

The head in detail

Lesson

4

Rube Goldberg

Milton Caniff

Al Capp

Harry Haenigsen

Willard Mullin

Gurney Williams

Dick Cavalli

Whitney Darrow, Jr.

Virgil Partch

Barney Tobey





Details of the Comic Head

In Lesson One you studied the simple comic head, drawing it from a toy balloon. Now you are ready to consider the comic head in a more detailed manner. Of course, the other parts of the body must fit in with the type of head you draw. But remember that the observer's attention is first focused on the face and head. Hence, these parts are all-important.

A mere exaggeration of features does not always convey character. There must be mobility in the features and feeling that a human being is pictured by the lines representing the face, no matter how comic or grotesque the face may be. On the opposite page is shown the head of Apollo, conceded to be the most finely proportioned of the Greek gods. Surrounding Apollo are heads that are about as different in beauty and symmetry from him as possible. Yet these comic heads and faces are as alive as that of the perfect Apollo, and perhaps convey more character. Moreover, they are not ugly in an unpleasant sense. A face can be

interesting, homely comic, crazily proportioned, and not be ugly. Ugliness is something that should be avoided in cartooning. It takes experience to know what is grotesque without being ugly.

The heads of the characters establish the mood of a cartoon. A well-known cartoonist who has several assistants to put in his inking and lettering never allows them to touch the heads. He knows that he must do them himself to keep the strip's flavor.

The faces in cartoons must have a vague familiarity as though you had met them before. You must feel like calling them Joe and Bill and Mabel and Jim. They are people — funny people — but *living* people.

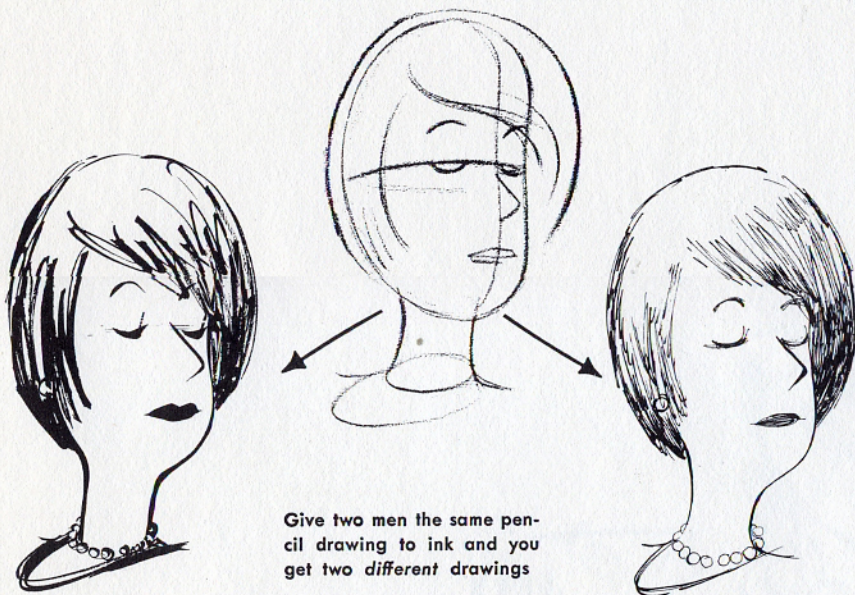
As you draw facial expressions, you will probably find your own face trying to match the face you are drawing. Don't worry — this is normal for cartoonists. It may be highly amusing to your friends who catch you in the act — but if it helps you get the drawing right, go to it.

A style develops

There is no limit to the way you can combine the features or treat them in pen and ink or brush and ink. There are two basic reasons why one cartoonist's work looks different from another's. First, one cartoonist may draw eyes close together while the other draws them far apart. Or one may draw big noses and small chins while the other likes big chins and small smellers. These differences are easily spotted. But the main differences will be found in such little things as the thickness or thinness of line or smoothness or roughness of line. They may be hard to see, but they give each individual cartoonist what is called "style."

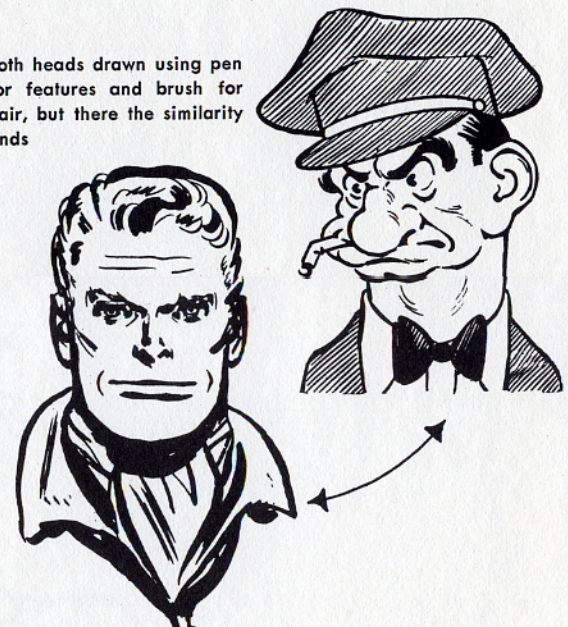
The beginner in cartooning usually worries because he hasn't developed a style. Some beginners sit around worrying so much

about style that they never have time to do the one thing that will give them what they want — actual *drawing*. If you practice and draw you can no more help developing a style than a baby duck can help swimming when it goes in the water. Drawing is like writing. Everyone who writes in long hand has a style — and the prisons are full of guys who tried to copy someone else's. The way you hold the pen, the shape of your hand, even the way you think all influence what comes off the end of your pen with the ink. Of course you can help this style along as soon as you see it developing, but don't try to force it. One of the easiest things for editors to spot is a forced style, and they don't like it. Be yourself — it's easier and the results will be better.



Give two men the same pencil drawing to ink and you get two different drawings

Both heads drawn using pen for features and brush for hair, but there the similarity ends



Cartooning the head

We cartoon heads by simplifying their outlines and exaggerating those features which will best show the type we want to draw — handsome hero, villain, highbrow, lowbrow, etc. By exaggeration we mean making the features much larger or smaller than in real life. However, don't exaggerate the size of ALL the features or you'll end up merely with an unfunny oversized face. If, for instance, you wish to emphasize a large nose, make the eyes and/or the mouth small. Then, by contrast, the nose will seem even larger. By the same token, a big mouth will appear larger if the nose is small. To help get across your character's mood you can also exaggerate his facial expression



1 A normal face — regular features, but none of them particularly distinctive or outstanding



2 By emphasizing the mouth and chin and thickening the neck we make him more rugged, masculine — the adventure-strip hero type



3 Carrying the exaggeration further — massive jaw, low forehead, bull neck, heavy eyebrows — we make him a roughneck. Two-day growth of beard helps



