BLitz COMICS

3.5

24 HOUR COMIC

SURVIVAL KIT

PART 1

GET READY!

Tackling a 24 Hour Comic
by Nathan Vargas and Anthony Francis

24 Hour Comics Day is an annual challenge to create a 24 page comic in 24 hours.

Originally started by Scott McCloud in 1990, 24 Hour Comics Day is now an institution, with artists not just tackling it in their own studios but participating at events held in venues all around the world.

This guide can help you survive that day.

What's a 24 Hour Comic?

The easiest way to explain it is with Scott McCloud's own words:

THE DARE: To create a complete 24 page comic book in 24 continuous hours.

That means everything: Story, finished art, lettering, color (if applicable), paste-up, everything. Once pen hits paper, the clock starts ticking. 24 hours later, the pen lifts off the paper, never to descend again. Even proofreading has to occur in the 24 hour period. (Computer-generated comics are fine of course, same principles apply).

No sketches, designs, plot summaries or any other kind of direct preparation can precede the 24 hour period. Indirect preparation such as assembling tools, reference materials, food, music etc. is fine.

Your pages can be any size, any material. Carve them in stone, print them with rubber stamps, draw them on your kitchen walls with a magic marker. Whatever you makes you happy.

The 24 hours are continuous. You can take a nap, but the clock keeps ticking. If you get to 24 hours and you're not done, either end it there ("the Gaiman Variation") or keep going until you're done ("the Eastman Variation"). I consider both of these "Noble Failure" Variants and true 24 hour comics in spirit; but you must sincerely intend to do the 24 pages in 24 hours at the outset.

THE ONLINE VARIATION: The above applies to printed comics or online comics with "pages" but if you'd like to try a 24-hour Online Comic that doesn't break down into pages (like the expanded canvas approach I use in most of my own webcomics) then try this: At least 100 panels AND it has to be done, formatted and ONLINE within the 24-hour period!

From http://www.scottmccloud.com/4-inventions/24hr/dare/index.html

We, the authors, have tried 24 Hour Comics Day several times – Nathan three times, Anthony twice. Nathan takes it completely serious, trying to complete an entirely novel story within the 24 hours; Anthony has so many stories buzzing around in his head that he tackles 24HCD as an exercise, trying to write one story down as a comic within the time allotted.

Either way, we've failed to finish 24 pages of a comic in 24 hours. In this guide, we're collecting what we've learned from our failures in an attempt to help us (and perhaps, you) succeed.

Wait ... What's a Comic?

Comics are a form of art that combine pictures and words sequentially into a story. Even the most basic art can tell a story if you tell it using rules your audience can recognize. For example, XKCD can tell a story with little more than stick figures and scrawled text:
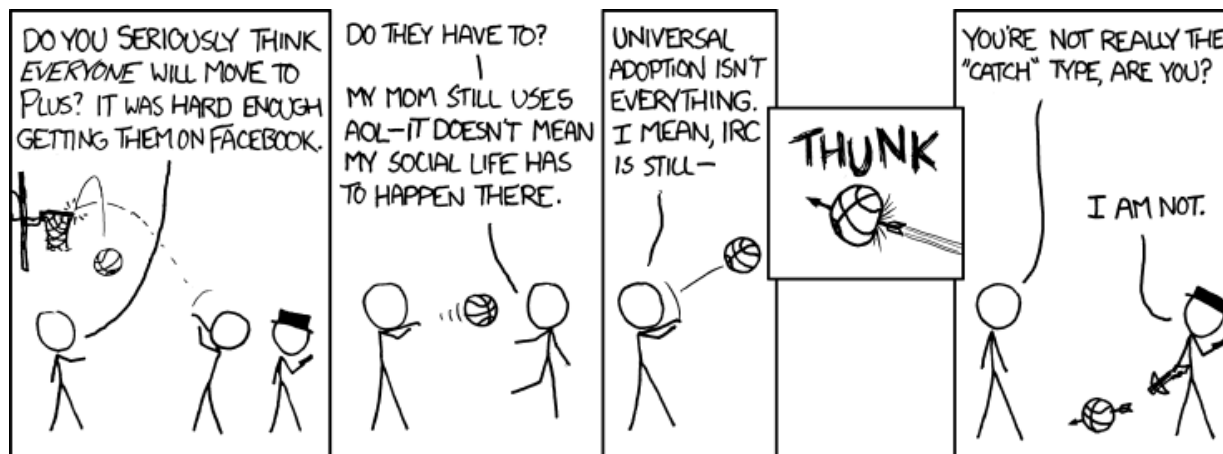
In this brief comic strip, we've not only got a story that shows what happens if not everyone's playing the same game: we've also got graphical samples of almost all the basic tools for traditional Western comics: the page, its panels, their borders, their art, word balloons, sound effects, and motion lines.

- **The Page:** the canvas that the comic is drawn on. American comics are roughly 7 by 10 inches (actually, 6⅝" x 10¼"), but you should probably shoot for standard 8.5 x 11 paper or A4 paper depending on what's easiest for you to get in your country.

- **The Panel:** a region of the page that represents a snapshot in time or an idea.

- **Borders:** Panels often, but not always, have borders. In the XKCD comic, there's a traditional panel, a borderless panel, and even a panel overlapping another panel—symbolizing Mr. Black Hat's springloaded interruption of the pontificating character.

- **Artwork:** Consisting of foreground characters, objects, and sometimes backgrounds (largely absent from XKCD) the artwork represents what's visually going on in the scene.

- **Balloons:** Word balloons (shown as outlined words or text with lines as above) and thought balloons (shown with cloud like outlines, absent above) represent what people are saying and thinking as events happen.

