Text conventions in comics

Conventions are sets of **rules** for what is normally found within a product

Comics use a set of **conventions** (usually)

Your work should usually keep to these **conventions**

Conventions and creativity in the components are **limited** in their fitness for purpose.	Conventions and creativity in the components are **adequate** in their fitness for purpose.	Conventions and creativity in the components are **fully** fit for purpose.
Conventions and creativity are applied in the final product in a **limited** way.	Conventions and creativity are **adequately** applied in the final product.	Conventions and creativity are **effectively** applied in the final product.

Text conventions in comics

Text is used in comics to help tell stories

In general, text is used in particular ways and has a set of normal styles

These are the conventions you need to keep to in your work

Text conventions in comics

AS FOR LETTING YOU GO...

YOU WILL BE RELEASED WHEN I'VE ACHIEVED MY GOAL.

AND I AM STILL AWAITING THAT GLAD DAY.
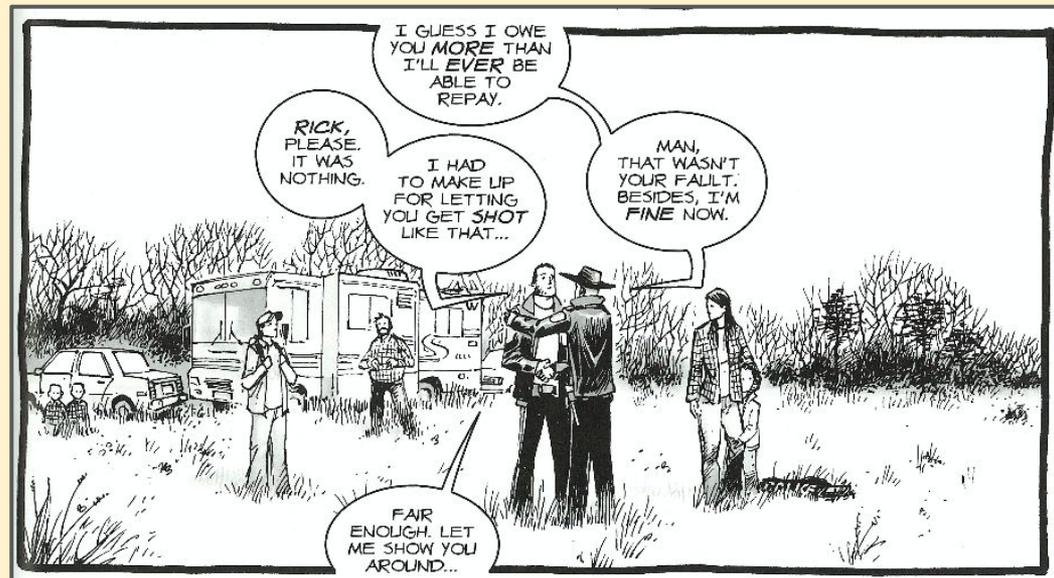
Convention 1: typeface

Comics will almost always use a hand written style of **typeface** (font)

There are lots of choices of typeface, but this is a good chance to use comic sans - which was designed specifically for use in comics

Text conventions in comics

Convention 2: styles

Most comics will use capital letters (**upper case**) for all text

There are some examples where **sentence case** is used, but the majority use capitals all the time