4 Emphasize the brow, reduce the skull foliage and add spectacles to create the studious type



5 Exaggerate the nose and simplify the outlines for a more comic character



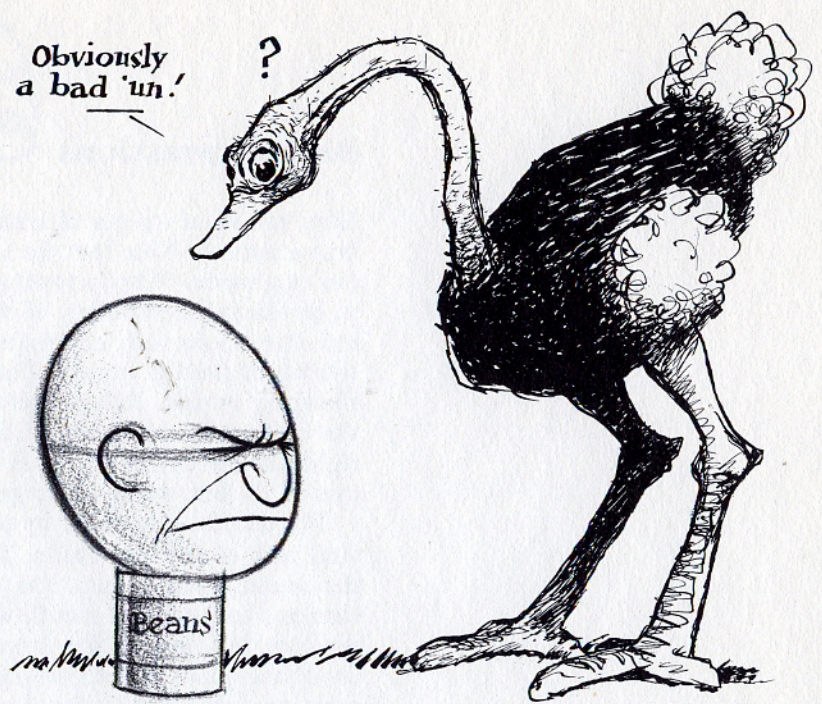
6 With further exaggeration we come up with a real low-comedy type

The head and neck

If you balanced an ostrich egg on a tin can you'd have a good representation of the basic forms of the head and neck and their relationship to each other in their normal position. However, the head can assume many other attitudes: it can tilt forward, backward, or sideways as well as turn from side to side.

Combine these actions with the appropriate facial expressions and you can reveal your characters' feelings much more clearly and emphatically. A pugnacious expression, for example, becomes even more pugnacious if the head juts forward belligerently. A startled or frightened expression is heightened by a backward thrust of head and neck. These and similar head gestures will give life and animation to your cartoon figures.

When you're faced with a problem of expression, it's a good idea to act out the situation or emotion in front of a mirror. Study the attitudes your head assumes with various facial expressions. It often helps to exaggerate these head gestures — but always base your exaggeration on reality.



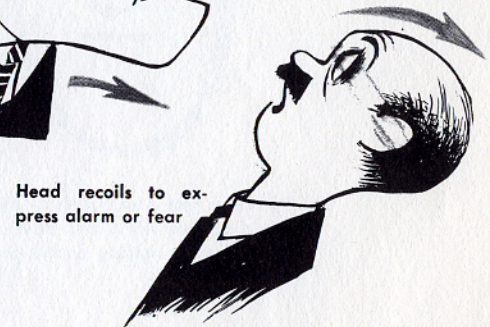
Remember the importance of the eyeline in showing the degree to which the head tips forward or back



The head can turn only from side to side but by exaggerating the action we can make him really do a double take



Forward thrust suggests belligerence



Head recoils to express alarm or fear



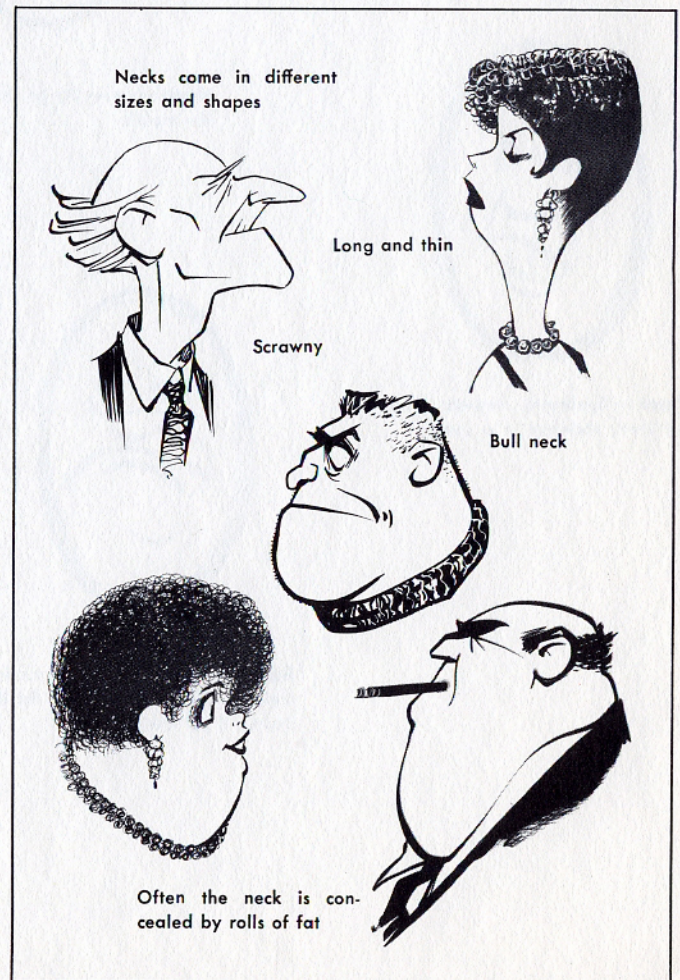
Head turns to give an over-the-shoulder sidelong glance for "come hither" look



For a haughty, supercilious expression, tip head back and get her nose in the air



Lower the head as well as the eyelids to suggest shyness

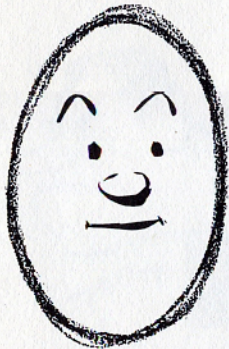




Basic expressions

Here you see a variety of features that express some of the human emotions. Note that the ball-type nose has little to do with the expression. When showing "vanity," the nose is turned up to emphasize the hauteur of the subject, but generally the nose has little to do with expression because it is immovable unless the whole head is turned. The eyes and the mouth are keys to changing moods. Raised eyebrows, the frown (a line between the eyebrows), the droopy lids, the lowered eyebrows, the upright narrow circles with the eyeballs in the center, the closed eyes — all help you quickly get across the expression you want.

The mouth — accented by cheek and lip lines — is an equally vital part of any expression. The teeth showing from one side; the round, open mouth, the laughing mouth with the raised corners, the puckered mouth with a suggestion of the lower lip; the lopsided mouth; the large mouth; the small mouth — all have their place in the great cycle of human emotions. Constant practice — and an occasional peek into your mirror — will bring you to a point where these devices will become automatic in your work. They will immediately come to your mind — and hence the tip of your pen or pencil — as soon as you want a character to show an emotion in your cartoon creation.



