



TEACHERS' NOTES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary school readers (ages 8 to 12; years 3 to 6)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Visual Language

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Learning about visual literacy
- Learning about graphic novels and comics
- Learning about imaginative thinking and creativity

THEMES

- Superheroes, supervillains and sidekicks
- Teamwork
- Responsibility
- Using your strengths
- Friendship
- Equality and fairness
- Bugs
- Dinosaurs
- Martial arts

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and
Gavin Aung Than

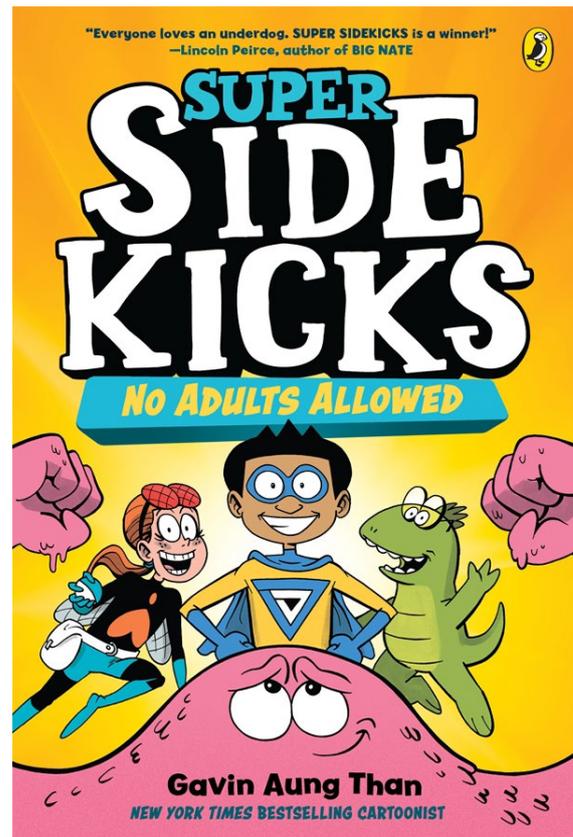
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Super Sidekicks 1: No Adults Allowed Gavin Aung Than

PLOT SUMMARY

Superheroes have it easy. They don't have to clean their secret headquarters, wash the alien bloodstains out of their costumes or be responsible for taking Super Mutt for a walk.

No! They leave all that for their sidekicks like me, while they get all the credit!

I'm Junior Justice, but you can call me JJ, and I think it's time we made our own team.

Being a superhero sidekick isn't as fun as you think. You do all the work, beat the bad guys and save the planet, only for your grown-up partner to get all the credit. Junior Justice is sick of it, so he and his sidekick pals, Flygirl, Dinomite and Goo, have decided to form their own super team.

But before they can start saving the world they'll have to prove to the adult superheroes that they're more than just sidekicks. And once the evil Dr Enok discovers his favourite pet Goo has left him, the world might need saving sooner rather than later!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gavin Aung Than is a freelance cartoonist based in Perth, Australia. His webcomic *Zen Pencils*, a cartoon blog which adapts inspirational quotes into comic stories, has been featured by *The Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, *Slate*, *Buzzfeed*, *Gawker* and *Brain Pickings*, and was named one of the top 100 websites of 2013 by *PC Mag*. *Zen Pencils* has also been collected into *New York Times* bestselling books. His first series for children, *Super Sidekicks*, grew out of Gavin's long-time obsession with superheroes.

Visit aungthan.com to find out more about Gavin and his work.

SYNOPSIS



Chapter 1

Junior Justice – JJ – has called together other sidekicks for a secret meeting. He wants to talk about how unfair it is that they have to do all the drudge work for their superhero partners. He thinks the sidekicks should form their own team – and Dinomite and Flygirl agree. But before they can plan any further, someone else

turns up for the meeting; It's Goo, the greatest creation of the evil Dr Enok! JJ and the others attack Goo, but he doesn't fight back – he wants to be friends. Finally the three sidekicks decide Goo can stay.



Chapter 2

The sidekicks get to know each other a bit better and show off their powers and abilities. Goo is happy to have found some friends. But their bonding session is rudely interrupted when the adult superheroes come crashing in to find their missing partners. Uh oh!



