# Using a Storyboard

Now it's time for action! It's time to draw our plot on a storyboard, but you're not going to write your story until *after* you've drawn it.

By the time you've pencilled pictures quickly on the storyboard and, later, done your book mock-up, you'll have so much feeling for your characters that the words you'll choose then will make your book come alive for your reader.

With a pencil, swiftly draw the action of your characters as circle or stick figures, beginning in frames #4 and #5 and ending with frame #24, the end of your story. Frames #1 to #3 will be used later for special information.

You could even begin drawing where your characters are in their worst trouble, probably by frames #12 and #13. Finish from there to frame #24 and then go back to #4 and fill in the beginning. This keeps you from telling us more than we need to know about your characters early in the story.

This is storyboarding your plot, not beautiful art, so without adding details of hair and clothes and background, you'll easily finish storyboarding in an hour or less.
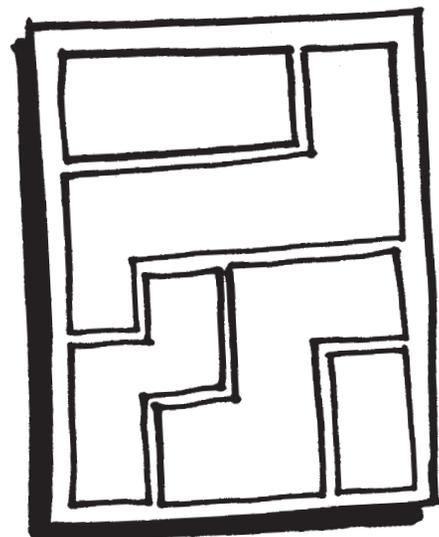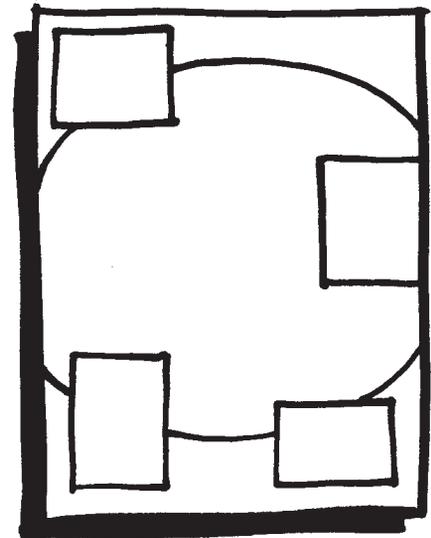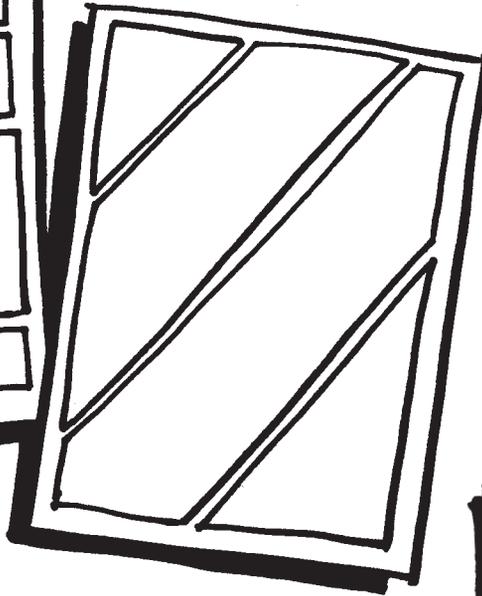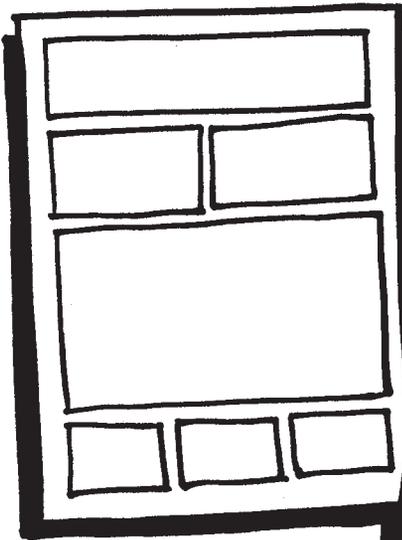
Storyboards for Graphic Novels and Comics

There are an unlimited number of layout options for comics and graphic novels. Here are a few different page layouts. Most important is frame logic. That is where the movement from frame to frame is easy to follow, going from top left to bottom right.

Hints for Storyboarding

• It's action you're drawing, not talking heads. Make bodies show what's happening by the way you make them move and relate to each other

• Use a *variety of views*—bird's-eye, ant's-eye, and lots of big close-ups. (These points of view are explained in Stage 3.)

• Decide where you want an illustration and where the words will go.

• Because it gives more power to spread a drawing over facing pages, you might sometimes want to use the *double-page spread*.

• Think about the suspense of a *page turn*.

• It's your characters that people will care about, so make them large. Don't draw teensy figures along the bottom of the frame. Put them higher up and fill the space!

• Most importantly, jump into your story feet first. Your reader doesn't want to hear about the alarm clock going off, admirable teeth brushing, or saying goodbye to Mom. Capture interest by providing trouble and complications as soon as possible.

• And, of course (does it need to be said?), *no words* go on the storyboard, just lines to indicate where they will go later.

Done?
Put it away.
That's enough
for a busy day.
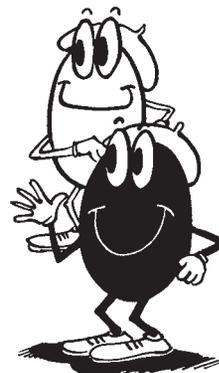
Editing Your Storyboard

Now that you've been away from your storyboard for a while, look at it as if someone else had done it. You'll see places where you can change, or edit, your story to make it clear. These changes will be easy to do because you used a pencil for your first work.