

The
WIREMAN
Comic Series • Volume 1 & 2
Curriculum Book



Written by: Sue Stauffacher
Designed by: Brian Cook

Welcome to **Wireman**, an innovative literacy tool designed as an appealing comic book for readers of all ages! Wireman works on the premise that kids will learn to read better and faster if they are motivated to do so. Here's how we make that happen.

- **Wireman** provides minority readers the opportunity to see themselves reflected in literature.
- The language is simple, but the story is complex, engaging the intelligence of older readers and creating the desire to read with an unfolding mystery and 'cliffhanger' endings.
- The 'look' of the comic is sophisticated, removing the stigma associated with primers.
- **Wireman** Volume 1, Issues 1-4, contain the 100 most common words in the English language. These words make up 50% of all written English. Volume 2, issues 1-4, contain the top 300 high frequency words. Now, we're up to 65% of all written English.
- **Wireman** allows teachers to reach students at very different reading levels.

Writing prompts that engage both the student's world and the world of the text encourage thoughtful text-to-life comparisons.

Messenger Pigeons

For hundreds of years, pigeons have been trained to carry messages. They are called 'homing pigeons' and they can be taken anywhere—even hundreds of miles away—and they will return to their 'home' or nest with messages.



Rock pigeons are the most common form of homing pigeon.



Here is how a pigeon carries the message.

Sometimes in stories, we exaggerate what characters can do. What is exaggerated in **Wireman** about messenger pigeons?

How do pigeons change the way people relate to each other in **Wireman**? What can pigeons do that we humans can't? What do you think about pigeons when you see them around? Where do you think they live? Would you feel differently about pigeons if you knew they were carrying secret messages for Wireman?

- 4 -

Each assignment was designed with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association's (IRA) Twelve Standards for the English Language Arts in mind.

Familiar faces and places help students bring prior knowledge to the fore

Thank you, teachers!

Thank you so much for the important work you do! **So many teachers have contributed to the success of Wireman.** We'd love to hear from you, too. You can always learn more by visiting us on the web at www.wiremancomics.com or by connecting Sue through her website at www.suestauffacher.com.

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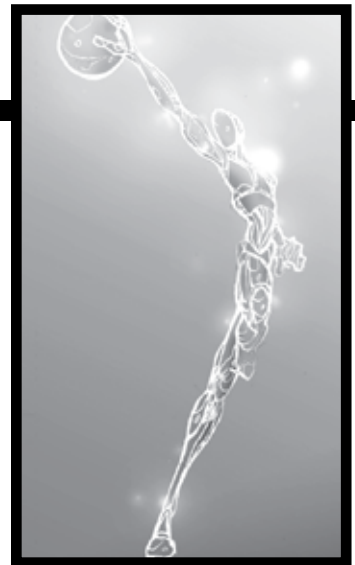
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WIREMAN:

Fun Facts & Big Secrets



Where did the idea for Wireman come from?

Wireman is inspired by a real person. On trash night in 1982, a lot of wire art was found in an alley in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. No one ever claimed the art, and the artist was never found. It took a lot of strength to bend the wire. Also, some of the artwork looked like art from Africa. For these two reasons, people said that the artist was an African-American man. They called him the Philadelphia Wireman.

1,200 pieces of wire sculpture were found, but no one knew anything about the mysterious artist who made them. It is likely that he made them in secret, maybe in an abandoned building.



These pieces are now in museums all over the country. This is one of the Wireman's sculptures. What does it look like to you?



Messenger Pigeons

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Sometimes in stories, we exaggerate what characters can do. What is exaggerated in **Wireman** about messenger pigeons?

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American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language (ASL) is a form of communicating between and to people who cannot hear. It is not like the spoken English language in many ways. First, English uses sounds to communicate, but an ASL signer can use hand gestures, facial expressions and the space around her to make clear what she is saying. The way words and phrases are put together to make meaning are also different. ASL has its own grammar.

Here are a few signs that Maya makes in Volume 1, issues 1-4. Our artists used the online video dictionary at aslpro.com to make sure they were creating the words correctly.



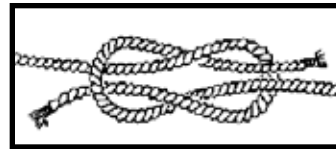
Just like we have different spoken languages depending on where you live in the world—Spanish, English, German—there are different sign languages for different parts of the world. In the comic book, **Wireman**, Maya communicates using American Sign Language, but that is not the only sign language she knows. She also knows Spanish Sign Language.

Do you think Maya can hear or not? What makes you think she can? What makes you think she can't? If she can, why does she use sign language instead of talking? And why does she know two different sign languages? When you solve this mystery, you will have a clue to why Maya joined up with Wireman.

We Know What's Going On....Knot!

Volume 2

The thief knot, pictured below, is almost like the square knot (to the right), but there is one important difference. The short ends are on the opposite sides, which makes the knot slip and slide. Not a good knot. It is called the thief knot because sailors used to tie up their ditty bags (the bags that contained their scissors, needles, and other small items) in such a knot. If someone went through their bag, the thief would probably tie it back up in the more common square knot. That way, sailors knew that a thief was around! Hey, what's wrong with this picture? Either way, the stuff gets stolen.

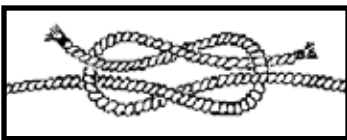


Thief Knot



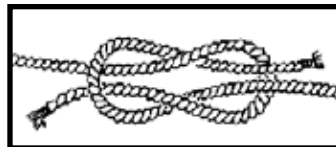
Square Knot

The grief knot, on the right, is a combination of the granny knot and the thief knot (to the left). These knots are not very sturdy, either. In fact, the grief knot is used mostly in magic tricks! There are no sad stories about the grief knot. It got its name from its two relatives. Can you guess how? In this case, the grief knot is an example of a portmanteau. You're going to have to look that word up on your own!



Granny Knot

+



Thief Knot

=



Grief Knot

They aren't really tying stuff up, so what is the purpose of the knots on these pages?

Do you have any idea who The Thief is? A character you've already met on the pages of Wireman? Or do you think The Thief has yet to appear? If you had to make a guess right now, who would you say it is? You have to use information from the text and pictures to back up your guess.



Morse Code

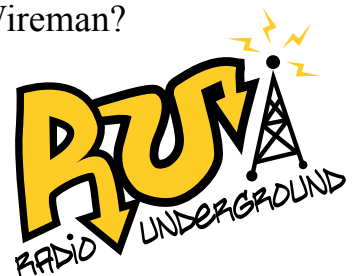
Volume 2

Morse Code is a way of communicating over long distances. It was developed in the mid-1800's by a man named Samuel Morse. He had to use the technology available to him at the time. He created a system by which a telegraph operator could type in a series of dots and dashes, and those pulses would travel by electrical current through cables to a distant location. On the other end, a telegraph operator would translate those dots and dashes into letters and words. In issue 3 of Volume 2, a boy uses his drum to tap out Morse Code.



There are translators on the web that will tell you what these dots and dashes mean. You can find one at <http://morsecode.scphillips.com/jtranslator.html> Once you know what the words are, answer this: What is the boy talking about? Why do you think he's communicating this message to the girl on the scooter? Where do you think she's going?

Today, Morse code is still used most by amateur radio operators. Hmmmm, isn't there something called "Radio Underground" in Wireman? How does it all connect?

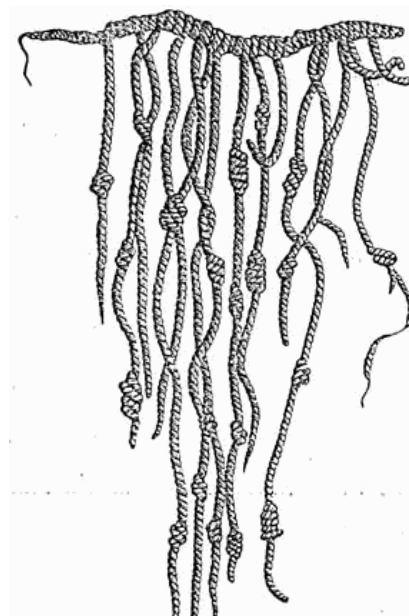


What is Quipu?

Volume 2

Knots were used by ancient people even before fire was invented. The Incas of ancient Peru did not have a written language, so they relied on knots in colored cords to keep records of their country. At the time, their country was so large it covered 3,000 miles.

They used quipu (pronounced key-poo), which is the Quechua word for “knot,” to count the items in their warehouses as well as the people in their cities. The knotted strings were light and easy to carry by messengers. Here is an example of quipu. Sometimes, they contained a few strands and sometimes they contained up to 2,000 strands!



Archaeologists also believe that quipu was used to remember poems and epic legends. But the real meaning of quipu has not been discovered yet.

Other cultures use colored strings, knots and beads to communicate as well. The wampam strings of North American Indians recorded agreements and important events.

What does the strand that the woman in the head scarf puts into Andre’s pocket have to do with the illustration above? Can you imagine what it might mean? Do you think having this tied around his wrist is a good thing or a bad thing for Andre?



Lost Boys

Volume 2



The “Lost Boys of Sudan” are a group of more than 30,000 boys (and some girls, too) who were forced to leave their villages in the south of Sudan because of intense violence in the region. Since the mid-1980s, Sudan, which is located in East Africa, has experienced a brutal civil war. Some people are fighting for religious reasons; some are fighting against other ethnic or regional groups. Children, some as young as three years-old, walked hundreds, even thousands, of miles in search of peace, only to spend years in a refugee camp in neighboring Kenya. Relief workers named the children the Lost Boys after the boys who ran from cruel adults in the story **Peter Pan**.

Today, thousands of Lost Boys (and girls) are resettled in the United States. Most of the Lost Boys are from the Dinka or Nuer tribes of Southern Sudan, where hundreds of villages have been burned, livestock stolen and families killed. The violence in Sudan continues today, particularly in the Darfur region in the western part of Sudan.

How do you think Mr. Ahmed’s life is different because of his experiences? Why do you think he knows and clearly tries to help Wireman? Write the story of what happened to Mr. Ahmed between the time he came to America and the time he began teaching at Andre’s high school.



Homeless Kids

Volume 2



Every day in America, there are at least 800,000 people who are without a home. That adds up to about 200,000 kids. The fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families with children. Homeless kids are more likely to get sick and more likely to be hungry.



Have you known anyone who is homeless? Have you been homeless yourself?

Can you think of any ways we can stop the problem of homelessness in America? What things can you do in your community, in your neighborhood, or in your school?

Mysteries to Solve

Volume 1

There are a lot of mysteries in Wireman. For example, look at this close-up of Andre's shoe from the cover of Volume 1, Issue 1. Can you read it? What do you think it means?



Look at this image of what seems to be an old homeless man on the street. He'll come back in a future issue. He is a veteran of World War II and, because of his culture, he learned to talk in a special code. In fact, the word "besh" might be used to describe one of the main characters in the story. Do you know who it is?



If Maya does not talk, why does she have one of these?



How does Wireman know about this?

What is Maya trying to say to Andre about this photo?



Why are these young kids out alone at night? Wouldn't they be scared?

Pick one of these mysteries and write about it. What do you know from the comic? What do you think will happen?

Here are some places on the web that will help you learn more about the characters in Wireman.

