

Annotation Examples

This guide provides examples of each type of annotation task completed while using the CAT. See the section below for specific examples of image sections/panels, character, text sections, and background annotations. Please refer to this guide as needed throughout the annotation process.

Overview: Heuristics of how to Annotate

- The goal of this annotation task is to get an idea of where the main elements of comics (characters, text bubbles, etc.) are placed on the page.
- Overall, this research is interested in why these elements are placed where they are, or where they may be placed to effectively communicate a story through the medium of comics. Therefore, when inputting information about the elements on the page, think of annotation through the lens of “**what (new) information is this element giving me?**”.
- The labels (e.g. X1, X2, Y...) should stay the same for the same characters and locations throughout the story, as far as you can judge a character or location in a panel to be the same as one that has appeared previously, while the descriptions may change.
- Annotate only the things you see directly on the page.
- Drag the rectangles to the outer boundaries to all things annotated, hugging tight to the outline. It's fine if the rectangles overlap.
- Don't worry it's difficult to fit a panel, character or text section inside a single rectangle - just try your best! :)

Image Sections/Panels:

Comics are, essentially, a series of sequential images, or coherent groups of images on the same page. Much of the time, these sequences are placed inside demarcated panels and it is really clear where each image section is on the page. These sections often contain components such as speech bubbles and images of the main characters and setting.

In some cases, there may be image sections that are more difficult to outline but are nevertheless still **coherent and distinct image sections** that help to guide the order you look at each section on the page. Try your best to outline what you perceive to be coherent and distinct image sections, even if the comic page does not have clear panels. There is no perfect or correct outline, and all that's needed is a good idea of where these image sections are situated on the page.

- It may be the case that the whole page is one image section, or one overall illustration.
- There may also sections that consist of text only.
- Try to fit as much of the panel or image segment inside the rectangle as possible - it's fine if the rectangles overlap.



Example 1: Distinct Panels

Each of the four panels below fits neatly inside a rectangle.

The Text Section in Section 3 appears to be part of that image section, so it is included within the rectangle.

Example 2: Text Sections, Non-Rectangular panels

Section 1 consists of a Text Section all on its own, as the text does not appear to be part of the second panel and instead stands alone.

Section 7 is a circular panel and is therefore more difficult to fit into a rectangle. In order to get as much of the panel inside the rectangle, rectangle 7 overlaps with 5 and 6.





Example 3: Full Page

This page is one illustration or image with no clear and distinct parts.

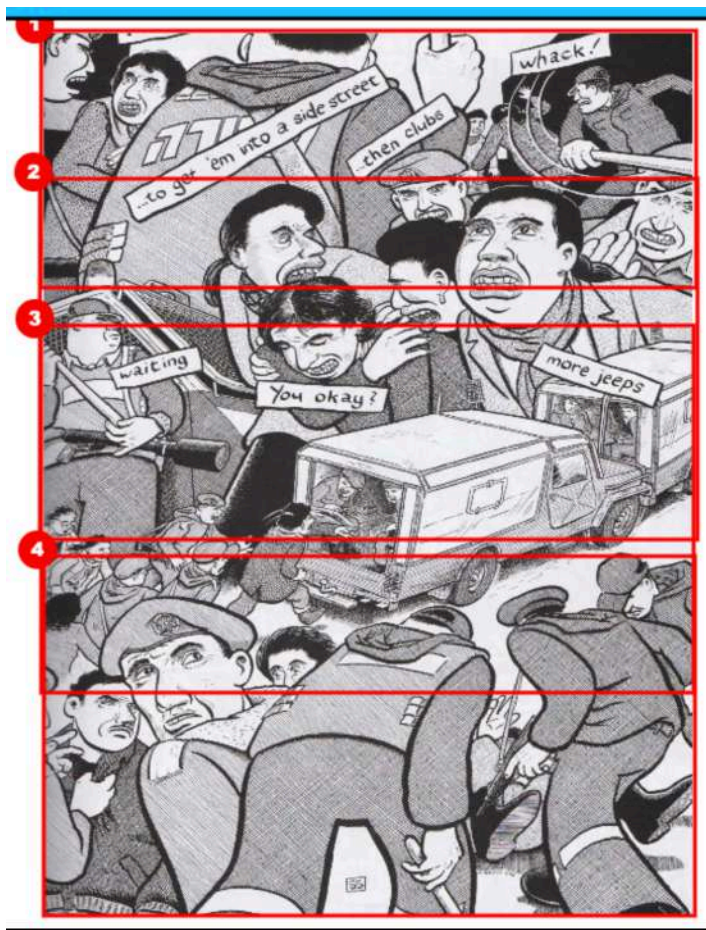
In this case, outline the page with one rectangle.