Ease — Eyes and mouth in neutral — that nice blank look that comes from having nothing on the mind



Happiness — Up go the corners of the mouth



Anger — Eyebrows vee-ed down and teeth showing in a snarl



Aggressiveness — Eyes frowning, mouth turned down — lower lip line makes it jut out



Hilarity — Mouth curved up and open in a laugh. Eyes closed



Drowsiness — Eyes closed — mouth round and ready to snore



Mildness — Eyes neutral — almost a smile



Hate — Eyebrows heavy and frowning — teeth showing — the beast shows through in this one



Sorrow — A smile upside down — eyes closed and wrinkled for crying



Vanity — Eyes closed — up goes the nose — mouth clamped shut on his own opinions



Nonchalance — Eyes closed to the situation — mouth clamped shut in an almost-smile



Surprise — Eyebrows up — eyes popped open. Small, open mouth says "Oh!"



Drunkenness — Drooping eyelids and lopsided mouth show the well-known loss of muscular control



Pain — Pain contorts forehead and eyebrows. Eyes closed and mouth ready to say "ouch!"



Stupidity — Round eyes, slightly crossed — open-mouthed smile with tongue hanging out give us just one version of the cartoonists' favorite expression



Innocence — High eyebrows — closed eyes with a small, shyly smiling mouth



Fright — Eyebrows up — mouth opened for screaming



Love — Open eyes looking up show admiration. Some people in love smile



Flirtation — A wink and the lopsided smile gives us the amorous leer

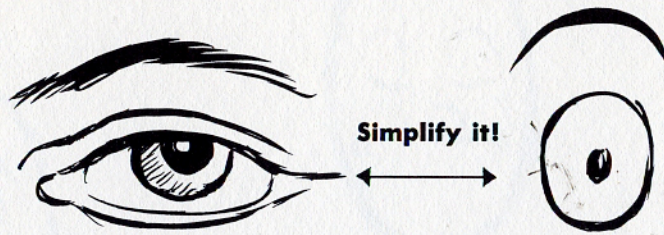


Thirst — Forehead and brows contorted — eyelids droop in exhaustion. Tongue hangs out of open, panting mouth

The comic eye



Here is the simple dot eye in full circle by Willard Mullin



In this comic face, Rube Goldberg uses the simple dot to get the character he wants



Here Al Capp uses the dot with a half circle for Li'l Abner

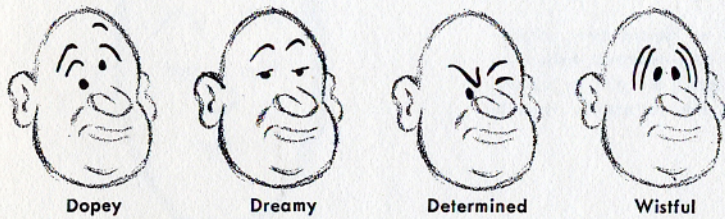
The eye, although of complicated structure, is basically a ball set in a socket of the skull and covered by lids of definite thickness. In cartooning we can simplify it to a dot or a dot within a circle (the dot representing the iris and pupil of the eyeball; the circle the eyelids which enclose it). By its placement within the circle the dot will show the direction of your character's gaze.

The placement of the eyebrow in relation to the eye is important in getting the right expression, so study the suggestions below and do some real-life observation by making faces into a mirror until you are thoroughly familiar with the action of the eye in expressing different attitudes and emotions.



An example of the simple dot eye as used by George Clark — note how much expression he gets with it

By using a simple dot eye you can make characters look...



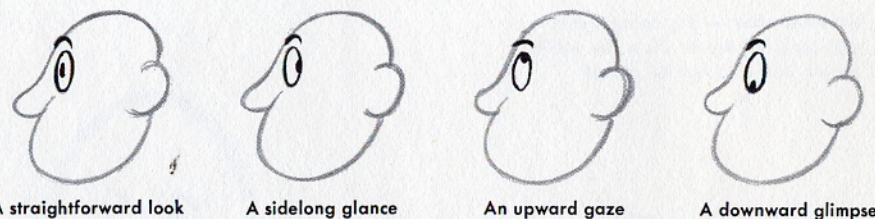
Dopey

Dreamy

Determined

Wistful

Or with a dot in a circle you can show...



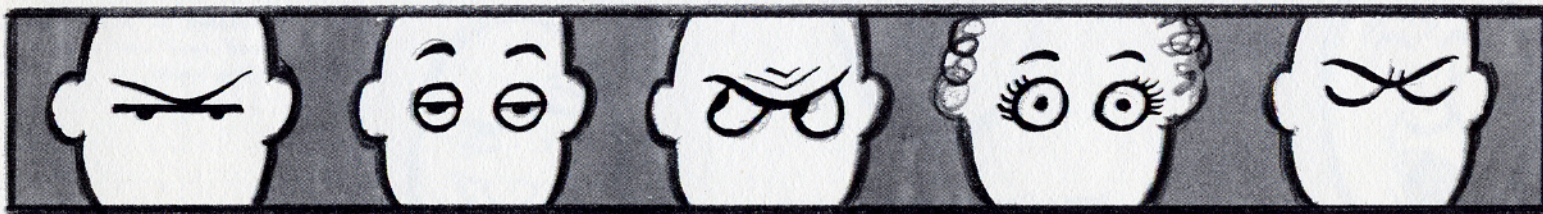
A straightforward look

A sidelong glance

An upward gaze

A downward glimpse

Eye expressions



1. A straight line half covering the dots along with eyebrows pulled down results in a menacing glower

2. Semicircles partially concealing the dots show sleepiness

3. Sidelong glance with eyebrows down and furrows in brow gives a suspicious, skeptical look

4. For a surprised stare raise the eyebrows and center the dots. Eyelashes suggest feminine character

5. Curved lids covering dots give a look of concentration when eyebrows are lowered

When drawing glamour gals, a more realistic approach to drawing the eyes allows emphasis to be put on this attractive feature of female faces



Emphasize eyelashes

Note curve of lowered eyelid as it covers the underlying eyeball



In a normal expression about one fourth of the iris is covered by upper lid

Showing the entire iris gives a staring, pop-eyed look



Indians have big noses—so Willard Mullin gave this fellow one

The comic nose

There's something fundamentally funny about a nose. It sticks into other people's business — it smells a rat — it makes a sound like a foghorn. Best of all, you can use it very effectively to create character. Large or small, a nose is a cartoonist's delight.

The human schnozzle has only four basically different shapes. However, by combining the characteristics of one group with those of another and adding a dash of exaggeration you can come up with countless comic variations. You can use almost any outlandish shape, as long as it looks as though your character can breathe through it. Here are a few of the thousands of possibilities. Practice them — and have the fun of creating some of your own.



