

We the People

Constitution Day

ACROSS THE COUNTRY ***** SEPTEMBER 17



About Constitution Day



In 1952, President Harry S. Truman signed a bill that moved “I Am an American Day” from the third Sunday in May to September 17 so that this holiday would coincide with the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787. Congress renamed the holiday “Citizenship Day.” A joint resolution passed in 1956 requested the President to proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 each year as “Constitution Week.”

Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) entered an amendment to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 that changed the name of the September 17 holiday to “Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.” The purpose of “Constitution Day and Citizenship Day” is to honor and celebrate the privileges and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship for both native-born and naturalized citizens, while commemorating the creation and signing of the supreme law of our land.

The addition of the amendment, known as Public Law 108-477, requires all schools that receive federal funds hold an educational program for their students on September 17 of each year. This lesson, which is adapted from curricular materials on the Constitution produced by the [Center for Civic Education](#), is designed to assist schools and federal agencies to meet the requirements of this law.

Orb and Effy Learn About Authority

Bubble Land



Close your eyes. Can you see a big, round bubble?
Gently, it floats through the air. Quietly, up and up it goes. The light makes the bubble shiny and colorful.

Our story is about a bubble. We call it Bubble Land. It is also about the people who we imagine live in Bubble Land.

The sky in Bubble Land is bright. It makes you think of a rainbow. The land and the houses are blue, green, and sometimes red. If you blow a soap bubble you will see many of the same colors. The Bubble People are all different colors, too.



Meet Orb. He is big and round. Everyone knows Orb. He has a blue beard. Orb owns an ancient bubble pipe

made of clay. Orb blows bubbles from this pipe every-where he goes.

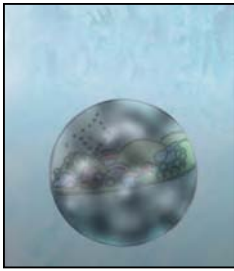
Orb says, “A long time ago children blew bubbles from clay pipes just like the one I own. It makes me happy to blow bubbles from this pipe like in the old days.”



Meet Effy. She has a big smile. Her name is Effy because she is always effervescent, that means bubbly. Effy and Orb have been friends forever. Everyone trusts Effy. She always tells the truth. People want to hear what she has to say.



“Today Bubble Land is a happy place. The Bubble People think it is a good place to be,” Effy said.



“Bubble Land was not always this way. A long time ago, we were in great danger. Our bubble walls got thinner and thinner. The colors of the sky grew dimmer and dimmer. The air became cooler and cooler. Smoke from the factories filled our bubble. It got dirtier and dirtier. The light did not shine inside. And Bubble Land started to sink. Down and down it went,” said Orb.

“The problem was the way we lived,” said Effy. “Bubble People love ice cream, and cake, and candy. Day and night the factories made sweets for us to eat.”



“Another problem was the way we acted,” Orb reminded Effy. “People did whatever they pleased. Some people took things without asking. Some people tried to eat all the food. No one wanted to share. People disagreed about everything.”

“We knew what was happening to Bubble Land,” Effy said. “We were very scared!”

DISCUSSION POINT 1

“Some Bubble People had good ideas about how to save Bubble Land,” Orb continued. “But no one could agree on what to do. People became angry and started to argue. They could only agree to disagree.”

DISCUSSION POINT 2

“Orb, remember how we looked and looked for the Bubble Land rules, but we could not find any? We had no rules! We had nothing to help us solve our problems!” said Effy.

“That’s right,” Orb replied. “There were no leaders in Bubble Land. There was no one to tell us what to do. There was no one to help us settle arguments or to help us agree.”



Meet Purl. She recalls the old days in Bubble Land, too. “In every house people talked about the terrible

problem. My neighbor said that we should have rules. Rules might help solve the problem.”

“I remember that,” Orb replied. “People were angry. ‘WHY DO WE NEED RULES?’ they shouted.”

“I thought we needed leaders,” Purl said.

“People were angry about that, too,” Effy recalled. “‘WHY DO WE NEED LEADERS?’ the people shouted.”