Chapter 3

Captain Perfect, Rampagin' Rita and Blast Radius demand that their sidekicks get back to work. The adult superheroes burst out laughing at the news that the sidekicks want to form their own super team. It must be a joke. An argument erupts between the two sides – and then the adult superheroes realise that Goo is in the room. ATTACK! Even worse is to come when – BOOM – the walls come crashing in. It's Dr Enok! He's come to find his greatest creation, Goo, and has brought a horde of robots to make sure no one gets in his way. A huge battle unfolds and the adult heroes help Dr Enok capture Goo. After all, they still think Goo is evil. Dr Enok flees with Goo and the sidekicks are left battered and bruised.





Chapter 4

The sidekicks explain that Goo was a member of their team and doesn't want to be evil anymore, but the adult superheroes don't believe it. The two groups come to a stalemate. 'I bet you'll come crawling back to us,' Captain Perfect declares. The three remaining sidekicks storm out. Even though they have their doubts, JJ, Flygirl and Dinomite commit to working together to prove the adults wrong. They decide what their first mission is: OPERATION RESCUE GOO! 'It's what mates do for each other!' says Flygirl.



Chapter 5

Cut to Dr Enok's laboratory. He's punishing Goo for running away. Goo is distraught and frightened. He had a taste of freedom and friendship and now it's gone. The climactic battle takes place, where the three sidekicks infiltrate the lab and rescue their new friend. We see their powers and teamwork on full display. But have we seen the last of Dr Enok?

Chapter 6

Reunited, the sidekicks need a new headquarters – and a team name. Will the adult superheroes finally accept the sidekicks' decision to create their own team? And what will the four friends call themselves?

ABOUT OUR FOUR HEROES

- **JUNIOR JUSTICE** is the leader of the Super Sidekicks. An ace detective and martial arts master, JJ is fearless in battle but still has a few things to learn about leading a super team. Ada, the wearable tech robot on his belt, helps JJ do some extraordinary things.
- **FLYGIRL** loves bugs. Not only can she gracefully buzz around the skies like her namesake but she can also throw nasty bug balls with incredible accuracy. From her always dependable Goliath Bird-Eating Spider, to the painful Arizona Bark Scorpion, to the full-scale assault of her killer Trap-jaw Ants, Flygirl has a bug for every type of mission. Just don't hurt one of them, or she'll more than likely hurt you.
- **DINOMITE** is the brains of the team: a physics professor, unparalleled linguist and poetry enthusiast. Oh yeah, he can also transform into any species of dinosaur, so he can act as the team's muscle (Tyrannosaurus), protection (Ankylosaurus) and transport (Pterodactyl) too. He'd much rather read some Shakespeare than jump into battle, though.
- **GOO** wants nothing more than to belong to a group and have friends. After years of being trapped alone and forced to commit evil acts by his creator Dr Enok, he's an emotional wreck. But he just might have found the friends and support he's been looking for all these years in the Super Sidekicks.

ABOUT GRAPHIC NOVELS

On the following pages Gavin Aung Than will take you through all the steps in creating a graphic novel. You'll also learn how to read a graphic novel.

Below you can find explanations of the terms used for graphic novel designs, and some online resources with more information on how to use graphic novels in the classroom.

Graphic novel terms

- **Panel:** The box or segment that contains the image and text.
- **Gutter:** The space between panels.
- **Bleed:** When an image goes beyond the borders of the page.
- **Speech bubble:** This contains the dialogue spoken by different characters. A 'tail' sticks out of the bubble showing which character is speaking.



- **Thought bubble:** Similar to the speech bubble, this contains the internal dialogue of a character. It usually looks like a puffy cloud and has multiple circles pointing to the character instead of a tail.
- **Caption:** A box or section of text that may include narration or other important information, such as a place or time.
- **Sound effects:** Words that give a sense of sound on the page (e.g. Bang! Thump!). To heighten their impact, the words are either bolded or have a special graphical treatment to make it stand out.



- **Layout:** The configuration of all the elements on the page; the way in which the frame, panels, speech bubbles, etc., are arranged to tell the narrative.
- **Close-up:** An angle that zooms into an image or character for dramatic impact, like when a character is angry, sad or determined. Panel 1 of JJ on page 5 is a close-up.
- **Long shot:** When the angle is very far away from the subject matter. Usually to show a setting. Panel 1 on page 3 is an example:



- **Bird's-eye view:** When the angle is looking down on a subject. Panel 1 on page 34 is an example:



- **Worm's-eye view:** When the angle is looking up at a subject. This angle usually is used to show a character who is powerful or important. On page 44, the reader is looking up at the three heroes to further illustrate their importance.
- **Foreshortening:** When extreme perspective is used to add energy and boldness to an image. For instance, Captain Perfect's left hand on page 6:



- **Splash page:** A page that has no panels but is just one single image. This is usually reserved for important moments in the story. Page 44 is a splash page.

