

# THE COMPASSIONATE COMIC PROJECT

## OVERVIEW: WORKSHOP OUTLINE 1&2 AND CELEBRATORY EVENT

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### WORKSHOP 1 OUTLINE

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#### Outcomes:

Students have chosen a partner to work with and as a pair have decided on:

- Their characters
- Their problem to solve
- The outline of their narrative (a storyboard of the beginning, middle, and end; a simple step by step written narrative and ideas for speech; initial sketches for their panels).

#### Resources required:

- Computer, white board and smart pen
- Writing pens and drawing pencils, a ruler, plus pencil sharpeners and erasers for all students
- A4 worksheet of questions for the group character development activity
- 15 characters for the group character development activity
- A4 worksheets for each student to design character(s)
- A3 worksheet for each pair to storyboard and begin sketching their story.

### INTERVENING WEEK

Students continue to sketch out and create written elements of their comic short story, ready for creating their final version in workshop 2

## WORKSHOP 2 OUTLINE

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### Outcomes:

Working in their pairs, the students create a nine-panel A3 comic strip where their characters solve a relevant problem by working together.

### Resources Required:

- A3 worksheets featuring eight panels for the students to create their short-story comic on.
- Drawing pencils, plus drawing pens to go over outlines. Writing pens for speech bubbles.
- Colouring pens and pencils.
- Scissors and glue stick.

### FINAL WEEK

Students complete any finishing touches to their comic ready for exhibition.

## CELEBRATORY EVENT

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Workshop element – students organise into groups of four, containing a pair from each school. They show and tell each other their comic stories. They then have to select a new surprise problem from a hat and their heroes must work together to find a solution and save the day. (Some might wish to start another chapter of their story together after the event...)

## WORKSHOP 1

PREFACE (15 mins) – But you may wish to make this a separate lesson.

### COMPASSION AS LOVE IN ACTION DISCUSSION

Pupils can be asked a number of sequential questions:

- 1) What do you understand by the term “Compassion”?
- 2) Who do you think the most compassionate people are in your own lives?
- 3) Can you give any examples of when you have been compassionate? And what was the outcome?
- 4) Why do you think compassion is so important in the life of the whole planet?
- 5) From your own faith or ethical tradition, why do you think it is so important?
- 6) Can you give any examples from your own traditions or backgrounds of compassionate leaders?
- 7) Do you think your school is compassionate?

### INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT (15 mins)

We discuss and introduce comics (10 min discussion. Example books will be available throughout workshop).

Leave example books on each table. Ask children what they identify as a comic. We work out together what features they involve. Discuss how they can be about any subject.



### CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: GROUP ACTIVITY (35 mins)

(Encouraging imagination, thinking about what makes a character, their strengths and weaknesses.)

Introduction: As a class, we look at three images together and discuss what kind of qualities and weaknesses these characters might have. What makes us think they should have these qualities or weaknesses? (10 minutes)

Activity: Class is divided into groups of 4, each group to a table. A mystery box is placed in the middle of each table, containing 3 different “characters”. The activity is intended to really stretch imaginations, to question how we think about personality and appearance, and to encourage the

children to work together and to build their confidence as storytellers. The children discuss the three characters together and decide various elements about them, encouraged by specific questions on a worksheet. (15 minutes)

A worksheet for each character asks e.g.

Hello my name is:

I live:

My greatest strength is:

My greatest weakness is:

I love:

I hate:

What other characteristics do I have? For example, do I have a best friend, or a mortal enemy? What do I sound or smell like?

Examples of potential mystery characters: A plastic dragon toy, a lego man, a Barbie, an image of Batman/Superman, alongside some silly objects like a blob of blu-tack or a banana with some googly eyes stuck in, a crisp...

Each group then picks their favourite character to tell the rest of the class about. (10 minutes)

HEROES AND VILLAINS: DISCUSSION (15 mins)

Do you have any heroes and villains in your collection of mystery characters? What are heroic qualities and what are villainous qualities? Do you think superheroes and supervillains happen in real life? Can normal people do villainous and/or heroic things? Can you give some examples?

FORM PAIRS: Students choose a partner to work with to create their comic. You might like to start discussing the characters you want to have in your story. Who might be the heroes? Who might be the villains?

EEK! A PROBLEM: DISCUSSION (10 mins)

Students are asked to name problems that people might face at home / at school / in the street / as part of the UK / as part of the world.

Write pupil suggestions on the board and each pair can choose one to write their stories about.