The people shouted and argued but they did not do anything. Meanwhile, Bubble Land sank lower and lower.

“What can we do?” worried the Bubble People.

DISCUSSION POINT 3

Then one day, Effy said to Orb, “We must do something or it will be too late! Let’s call all the people of Bubble Land to a meeting.”



“On the day of the meeting, everyone talked at once,” Effy recalls. “It was noisy. Hardly anyone could hear.

Then Orb got up to speak.”

“Quiet! Quiet, please!” Orb shouted to the crowd.

Slowly the crowd grew quieter. Then, all the Bubbles were ready to listen.

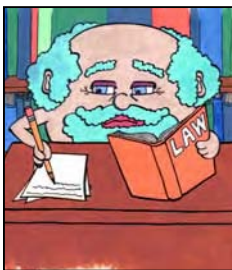
“Let’s try to speak one at a time,” Orb said to the crowd.

“Effy, you may speak first.”

“There is one thing I know,” Effy told the people.

“We must solve this problem. We have to agree to work together to put Bubble Land high in the air again. We need some rules. We also need rules to help us get along better, so we can solve our problems together.”

After much whispering, everyone at the meeting agreed. Bubble Land needed good rules and good leaders.



DISCUSSION POINT 4

PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITY

Authority vs Power without Authority

PARALLELS

Compare to the United States and the U.S. Constitution

Parallels to the United States and the U.S. Constitution



Discussing the “Framers”



INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT

Authority touches the lives of everyone in society. It affects parents, teachers, children, judges, legislators, and presidents. Some people might view authority as unnecessary, even antithetical to freedom and human dignity. Most people, however, see authority as essential to civilization and valuable to social existence. Americans have always displayed a distrust of authority, while looking to authority for resolution of conflict and maintenance of order. Our Constitution clearly reflects this fundamental ambivalence. The Constitution provides for authority, but it also limits its practice.

Since government is defined as people and groups with the authority to perform certain functions in a society, it is important to understand the concept of authority and the related concept of power. An understanding of the difference between power and authority is essential for understanding whether people with power have the right to exercise it. An understanding of the necessity of authority and its usefulness in promoting agreed upon goals that benefit the individual and society is essential for the development of informed, competent, and responsible citizens.

In the United States, the powers of government are limited. They are limited to ensure that people in positions of authority fulfill the responsibilities they have been assigned, serve the major purposes of government, and do not

misuse or abuse the power they have been given. Limits on authority are seen as essential to the protection of individual rights. An understanding of the reasons for and the necessity of placing limits on authority is essential if citizens are to control their government and make sure that government fulfills its purpose.

Imparting these ideas to very young children presents a unique challenge. The story *Orb and Effy Learn About Authority* has four chapters. Each chapter presents material designed to teach an important aspect of the concept.

- **Chapter 1: What is authority?**
Children learn to define the concept and identify some important uses of authority in society.
- **Chapter 2: How can we decide if a rule is a good rule? How should we choose people to be leaders?**
We address two important aspects of using authority: making rules and choosing leaders. Allow time for two lessons.
- **Chapter 3: How can we decide if we want to use authority?**
Some of the consequences of using authority are benefits and some are costs. Children learn some of the most common benefits and costs. They make decisions about whether to use authority in a situation.
- **Chapter 4: How much authority should a leader have?**
Children learn that a position of

authority can be abused if it is not designed with care. Positions of authority must be well designed with duties, powers, and limits clearly established.

To meet the Constitution Day mandate we have adapted Chapter 1 of the story. The characters in *Orb and Effy Learn About Authority*, needed to create rules for their country to proceed with order and to protect its citizens, just as the Framers did. It is important for students to understand that the Constitution is the Supreme Law of the land and that our leaders derive the legitimate use of their power (authority) from it. After reading the story and understanding the basic concepts, a simple parallel is drawn between what the people of Bubble Land needed to do and what the Framers needed to do.

THE LESSON GUIDE

The lesson guide provides some background on the concepts that the students will learn. It will also provide discussion questions to use throughout the reading of the story and problem-solving activities. The pictures at the end of the guide are to be used while reading the story. You may choose to display them at the appropriate points in the story or mount them in the classroom all at once and then refer to each at the appropriate points.