Bold text is used occasionally to add **emphasis** to key words

Text is almost always **black**

Text conventions in comics
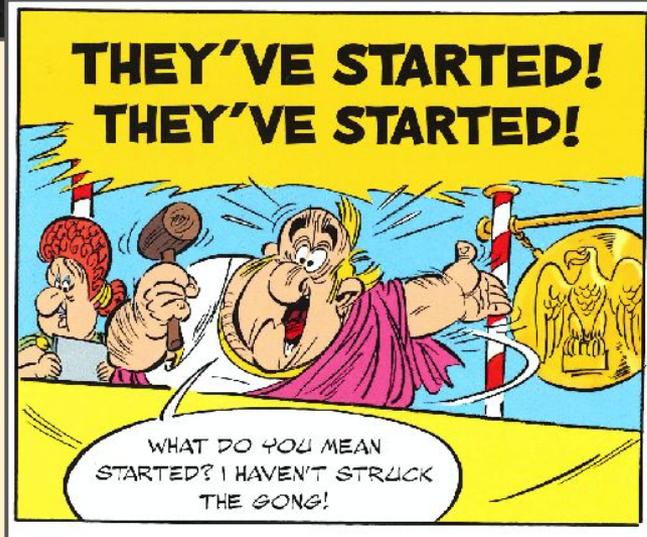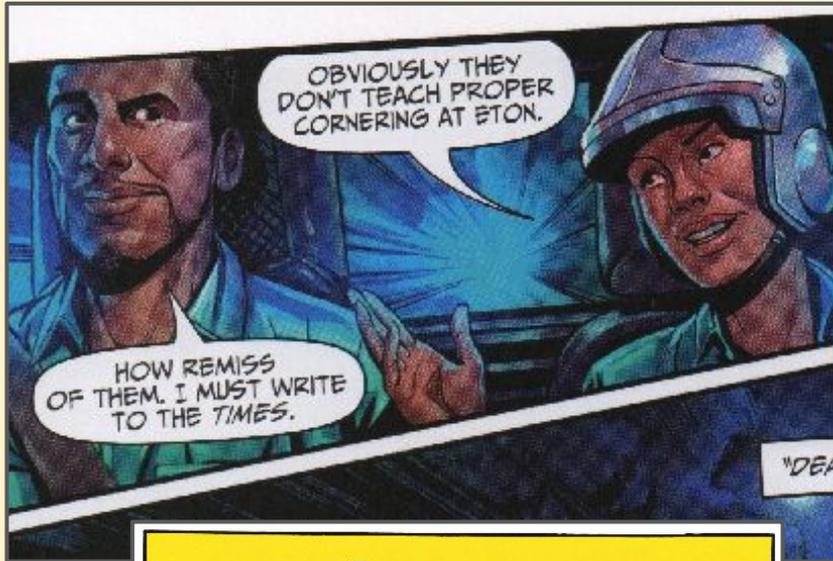
Convention 2b: styles

Text is often **quite small** in comics

Exactly what size depends on the typeface being used, but between 6 and 8 points is normal

Larger text size can be used to indicate shouting or louder sounds

Text conventions in comics
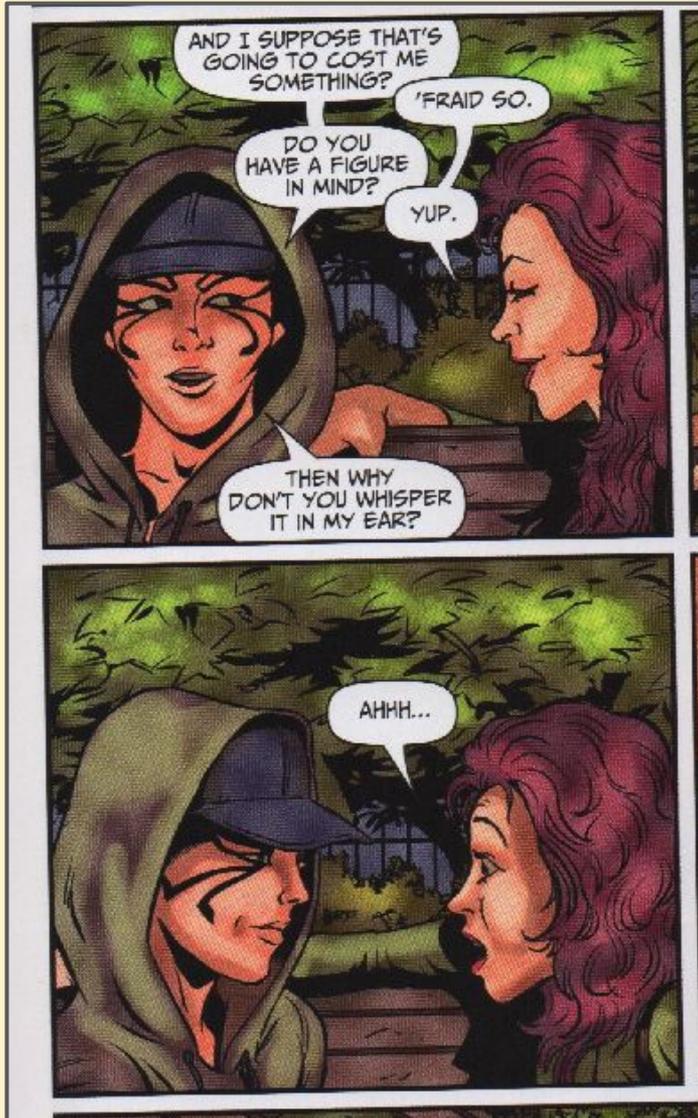
Convention 3: word balloons

Word balloons show speech and are one of the key ways that text is used in comics

