

A Graphic History

Graphic Storytelling and Comic Writing

INTRODUCTION:

Children will read a short graphic story about Jesse Owens and watch a video about the research, writing and illustrating process for the graphic story. Then children will conduct original research on a figure of their choice and create a short biography about that person in graphic or comic form.

GRADES:

6 through 12

DURATION:

Suggested time: approximately 12 total work-time hours – Total time will vary based on child’s grade level, topic of research and creative process.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Children will understand how to read, interpret and analyze graphic stories and comics as literature or nonfiction works.
- Children will perform historical research using online databases to collect information on a topic, then compile that research into a narrative, graphic-form story.
- Children will interpret and analyze digital primary and secondary sources to identify main ideas and key facts.
- Children will use common comic and graphic story conventions to tell a narrative story.

MATERIALS:

- “The Jesse Owens Story” comic (attached), as featured in the November 2018 issue of *Echoes*, the Ohio History Connection’s publication for members
- Process Guide (attached, optional)
- Computer with internet access
- Panel Outlines (optional) or blank paper
- Felt-tip markers, pens, colored pencils, etc. for illustrating the story

ACTIVITY:

1. Read the comic “The Jesse Owens Story” (attached below), then watch the video [“The Making of ‘The Jesse Owens Story’”](#).
2. Consider a person of historical significance from Ohio. This figure can be someone from the past or currently living. This could also be a family member or someone you know who has a story you want to tell.

TIP: Looking for ideas? Visit OhioHistoryCentral.org and browse by topic to find entries on Ohio’s historical figures that might be of interest to you. You can visit OhioMemory.org and browse subjects. Lastly, check out [this list of Ohio Women of Significance](#) for short

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biographies on important Ohio women. If you want to choose a family member or someone you know, be certain that you have access to primary or secondary sources about them such as photo albums, letters, diaries or oral histories. Check out [our activity on collecting oral histories](#) to guide you in collecting an oral history.

3. Visit [OhioMemory.org](#) to search for primary sources such as diaries, letters or newspaper articles to begin your research. Don't forget to collect photographs, portraits or other images of your figure!
4. Use the attached process guide to help develop your outlines, drafts and illustrations (optional). Be sure to proofread for accuracy. If not using the process guide, be sure to outline the key facts about your figure, then compose a rough draft of the narrative you'd like to tell. Remember that this isn't an essay! You can use bullet points to organize the main points you want to make if you choose not to use the process worksheet. Check out [this handout on comic terminology](#) and [this handout on story structure](#) from the National Association of Comic Art Educators and the Center for Cartoon Studies, attached.
5. Complete a final draft of your comic or graphic story using the panel outlines or your own blank paper.
6. Share your work with us! Tag @OhioHistory on Twitter, @OhioHistoryConnection on Facebook or email us at education@ohiohistory.org.

REFERENCENCES

Morrow, Raechel. & Spencer, Steve. "The Jesse Owens Story." *Echoes Magazine*, Nov, 2018, pp. 33-38.

National Association of Comics Art Educators. "Three-Act Story Structure." *The Center for Cartoon Studies*, https://www.cartoonstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/three_act.pdf.

National Association of Comics Art Educators. "Comics Terminology." *The Center for Cartoon Studies*, <https://www.cartoonstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/terminology.pdf>.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Want to learn more about graphic storytelling and comic writing? Visit cartoonstudies.org/teachingcomics for more resources.

If you've enjoyed reading the biographical graphic story on Jesse Owens, check out these other nonfiction graphic novels. Please note that caregivers are responsible for determining age appropriateness for your child for any of these suggested texts.

Satrapa, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. Pantheon, 2007. ISBN 9780375714832. (This book was originally published in two volumes.) A graphic memoir, *Persepolis* is the story of Satrapa's coming of age in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution. Please be aware of language and mature content – suggested for grades 10 and up.



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Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus*. Penguin, 2003. ISBN 9780141014081. (This book was originally published in two parts and can be found as *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale* and *Maus II*, as well as this complete edition.) In 1993, *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale* was the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize. The complete story of Vladek Spiegelman and his wife living and surviving in Hitler's Europe, this book captures the horror of the Holocaust through cartoons and creative license. The author casts the Nazi's as cats and the Jews as mice, and humanizes the Jewish war experience. Suggested for grades 7 and up.

Titeux, Sybille & Amazing Ameziane. *Muhammad Ali*. Dark Horse Books, 2016. ISBN 9781506703183. This is a graphic biography, but Muhammad Ali's superhero-like story makes it feel like a true comic book. This book tells the story of one of the biggest civil rights and athletic icons of the twentieth century from his childhood start in boxing, to his work as an activist. Suggested for grades 7 and up.