The script for the story has three types of cues:

- Picture placement. Thumbnail prints in

the script itself will indicate which picture is appropriate at that point in the story.

- Discussion Point pauses. These marks indicate when to ask the questions that will facilitate concept development
- Problem-solving points and section headings.

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson introduces the study of authority. Children learn that when people have a right to tell others what to do in certain situations, they are exercising authority. When they do not have that right, they are exercising power without authority. Children learn some ways in which people earn the right to exercise authority.

The lesson also illustrates problems that are likely to arise in the absence of effective authority. Children learn how and why authority is useful in society.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the lesson, students should be able to

1. define the term authority
2. identify some important uses of authority in society
3. identify the Constitution as a legitimate source of authority to organize the government and its leaders

PREPARATION / MATERIALS

- A copy of *Orb and Effy*
Learn About Authority
- Pictures of the storybook characters
- The lesson guide
- Paper and crayons

IDEAS FOR THE TEACHER

These are ideas the instructor should know and be able to explain

A job can give you authority, or the right, to tell others what to do. A teacher tells you to study your lessons. That is part of a teacher's job.

The law can give you authority, or the right, to tell others what to do. A law is a rule made by people in the government. A police officer may tell you to wear a helmet when riding a bike. The law gives the officer the right to use power.

Parents tell their children what to do. It is their right as parents. The law also says they have the right to use power. They have authority.

Sometimes people use power but they do not have the right to do so. A bully might tell another student to leave the schoolyard. Robbers might tell someone to give them money. These people do not have the right to make anyone do these things. They use power without

authority. This means using power without having the right to do so.

Help the children understand that authority is the right to exercise power. It is the right to tell others what to do. Children should learn that when a person does not have a right to tell others what to do, that person is using power without authority. It is important to know the distinction between authority and power without authority to decide if a person is using power legitimately.

This lesson helps children understand that in the absence of rules or people with authority, their lives would be difficult and possibly dangerous. Children should learn that authority is important to society: the community, the school, and their classroom. Designating authority serves many societal functions. Some of these help us to maintain order and safety, protect property, share things fairly, and settle conflicts peaceably, while some help us to protect important rights such as the right to free expression.

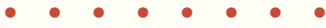
You probably have a rule that requires children to raise a hand before they speak out in the classroom. The rule helps you maintain order; it helps you fairly distribute time during a class discussion among those who want to speak; and it protects the right of a child to express his or her ideas.

NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

IDEAS FOR THE STUDENT

Introduce the ideas that children should know

Complete this exercise with the children before reading the story. Read the following aloud and discuss the questions.



Many times you decide what you want to do. No one tells you to do it.

- David said, “I am going to go play at Jim’s house.”
- Ruth said, “I am going to feed my cat.”

David and Ruth are acting on their own. No one told them what to do.

Many times you do what others say you should do. **Display picture.**

- “Amy, please brush your teeth,” said Amy’s mother.
- “Luke, give me your lunch money or I will hit you,” said Al.

Amy’s mother and Al each told someone what to do. Both used power. Someone has power when they tell people what to do and they do it.

What is different about what Al said and what Amy’s mother said?

Does Al have the right to make Luke give him money? Why?

Does Amy’s mother have the right to tell Amy to brush her teeth? Why?

Amy’s mother had authority. Authority means to have the right to use power. It is the right to tell others what to do.

Al used power without authority. He did not have the right to ask for Luke’s money. He did not have the right to threaten Luke.

Ask the children:

- **When have you seen someone use power without authority?**
- **When have you seen someone use authority?**
- **Why do you want to know if someone is using authority or power without authority?**

NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

READ THE STORY

Orb and Effy Learn About Authority

Prepare the children to listen; read the story aloud. Give them a short overview of the story and show some of the illustrations.

The story has several discussion points indicated. Point 1 page 4 deals with power without authority: some Bubble People take whatever they want; some eat more food than they need. Point 2 on page 4 is concerned with all the Bubble Land’s problems and looks toward a solution. Points 3 and 4 on pages 5 and 6 engage students in thinking about the functions of rules and people with authority.