They have a tail to indicate who is speaking

Text within word balloons is usually **centred**

Balloons are often **white** with a **black border**. They are usually an **ellipse shape**

Text conventions in comics
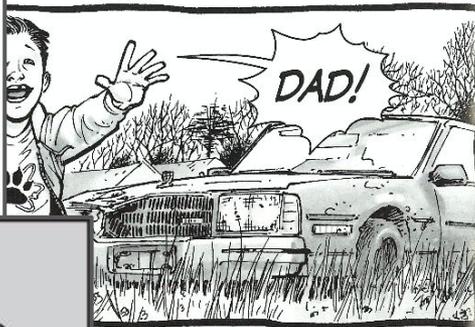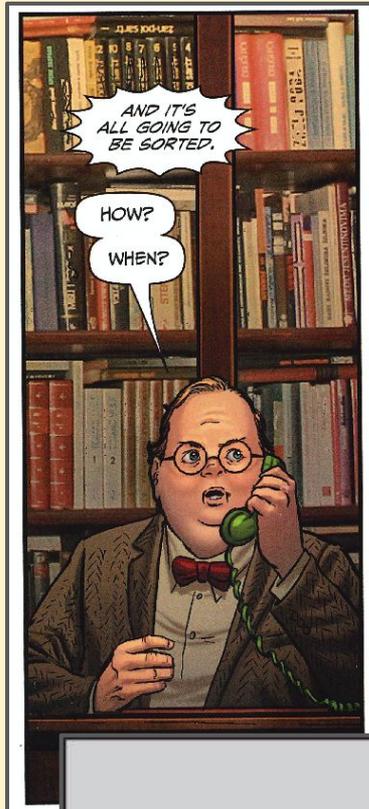
Convention 3b: balloon types

Using a **dashed border** shows whispering. Text might also be smaller

A **jagged border** is a **broadcast balloon** and shows sound coming from a device like a phone or shouting

A **thought balloon** is cloud shaped with dots rather than a standard tail to show thinking

Text conventions in comics

Convention 3c: balloon types

A jagged border can also represent a **burst balloon**. These are used for **emphasis** - perhaps when something is shouted. They often include **bold** or *italic* text or use a larger sized text

A double outline balloon is also used for emphasis at times

Text conventions in comics

Convention 4: narration

Rectangular boxes are used to show **narration**

This is where a character tells the story without using speech. Narration is a key storytelling device in comics

Text is usually **left aligned**, but still in capitals. Narration boxes are often white, but may be a different colour such as yellow to set them apart from speech

Text conventions in comics

Convention 5: captions

Captions can be used to set the scene or to explain what is going on

Captions are **information** rather than a character telling the story. They set the scene or describe action

Caption boxes are similar to narration boxes, but are often coloured differently to set them apart
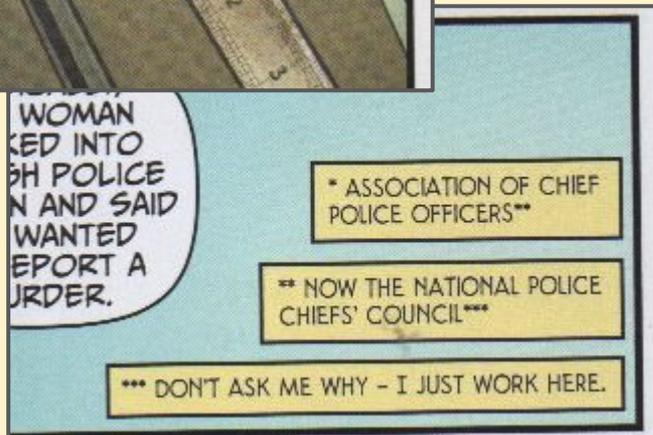
Text conventions in comics

Convention 6: sound effects

Text is used to show **sound effects** such as bang or splash

These are called **onomatopoeias** - the word sounds like the noise it is describing

Onomatopoeias are usually drawn in a different style to the rest of the text in a comic, often with an explosive shape outline

Text conventions in comics

Convention 7: titles

Comic books don't often have **titles** on the individual pages - that's what the cover is for

If titles are used, they are usually large writing at the top of the page. These might include chapter titles