- **Editorial text:** Displayed in boxes rather than bubbles You can also show editorial text which can represent an offscreen character or an editorial interjection.

- **Sound Effects:** Text unconnected to a character that represents a sound happening.

- **Motion Lines:** represents an action intended to be happening in the panel.

Sound effects and motion lines are examples don't appear in real life. They're examples of comic book conventions which, if you know them, will make doing each page and panel easier.

The Language of Comics

By comic book conventions, we don't mean San Diego Comic-Con. We mean shorthands for a telling a story which immediately communicate an idea to a cultural audience, like a cloud of smoke with fists and feet obscuring a fight, punctuation as a stand-in for cursing on a family comic, or the sound "SNIKT" signaling impending violence from Wolverine.

Once you've read the X-Men often enough, when you see "SNIKT" you don't even need to see Wolverine's claws pop out. If you saw the silhouette of a villain in a dark tunnel and the sound effect "SNIKT" appeared behind them, you know that Wolverine is about to mess them up.

Don't you want to draw panels that are that easy for 24 Hour Comics Day?

There are three major kinds conventions you can rely on: facial expressions, genre conventions, and to a lesser degree sound effects. All of these are different in different cultures; we'll give examples from American comics and Japanese manga because, hey, that's what we know.

- **Facial Expressions:** There are eight easily recognizable human facial expressions: ***neutral and surprise, fear and anger, disgust and contempt, sadness and joy***. Beyond these eight, there are hundreds of variants, but you don't need to master all of them to communicate effectively. You should practice the major expressions in advance, or use a facial expression cheat sheet to help you draw the right expression on the fly.

- **Genre Conventions:** While human expressions are essentially the same across all cultures, there is a whole language of expression and movement which are particular to American comics, Japanese comics (or even American comics in a Japanese style):

    - **Speed lines:** in American comics, lines indicating motion. Trailing parallel lines indicate fast movement (imagine them trailing a fastball) and radiating lines can mean a sudden stop (imagine them shooting off the ball in the catcher's mitt).

    - **Patterned backgrounds:** in Japanese manga, a non-real patterned background behind a character indicating a sudden revelation (imagine a wall of wavy lines behind Vader as he cries "Luke, I am your father!") or emotional distress (now think a strike of lightning behind Luke as he cries "No! That's impossible!")

    - **Sweat drops and nosebleeds:** Stereotyped, unnatural bodily reactions are seen more in Japanese manga than American comics—a large single sweat drop can mean a character is worried, whereas a comically spraying nosebleed generally means a boy has fallen for a girl.

- **Sound Effects:** the printed depiction of a noise on a page. These are controversial; some American manga use sound effects extensively, whereas "widescreen comics" sometimes eliminate them completely. You have to decide what YOU want to do.

Study your favorite comics or get a cheat sheet that summarizes the conventions for you. So now you know what a comic is and some of the language comic artists use. Now, how do you apply that idea over 24 whole pages?

Let's start with how a comic is built....

Typical Page Layouts in Traditional Comics

You may not have thought about it before, but there's structure to a traditional comic that can help you complete 24 pages in 24 hours.

- **The Starting Page:** The very first page of your comic must introduce the story to the reader. In many traditional comics this first page, and sometimes the next two pages introduces the situation that our hero will confront. Think of the self-contained mini-story at the beginning of most Indiana Jones and James Bond films.

- **The Title Page:** Some traditional comics often have a "title" page which introduces the main character. "Bitten by a radioactive scorpion, Radioactive Scorpion Man uses his sting to strike back at evil!" You don't have to use it, but it can help orient readers towards the kind of story you are telling … and it's a page long. Or even two.

- **The Dual Page Spread:** Some comics have images which are simply too big for one page. These comics combine a single image across two pages in a "dual page spread". This could be the title page, the first appearance of the hero, or the villain's hideout, or simply a beautiful vista. Or you might not use one at all.

- **The Establishing Page:** More typical for Japanese than American comics, this is a page whose purpose is less to advance the narrative than to set the stage. Before showing a shot of your hero talking to his sidekick, show a page with a full-page shot of his hideout, or six panels showing typical things from your character's daily environment. This is a powerful tool to set the tone: the same panel of your hero and sidekick talking will seem completely different if preceded by a page of people-crowded panels from downtown New York or sparse cactus-adorned panels from desert Arizona. And it can eat a whole page.

- **The Finishing Page:** The last page of your comic must wrap up your story. This sounds obvious, but think about it: the first page of your comic must introduce it, and the last one must satisfactorily conclude it. Thinking about that now, at the start, can help you decide what's in those pages … and can help you structure what lies between it.

Feeling liberated? **Great!** Start thinking about how you can use these tools to plan a story.

Feeling constrained? **We totally understand.**

These are tools from traditional comics that may not be relevant to your story.

But you know what? You don't need to use any of those tools. Your comic could be completely nonlinear, designed to be read in any order. Your story could be a timeloop and could cycle back to the beginning so it could be started at any point, like FINNEGAN'S WAKE. Your comic could be an 4x6 grid plastered across a wall. You could do 24 completely abstract pages. Or, as Scott McCloud has suggested, you could do 100 panels of a webcomic.

It's all up to you!