Online resources

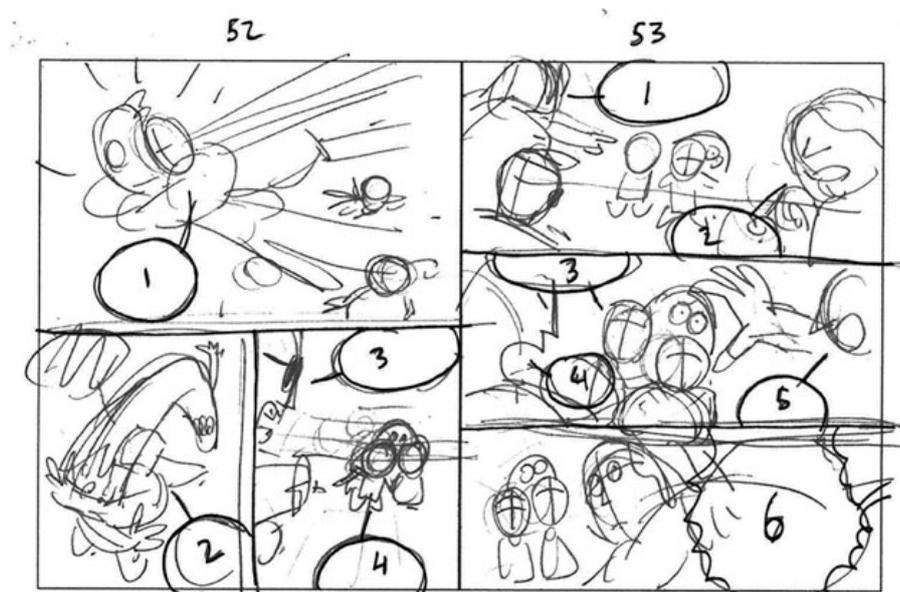
Here are a few great resources for studying graphic novels:

- Creating Multimodal Texts: <https://creatingmultimodaltxts.com/comics/>
- The Truth About Graphic Novels: <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v32n2/fletcher-spear.pdf>
- Get Graphic (Graphical resources for teachers): <https://www.buffalolib.org/content/get-graphic/teachers>
- How to Teach Graphic Novels: <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/nov/30/how-to-teach-graphic-novels>
- A Teacher Roundtable: <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teaching-graphic-novels/>



FROM THE AUTHOR: How a graphic novel is made

STEP 1: STORYBOARD AND SCRIPT



PAGE 52

PANEL 1: Big action panel. Captain Perfect flying tackles Goo from behind. JJ and Flygirl get pushed out of the way.

1 CP: Where's Dr Enok hiding, scumbag!

PANEL 2: Goo slips out of CP's arms.

2 CP: Ah! Slippery devil!

PANEL 3: Blast Radius pointing blaster at the 3 sidekicks. Again, JJ and Flygirl are protecting Goo.

3 BR: Move, I've got my blaster set to vaporise!

4 JJ: No, stop attacking!

Creating the storyboard and script is the hardest part of making a graphic novel. Unlike a traditional novel, graphic novels are a visual medium – the images, pacing and balance are very important – so the words and the pictures need to be considered together from the very beginning.

I always write the script and storyboard at the same time, but I think storyboarding is the more important step. The goal is for the reader to know what is happening even with no words or dialogue. This step is difficult because it's like figuring out one massive jigsaw puzzle – which panel needs to go where, how many panels are needed, which character needs to be standing in a certain position, making sure to end the page on the right note so the reader is in suspense and eager to turn the page . . . lots of decisions are being made at this stage!

Although I'm showing you the script for page 52 (which later turned into page 54) for this demonstration, I always storyboard two pages together as a spread, like in the example above. This allows me to balance the spread as a whole.

You can also see I'm already figuring out where the speech balloons need to go. They are an important design element in comics and should be treated as such. Having a balloon in the wrong place can break the flow of a reader's concentration and pull them out of the story. We don't want that!

