



LIFEOLGY SCICOMM CHALLENGE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ECHO RIVERA & ABRIAN CURINGTON

CREATE A SCIENCE COMIC!

For the month of May, Lifeology is launching our inaugural **SciComm Challenge**, a monthly fun challenge that scientists, science writers, artists and anyone else can participate in to improve their science communication skills in a variety of formats!

This month, your challenge is to create a **simple science comic** around the theme *“Smaller than the eye can see!”*



About the Lifeology SciComm Challenges & How to Submit

Monthly Lifeology SciComm challenges help you learn more about the science and practice of communicating science for broad audiences. These challenges give you the opportunity to practice communicating science more engagingly in a range of formats. [Learn more about Lifeology.io](#)

Submit your Lifeology SciComm Challenge products to Lifeology@lifeomic.com by the last day of the month!

Your science communication products will be featured on the Lifeology blog and our favorite entry each month can be translated into an interactive Lifeology course for free.

About Lifeology

Lifeology is a platform and a community space that brings together scientists, artists, writers and broader audiences in the creation of more beautiful, engaging and fun science educational content, including [mobile-friendly Lifeology mini-courses](#) that can reach anyone.

About this packet

The contents of this packet were created by **Paige Jarreau** ([Lifeology.io](#)), **Echo Rivera** ([Creative Research Communications; echorivera.com](#)), and **Abrian Curington** ([BlueCat; BlueCatCo.com](#)).



Let's make a comic!

“Smaller than the eye can see!”

Making a comic is a lot of fun! This is your chance to **think creatively** and try to **explain a scientific concept, finding or story** in a way that you (probably) haven't been able to do before. This worksheet/template is designed to **help you get started** so you can **start to think** like a storyteller. There are, of course, other ways to go about this and other formats we could use to create a comic—these aren't our only options.

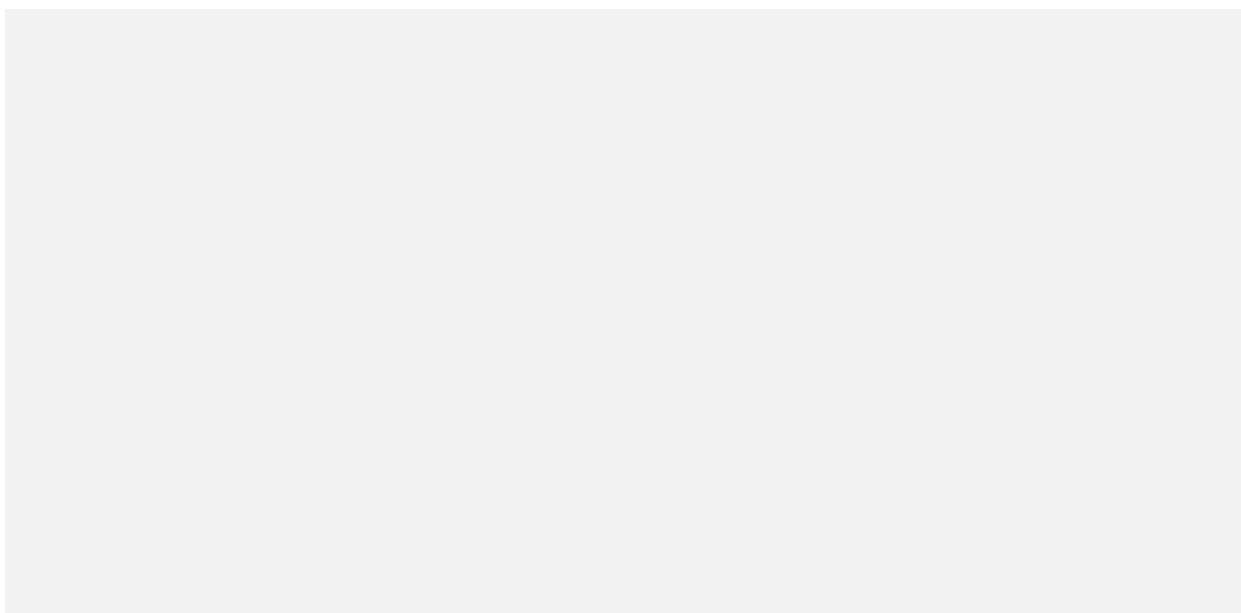
ACTIVITY #1 >> WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE COMIC? WHAT WILL THE TAKEAWAY MESSAGE BE?

