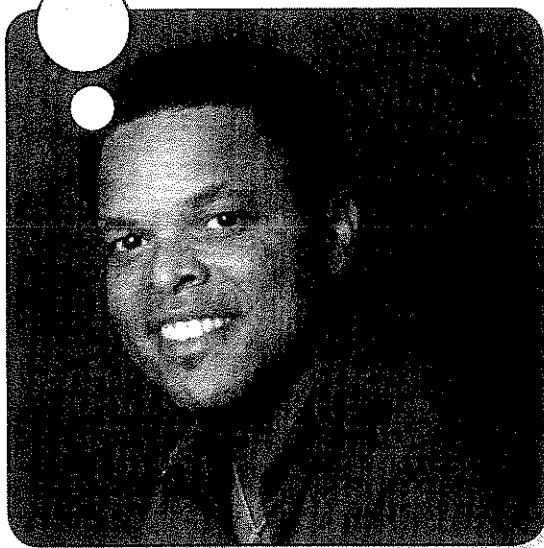


# Life in the **COMICS**

by Frances Storey



## Set Your Purpose

Read this article to find out how a real cartoon artist creates his strip.

**C**artooning can be a wonderful career for people who don't mind the hard work that comes with it. Robb Armstrong is one person who has chosen this career. He writes and draws a popular comic strip called *Jump Start*. *Jump Start* can be seen in more than 450 newspapers in eight countries. What's it like to draw a comic **strip** for a living? Let's find out!

"I began drawing comics when I was four years old," says Robb. "When I was 17, I sold some cartoons to a newspaper. I thought I'd found an easy career. I didn't **realize** how much work it takes to be a cartoon artist."

Robb's comic strip is a big hit. But he still has to work very hard. Robb has **deadlines** to meet every week.

When he sits down to **create** a new strip, he says, the ideas come first. Then comes the writing. Robb writes the words in the spots where they will be in the strip. Next it's time to draw. Robb draws first in pencil. At the end, he goes over the finished strip with a black marker. On Sundays, the cartoon page is in color. Robb uses a computer to apply color to the drawings for his Sunday strips.

When he's not working, Robb likes to talk to kids about drawing cartoons. What's his advice for kids who would like to do their own comic strips? It's important to keep on drawing. It's also important to continue your education. "Go to **college!**" Robb says.

Who knows? Maybe you'll be the next Robb Armstrong!

## Think About It

What steps does Robb Armstrong follow as he creates his comic strip?



## Check Your Understanding

Fill in the letter with the best answer for each question.

- What is the first thing Robb Armstrong does when he's creating a cartoon?
  - He writes the words.
  - He draws the pictures.
  - He uses colored markers.
  - He comes up with ideas.
- What is the last thing Armstrong does to his cartoons?
  - He thinks of the words.
  - He draws the pictures in pencil.
  - He writes the words in the frames.
  - He goes over the words and pictures in black marker.
- Why did Armstrong want to become a cartoon artist when he was young?
  - He thought it would be easy and fun.
  - He liked the deadlines.
  - He wanted to go to college.
  - He enjoyed talking to kids.
- What does Armstrong say is the most important thing he has learned about cartooning?
  - It takes a lot of work.
  - His strip is a big hit.
  - It is an easy job.
  - It is in color on Sundays.
- In which book might you find this article?
  - Drawing With Markers
  - How to Be Funny
  - Conversations About Careers: What Can You Be?
  - Keeping Up With the News

## Vocabulary

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Fill in the letter with the best definition of the underlined word.

- Robb Armstrong draws a comic strip for a living.
 

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| (A) line of drawings | (C) image  |
| (B) character on TV  | (D) poster |
- Most people don't realize how much work it takes to create comic strips.
 

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| (A) make something bigger | (C) forget about |
| (B) pretend               | (D) understand   |
- Armstrong must get the comic strips done in time for the deadlines.
  - dangerous places
  - dates when work must be finished
  - rear lines on a tennis court
  - times when things are not going well
- Armstrong has to create a new comic strip every week.
 

|          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| (A) read | (C) make       |
| (B) sell | (D) understand |
- Armstrong advises kids to go to college to continue their education.
  - place of higher learning after high school
  - where to find a job after high school
  - place to meet other artists
  - where to see more comic strips

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Word Work

A **suffix** is a word part that comes at the end of a base word. Knowing the meaning of a suffix helps you figure out the meaning of the whole word. The suffix **-ful** means "full of." The suffix **-y** means "having."

**careful** full of care  
**bumpy** having bumps

If a base word ends in *e*, drop the *e* before adding the suffix *-y*.

**ice** → **icy**

Write a word that fits the definition by adding the suffix **-ful** or **-y** to the base word.

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. full of wonder  | <b>wonder</b> _____  |
| 2. having snow     | <b>snow</b> _____    |
| 3. full of respect | <b>respect</b> _____ |
| 4. full of color   | <b>color</b> _____   |
| 5. having lace     | <b>lace</b> _____    |

Read each sentence. Add the suffix **-ful** or **-y** to the word in dark type to complete the sentence. Write the new word.

- 6. dirt** When drawing cartoons, do not use a \_\_\_\_\_ eraser.
- 7. care** Be \_\_\_\_\_ with sharp tools.
- 8. ease** It is not always \_\_\_\_\_ to come up with ideas for cartoons.
- 9. joy** I like to listen to \_\_\_\_\_ music while I draw.
- 10. thought** I give drawings to others when I'm in a \_\_\_\_\_ mood.

## Write Now

In "Life in the Comics," you learned how Robb Armstrong draws cartoons. Think about a cartoon that you might like to draw.

- Plan to draw a two- or three-frame cartoon. Use a chart like the one below to help you plan the characters, the setting, and the plot for the cartoon.
- Draw your cartoon. Use speech bubbles to show what the characters are saying.

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| <b>Characters</b> | _____ |
| <b>Setting</b>    | _____ |
| <b>Plot</b>       | _____ |