Instructions and Examples

Please refer to these instructions as needed throughout the study

Two Fundamental Things to Keep in Mind:

1. Please go through the panels and prompts in the order that you would naturally read or see them on a comic page.
2. In other words, do not go back and change previous answers if new information is given in later panels.
3. Keep in mind that a person or thing may change in animacy type later in the story!

Definition of Animate v. Inanimate

In this study, we ask you to decide whether the outlined areas on the comic pages show depictions of **animate entities**, and if so, what type of animacy is being suggested.

The definition of animate for this study is: **a depiction of an entity that displays human or higher animal-like behaviours, and/or can communicate autonomously and move intentionally.**

"Human" behaviour refers to behaving like a human; namely speaking using language and/or high-level thinking and planning . "Higher animal-like behaviour" refers to behaviours displayed by mammals, birds, reptiles etc. - basically, animals that have sentience and intentions.

Note that this is **not** a biological understanding of animate. When determining if something is animate, go through this list of questions below. If the answer to any of them are "yes", then it is considered to display some type of animacy.
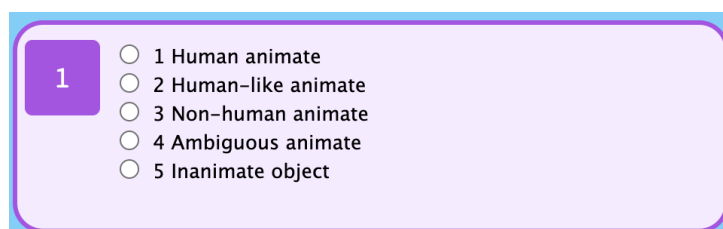
1. Is the entity showing human or higher animal-like behaviours (talking, thinking, sleeping, running, planning, building, using tools, etc.)?
2. Is the entity communicating on its own, through its own volition?
3. Is the entity moving on its own, through its own volition?

Types of Animacy:

There are several options to choose from to describe the animacy type. The different types and what they mean are:

- **Human animate** - An actual human is depicted.
- **Human-like animate** - Something that looks somewhat human and acts human. This includes things that do not look human but are speaking and/or appear to think like a human. An example is the enchanted furniture in the the film Beauty and the Beast!
- **Non-human animate** - Something that does not appear human, and does not speak using human language. This includes animal-like behaviour.
- **Ambiguous animate** - It is not clear whether what is depicted is animate or inanimate.
- **Inanimate** - The depiction is not an animate entity.

The image below shows how options appear on screen. you can only choose one option.

Examples:

- **A Talking Tree - Human-like animate,** because it is speaking in language through its own volition.

- **A Wolf - Non-human like animate,** because it displays animal-like behaviours.

- **A Sleeping Teacup -** This could be **Human-like animate** if the teacup is shown to speak or do other human behaviours, or **Non-human animate** if the teacup only shows lower-level behaviours like sleeping. In the latter case, perhaps the teacup is a pet.

- **A Zombie -** This may depend on the rules of the world established in the story! If the state of the zombie's mind is unclear, it may be best to put **ambiguous animate**.

- **An Artificial Intelligence**
  - If the AI is clearly sentient through speaking, thinking, or showing other higher-level behaviours, it is **Human-like animate**.
  - If the AI is like a chatbot (like Siri or ChatGPT) or chess-playing machine, it is **Inanimate**.

- **A Dragon** - **Non-human animate**, as it displays animal-like behaviours.

- **A Growing Tree - Inanimate object**, as it has no sentience and therefore isn't moving on its own volition.

- **A Sea Sponge - Inanimate**, as it has no sentience and therefore isn't moving on its own volition.

Labelling the Depictions in the Outlines

We would also like to keep track of which person or thing we are referring to in each outline. To do this, you are prompted to assign a **unique label** for every animate person or thing.
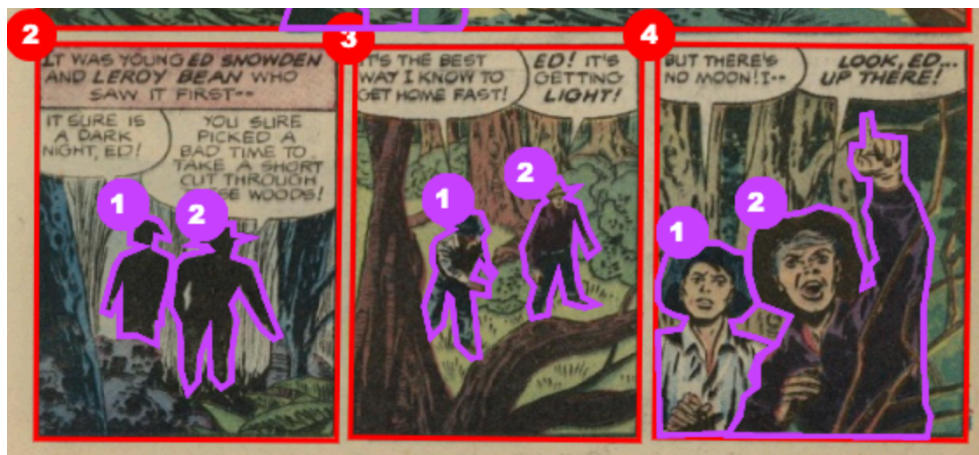
Most stories have at least one character that is repeatedly drawn across panels, which suggests that the character is moving, talking, or simply persisting through time. We would like to know if we have seen the person or thing in an outline before, or whether it is a new person or thing we haven't seen before.

