



WHAT'S THAT, LASSIE? TIMMY'S TRAPPED DOWN A WELL?

CREATE YOUR OWN SUPERDOG COMIC STRIP OR FILM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Invent a character and their world
- Write a storyline
- Plan a trailer/comic strip
- Communicate a plot in storyboard format

1.5-2 HOURS

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

DIFFICULTY: ★★★★★

YOUR MISSION

AQUILA TV, a brand new TV streaming service (not a real thing) needs submissions for a new SUPERDOG film, based on an original character. We need your ideas for a new canine superhero and their arch nemesis, complete with costumes, a catchphrase and superhero universe, like the Marvel universe BUT BETTER.

Your brief is to create a nine-frame storyboard for the SUPERDOG film.

GET STARTED

PHASE 1:

Invent your characters. Start with your hero; bullet point your ideas for a name (they usually have a cool adjective like 'mysterious' or 'invincible'), breed of dog and their superpowers. Once you have created your hero, come up with an enemy using the same method, then any other characters – does the dog have a helper? A friend or family member who needs rescuing?

PHASE 2:

Sketch an image of your doggy characters on a piece of A4 paper – picture this image as the one used to promote the new doggo film. Pay particular attention to the characters' features and costumes – how can you make your **protagonist** (main character) seem heroic and herculean whilst their enemy looks ruff (haha) and rugged? Is it obvious from your drawing what their super power is? Your audience should be able to identify the hero, villain, helper and extra characters from their positioning, costume and appearance.

PHASE 3:

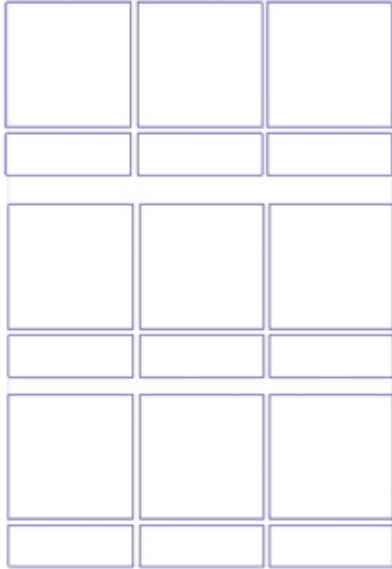
The story's the thing! All brilliant superhero screenplays start with the basic story. Good vs. Evil. Save the world. Protect the planet from an evil race of aliens – whatever your storyline, make sure good wins the day... eventually. Perhaps you want to leave your hero at the villain's mercy at the end of the film to create a **cliffhanger** and entice us to watch the sequel? Jot down bullet points for your story, splitting it into nine even parts.

YOU WILL NEED

- Paper (A4 or A3)
- Pencil
- Colouring pencils or felt tips

PHASE 4:

On a piece of A3 paper, prepare your storyboard. If you don't have A3, A4 will do. Divide your page into a grid of nine rectangles, using a ruler and a pencil. This will become your storyboard. You might want to add a small story box to each of the nine frames to describe the plot, if so, divide each frame so that it has a small rectangle below it (see example).



PHASE 5:

Using your bullet pointed storyline, draw one image per box to show each part of the story. Remember to make the illustrations bold and exciting, adding lots of colour and speech bubbles for dialogue. If you have a small box underneath your image, you can write a sentence to explain the plot of each frame. Once complete, pin it to the wall with pride, you superhero! You might even want to produce the film by getting your family to dress up as the characters and film it on a smartphone or camera. WOOF!

We want to read your storyboards. Don't forget to send your comic strip or film to the address on the readers' page of the AQUILA website, and we'll share as many as we can.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- * Your superdog character is the glue that holds this story together: what breed of dog will it be? Super Pug? Super Husky? What superpowers does your hero have? Can they knock out all enemies with a high frequency bark? Do they have super speed, heightened sense of smell or strength?
- * The costumes your characters wear communicate a lot about what they will do; could you break some stereotypes and have the 'damsel in distress' (who is typically female and wears a dress to make her seem feminine and fragile), actually a big, tall male character instead?
- * Does your storyline have a clear beginning, middle and end? Does it end with a cliffhanger? Do you have some mysteries established at the start of the story, which are solved later on? Does it keep your audience interested?
- * What is the best order for the events in your story? Could you play with a flash-back or flash-forward, so that your storyline doesn't run in chronological order and has more twists and turns?
- * What's the unique selling point of your superdog character? What sets them apart from other superheroes? Is there something unique about how they got their powers or their **origin story** (how they became a superhero)?
- * **CHALLENGE:** why not swap the perspective of your film, so that throughout the story, we see parts told from the hero's perspective and the villain's perspective. This is what's called a multi-strand narrative, where more than one story is told within one film, but they weave together in some way.