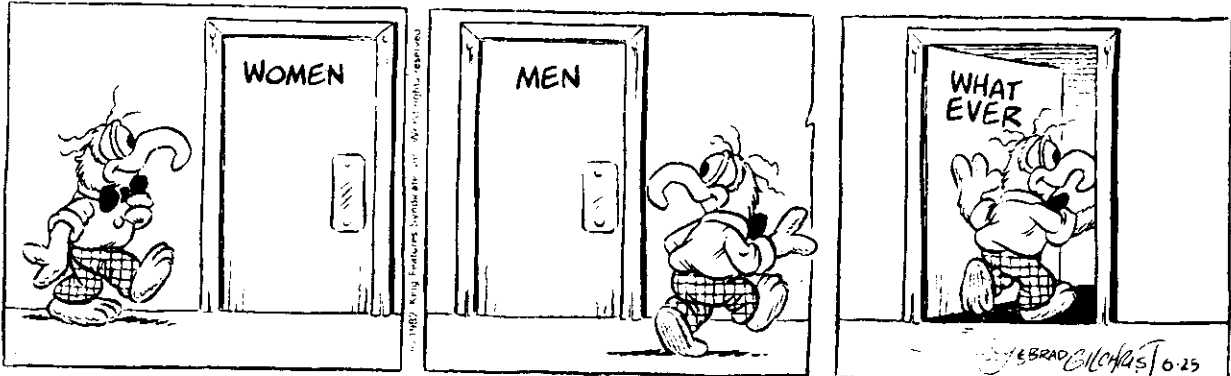
**Activities:**

A. Classify newspaper comics as follows.

1. Comic characters I like; comic characters I dislike
2. Realistic comics; fanciful comics
3. Comics that personify animals; comics that show animals as they are in nature
4. Comics that show females as the main characters; comics that show males as the leading figures.

B. Take a packet of comic characters and comic situations and group these into as many groups as possible. Be able to explain why you have grouped as you have.

## JIM HENSON'S MUPPETS



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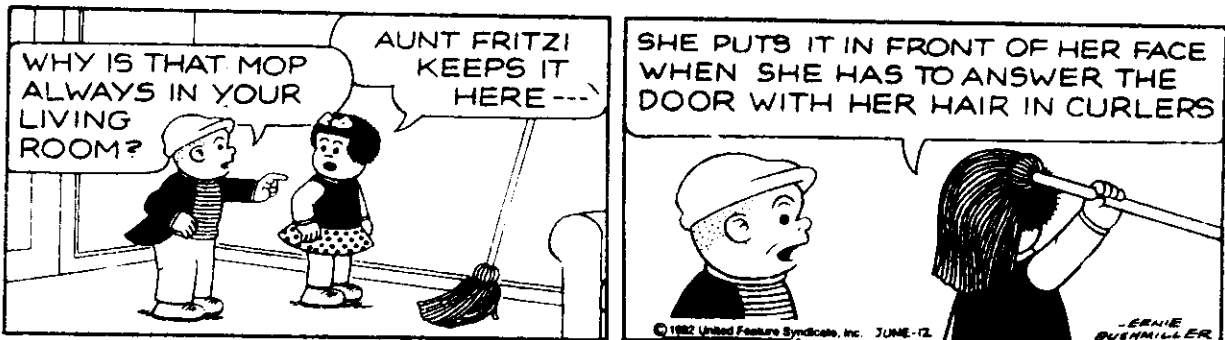
# Comical Causes

**Objective:** To identify cause and effect relationships

**Activity:** Find examples of cause and effect relationships in the comic section. What are the causes? What are the effects?

**Example:**

## NANCY By Ernie Bushmiller



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**Effect:** mop in the living room

**Cause:** Aunt Fritzi's desire not to be seen with curlers in her hair

# LEARNING THROUGH THE NEWS

## **NIE COMIC STRIP BINGO**

### **Teaching Kids To Laugh As They Learn**

(Suggested time: varies with strategy selected)

**AIM:** The student learns to —

- Use the newspaper comics as a learning tool.
- Build a basic understanding of humor and its role in society.
- Become aware of the cross-curriculum aspects of comics.
- Work on individual and team projects.
- Explore his/her own creativity and sense of humor.



**MATERIALS:** newspapers, *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* activity sheets, writing and drawing supplies.