The discussion should help children understand what might happen in a place where there are no rules, laws, or people in positions of authority. It should help children understand why we need authority in society.

DISCUSSION POINT 1

Read to Discussion Point 1 on page 4.

Discuss the following questions with the children. Some possible responses are below.

What problems did the Bubble People have?

Bubble Land was in danger. The walls of the bubble got thinner and thinner. The colors of the sky grew dimmer and dimmer. The air became cooler and cooler. The factories in Bubble Land polluted the air. The dirty air prevented the sun from entering the bubble. The cooling air was causing Bubble Land to sink.

The environmental problems in Bubble Land were caused by the way the Bubble People lived. Day and night the factories manufactured candy, ice cream, and sweets. The people did whatever they pleased because there were no rules. The people did not share things. Some people ate more food than they needed. The people could not agree on anything, instead they became angry and argued.

Why are these things problems?

Accept any reasonable answer.

DISCUSSION POINT 2

Read to the Discussion Point 2 on page 4.

Ask the following question:

What are some things the Bubble People could do to solve these problems?

Make a list of the suggestions the students offer and keep the list in sight.

DISCUSSION POINT 3

Read to Discussion Point 3 on page 5. and ask the following questions:

What ideas did the Bubble People have that would solve their problems?

Purl's neighbor suggests that having rules might help solve the problems. But many Bubble People did not like the idea.

Orb remembers that there were no leaders to tell the people what to do. When the suggestion of leaders was raised it angered people.

Were any of their ideas similar to your ideas for solving the problems?

Have students match the Bubble People suggestions with those on their list.

DISCUSSION POINT 4

Read to the Discussion Point 4 on page 6 and ask the students:

Why do we need rules?

Accept any reasonable answer.

Explain that another word for “rule” is “law,” and that essentially what the people of Bubble Land did was to create laws. Ask students if they can think of any laws we must follow?

Why do we need leaders?

Accept any reasonable answer.

Ask students if they can name some leaders in the community.

Have you seen any problems like these? What are they?

Children might state a problem at school, for example, trash in the hallways. The problem occurred because there was no rule or no person with authority to address the issue. They might give examples like sharing TV time with their siblings because there is no rule or person enforcing the rule. They might give examples in the classroom, such as a problem of sharing things because there is no rule or person to enforce the rule.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Read the situations aloud to the children. Ask them to say if the person is using authority or power without authority. Following are some common responses to each of the three situations.

The crossing guard said, “You may cross the street.”

The crossing guard is using authority. The authority has been delegated by

school authorities, who, by law must protect children on their way to and from school. The authority of the crossing guard also derives from state traffic laws.

Luis said, “Let me cut in line, now!”

Luis is using power without authority. He does not have the right to order the children to let him cut in line.

Rita’s father said, “Please take the dog for a walk.”

Rita’s father is using authority. The authority comes from custom. We have long recognized the traditional role of parents. It also comes from the law. In some situations, parental authority may be derived from moral principles, that is, the parent’s sense of right and wrong.

PARALLELS

Parallels to the United States and the U.S. Constitution

Show students the picture of the U.S. Constitution. Ask them if they have ever heard the word “Constitution” before and what they think it means?

Draw a parallel between the people in Bubble Land and the people in the United States.

Ask if they know who George Washington was?

Show the illustration of the Framers. Recount to the students that in the

early part of U.S. history, people like George Washington helped to make the rules that formed our government so that we could have order and be protected. Draw on the answers and examples students gave earlier in the lesson.

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY

To conclude the lesson, distribute drawing paper and crayons to each child. Ask the children to draw two pictures. The first picture should show someone using power without authority. The other should show someone exercising authority. Ask the children to share their work with each other.

NOTES
FOR THE
TEACHER





This supplemental lesson celebrating the U.S. Constitution is adapted from the Foundations of Democracy Series, *Orb and Effy Learn About Authority*, Primary Level, Lessons 1 and 2, published by the [Center for Civic Education](#) in 1999.

