

The Wrong Planet: Timing, Closure, and Editing

GOALS:

Gain understanding of how to manipulate the illusion of passing time in a comic. Students gain insight into how much closure a reader needs to complete a story between the panels.

STORY:

An astronaut launches his rocket, lands on the moon and plants a flag. He returns home to much fanfare then realizes he has come to the wrong planet. Note: This is only a suggestion; any very simple story will work.

MEDIA:

Pencil on white unruled index cards

PROCEDURE:

Students are broken up into groups of 3 to 5 and each student is given a section of the story to illustrate.

Students draw each panel of the comic on unruled index cards so that the story can be expanded, contracted, and rearranged.

Each student will first draw 5 or 6 panels that completely illustrate his/her section. Students are asked to tell the story mainly in image and keep written words to a minimum.

Groups will pin their drawings in order on the wall and examine how the story reads.

Students will then draw another 5 or 6 panels to stretch out the action in between the panels.

The group will now examine the largely extended comic. They will subtract, rearrange and re-add the drawings to see how the sense of time is effected by the amount of closure between panels. Additional panels may be drawn at this point to make the story more effective.

Lastly, students will try to find the minimum number of panels in which the story can be told by removing as many drawings possible.

-- Contributed by Paul Hluchan