- Learn about communicating in American Sign Language (ASL) at:
<http://www.aslpro.com>
(click on 'video dictionary' and see if you learn how to talk with Maya.)
- Learn about Mr. Ahmed's culture at:
<http://www.sudan.net/society.shtml>
- Learn about personal protection canines at:
http://www.worldwidecanine.com/ppdogs_wwc.htm
- Learn about creating your own radio station at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amateur_radio_station
- See the **Philadelphia Wireman sculptures** here:
<http://www.fleisher-ollmangallery.com>
(click on 'artists' and then 'Philadelphia Wireman')



Wireman on the Web

Volume 2

You can translate the dots and dashes on Vol. 2, Issue 3, page #6 at

<http://morsecode.scphillips.com/jtranslator.html>

Learn more about quipu at

<http://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/museum/laarch/inca/quipue.html>

Learn more about coping with your sadness around losing a friend to violence at

http://www.cvvc.org/HealingWellness/coping_tips_sugg.php

Learn more about the conflict today in Sudan at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darfur_conflict

Learn about the experience of a Lost Girl come to America at

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-23-lost-girls_N.htm

Meet the Wireman artists at

<http://www.wiremancomics.com/artists>

Learn more about tying knots at

<http://www.animatedknots.com>

(you need to scroll down and click on 'knot list')

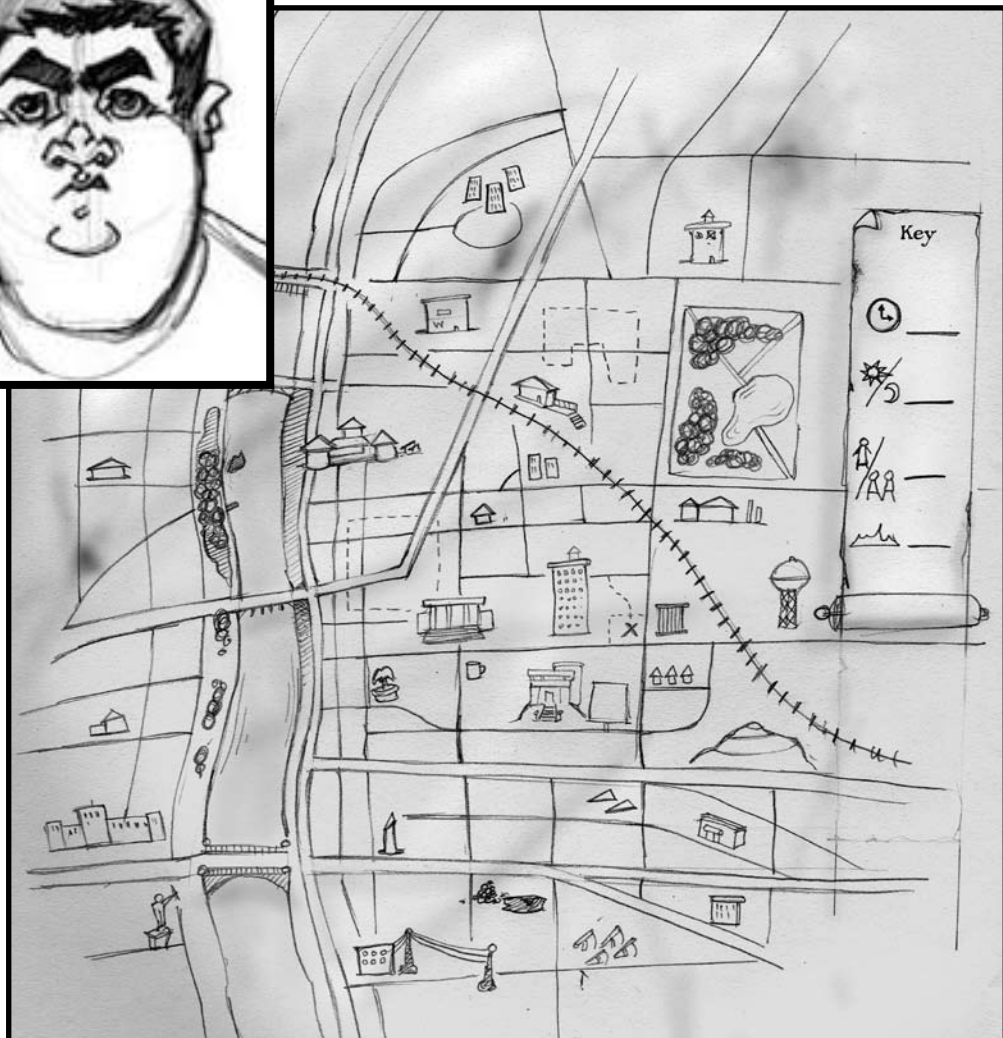
Learn more about kids who are homeless at

http://www.familyhomelessness.org/pdf/fact_children.pdf



WIREMAN:

Faces & Places



Wireman Characters Early On

Both the artist and the author go through a process of figuring out what the characters will look like. Here are some early sketches. Can you tell who is who?



Compare these early studies with the way the characters look now. Do you like the way it is in the comic? If so, why? If not, why not? Which character didn't make it into the comic at all?

The Backstory

Volume 2



Look at the storyline about Jenny on pages 4-7 in issue 1 of Volume 2. Then, think about Jenny from issue 1 of Volume 1. How does knowing about her home life change the way you feel about Jenny?

Knowing Jenny's business is called knowing the backstory. What is your backstory? Who knows your backstory? Jenny doesn't share hers with just anybody. Only close friends.

Sometimes, like when your mom or dad get sent to prison, everybody knows your backstory whether you want them to or not. That can be really uncomfortable. Every character in **Wireman** has a backstory. You can pick any one of them and imagine what it might be. Make sure it fits with what we know about them.



Create a Character

In future issues, you will meet many new characters. A comic book world always has room for new characters. Create a new character for **Wireman** here. Your character could be a high school teen, a younger brother or sister, a mysterious stranger or an adult who enters the story. What does your character look like? Can you draw him or her? What are his or her deepest thoughts, feelings and fears? Who will your character hang out with? How does your character change the story?

Who's Who in Volume 2

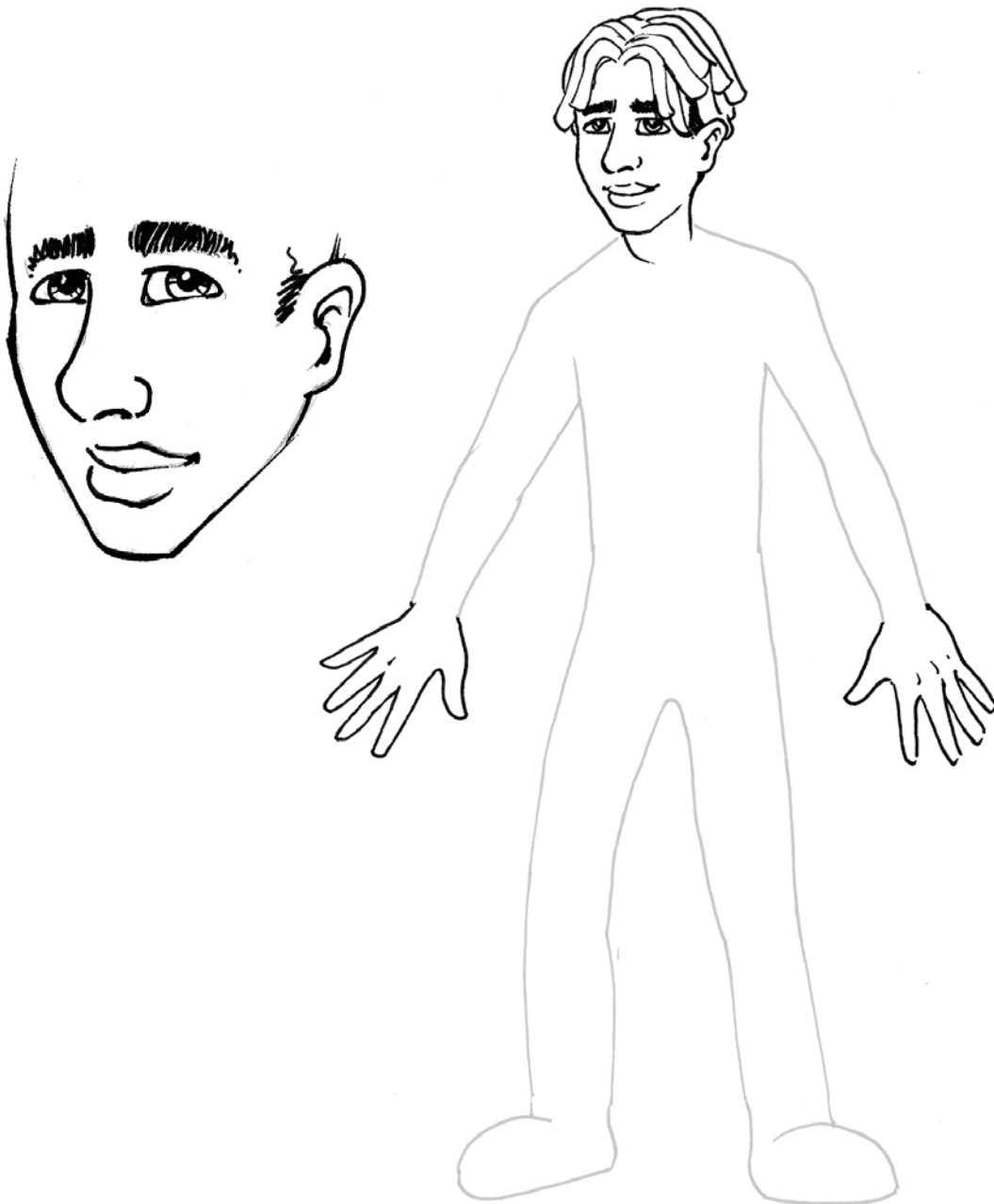
This character was created for **Wireman**, Volume 2. On the left is the first version of her. On the right, you'll see the finished version. Which do you like better? What is it about her that makes you feel the way you do?



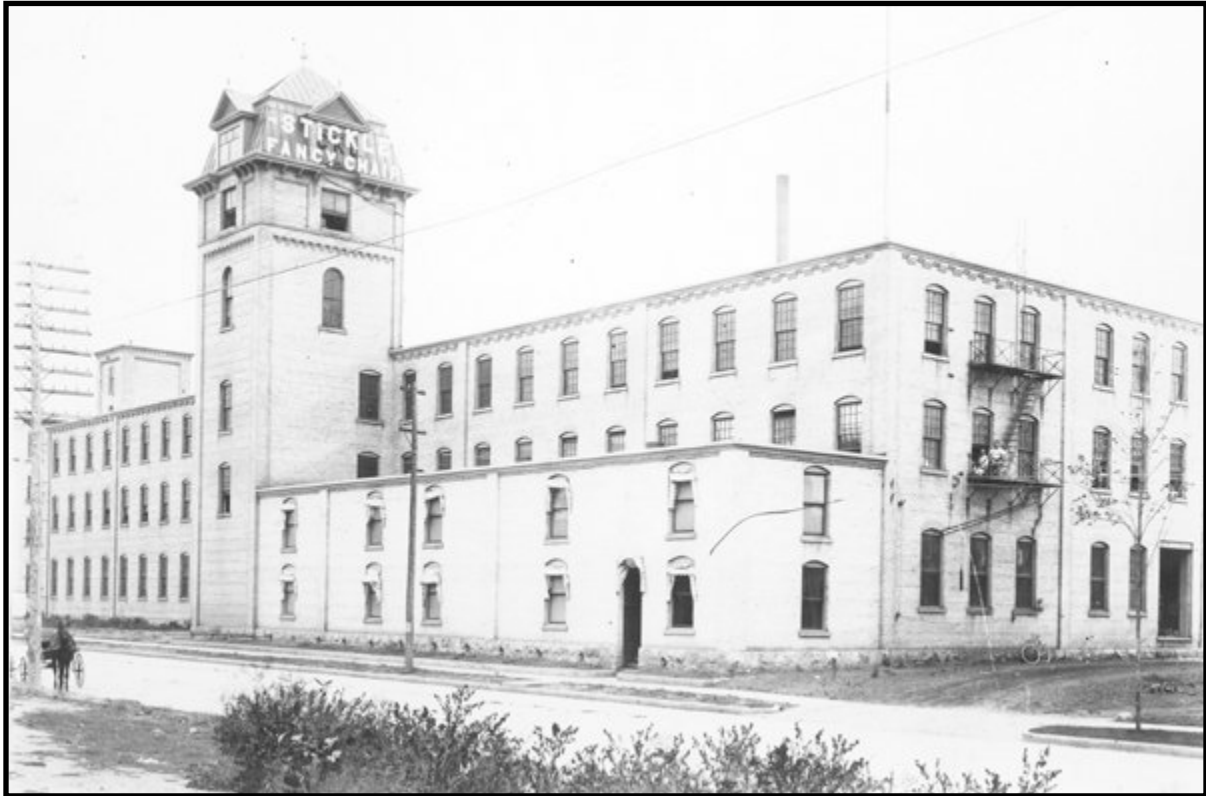
Do You Agree Andre Needs a Makeover?

Volume 2

Our story consultants blasted us over Andre's lame clothes. We decided to write his makeover into the story. Do you agree Andre needs a new look? If so, what look should he get? Dress him in clothes that are most popular today. Feel free to add more accessories in the space at the bottom. You can use the head on the left to draw Andre with a new hair style.



An Unconventional Art Studio



Wireman is set in an old furniture factory much like this old Stickley factory in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While some of these factories have been divided up into smaller businesses, some sit empty and abandoned.

Hmmmm...good place for an artist to work?

What would make a building like this good for Wireman's uses? What wouldn't be good about it? Can you think of some old buildings in your city where Wireman could work in secret?