CHARACTER DESIGN: WORKING IN PAIRS (15 mins)

Create the characters for your story. Adult helpers go around helping each pair with their ideas. Encourage the children to have one or two heroes and one or two villains, and to begin thinking about the central problem that will drive their narrative.

Hero(s)

Villain(s)

While you create the characters, think about the problem in their story and how the hero(s) and villain(s) might interact with it. Where is the story set? The heroes should be able to help each other somehow.

The children draw and label key elements about their characters using worksheets for character design. We can talk about appearance etc. – tips on how to draw (physical attributes, using colours to help tell a story, facial expressions, body language, accessories...). Some of these worksheets could be exhibited at the celebratory event.

#### BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO DRAWING SKILLS

During the project the artist Gilroy Brown introduced a number of key drawing skills which the children were able to use very effectively in the timeframe. The young people themselves however, were crystal clear that they wanted more time to practice their drawing skills. As a result of this, the CoED Foundation have uploaded a video masterclass which consists of Gilroy's responses to Maurice's questions related to drawing. Teachers are advised to watch the masterclass and to extract from it elements they find helpful. The masterclass can be found here ([\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)).

#### HOW WORDS WORK IN COMICS: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION (10 mins)

Presentation and discussion of how speech, thought, narrative voice, and sound effects are presented in the genre. How they might like to use them in their story.

#### STORYBOARDING: BRIEF INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

Introduction: How to use the nine panel A3 sheet to make sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

**SURPRISE!** One thing about storytelling is EXPECTATION. When you write a story, you can create a set of expectations for your reader, and then you can UPSET EXPECTATION! This can create humour, or fear, or suspense, and always INTEREST! Quick discussion of examples of characters and how they might upset our expectation. Doesn't have to be characters – can be objects/forces of nature... (e.g. a bomb/a tidal wave/an ice cream)

#### CONTINUED CHARACTER DESIGN AND STORYBOARDING WORKING IN PAIRS (40 mins)

The children work in their pairs to storyboard their story across the nine panels. They can use a mixture of words and pictures to tell their story, and can begin to think about what they will want to include in speech/thought bubbles and as sound effects.

#### TIDY UP (10 mins)

Let the children know that the next workshop will be all about creating their finished comic. We'll help with their characters, speech, and storytelling, but please use the intervening week to keep sketching and planning so that they're ready for the final workshop.

## WORKSHOP 2

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This will mostly be for creative time, with members of staff meeting with each pair to see how their comic is progressing, talking about their story, discussing their ideas, and helping out with written and visual storytelling.

## CELEBRATORY EVENT

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In The Compassionate Comics Project we brought two separate schools together in order for them to talk about their respective storylines and then to work on a new story collaboratively building upon their characters they had already invented. They were asked to choose one of the following scenarios as the context for their new stories.

**The new mayor invites all of your characters to a huge party with hundreds of guests. But when you arrive, a lot of the guests are acting strangely, and you suspect an evil plot is underway...**

(What is the plot?)

(Who is behind it?)

(What will your heroes do to save the day?)

**Suddenly all the TV channels switch to an emergency broadcast. BREAKING NEWS! A huge tentacled monster has emerged from the coast and is heading towards your city!**

(What is the monster and what does it want?)

(How will your characters react to the event? Will some join the monster's side, will some go against it?)

(What happens in the end?)

**A character you all thought was good is seen doing something that looks VERY suspicious. What are they up to? And what should the rest of the characters do?**

(What will your characters do with this information?)

(Is the suspected character really doing something bad, or is this a huge misunderstanding?)

(What happens in the end?)

**One of your characters is at a restaurant. When the bill arrives, a message is written on the back saying, 'Your life is in danger. You must leave the city immediately and never return.'**

(Who is the message from? Can they be trusted?)

(Why is their life in danger?)

(What does this character do with the information?)

(How do your hero characters help them?)

**Your characters are visiting the house of a mysterious new neighbour. A butler invites them into a room, and suddenly locks the door behind them. They're trapped! The walls start moving slowly inwards! How will they escape?**

(Who is this mysterious neighbour? What do they want?)

(How will your characters escape? Can they work together?)

(Is a key or a clue of how to escape hidden in the room?)

**A volcano that had remained hidden for millennia suddenly erupts right next to your city! How will you save the citizens? And is this volcano a natural disaster, or has someone caused this eruption for a reason?**

(How will your characters work together to save the people of the city?)

(Will they split into teams so that some can investigate the mysterious volcano while others save the citizens?)

(What happens in the end?)