What do you want readers to KNOW, THINK, or DO differently after reading the comic? This is your **key point**. Another way to think about it is: *What change do you want to make happen with this comic?*

For example: What's the key scientific concept you are trying to explain & how can they use that info in their everyday lives? What behavior or attitude would you like them to change? It doesn't need to be a Big Change - it could just be that now they learned something new today (like just *how* small a virus is, and why that matters).

What (if any) concrete & specific action do you want readers to take after reading the comic? This your *“call to action.”* For example: *Should they visit your website? Join your email list? Follow you on social media?*

Sketch or makes some notes below to brainstorm your key point for this comic!



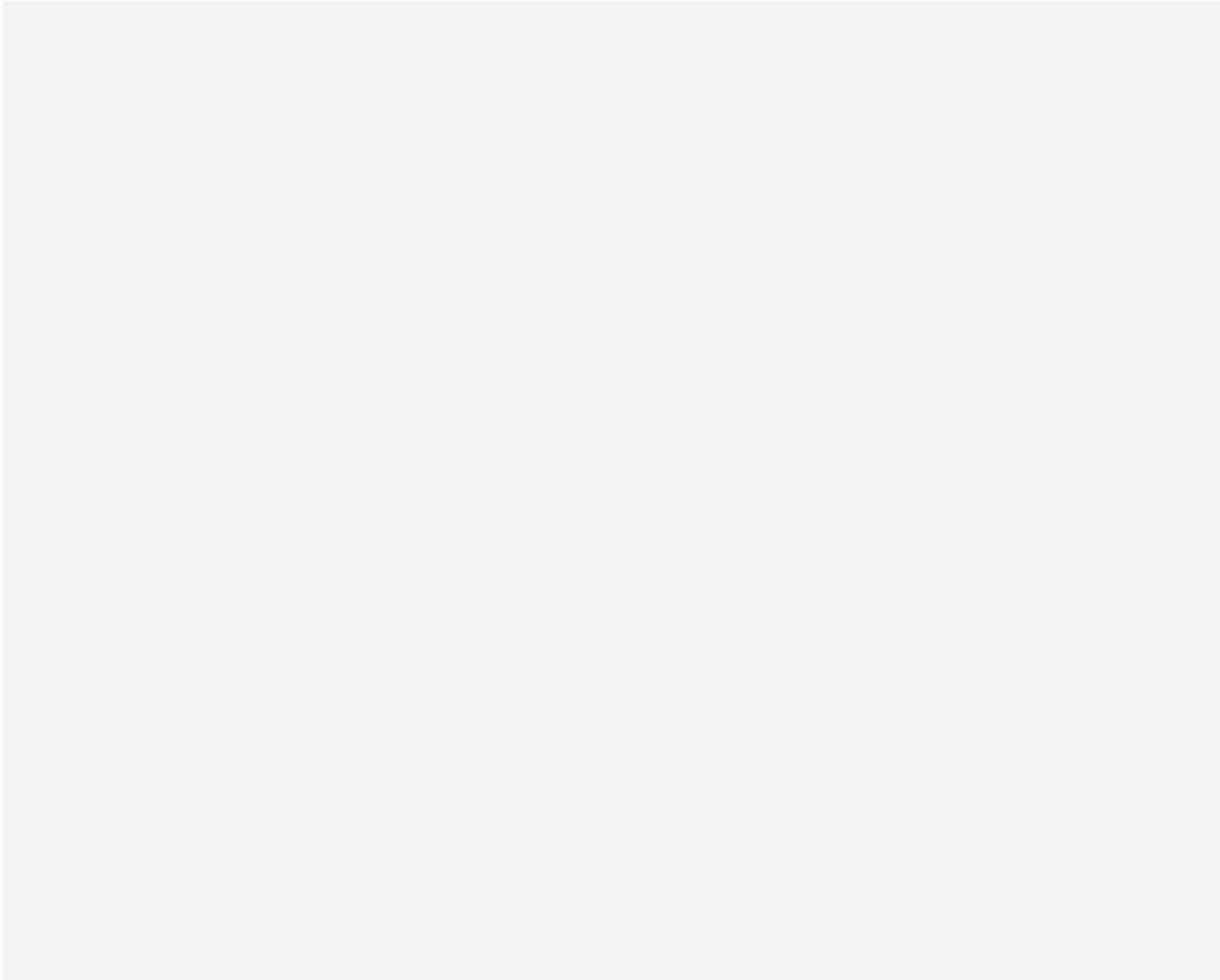
ACTIVITY #2 >> WHAT IS YOUR STORYLINE?

