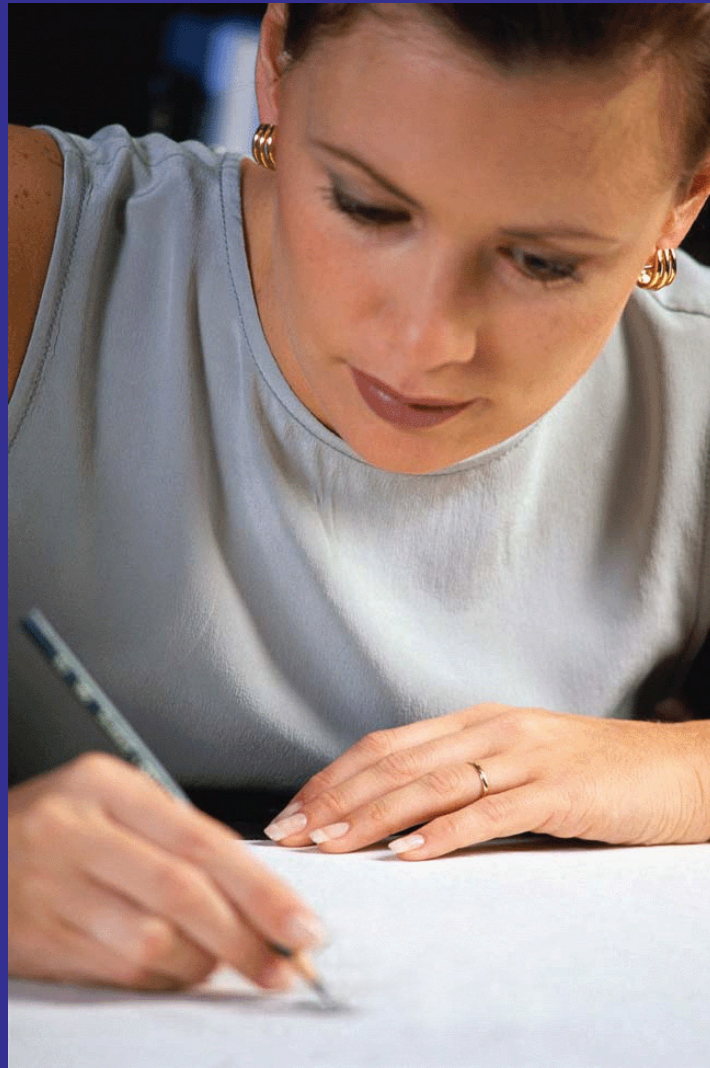


Get paid to draw cartoons!

FabJob Guide to  
**Become a  
Cartoonist**



T CAMPBELL

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# Welcome!

Welcome to the **FabJob.com Guide to Become a Cartoonist**. In this guide we offer you the tools and techniques you need to succeed in the world of cartooning.

If you are a **beginner**, this guide will offer you the information you need to get started.

If you are an **experienced** cartoonist, you can learn tips and tricks about the markets to help you **increase your sales or salary**.

First, take a look at where you are now. Have you ever:

- Drawn a picture that made someone **laugh**?



- Drawn a picture that **excited** someone?
- Drawn a set of pictures that **told a story**?
- **Dreamed** in pictures?

If so, you may already have many of the skills you need to become a published cartoonist.

This guide includes:

**Tools** for **developing great cartoons**.

**Techniques** to get you and your cartoons **noticed**.

**Options** to **start your cartooning career**, including key information about a variety of markets.

**Insights** into the **largest cartooning markets** and **industry trends**.

**Ways** to send and present your **samples**.

Each section is set up for a distinct purpose:

The **Introduction** tells you what a cartoonist is and takes a look at the many faces of this exciting career.

**Getting Ready** explains what you need to do to prepare yourself to break into this competitive field, including technical skills, informal and formal education, internships... even the art supplies you'll need!

**Getting Hired** sets you up with a package of employment materials, then takes a look at ten specific cartooning markets: where the jobs are, networking, working conditions, pay, and breaking the rules to get a foot in the door.

Finally, even cartoonists who have “broken in” have problems staying in. There are practices that all cartoonists should avoid even before they get started. For this reason we present a special section: **Ten Stupid Things Cartoonists Do to Mess Up Their Lives.**

This book is meant to give you a complete picture of cartooning as a business—its frustrations and obstacles as well as its joys and its promise.

Let's get started.