Example 4: No Clear Panels

This page is one large illustration, but the way the illustration is drawn suggests different coherent sections or layers.

The eye is drawn to a top section that shows an armed guard attacking people with a club. Below is a stream of people running the other way. Below that is a section with several jeeps followed by several people chasing them. Finally, at the bottom of the page is a closeup of a group of people surrounding someone who has fallen on the ground.

Try to outline these the best you can, allowing for overlaps to get as much of each section in its respective rectangle as possible.



Characters:

Characters are any active participants in the comic narrative - individuals that are not active participants in the narrative (e.g. crowd scenes) are **not** considered characters.

Character Label: Give each character a label that **will stay the same for that specific character throughout the whole story** - that is, for all pages in that story. A new label is created when a new character is introduced. Keeping the label to one or two letters or number makes the label easier to see on the comic page. **The recommended sequence of character labels as they appear, for n total characters is as follows:**

- X1, X2.... Xn

Unusual Case: If a new character is introduced that is revealed to be the same as a previously labelled character but you initially believed them to be a new character, it's fine to keep using the new label used. For the description that character you can put "X2 = X5" when you find out that X2 and X5 are the same character, and then continue to use X5 thereafter.

Character Description: Give each character a short description that describes that character's appearance in that particular section. The description can be whatever the most salient feature of that character is, or what is appropriate to identify that character.

Unlike the character label, the character description may change per each section. If there is **new information about the character**, such as the introduction of a name or profession, or a change in appearance or the amount of the character shown, this should be put in the description first and foremost.

Examples:

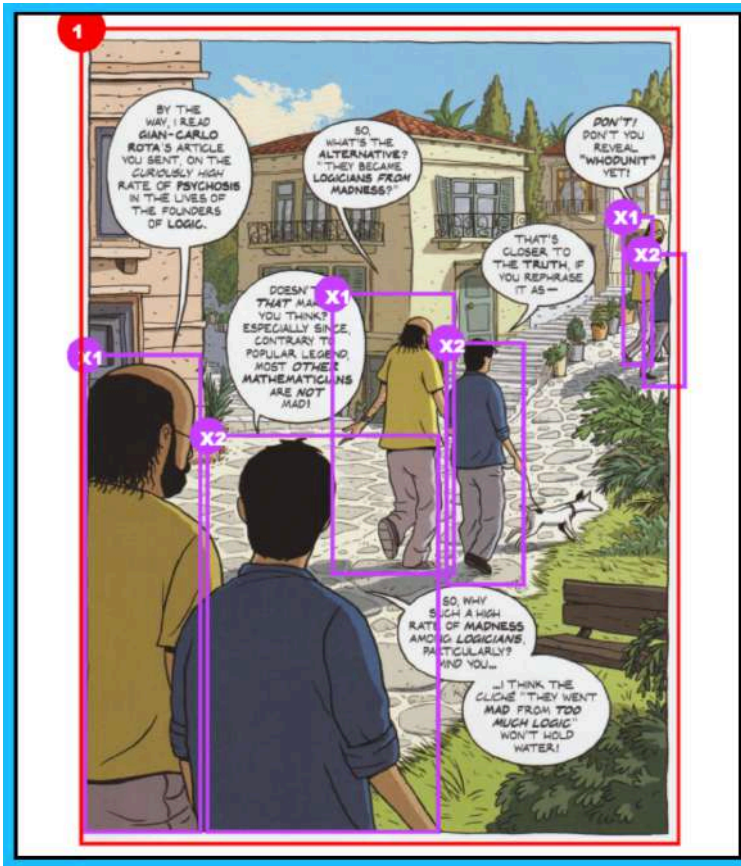
- Tall woman
- Woman's hand holding a watering can
- Closeup of head and shoulders
- X2 = X5
- Husband of X3

Character Action: This is the main action that the character is performing in a particular section. This should be the most salient action of that character. Similar to the character description, the character action may change per each section. If there is **new information about the character**, such as the introduction of a name or profession, or a change in appearance or the amount of the character shown, this should be put in the description first and foremost.