This Constitution and citizenship lesson is cosponsored by The American Association of School Administrators. AASA, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for over 14,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. AASA's major focus is standing up for public education.

The [Center for Civic Education](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational corporation dedicated to fostering the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to the values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy.

The Center specializes in civic/citizenship education, and international education exchange programs for developing democracies. For additional information on the Center's programs and curricula, contact the [Center for Civic Education](#).

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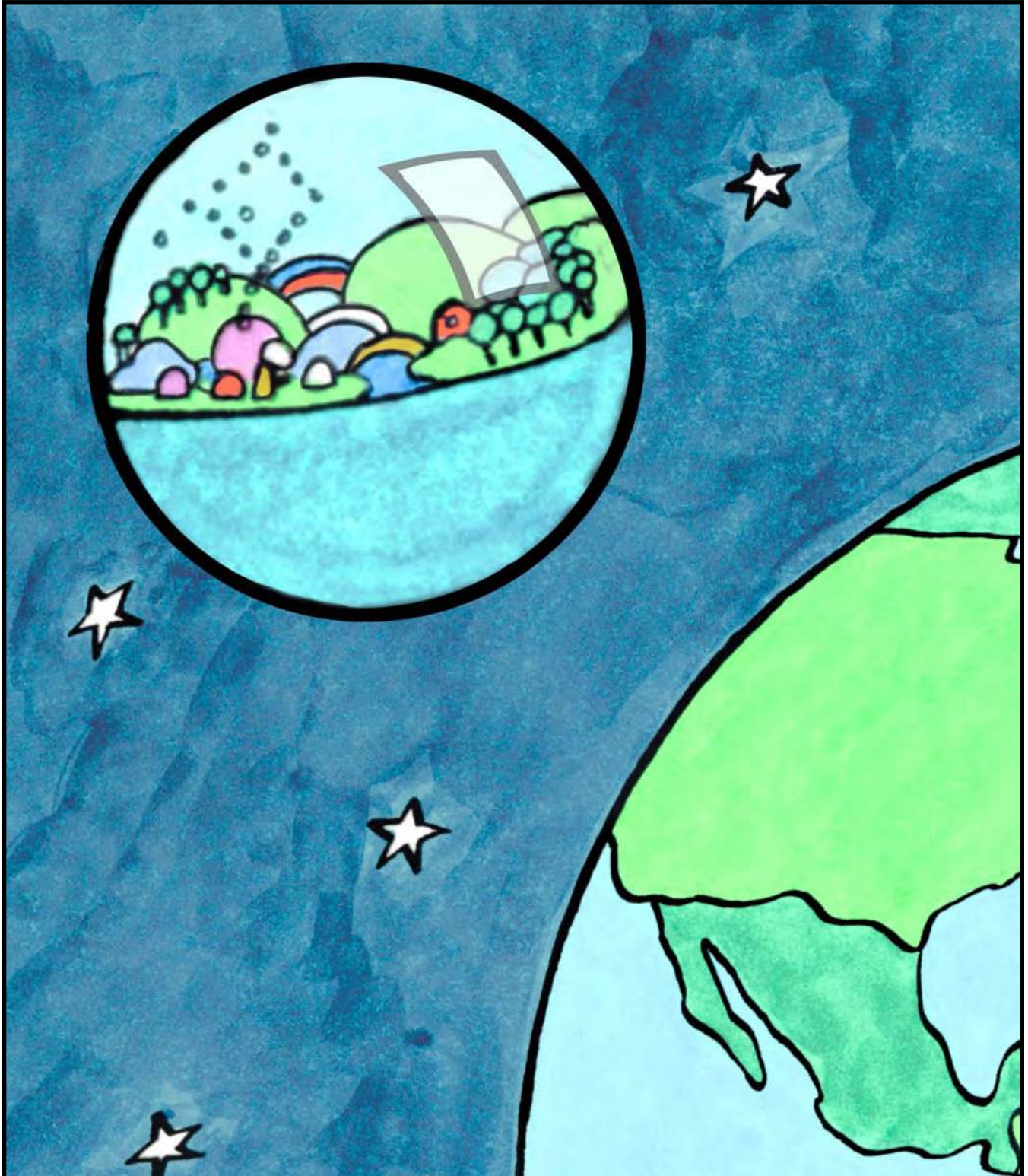
Amy and her Mom