# 1. Introduction

**“I didn’t want to be president, I wanted to be Charles Schulz.”**

—Scott Adams, *Dilbert*

**“All parents believe their children can do the impossible. They thought it the minute we were born, and no matter how hard we’ve tried to prove them wrong, they all think it about us now. And the really annoying thing is, they’re probably right.”**

—Cathy Guisewite, *Cathy*

**“My all time favorite cartoon is by Kliban. It shows a guy walking down the street, two starlets on each arm, and a police escort pushing a blind man out of the way while he yells: “Get back! A cartoonist is coming!”**

—Jeff MacNelly, editorial cartoonist

So, you want to become a cartoonist...or maybe you'd rather call yourself a “sequential artist,” or a “comics artist” or a “graphic storyteller.” Whatever you call it, cartooning is one of the greatest **roads to self-expression** ever discovered. There’s nothing like the joy that comes from taking a story you see in your mind and bringing it to life with your own two hands. And there’s nothing like sharing that creation with thousands—even millions—of other eyes.

Cartoons **have power**. As a communication tool and a cultural statement, they bring us laughter, new perspectives and critiques about society. For example, **Scott Adams’** *Dilbert* strips that now line the office cubicles of America have reshaped office culture. As writer **Harlan Ellison** observed, more people know about Superman than about Hamlet. **Charles Schulz’s** *Peanuts* was translated into more than 20 languages.

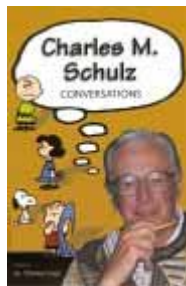
Children in impoverished neighborhoods have learned to read from superhero comics. **Matt Groening**, creator of *The Simpsons*, not only realized his own dream but also changed how America looked at itself.



There is only **one thing you need** to know to be a part of this medium and to join the ranks of Adams, Schulz and Groening—can you make cartoons?

If you draw and write cartoons, congratulations—you **are a cartoonist**. Remember this fact. No matter how many discouragements there may be on the path to your dream, never forget that your first and most important battle is already won. You are a cartoonist.

I didn't say, "Can you make great cartoons?" or even, "Can you make good cartoons?" Whether it comes from within or from someone else, avoid letting early criticism get you down. Even Schulz received a C+ in an early art class called "Drawing of Children." I also haven't asked, "Can you sell your cartoons?" That comes later.



This book will teach you how to achieve success as a cartoonist both in your eyes and in the eyes of others.

## 1.1 The Many Faces of Cartooning

Most people have a desire to be a particular kind of cartoonist. Maybe you want to create a comic book superhero, or an "independent" comic book, or a nationally syndicated comic strip, or editorial cartoons, or animation, or storyboards for movies, or online cartoons or greeting cards.

Nothing is impossible. However, I won't pretend that all areas are equally friendly in today's marketplace. The demand for comic strips and editorial cartoons is currently shrinking, while the demand for animation, cartoon books and online cartooning is on the rise. The greeting card and magazine markets are relatively consistent, although the greeting card business is starting to merge with the online market. The comic book market has recently stabilized, but only after a long, steep decline, and it has always been a tricky—but rewarding—niche.

In this guide, we'll describe the **top ten cartooning markets** in America today. Read about each of them and decide which markets seem best for you. However, I urge the newcomer to explore all these markets to some degree. Not only will you increase your chances of making a living as a full-time cartoonist, but you will also broaden your portfolio, and a broader portfolio will help you get the cartooning jobs you really desire.

What's more, a flexible career can bring you pleasant surprises. **R. Crumb** was one of the most famous (some would say infamous) underground cartoonists of the 1970s, which led to his almost equally famous advertising and record label work.



**Berkeley Breathed** drew the comic strips *Bloom County* and *Outland* for a total of fifteen years before stunning millions with his abrupt retirement from the newspaper page. But he continues to use his cartooning skills in greeting cards, cartoon books for children, and even animation.

**The Official Berkeley Breathed Website**  
<http://www.berkeleybreathed.com>

As a personal example, my self-published comic book *FAANS* was praised by some of the leading lights in the industry, but it didn't immediately achieve a profitable circulation. *Comics Buyers' Guide* author **John Jackson Miller** advised me to try another comic book property based on what I'd learned with *FAANS*, but I dearly wanted to continue the story I began, and a small but dedicated audience was cheering me on.

So, I established **FAANS.com**, a website that now has ten times as many visitors in a day as *FAANS* had readers in a month. To view my online cartooning, visit FAANS.com at the link below.

**FAANS.com**  
<http://faans.com>



All cartoonists want to express themselves; however, you also need to decide what else you would like your work to accomplish.

- Do you want to make people **laugh** or to make people **think**?
- Do you want to be a **daily presence** in their lives?
- Do you want to **explain** something to them?
- Do you want to discuss **politics** or to develop a **cast of characters** over time?

Different markets are better suited to different dreams, and knowing what you want is an important first step. So let's move on to...