**BACKGROUND:** 1995 marked the 100th year of newspaper comics. Richard F. Outcault's strip *Hogan's Alley*, printed in color and featuring the exploits of The Yellow Kid, began May 5, 1895.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Schedule delivery of newspapers to be used in class.
  2. Read all steps in this procedure and decide which ones are appropriate for your students, based on their age and ability levels. Modify the procedure as you deem necessary.
  3. When class begins, distribute newspapers and allow students some free-reading time. After five to seven minutes, ask how many are currently reading or have already read from the comics page. (It is one of the most popular newspaper features with both adult and young readers.)
  4. Discuss with students what they like to read on the comics page and why. As appropriate, list on the board main ideas or themes of the discussion, poll the class members about their favorite comics, or select one particular comic to read and discuss as a group. Tell students that the comics have a lot more to offer than just a smile or laugh. Ask for student suggestions about what can be learned *from* the comics and *about* the comics.
  5. Introduce the way you plan to use *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* in your class. Here are some ideas:
    - A. Set up a learning center about comics. It should contain reference materials about comics and cartoon art, collections of popular comic strips, biographies of well-known cartoonists, newspaper comics, drawing and writing supplies, and activities adapted from *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* for students to work on. Introduce the center to students, explaining procedures such as number of required activities, timetable, posting of completed work, how many in the center at once, etc.
    - B. Establish *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* teams of four and have them work together in selecting a row of activities to complete and present as appropriate. Allow time for student teams to complete the activities selected. Allow presentation time and display areas for the teams.
    - C. Allow students to work on the *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* activities on their own, selecting partners and teams as needed for the participatory activities. Establish a timetable, display area and times for presentations. Challenge students to try for Block-Out BINGO (completing all activities on the gameboard) if they have time remaining or want to work outside designated times.
    - D. Work on *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* as a class, challenging other classes at the same grade level to participate as well. Arrange for hallway or library display areas for class projects and set aside a time for presentations by classes. Invite non-participating classes or parents to watch.
- Note:** If you use student incentives, comic strip-related stickers, books, apparel, toys, pencils, etc. would make good prizes. To reward larger groups and classes, a screening of an animated movie featuring a comic strip character might be appropriate.
6. Set aside a brief time to discuss with students what they learned from and about comics, what they liked about *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* activities, what they would change, etc. Also have students do self evaluations and peer evaluations of work they did related to the BINGO game.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Enhance any of the *NIE Comic Strip BINGO* squares. For instance, on the one about how comics depict families and family issues raised in the comics, students could act out the comic strip family facing a new problem and solving it. Have students create their own BINGO gameboard with items related to one comic over time, one day's comics page or section, or specific subject matter (Comics Math).

# N.I.E. COMIC STRIP BINGO

SELECT A "4 PANEL STRIP" ACROSS OR UP AND DOWN AND COMPLETE THE CARTOON RELATED ACTIVITES USING COMICS FROM YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

CHOOSE A COMIC STRIP AND ELIMINATE ALL THE **DIALOGUE**. CREATE YOUR OWN NEW DIALOGUE.

CHOOSE A FAIRY TALE AND TRY REWRITING AND ILLUSTRATING IT IN THE CONCISE STYLE OF A COMIC STRIP.

STUDY **HUMOR DEVICES** USED IN COMIC STRIPS, WHICH DO YOU CONSIDER FUNNIEST- PUNS, IRONY, SURPRISE, SARCASM, SIGHT GAGS? FIND AN EXAMPLE OF EACH.

DISCUSS WITH A PARTNER THE CONFLICTS THAT ARISE IN ONE COMIC STRIP. DECIDE ON A REAL-LIFE SOLUTION TO THESE COMIC PROBLEMS AND PLAY **DEAR ABBY** COUNSELING THE CHARACTERS.

DAN JURAVICH

STUDY **Facial Expressions** AND GESTURES. CLIP EXAMPLES OF AS MANY MOODS AS YOU CAN FIND- JOY, ANGER, FEAR... NOW TRY DRAWING YOUR OWN.

STRIPS LIKE **PEANUTS** CREATED BY CHARLES SCHULZ IN 1950 SHARE WORDS OF WISDOM WITH LOVABLE CARTOON CHARACTERS. FIND AND DISPLAY SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE COMICS PAGE.

THE **REUBEN** IS THE TOP AWARD A CARTOONIST CAN GET. IT'S LIKE AN EMMY OR OSCAR. FORM A JUDGING PANEL TO SELECT THIS YEAR'S WINNER AND DISCUSS WHO SHOULD WIN AND WHY.

CUT OUT YOUR FAVORITE COMIC STRIP CHARACTER. LIST THREE TRAITS THE CHARACTER HAS THAT YOU LIKE AND ONE YOU DISLIKE.

CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE CARTOON **FAMILY**. IS IT TRADITIONAL OR NON-TRADITIONAL? LIST SOME FAMILY ISSUES THEY HAVE FACED.

ELIMINATE THE LAST PANEL OR **GAG** OF A COMIC STRIP. WRITE YOUR OWN **PUNCHLINE!**

1995 MARKED 100 YEARS OF NEWSPAPER COMICS. WHAT DO YOU THINK COMIC STRIPS WILL LOOK LIKE IN ANOTHER 100 YEARS? DRAW YOUR IDEA.

STUDY THE **SET-UP** OF A GAG IN A COMIC STRIP. IS IT A LONG STORY? A SNAPPY COMEBACK? VISUAL PUN? WHICH DO YOU LIKE THE BEST? WHY?

WRITE DOWN ALL OF THE **SLANG** WORDS OR PHRASES YOU CAN FIND IN TODAY'S COMIC STRIPS. CHECK THE MEANING OF ONE IN A SLANG DICTIONARY.

WORK WITH A GROUP TO ACT OUT A COMIC STRIP FOR OTHERS. DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTION AND EXPRESSION IN BOTH A COMIC STRIP AND ACTING.

READ YOUR FAVORITE **SERIAL COMIC** THAT HAS A CONTINUING STORY. DECIDE WHAT WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN NEXT AND DRAW TOMORROW'S STRIP.

STUDY THE DRAWING STYLES USED BY VARIOUS COMIC STRIP ARTISTS. ARE THEY REALISTIC OR EXAGGERATED? DO THEY USE BOLD, DARK LINES OR FINE, LOOSE ONES? TRY DRAWING IN THE STYLE OF YOUR FAVORITE CARTOONIST.