Here we have the elevated proboscis on a haughty butler by Willard Mullin

Here's a fine example of a smeller by Al Capp



Here Rube Goldberg uses the simple ball nose to create a rather meek little bookworm

Four basic beaks

1 Regular (normal bridge): It has no special character but can be exaggerated in size — made either very large or tiny in relation to the size of face

2 Roman (high bridge): This one is the basis for the bugle of an Indian brave or the sniffer of a disdainful dowager

3 Grecian (no bridge): Nose and forehead form a straight line to give an autocratic look. Suitable for stage and screen stars or aristocratic dames

4 Pug (low bridge): The snub nose of the comic Irishman can be modified to retroussé or potato nose





Mean old chin — thin and bony — by Al Capp



Square strong chin by Willard Mullin

The mouth and chin

The mouth smiles, grins, snarls and hollers. You will probably find your own mouth moving as you draw one on a character — let it. It means that you are getting a little feeling into your drawing. Here again, simplify. Don't try to draw a whole line of separate crockery for teeth in an open mouth where a single line will do. The shadow of the lower lip, cheek lines, etc., are up to you: will they help the character you are drawing, or will they clutter it up? Naturally, in the adventure-type of characters, the mouth must have more realism.

The chin is an important part of the face. With it you can indicate weakness, strength or weight. The chin also gives you a great chance to be funny — it can be exaggerated in size or left out altogether. Just remember that the chin, mouth and nose should all more or less fit together. They have an important bearing on character.



Weak — little or no chin — by Rube Goldberg



The heroes—or good guys— have strong, square chins



To express belligerence the chin juts out



The receding chin suggests weakness



The double chin shows overweight and sometimes coarseness

With age—and loss of teeth—the chin moves up to meet the nose



Neat, crisp and pretty



Smile, please!



Eek!

Get expression into it

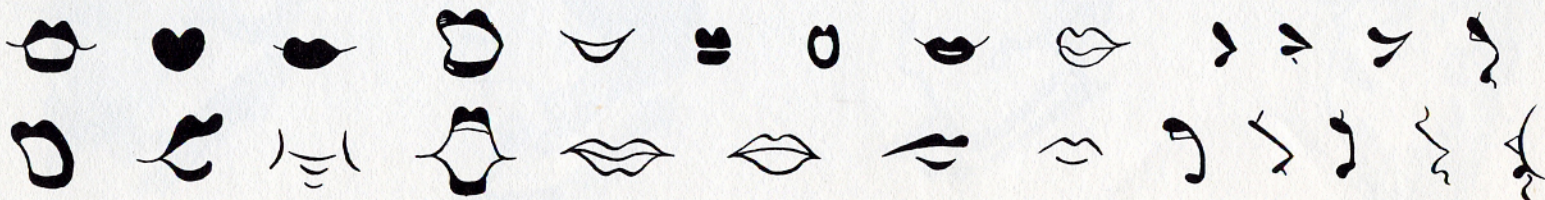


Girl's chin lines must be super-neat



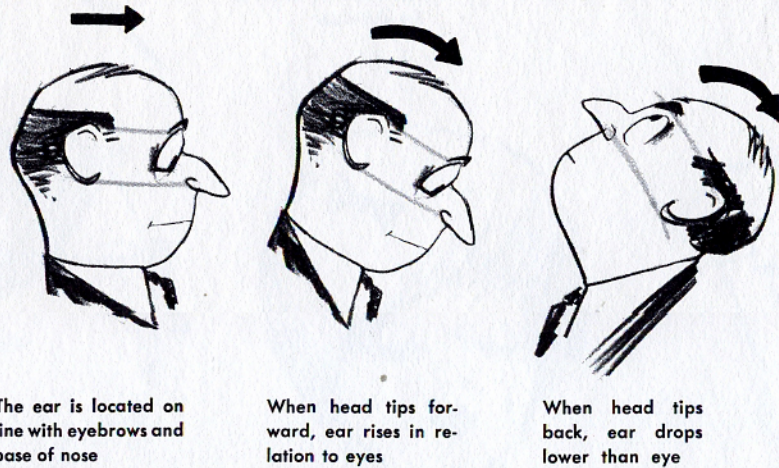
Girls' mouths

Makeup makes a girl's lips stand out — draw your girl's mouth like a smooth lipstick job



The ear

The ear listens to gossip, brushes against revolving doors when it sticks out too far, and serves as a mooring for strange-looking earrings. It can contribute to the character of the head (the cauliflower ear of the prizefighter is a good example) but not to the facial expression. In its natural state the ear is complicated — full of confusing ridges and convolutions — but, since simplicity is the essence of cartooning, we can streamline it down to its overall shape and very little else.



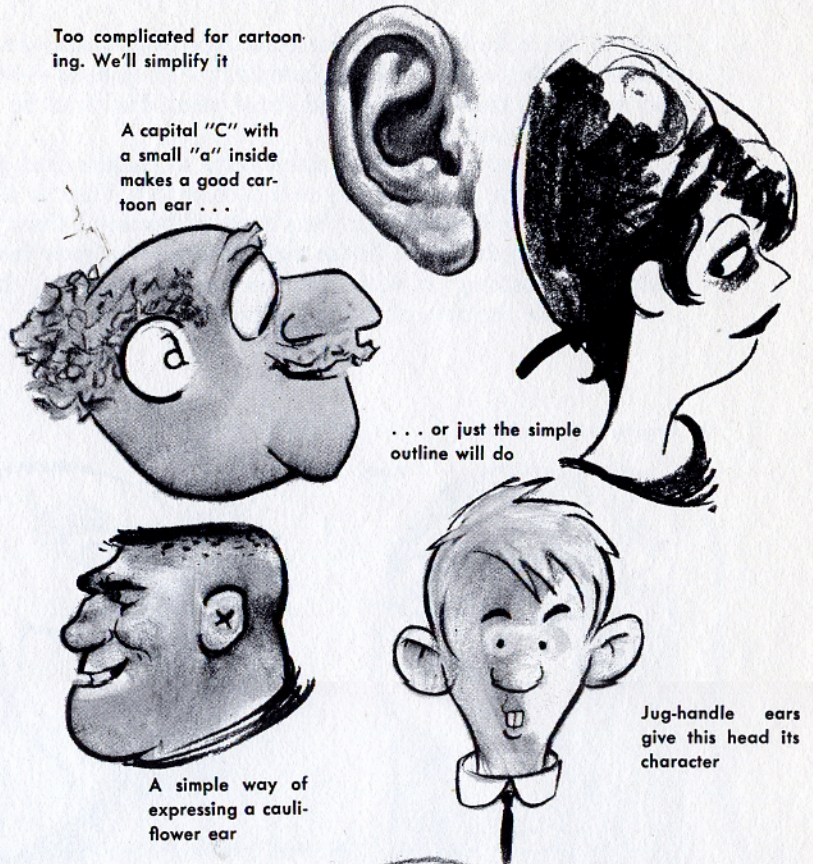
The ear is located on line with eyebrows and base of nose

When head tips forward, ear rises in relation to eyes

When head tips back, ear drops lower than eye

Too complicated for cartooning. We'll simplify it

A capital "C" with a small "a" inside makes a good cartoon ear . . .