Examples:

- Talking to X4
- Watering plants
- Crying
- Moves back in surprise
- Standing while looking in a mirror

The most important point to remember is that while the **label must stay the same per character**, but the description and actions may change!



Example 1: Multiple Same Characters in the Same Section

This page has one image section, and multiple instances of the same characters.

All instances of the characters should be outlined, and consistently given the label assigned to that character.

Section 1:

Character Label: X1

Character Description: Man in yellow shirt, back turned, upper body

Character Action: Walking with X2

Character Label: X2

Character Description: Man in blue shirt, back turned, upper body

Character Action: Walking with X1

Character Label: X1

Character Description: full body

Character Action: Still walking with X2

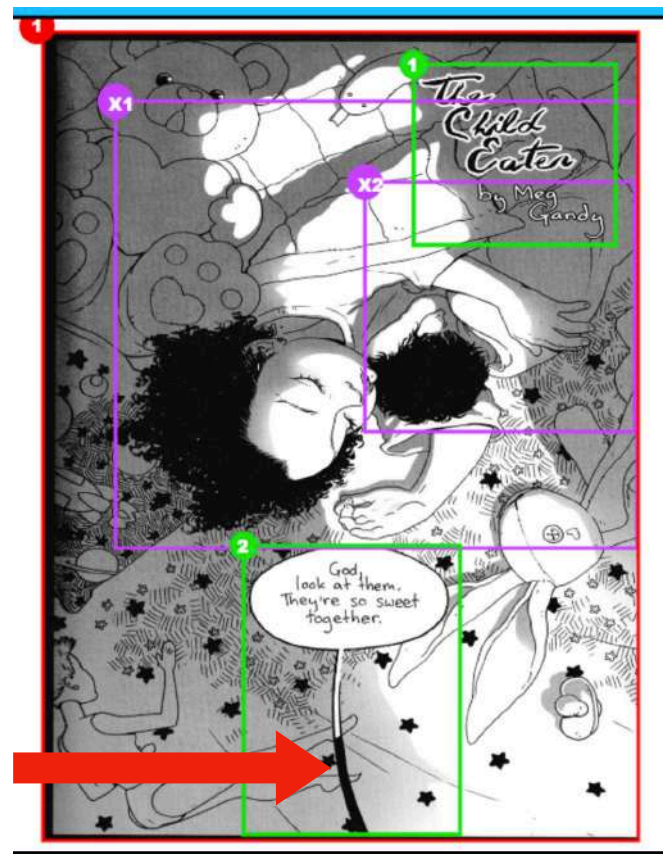
etc...

Example 2: Character Introduced through Text Section

Sometimes a character may be present but not explicitly shown.

For instance, on this page a character is introduced through a speech bubble but is not actually drawn on the page. In this case, **do not** outline where the character might be - instead, you will be able to outline the speech bubble and assign that speech bubble to the correct character in the text section outlining task.

You can assign the character in the **Text Section** task (which is discussed in the next section of this guide), and keep track of that label in case the character is present in other panels throughout the story.



Example 3: Only Parts of a Character are Shown

Sometimes only a part of a character is visible. In the first panel on the page below, one the hand of one of the characters is visible. **Outline whatever part of the character is visible** on the page, and put what is depicted in the description.



A good description of the character X1 in panel 1 is “Woman’s hand”, with the description “holding a teacup and saucer” or “giving tea to X2”.

X2 can be described as “Woman (Mrs. Corinth) head and shoulders”, with the action “laying in bed”.

Text Sections:

Text Sections are any sets of text appearing on the page. Usually text sections are clearly demarcated as speech bubbles or thought bubbles, or narration text that is separate from character's thoughts and speech.

Once you outline a text section, choose what type of text section it is from the three options: Narration, Speech/Thought, or Other.

Narration: text from a third person perspective, and typically supplements the narrative and enhances its progression.

Speech/Thought: text directly associated with a specific character (typically a speech bubble or a thought bubble), and shows that the character is either speaking out-loud or thinking. Selecting this option will prompt you to fill in the character label it is associated with who is speaking or thinking. When outlining a speech or thought bubble, **try to include the "tail"** of the bubble as best as possible.

Other: text that is neither narration or speech/thought bubbles. Selecting this option will prompt you to describe the type of text section just outlined.