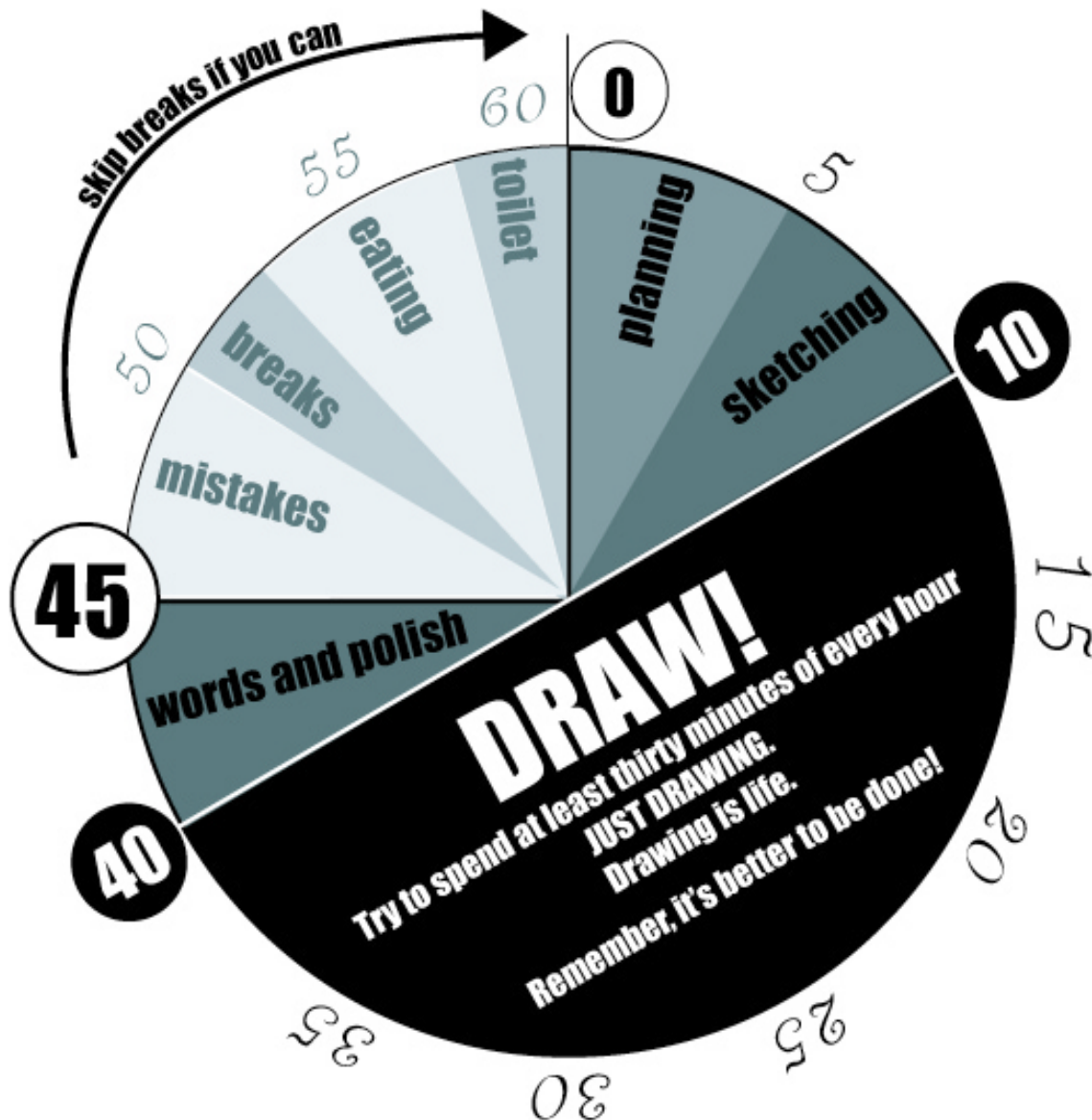Now let's talk about how to do 24 pages WITHIN the 24 hours....

Using Your Time Wisely

There are 24 hours in a day and 24 pages in a [24 Hour Comic](). So you think you have an hour to finish a page? Think again. A minute spent sharpening your pencil each hour costs you almost a half an hour over the day—and an hour dinner break chops five minutes off each page.

But the solution is not to skip eating, to never take breaks, or to never sharpen your pencil—and if you're planning on never going to the bathroom, good luck. The solution is being realistic about how much time you need for administrivia and being smart about the rest of your time.

The Infamous Hour Wheel

You've got 60 minutes in one hour

skip breaks if you can

60 · 0 · 5

toilet

eating

planning

sketching

55 · 50 · 10

breaks

mistakes

45 · 15

words and polish

DRAW!

Try to spend at least thirty minutes of every hour JUST DRAWING. Drawing is life. Remember, it's better to be done!

40 · 20 · 35 · 30 · 25

What's up with the hour wheel on the previous page?

It's a graphic way to visualize the relationships between minutes you spend each hour and the hours you take out of the whole day.

- One minute you spend each hour—whether it's sharpening your pencil, live blogging your progress or getting a soda—adds up to 24 minutes over the day.
  Congratulations. Texting your S.O. used up nearly half an hour out of your twenty four.

- Each hour you spend during the day—whether it's setting up your table, having lunch and dinner, or taking a nap—chops 2.5 minutes out of each page.
  Congratulations. Overthinking your plot left you with 57.5 minutes to finish each page.

There are things that you can do to avoid using time you don't need to, of course:

- Sharpen lots of pens, pencils, etc. before you begin

- Set your workspace up before the 24 Hour Comics day officially starts

- Pack lunch, dinner, snacks and breakfast so you don't have to break for lunch

But you can't imagine that you'll never need to sharpen a pencil, that you'll never have to adjust your workspace over the day, or that you can eat in zero time. What if these things happen?