. . . or just the simple outline will do

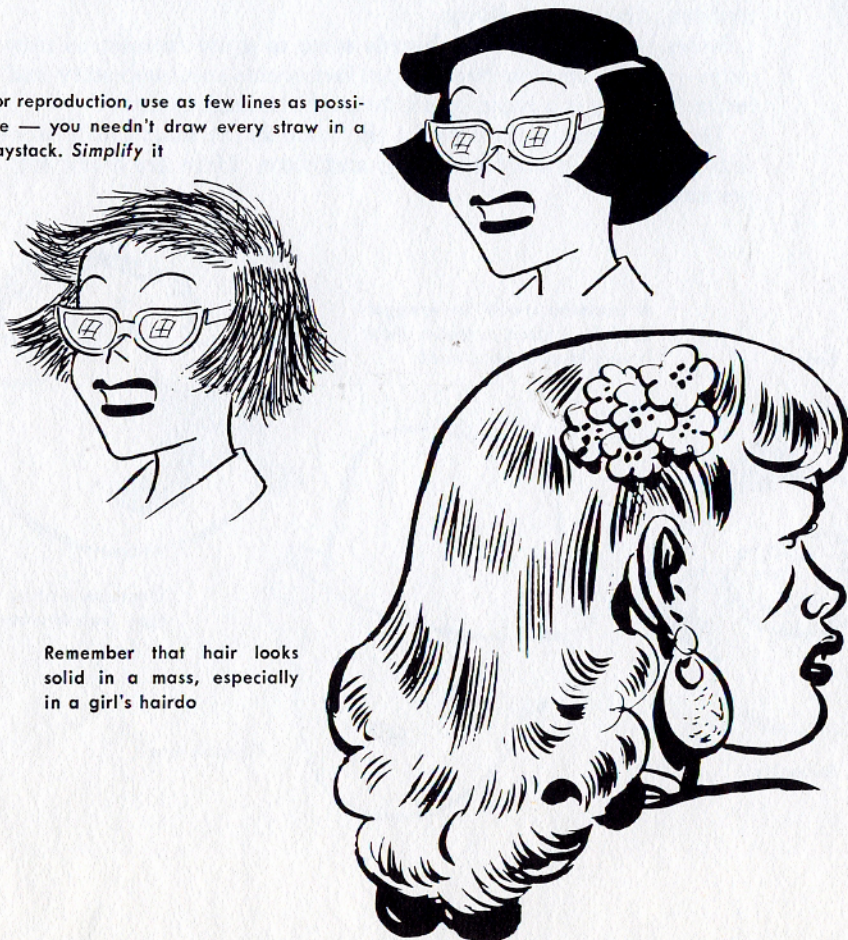
A simple way of expressing a cauliflower ear

Jug-handle ears give this head its character

Drawing hair on the head

When you draw hair on the comic head, remember this very important point — be sure to draw the outline of the top of the head in pencil before you put hair on it. Many beginners draw the face and then pile a stack of hay on top for hair. They forget that there is a solid head under the hair, and create a head which is all out of proportion. When drawing a character for a strip or a continued feature, you want the head to look the same every time. To get the same shaped head — pencil the shape *under* the hair every time.

For reproduction, use as few lines as possible — you needn't draw every straw in a haystack. *Simplify it*



Remember that hair looks solid in a mass, especially in a girl's hairdo

Hair should have covered this shape

Hair should cover this shape

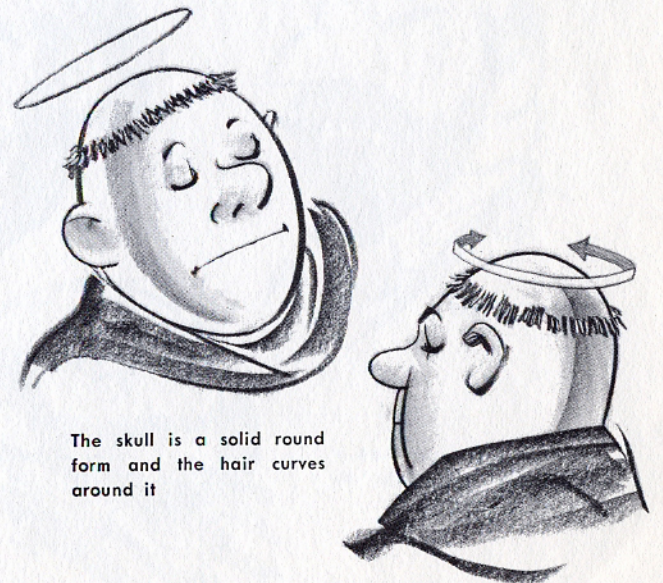


Wrong

Hair drawn without following basic shape of head

Right

Hair covers shape of head



The skull is a solid round form and the hair curves around it

Hair to indicate type

Hair, or the lack of it, can indicate the type of character you wish to draw. Sophisticate or yokel, glamour type or spinster — by their hair you shall know them — and draw them. Hair can be funny — or serious. Learn to use it.

When drawing hair, it sometimes helps to change from pen to brush — or from a Gillott 170 to a Gillott 290. Hair is flexible and demands a flexible line. Don't use a thousand lines where three would do the trick. Try to make it appear to grow from the scalp by "combing" it with the pen or brush, letting the ink strokes follow the flow of the hair strands.

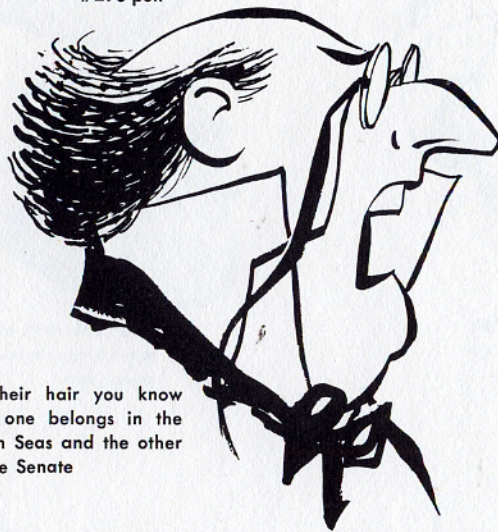


Suit the hair style to the character

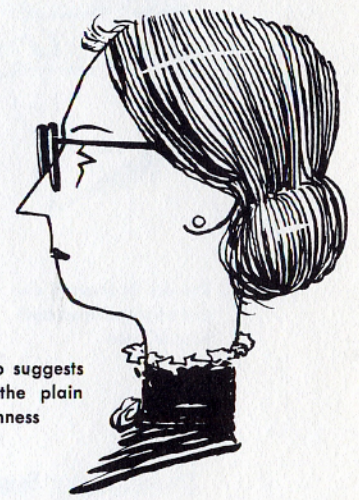
Long sweeping strokes

Brush

#290 pen



By their hair you know that one belongs in the South Seas and the other in the Senate



Fancy hairdo suggests frivolity — the plain coiffure, primness

A beard is born



1 Five-o'clock shadow



2 Visible bristles suggest three-days' growth



3 Full bloom

Hair on the face

Everyone is intrigued by a beard. Look at the posters on the fences in your town. If the faces do not have a mustache or beard drawn on them, they are likely to have one by the time you finish this lesson!

