We also have a very friendly tech support team who will be more than happy to help you find your way round the site and forum. So please do give it some thought.

In the meantime and whether you decide to work with computers now or later or just stick to old fashioned drawing, here are the basic materials you'll need as you work through the rest of this course:

A good supply of paper (a packet of cheap typing paper for roughs and some good quality cartridge paper for finished work should be fine), a simple drawing board or a flat surface, a bottle of Indian ink or a broad felt-tipped black pen for solid areas, an HB pencil and a softer 2 or 3B pencil, a drawing pen which can be either a fountain pen type with extra nibs or several fine felt tip, gel or designer pens of different thicknesses, three brushes, two sketch books - one that can fit in your pocket, the other larger-and a soft rubber eraser.

I will be dealing in more detail about the uses of the above items later on but this is your basic drawing kit. Any art or stationary shop will supply them at modest cost and it would certainly be worth your while spending an hour or two in one experimenting to find out which pens suit you. Just bear in mind that at the learning stage it is how much time you invest in learning to use the tools, not how much you spend on them that will give you the best results.

You will notice I have not included a ruler. You will only need one occasionally. When you do, you can buy one without difficulty. But at the moment concentrate on drawing freehand. You'll gradually get used to drawing in LINE. (If you need a straight line in a piece of expressive work, use the edge of a piece of paper - much less mechanical!)

If you're going to use Indian ink, use the waterproof kind in case you want to add washes of colour later. Do not put Indian ink into a fountain pen, it just clogs and is hard to clean, especially after it dries. However if felt tip is your choice, go for the permanent type so it doesn't smudge when you are working on details or correcting your pictures.

Overleaf, you see a collection of the three basic types of lines used in all drawings. First, the straight lines of varying lengths, followed by a number of bent lines. The bent lines are just straight lines joined together to give a variation on the simple straight line. The curved lines are all similar lengths but of different shapes. Notice how they also curve in different directions.

Would you believe that a combination of these three lines is simply what all drawing is about? Basically, they are the foundation of every line drawing ever made. *Of course, it is important to know where to put them.*

# Study Unit 3
The Art of Humour

Portraying humour as a visual art is a most effective way of influencing people. It can make them laugh, it can make them think. It can influence their attitude towards a product or a corporation or even alter their social behaviour.

We live in an age of visual communication - television, newspapers, cinema, and the internet. Much of this communication is international. Visual humour is uniquely free of national constraints - even a child can appreciate and laugh at a picture long before he or she can read. The audience potential is vast.

Let us first, then, try to examine what makes people laugh. Laughter is the spontaneous reaction to a given situation, but, as a famous American humorist once said, "The moment you begin to analyse fun it isn't fun anymore." There are, however, certain guidelines available to help the artist who wishes to use his art to create laughter.

In the first instance simplicity is the essence of humour. This is particularly true of humorous art, though where detailing is relevant, the public is prepared to accept and even delight in visual complexity.

But generally it is the simple things in life which make most people laugh. The task of the artist is to exploit the simplicities of life in such a way as to provide the necessary 'twist' which causes people to laugh. The artist's skill lies in the ability to turn an ordinary situation into something larger than life.
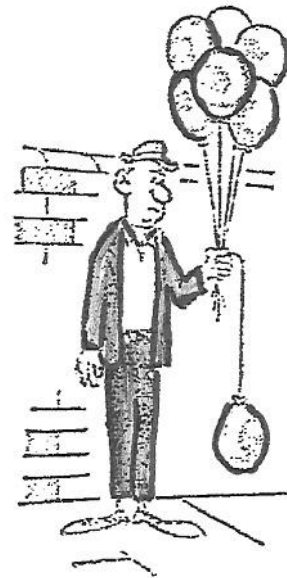
Exaggeration is the artist's licence to get the point across and to awaken awareness in his audience of something, which automatically will make them laugh. In the cartoon shown, the misbehaving balloon would in reality either burst altogether or hang listlessly from the string. It is exaggerating that idea and making it heavier rather than lighter which produces a surprising picture and it is the surprise, linked to the idea that all of us have had that 'if something can go wrong it will' experience at some time in our lives which makes us laugh.