THE

JESSE OWENS

RESEARCH:
RAEHEL
MORROW

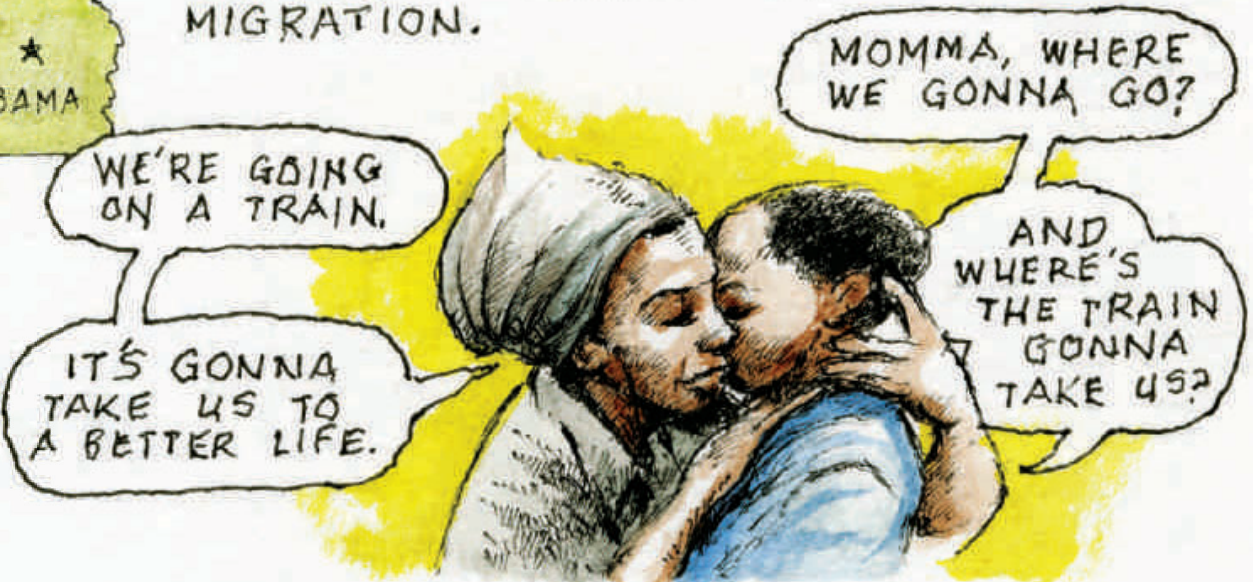
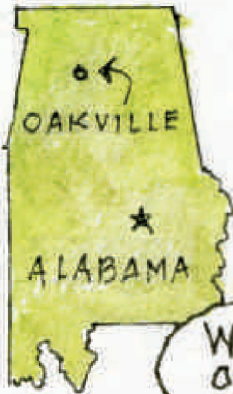
ART: STEVE
SPENCER

STORY

ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1913, MARY EMMA OWENS GAVE BIRTH TO JAMES CLEVELAND OWENS - J.C. FOR SHORT - IN OAKVILLE, ALABAMA. AS THE SON OF A SHARECROPPER AND GRANDSON OF A SLAVE, THERE WAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE HE COULD ESCAPE SOCIETY'S PERIPHERY.



NINE YEARS AFTER HE WAS BORN, JESSE AND HIS FAMILY MOVED TO CLEVELAND, OHIO, FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF OTHER AFRICAN AMERICANS DURING THE GREAT MIGRATION.



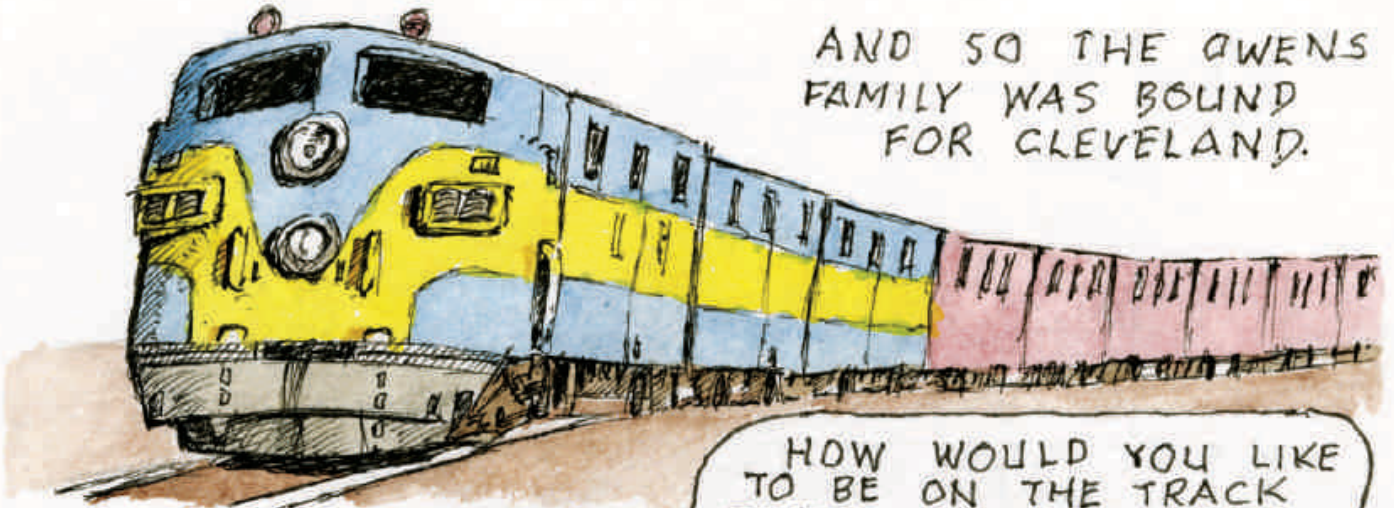
WE'RE GOING ON A TRAIN.

