

For a wealth of useful do-it-yourself info, whether it be zines, comics, or crafts, check out Alex Wreck's **STOLEN SHARPIE REVOLUTION**. Send \$6 to 5307 N Minnesota Av, Portland OR 97217-4551 or order online from Microcosm (see Distros)

DIY COMIX, Third Edition, 2005 Update

This instructional pamphlet created by **SHAWN GRANTON**, 2002,2003,2004,2005.

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Ordering: Well, the days of wine and free photocopies are over, so if you would like to order additional copies of this pamphlet:

ONE COPY: one first-class (37¢) stamp in the US or one IRC for each individual copy.

For every two copies, please send \$1.00 in well concealed cash. For bulk amounts (10 or more, contact me first for price.) Overseas orders, contact for price.



THE END!

When trading, be nice. Include a note or letter along with a copy of your comic requesting a trade. People can be busy, so it might take a little while to get back to you. Occasionally, you might not get a trade back, either because they don't trade, or don't like your comic. Don't take offense if this happens.

Send a copy of your comic to a review zine or website. Make sure you include these things in a separate note: price (including postage), your mailing address (an email or website does not suffice), and if you accept trades. It may take a while for a review to get printed, since most review zines are on erratic schedules. Be prepared for the possibility of a bad review, or no review at all. It happens to the best of us, and besides, it "builds character". As someone once said, bad publicity is still publicity.

Sell your comic through stores or distributors. Before you try to sell your comic through these outlets, keep in mind that they will want a **wholesale rate**, a discount of about 40%-50% off the cover price. Keep track of your printing costs, and price your comic accordingly. For example, if your comic costs 42¢ to print each individual copy, you should not price your cover lower than \$1.00, since 50% off would be 50¢.

Stores are hit-and-miss. While comic stores are supposed to sell comics, many look at a handmade DIY comic with apathy. Expect most standard comic shops to give you a cold reception when you try to sell your book there. Try stores that sell zines, book stores, record stores, and other "quirky" shops that may take a chance on you.

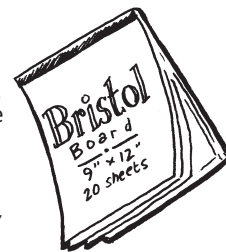
One thing to note: many stores work on **consignment**, meaning you do not get paid for your comics until after they sell. Usually, you must check back in within a specific timeframe to get paid. Make sure you save those invoices!

Generally, the distributors to go to are the small mail-order based ones. Diamond, North America's primary comic distributor, does not



REVISED 3rd EDITION

Paper: While plain photocopy-stock paper will suffice, it is much better to use a **stiffer, thicker** paper. This paper will hold ink better (less bleed) and will be more durable (won't wrinkle or crease as much, esp. during erasing.) Bristol is the standard all-purpose paper for illustration and graphics, and is made by various paper companies (Strathmore, Canson, etc). It either comes in pads or in large sheets that can be cut down. Sketchbook paper also works well. Hot Press and Cold Press boards are sooper-doooper for comics, but its high price is prohibitive.



The Bleed Test: Before you start to draw your comic, it is good to test the drawing tools with the paper to make sure it is compatible. Mark a corner of the paper with your ink drawing tool (brush, pen, sharpie, etc). Wait a moment, and observe how the ink dries. If everything is working properly, there should be little **bleed** (ink spread) in the line. If there is too much bleed, you should either switch the drawing tool, or switch to a better paper.

All of the above tools can be purchased at your local art supply store. They may also be found at an office supply, stationery, or craft store. Some tools may already be readily available at your home, office, or school. With little to no monetary investment, you can have the basic tools of drawing with pen and ink!

Welcome!

It's amazing to think over a year has passed since the 2nd edition of this thing has come out, but time sure does fly. If you are new to this pamphlet, thanks for picking this up! I hope you find this informative.

I should note that there isn't a heck of a lot in new stuff this time around, but with each new edition I try to correct the errors and omissions of the past. (I'm not perfect, y'know.) In this revision, you will find expanded "Other Production Techniques" and "Now What?" sections, plus an updated "Resources" section.



As noted in earlier editions, I am not a trained instructor. I'm just some guy who's drawn comics for a while. There is no "correct" way to do this. **Just get out there and draw!** Hopefully this pamphlet will give you some ideas.

In 2003, I conducted dozens of "DIY Comix" workshops all across the US and Canada. I've had loads of fun, and met a lot of great people doing it. I'm **always** up for doing more, so if you'd like me to do a workshop in your town or for your organization, **please get in touch**. Full contact info is on the back cover.