The Old Water Plant

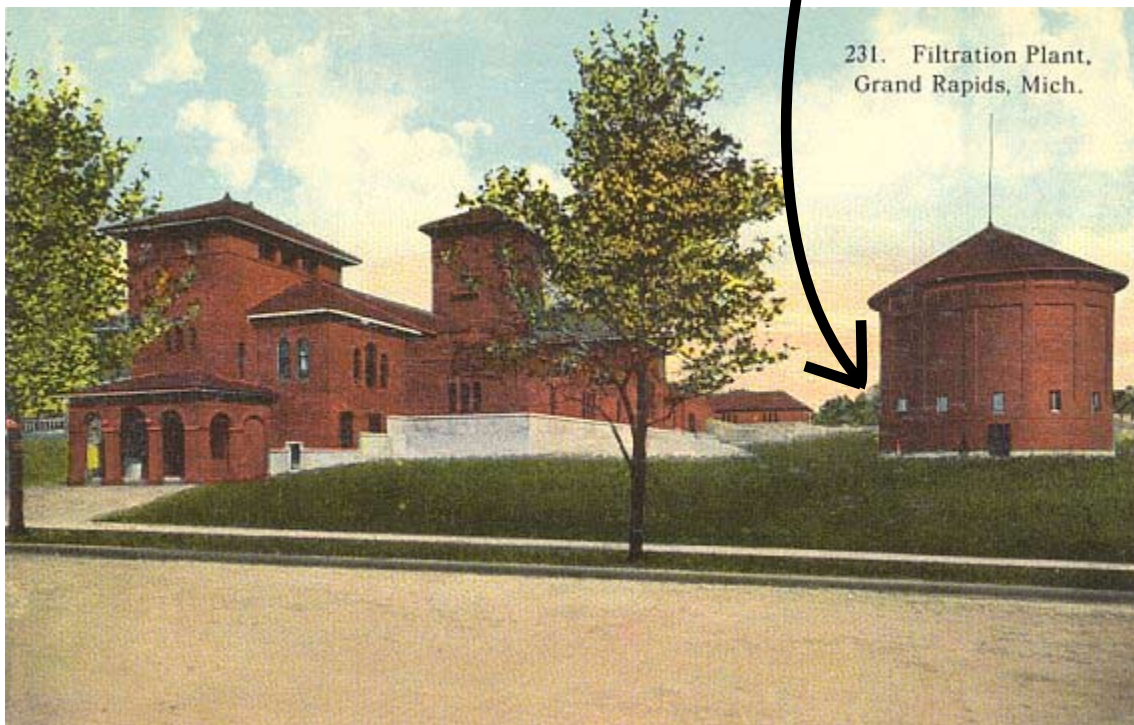
Volume 1

This water plant was being restored when **Wireman**, Volume 1, was written. It is located in Grand Rapids, MI, on Monroe Street, just north of Leonard (can you find Monroe on the map on page 13? The water plant is north of I-96). Our lead artist, Brian Cook, wanted to know what it looked like inside so he could draw the scene just the way it should be. He stuck his camera in a broken window and clicked some photos.

Today, the water plant houses offices, but in the early 1900's when the photo below was taken, it was the place where water was made clean for drinking. There is still space available. How could this space be used in the comic? How would you use it?

Brian stuck his
camera in this
window

Bats flew out
...scary!



Victims of Violence

Volume 2

In **Wireman**, we respect victims of violence by showing all the ways a violent act affects the people close to the victim. Look at the frames below. Reflect on what you know about the violence that has happened both in the comic and even before the story begins.



Do you know someone who's been the victim of violence? Can you tell that story? How were you changed as a result? How were others around you changed? How could this tragedy have been avoided?

Please accept our sympathies for your loss.

Girl Gangs

Volume 2

Our story consultants gave us an earful about girl gangs! We learned that when a member of a girl gang is out to get you, she might fight you or she might try other ways to upset you. Why does Fresca get mad at Maya? How does Fresca get her revenge? Do you think she's finished? Can you make a list of the ways girls are mean to each other at your school? What is the best way to deal with a girl bully?



Meet Erica and Lindsey

Volume 2

Our story consultants wanted us to introduce singing into the story, so we created the characters of Lindsey and Erica. As you can see from these photographs, Lindsey and Erica are based on real people. And they are wonderful singers that Sue met when she was producing a musical based on her picture book, Bessie Smith and the Night Riders.



One magical night in December, Erica's 18th birthday, we recorded the song you can hear at www.wiremancomics.com. Erica and Lindsey graduated from Ottawa Hills High School in May, 2007, so it was like a reunion as the girls' music teachers, Vanessa Allen and Debra Perry, were there. These accomplished women worked with Lindsey and Erica to produce the beautiful song, originally "Grateful," sung by the gospel group Mary Mary. These are some really talented women! Debra is founder of Majestic Praise and CEO of JointHeir Music Studios. Vanessa Allen is a professional singer and coach. While Debra produced the song from the sound booth, Vanessa helped fill in with the chorus and coached the girls on the tricky parts.

If you would like to see the studio where we recorded, visit <http://www.myspace.com/jointheirmusic>

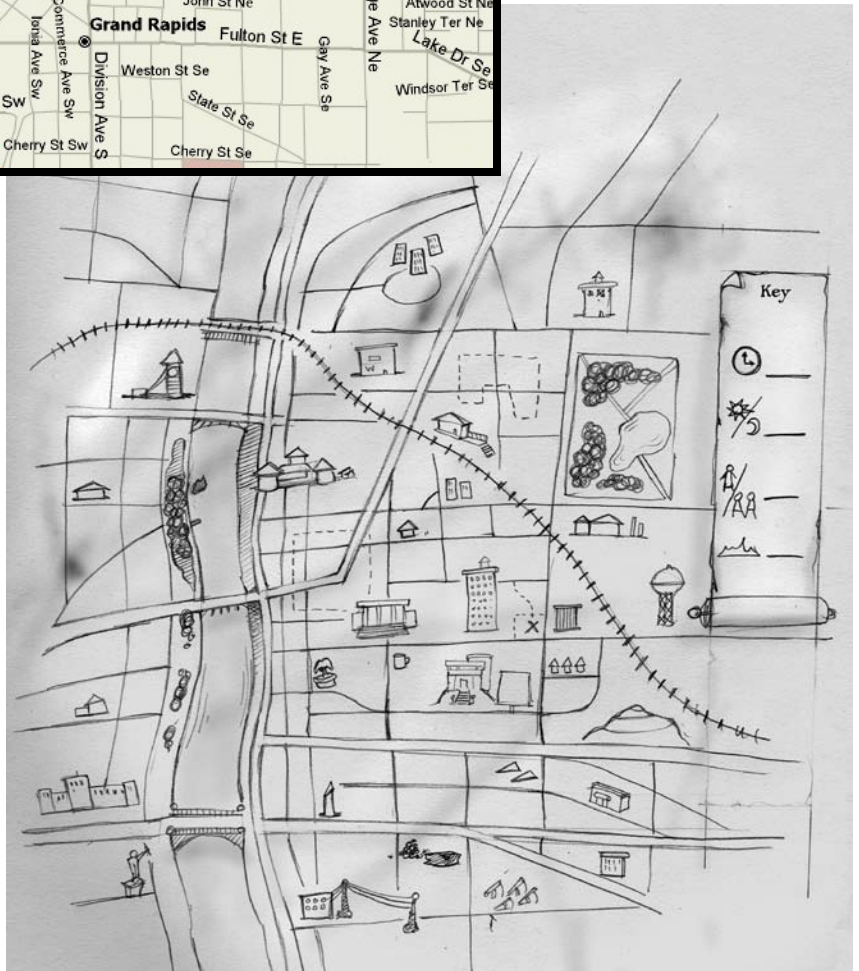
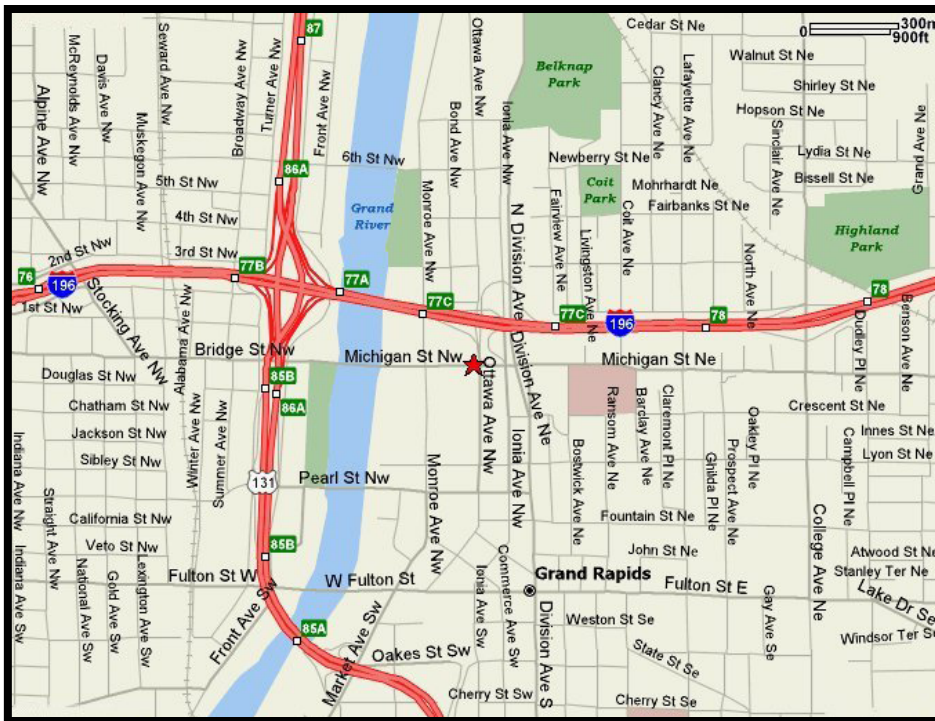
If you need encouragement, download this song. It's so beautiful. You can see why we think Lindsey and Erica are going to be great professional singers!

What did Erica and Lindsey think about being characters in a comic book? They think it's cool, but they wanted to know what the artists did with their curves, of which they are very proud. As you must know by now, we don't always get it right here at **Wireman**.



Where Does Wireman Live?

Look at these two maps. One is of the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and one is of the made-up city of Grand River, Michigan, where Wireman lives. Can you imagine where some new scene in the comic will take place? What will happen there?



WIREFORMAN:

Test your WI-Q



A Story in Pictures

Volume 1

Storytellers often use sketches to help them remember the high points of a story. Using these frames from Volume 1, Issue 1, can you retell the story of what happens to Andre in the first issue?



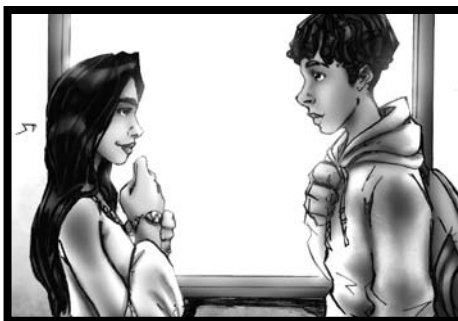
Mixing it up

Volume 1

This is a little harder. Now, you have to put the frames in order. They come from all four comics. If you're a real pro, you can put them in order (after the # sign) and indicate what issue they came from. We've given you one hint. **Good luck!**



7 Issue 3



_____ Issue _____



_____ Issue _____



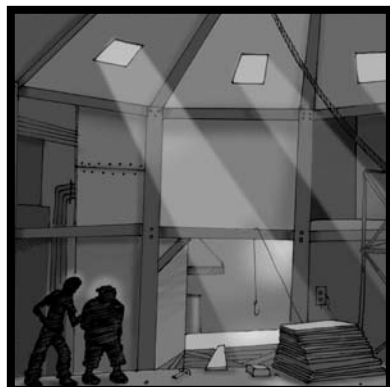
_____ Issue _____



_____ Issue _____



_____ Issue _____



_____ Issue _____



_____ Issue _____



_____ Issue _____

Wireman Challenge

Look at the characters below. Beneath each picture, write what you think is the characters' greatest challenge. Also, what skill or personality trait would you give this character to help them in the future?



Challenge

Skill I would give



Challenge

Skill I would give



Challenge

Skill I would give



Challenge

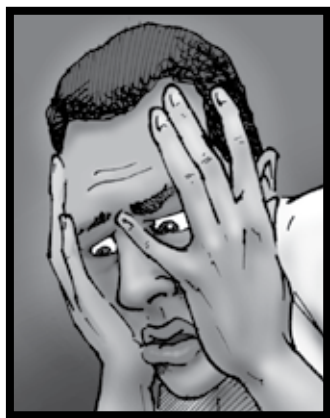
Skill I would give

Draw yourself in the blank box. What is your greatest challenge? What skill or personality trait would you like to have to help you in the future?