IT'S GONNA TAKE US TO A BETTER LIFE.

MOMMA, WHERE WE GONNA GO?

AND WHERE'S THE TRAIN GONNA TAKE US?

AND SO THE OWENS FAMILY WAS BOUND FOR CLEVELAND.



ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL THE TEACHER ASKED FOR HIS NAME.

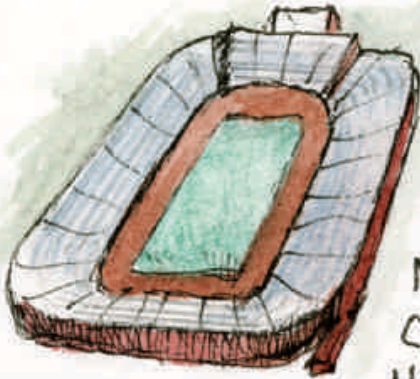
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ON THE TRACK TEAM WHEN YOU GET INTO HIGH SCHOOL?



UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF COACH AND MENTOR CHARLES RILEY, OWENS JOINED EAST TECHNICAL HIGH'S TRACK AND FIELD TEAM. HE FIRST GAINED NATIONAL ATTENTION WHEN, AS A YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, HE TIED THE WORLD RECORD FOR THE 100-YARD DASH....

....IN 9.4 SECONDS.