This here instructional pamphlet is ever-changing and expanding. I encourage feedback, because that is the only way the pamphlet and workshop will improve. If you have any comments, suggestions, critiques, compliments, etc., please contact me! Contact info is on the back cover. Thanks so much for reading this, and **VIVA LA COMIX!**

--Shawn Granton, Portland, Oregon, August 2004

A Few Notes about the Third Edition

Some of you may have noticed that this edition uses fancy computer generated type versus the obsessive-compulsive hand-lettering of the last two editions. Well, having this thing in computer format makes it easy to make the inevitable changes and updates to keep this fresh. Plus, my hand was about to fall off from doing it. Hopefully, I haven't upset you purists out there.

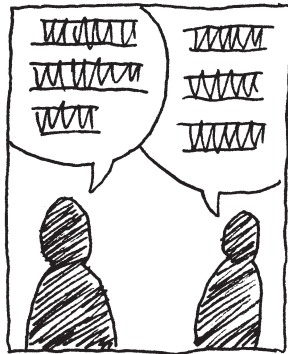
Also, my access to "cheap" copies has dwindled. If you would like to order a quantity in bulk, I will have to charge for it (versus just asking for postage). Full details on ordering are on the back cover. Remember, it is okay to recopy and distribute this thing, so long as you don't charge for it. Donations for printing are greatly appreciated! Send cash to the address on the back cover.

The "Language" of Comics

Comics are unique because it is the only printed medium where both words and pictures come together to tell the story. The art complements the prose, and vice versa, each working in tandem to convey time, place, effect, emotion, etc. There are multitudes of ways comic artists can use the interplay of written word and drawn image. Some comics are heavy on narrative (a very classic American way of doing it), where words primarily tell the story and the drawings illustrate. Other comics are visual storytelling heavy (much more European), where the images move things along and words embellish, usually in the form of dialogue. At the extreme ends of the spectrum are illustrated stories and wordless comics that rely solely on visuals.

There is no "correct" way of storytelling. What method you choose can be based on what you think works best for the comic. For example, heavy narrative compresses time, while more a visual approach expands. By all means, feel free to experiment and mix and match!

To learn more, read a lot of comics! Observe how each story is told, and determine if it is effective or not. Or, if you are not satisfied with my gross generalizations, check out these two books: UNDERSTANDING COMICS by Scott McCloud and COMICS AND SEQUENTIAL ART by Will Eisner. Both are good meditations on the language and structure of comics. They can be found in better bookstores, comic shops, and libraries.



Comic and Zine Events

There has been a **TIDAL WAVE** of zine-related events in the past few years, where before there were next to none. Many are of small, regional nature. **Dates and locations are ALWAYS subject to change, and more are springing up every year. Check out the websites for the most up-to-date information.**

early: ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO (APE), San Francisco. www.comic-con.org
Mar: ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR, San Francisco.
Mar: STAPLE, Austin, Texas. www.staple-austin.org
Mar: SPEAK FOR YOURSELF-BOSTON ZINEFAIR. www.bostonzinefair.org
Apr: SMALL PRESS AND ALTERNATIVE COMICS EXPO (SPACE), Columbus OH. www.backporchcomics.com/space.htm
?Apr: NEW JERSEY ZINE FEST, New Brunswick NJ. www.njzinefest.com
May: OLYMPIA COMICS FESTIVAL. www.olympiacomicsfestival.org
Summer: PORTLAND ZINE SYMPOSIUM! www.pdxzines.com
June: STUMPTOWN COMICS FEST, Portland www.pdxcomix.com
June: MOCCA ARTS FESTIVAL, New York City. www.moccany.org
June: ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE (AMC), Bowling Green OH. Formerly known as the *Underground Publishing Conference (UPC)* www.clamormagazine.org/amc/
***July: PHILADELPHIA ZINE FEST**. www.philadelphiazinefest.com
July: COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL, San Diego. www.comic-con.org
Aug: COMIX AND STORIES Vancouver BC mypage.uniserve.ca/~lswong/comicon.html
Aug: SAN FRANCISCO ZINE FEST. www.sfizinefest.com
Sept: SMALL PRESS EXPO (SPX), Bethesda MD. www.spxpo.com
***Sept: PROVIDENCE ZINE FEST**.
<http://www.geocities.com/providencezinefest/zinefest.html>
***Oct: CANZINE**, Toronto and Vancouver. www.brokenpencil.com/canzine/
Oct: EXPOZINE, Montreal. www.expozine.ca
Oct: MADISON ZINE FEST, Madison, Wisc. www.madisonzinefest.org

Other

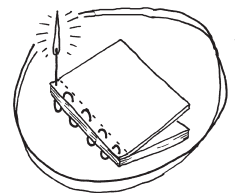
When in Portland, check out the **Independent Publishing Resource Center (IPRC)**. It is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the small press. The IPRC includes a zine library, computer lab, copier, production space, workshops, and a letterpress studio! You are always welcome to check it out during open hours: Mon 12p-10p, Tues-Wed-Thurs 4p-10p, Fri-Sat-Sun 12p-6p. See address in Zine Libraries.