Examples:

- Title
- Title and byline
- Onomatopoeia
- Sound effect
- Narrative, first person perspective (X2)

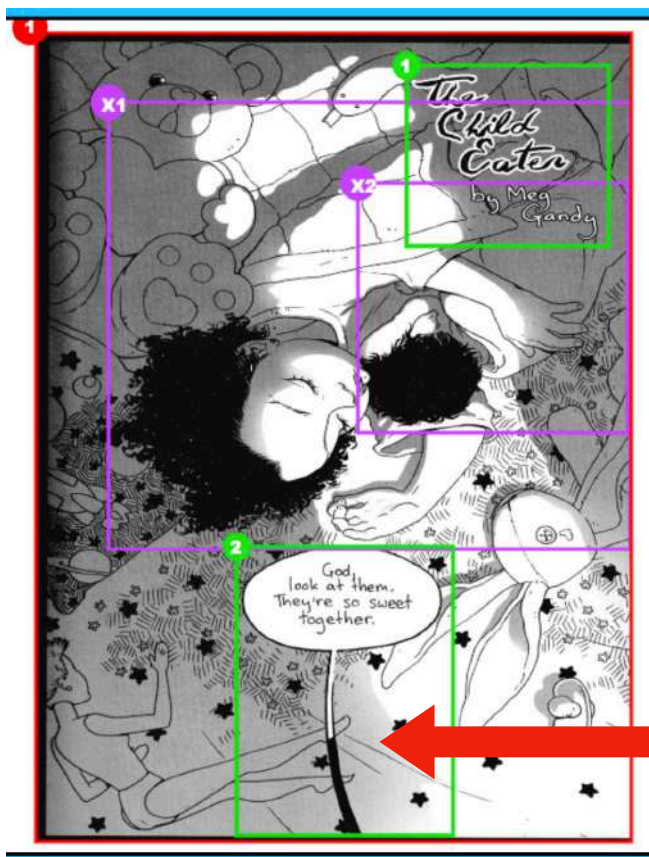
Unusual Case: There may be text sections that can be considered narrative, but from a first person perspective - that is, a character is narrating the story in text sections that are not explicitly speech or thought bubbles. In this case, select Other and describe this as Narrative, first person perspective, with the associated character label.



Example 1: Narration and Other

Text Section 1 is a title. Therefore, the **Other** button should be selected, and the description given should be "Title".

Text Section 2 is an example of narration, as it is from a third person perspective. Therefore, the **Narration** button should be selected.



Example 2: Speech Bubble and Other

Text Section 1 includes a title and a byline. Therefore, the **Other** button should be selected, and the description given should be "Title and byline".

Text Section 2 is a speech bubble. Therefore, the **Speech/Thought button** should be selected. The character associated with that bubble should be given, even if that character is not shown directly on the page. In this case, as it's the first page of the comic, this would be "X3", as it's a distinct new character to the other two characters.

Try to include the "tail" or "stem" of the speech bubble in the rectangle, as shown here.

Background:

The background section asks about the perceived location or setting where the story is taking place.

You are asked to annotate two things regarding the background per section: the specific location, and whether the extent the background/setting itself is shown or depicted in the panel/section.

Location Label: This label associates the general location of a particular section. Give each location a label that **will stay the same for that specific location throughout the whole story**. A new label is created when a new location is introduced. There is no need to introduce a new label for small changes in location, such as a character moving to a different corner of the same room - locations should change when there is a significant change in location or suggested setting. Keeping the label to one or two letters or number makes the label easier to see on the comic page. **The suggested labelling convention for a story with n locations is:**

- L1, L2... Ln

Location Description: Give each location a short description. The description can be whatever is the most salient or identifiable feature of that location.

As was the case for character annotations, the location label must stay the same for locations you judge the same as previously seen ones, the location description may change in each section. If there is **new information about the location**, such as a panel is a wide shot of a house rather than just the room of that house, this should be put in the description first and foremost.

Examples:

- Bedroom
- House, showing entire house from the outside
- Corner of library
- Beach
- Outer space
- Closeup of character X2
- N/A (*for text only sections*)

Detailed/Empty/Text Only: This refers to the extent that the background location in a particular section is drawn in or depicted. It helps to think about Detailed versus Empty backgrounds through **how much information about the location is shown**, and whether you would know the location of that section from the image in that section alone.