Once the whole book is done like this, I send it to my editor for approval. In the case of *Super Sidekicks 1: No Adults Allowed*, there were minimal changes suggested, which is always nice.



FROM THE AUTHOR: How a graphic novel is made

STEP 2: PENCILLING

Now the fun can begin! Once the script is approved I can start drawing.

I draw the page on regular photocopier paper at A4 size using a 2H pencil lead. I try to pencil loose and fast and not worry too much about mistakes.

I'm aiming for funny expressions, lots of movement, action and energy!



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Once the pencils are done, I scan the drawing into my computer. Next I use Adobe InDesign to place the words on the page (this is a not fun part!).

The circles and ovals are just a guide, as I will hand-draw the balloons and tails during the next part of the process.

Once the whole book is done in this way, I send it to my editor again for another round of approval.



FROM THE AUTHOR: How a graphic novel is made

STEP 3: INKING



Once the pencil stage is approved I can move on to the next stage: inking! I do this the traditional way, using good ol' pen and paper.

First, I turn the pencils and words that I put together on my computer into a light blue colour using Adobe Photoshop. Then I print that on some nice drawing paper. That gives me a nice light blue guide that I can ink over.

Before inking with pen I usually go in and tighten most of the drawing with pencil. What I mean by 'tightening' is just fine-tuning the drawing. For instance, I changed Captain Perfect's cape in the second panel.

Then, once I'm happy with the drawing, I can finally ink it, meaning I go over the pencil with pen. I use Pigma Micron pens and a Pentel Pocket Brush Pen.

This is the longest part of the process.

Once the inking is done, I erase the pencil lines I drew to tighten the drawing and then scan the page at a high resolution (600 dpi). The rest of the page will be completed digitally.

I then open up the image in Photoshop and use the digital tools to adjust the page if there are any mistakes or wobbly balloons that I'm not happy with.



FROM THE AUTHOR: How a graphic novel is made

STEP 4: COLOURING

Well, sometimes this step isn't really colouring. For the Super Sidekicks series, which was originally printed in one colour, the colour is all in grey tones.

All of the tones are added in Adobe Photoshop. There's a tutorial on digital colouring on my website (aungthan.com) that shows a more in-depth look at this process.

For the full colour editions of the Super Sidekicks series, illustrator Sarah Stern added colour to the pages digitally.



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And that's pretty much it! Once the colouring is done, I place the Photoshop image into the Indesign file that had all the words in it before sending to my editor again. You can see that we changed the font to a more traditional serif font.

Yay, that's one page done, another 136 to go!



HOW TO READ A GRAPHIC NOVEL

With a mix of words and pictures spread over multiple panels, graphic novels can be initially confusing to read. Here's a handy guide to help you get the hang of it.

Read the panels left to right, then top to bottom.

Where's Dr Enok hiding, scumbag?

Aaaah! Slippery devil!

Move! I've got my blaster set to vaporise!

No, stop attacking!

Read each panel the same way you read each page – left to right, then top to bottom.

Each individual picture is known as a panel. This page has three panels – one on the top, and two on the bottom.

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WORKSHEET 1: Comparing books

Find one copy each of a **picture book**, **novel** and **graphic novel**. Flick through and study the pages. How is each medium different or similar to the other? Write your answers down on the chart below.

	Text (e.g. How does the text appear? Does it change for different parts of the story?)	Layout (e.g. How are the elements on the page arranged? Is it all text or are there some images? How many pages are there?)	Illustrations (e.g. Do the pages have any illustrations or not?)	Graphical elements (e.g. Are there any graphical elements for text breaks or chapter icons?)
Picture book				
Novel				
Graphic novel				