For more zine library info, check out Greig Means' **ZINE LIBRARIAN ZINE**. Go to the Microcosm website for ordering info.

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plates with the printed image do not print directly on paper, but onto a roller, hence the "offset". Offset printing is associated with professional printing, as the equipment setup is too bulky (and expensive) for D-I-Y, at-home setups. With offset printing, you have a world of options in color, size, and style--as long as you're willing to pay the price. Offset is only feasible or economical for large print runs of 1,000 or more.

Get crafty! Use different types, colors, or size of paper for your comic. Trim the book to a unique size. Make your covers stand out by using colored paper, or by hand-coloring it. Glue weird stuff onto your comic. And don't forget, there are other options of binding than stapling. Use twine or string to sew the book together. The sky's the limit.



Now What?

Well, get your comic out there, that's what! You've done the work, now share it with the world!

You can do as much or as little as you want when it comes to getting your work seen. Remember, this is D-I-Y, so no one is going to do it for you. Other folks will definitely help you out, but what gets done is squarely on your shoulders.

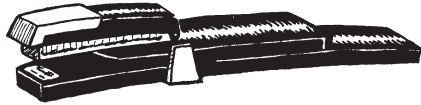
The easiest thing to do is give copies of your comic to friends and family, and maybe even give one to that boy/girl you secretly like?

Trade your comics with fellow DIY comic makers. Zine review zines are a great way to seek out other DIY comics, as well as review websites. Some zines/comics plug or review other comics. And ask your friends, pen-pals, and fellow DIY comic makers for recommendations.

Zine Libraries

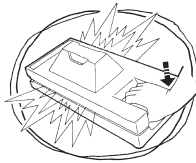
Send off your comic to these places and have it immortalized!

INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING RESOURCE CENTER. 917 SW Oak St, Suite 218, Portland OR 97205 503.827.0249 www.iprc.org
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER. 218 W Main St, Urbana IL 61801 <http://urbana.indymedia.org/library>
BREAD AND ROSES LIBRARY/INFOSHOP. P O Box 63212, St Louis MO 63163 www.stlcamp.org (Note: the physical street address at 3022 Cherokee has been in limbo for awhile. Hopefully it will open soon.)
ALTERNATIVE MEDIA LIBRARY AND RESOURCE CENTER. P O Box 204902, New Haven CT 06520 www.yale.edu/altmedia (Note: actual collection located at the New Haven Free Library, 133 Elm St, New Haven, across from The Green)
¿JUNTO LOCAL NINETY-ONE 2D-91 Albert St, Winnipeg MB R3B 1G5
MISFIT THEATRE ZINE LIBRARY. P O Box 68939, Newton, Auckland NEW ZEALAND
ZINE ARCHIVES AND PUBLISHING PROJECT. c/o Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Av, Seattle WA 98122 206.322.7030 www.hugohouse.org/programs/zines.html
OLYMPIA ZINE LIBRARY, c/o Last Word Books, 119 5th Ave SE, Olympia WA 98501
CIVIC MEDIA CENTER LIBRARY. P O Box 13077, Gainesville FL 32604-1077 Physical location at 1021 West University Av, Gainesville FL 32601, 352-373-0010
SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY. Attn: Periodicals Dept, 210 East 400 South, Salt Lake City UT 84111 801.524.8200 www.slclpl.lib.ut.us
DENVER ZINE LIBRARY. P O Box 13826, Denver CO 80201 denverzinelibrary.org (Physical location at 1644 Platte St at Other Side Arts)
ABC NO RIO. Attn: Zine Library, 156 Rivington St, New York NY 10002 212.254.3697x323 www.abcnorio.org/facilities/zine_library.html
ABOVEGROUND ZINE LIBRARY. c/o Quickdummies, 6810 Bellaire Dr, New Orleans LA 70124 www.geocities.com/abovegroundlibrary (Physical library located at 4820 Banks St, New Orleans)
STEVENS SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS ZINE LIBRARY. 1905 3rd Av S, 2nd floor, Minneapolis MN 55404 612.879.0200 www.stevensarts.org



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Gocco Printing (pronounced “go-ko”) is a self-contained kit that uses a modified method of screenprinting. Imported from Japan, Gocco is catching on more and more in the US, but it is still difficult to find. (Check eBay.) Kits start around \$125. Gocco can do multiple colors. While easier to use (and less cleanup) than standard screenprinting, Gocco’s main drawback is the small image area- the maximum size of finished art is 4”x6”.



