

OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Graphic Novel
Title	Pilot & Huxley
Author/Illustrator	Dan McGuinness
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Age	8+
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Teachers’ Notes

PILOT & HUXLEY

Written and Illustrated
by Dan McGuinness

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About the Story

When Pilot and Huxley forget to return a video game, they have no idea of the trouble they're about to be in. An evil video store has hired an inter-dimensional hit man debt collector to hunt them down and retrieve the overdue game. When he zaps the two boys into another world, getting home is only half the problem. On the run from aliens who really want the video game, Pilot and Huxley will need more than luck to come out on top. They may even need the golden nose-hair of a mountain giant.

About the Author

Dan McGuiness started out by selling independent comics at conventions around the country. He never imagined he would write and illustrate his own comics. Since becoming a professional artist, Dan has shown his work in many exhibitions. Dan likes to tell people he was discovered as an infant among the smouldering remains of a top secret laboratory. *Pilot & Huxley* is his first published book. His second book, *Pilot & Huxley and the Holiday Portal*, will be published in 2010.

Author/Illustrator Inspiration

Dan took inspiration from the cartoons (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *He-Man*, *Thundercats*, *Jabba Jaw*, *DragonBall Z*, *the Real Ghostbusters*, *Voltron*, *M.A.S.K*) and comics (*Footrot Flats*) that made him laugh as a child. He wasn't a big reader, but he did love everything by Roald Dahl. When writing *Pilot & Huxley*, Dan set out to create a story that all ages would enjoy.

About the Illustrations

Dan says, 'I begin my books by writing a script. The script includes the dialogue, sound effects and descriptions of how the panels will be laid out. As I write the script (or sometimes even before I start), I sketch new characters in lead pencil into an idea book. My idea book is a simple blank notebook that I keep handy on my desk. In these early sketches I

decide what style I'm going to draw the character in – for example, I wanted the *Pilot & Huxley* characters to have quite large heads but little bodies.

'I start by drawing each page quite roughly in lead pencil. I work at A3 size so that it's easier to include the smaller details. Once I'm happy with the pencil drawings, I place a sheet of tracing paper over each page and 'ink' their outlines using a felt-tipped pen. The next step is to scan the outlines and colour them using Photoshop. At this point I also add big, colourful sound effects. These files are then brought into InDesign by my graphic designer (my girlfriend Clare). She adds the panel borders, speech bubbles and captions.

'This is the process I use but there is no right or wrong way. Every person has their own way of drawing and colouring.'

Study Notes for Teachers

1) Comics and the Internet

The Internet is a terrific resource for kids looking for information on comics. At the Good Comics for Kids website, you can find the latest comic reviews and regularly updated reading lists: <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/540000654.html>. At the Kids Love Comics blog <http://kidslovecomics.blogspot.com/> you can find information and character sketches, as well as links to all the contributors' homepages and other useful resources. The website Sidekicks, <http://www.noflyingnotights.com/sidekicks/index.html>, reviews comics for kids and provides information about how to get involved in the comic scene. Pilot and Huxley have their own website at www.pilotandhuxley.com.au where you can find fun facts about the characters, download T-shirt transfers and desktop wallpaper, and sign up to receive news about upcoming books. At the website Make Beliefs Comix, you can find instructions on how to make your own comic strip: <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>.

2) Creating comic strips

Kids can be asked to create their own comic strip. Using an example from a newspaper, and following Dan's advice on how to best create a comic, they could develop their own characters and write a story about them. Once this is done, the comic strips can be gathered together and photocopied in a layout similar to those you would find in newspapers.

3) Making maps

Students could map the world in *Pilot & Huxley*. Students can be asked to make a timeline with all the landmarks Pilot and Huxley visit. Using this as a reference, they can design a map that shows Pilot and Huxley's journey.

4) Movie previews

Lots of comics have been made into movies. Students can talk about their favourite comic adaptations and why they were successful. Do they think adapting comics to movies is a good idea? Can they imagine *Pilot & Huxley* as a movie? In small groups, students could plan a movie preview. They could write a script, adapting scenes from the book, and act it out. If they have access to recording equipment, students could film their preview and add music, a voice over and other special effects.

5) Inventing worlds

Have a discussion about favourite make believe worlds in fiction. Make a list of all the things authors need to create in order to convince their readers of the setting (people names, place names, species, rules, languages, customs, clothing styles, inventions etc.). Using this list, students could invent their own worlds and present the information in poster form.

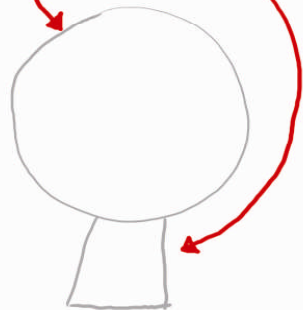
6) Drawing Pilot

Using the step-by-step guide by author Dan McGuinness, students can draw their own versions of Pilot.

