

# The Cartoonists Club

AUTHOR

**RAINA TELGEMEIER**

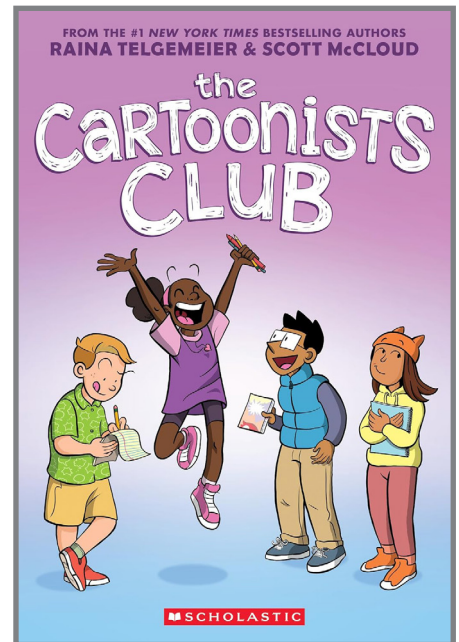
ILLUSTRATOR

**SCOTT MCCLOUD**

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Mid to Upper Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Makayla is bursting with ideas but doesn't know how to make them into a story. Howard loves to draw, but he struggles to come up with ideas and his dad thinks comics are a waste of time. Lynda constantly draws in her sketchbook but keeps focusing on what she feels are her mistakes, and Art simply loves being creative and is excited to try something new. They come together to form The Cartoonists Club, where kids can learn about making comics and use their creativity and imagination for their own storytelling adventures!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raina Telgemeier is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling, multiple Eisner Award-winning creator of *Smile*, *Sisters* and *Guts*, which are all graphic memoirs based on her childhood. She is also the creator of *Drama* and *Ghosts*, and is the adapter and illustrator of the first four *Baby-sitters Club* graphic novels. Raina lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

To learn more, visit her online at [goraina.com](http://goraina.com).

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Scott McCloud has been writing, drawing and examining comics since 1984. Winner of the Eisner and Harvey awards, his works have been translated into more than sixteen languages. Frank Miller (*Sin City*, 300) called him 'just about the smartest guy in comics.' He lives with his family in southern California.

His online comics and inventions can be found at [scottmccloud.com](http://scottmccloud.com).

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion might be:
  - What are the characters on the front cover of the book doing?
  - What can you tell about the characters in this story from the cover illustration?
  - Which character do you think the story is mostly told? Why do you think this?
  - What are some of your hypotheses regarding what might happen in this story?
  - After reading the back cover of the novel, and looking at the illustration, what more can you now hypothesise about what might happen in the novel?
  - Based on the illustrations on both the front and back cover, in conjunction with the text on the back cover, can you identify each of the four main characters by name? Discuss your conclusions about the identity of each

pictured character, sharing your reasoning with the rest of the class.

- Which of the described characters do you think you might identify with the most? Why do you think this?
- What are the pictured characters feeling in the cover artwork? How has the illustrator shown this?
- What are the differences between graphic novels, comic books and cartoons? What are the similarities? How would you categorise these things into different groups? As a class, discuss the differences between the three, and in pairs or small groups, compile a list of features that you would expect to see within each category. Make note of which features they share, and which are distinct to a single type. On a large sheet of paper, present your conclusions as a Venn diagram. Discuss everyone's different conclusions, and re-read the section of the novel where Ms Fatima talks to the club about what makes a comic. (pp 45–51)
  - Individually, create a small illustration based on or inspired by the illustrations in the novel to go around the edge of the poster.
- Makayla helps Howard learn how it is possible to create a story from almost any type of prompt. Write a short story of your own using a random word, idea, or object as a story prompt.
  - With your eyes closed, open the book to a random page, and stab your finger down on the page.
  - Look carefully at the illustrations and words where your finger has landed.
  - Use one word from the text, and one object from the illustrations as prompts to be incorporated into your short story.
  - Illustrate your work, then mount your story and illustration on a large piece of card.
  - Caption your work with your prompts.
  - Hang your work up on the classroom or hallways walls for others to appreciate and enjoy everyone's creativity.
- Art is extremely enthusiastic about the idea that they can really let their creativity run riot when creating a comic—that it doesn't have to conform to the stereotypical format of panels of line art on a piece of paper with small amounts of text. In pairs or small groups, brainstorm your own super-inventive way of creating a comic, and then create a comic using your method, that tells the story of how you thought of it and how you created it.
- After you finish reading Chapter Four, as a class, discuss why a game such as 'quanto comics' is so valuable an exercise for aspiring creators. Talk about what happened in the book, and how the students reacted to each other's work during the game. Include in your discussion your own ideas about why this is an excellent way to prompt and encourage creativity.
  - In small groups, or as a class, play your own game of 'quanto comics'. After you have finished your game, discuss what you personally found the most challenging part of the exercise, and what you found the most rewarding part. Can you think of any other benefits to playing this game now that you have personally participated? If so, share them with the class.
- Make a zine of your own! Use a single sheet of paper like the zines that Art's dad told the young people about on their drive. Follow Art's instructions on pp 96–99 on how to fold your page and draw your comic. Choose a topic inspired by an event from the novel as the focus of your zine.
- Makayla has been writing a space epic, and designing fancy costumes for the royal family in her story. Choose a fictional family of your own to design fancy costumes for. Draw at least three members of the family, and draw and colour your final costume designs. Around the pictures of your chosen characters, write notes sharing the design features, as well as your design process and any issues you think might be faced by someone trying to make the costumes in real life.
- Ms Fatima gives the club members lots of good advice about creating comics—and about writing stories as well! In small groups, write down as many different pieces of advice as you can remember, before going back through the novel and seeing if you can find any other piece of advice in there you had forgotten. Why do you think you remembered some of the advice more easily than other parts? What piece of advice do you think is the best/most useful, and why do you think this?
  - Create a four-panel comic strip of your own, using at least two separate pieces of Ms Fatima's advice to help you on your creative journey. After you finish, share with the class which pieces of advice you chose to help you, and how you think following Ms Fatima's techniques impacted your creative process.
- Try using Art and Lynda's recipe for showing different emotions on a cartoon face. Start with practising drawing the

six basic faces, then experiment with mixing little bits of each emotion together to see what expressions you can create.

- What do you think was the best part of the convention that the club went to?
- How did Lynda's comic make you feel? In small groups discuss her comic, and why she felt doubts about the value of her own work and was so nervous about sharing it with others.
- Read the back matter, where the author and artist share more about how they made this novel, and some of the different roles that people can play in the creation of comic books. Is there anything in this back matter that surprised you? How much of what is in these back pages did you already know because you have read the book? Write down and share your favourite fun fact from the book. You can illustrate it, or even present it as a comic strip of its own if you want.

AUTHOR OF NOTES  
**RAE CARLYLE**