If there is any information about the overall location and setting, even if it is a very simple or abstracted background, then it is **Detailed**. If there is no information about the overall location in that panel, then it is **Empty**. Empty sections are often blank tones, or cross-hatched tones.

If a particular section is just a text section without any background, select **Text Only** and give the Location Label as N/A and the Location Description as N/A.

Unusual Case: a section may be a closeup of a character or object, and therefore there is no shown background even though the entire section is completely drawn in. In this case, give the Location Label (assumed location based on the progress of the story thus far), describe the location as "closeup of character x" with the appropriate character x or describe the close up object, and select **Detailed**.



Example 1: Detailed versus Empty Sections

In the left panel, there is nothing drawn to show what the surrounding location in the first section, so this is **Empty**. The right panel shows elements of the location, so it is **Detailed**.

Example 2: Locations and Detailed versus Empty Sections

Section 1 would have a specific location label, for instance L2. A good description for this location is "Bedroom", and **Detailed** selected.

Section 2 shows a closeup of the character X1. Therefore, it is assumed that the location of this section is the same as Section 1. Therefore, the location can be described again as "Bedroom", with **Empty** selected.



Example 3: Detailed versus Empty Sections

The first, left section should be marked **Empty**.

The second two sections on the right should be marked **Detailed**.



Example 4: Full Page Locations and Background

Section 1:

Location Label: L1

Description: Beach with a lighthouse
Detailed

Section 2:

Location Label: L1

Description: Beach
Empty

Section 3:

Location Label: L1

Description: pier,
overlooking ocean
Detailed

Section 4:

Location Label: L1

Description: Beach,
outside lighthouse
Detailed

Section 5:

Location Label: L2

Description: Inside
lighthouse
Empty

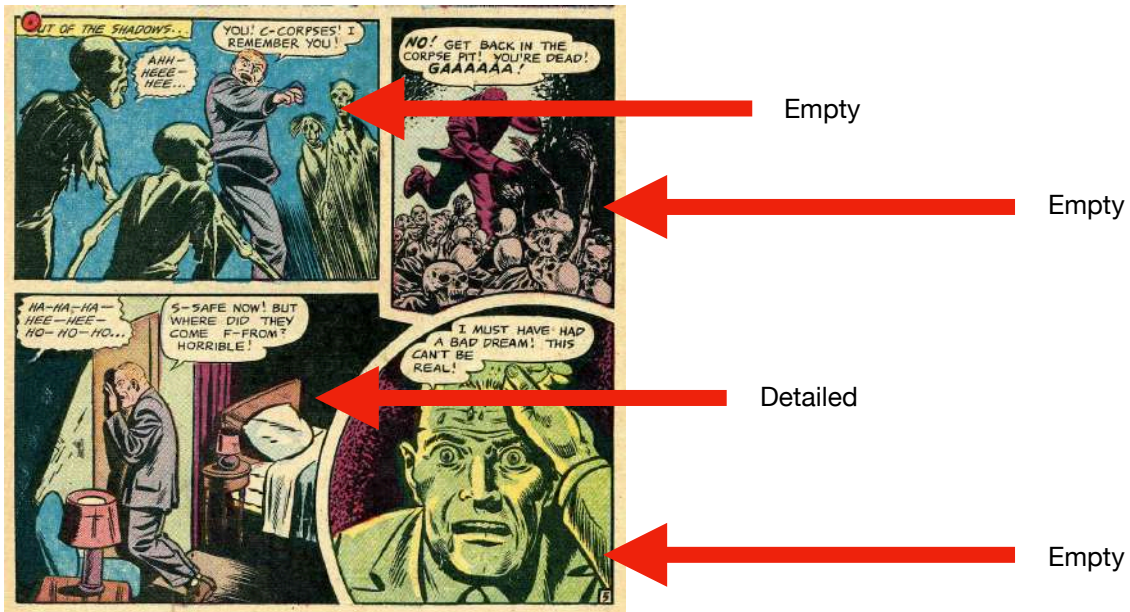
Section 6:

Location Label: L2

Description: window of
lighthouse
Detailed

Section 5 is tricky - it shows quite a bit
In the foreground, but little in the background. This
Should be marked as **Empty** because the actual
Background is not drawn and only has two colour tones.
There is no information about the overall location, and
The location must be inferred from previous panels and
What point it is in the story.

Example 5: More Detailed versus Empty



Example 6: More Detailed versus Empty