Knowing Your Characters Inside and Out

Choose a character from the pictures provided and write his or her name below. Under that, write three words that describe that character. Now, go back to the comics and find where you got your ideas for those three words. How does the character act, what does the character say or think, that gives you these ideas?



I chose: _____

1. _____

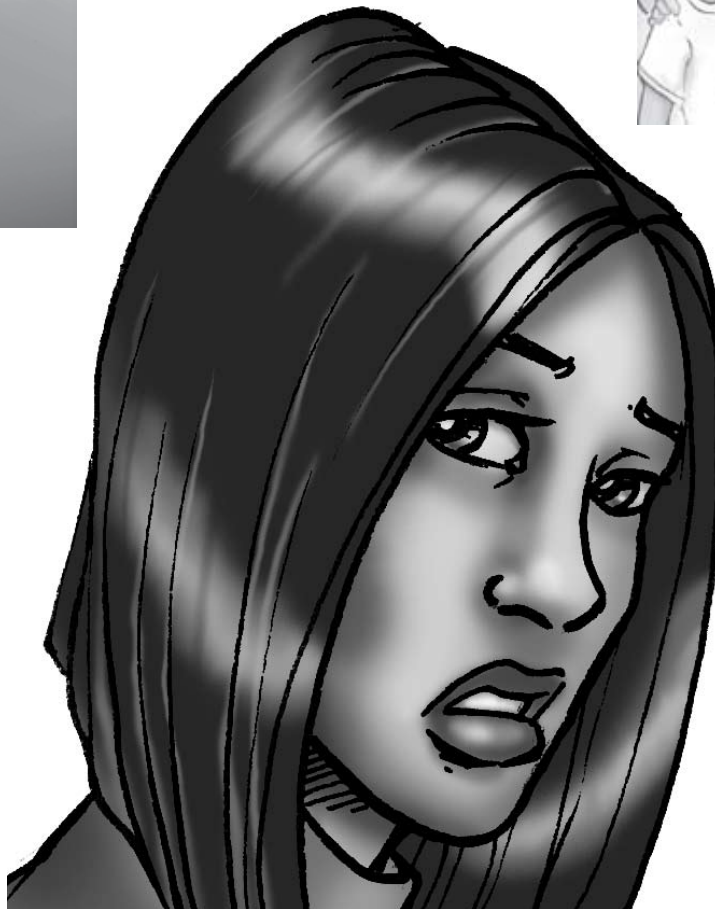
2. _____

3. _____

What is Going on Here?

Volume 2

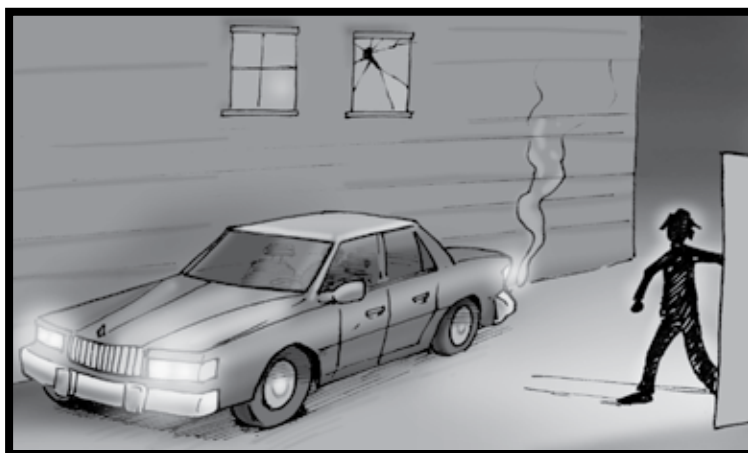
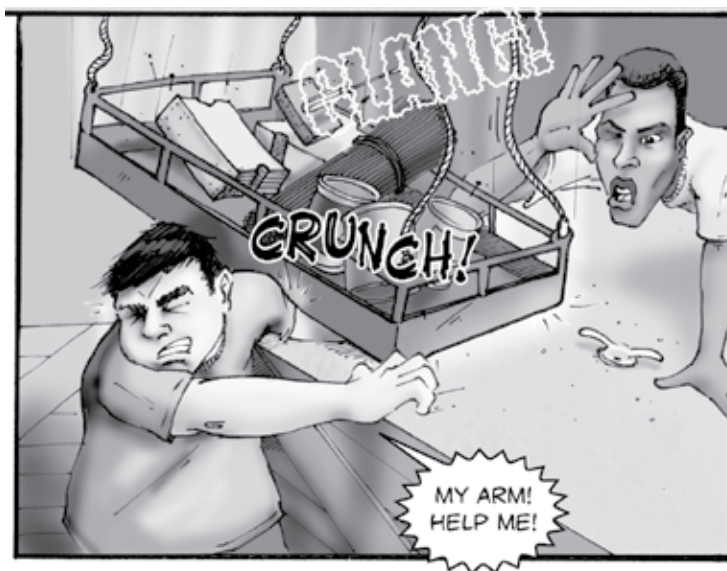
On the last page of Volume 2, Issue3, Andre's mom says, "That's right...It's all coming back." She gets very upset with Andre and orders him never to see those people again. Spend time going through what you know about each character. How do you see them fitting together? What do they all have in common? Do you know what is going on?



On the Edge of Your Seat

Volume 1

From the scenes below, choose the one you think is most dramatic, scary or suspenseful. Explain how you got this impression.



100 Most Common Words in the English Language

If you can read Wireman, Issues 1-4, you know the 100 most common words in the English language. Wow! **That makes up 50% of all the words you have to read in English.** Can you read this whole list?

- 1) Can you guess which issue has the most words?
- 2) Which issue has the least words?
- 3) Which two issues have about the same number of words?

Check your answers at the bottom of this page.

a 1 2 3 4	I 1 2 3 4	that 1 2 3 4
about 2 3	if 1 3 4	the 1 2 3 4
all 2 3 4	in 1 2 3 4	their 4
an 3	into 2 3	them 2 3
and 1 2 3 4	its 1 2 3 4	then 2 3 4
are 1 2 3 4	is 1 2 3 4	there 1 2 3 4
as 3 4	it 1 2 3 4	these 2 3
at 3 4	like 1 2 3 4	they 2 3 4
be 1 2 4 3	long 2 3 4	this 1 2 3 4
been 1 3 4	look 1 2 3 4	time 2 3 4
but 1 2 3 4	made 2	to 1 2 3 4
by 3	make 1 2 3 4	two 1
called 2	many 3 4	up 2 3 4
can 1 2 3	may 2	use 2
come 2 3 4	more 2 3 4	was 1 2
could 3 4	my 1 2 3 4	water 2 3
day 2 3 4	no 1 2 4	way 2 3 4
did 1 2 3	not 1 3 4	we 1 3 4
do 1 2 3 4	now 1 2 3 4	were 2
down 2	number 3 4	when 3 4
each 3 4	of 1 2 3 4	which 3 4
find 2 3 4	oil 2	who 1 2 3 4
first 3 4	on 2 3	will 1 2 3 4
for 1 2 3 4	one 1 2 3 4	with 1 3 4
from 2 3 4	or 2 3 4	words 1
get 2 3	other 2 3	would 2 3 4
go 1 3 4	out 2 3	write 2
had 3	part 3 4	you 1 2 3 4
has 1 4	people 3 4	your 2 3 4
have 1 2 3 4	said 3 4	
he 1 2 3	see 1 2 3 4	
her 1	she 1	
him 1 2 3 4	so 1 2 3 4	
his 2	some 2	
how 2 3 4	than 4	

3) 2 - 2 - 71, 4 - 68
2) 1 - 47
1) 3 - 80

Top 300 High Frequency Words

Volume 1

If you can read Wireman, Volume 2, issues 1-4, you know the top 300 most common words in the English language. Now we're cooking! That makes up 65% of all the words you have to read in English. Can you read this whole list?

above	chose	hard	men	read	thing
add	city	head	might	really	think
after	country	hear	mile	right	those
again	cut	help	miss	river	thought
air	different	here	most	run	three
almost	does	high	mother	same	through
along	don't	home	mountain	saw	together
also	earth	house	move	say	too
always	eat	idea	much	school	took
America	end	important	must	sea	tree
animal	enough	Indian	name	second	try
another	even	it's	near	seem	turn
answer	every	just	need	sentence	under
any	example	keep	never	set	until
around	eye	kind	new	should	us
ask	face	know	next	show	very
away	family	land	night	side	walk
back	far	large	off	small	want
because	farm	last	often	something	watch
before	father	late	old	sometimes	well
began	feet	learn	once	song	went
begin	few	leave	only	soon	where
being	follow	left	open	sound	while
below	food	let	our	spell	white
between	found	letter	over	start	why
big	four	life	own	state	without
book	girl	light	page	still	work
both	give	line	paper	stop	world
boy	good	list	picture	story	year
came	got	little	place	study	young
car	great	live	plant	such	
carry	group	man	play	take	
change	grow	me	point	talk	
children	hand	mean	put	tell	

They're Just Comics, They Don't Teach Anything.



HEY!

There are a lot of people who think comic books aren't a great way to learn to read.

Hello? We think differently. For example, people think that comic books are simple and that the pictures don't invite children to develop their imagination. We're going to show you a way to think about comics that proves these people wrong. Here's the example that Scott McCloud gives us. Think of a trapeze artist. What happens between the time they let go of one bar and grab for another?

There is a moment of hanging in space, right? Well, that's like what happens between the time one frame ends and another one begins. Your sparky brain has to fill in the information. Look at the examples below.



See what we mean? There's no goofing off when you read comics. It's hard work. How can it be hard work when it's so fun? Can you think of three other ways that comics help kids learn?

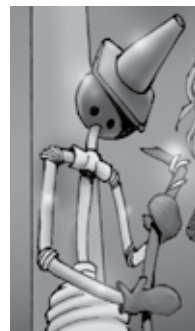
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Make Your Own Wireman Sculpture

Here is a list of all the things that the real Wireman put in his art.

plastic	food packages	nuts
bolts	leather	tape
nails	rubber	batteries
eyeglasses	pens	glass
coins	foil	umbrella parts
toys	reflectors	jewelry

Our character Wireman makes art that looks like this:



Look at the objects below. What kind of art would you make out of them? Can you draw it?



WIREFORMAN:

**Getting it Right for our
Readers**



Creating the Look of Wireman Comics

Volume 1

Here at **Wireman**, we looked at hundreds of comic books to see which ones made us want to open the comic just by looking at the front cover. Below, you'll see two that we liked. Can you tell which **Wireman** covers they inspired? How are they alike? How do they make you feel like something is going to happen?



It's easy to be dramatic when using guns and violence, but we're not into that. We do it the hard way. Could you draw a cover without any gory stuff that illustrates a dramatic moment in the book? What moment would you pick, and why do you think it would be good for a cover?

Cover it Up

Volume 2

Look at the four covers below. We had another long session to decide who to feature and what part of the story to highlight on the issues in Volume 2. Can you guess which cover has attracted the most attention? Choose your favorite cover and tell us below why you think so.



Answer: Issue 2 with Fresca on the cover has attracted the most attention. We're not sure why. Our guess is that she's close up and has a strong expression on her face.

What our Readers Want

Look at the list below and you'll see what kids want to see **most** in future **Wireman** issues. Can you make a graph from the information?



Boys

100% Friendships
97% Fantasy
89% Sports
92% Future
94% cars
88% battles



Girls

100% music
97% brothers and sisters
89% relationships
88% sad stories
94% cars

If you were going to write another issue based on these votes, what scene would appeal to both boys and girls?

These are the things readers **least** wanted to read about in future issues.



Boys

20% Wildlife
27% Superheroes
29% Issues of Race
31% Time travel
33% Fathers and Sons



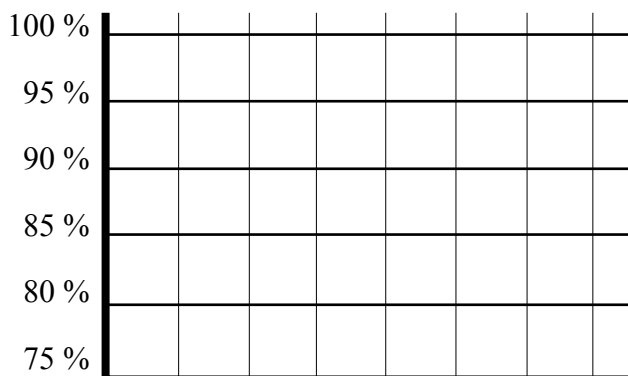
Girls

10% plants
12% cars
14% cops
18% fixing stuff
23% dogs

If something is not popular, do you leave it out all together? How do you decide?

