

READ. SHARE. CONNECT



Activity Guide **Vera Vance: Comics Star**

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Themes: Stand up for yourself and others / Get better at something by working at it / Grass is always greener / Feelings and communication / Follow your dreams / Friendship and family / Don't worry about being "perfect" / Ask a lot of questions / Follow your heart

Although the times we are living in are less than perfect, we have the opportunity to find fun in their imperfection. We hope a few of the activities below will inspire you to find new ways to do the things you love (or maybe even try something new), and connect with those you care about.



Make Your Own Comic

Now that you've read a book all about comic-book making (you can also check out other books like "We Make Comics" on Epic), make your own! Divide a piece of paper into four panels. Use speech bubbles and sound effects. Create an adventure with the character you created or a character from the Vera Vance book!



What would Vera do?

For many of us, things have changed and we can't do all the things we usually do in the ways we usually do them. It may not be fun, but it challenges us to try different ways of doing things.

Can't go to the park to run around? Make an obstacle course, or a silly relay race, or have a dance party at home with your family. Tired of your board games? Make up new rules—or even new games!

Think about how the characters in the Vera Vance book might handle your daily activities and challenges. What would Nixie do? How might Vera's Mom react? Can you turn it into a fun or silly situation like Boogie? Would Nolan find some facts to make things better? This will help you see different approaches, or at least add a little fun to your day!



Follow Your Dreams

Don't be afraid to follow your dreams. They might not come true right away and they might change, but make time to work for them. Like Nixie says, sometimes you just have to stand up for yourself when you really, really, really want something. So listen to your heart. Believe in yourself. Find your voice. Stand up for yourself and others. You make a difference!



Perfect Imperfection

On the first day of comic-book camp, Vera worries so much about making a mistake, that she freezes when trying to draw a squirrel. Buzz-Bee tells her “It doesn’t have to be perfect. It just has to be.” Another day, she tells her “Don’t worry about making your drawing perfect.” On another she tells her, “You can change your story—any story—to add whatever you think is missing. It’s as simple as that.” Vera finds that her drawings and her stories get better the less she worries about if they are perfect or not, and the more she becomes open to trying things out, and then continuing to try and work until things get better.

Choose something you’d like to get better at (riding a bike, telling a good joke, cooking, playing an instrument, being a good big sister, drawing a cartoon squirrel or making a comic). It could be something you already do or something brand new. Research how to do this thing (read books or articles about people who do this, reach out to experts, watch tutorials, ask people you know for advice—remember, Nolan knows a lot partially because he asks a lot of questions!). Set aside a specific amount of time (every day, every other day, once or twice a week) to experiment and work at this new thing. Expect that it won’t be perfect in the beginning. Realize that you learn by seeing what is working and what isn’t working. Remember to keep working at it, and to keep asking questions or researching if you get stuck. Notice how you get better over time. Have fun! Be open to new ideas! Don’t give up!



Drawing Squirrel-y Emotions

The kids at Comic-book Camp get lots of good tips from Buzz-Bee and Brian about communicating emotion with drawings. Such as how the size and shapes of characters’ eyes and eyebrows show how they are feeling, as well as shoulders, posture, hand or foot position. Check out chapters 2 and 4 for more tips and start your own drawing.

Create Your Character

- Choose an animal: a monkey, a bear, a cat, or a bunny
 - All characters are made up of a combination of simple shapes. For instance, you might start with a circle-shaped face, then add ovals or triangles to the head to make ears. Circles might make bear ears, for example and triangles might make cat ears. Two small circles could make a nose. Experiment! Just by using basic shapes you can make ANYTHING.

Add Emotions

- Once you’ve drawn your character, try showing different emotions. Look at your own face for inspiration. Don’t draw the body yet.
 - Start with a neutral face and watch what changes when you smile or laugh. Does your mouth change? Your eyebrows? Make a sad face or surprised face or an angry face—what happens?
 - What happens if the eyes are wide open? What changes when your eyebrows are up or down? Or if you change your mouth? What emotions do you see?
 - Next, try these on your character: happy, sad, angry, silly, scared and surprised.

What Are You Feeling Today?

Draw it! Then see if you can use these drawings to communicate emotions to friends and family without using words. Does it work? Let them try, and make a game out of it.