The storyline is the order in which you organize your information, so that it follows a logical pattern to make the message more memorable. There are many quick story formulas, but a popular format in the scientific community is Randy Olson's And, But, Therefore strategy (ABT):

[State the current situation you're researching] **AND** [a poignant fact about your research] **BUT** [a twist thrown into the plan to complicate the situation, good or bad] **THEREFORE** [what's being done about the situation]

Challenge yourself to make this statement as short as possible, getting to the BUT section as quickly as you can! Once done, you'll have a nice framework to either illustrate, or base your comic on, like an outline.

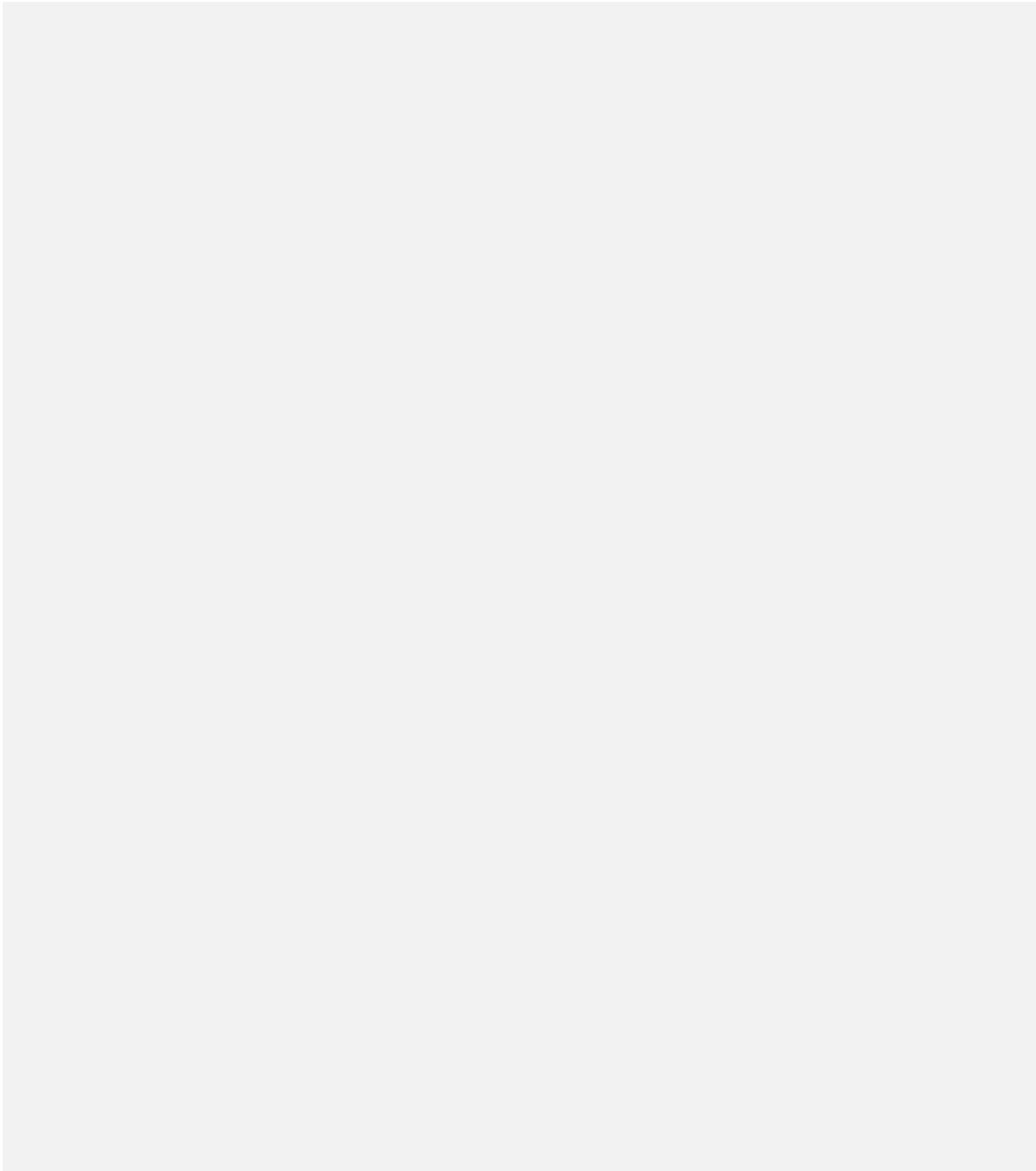
Sketch or makes some notes below to brainstorm your ABT!