- Your RSI (repetitive strain injury) acts up so you need to take a wrist break

- You knock over your carefully arranged jar of pens, pencils and other writing implements

- You end up gurgly from your store bought sandwiches and lose an hour in the bathroom

A better approach is to try to enumerate the things that you will need to do once or a few times during the day, like eating, drinking, hitting the toilet, or freshening your art supplies, and to use the hour wheel to calculate how many minutes you lose. It's not unrealistic to imagine you'll spend two hours on lunch, dinner, breakfast, snacks and drinks out of twenty four hours; this will cost you five minutes of each hour.

Then you need to add in the things that you have to do EACH hour, like planning your page, possibly sketching it if that's part of your process, drawing it, and adding lettering. If you're a web-comic artist or have other elements of your process, add them in too. And don't forget to add in time for wrist breaks and stretches, for mistakes where you have to redo something, or where you've bitten off more than you can chew with a particular page.

Being Realistic About Your Time

We estimate you can lose up to *fifteen minutes each hour* doing things that add up over the day.

So if you finish one page of your comic in 60 minutes, congratulations: you're going to lose. At the end of the day you'll probably have something like ¾*24 = *18* pages done, maybe 20 if you're really hard on yourself, half starving, half mad with thirst, clenching your buttocks while you frantically scribble with a blunt pencil gripped desperately in your numb, throbbing claws.

Or you can try to finish each page in 45 minutes—and finish *all of them.*

Why the 45 minute figure?

We analyzed what goes on during the course of a day and added up the time things typically take. Think about spending an 8 hour day at work. Depending on your jurisdiction, your employer may be required to give you a 30 minute lunch and two 15 minute breaks for each 8 hour shift.

Now think: 24 Hour Comics Day is **THREE 8 hour shifts**. Even if you're going to be harder on yourself than your employer, do you realistically think you can eat, drink, hit the toilet and work without mistakes for 0 minutes out of the 24?

If you are willing to be realistic that you'll lose some time … think about *how* you might lose it:

- **Eating:** If you give yourself no more than 30 minutes to eat lunch, dinner, and breakfast, and leave 15 minutes each for midnight snacks and beverage breaks, that's two hours over the course of the day, or five minutes lost from each hour. *Don't* assume you can power through by wolfing down crap food. It's not just that candy bars will cause blood sugar spikes where good food will keep you going. It's that you really can't shave off that much time. *Ten* minutes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, midnight snacks, and beverages will still take almost an hour—2.5 minutes. Do yourself a favor: whether you pack a lunch or go to a café, eat good meals—and count that time.

- **Breaks:** There are a lot of reasons to take breaks. For your eyes. For your wrists. For your back. To recharge your brain juice. Realistically, you should take two and a half minutes out of each hour to at least stretch. For your health, you should take more. But we'll give you two and half minutes each hour—one hour out of your whole day.

- **Toilet:** We don't know about you, but we hit the toilet more than once a day, and it takes more than a minute each time. It probably takes more than two and a half minutes, but most people don't need to go to the bathroom every hour. So we'll give you an hour to hit the can over the day, averaging out to two and a half minutes. If you're ahead of schedule, splurge. Go brush your teeth and splash water in your face. You'll thank us.

- **Mistakes:** Not every page is going to work. Not every idea is salvageable. And not every coffee spill can be mopped up before the stain sinks into the page. You're going to make mistakes—in the design of a panel, in the execution of a drawing, in the ripping of the paper. If you knew when they were going to happen, you could avoid them—but you don't. Assume you lose less than one out of ten pages. That's two (idealized) hours out of the day—five minutes of every hour.

All those sources of breaks add up to fifteen minutes. So you've got at most forty-five minutes left. So you now have two powerful motivations: to power through everything nonessential quickly and make no mistakes—or to try to finish each page early.

Using the Time Available To You Effectively

If you only have forty-five minutes to finish a page, how can you use it effectively? Well, you need to do at least two things to finish a page: draw it and letter it. Depending on your process, you might just wing the whole thing. And that's perfectly OK. You'll get done faster if you do.

If you're doing something more planned, however, you're going to need to decide *what* you're going to draw, sketch out how it should look, script the words go with it, draw the page itself, and then letter it. A lot of that isn't drawing.

You should spend the minimum possible amount of time on things that aren't drawing.

Try To Spend Less Than 15 Minutes on Preparation

Plotting, sketching, and scripting are all preparation steps—they do not actually produce pages. If you've got 45 minutes to produce a page, you're better off spending less than a third of that on stuff that doesn't produce output. Say ten minutes max. Here's some tips.........

- **Plotting: deciding what you want to draw in the page.** If you're winging it, this may be no more complicated than "Cold Pizza Man dukes it out with The Salad Avenger". If you've got a more complicated story, you need to make sure you leave enough room in the story. If you want to end your story with the Salad Avenger's victory after a long struggle, but by page 22 the hero and villain haven't even met … you're in trouble. If there's any doubt in your mind, spend at least five minutes thinking this through.

- **Sketching: deciding how you want your page to look.** Again, if you're winging it, cartooning it, or playing it abstract, this may not matter. But whether you're doing a splash page, a complicated battle sequence or two people sitting down for dinner, having a rough sketch of what you want can make finishing the drawing go easier and faster and prevent mistakes. Spend at least five minutes sketching if there's any doubt.

- **Scripting: deciding what your characters want to say.** We don't recommend allotting time for this separate from plotting, sketching and lettering. The Marvel Method proved that it's possible to draw art to a rough outline and then letter it. If your comic depends heavily on words, however, you may want to take time from sketching and plotting to make sure the dialogue is right.

A better approach than taking ten minutes out of every hour is a couple of hours up front storyboarding your whole comic. This tackles plotting, sketching and scripting all together and effectively packs what would be ten minutes of effort out of every hour into half that time. Or you can just wing it, throwing traditional narrative convention to the wind. It's your comic, and no-one can stop you. Go nuts!