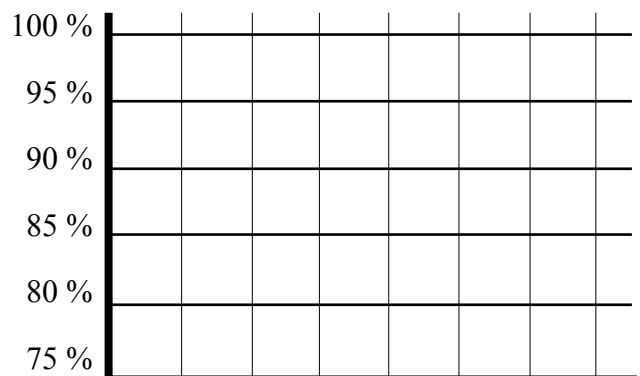
Do **you** go with the crowd? Find out if your opinions are swayed by what others think and fill out the **Wireman** interest sheet on the next page for yourself. Make a new graph based on your class answers.

Boys



Most Popular Subjects

Girls



Most Popular Subjects

What would you like to see in Wireman?

Hunting	Sports
Spies	Brothers/sisters
Fashion	Friendships
Cooking	Plants
Honor	Loyalty
Survival skills—in the wild	Survival skills—on the street
Battles	Martial arts
Codes	Gangs
Love relationships	Mothers/children
Fathers/children	Superheroes
Fantasy	Future
Inventing	Cars
Dogs	History
Courage	Cops
Technology/computers	Other languages
Other cultures	Funny stories
Sad stories	Adventure stories
Time travel	Fixing stuff
Music	Pop culture
Issues of race	Other:
Girl gangs	
Wildlife	

Looking ahead...

What are three questions you hope to have answered by upcoming **Wireman** issues?

1.

2.

3.

Where do you see the story going from here?

Who are your favorite **Wireman** characters, and what should happen to them next?

1.

2.

3.

What Our Readers Want

Volume 2

Now that you've read Volume 1 and 2, go back and look at results of the surveys on page 37. What did the girls and boys say they wanted most in Volume 2?

How do you think we did?

What did we cover in detail?

What do we still need to work on?

Write a Letter

This is what a business letter looks like. You put the school's address on the left hand side. Then, you put the date and then the address of the person you're sending the letter to.

Wayside School
123 Crazy Street
Anywhere, MI 48904

February 1, 2008

(you put more or less space here depending on how long your letter is)

Street Read Publishing
Sue Stauffacher
1080 Knapp Street, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear Ms. Stauffacher:

(in the body of the letter you should describe your experience of reading Wireman. If you would like to keep reading Wireman, tell Sue why. What questions do you want answered? Why do you think Wireman is the sort of literature kids should read at school?)

Finish your letter with something like this,

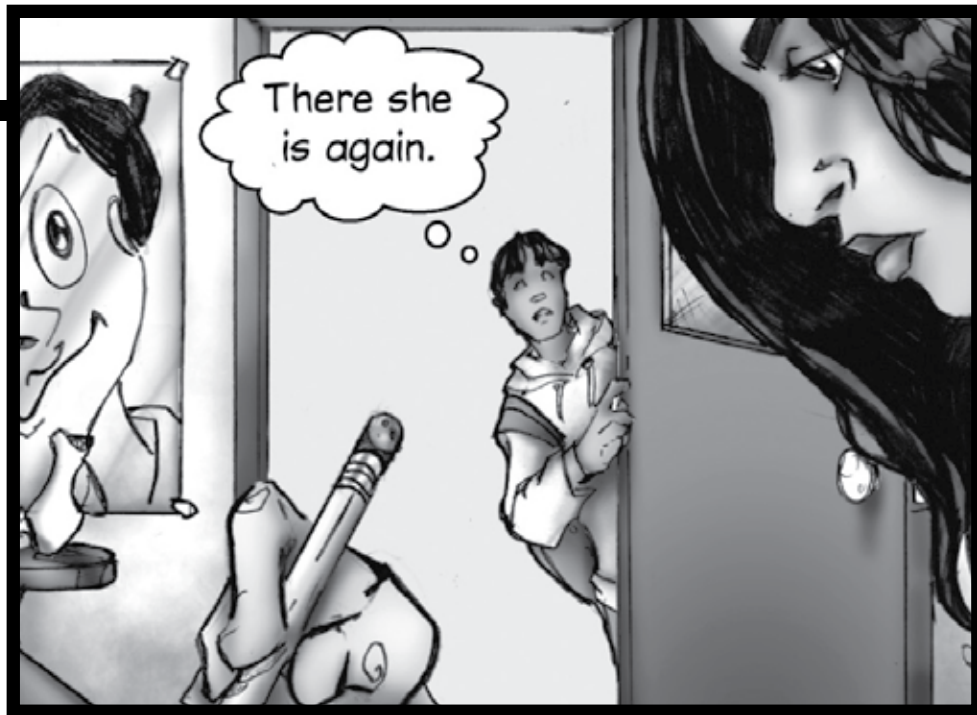
Sincerely,

Your name *(and then you sign just above it in your best cursive)*

WIREMAN

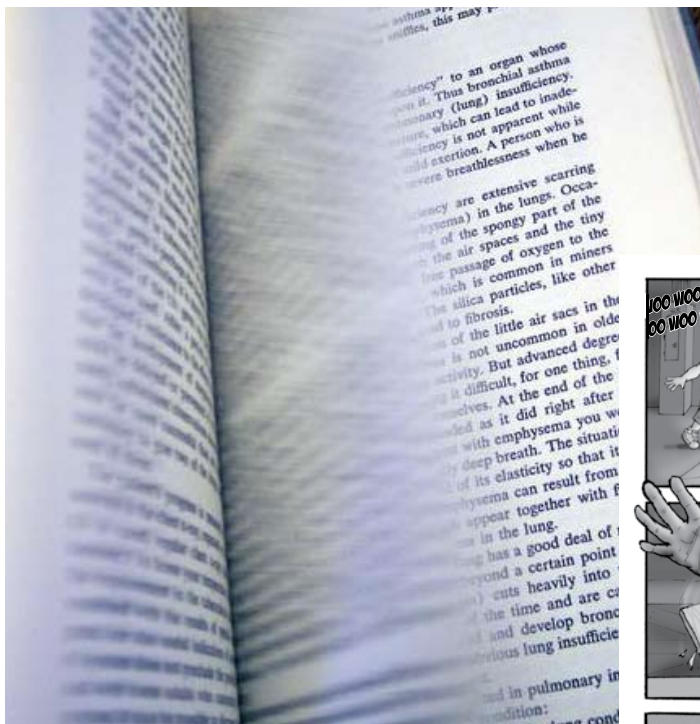
Comic Books :

You can make them, too!



What Makes a Comic a Comic?

Before we take you through the process of how comics are made, let's think about them for a minute. What makes a comic a comic? Can you define it? How are comics different from stories without pictures? What can comics do that stories without pictures can't? What can stories without pictures do that comics can't? If you had your pick, what kind of story would you want to read, one with pictures or without, and why?



Meet the Artists

Below, you'll find the artistic team that created Volume 2.

Volume 2



Brian Cook

- Layouts, penciling, inking, grayscale for Volume 1, issue 3&4. Covers for all issues of volume 1 & 2.



Cang Du

- Penciling and inking for various pages in volume 2, issues 1 & 3.



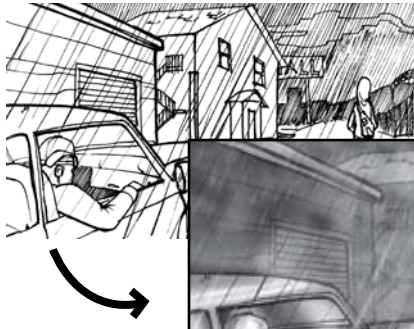
Matt Geerling

- Penciling and character design for volume 2, issues 1-4.



Salim Muhammed

- Penciling for Mr. Ahmed's scene in volume 2, Issue 3.



Jennifer Roon

- Grayscale and effects for all volume 2 issues.



Molly Corriveau

- Artistic Director for Volume 1 and 2.

Two of the artists, Jenn and Brian, are recent graduates of Kendall College of Art & Design. The other three, Cang, Matt and Salim, are students at Kendall who graduated from Union High School, right here in Grand Rapids in 2006. Molly Corriveau heads the Illustration Department at Kendall.

Coming Up With the Ideas — Our Story Consultants

So what's with all the names on the inside of each issue? These are probably some of the most important people in the development of the **Wireman** series. They're the kids, ages 6-19, who helped Sue shape the scripts and come up with the plot for the comic books. Sue learned early on that kids would want to read even more a story that felt very close to home, so she checked out the early art drafts and her scripts with kids in fourth grade, middle school after school programs, high school students, and locked-in juvenile offenders.

We changed this picture of Duane, for example, from one of being scared to one of being mad because Lindsey and Erica told her that Duane could not “lose face” in front of B.L.



Yahtophia pointed out that there was no reason for Duane and Esteven to go into the abandoned warehouse (since it was pretty much empty and in the middle of nowhere), so we added the part about them coming back to pick up “the stash.”

Phrases like “Dude’s too fat to lift,” and “This is whack,” were examples of the story consultants “brushing up” Sue’s language to make it seem more modern.

If not for our story consultants, **Wireman** would not be nearly as good as it is...what we say is true!

We couldn't do it without them!



How Comics Are Made — The Script

Comics can be made in different ways. Sometimes, the author and the artist are the same person. Sometimes, there are many authors and many artists. Here are the steps we take to make **Wireman**. The first thing that happens is the author, Sue Stauffacher, writes a script. The script helps the artist to ‘see’ how Sue visualizes the story. There is a key on the next page to help you understand the script. Here is part of a script from **Wireman**, Volume 1, issue 3, page 4. Compare this to the drawings on page 49:

PAGE 4 [7 PANELS]

- [1] PERSPECTIVE FROM ABOVE. ANDRE IS WALKING TOWARD US, BUT GLANCING BACK, FROM LEFT BACKGROUND. HE IS WEARING AN OVER-SIZED JACKET. THIS SHOULD FEEL LIKE SCENE IN ISSUE 1, PAGE 11, PANEL 6, BUT THE BUILDING IS SUPPOSED TO BE A HOUSE. ONLY THERE IS A **GATED OPENING IN THE FENCE** AND AROUND IT HANGS A LOOP OF WIRE LIKE ON MAYA’S WRIST.
1. Caption: Next Day—After School
2. Andre (TB): I think I gave Duane and Esteven the slip.
- [2] ANDRE IS CLOSER TO FENCE NOW. THE SIGN ‘BEWARE OF DOGS’ IS CLEARLY VISIBLE TO HIS RIGHT. THE HOME IS IN THE BACKGROUND, BUT WE CAN JUST MAKE OUT A FACE—MAUDE—IN ONE OF THE WINDOWS.
3. Duane (from offstage..electric panel): Hey, Fish! Where you been all day?
- [3] PERSPECTIVE FROM ABOVE. **ANDRE** IS UP AGAINST FENCE. ESTEVEN AND DUANE ARE CLOSING IN FROM EITHER SIDE OF PANEL. ANDRE’S HEAD IS CLOSE TO THE WIRE LOOP. IT IS VIBRATING.
4. My leg. I can feel that ring!
- [4] CLOSE-UP OF **ANDRE AND THE LOOP**. HE IS GETTING THAT THIS IS HIS FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO TRUST.
5. Andre (TB): That’s just like Maya’s bracelet...-- But those dogs could eat me alive.
- [5] BACK TO **FACING DUANE AND ESTEVEN**. ANDRE IS FACING THEM. PERSPECTIVE IS FROM OVER THEIR SHOULDERS. THEY ARE STRIDING TO THE CENTER OF THE PANEL IN A MENACING POSTURE.
6. Andre (TB): This is whack. What am I supposed to choose?
- [6] CLOSER ON **ANDRE, THE SIGN, THE LOOP**. HE IS DECIDING.
- No copy.
- [7] HE **VAULTS THE FENCE** JUST AS THE DOGS ARE VISIBLE AROUND THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE
- No copy.

How Comics Are Made — The Script Key

Every writer makes his or her script a little differently. Here is the key for Sue's script.

BOLDFACE

When Sue puts things in all capital letters, she is giving directions to the artist. When she makes the capital letters in bold, that means she wants what is bold to be the focus of the picture. It doesn't have to be the center (it often won't), she just wants the artist to know what she hopes the reader will take away from the picture. If there's no bold, then the whole picture has equal value.