In other words, **please assign each animate person or thing a unique label that follows them throughout the story**.

After selecting an animacy type option (shown above), a new darker purple section will appear (however, it will **not** appear if the inanimate option is selected). You are prompted to put a one or two-letter label for the corresponding outline - it is best to use labels like **X1, X2, X3**…, etc. The most important thing to remember is that **each person or thing will keep the same label through the the story.**

There are some examples on the next page….

Below are three sequential panels/sections. The labels assigned to each outline are shown in the corresponding sections 2, 3 and 4. The same two people seem to appear in each panel. Therefore, the same label is assigned to the same person in each panel - one character has the label X1, and the other has the label X2.
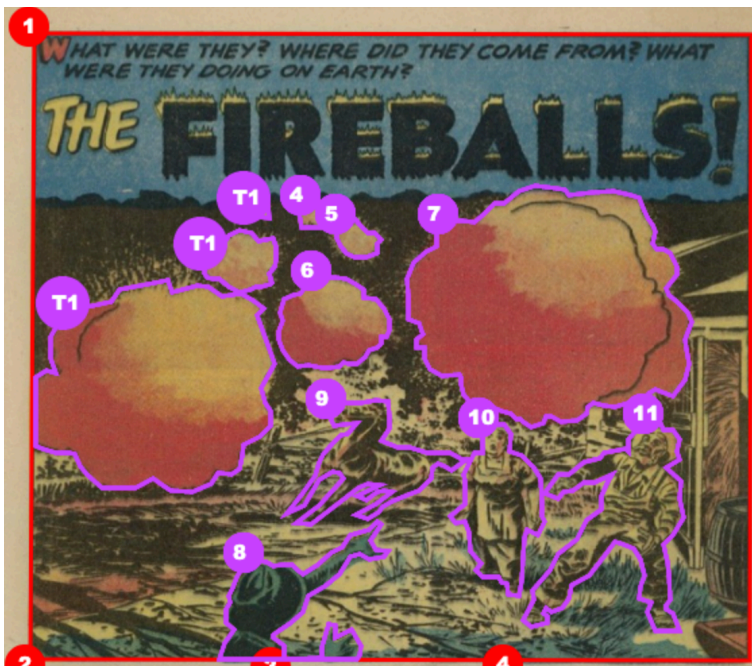

Section 2

1
- ● 1 Human animate
- ○ 2 Human–like animate
- ○ 3 Non–human animate
- ○ 4 Ambiguous animate
- ○ 5 Inanimate

Label: X1

☐ Same as other label

2
- ● 1 Human animate
- ○ 2 Human–like animate
- ○ 3 Non–human animate
- ○ 4 Ambiguous animate
- ○ 5 Inanimate

Label: X2

☐ Same as other label

Section 3

1
- ● 1 Human animate
- ○ 2 Human–like animate
- ○ 3 Non–human animate
- ○ 4 Ambiguous animate
- ○ 5 Inanimate

Label: X2

☐ Same as other label

2
- ● 1 Human animate
- ○ 2 Human–like animate
- ○ 3 Non–human animate
- ○ 4 Ambiguous animate
- ○ 5 Inanimate

Label: X1

☐ Same as other label

Section 4

1
- ● 1 Human animate
- ○ 2 Human–like animate
- ○ 3 Non–human animate
- ○ 4 Ambiguous animate
- ○ 5 Inanimate

Label: X2

☐ Same as other label

2
- ● 1 Human animate
- ○ 2 Human–like animate
- ○ 3 Non–human animate
- ○ 4 Ambiguous animate
- ○ 5 Inanimate

Label: X1

☐ Same as other label

Sometimes animate people or things are not able to be uniquely identified - that is, there may be things of the same kind where it is not possible to know which one is which across the story. For example, there may be a group of ants, and a number of ants appear in each panel. It is not possible to tell the ants apart and follow an individual ant through the story. In these cases, **give these outlines the label T** (which stands for Type).

See the example on the next page…

The panel above shows a number of outlined fireball entities. All the fireballs look that same, and as the story progresses it is impossible to tell which fireball is being shown. In this case, all the fireballs should be given the same label across the whole story. The first three fireballs here are assigned **T1**, and all other fireballs should be given the same.

Lastly, underneath the label box, there is a checkbox for **Same as other label.** Tick this checkbox **if an individual person or thing has already been assigned a label, but then receives another label for whatever reason**.

It may be the case that there appears to be two characters, and each are given different labels. Later it becomes clear that these two characters are actually the same person. In this case, check **Same as other label** - once you realise that the two appearances are actually the same person, indicate this by putting the new label in the top box and put the old label in the right box. You can then keep going with the new label.

A good example of this happens in superhero comics. You might be introduced to a new superhero in costume, and only later learn that a character you've seen before is actually the superhero's secret identity.

And that's it!

Thanks again for your help with the study. I hope you enjoy reading the comic!