Spend At Least Half of Your Time Just Drawing

Drawing and lettering are what produce output pages. Unless you are an expert letterer who works at a very high level of quality, drawing is both the more time consuming and more demanding activity. You can have almost scrawled lettering as long as it's legible, but a squiggle is just not Captain Godot unexpectedly arriving at one of Sartre's posh dinner parties.

We recommend spending *half of each hour just drawing*. If you spent no more than ten minutes on preparation, that leaves five minutes to letter your page (if you aren't doing it while you draw) which you can probably accomplish if you do it hastily (or you can take your time with if you're ahead). If you try to finish each page in thirty minutes of drawing, you should have more than enough time to hit the can, stretch your wrists, and sit down to do the next page well ahead of schedule.

Now let's talk about how, practically, you can get your 24 pages done.

Practical Advice on Getting it Done

This thing can eat you alive. Here's some tips on getting out alive. These aren't exclusive. Some of them are actually contradictory. Pick the ones that will work for you.

- **Plan at least one splash page somewhere** in the middle of your book. That way you won't have to worry too much about panels for that one hour. Just smack the page with something large!

- Spend 5 or so minutes of the first hour **writing notes on each page** before you draw.

- Use a **story seed generator template** of some kind to flesh out your story. Only spend mere minutes on this. *See the Plot Line exercise for how to do this!*

- **Make ACTION based story notes.** Focus on what's happening and who it's happening to.

  At the start is not the time to get philosophical. And with luck your drawings will ultimately convey your ideas but you gotta FINISH first!

- **Have your ending already.** (or at least an abstract idea of what the last scene will be)

- Even go as far as to **draw out the final panel on the last page during the first hour**. Then fill in the rest of the story to get to that ending.

- **Jot down some quick and easy notes on the final page.** That will help you remember during hour 21, just why you drew a unicorn with a cast on his horn eating some cake...

- You can even consider drawing your book backwards! Write to the start!

Feel free to ignore any or all of this advice. But consider this: what are you trying to achieve? Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons didn't complete *Watchmen* in 24 hours. The purpose of 24 Hour Comics Day is not to realize your every artistic ambition … but just prove to yourself you can execute on some of your ambitions right away, in 24 hours, with a *completed* end product.

Tips and tricks to shorten the time on certain elements:

- **Work small!** Nothing larger than 8.5x5.5 inch paper. Half the size of a regular sheet of paper. If you like what you did, redo the *finished* 24 hour comic onto better paper afterwards.

- **Work Light.** Wondering which pen to use? Don't. Use only 1 pen. You have 10 different pencils you want to use? Don't! Use just one type. (of course, bring a couple spares)

- **Work Forward.** Want to shade that oval for 5 minutes? STOP! Make the minimum number of lines to get the idea then move forward.

- **Work Cheap.** Use printer paper. Seriously, because you don't need to spend brain power worried you'll smear your $3 Bristol Board...

- Use a **simplified style** of drawing. **Practice** making really fast backgrounds (Charles Schultz like). Practice drawing clothing faster.

- **Make faces with minimal number of lines,** Develop your 24 Hour Comic Day drawing style NOW, before the day!

- **A short list of design No-No's** (means *avoid* drawing these things unless you are waaaaaay ahead on time): Tentacles, Jungles, Cityscapes, Outer Space Vistas, Intricate Costumes.

- **When in doubt, black it out!** Don't spend too much time trying to get anything 'just right'. If you're spending too much time in one small area, and you doubt you can get it right in a few minutes, take your large marker and black that area out. Easy solution to deadlock.

- **Decide on your genre going in.** Practice drawing simplified versions of elements in that genre before the actual day.

- Stretch out your hands and wrists every hour. **Seriously.**

- **Don't give up!** What's better? Being exhausted with a shiny new completed 24 hour comic in your hands OR being exhausted with a half finished attempt?

- **No chips or candy as your sole food supply.** Your body will hate you after hour 14 or so...Make some of your own food beforehand and bring a small cooler. **If you don't,** consider this. Do you really wanna burn valuable time ordering up a sandwich at the deli when you can make it just the way you like it and bring it with?

- **When you stick to it, the pages will start writing and drawing themselves.** You must push forward till you hit that wall where you want to quit (you'll have many moments like this). Break through by having your one of your characters mirror EXACTLY what your thinking and feeling. Even draw the emotions and say

the words your brain is screaming! This will move that feeling out of your head and onto the paper! It's a Win-Win!

- **Don't be chatty!** Sure, field the occasional question … but then buckle down again but fast!
- **Avoid doing pencils first.** Dive in and just use a pen! If you're using cheap paper and you mess up...just retrace what you've already done onto a fresh sheet of paper. OR redraw that panel all by itself on a separate piece of paper and GLUE IT IN PLACE!
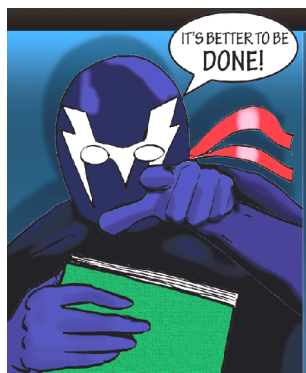
Real World Objects You Can Definitely Use:

- **Your own light source.** Avoid the clip style, it's hard to find a place to clip them. Go for one that is bendy and has it's own base. We recommend using CFLs: they don't get as hot.
- Even **bring your own power strip** if you have stuff you wanna keep charged. Phone, laptop, lights, MP3 player, etc....
- A cooler with **food** and drinks.
- **A Cheat Sheet for basic facial expressions.** Sure you can do Internet searches but have you ever tried to trace on a computer screen?
- Find someone else in the room that inspires you. **If you're gonna chat with someone, choose that person.** (Beware that the other artists might steal this from you)
- **A clean shirt, pants, and socks.** Not for the obvious reasons (24HCD *is* stressful, I know). When you feel restless, like you've been grinding slowly into dust and your butt is sticking to the chair...change your clothes into something more fresh. You'll be glad you did....
- **A chewable Multi-Vitamin.** Give your body something to chew on that will translate to more brain power, release of hidden energy, and clarity of thought. Only you know your body can tolerate a multivitamin.
- **Toothbrush and toothpaste.** Brush your teeth at night and you'll get a real physical boost. There's really no need to marinate in your own body juices all night...