EXAMPLE:

ANDRE. LADDER IS SWAYING. **LOOKING DOWN.**

THOUGHT BUBBLES

When you see (TB) following a character, that means he is thinking the words rather than saying them aloud.

EXAMPLE:

2. Duane (TB): If they catch me this time, it's the county for sure.

DASHES

Dashes show where a line should be cut and continued on the next line. A broken line can give the feeling that time has passed.

EXAMPLE:

1. Andre: Am I supposed to go there? But why? - - Why at night?

SOUND EFFECTS

The phrase 'Sfx' tells the artist that a sound effect is to be placed in the panel.

EXAMPLE:

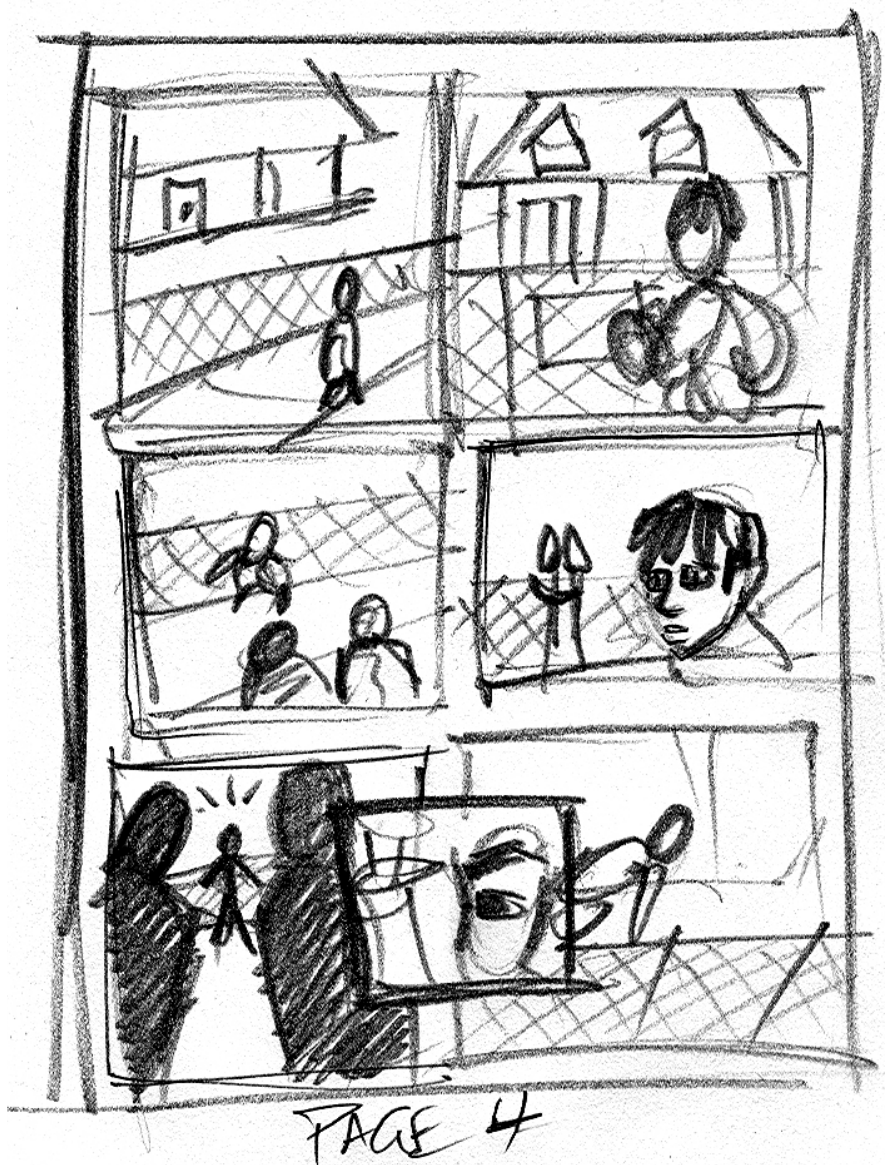
ESTEVEN TAKING A **BIG LEAP.** HIS HEAVY WEIGHT BENDS THE BOARD.

1. Sfx: Crrrack!

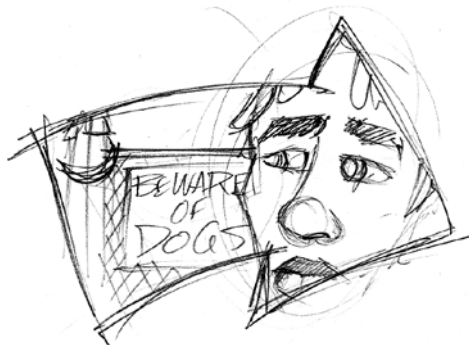
This is like the pre-writing stage.

How Comics Are Made — The Drawings

1. Using the script, the artist begins to lay out each panel of the comic using very simple line drawings, called “thumbnails.” Why do you think they call them that?



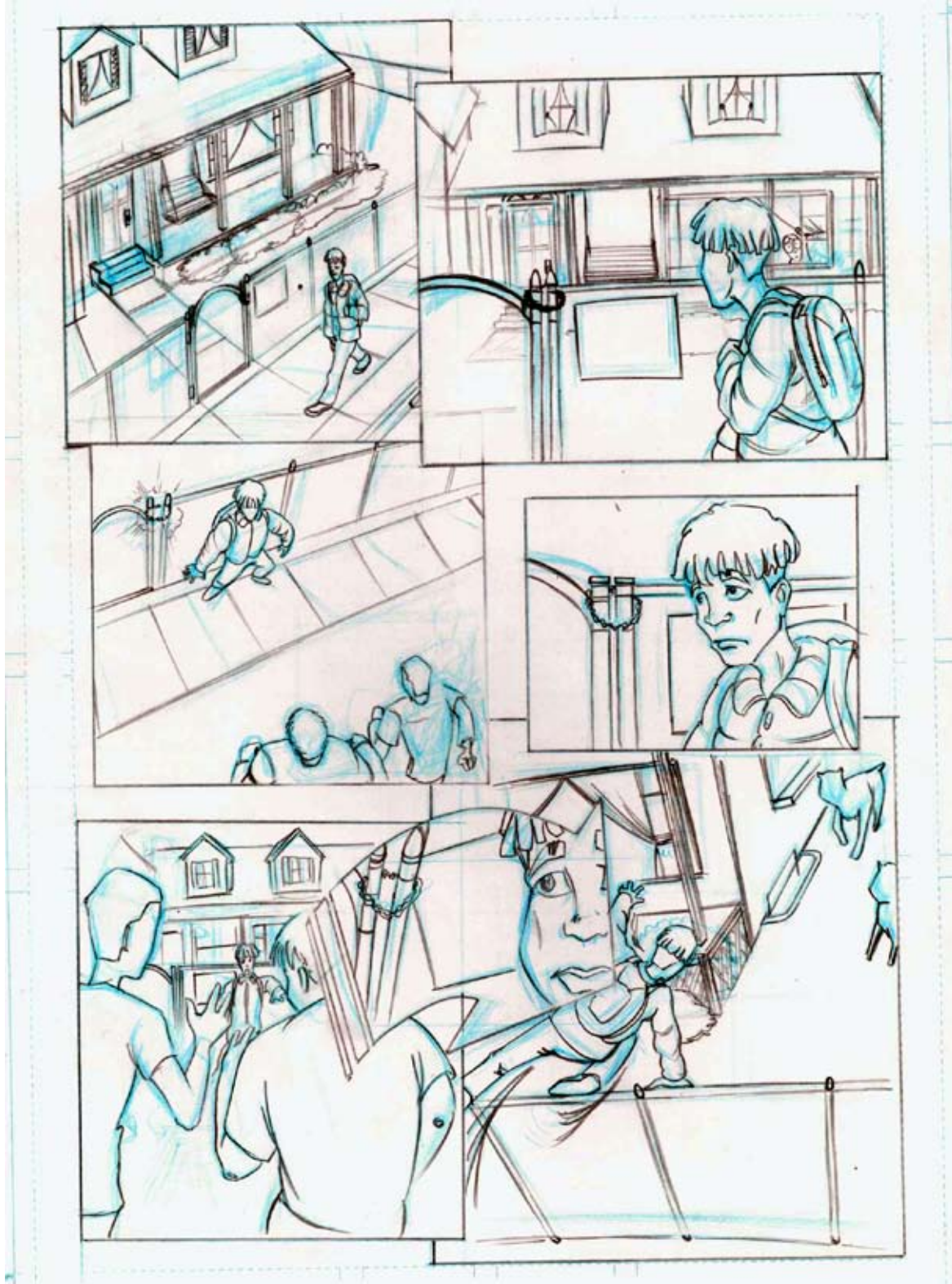
2. Sometimes, the artist has ideas for making the comic more clear. On the page 4 example, artist Brian Cook put Andre looking at the wire on Maude's fence inside an arrow instead of making it a whole panel.



Our drawings here are like rough paragraphs.

Pencils

3. After the layout is okayed by the author and the art director, the artist begins penciling in the panels in greater detail.



Inks

4. After the penciled sketches get okayed, the artist draws over them in ink.



Here, we are polishing our story to make it even clearer.

Grayscale

5. The pages are then scanned into a computer. From this point on, the rest of the artwork is done on the computer.

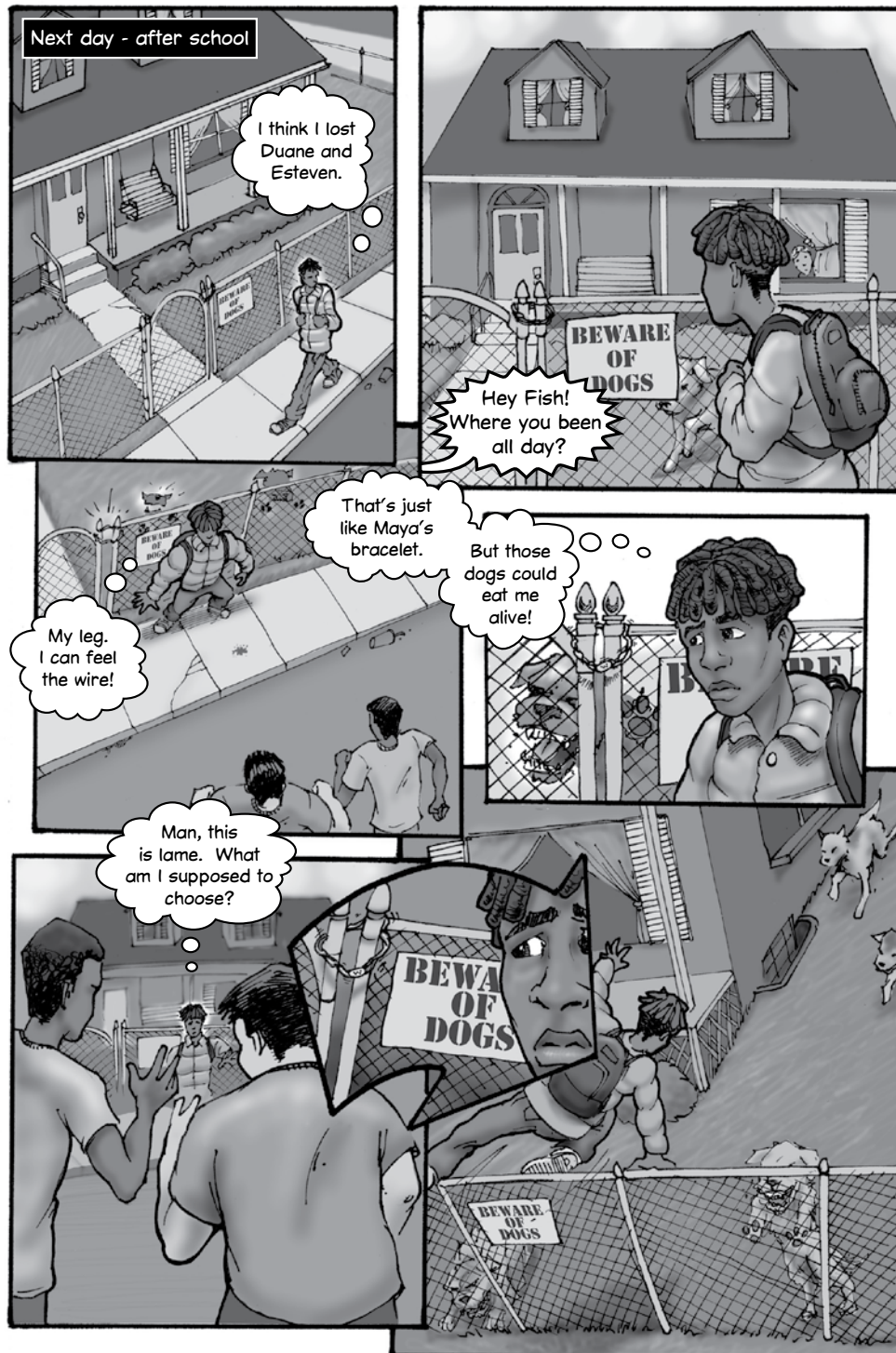
6. First, an artist puts in the gray scale, which helps to make the pictures seem more real.



