

# Short Formats

## Meme

An Internet meme is an idea that spreads from one person to another, getting parodied or revamped as it goes. It can be a video, music clip, photo, picture, character, hashtag or cult phrase. But most memes are composed of an image with a word or short sentence.

USE THIS FORMAT – 15 min. required

### The Format's Rules and Structure

Internet memes come in different formats.

Nevertheless, one popular form of meme on social media sticks to a very specific structure:

- A single square or rectangular panel.
- In the middle of the panel is the key visual, which is often an image of a well-known person that immediately establishes the meme's meaning or tone.
- Above the visual is a hook, the beginning of a sentence that introduces the situation.
- Below the visual is the punchline, the end of the sentence, which usually aims to be funny, offbeat, or controversial.

## Comic Strips

Comic strips are one of the oldest kinds of comics. The earliest ones, which presented humorous situations with recurring characters, were published in American newspapers starting in the late nineteenth century. As their name implies, most early comic strips were funny, although some, like Little Orphan Annie (from 1924) or Dick Tracy (from 1938) told dramatic stories in daily installments. Most comic strips are composed of 3 or 4 frames.

USE THIS FORMAT – 30 to 40 min. required

### The Format's Rules and Structure

There are no strict rules about composing comic strips, but the best-known ones all follow the same structure.

The creators of Snoopy, Mafalda and Calvin & Hobbes, for instance, all use 3 or 4 frames of the same size to tell story in 3 parts (or "acts"):

- The introduction, which shows the situation when the story starts. Readers recognize the characters and the setting where they live or spend a lot of time.
- The development, in which a problem or issue crops up. A disruptive element upsets the opening situation.
- And finally, the conclusion resolves the problem that arose in the preceding frame through a funny or unexpected plot twist.

## Major Works and Cult Classics

Snoopy, Garfield, Calvin and Hobbes, Dilbert, Popeye, The Katzenjammer Kids

## Yonkoma

Yonkoma means “four frames” in Japanese. They are manga with stories told in 4 vertical frames or panels. Like comic strips, their western equivalent, they were originally published in daily newspapers, and are usually meant to be funny.

Nowadays, yonkoma – which are often called 4-koma – aren’t just in newspapers. Lots of yonkoma authors and artists publish them on line. Manga authors (called *mangaka* in Japanese) use the format for jokes and gags on bonus pages.

## USE THIS FORMAT – 30 to 40 min. required

### The Format’s Rules and Structure

Traditionally, yonkoma stick to a structure called kishōtenketsu (起承転結). Simply put, that’s a four-act structure in which each frame corresponds to one element of the plot.

The term comes from old Chinese, and is made up of the following characters from the Chinese writing system:

- Ki (起, rise, or introduction): The first frame is the beginning of the story, it establishes the context.
- Shō (承, support, or development): The second frame flows from the first and advances the story.
- Ten (転/轉, change, turn, or twist): The third frame is the crux or climax of the story, when something unexpected happens.
- Ketsu (結, finish, or ending): the fourth frame is the conclusion, which takes the change from the third frame into account.

## Major Works and Cult Classics

The Wonderful World of Sazae-san, K-On!, Azumanga Daioh; My Neighbors the Yamadas