Good Luck!

Stirring words of conclusion and such. *Remember, it's better to be done!*

Resources

24 Hour Comics Day:
http://www.24hourcomicsday.com

Blitz Comics : http://www.blitzcomics.com/
Fantasy Name Generator:
http://www.rinkworks.com/namegen/

Scott McCloud's Web Site: http://scottmccloud.com/
Understanding Comics:
http://scottmccloud.com/2-print/1-uc
Reinventing Comics:
http://scottmccloud.com/2-print/2-rc

Making Comics:
http://scottmccloud.com/2-print/3-mc

Comics Pro Web Site:
http://www.comicspro.org/

Comics and Sequential Art:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comics_and_Sequential_Art

Donna Young's Comics Templates:
http://donnayoung.org/art/comics.htm

Find the latest version of this Survival Kit at:
www.blitzcomics.com/go/kit-latest

The authors would like to thank all the hardworking people
that make 24 Hour Comic Day possible every year.

A special thanks goes to Scott McCloud.

Finally, ComicsPRO
(http://www.comicspro.org/)
for supporting what we are doing here.

This is our attempt at giving something back
to the art community, so use it in good faith.

PART 2

GO!

BLitz COMICS

Tips, Tricks, and Advice

KEYS TO SURVIVAL

You can do this!

Here's a whole page of positive thoughts, ideas, and attitudes.
The key here is to act on them. Even if you only do 10 from the list, you'll be in
a much better position of success. REMEMBER.......

It's Better to be Done!

GET STARTED FAST!

1. Use the Plot Line Exercise Sheet and know your story.
2. Have an ending already in your mind. Even if it's a general idea.
3. Draw your book starting from the end and spark your creativity.
4. Use the Character Workup Sheet to put flesh on your characters.

5. Write short plot notes on each page before you draw.
6. Make your notes 'action' based with lots of verbs.
7. Plan at least one full page splash. Break up the monotony.
8. Consider drawing the last page first and then starting from the start.

FINISH YOUR PAGES QUICKER!

9. Work Small, use 8.5x5.5 size sheets of paper.
10. Work Light, use only one pen and one pencil.
11. Work Forward, use the min. number of lines.
12. Work Cheap, use regular printer paper.
13. Use a simplified style of drawing.
14. Avoid drawing:
    jungles, tentacles, intricate costumes, etc.
15. When in doubt, black it out!

HOW TO SURVIVE THE 24 HOURS!

16. Stick to it, pages will start to draw themselves.
17. Avoid being chatty with others. Answering some questions is ok.
18. Avoid chips/soda/candy as your sole food source!
19. Stretch your hands and wrists a lot!
20. Never give up! Remember, it's just better to be done.
21. At 12am, change into a clean pair of pants/shirt.
22. Brush your teeth at night. It'll gvie you brain a boost.
23. Take a few vitamins that morning so your brain has what it needs
to think up more ideas.

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED!

24. Toothbrush and toothpaste.
25. A Chewable Multi-Vitamin...
26. Clean shirt/pants/socks/underwear.
27. Cheat sheet of Facial Expressions.
28. A cooler with food/snacks that work for you.
29. Your own power strip for power.
30. A bendable lamp with a heavy base.
31. Use a CFC in your lamp, they dont get hot.
32. One ream of printer paper, brightest shade.
33. Personal music device and earphones.
34. Comic book conventions Cheat Sheet.
35. The strength of Will to go the distance.
36. Have the attitude of success, or fake it!

MORE RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP...

Scott Mcloud and 24HCD
http://goo.gl/tXG9O

Official 24HCD Blog
http://goo.gl/Y39Ch

Sequential Art PDF
http://goo.gl/xqWWG

Understanding Comics
http://goo.gl/XM4SG

Blitz Comics Survival Techniques
http://goo.gl/4lycH

Comic Strip Advice by Donna Young
http://goo.gl/3GUQn

BLitz COMICS

DIRECTIONS

A Creative Web
Catch your Story

This exercise should take 5 minutes.

Near each header, add your own ideas. We've provided some examples to help you get started. Once you've filled it out, circle the ones you are interested in or just connect the dots together! Now you've created a web to catch your story!

THEMES

- Crime
- Heroism
- Fate
- Resurection
- Restoration

GENRE

- Western
- Romance
- Sci-Fi
- Epic
- Parody

CONFLICT

- Achievement
- Jealousy
- Love
- Survival
- Supernatural

CHARACTER

- Gardener
- Panhandler
- Superhero
- Alien
- Hang Glider

SETTING

- Old West
- Mythical Place
- The Future
- Dystopia
- Crossover

BLitz COMICS

Plot Line Generator
A Sequence of Events

DIRECTIONS

WHO: Pick your main character.
WANTS: Write in what they want to accomplish (avoid philosophical stuff).
BUT...   Write in why they can't accomplish what they want.
AND..   Describe another obstacle.
ACTION: The action your character takes to get their goal.
GOAL: The overall goal they will accomplish.

start

WHO..