Linoleum Printing, also called Linocut, is a method where you use a carving tool on a linoleum block to carve away the areas you don't want to print, leaving the uncarved (raised) surface to touch ink first, then paper. This is a great, inexpensive (though time-consuming) way to get a unique look to either your cover or interior.

Woodcuts are similar to linoleum prints in carving techniques, but use wood blocks instead of linoleum. Woodcuts have the added benefit of being able to be letterpressed.

Mimeograph Machines were the most common method of office reproduction before photocopier technology was perfected in the 1970’s. Copies are printed from a *stencil* (either cut by hand or by mechanical methods) that wraps around a drum. This drum rotates, pushing ink through the stencil and then onto the paper being fed through it. A version of mimeograph called a *spirit duplicator* or *ditto machine*, printing with funky smelling purple ink, was commonly used for school handouts. Long considered a dead technology, you might be able to find one kicking around somewhere, and you can still do some cool stuff with one (like multiple colors).



Offset Printing refers to a method of printing where metal

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What is a D-I-Y Comic?

That’s a tough question! D-I-Y comics can mean different things to different people. D-I-Y is an abbreviation for “do it yourself”. While that phrase has been employed by hardware stores for ages, it only started to be really used in pop culture in the late 70’s, when punk rock came about. Strictly speaking, a DIY comic is one you “do yourself”. This means one person has complete control of all aspects of the comic, from the content and creation, on to production (printing) and then distribution. While a DIY comic can be made by two or more people working together, all that is really needed is one person. Typically, DIY comics are photocopied (xeroxed), but that is not the rule. There are many other ways it can be produced--including professional offset printing. (More about that later.)

Probably the greatest difference between a DIY comic and a “regular” (aka mainstream) comic is this: A DIY comic is self-published. Comics published by a larger publisher, whether it be superhero stalwarts Marvel and DC or indie houses like Top Shelf or Sparkplug, cannot claim that right, even if the content and/or production techniques to a DIY comic are similar. DIY Comics are not a genre or style of comic, but a method for getting it out there.

DIY Comics are generally self-distributed, whether it be in person or through the mail. Small mail-order distributors can also carry DIY comics. “Regular” comics go through the larger comic distributors (Diamond) who deal directly with stores.

Sometimes DIY comics are referred to as mini-comics. In fact, the term is used interchangeably (especially by me!) Some underground comic purists insist that a comic must be eight pages long and 4 1/4” by 5 1/2” in size to be termed a mini-comic, but most folks don’t make that distinction.

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Drawing

This is, of course, the most crucial part of DIY Comics. Without drawing, it wouldn’t be a comic! You may not consider your art to be “good enough” to draw a comic. But comics are open for all levels of drawing ability. Not everyone can (or wants to) draw like Leonardo daVinci, especially if you are just starting to draw. Don’t beat your head against the wall because of this. Your art skills will improve over time. The key here is **DRAW**. To re-appropriate a catch phrase appropriated by an evil corporation: **JUST DO IT**.

To learn more about drawing techniques, go to your local library and check out some books. There are also open studios available for figure drawing in most cities. They generally happen at schools and art studios, check the newspaper and internet for options. And the best way to learn how to draw better is through constant practice, practice, practice. Having a sketchbook or journal on you at all times is great; pop it open when the inspiration hits you. Draw interesting things from life: people, buildings, household items, trees, bicycles, streetscapes, etc.

Of course, you can always look through comics to see how other people draw. But remember, there is no right or wrong way to draw. Just because what comes out isn’t the same as some hip alternative cartoonist, it doesn’t mean what you’re doing isn’t good. Keep on drawing, keep on experimenting, and don’t stagnate. Your own voice will show.



Comic Sizes

Before you start to draw your comic, it is good to figure out what the *finished size* of the comic will be. This will make it easier to determine the correct size to draw your comic pages. Most comic

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What can DIY Comics be About?

Aah, that's the beauty of it! DIY comics can be about **anything!** You have no editor to worry about or "target demographic" you're aiming for. You are in **COMPLETE CONTROL**.