Word Balloons

7. After that, the words are added.

8. Throughout the process, the author, artists and art director are looking over the pages and making small changes. Can you see some changes from the script to the finished copy? Why do you think those changes were made?



Sometimes, We Blow it

So we're not perfect. Even after lots and lots of checking and proofreading, we still make mistakes. This one was caught by Jennifer's husband, Andy Roon. He wondered why Esteven gave his belt to Andre when Andre walked through the metal detector first. Oops...zap!



Emily Oxford, our copy editor, found this one. Notice in this picture the woman is wearing two earrings. In this picture, one of the earrings has magically disappeared. We'd like to tell you it's all part of some brilliant master plan, but actually, it's an oops!

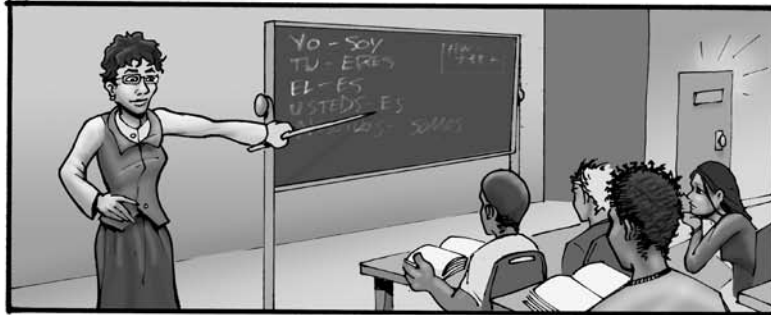


Making Your Own Comic Pages

When you draw pages for a comic book like **Wireman**, there are a lot of things to keep in mind. Here are some tips from **Wireman** artist Brian Cook.

1.

Make sure you draw your pictures near the middle of each panel. If the drawings are too close to the edge, they may be cut off by the printer.



2.

If characters are talking, make sure they look at each other. Even if they are in separate panels.



3.

Remember to leave room in your drawings for the word balloons.

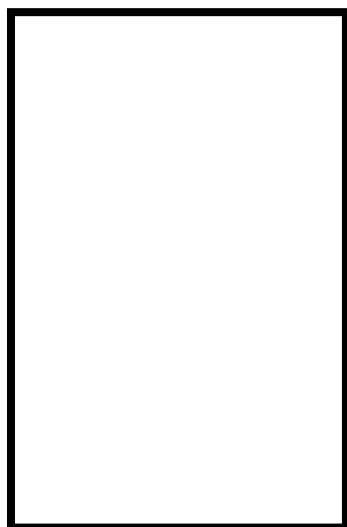
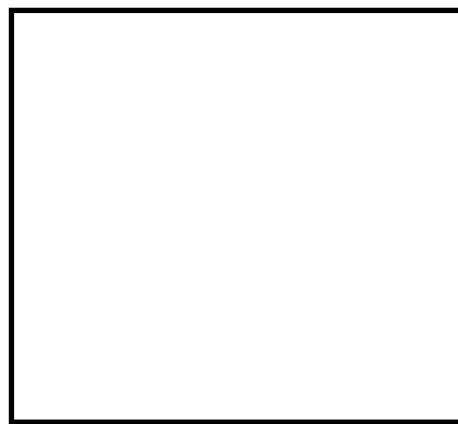


4.

Your comic seems to come alive when an image breaks through a frame.

Now, it's Your Turn!

Here are some blank panels. Now that you're an expert on how to make a good page, can you draw one of your own?



A Note from Artist Brian Cook

Greetings, inspiring artists! I would like to thank all of you for sending in your drawings to us at **Wireman**. Sue and I have looked over each drawing that you have sent in. You are all doing a fantastic job! I can see that there is real artistic talent out there, and I hope to see even more drawings from you in the future. If you guys keep practicing, you'll be putting me out of a job!

I wish I could have printed all the drawings that you sent in, but here are a few!



Keep up the good work! If you have a drawing you would like to send us, there are two ways you can do it:

By mail: **StreetRead Publishing**
1080 Knapp Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

By email: carey@wiremancomics.com

I hope to see more drawings soon!

WIREMAN:

For Teachers:



Welcome!



Welcome to the Teacher's Section, where we continue to help you further your academic goals using the **Wireman** comic series. Included in this section is a printout of the poster we provide on how to read a comic book or graphic novel. This will help you think about how comics are similar to and different from more traditional texts. You can have the students create a Venn diagram to help them think this through. We've provided one for you on page 59.

Next, is a study guide created by Sue and secondary language arts coordinator, Teisha Kothe, and assistant principal at Martin Luther King Leadership Academy, Carrie Tellerico. Teisha and Carrie work for the Grand Rapids Public Schools in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

We were particularly eager to use the graphic format to facilitate accountable talk in literature circles in the classroom. Accountable talk is classroom talk that is accountable to the learning. Kids need to practice conversations in which they back up their assertions, listen respectfully to other interpretations and work together to make meaning out of a text. Because there are so many clues and cues in the story, and we brainstormed questions that were so tantalizing, students will be more interested in unraveling the mystery of **Wireman** than of the basketball game Friday night or the latest entries on BeBo. You can let us know if we hit the mark! The tent folds that follow the study guide will help you assign roles to each student. Change the roles daily. An archaeologist digs for clues in the text; a forecaster makes predictions; a journalist records the findings; and a reporter reports the groups' findings back to the class.

Good luck and have fun!

How to Read a Comic

Caption boxes fill in time and place.

The story is divided into frames that proceed from top to bottom and left to right: How many frames are on this page?

In a comic book, talk balloons replace quote marks.

When talk balloons are divided into two or three sections, that tells the reader to pause between balloons.

A "burst" is a jagged talk balloon. It means that the speaker is mad or stressed out.

Comics create drama by changing the perspective. What effect is created by looking up at the fire escape from below?

Across Town

When a balloon does not lead to a person, that means he or she is outside the frame.

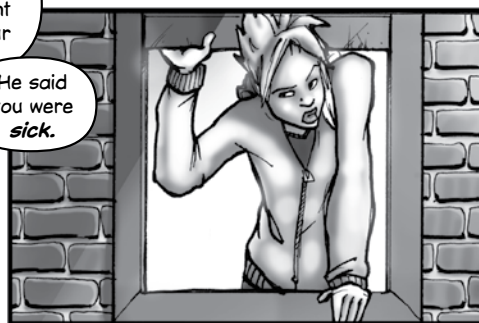


You want me to make you a list? A *real* father would spend time with her!

How can I spend time with Jenny when I always have to work?

You went to work this morning? I got a different story from your boss.

He said you were *sick*.

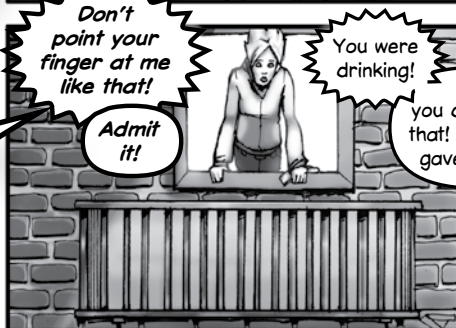


Don't point your finger at me like that!

Admit it!

You were drinking!

Don't you dare break that! My mother gave me that!



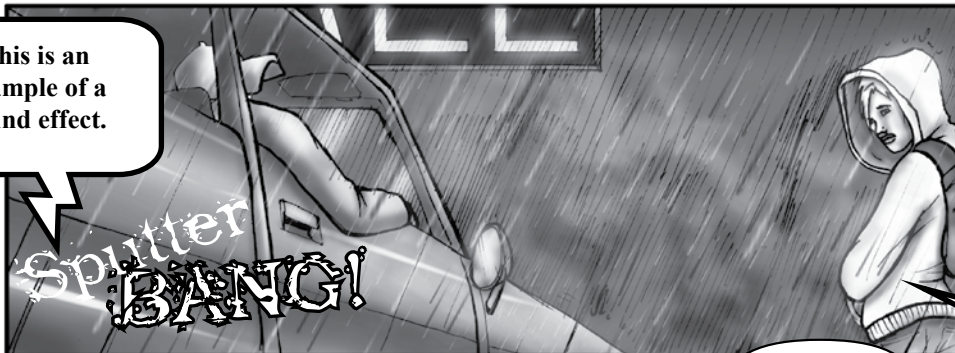


When the balloon looks like a cloud with bubbles, it means the character is thinking.



Often, the reader has to fill in the gaps of the story that occur between frames. What happens between the first and second frame?

This is an example of a sound effect.



See how the picture moves the story along even when there are no words?



Hola, Chiquita.

The illustrations often show how a character feels.



Need a ride?

You can sit between me and my boy, Johnny, here.

A good comic story makes you want to turn the page to see what happens next. Will Jenny get in the car? Would you??

Venn Diagram

Comics

many pictures,
few words,
descriptions in captions,
exciting action,
superheroes,
fantasy,
characters' dialogue in speech balloons
cliffhangers,
part of a series

convey a story,
draw the reader into the drama,
create characters you care about,
cliffhanger endings,
series

NOVELS

few pictures,
many words,
characters' dialogue in text,
descriptions in text form,
rely on readers' imagination,
can be realistic or fantastic,
conflicts usually resolved at end,
single titles,
stand alone

Study Guide for Students

Name

Date

Hour

Welcome to *Wireman*! The story of Wireman was inspired by a real person. On trash night in 1982, a lot of wire art was found in an alley in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. No one ever claimed the art and the artist was never found. It took a lot of strength to bend the wire. Also, some of the art looked like art from Africa. For these two reasons, people said that the artist was an African American man. They called him the Philadelphia Wireman.

1,200 pieces of wire sculpture were found, but no one knew anything about the mysterious artist who made them. It is likely that he made the art in secret, maybe in an abandoned building. These pieces are now in museums all over the country.

Enjoy reading the graphic novel series titled *Wireman*. Let your imagination have fun, but use the clues the author and illustrators provide to guide your thinking.

Eighth grade students in Grand Rapids Public Schools in Grand Rapids, MI study fantasy literature. Using the graphic novel series *Wireman* as a guide, students will engage in the practice of “accountable talk”, a principle of learning from the Institute for Learning.

Accountable Talk: Students are responsible in 3 ways.

1. Accountability to the Learning Community: Students participate in literature circles and classroom talk, listen attentively, elaborate and build on each other’s ideas, and work to clarify or expand a proposition.
2. Accountability to Knowledge: Students search for specific and accurate knowledge, find appropriate evidence for claims and arguments, and commit to “getting it right.”
3. Accountability to Rigorous Thinking: Students synthesize several sources of information, construct explanations and test understanding of concepts, formulate hypotheses, employ accepted standards of reasoning, and challenge the quality of evidence and reasoning.

8th Grade Content Expectations: Students in 8th grade have clear expectations to guide their learning. Here are 10 learning objectives for you to track:

- Read selected classic and contemporary fiction to identify purpose, structure, elements, style, and theme.
- Analyze the structure, elements, style and purpose of narrative genre including science fiction, fantasy, and realistic fiction.
- Analyze the role of rising and falling actions, minor characters in relation to conflict and credibility of the narrator.
- Analyze author's craft including symbolism, imagery, and consistency to develop credible narrators, rising and falling actions, and minor characters.
- Respond to individual and multiple texts by finding evidence, discussing, illustrating and/or writing to reflect, make connections, take a position, and/or show understanding.
- Select, listen to or view, responding thoughtfully to both classic and contemporary texts recognized for quality and literary merit.
- Self-monitor comprehension when reading or listening to text by automatically using and discussing the strategies used by mature readers to increase comprehension including: predicting, constructing mental images, visually representing ideas in text, questioning, rereading or listening again if uncertain about meaning, inferring, summarizing, and engaging in interpretive discussions.
- In context, determine the meaning of words and phrases including content area vocabulary and literary terms using strategies including activating prior knowledge, using text features/structures and authentic content-related resources.
- Connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses.
- Analyze global themes, universal truths, and principles within and across texts to create a deeper understanding by drawing conclusions, making inferences, and synthesizing.