WORKSHEET 2: Creating sound effects visually

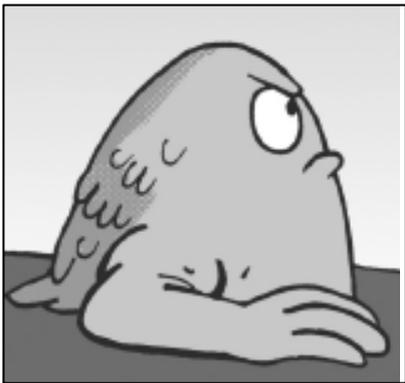
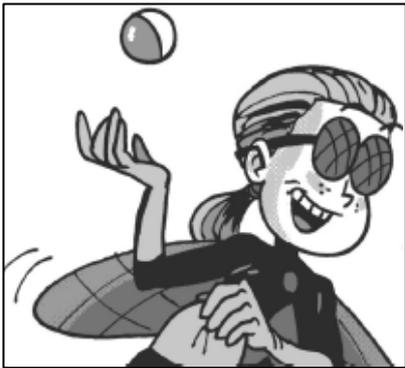
Unlike the traditional novel, graphic novels rely on 'visual' sound effects, like BANG! or STOMP!, which illustrate the word so that it can be graphically recognised. For example, BANG! can be drawn in big bold letters that stand out prominently on the panel. Look at the words below and see how you can illustrate these sound effects to suit the noises they create. Can you think of some more?

Sound	Illustration
'Shhhhh!' she hissed to the man as the movie played.	
KERBLAMMO! The factory exploded into smithereens.	
<i>Bounce! Bounce! Bounce!</i> went the ball.	



WORKSHEET 3: Match the superheroes to their sidekicks

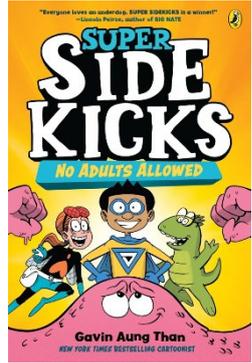
In *Super Sidekicks 1: No Adults Allowed*, the four sidekicks decide to strike out on their own, without their adult partners. Draw a line between each sidekick and their former superhero/villain, and write the name of each character beside their picture.



WORKSHEET 4: My super sidekick squad

Each of the sidekicks in *Super Sidekicks 1: No Adults Allowed* has their own strengths and skills. Junior Justice can fight in the deadliest styles and has heaps of gadgets, Flygirl is an amazing acrobat and her unrivalled knowledge of insects helps her to select her best pet to help win fights, Dinomite can turn into any dinosaur and is super smart, and Goo is incredibly friendly and can mould itself into anything it likes. Together, they can take on anything!

Come up with your own super sidekick squad. What different abilities might your sidekicks have? How do they complement each other? Write your squad's abilities and draw their pictures below!



<p>Name:</p> <p>Special ability 1:</p> <p>Special ability 2:</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>Special ability 1:</p> <p>Special ability 2:</p>
<p>Name:</p> <p>Special ability 1:</p> <p>Special ability 2:</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>Special ability 1:</p> <p>Special ability 2:</p>



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Super Sidekicks 1: No Adults Allowed (full colour edition)	Gavin Aung Than	9781761049323	4-6	\$17.99		
Super Sidekicks 2: Ocean's Revenge (full colour edition)	Gavin Aung Than	9781761049507	4-6	\$17.99		
Super Sidekicks 3: Trial of Heroes (full colour edition)	Gavin Aung Than	9781761049514	4-6	\$17.99		
TOTAL						

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES ARE RECOMMENDED RETAIL ONLY AND MAY HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE TIME OF PRINTING. PRICES ARE GST INCLUSIVE.