WANTS..

BUT..

'AND' OBSTACLE..

ACTION..

GOAL

PREMISE Summarize your plot concretely.

Summarize your plot abstractly. **THEME**

end
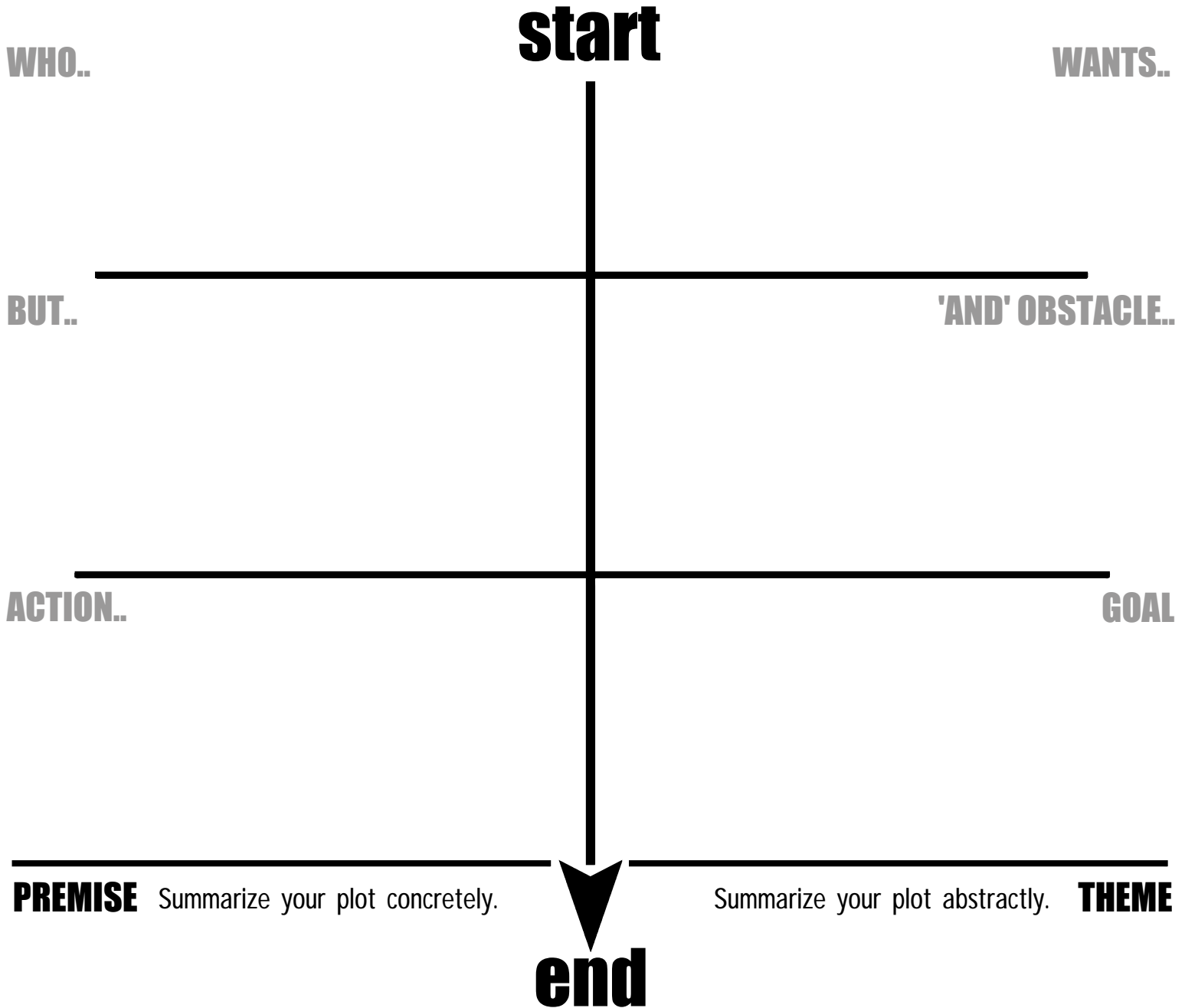
Character Buildout
Creating a Fictional Life

DIRECTIONS

This exercise should take about 8 minutes.

Near each header, write at least 3 character traits.
Don't overthink this...use the first trait that pops into your head. It helps if you think of traits your favorite character from a book or movie might have and start there.
There's no `right' or `wrong' way to fill this exercise in, just write anything!

COURAGE

FRAILTY

EVIL

your character's name

STRENGTH

VIRTUE

FEAR

Thumbnail Worksheet

Sketch your comic on a single page.

