

THE BOY WITH WINGS

By Lenny Henry

Illustrated by Keenon Ferrell

With a comic created by Mark Buckingham



FIVE FABULOUS TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

By Mark Buckingham,
Marvel and DC Comic artist



photo credit © Allan Amato

TIP NO.1 – Plan your story and write a script

Before you draw anything, plan your story. Think about where it starts, how it will end, and the flow of the tale in between. It helps if you write a script first.

Start by writing down what the sequence of action will be, what is going to happen, and what your characters are going to say to each other. Once you have that clear in your mind you can then break that action down into individual panels for each key moment in the tale.

TIP NO.2 – Let your imagination fly but stay focused

It is easy to get carried away when creating a story and find yourself in the middle of a big sprawling epic. That's fine, because comics are full of amazing potential. The only limit is your own imagination. If you want to have vast armies fighting planet sized monsters, just grab a pencil and draw them.

That said, sometimes the story gets so big you don't know where to start! If that happens to you, look for a little story within your bigger story - one that feels more manageable - and use that as your starting point, to open a window into your world for the readers.

TIP NO.3 – Draw little roughs of your story pages before you start

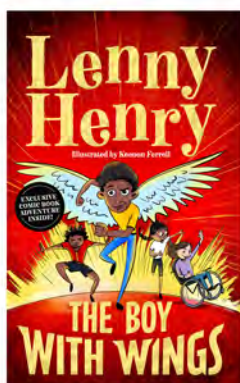
This will help you make sure the story flows well before you start drawing your finished pages. Professional comic book artists often call these 'thumbnails', because they are like miniature versions of the comic, often no bigger than your thumb. This is where you plan out the action on each page, with a box for each panel, stick figure characters, and rough positions for the speech balloons.

Think about the captions and speech balloons first. Try not to fit in too much dialogue, no more than a third of the panel is a good guide, or you will have no room left for the art. You should position the characters in order to match who speaks first and second, so your eye naturally connects the words and characters together. It can get confusing when the speech balloon tails cross!

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TIP NO.4 – Think about flow and pacing

Remember that, unless it is a manga, you are probably going to read it from left to right, top to bottom, both within the panels and on the page. Try to make the story flow to match that.

Certain sizes and shapes of panels can slow action down or speed things up. You may want a big panel for something huge and dramatic or a little panel for a reaction shot or a quiet pause. Keeping all the panels the same size and shape on a page will keep the pace consistent and gives each panel equal importance. Think about keeping page turns exciting, so the reader can't wait to turn over to see what happens next!

TIP NO.5 – Keep things consistent and get to know your characters

Once you have started drawing, remember the importance of keeping the characters in your strip consistent, so anyone reading the story can recognise them from one panel to the next.

It may help you to doodle a few different drawings of your main character in your sketchbook first, so you can think about the things that make them look distinctive and how they might look from different angles. Think about key colours, to convey emotion, or to give your characters, or the scenes they appear in, their own feel or identity. Colours can help you to distinguish between different locations too.

And don't forget about lighting! Lighting can be important too when you are creating a comic; think about where the light is coming from and where the shadows fall. For example, light from below with big dark shadows can make things scary.

We hope these tips will help... but the most important thing to remember is just to have fun!

You can make them as simple as you like! As silly as you like! Full of dialogue or silent! One page or a hundred! It doesn't matter. Just tell the story you want to tell, the way you want to, and enjoy yourself!

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