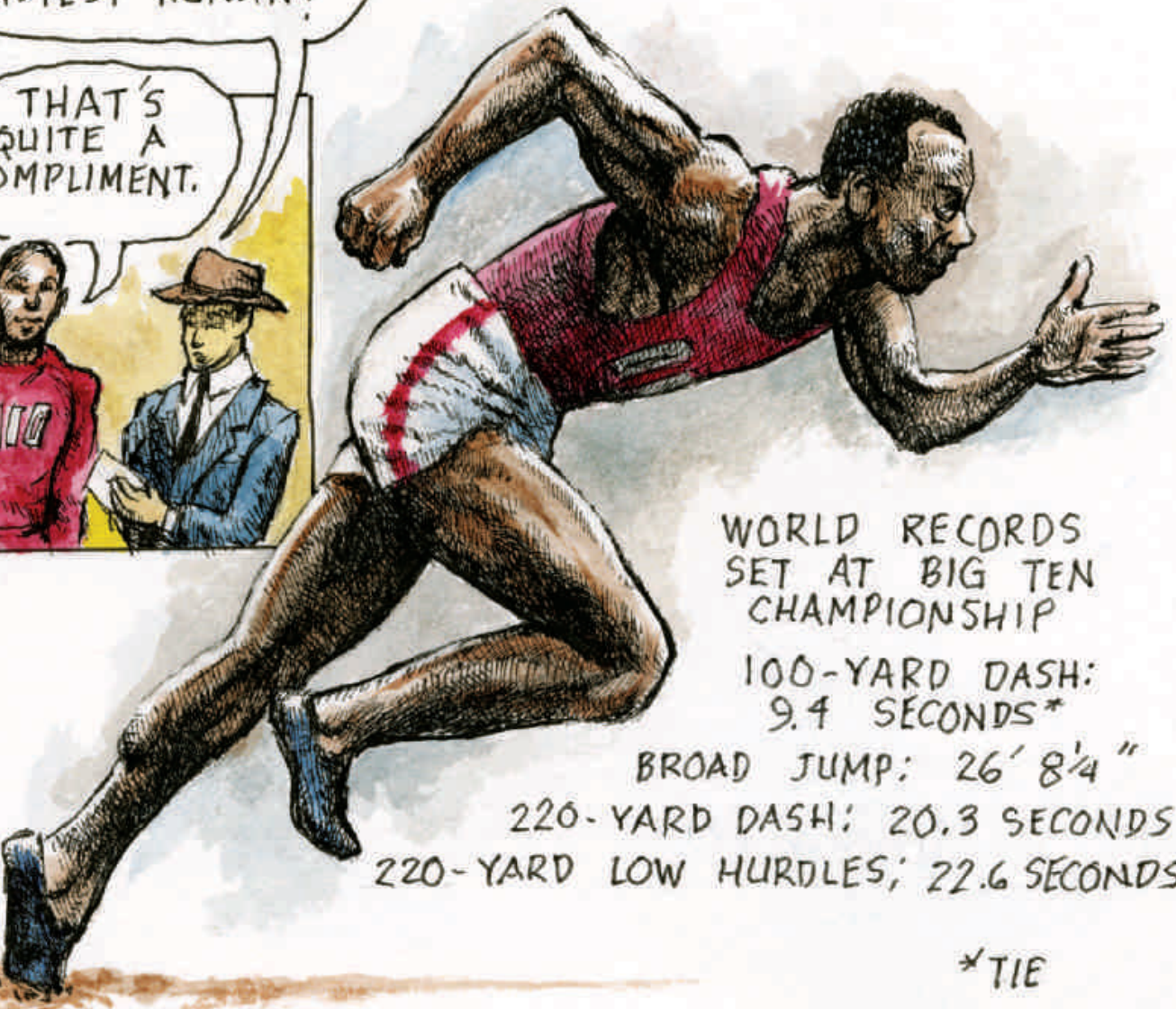


FERRY FIELD

OWENS CHOSE OHIO STATE TO PURSUE HIS ATHLETIC CAREER. IN 1935, OHIO STATE'S TRACK TEAM ARRIVED IN ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, FOR THE BIG TEN CHAMPIONSHIP. WITH THE COMPETITION HOSTED BY ITS RIVAL, OHIO STATE NEEDED TO PUT ITS BEST FOOT FORWARD. IN THE SPAN OF 45 MINUTES, JESSE, A MERE SOPHOMORE, SHATTERED THREE WORLD RECORDS AND TIED A FOURTH.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE WORLD'S FASTEST HUMAN?

THAT'S QUITE A COMPLIMENT.



WORLD RECORDS SET AT BIG TEN CHAMPIONSHIP

100-YARD DASH: 9.4 SECONDS*

BROAD JUMP: 26' 8 1/4"