DIY comics are about having **fun**. Don't worry about whether other people are going to like your comic or not, and don't stress out about your comic not being "good enough". First and foremost, **YOU** should like what you're doing and have **fun** doing it. Write and draw what **YOU** want to write and draw about. Don't make a comic on, say, yak herding because other people are doing it and that's what you think people want to see. *The comic you create should come from within.* (the Zen of Mini-Comics)

Subject-wise, there is no difference between DIY Comics and other formats of comics. That's because DIY Comics are a *medium*, not a *genre*. For example, there are heaps of DIY Comics that feature superheroes, even though that genre is typically associated with mainstream comics. Conversely, auto-bio (aka "personal") comics, long a stalwart of the DIY medium, can be published by larger publishing houses.

Here are some examples of what DIY Comics have been about (but **PLEASE** let this *define* DIY Comics for you): *two young skaters that constantly get into misadventures; an adaptation of the New Testament using Popeye instead of Jesus; crushes; a monster racoon who attacks a record company because they prolong the existence of Pink Floyd; the day-to-day trials and tribulations of a zine librarian; a kid who thinks he's a famed Mexican wrestler; a Civil War water battle; a battle on a toilet; a travelogue of a bicycle trip across Florida; more crushes; the story of a girl who moves Portland-to-Portland (Maine to Oregon); a documentation of a relationship falling apart; yet more crushes; THE LIST GOES ON...*

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artists draw their pages larger than the size they are printed in the comic. Here are the most common DIY Comic sizes:

"True" Mini-Comic (4 1/4"x5 1/2"): Made by cutting a letter sheet in half and then folding that in half.

Quarter Legal (4 1/4"x7"): Made by cutting a legal sheet in half and then folding that in half.

Digest, or Half-Letter (5 1/2"x8 1/2"): The most common DIY comic size. Made by folding a letter sheet in half.

Half-Legal (7"x8 1/2"): Good for making it "just a little bigger". Made by folding a legal sheet in half.

Letter (8 1/2"x11"): Made by either folding a ledger sheet (11"x17") in half or binding letter sheets together.

All of the above sizes are made from standard North American photocopy stock paper, available at any copy shop or office supply outlet. You can create any dimensions you want by trimming. If you go through a professional printer, you can ask for custom sizes.

For those of you outside North America, the A4 paper size (210mm by 285mm) is the standard equivalent to letter. When folded in half, it creates the A5 size.

Sizing your comic pages

The easiest way to make sure your comic pages are drawn at a size that will fit into your finished comic is to draw it at actual size -- the same size it will appear when printed. If you want to draw your pages at a larger size than it will be printed (recommended), make sure your dimensions match up. **This can be complicated and confusing**, and is easy to screw up. There are several ways to check your proportions.

The easiest is by obtaining a **proportional wheel**, available at art

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THE BEGUILING. 601 Markham St, Toronto ON M6G 2L7 416.533.9168 www.beguil-ing.com

SILVER SNAIL. 367 Queen St W, Toronto ON M5V 2A4 416.593.0889 www.silversnail.com

FICHTRE. 436 Rue de Bienville, Montreal QC H2J 1S9 514.844.9550 fichtre@vif.com

RX COMICS. 2418 Main St, Vancouver BC V5T 3E2 604.454.5099 www.rxcomics.com

LEGENDS. 633 Johnson St, Victoria BC V8W 1M7 250.388.3696

COPACETIC COMICS COMPANY. 1505 Asbury Pl, Pittsburgh PA 15217 412.422.1344 www.copacetic.biz

NEEDLES AND PENS. 483 14th St, San Francisco CA 94103 415.255.1534 www.needles-pens.com

ELLIOT BAY BOOK CO. 101 S Main St, Seattle WA 98104 800.962.5311 www.elliottbaybook.com

Review Zines

BROKEN PENCIL. P O Box 203, Stn "P", Toronto ON M5S 2S7 brokenpencil.com (note: concentrates on Canadian zines)

SLUG AND LETTUCE. P O Box 26632, Richmond VA 23261

PUNK PLANET. Attn: Reviews, 4229 N Honore, Chicago IL 60613 punkplanet.com

ZINE WORLD. P O Box 330156, Murfreesboro TN 37133 undergroundpress.org

MAXIMUM ROCK AND ROLL. P O Box 460760, San Francisco CA 94146 www.maximumrocknroll.com

Mail-Order Distributors

There has been an EXPLOSION of zine distributors in the past five years or so, unlike the small numbers seen during the earlier 90s. Most of these zine distros concentrate on personal zines, with few mini-comics being stocked. Some will carry comics if they like them, but these listed below are the best for mini-comics.