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COLOUR ME IN

SUPER SIDE KICKS



**SUPER
SIDE
KICKS**

COLOUR ME IN



SUPER
SIDE
KICKS

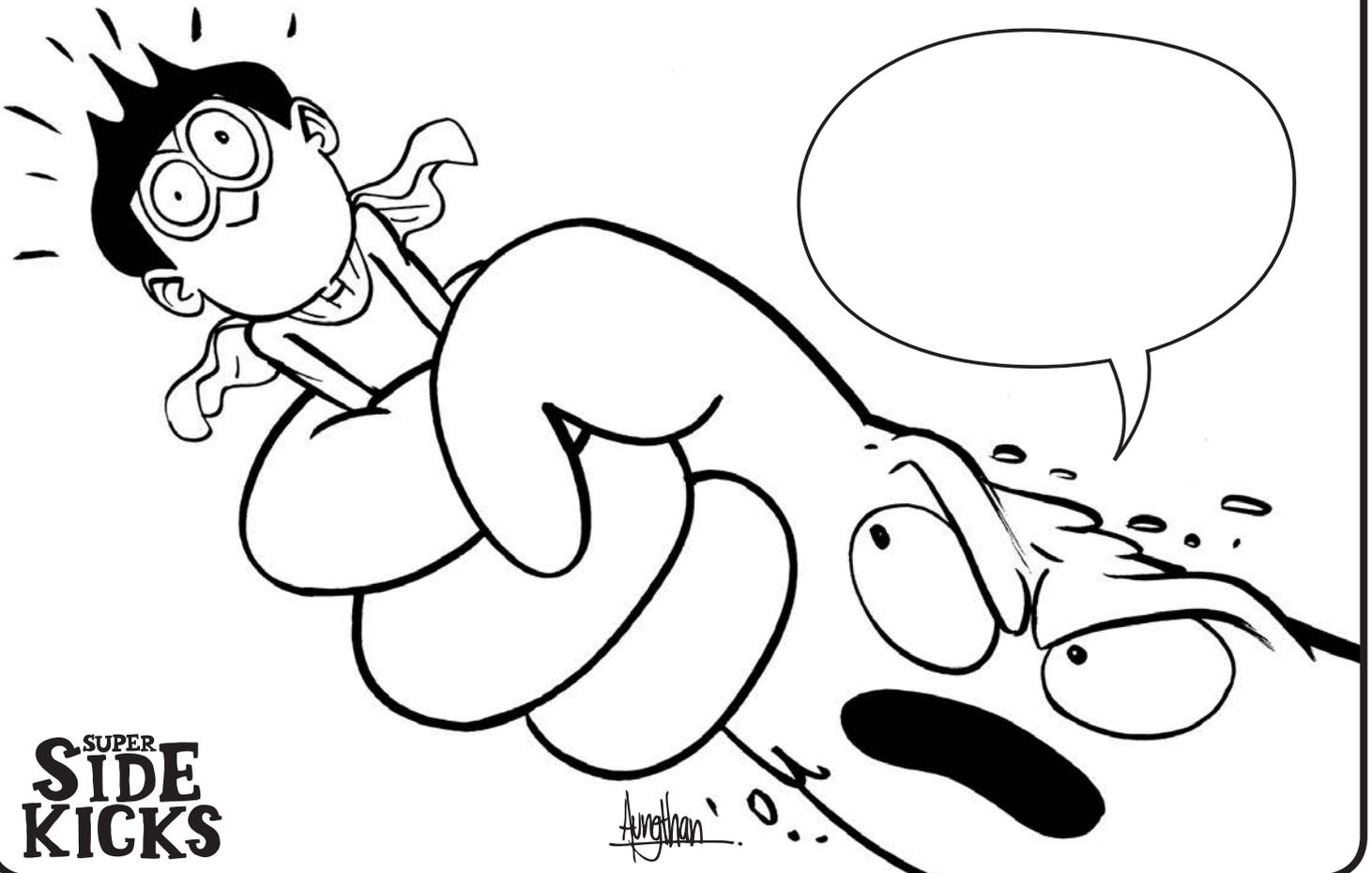
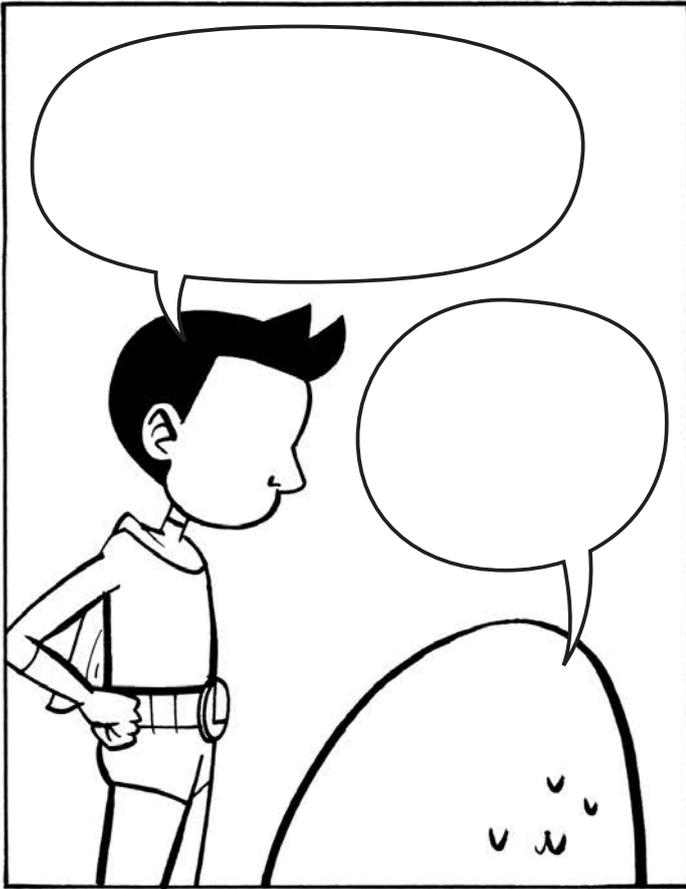
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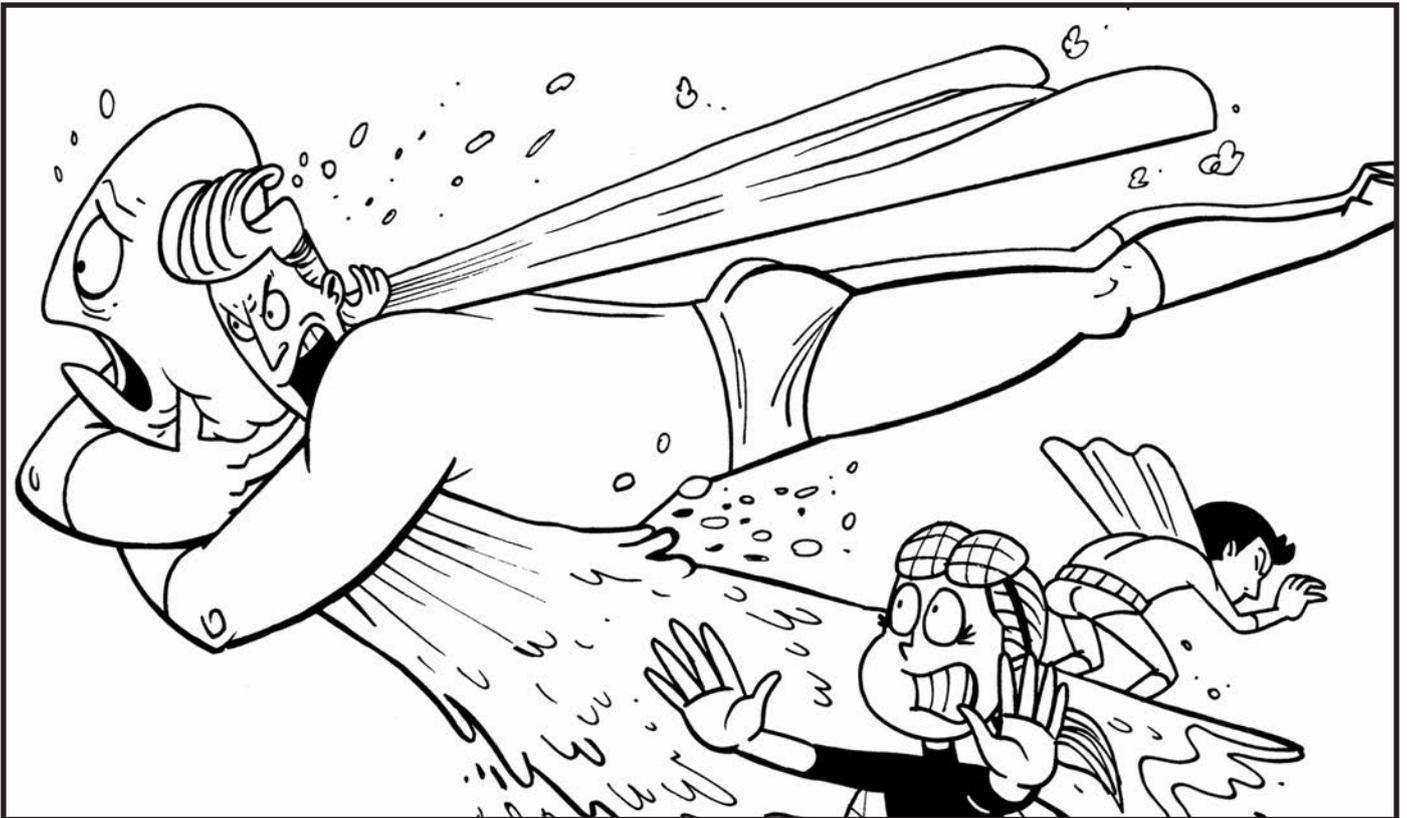