220-YARD DASH: 20.3 SECONDS

220-YARD LOW HURDLES; 22.6 SECONDS

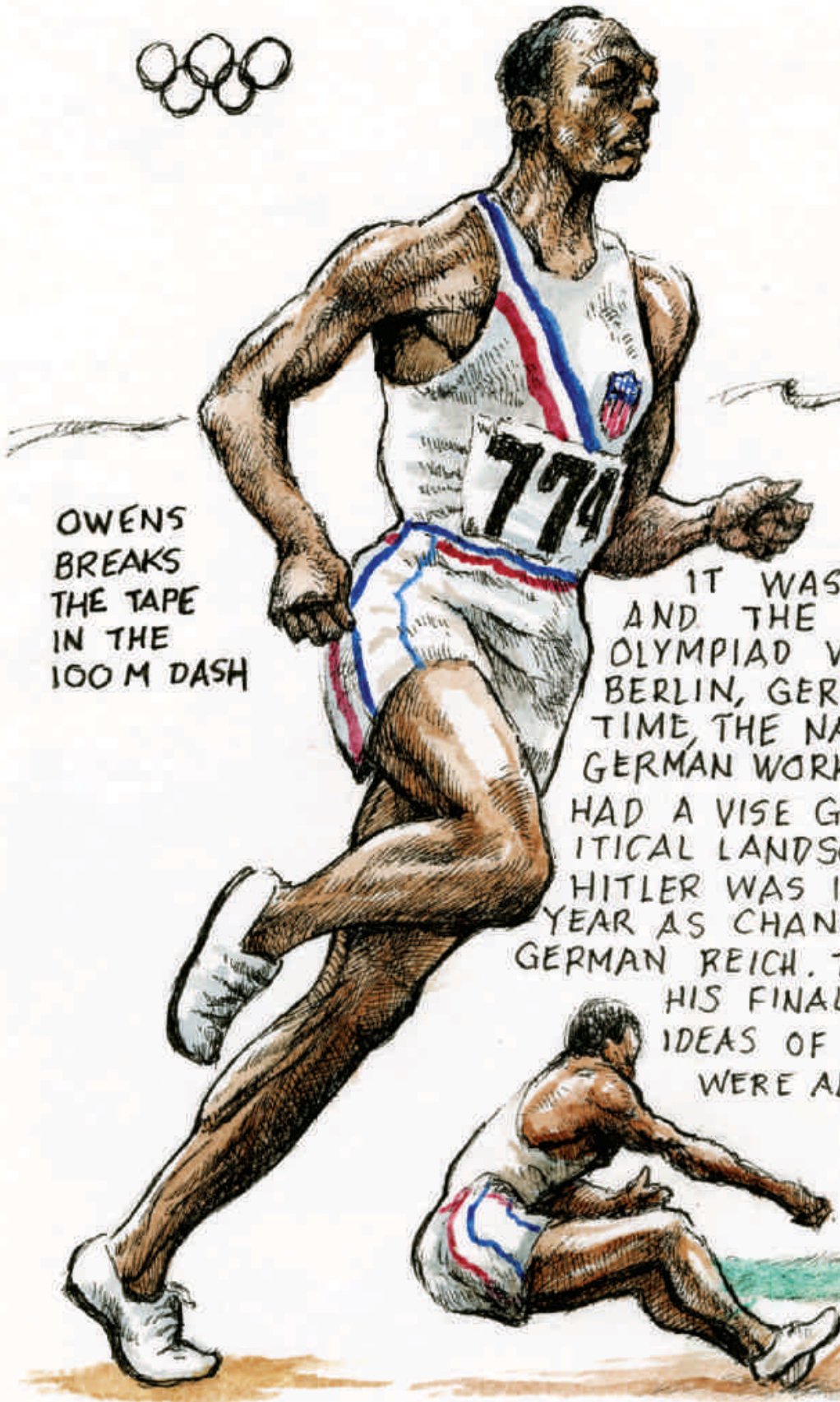
*TIE

1936 OLYMPIAD



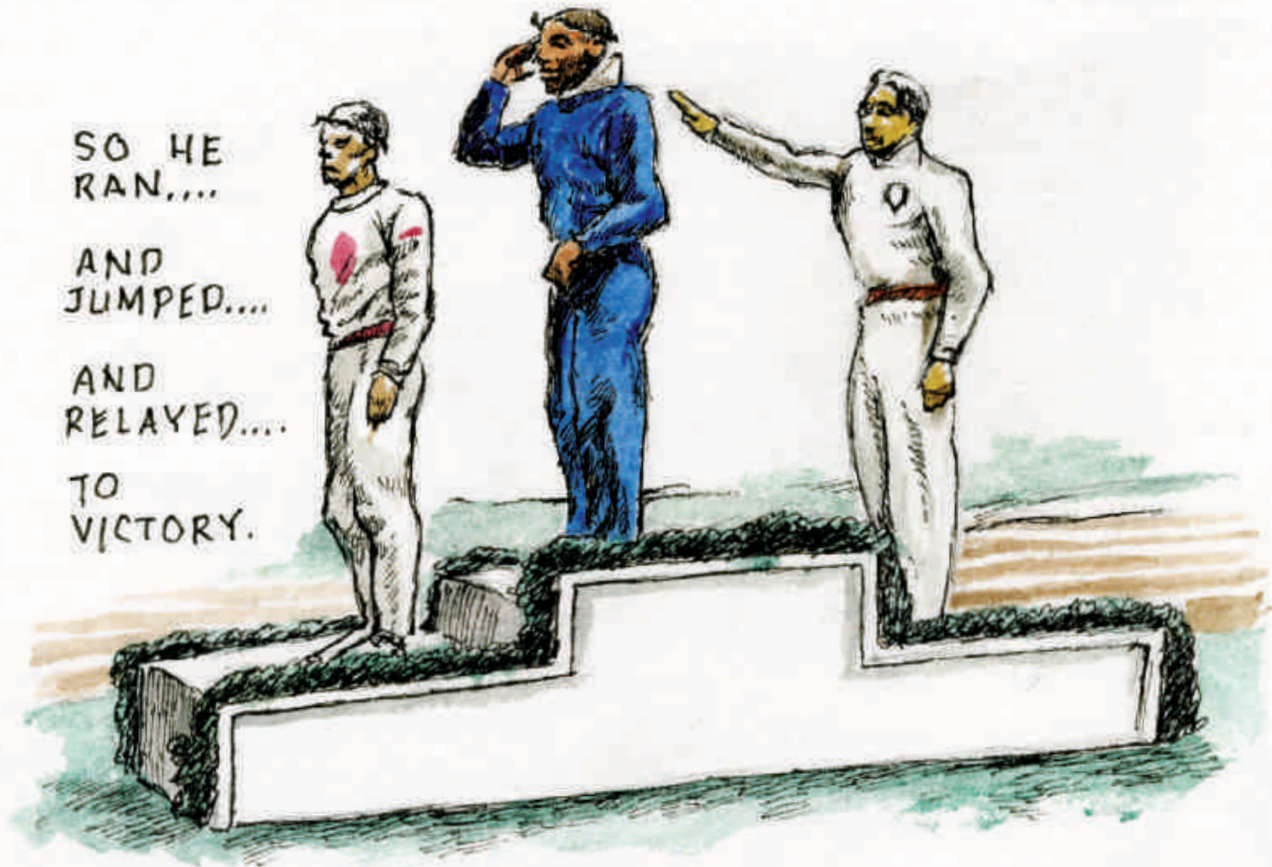
OWENS
BREAKS
THE TAPE
IN THE
100 M DASH

IT WAS AUGUST, 1936
AND THE 11TH SUMMER
OLYMPIAD WAS HELD IN
BERLIN, GERMANY. AT THE
TIME, THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST
GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY
HAD A VISE GRIP ON THE POL-
ITICAL LANDSCAPE, AND ADOLF
HITLER WAS IN HIS THIRD
YEAR AS CHANCELLOR OF THE
GERMAN REICH. THE SEEDS OF
HIS FINAL SOLUTION AND
IDEAS OF RACIAL HIERARCHY
WERE ALREADY SOWN.



AFTER JESSÉ OWENS'S STUNNING ATHLETIC SUCCESS IN COLLEGE, NO ONE COULD QUESTION THAT HIS PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS EASILY EARNED HIM A SPOT ON THE U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM, AND THE THREATENING NAZI RHETORIC DID NOT STOP HIM FROM COMPETING.

SO HE
RAN....
AND
JUMPED....
AND
RELAYED....
TO
VICTORY.

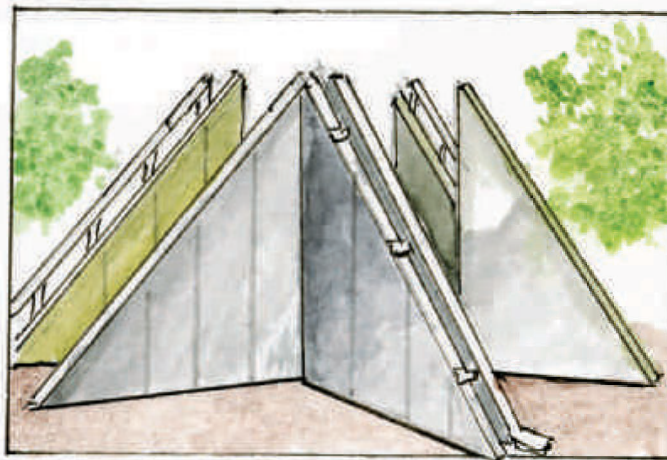


JESSE OWENS WON FOUR GOLD MEDALS IN ONE OLYMPIC GAMES; HE BECAME THE FIRST AMERICAN SINCE 1906 TO DO SO IN THE TRACK COMPETITION. ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE, JESSE PROVED NAZI RACIAL THEORY WRONG IN THE HEART OF HITLER'S BERLIN.