STICKFIGURE. P O Box 55462, Atlanta GA 30308 www.stickfigure.com

U.S.S. CATASTROPHE. P. O. Box 12299, St Louis MO 63157 www.usscatastrophe.com/store

ECHO ZINE DISTRO. P O Box 11102, Milwaukee WI 53211-0102 www.geocities.com/echozinedistro

MICROCOSM PUBLISHING. 5307 N Minnesota Av, Portland OR 97217-4551 www.microcosmpublishing.com

MOON ROCKET DISTRO. P O Box 7754, Wellesley St, Auckland, NEW ZEALAND www.moonrocket.co.nz

LOOP DISTRO. 1357 W Augusta #1, Chicago IL 60622 www.loopdistro.com

GLOBAL HOBBO. P O Box 11493, Berkeley CA 94712 www.hobocomics.com

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The folding and stapling of comics can be a long and tedious process. Make the best of it by playing some good music and drinking your favorite beverage (coffee works well for this). To make it more fun, have a "fold and staple" party and recruit your friends to help out, or have them bring their own zines and comics to fold and staple with you!



Other Production Methods

Photocopying is the easiest, most readily available method to produce your DIY Comic, but it isn't the only option. Here are some other methods of printing, whether you do it for your entire comic or just for the cover. Don't be afraid to experiment!

Color Photocopies are a great way to liven up a comic. Most copy shops have at least one machine. Copies are spendy (averaging 99¢ each), so most often folks only use them for covers. A way to save money is make a smaller image for the cover, print it three-up (or more) on a sheet, trim it down to size, and glue it onto the cover.



Screenprinting, also known as "silkscreening", is mostly seen in fabric printing (like your t-shirt!) but can also be used on paper. It works by using a squeegee to push ink through a fine-mesh screen, the ink only going through in the image area (the rest of the screen is blocked). Speedball screenprinting kits can be found at art supply stores for around \$50, and colleges usually have a studio in the art department. Screenprinting is a great way to make multiple color images.

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Resources

items with a question mark (?) before its name means I'm not sure if it still exists or not. items with an asterik (*) mean info has changed since the 2004 edition. If you have any info, please let me know!

Stores

READING FRENZY. 921 SW Oak St, Portland OR 97205 503.274.1449

www.readingfrenzy.com

Q IS FOR CHOIR. 2510 SE Clinton St, Portland OR 97202 503.235.9678

33 1/3 BOOKS. 1200 N Alvarado St, Los Angeles CA 90026 213.483.3500

FAT JACKS. 2006 Sansom St, Philadelphia PA 19103 215.963.0788

MELTDOWN COMICS. 7522 Sunset Blvd Los Angeles CA 90046 323.851.7223 www.meltcomics.com

LEFT BANK BOOKS. 92 Pike St, Seattle WA 98101 206.622.0195

www.leftbankbooks.com

BOXCAR BOOKS. 310A S Washington, Bloomington IN 47401 812.339.8710 www.boxcarbooks.org

STICKY. P.O. Box 310, Flinders Lane Post Office, Melbourne VIC 8009, Australia

sticky@platform.org.au

CONFOUNDED BOOKS. 315 E Pine St, Seattle WA 98122

***COMIC RELIEF.** 2026 Shattuck Av, Berkeley CA 94704 510.843.5002

www.comicrelief.net

NAKED EYE VIDEO. 533 Haight St, San Francisco CA 94117 415.864.2985

STAR CLIPPER COMICS. 6392 Delmar, St Louis MO 63130 314.725.9110 www.starclipper.com

DANGER ROOM COMICS. 201 W 4th Av, Olympia WA 98501 360.705.3050 www.dangerroomcomics.com

CHICAGO COMICS. 3244 N Clark St, Chicago IL 60657 773.528.1983 www.chicago-comics.com

QUIMBY'S. 1854 W North Av, Chicago IL 60622 773.342.0910 www.quimbys.com

THE COMIX REVOLUTION. 606 Davis Street, Evanston IL 60201 847-866-8659

www.online-revolution.com

MILLION YEAR PICNIC. 99 Mt Auburn St, Cambridge MA 02138 617.492.6763

also: 276 Thayer St (2nd floor), Providence RI 02903 401.272.0941

COMICOPIA. 464 Commonwealth Av #13, Boston MA 02215 617.266.4266 www.comicopia.com

JIM HANLEY'S UNIVERSE. 4 W 33rd St, New York, NY 10001 212.268.7088 www.jhuniverse.com