ACTIVITY #3 >> BRAINSTORM THE CHARACTERS

Who is the narrator & are there other characters? Maybe you? An object? An animal? A plant? An alien? A microbe? A virus? *Don't be afraid to creative, playful, humorous, or fun!*

Sketch or makes some notes below to brainstorm your characters!



Comic Creation (Visual Thinking) Tips

Here are some tips for how to visualize the ideas you've generated above. I've also include some examples for you to check out. *Note: a panel is one square/rectangle/circle in a comic.*



Show a conversation between people or things.

This is an **excellent place to start**. In terms of **roles**, one could be the “expert” educating the other. Both could be novice learners trying to figure the topic out for themselves. Or, both could be experts debating with each other. When you're ready to draw it, this could be as simple as **stick figures** (or simple line drawings) **and speech bubbles**. Ideally, however, you will also draw some type of object, plant, or other visual element in at least one panel.

Examples:

- [9 myths holding you back from creating effective slides](#)
- [How to be an expert at effective, visual communication](#)



Literally draw the topic with captions in each panel.

Another great place to start is by creating a comic that just *literally* shows a topic, process, or thing in a visual way. This could be used to point out or highlight different components or features of one thing. Another way to use this approach is to show a process in a step by step (i.e., panel by panel way). Then, add text captions that explain what is in the panel. Or, you can have a person (narrator) explaining it and use speech bubbles.

Examples:

- [Why webinars are so terrible](#)
- [A science comic about hearing loss research](#)



Show contradictions, inconsistencies & conflicts.

One great way to make a point is to show an obvious conflict or contradiction within. For example, have a character saying one thing, but doing another.

Example:

- [This comic](#) by [Rosalarian](#)

Instructions

May 2020 Lifeology SciComm Challenge

Due: May 31, 2020

Theme: Smaller than the eye can see

Use this template (or create your own) and email to Lifeology@lifeomic.com

You can draw by hand or create digital illustrations, however, please note that each comic panel illustration should be square (1:1 aspect ratio).

You can send your comic to Lifeology in any format that works for you. For example, you can scan the completed the template (next page) or take a picture.

If you want, you can even collaborate with an artist on this! Find collaborators at Lifeology.io