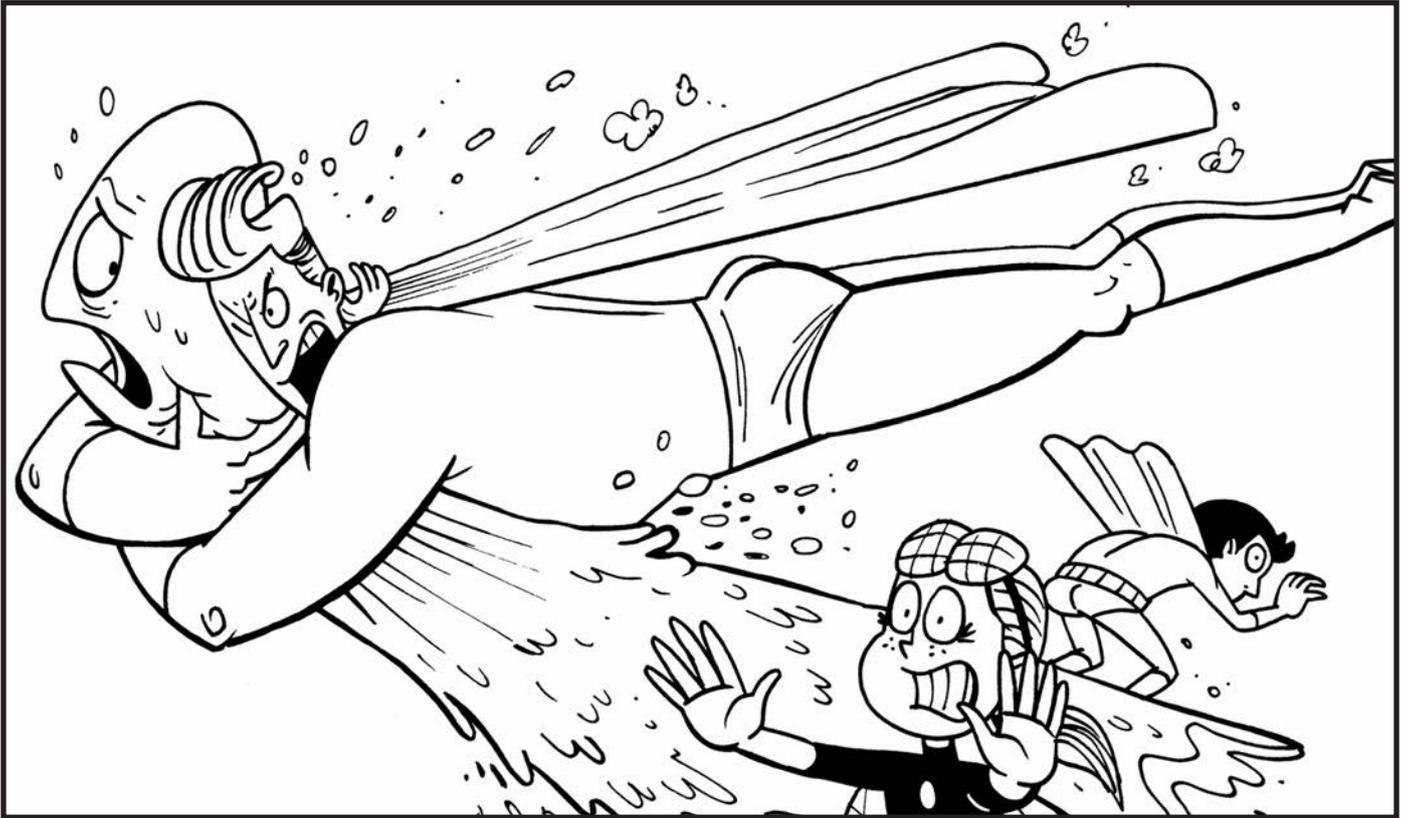
COMPLETE THE SCENE

Fill in the missing speech balloons and facial expressions to make this scene between Junior Justice and Goo come alive.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Find the 7 differences between the two pictures.



1. Goo's eye facing opposite direction.
2. Both of Captain Perfect's eyes open.
3. One puff of smoke missing above Captain Perfect's cape.
4. Flygirl's eye's looking up.
5. Flygirl's freckles missing.
6. Junior Justice's eye closed.
7. Flygirl's logo on costume missing.

Amethan

**SUPER
SIDE
KICKS**