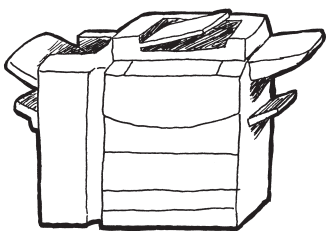
WOODEN SHOE BOOKS. 508 S 5th St, Philadelphia PA 19143 215.413.0999 www.thud.org/wooden.htm

ATOMIC BOOKS. 1100 W 36th St, Baltimore MD 21211 410.662.4444

www.atomicbooks.com

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before you copy the full amount you want. Check each page to make sure everything is in the right order (and not upside down), and also to see how well it reproduces. Most newer copiers will double side your pages automatically, and some will *collate* (putting the pages in the correct order), making things much easier in the long run. Get to know your copier!



If you let a copy shop do it for you (full serve), *make sure they know exactly what you want.* **BE VERY SPECIFIC** in your instructions. Tell them that you need it double sided and the finished product will be made into a booklet. Have your master pages in the correct order. Ask them to collate it, as well.

To start off, you will most likely only need 25-50 copies of your comic. Remember, you can always make more if you run out.

Shop around for the best deal in copies, but make sure the quality of the copy is decent as well. The average price for a single-side letter copy varies from 3¢ to 10¢. Budget your money accordingly.

Assembly

Most copy shops will cut and trim (if you are making a mini or special size comic), bind, and fold your comic for you--at a price. Save money by doing this yourself. If you need pages cut, use the paper cutter or trimmer at the copy shop. You can also borrow a long-arm or saddle-stitch stapler from them (necessary for stapling a comic booklet-style), but if you have a lot it's best to do this somewhere else. Long-arm staplers retail for about \$30 and are found at office supply stores. This may sound like a big investment, but it definitely pays in the long run if you intend to keep on making comics. Or, you can borrow one from a friend!

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The tools of D-I-Y Comics

There are many different tools that can be used to draw comics. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG TOOLS TO USE, but here are the most common tools used for graphics and illustration:

Pencils: Most any pencil will work, but avoid leads that are too dark or hard (because they are difficult to erase and show up on copiers.) Technical (click) pencils work dandy. Some people use a non-photo blue pencil which is not supposed to show up on photocopies.



Erasers: the soft, rubbery type work best (and are fun to play with!)

Drawing Pens:

The "old school" way is to use a crowquill or dip pen. Nowadays they have a plastic body with an interchangeable metal *nib* (tip). These can take some time and skill to use properly.



Technical (or Drafting) **Pens** are probably the easiest pen for *inking* (going over your pencils). These come in two basic types:

Refillable: These pens have an ink cartridge or well in the body that can be replenished when dry. Rapid-O-Graph is the most common make. These pens can be spendy--averaging \$15 to \$20 (USD) a pop, and also require maintenance.

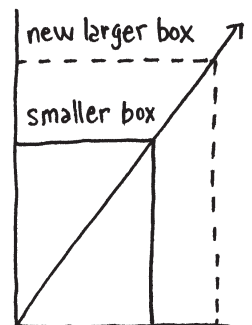


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supply stores and copy shops. These scales take the guess work out of correct sizing.

Another way to check your proportions is to draw a box a little smaller than the size as the comic book you'll print. If you're going to make a digest size comic (5.5"x8.5"), draw a box that is *at least one quarter inch smaller on each side* (this will make sure your comic doesn't get cut off at the edges). This box would be 5"x8". Find a copier and enlarge. The new box that is printed will be a larger size *but in the same proportion* as the smaller box you drew. Enlarge until you find a size that you are comfortable with, then measure the box and draw your comic page at that size.

Yet another way to check proportions is, like above, to draw a box a little smaller than the size as the comic book you'll print. Then draw a diagonal line through the box from bottom left corner to top left corner. Continue that diagonal outside the box. Draw a new, bigger box with the ends lining up with the diagonal line. This new larger box is in proportion with the smaller. Measure the dimensions and draw your comic page at that size.



Production and Printing

After you've finished drawing all your comic pages, you will of course have to print it yourself. This part can be daunting to a first-timer, but just remember to have patience and double (and triple) check everything you do. Soon you'll be a pro at it!

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Disposable: There is no way to replenish ink with these pens, so they are not as environmentally-friendly as a refillable unit. The prices are much cheaper (\$1.50-3) and they give just as good a line. Micron is the most common make.

Whichever pen you choose, make sure the ink is **waterproof** and **fadeproof**. It is generally easier to start with the disposable tech pens.

Brushes: They give the most expressive, flowing lines, but, like crowquills, can take time to get used to. Most commonly used for inking is Windsor-Newton Series 7, no 2.