Text conventions in comics

Convention 8: other text

Text can be used in other ways - for example, on signs, computer screens, letters or notes that characters are using or looking at
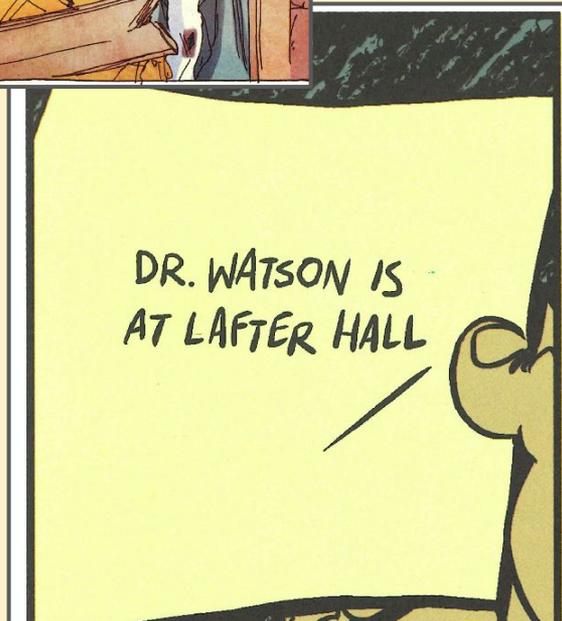
Conventions of comics

Reading order

Don't forget the reading order is an important convention to do with page layout that helps make sense of text
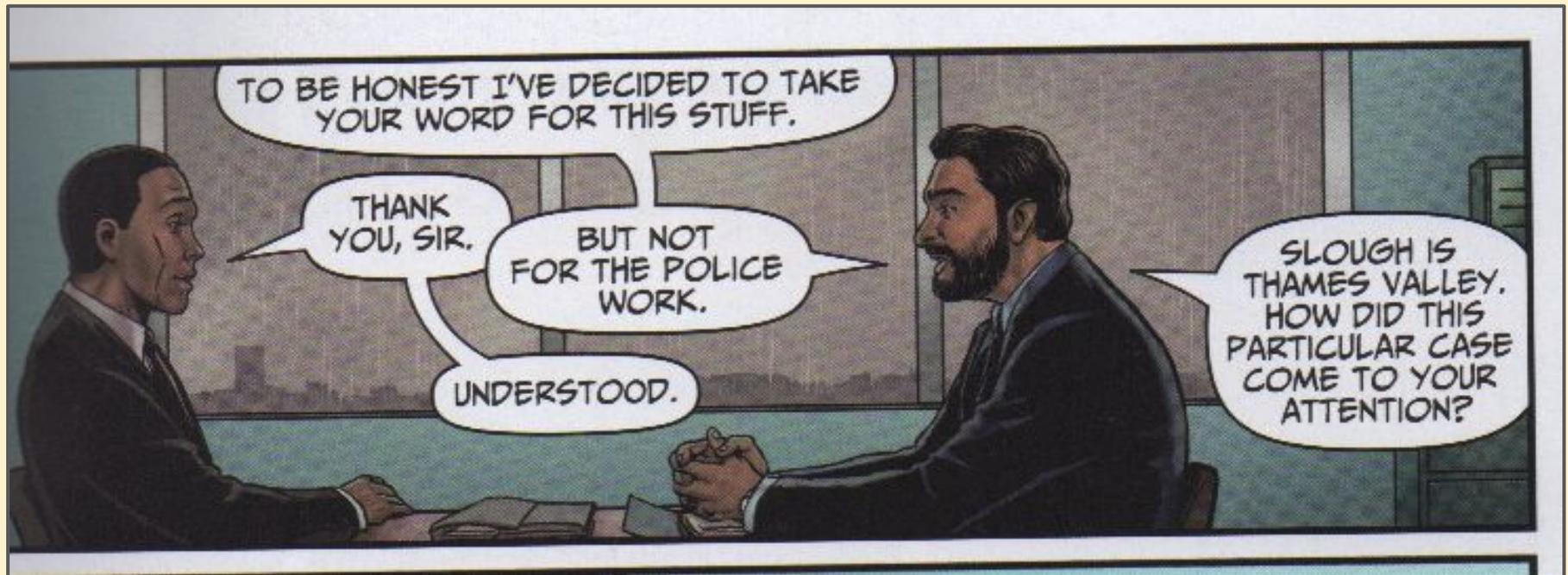
Text conventions in comics

Key vocab:

- typeface
- upper case
- emphasis
- word balloon
- broadcast balloon
- thought balloon
- narration
- caption
- onomatopoeias

Text conventions in comics

Task:

Annotate at least one of the comic book extracts to show the main conventions

Make sure you include a definition of the conventions

Extension:

Add annotations to note content conventions (colours, dialogue, lettering, action etc...)

Text conventions in comics

The comic book extracts used in these slides have been used at smaller scales for educational purposes only

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