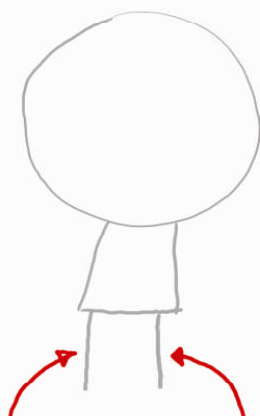
HOW TO DRAW PILOT.

STEP 1

WITH A PENCIL, DRAW A CIRCLE WITH A SQUARE COMING OFF THE BOTTOM.



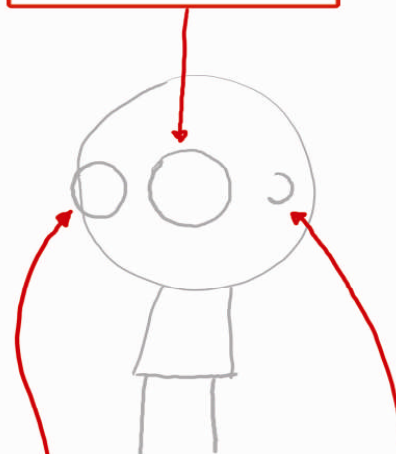
STEP 2



DRAW TWO LINES COMING OUT FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE SQUARE. THESE WILL BECOME THE LEGS LATER.

STEP 3

DRAW A CIRCLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BIG CIRCLE.

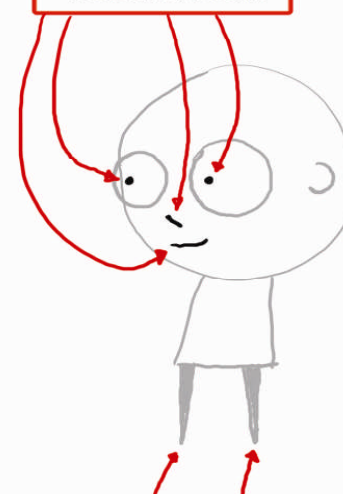


THEN DRAW A SMALLER CIRCLE JUST INSIDE THE EDGE OF THE BIG CIRCLE.

DRAW THE EAR IN BETWEEN THE EYE AND THE EDGE OF THE BIG CIRCLE.

STEP 4

WITH A BLACK PEN, DRAW IN THE PUPILS, NOSE AND MOUTH.



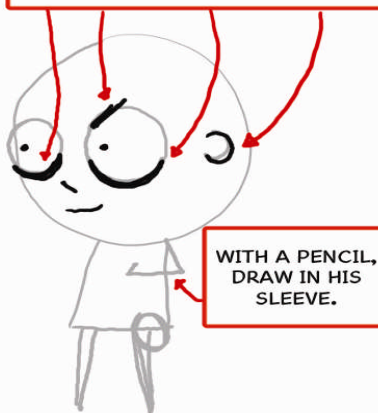
WITH A PENCIL, TURN THE LEG LINES INTO SPIKES.



HOW TO DRAW PILOT.

STEP 5

WITH THE PEN, GO OVER THE EAR. DRAW IN THE BAGS UNDER HIS EYES AND GIVE HIM AN ANGRY EYEBROW.



WITH A PENCIL, DRAW IN HIS SLEEVE.

IN PENCIL, DRAW A CIRCLE. THIS WILL BECOME HIS HAND.

STEP 6

DRAW A LINE THAT HAS FIVE SPIKES OF HAIR, FINISHING AT THE TOP OF HIS EAR.



WITH THE PEN, DRAW TWO LINES FROM THE SLEEVE TO THE HAND. THIS IS HIS ARM.

STEP 7

WITH A PEN, DRAW THREE TUFTS OF HAIR. TRACE HIS EYES.



WITH A PEN, DRAW THE TOP OF HIS HEAD AND THREE SPIKES FOR THE BACK OF HIS HAIR.

WITH A PEN, TRACE ANTI-CLOCKWISE AROUND THE BIG CIRCLE, STARTING UNDER HIS EYE. UNDER HIS MOUTH, STOP FOLLOWING THE PENCIL LINE AND CURVE THE PEN LINE UP TO MEET HIS EAR.

WITH A PEN, FILL IN HIS LEGS AND DRAW SOME FEET. NEXT, DRAW IN HIS T-SHIRT AND ARMS.

STEP 8



RUB OUT ALL THE PENCIL LINES, FILL IN HIS HAIR AND COLOUR HIM IN.

**ALL FINISHED!
NOW GO SHOW
YOUR FRIENDS HOW
GOOD YOU ARE!**