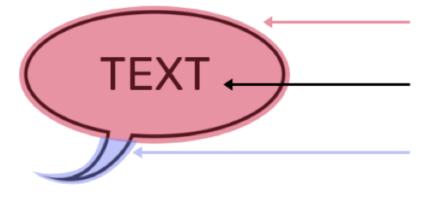# Speech Bubbles

In comics, characters speak through text that appears in <u>speech bubbles</u>, or <u>speech balloons</u>. Each bubble has a tail, or pointer. The tail points to the character that is speaking.

The Different Parts of a Speech Bubble

Bubbles consist of three elements:

- The bubble itself, which surrounds the text.
- The text.
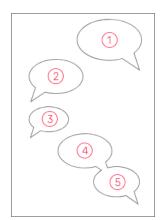- The tail, which points to who is speaking.

The Speech Bubble contains the text

The Text is what the character is saying

The tail points to the character who's speaking

Placing Your Bubbles Properly

Bubbles are placed on a page in a precise order. We always start by reading the bubble that is highest in the frame, then the next one down, and so on.

When two or more frames are next to each other, we read them from left to right.

[Learn to Structure a Frame]

[Learn to Structure a Page]

Tails

The tip of the tail points to the character who is speaking. In the first example below, the tail is pointing to the boy, meaning that he is the one speaking. When a bubble has more than one tail, it means that two or more people are saying the same thing at the same time.

Hello!	Hello!	Hello!	Hello!
THE BOY IS SPEAKING	THE GIRL IS SPEAKING	THEY ARE BOTH SPEAKING	SOMEONE ELSE IS SPEAKING

The tail should always be pointing at the person's face or mouth. If the tail is pointing at the character's stomach, readers might think the character is a ventriloquist.

My stomach is doing the talking

My mouth is doing the talking

THE TAIL POINTS TO WHERE THE SOUND IS COMING FROM
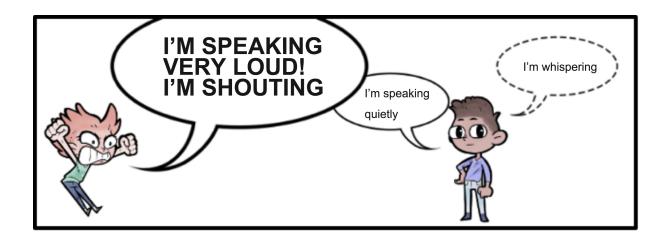
Text Size

Speech bubbles should be large enough for the text inside them to be legible. Ideally, all of the texts in your story should be the same size, font (typeface, or type of letter), face (bold or light) and case (i.e. capital letters or lower case).

Text that is smaller than the rest will give the impression that the character is speaking quietly; larger, that they are speaking loudly.

Putting all the text in a speech bubble in capital letters, or making it bold, will reinforce that effect. If you have large, bold capital letters, it means the character is shouting at the top of their lungs.

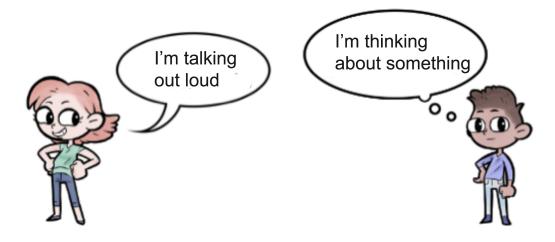Another way to show that a character is whispering is to use a speech bubble drawn with a dotted line.

You can indicate bubbles' relative importance by overlapping them. The text of the lower bubble is considered less important than the one on top.

Different Types of Bubbles

Bubbles drawn with dotted lines mean that the character is speaking quietly. Other kinds of bubbles have other uses.

If the tail is made up of smaller bubbles, that means that the character is thinking rather than speaking.
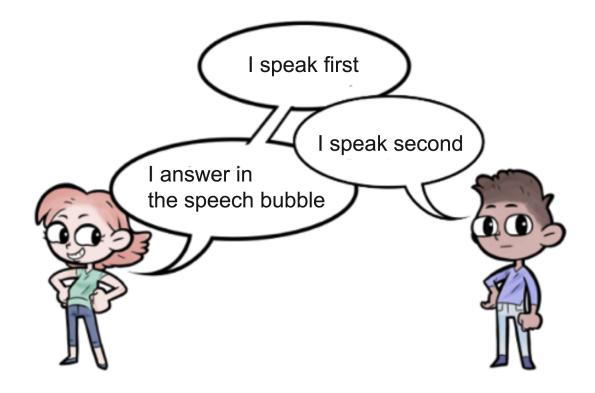
Rectangular speech bubbles usually mean that the sound is different from the rest. They are traditionally used for mechanical-sounding voices: a voice coming out of a telephone, or a computer or robotic voice.
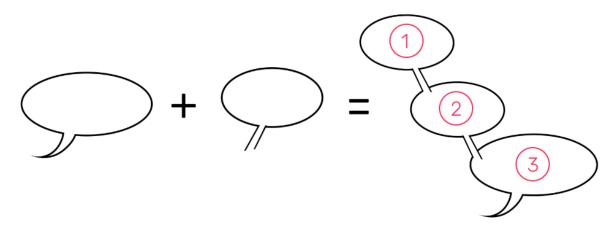

Stacked Bubbles

To illustrate a dialogue, you can stack more than one bubble together with a single tail to show that they are being spoken by the same character.

With BDnF, you can make stacked bubbles. You can stack as many bubbles as you want, as long as there is enough room in the frame. Don't forget to follow reading order and to align them neatly.

Captions

Some text goes inside frames within the frame, called captions.

The kind of caption that explains where and/or when the action is taking place is usually placed at or near the top of the frame. It is often used to indicate a change of time or place.

Other captions are more narrative. They are used to comment on the hero's actions.