Luke and Al



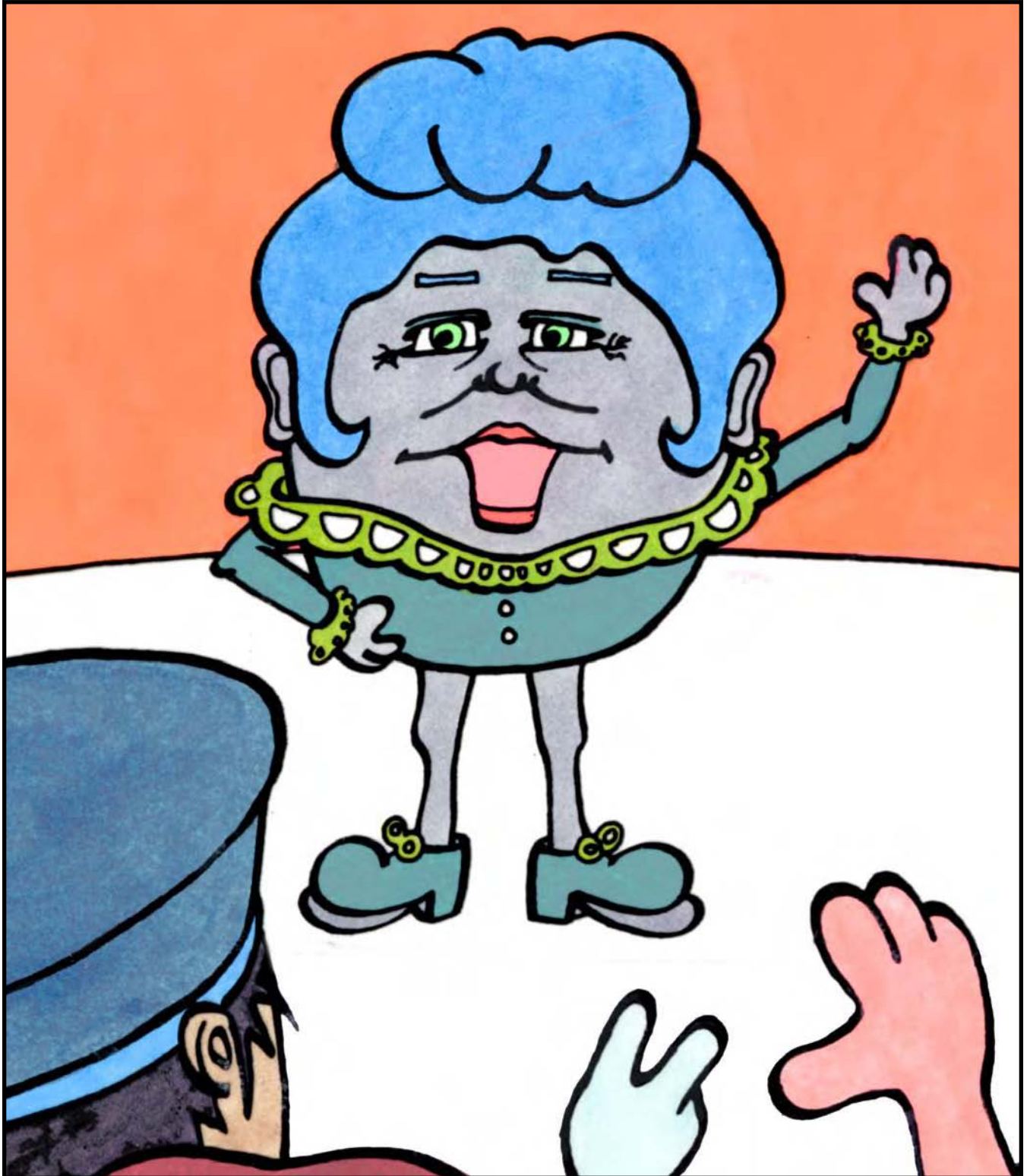
Bubble Land