LEGACY

AFTER RETURNING FROM THE OLYMPICS, JESSE RAN IN SOME EXHIBITION RACES TO EARN EXTRA INCOME. U.S. ATHLETIC OFFICIALS STRIPPED HIM OF HIS AMATEUR STATUS AND HE DID NOT COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS AGAIN.



THE JESSE OWENS MEMORIAL AT OHIO STATE

HE AND HIS WIFE RUTH RAISED THREE DAUGHTERS: GLORIA, BEVERLY AND MARLENE, WHILE JESSE WORKED A VARIETY OF JOBS. AFTER THE WAR, THE STATE DEPARTMENT APPOINTED JESSE TO BE AMERICA'S AMBASSADOR OF SPORTS. HE TRAVELED THE WORLD TO PROMOTE AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE AND AMERICAN ECONOMIC IDEALS.

THE GIRLS BECAME MORE AWARE OF HIS FAME DURING THEIR TEENAGE YEARS. "HE WAS JUST DADDY TO US." TODAY, HIS DAUGHTERS GOVERN THE JESSE OWENS FOUNDATION, WHOSE MISSION IS TO HELP ALL CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

AN AGGRESSIVE FORM OF CANCER INVADED HIS LUNGS AND OWENS DIED ON MARCH 31, 1980, AT THE AGE OF 66. TRIBUTES TO HIM CAN BE FOUND IN THE MANY PLACES THAT STAKE A CLAIM TO HIS LEGACY, INCLUDING OAKVILLE, COLUMBUS, ANN ARBOR AND BERLIN.



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PROCESS GUIDE

1. SKETCHES AND PLAY

Explore your idea with doodles and writing. List main events you want to share in chronological order.