BLitz COMICS

1

2   3

4   5

6   7

8   9

10   11

12   13

14   15

16   17

18   19

20   21

22   23

24

INSTRUCTIONS: Quickly sketch each page of your comic within the thumbnails. This sheet assumes that the first page is your intro and that your comic will be printed as a normal booklet with side to side pages. You can easily see where you have a chance to do a great dual page spread, but still leave space for a final page of your comic.
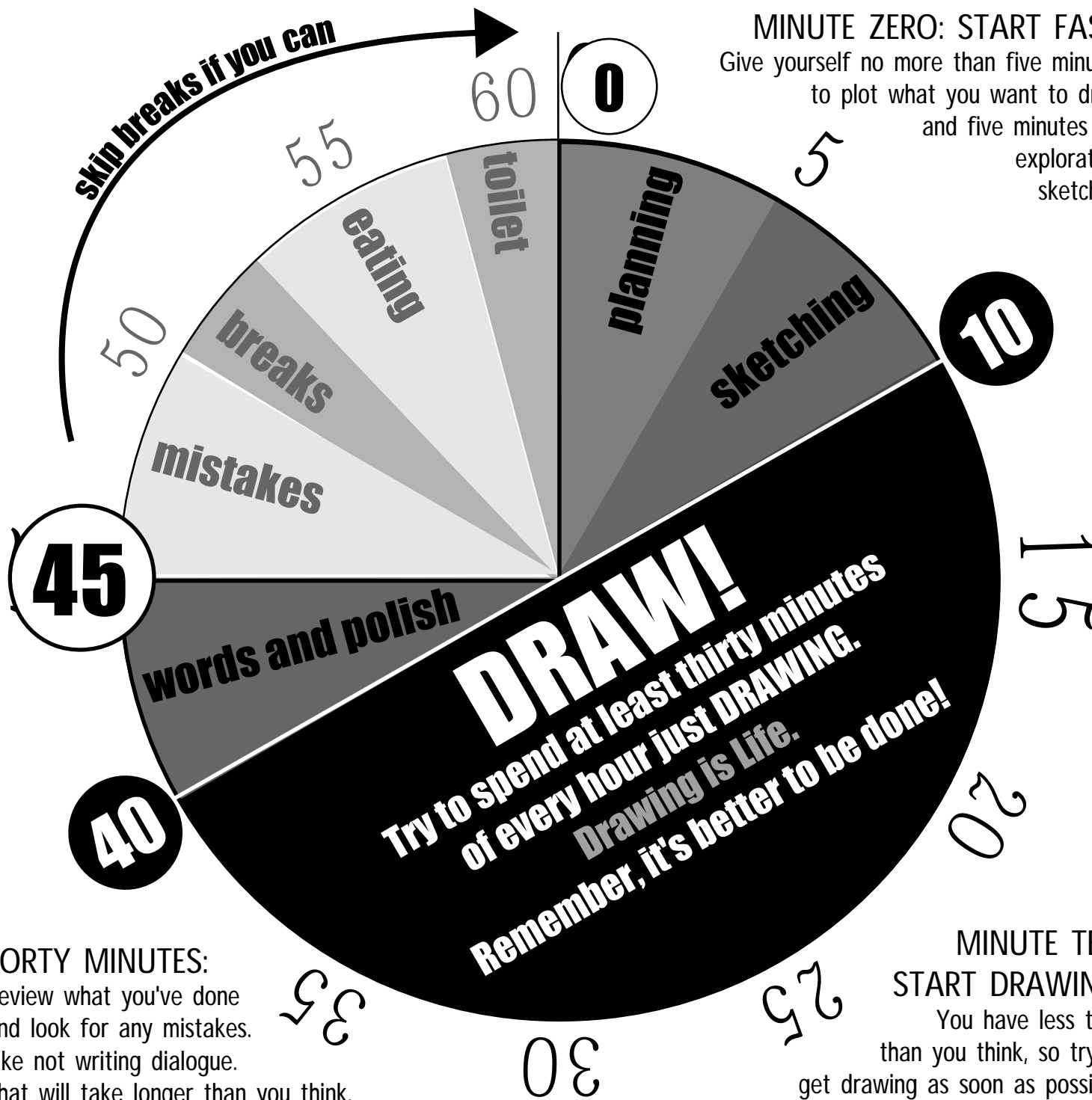
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BLitz COMICS

Page Timing Clock
How One Hour Goes By

THINK YOU HAVE AN HOUR TO FINISH A PAGE? THINK AGAIN.

If you give yourself half an hour for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and only two fifteen minute bathroom breaks, congratulations - you have 55 minutes to finish a page. Each two hours you spend not drawing eats 5 minutes from every page you want to finish. The solution is not to imagine you won't have to take breaks or make mistakes. The solution is to finish each page in 45 minutes or less so you have time to recover.

MINUTE ZERO: START FAST!
Give yourself no more than five minutes to plot what you want to draw and five minutes for exploratory sketches.

skip breaks if you can

60 0
55
50
45
40
5
10
15
20
25
30
35

toilet
eating
breaks
mistakes
planning
sketching
words and polish

DRAW!
Try to spend at least thirty minutes of every hour just DRAWING.
Drawing is Life.
Remember, it's better to be done!

FORTY MINUTES:
Review what you've done and look for any mistakes. Like not writing dialogue. That will take longer than you think.

MINUTE TEN: START DRAWING!
You have less time than you think, so try to get drawing as soon as possible.

BLitz COMICS

Manga Conventions
The Language of Manga

These are some of the most common Manga Conventions. There are many more but this reference can help you get a good start at conveying the message you want.

Of course, some of the definitions listed here may be used differently for other story situations. BONUS! We left an open spot for you to fill in your own icon definition.

Nose Bubble	Gushing Blood From Nose	Lines on Cheek	Large Bump	Wavy Lines	Vertical Lines	Popping Vein	One Tear Drop
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sleeping	Increased Excitement	Blushing	Injured	Disgusted	Fatigue, Horror	Rage	Confusion

One Fang Showing	Small Eyes	Big Eyes	Shadowed Eyes	Heart as Eyes	No Irises Hanging Mouth	Spirals as Eyes	Opposite Arrows as Eyes
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Mischief	Coldness, Evil	Innocence Excitement	Deep Anger, Vengence	Infatuation	Extreme Excitement	Dizzy	Nervous

X's as Eyes	Bandage in X Form	Ellipses	Index Fingers Touching	Hair Tied Back	Twitching Eye	Drooped Head	_____
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Stunned	In Pain	Something is Unsaid	Holding a Secret	Being Restrained	Extreme Anger	Deep Sorrow	_____