Ink: A bottle of this is required if you use crowquill or brush. "India Ink" is the common name for solid black ink. Make sure it's **waterproof**.



Permanent Markers: Good for filling in black areas or for super-thick lines. Also good for pissing off art purists. SHARPIE is the most common make. Make sure the ink does not **bleed** too much.

Ruler: Good for straight lines and measuring.

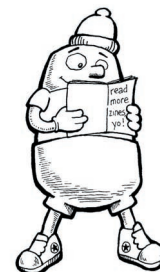


White Out: Useful for correcting mistakes, which will inevitably happen! Use a thin layer, and make sure it is completely dry before drawing over it. Best to use white out towards the end.

carry mini-comics, nor do some of the smaller comic wholesalers. The mail-order distros will probably not get your books into stores, but they will be enthusiastic about carrying your comic. Most distros work on consignment as well, and few will pay for the postage needed to send your comics to them.

If you are going to do a lot of store and distro "business", keep records. This can be as simple as a notebook where you write everything down or an envelope to hold receipts. You can be advanced and make a "database" of all that, but you don't have to.

If you are adventurous, you can try to sell your comics at a comic or zine event. There are many different types held around the country, and some of them may charge a fee for setting up a table. Generally, zine events are free or a small fee to attend and/or table, while comic shows can cost a bit. It's best to attend an event or two before you commit to sitting behind a table for several hours (and possibly days), just to get a feel for what it would be like. You can always load up your backpack with comics to trade, sell, or give away.



In the following pages, you'll find a listing of resources that you should hopefully find useful. All of this is up-to-date as of August, 2005, but remember, dates change, places move or go out of business, etc. Please send any and all corrections or additions to:

tfrindustries@scribble.com

For simplicity, all of the steps of layout will be demonstrated the old school way--by photocopying and cut and paste. Yes, computers can do all that stuff these days, but access to photocopiers is a lot more open than computers. (And it isn't hard!)

The first step is to take your original art and make a **master set** (or **template**), a formatted copy that the comic will be printed from. This is where you will need to find a high-quality, self-serve copier. There should be a copy shop close to you, sometimes beginning with the letter "K". Use the *reduce* function on the copier to shrink the art down to the size it will be printed at. This will take some trial and error to find the right size, be prepared for that.

After you have copied the art, you must **lay out** the comic. *This part can be extremely tricky!* You should always start out with a page plan-- a paper with the order of the pages listed. Take a sheet of paper and number down one side the number of pages your comic will be (it should be in a multiple of 4 if you are doing any folded comic). On the other side, list your comic pages in the order you would like to appear. Remember to account for inside and outside covers!

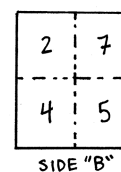
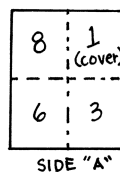
For the layout, you will need:

An Exacto Knife: For trimming your copies of excess borders. You can also use a paper cutter or scissors.

A Glue Stick: For adhering copies down to the master page. Rubber cement or tape works as well (but tape under the copy).

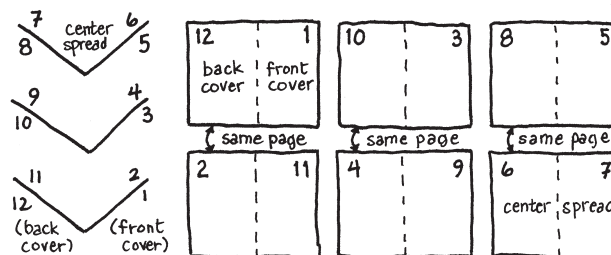
There's many different options for laying out your comic. Here are a couple:

The easiest layout format is the 8 page mini-comic. All it requires to lay out (and print) is one sheet of letter paper! After copying and trimming, take a blank paper and number as shown below:



Glue your comics to the corresponding page number. When you make a double-sided copy, page 2 will be behind page 1, page 4 behind page 3, etc. After you copy your comics, make sure you get the sheets cut in half!

For larger books, remember that pages **must** be in increments of **FOUR** (4,8,12,16,20,24...) Below is a diagram of a 12 page comic (using three sheets of paper). The last page (12) is on the same side as the cover (p1). **THIS IS CONFUSING!** Just remember to be careful and double-check everything!



Copying your Comic

You can either do the copying yourself (to be truly DIY) or let a copy shop do it for you. I recommend doing it yourself if possible, because you will learn a lot more about production techniques and copiers this way. If you do copy it yourself, *run a test set first*