<p>Main events/Key Facts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.	<p>Doodles and sketches:</p>
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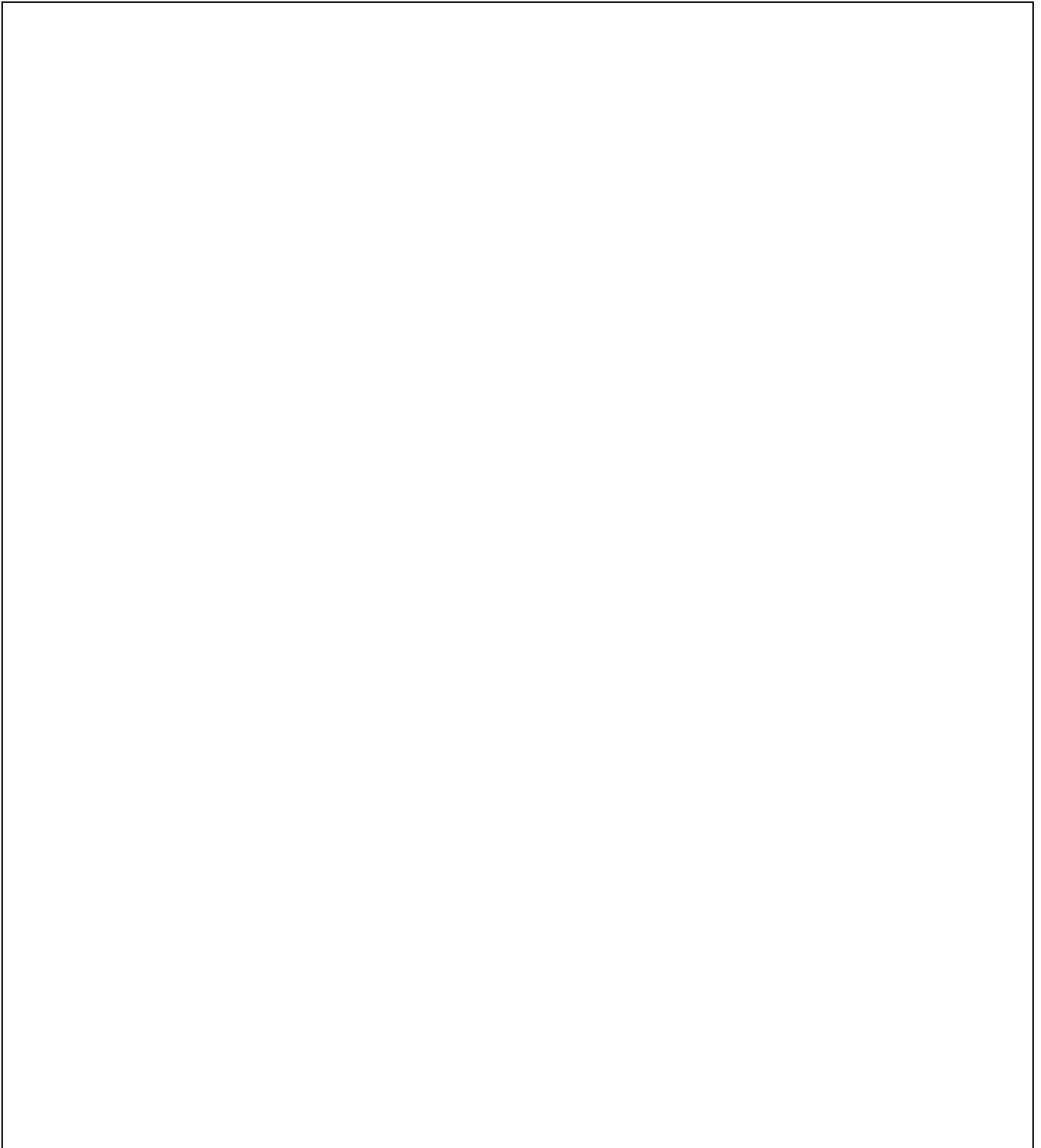
2. FIRST PANELS

Sketch drafts of your panels. These drafts should focus on composition (what items/illustrations that go in each panel or section, where those things are placed) and sequence of events.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.

3. DETAILED PRACTICE

Practice sketching your figure with different expressions or poses. If drawing exact representations from photographs, practice those sketches here, too.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for sketching a figure with different expressions or poses.

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PANEL OUTLINES

You can use the following panel outlines for your final comic or graphic story. The first outline (horizontal) is for a traditional comic format with panels. The second outline (vertical) is for a graphic story, like the format used in “The Jesse Owens Story” graphic story you read at the beginning of the activity.



Title:

By:

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Title:

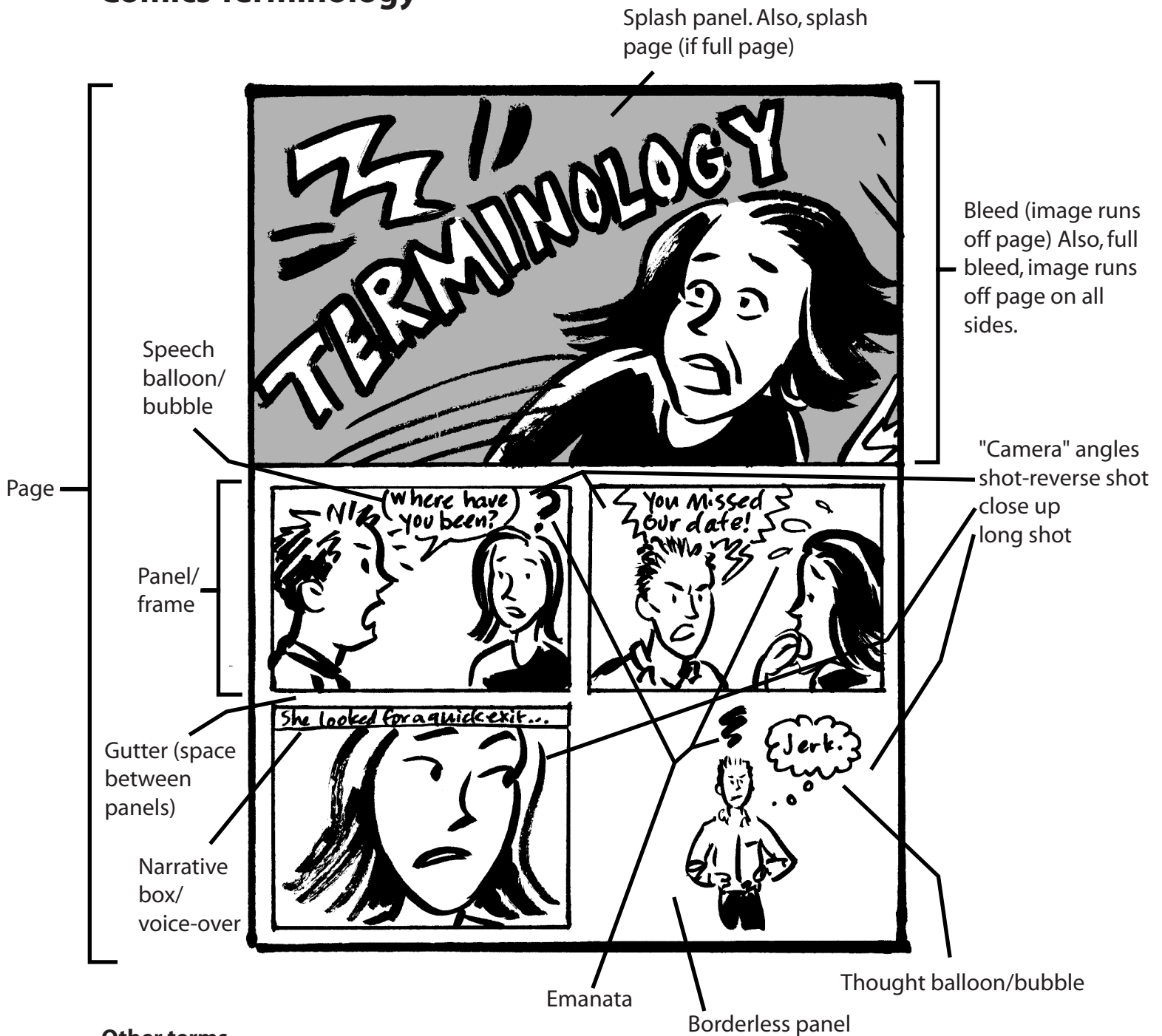
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Comics Terminology



Other terms

Spread: two facing pages in a printed book

Recto/verso: technical terms for pages in a spread. Recto = right page, verso = left page

Printer's spread: the layout of pages for printing. Not the same as a spread in a printed book.

Thumbnail: a rough sketch of a comic, delineating placement of figures, word balloons, and background elements, as well as content of word balloons.

Pencil: a relatively defined drawing preliminary to the final inked stage.

Inks: the final stage of a comics drawing (applying ink to the pencil guidelines)

Mockup: a rough layout of pages to plan a book

Paste-up: the final artwork pages ready for printing

Indicia: important copyright and other legal information printed in a book, usually at the beginning.

This document is free for non-commercial educational use.

See <http://www.teachingcomics.org/copy.php> for complete copyright information.

THREE-ACT STORY STRUCTURE

I. Setup

Pre-existing conditions:

Characters

(If they are new characters you need to establish their personality somehow)

Setting

(time and place)

+

New conditions:

An Action, Event or Situation

(a new character, a sudden change, etc.)

=

II. Conflict

CONFLICT

+

Reactions of characters which are motivated by their characteristics

(of person or relationships between characters)

=

- Reversals
- Complications
- Secondary conflicts

AND, eventually...

III. Resolution

RESOLUTION

of conflict, either temporarily or permanently

Stasis

(Things return to normal.)

Change

(Things have changed, fundamentally or superficially.)

Of course, this is not all that happens in a good story, whether it's comics or something else. Soon we will also be talking about: digressions, observations, flashbacks, mood pieces, slices of life, themes & leitmotifs, and other things that happen in and around the story itself.