Like the hair, beards and mustaches can indicate character and type. They can make a figure look domineering or down-trodden, diabolic or divine.

Styles in mustaches and beards seem to grow funnier as they vary — maybe because hair on the face seems so unnecessary and futile. Futility is a basic comic factor in human nature.

Treat the beard or mustache the same as the hair: don't over-draw, and keep your lines sharp and clean. Here are a few suggestions:



Dignified



Bad



A beard can show a man's character as well as his type

Disreputable



Benevolent

A mustache should be exaggerated for cartoon purposes. Make it very large or very small



Oversize walrus-type soup strainer



Chaplin type

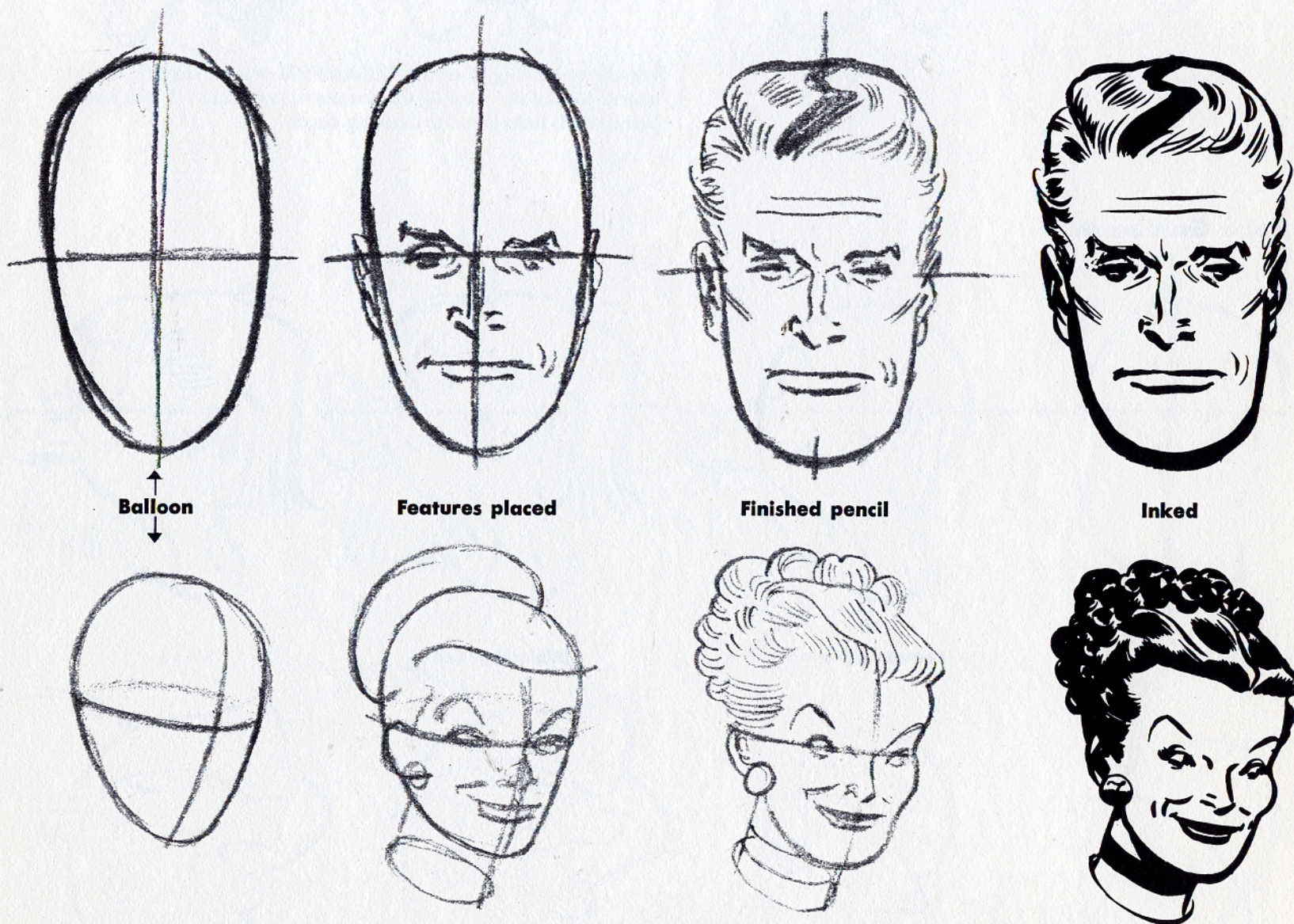
Putting the parts together

You've seen how to construct the eyes, nose, mouth, chin and ears of a comic character and how to decorate the result with hair. Using the balloon head of Lesson 1, now is the time to experiment and practice the business of putting the parts together. This should be fun and if you're going to be a cartoonist, this experimenting will continue for a lifetime.

Combining features is an endless pastime — the results are endlessly surprising. Most of the characters you develop will wind up in the waste basket. This is a natural state of affairs and comes under the heading of experience. Some of them, however, will smile or smirk or glare up at you from the paper and set your mind working along new and delightful lines. *These* are characters and, what's more, they're *your* characters — your own personal, beautiful babies. They make life worth living. Keep that pencil of yours searching for them.