ATTENTION TO LAYOUT

Sometimes a good cartoon is spoilt because the cartoonist has not paid sufficient attention and has become so engrossed in his idea that the drawing has meandered across the paper until it has become so large, busy or fussy as to be unmanageable.

Good layout is important because:

a.   It is pleasing to the eye and the content of the picture can be absorbed in a glance.

b.   It balances the drawing so that the characters get their proper place and prominence and so the 'message' - the joke - of the cartoon is understood.

Here are a number of little 'roughs', thumbnail sketches, showing how figures in cartoons are given their places on the cartoon stage.

These little drawings can be invaluable in developing a good layout because the elements are drawn small enough to give an idea of how the finished layout of the cartoon will appear.
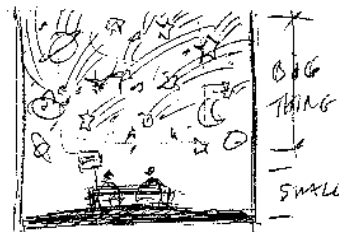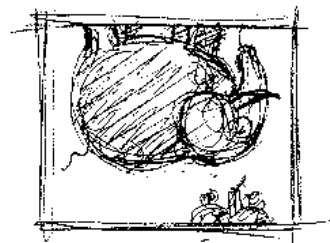
It will take only a few minutes of scribbling to get the main positioning of the figures and background.

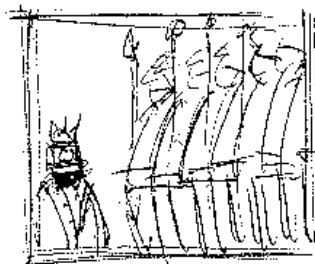These sketches deal with two, three and four people with various supporting backgrounds. Even though there is practically no detail shown, the layouts show quite clearly what the characters are doing and where they are.

I cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of these little thumbnail sketches. They can save you hours of time in approaching the finished cartoon. And they will avoid the tragedy I see so often with promising students - an excellent joke idea ruined by poor staging of the scene by the artist.

EXERCISES

1. Draw a head showing the features. Do this in pencil. Roughly indicate the features, again in pencil. When you are satisfied that the features of the eyes, nose and ears are in the right places, ink in. Rub out the pencil marks.

2. Now draw the same character and show him or her with at least three different expressions. Try at least one 'hard' one such as disgust or curiosity as well as the usual 'happy', 'sad' faces. The aim is to capture the emotion but also keep the face looking like the same person throughout.

3. Draw your character in a uniform or costume including full figure. Do not draw him or her standing still-they should be doing some action, whether it is standing, sitting or lying down that is typical of whatever job you have given them.

4. Finally, draw a cartoon joke, as professionally as you can, featuring your character and at least one other character. They can both do the same job, or they can be two different kinds of people. There should be an indication of the setting too.

5. OPTIONAL EXERCISES: Your tutor is happy to mark these, but they are not essential to your completing the course.
   a) Draw a caricature or a friend or celebrity, including a copy of the photo you used to draw the picture. Please DO NOT send precious original photos, we cannot guarantee their safe return.
   b) If you are interested in graphic novel or manga style cartooning, do exercises 1-4 above but in graphic novel or manga style and your tutor will mark/feedback on that basis. If you wish to submit work in both styles for this exercise, that is fine, but not compulsory

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT MORE THAN 5 OR 6 PIECES OF ARTWORK FOR THIS SECTION.

See the back of the file for information on submitting your coursework.

Single Frame or Double Frame Joke Cartoons

These cards feature single frame cartoon jokes or short double frame cartoons (usually printed one frame on top, one below to fit the card size.) Jokes range from innocent to quirky to rude depending upon the target market. Subjects may or may not be tied to the cartoon themes-i.e. birthdays; Christmas, valentine etc but they usually reflect the taste of the target audience. For instance cards aimed at the young adult market will tend to feature jokes about alcohol, body image or love with various degrees of subtlety (usually not much of the latter!) while cards for middle aged people often feature jokes about aging. Again, popular cartoonists like Glen Baxter or Bestie have their own lines of cards, usually featuring some of their most popular single frame cartoons. There is little difference in the production of these sorts of card from producing single frame cartoons in general, except that due to normal card sizes, jokes which fit into a portrait shape tend to be the most popular.