Getting the Whole Group Started:

1. Review the elements of literature:
 - What is plot?
 - What is conflict?
 - What kind of conflicts can be in a story?
 - What is theme?
2. What do you think makes a story a fantasy?
3. Write the definition of fantasy literature here:
4. After drawing a Venn diagram, brainstorm the similarities and differences between comics and books.
5. How do you read a graphic novel or a comic book? Look at pages 57-58 in your guide. They annotate pages 4-5 from *Wireman*, Volume 2, Issue #1, “What Was That?” Also, use the large poster in your classroom as a visual aid.
 - How many frames do you think are on p. 4?
 - If we had to number the frames in the order you read them, how would we number them?
 - How do you distinguish one issue from another?
 - How do you know if there is a change in setting?
 - What is the difference between a talk bubble and a thought bubble?
 - How do you know if someone outside of the frame is talking?
 - What indicators might be present to show a character is upset?

6. Who do you think Wireman is? What special powers might he have?
7. If you had super powers, would special powers would you want to possess?

Reading graphic novels is fun because you can discuss the story and compare your thinking with classmates. They might see something you did not, or they might interpret an event differently. Your classmates might also make predictions that keep you guessing what will happen next. While reading **Wireman**, you will be a part of a group called a literature circle. All group members play a role during literature circles. The roles will change often. Be responsible with your role and always show respect to your group members.

Roles for Literature Circle Meetings

- **The Forecaster**: makes predictions or inferences. What will happen next?



- **The Archeologist**: digs for evidence in the text and in the illustrations to support the group's thinking.



- **The Journalist**: takes notes on his or her study guide for the group to capture the essence or the "gist" of their discussion.



- **The Reporter**: reports findings to the whole class. In other words, the reporter shares the group's thinking.



8. Make a name plate for your first role. (Your teacher will assign the groups and assign your role.) Write your title and draw a quick picture to show what your role does during the literature circle meeting. Remember, you will switch roles in your group often.

Well, now you know a little about how the idea for the **Wireman** series began, what your learning goals are, what roles you will play when discussing **Wireman**, what learning you are accountable for, and how to read a comic. So, let's get started! Read Volume 1, Issue #1, "Who Is He?" on your own.

Vol. 1 Issue #1 Questions for the Literature Circle

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

In addition to making predictions about the story, the forecaster is also responsible for keeping the group's discussion on the topic of *Wireman*. To encourage a deeper discussion, facilitate your group members by using phrases like

--Say more about...

--Help me understand...

--Can anyone build on that idea?

--I disagree because...

--I agree because...

--I wonder...

Every time your teacher hears a group member using one of the phrases above to keep the conversation going, your group will earn a point. The group with the most points at the end of the unit will earn a prize for masterfully conducting discussions about literature.

1. Andre is new to town. How do you think it feels to be the new person?
2. Kids pick on him. Why do you think kids pick on other kids? What would you say to them about how it makes someone feel?
3. Inference is defined as the process of arriving at a conclusion that is logical and probable. When we infer we sometimes guess or speculate, but we try to use reasoning to support our inference. What inferences can you make about the characters Duane and Esteven from p.1-4?
4. What are the 2 settings in vol.1 issue 1?
5. Metafiction: The story calls attention to itself as a story. How does meta-fiction happen on p.5?
6. Prediction is defined as telling in advance. Predict: Who is the person in the photo that the teacher returns to Andre? Why do you think he is important to Andre?

7. How do you think Andre feels on p. 6? How do you know? Use evidence from the illustrations on p. 6 to support your thinking.

8. Look at p.10. If Maya does not talk, why do you think she has a cell phone? Why do you think she takes the phone out of her backpack? What are your hunches about why Maya does not speak.

9. What happens on p. 12?

10. Imagine that you are Andre and you find something 3-dimensional that looks similar to a valuable photo you always keep with you. How would you feel?

11. Who do you think the character is on p.15? Why is he wearing goggles and an apron? Do you think this character will protect or hurt Andre? How do you know? Talk with your group. Use the illustrations to support your thinking.

12. What do you think are the **themes** or messages of vol. 1 issue #1 are?

Remember, these are the elements of fantasy:

- **Fiction**
- **Imaginative**
- **Characters, setting, plot, conflict, theme**
- **At least one unexplainable event**
- **Supernatural or unnatural characters or events**

Extra: Kindel Furniture is a real building in GR. Try to find it on a paper map or electronically.

Check out www.wiremancomics.com!

Vol. 1 Issue #2 Questions for the Literature Circle

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

In addition to making predictions about the story, the forecaster is also responsible for keeping the group's discussion on the topic of *Wireman*. To encourage a deeper discussion, facilitate your group members by using phrases like

--Say more about...

--Help me understand...

--Can anyone build on that idea?

--I disagree because...

--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. Who do you suspect the woman on p.1 is? What clues support your thinking?

2. Predict on p. 4 what the thing on Andre's leg is.
Go back to issue 1. Is anyone else wearing a bracelet? How is it different than Andre's?

3. What kind of conflict happens on p. 7? Internal or external? Explain.

4. Now who do you think is in the photograph playing basketball?

5. What is Mr. Ahmed communicating to Andre without actually saying it? Make an inference.

6. On p. 10, who does Andre run into again? What do they have in common?

7. Why do you think this issue is titled “Electric”?

8. How is Maya communicating to Andre on p. 12? What do you think she is trying to say to Andre? Check out www.aslpro.com ASL Pro is a completely free online American Sign Language educational resource website featuring over 11000 ASL Signs.

9. How do you think Wireman knows Andre? Provide evidence from issue 1 or 2.

10. Before reading issue #3, predict what will happen to Andre.

Vol. 1 Issue #3 Questions for the Literature Circle

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

In addition to making predictions about the story, the forecaster is also responsible for keeping the group's discussion on the topic of *Wireman*. To encourage a deeper discussion, facilitate your group members by using phrases like

--Say more about...

--Help me understand...

--Can anyone build on that idea?

--I disagree because...

--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. In your own words, summarize what has happened to Andre so far in vol. 1 issues 1 and 2.
2. On p. 2 of issue 3, "Beware of Dogs", Wireman tells Andre the lights in the city symbolize, or represent, something. What do the lights represent?
3. Andre has a test. Predict what you believe the test might be? What kind of test might Wireman give Andre and why?
4. What do you know about a homing pigeon? If I release my homing pigeon, will it fly to your house? So, what is unique about Wireman's homing pigeons? How do his pigeons fit the traits of fantasy literature?
5. Read the note the pigeon delivers. Now, go back to vol.1 issue #1 page 1. What is similar about the note and the cd case? What do you believe the connection is between the two?
6. What does Andre see in frame 4 on p. 4? What were Wireman's words to Andre about the wire?

7. Tell us more about Andre's thought process before he jumps the fence. What would you have done?
8. What significant role does the old woman play in Andre's life? Cite evidence from the text to support your thinking.
9. A pigeon brings something to Andre. What do you think is the significance of the items?
10. Why do you think Maya shows Andre a photo? What is your prediction about the significance of the photo? Is it her?
11. What questions would you ask the author right now?
12. On p. 13 who do you think the little kids are who are watching Andre? Why are they out alone so late at night?
13. Have you ever been dared to do something that you were afraid to do? What is more important to you—saving face in front of peers or standing up for your self?
14. Choose a side: Either defend or oppose Duane's decision to leave Esteven.
15. What do you think some of the themes, or messages, are from this issue?

Vol.1 Issue #4 Questions for Literature Circles

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

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--Help me understand...

--Can anyone build on that idea?

--I disagree because...

--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. On p.2 of issue #4 "Sound the Alarm," who do you think the kids might be and why are they helping Andre to save Esteven?

2. What do you think the "G-code" is? Is it right to use it in this situation? Would you?
Can you think of another character in another story you have read who has been in a similar position?

3. Make **an inference**: Why does the lady on p. 8 put Andre's file in a drawer labeled "W"?

4. What does the police officer do that indicates to Andre he is one of the "lights"?

5. What is the graffiti on p. 11 and where have you seen it before?

6. What is the significance of Andre having the ankle bracelet removed and one put on his wrist? How do you think he will now be different in his new “level”?

7. Archeologist: Dig in each issue to find every character that has a bracelet like Andre’s. Share your findings with your group.

8. Andre finds a note on the floor. “Man Down Dress Nine Mall” Predict what you think the significance of the note is.

9. What are the elements of fantasy literature? (Try not to look back in the guide! Peek only after your group tries to name the elements without looking.)

10. What are you enjoying about reading and discussing *Wireman*?

Vol.2 Issue #1 Questions for Literature Circles

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

In addition to making predictions about the story, the forecaster is also responsible for keeping the group's discussion on the topic of *Wireman*. To encourage a deeper discussion, facilitate your group members by using phrases like

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--Help me understand...

--Can anyone build on that idea?

--I disagree because...

--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. How many scenes are there in vol. 2 issue #1 "What Was That?" In your opinion, which scene is least likely to happen in a realistic story? Why?

2. Why do you think Ms. Patterson was so frightened when she saw the grief knot? What do you think she might know that the reader does not know?

3. How does Erica and Lindsey's response to the grief knot differ from Ms. Patterson's?

4. What do you think the significance of the grief knot is?

5. What is Esteven's reaction when Andre mentions Duane? What do you think will happen when Esteven and Andre meet again? What would you do?

Vol. 2 Issue #2 Questions for Literature Circles

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

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--Help me understand...

--Can anyone build on that idea?

--I disagree because...

--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. Looking at the illustration on the cover and the title of issue #2, "Watch Your Back!", what do you predict the conflict will be? How will the character on the cover interact with the other characters?

2. How did the conflict between Maya and Fresca get started?

Make an inference: What does Fresca mean when she says "It starts now."

To Fresca, the problem is a big deal. For you, is her anger towards Maya justified? Explain.

3. What do you think Maya is trying to explain to Andre about the kids he met in the warehouse the night Esteven was hurt? Is it realistic for kids to live on a roof or is this part of the fantasy in *Wireman*? Explain.

Vol. 2 Issue #3 Questions for Literature Circles

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

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--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. On the cover of vol.2 issue #3: Look at the expression on Duane's face. Is it in his character to look like he does? Why do you think he looks like he does in that moment?

2. On pages 9-11 we learn the story of Mr. Ahmed's childhood through a flashback. Define what a flashback is.

On p. 9 what is the difference between the first frame and second frame?

How did the artist convey that we were in a flashback?

3. Every character has a "backstory." How does knowing Mr. Ahmed's back story change how you think about him?

4. Look at Fresca's entrance on p. 13 and talk about how the storyline develops among Andre, Fresca, and Maya.

5. On p. 16, why do you think Andre's mom is so upset?

Vol.2 Issue #4 Questions for Literature Circles

Today's reporter for my group is: _____

The forecaster: _____

The archaeologist: _____

The journalist: _____

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--I agree because...

--I wonder...

1. The title of vol.2 issue #4 is "She Can Never Know." The question is, who can never know what? Use the text and illustrations in issues 3 and 4 to back up your assertions.
2. What do you think clothing says about a person? Do you think Andre needs a makeover? Why or why not?
3. Listen to the song "Can't Give Up Now." Why do you think the song is meaningful to the characters Lindsey and Erica? What songs have special meaning to you?
4. Now that you have read 8 issues of *Wireman*, what themes can you detect in the story?

5. Connect any theme in *Wireman* to another text you have read. Explain the connection.
6. In what ways was reading a graphic novel different from other reading experiences you have had?
7. What role did you enjoy most during literature circles? Why?
8. In what ways did the literature circle meetings help your understanding while reading *Wireman*?
9. Develop a scoring/grading system. If you were to grade your group based on the following criteria during literature circle meetings, how would you grade the group?
 - Everyone participating
 - Staying on topic
 - Using facilitators' phrases to expand thinking (Ex: Say more about...)
 - Being respectful to each other
 - Being courteous to other groups
 - Doing deep thinking
 - Digging for evidence to support thinking
 - Reporting to the whole group
 - Journaling ideas
 - Creating predictions and making inferences
 - Learning the elements of fiction, namely conflict and theme
 - Learning the elements of fantasy
 - Learning to read and to comprehend graphic novels
10. What do you like or dislike about fantasy literature? Support your opinions using the elements of fantasy literature.
11. Some people say comics, or graphic novels, should not be used in the classroom for educational purposes. Either support this position or defend using comics in the classroom. Include 3 reasons to support your position.
12. Make your predictions of what will happen in the next volume and issues of *Wireman*. (Sue Stauffacher, the author, uses readers' comments to determine the direction of future comics!) Continue on the back of the paper, if needed.

Archaeologist

Journalist



Reporter



Forecaster