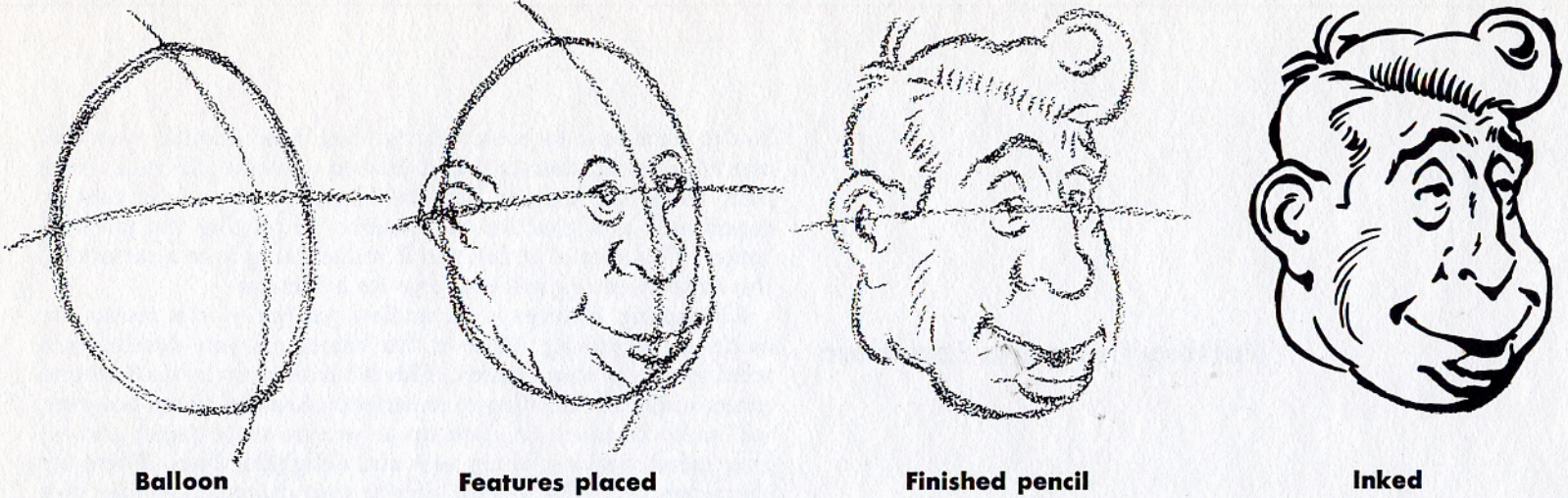
To give you concrete examples of how the combining process works, here are some examples by the faculty. Each man has started with a penciled balloon, placed the features and inked in the drawing. No two are alike; they vary from comic to realistic, but the process they used was the same. The results are good, solid cartoon characters.

Milton Caniff



For heads I use a Gillott crowquill pen #659. It is a very flexible pen and you can get a wide variety of lines with it.

Al Capp

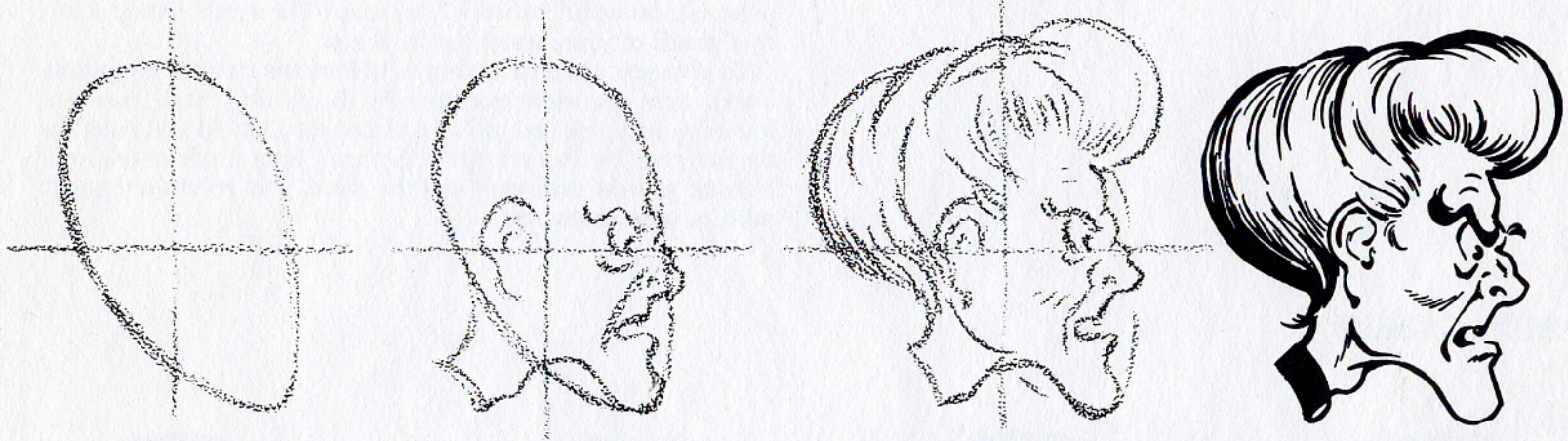


Balloon

Features placed

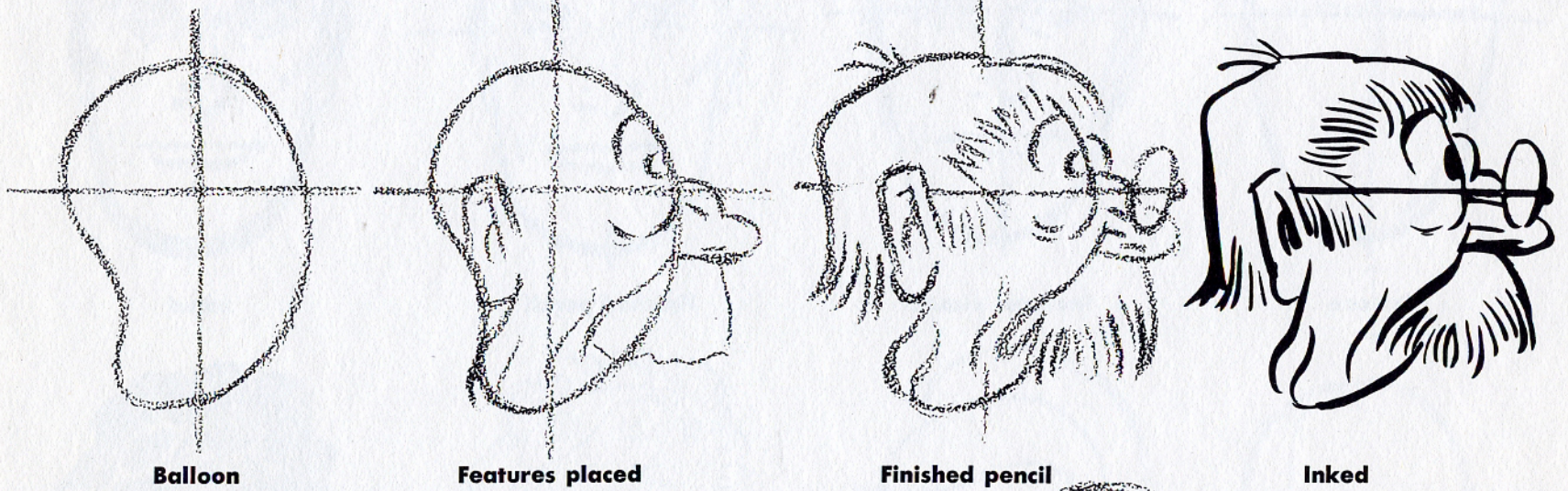
Finished pencil

Inked



For these drawings I used a Gillott #290 pen on smooth bristol board. Notice the varying thicknesses of pen lines – I like heavy pen lines to help give the drawing depth.

