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Four Panel Comic Challenge

Presented by the Wild Escape

Created by LICAF and Hester Harrington

Art Fund and LICAF (Lakes International Comic Art Festival) are setting children the challenge to create a comic, using only 4 panels. The theme is 'The Wild Escape', which asks children to explore the creatures in your museum and create an artwork imagining one creature’s journey to a natural habitat rich in life. The stories and pictures children make will be brought together in a collective work of art, unveiled during a weekend of activities for all ages on Earth Day 2023.

Below is a lesson plan that has been developed with the help of LICAF and Hester Harrington who devised the original resource, and Derby Museums, Museum of Gloucester and Touchstones part of Your Trust Rochdale. Also available is a powerpoint for you to use with a class, and adapt as needed, and A4 templates for the Four Panel Comics.

**Instructions**

* Create a four panel comic that imagines one creature’s journey from your museum to a natural habitat rich in life. It can be any size.
* Use a combination of images and words – we have provided templates if needed.
* The comic could be created individually or you could work collaboratively.
* You can use any materials and equipment you want; draw, paint, collage, hand write, type, digital drawing or computer aided. Be creative and enjoy!

Advice from the four museums that piloted this activity is:

* Use real objects, rather than photographs of a painting or object. This has a much greater impact and is more exciting for children
* Check children’s prior knowledge of biodiversity, habitats and food chains. If necessary do a starter activity to learn about these.
* Choose one or a limited number of creatures that children will imagine are journeying to a natural habitat rich in life. You can have fact sheets ready about these creature’s habitat, food and lifecycle.
* If you are using taxidermy be prepared for questions the children may ask. See these Q&A on Taxidermy.
* For children who are not confident drawing or writing provide old magazines or newspaper for children to cut out images and text.

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Resources (depends on the medium for the artwork and level of difficulty you have picked)

* A4 four panel comic challenge template, one per child – there are three different versions to provide different levels of challenge.
* Colouring pencils or pens
* Old magazines to use for collages and glue

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| **If needed, pick one starter activity** to teach children about biodiversity and habitats:   * Mind map * Odd one out * Construct a food chain * Natural History Museum [build a bird](https://www.nhm.ac.uk/content/dam/nhmwww/take-part/dippy-on-tour/resources/dinosaurs-and-birds-learning-resource-build-a-bird.pdf) activity (will take longer than 10 minutes) | 10 minutes |
| **Tell the children they are taking part in a nationwide project the Wild Escape.** Explain what the Wild Escape is   * Project to picture the future of the UK’s wildlife through the art and objects in museum collections * Explore the creatures in our museums and create artwork imagining their journey to a natural habitat rich in life. * Stories and pictures children make will be brought together in a collective work of art, unveiled during a weekend of activities for all ages on Earth Day 2023.   They are invited to design a four panel comic telling the story of a Wild Escape of one creature from this museum. | 5 minutes |
| **Introduce the four panel comic structure to the children**:  Show Clarice Tudor’s four panel comic (it is on the class slides powerpoint)  Discuss Clarice Tudor’s comic, eg ask:  What is the story?  What is happening in each panel?  How do you know what is happening?  Eg  1) creature escapes from museum (case or frame), we see it leaving.  2) where does the creature want to go/get to? Who does it pass or encounter?  3) what does the creature want to do? Linked to biodiversity, habitat, food chains (refer back to starter activity).  4) how does the creature feel in the wild?    You can ask the children to answer these questions in small groups, or do as a whole class activity. | 10 minutes |

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| **Pick one creature from the museum**  Go out into the galleries to explore find a creature and collect information about it. Ask the children to find out about the creature:   * What does it eat? * Where does it live? * What is its life cycle? * What is a good habitat for the creature? | 30 minutes |
| **What is a comic?**  If needed provide information on comics. Some museums said children already understood comics well and did not need to be taught the following.   * Comics combine WORDS with IMAGES to convey information. * Comics are a MEDIUM, so they can be about anything! They cover a wide array of genres; fact, fiction, superhero, thriller, biographic, historical, political, the list goes on... * A comic usually contains PANELS, the edge of each panel is called a FRAME, and in between each frame there is a space called a GUTTER. * A GUTTER helps show the passing of time, this could be a minute, an hour or years! * Words can be presented in comics in different ways, but most commonly they are used in SPEECH BUBBLES, THOUGHT BUBBLES or EXCLAMATIONS!   *Top Tip from comic artists: write the words first then draw the speech bubble around after. Speech bubbles tend to be positioned at the top of a panel (floating like a cloud), with a tail pointing down to the character.*   * Comics can be presented in many ways. English-language comics are laid out starting at the top left of the page, read left to right. Then let your eyes travel to the next row of panels and continue left to right, reading in the same direction as you would read a book.   The class slides powerpoint includes some additional four panel comics as examples of different ways children can make their comic. | 5 minutes |

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| **Plan your four panel comic**  Work individually or in small groups  Ask children   * What is a good habitat for your creature? *What would it include? How would it smell? How would the habitat feel?* * How did the creature journey from the museum to this habitat? *What did they pass? What did they see?*   Plan what you will put in each of the four panels  Children could use four post it notes to plan the story or answer four questions, one per panel:  Panel one: Where is your creature?  Panel two: How does it leave the museum?  Panel three: Where does it go?  Panel four: Why does it go there? | 10 minutes |
| **Make your four panel comic** | 20 minutes |
| **Share your comics**  We would love you to share your comic creations with us at [thewildescape@artfund.org](mailto:thewildescape@artfund.org) or share on your school or parental Twitter and Instagram using @LittleLICAF #LittleLICAF [Artfund Twitter](https://twitter.com/artfund?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) [Artfund Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/artfund/?hl=en)  Please include the name of your museum and school when sending in artwork. We look forward to sharing your accomplishments as part of the celebrations on Earth Day 2023. | After the session |

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**Starter activity ideas**

**Mind map**

In groups or as a class

Put the creature/an image of the creature/write the creature’s name in the middle of a large sheet of paper

Ask children to write everything they can think of about the creature on the paper.

To make the activity more challenging you can give the children a time limit, eg 1 minute, , and ask the groups to rotate and add more information to the new mind map, with decreasing amounts of time eg 45 seconds, 30 seconds.

Prompt questions:

* What colour is it?
* What does it eat?
* Where does it live?
* What is its life cycle?
* What does It look like? Can you describe its main features?

**Build a food chain**

Put the children in small groups and give them images of different creatures that make up a food chain. Ask them to put the images in order.

**Odd one out**

Show four images of the same creature in different types of habitat

Ask the children which image is the odd one out.

Discuss why the image is the odd one out.