Rube Goldberg

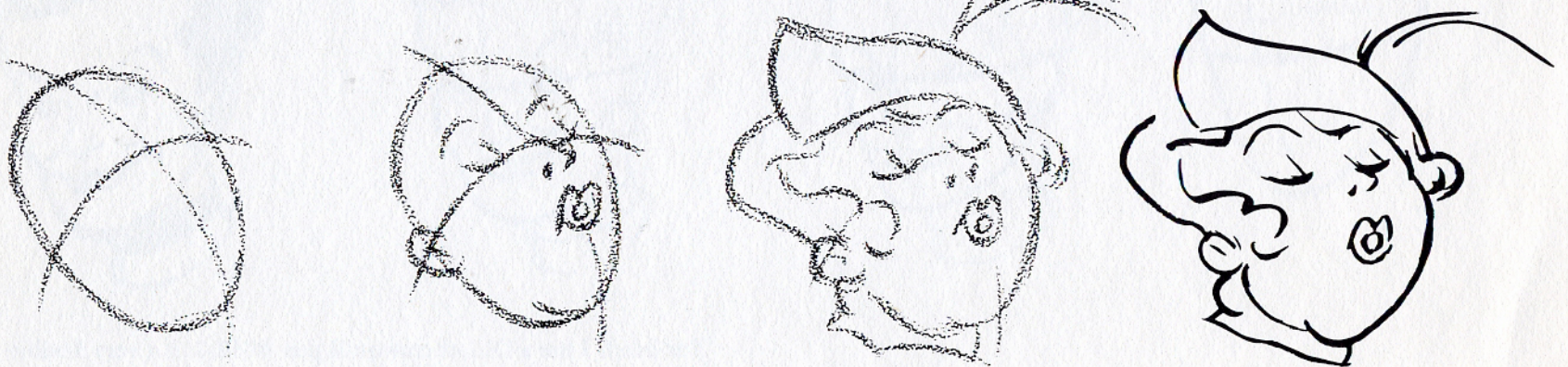


Balloon

Features placed

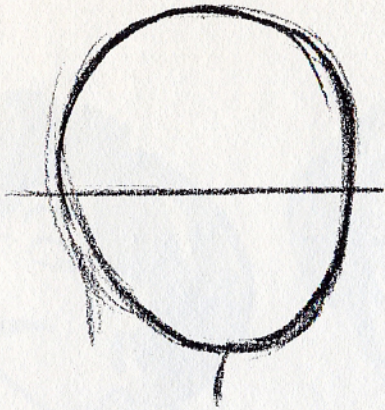
Finished pencil

Inked

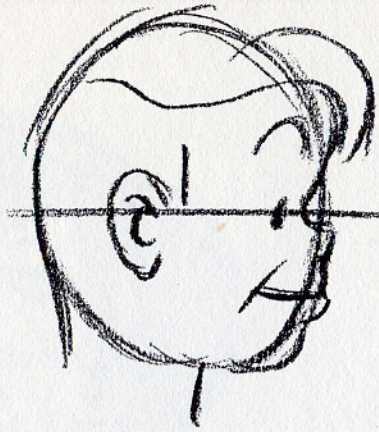


For inking I have always liked a Gillott #290 when I am working on a smooth surfaced paper.

Harry Haenigsen



Balloon



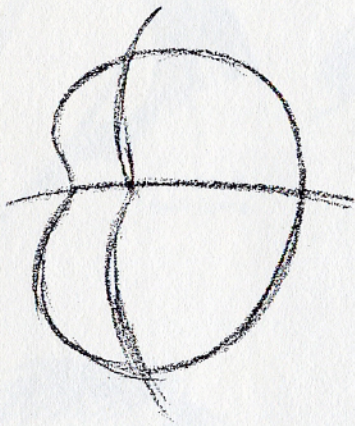
Features placed



Finished pencil



Inked



Balloon



Features placed



Finished pencil



Inked

I pencil with an HB pencil and use a Gillott #170 pen to ink with.

Willard Mullin



Balloon



Features placed



Finished pencil



Inked



Balloon



Features placed



Finished pencil



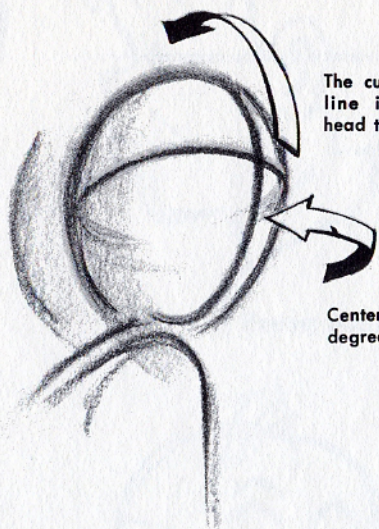
Inked

For the two heads above I used a Gillott #290 and drew them on rough paper called Coquille board.

Examples



1 Like the rest of the figure the head should be alive, so draw the overall gesture or action first



2 Use the guidelines to show the tilt and turn of the head

The curve of the eye line indicates that head tips back

Center line shows the degree of turn



3 Use guidelines to locate features. Draw the expression and add details



4 Ink and erase pencil lines



Keep your outlines simple. Unnecessary lumps and bumps make faces grotesque rather than funny



For newspaper reproduction, the fewer lines you use the better. You'll get a cleaner job without all those hen-scratches



This

Make mustache appear to grow from the face



Not This

Avoid the artificial, "glued on" look



Vary the shapes of your practice heads . . . it's fun!

FAMOUS ARTISTS CARTOON COURSE
Student Work
Lesson 4

To study and practice

In this lesson you learn to add the fine points to the basic heads you drew in Lesson 1. Here are expressions, head gestures and different types of eyes, noses, mouths, chins, ears and hair for you to experiment with. Experimenting with features is the process by which you arrive at new characters -- a process that never ends for professional cartoonists.

For practice, swing balloon ovals in pencil as you did in Lesson 1. Then think of an expression and the best, simplest way to get it into your drawing. Don't trust to luck. Plan your faces carefully; the features must be in the right locations. Once the features are located correctly, small refinements of expression can be added. When you do your inking, leave out unnecessary lines to make the drawings as simple and direct as possible. Never use two lines where one will do the job.

We will criticize and grade your work on the basis of the way you construct these heads and the effectiveness of the head gestures and facial expressions.

The assignment you are to mail to the School for criticism

On a sheet of 11 x 14-inch Bristol board, using pen and ink, draw six heads (three groups of two heads) about the size of the examples on pages 13 -- 15. Put necks and collars on all of them. Here are your subjects and views:

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| Group 1 | { | A side view of a hero or good-guy type. He is smiling at the head of . . . |
| | | An innocent-looking teen-age girl -- three-quarter front view. |
| Group 2 | { | A three-quarter front view of a determined-looking business man who is just about to fire . . . |
| | | A weak character, side view, who is surprised at the news. |
| Group 3 | { | A middle-aged woman, three-quarter front view. She wears earrings and has a vain, disdainful expression because . . . |
| | | An elderly seafaring character, three-quarter front view, with or without hair on his face, is winking at her. |

Present your assignment in the same clean, professional manner you would use if you were submitting it to the cartoon buyer of a publication. Letter your name, address, and student number carefully in the lower left-hand corner of the page. In the lower right corner, place the Lesson Number. Mail to:

FAMOUS ARTISTS CARTOON COURSE
Westport, Connecticut