My name is Orb



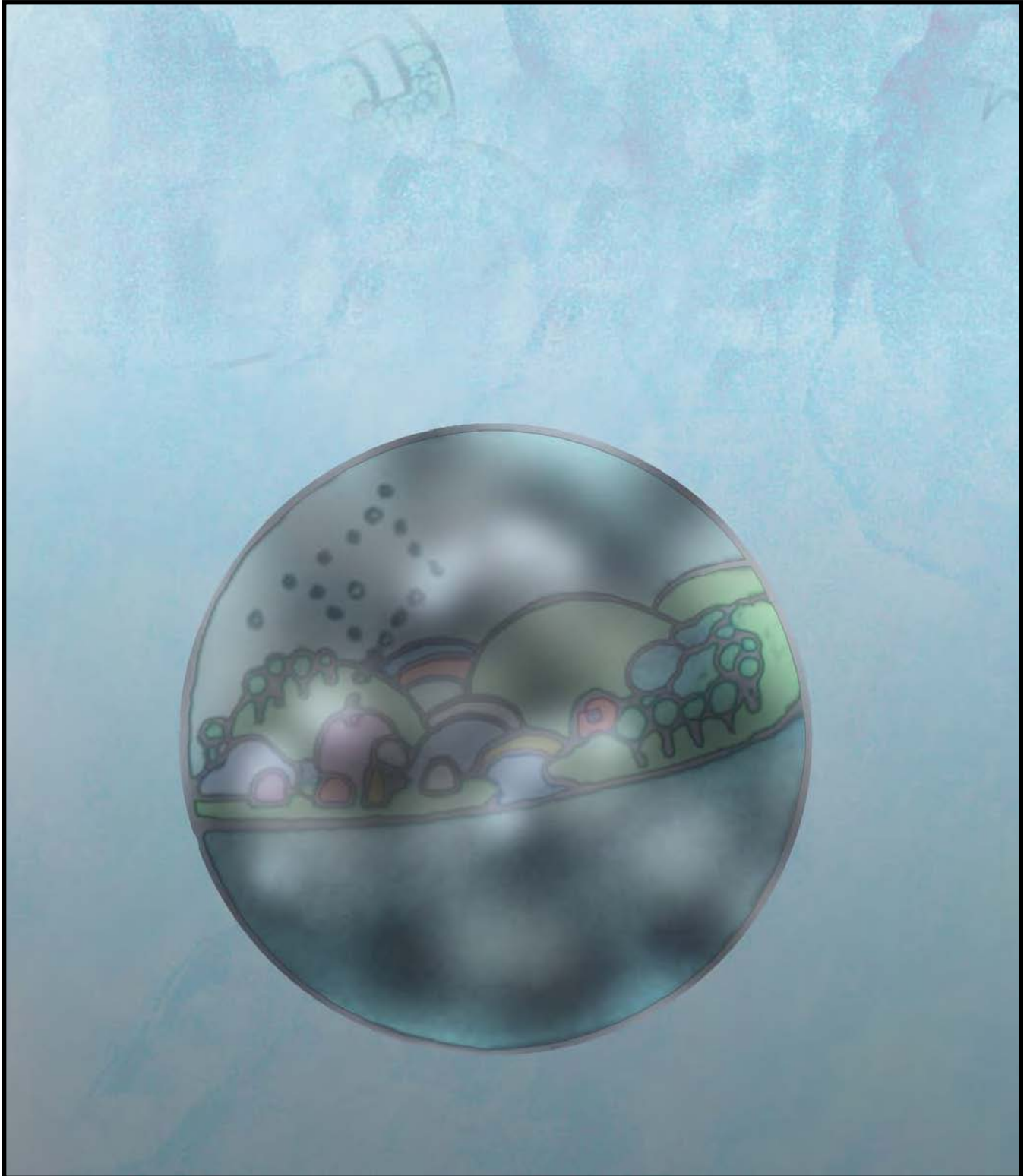
My name is Effy



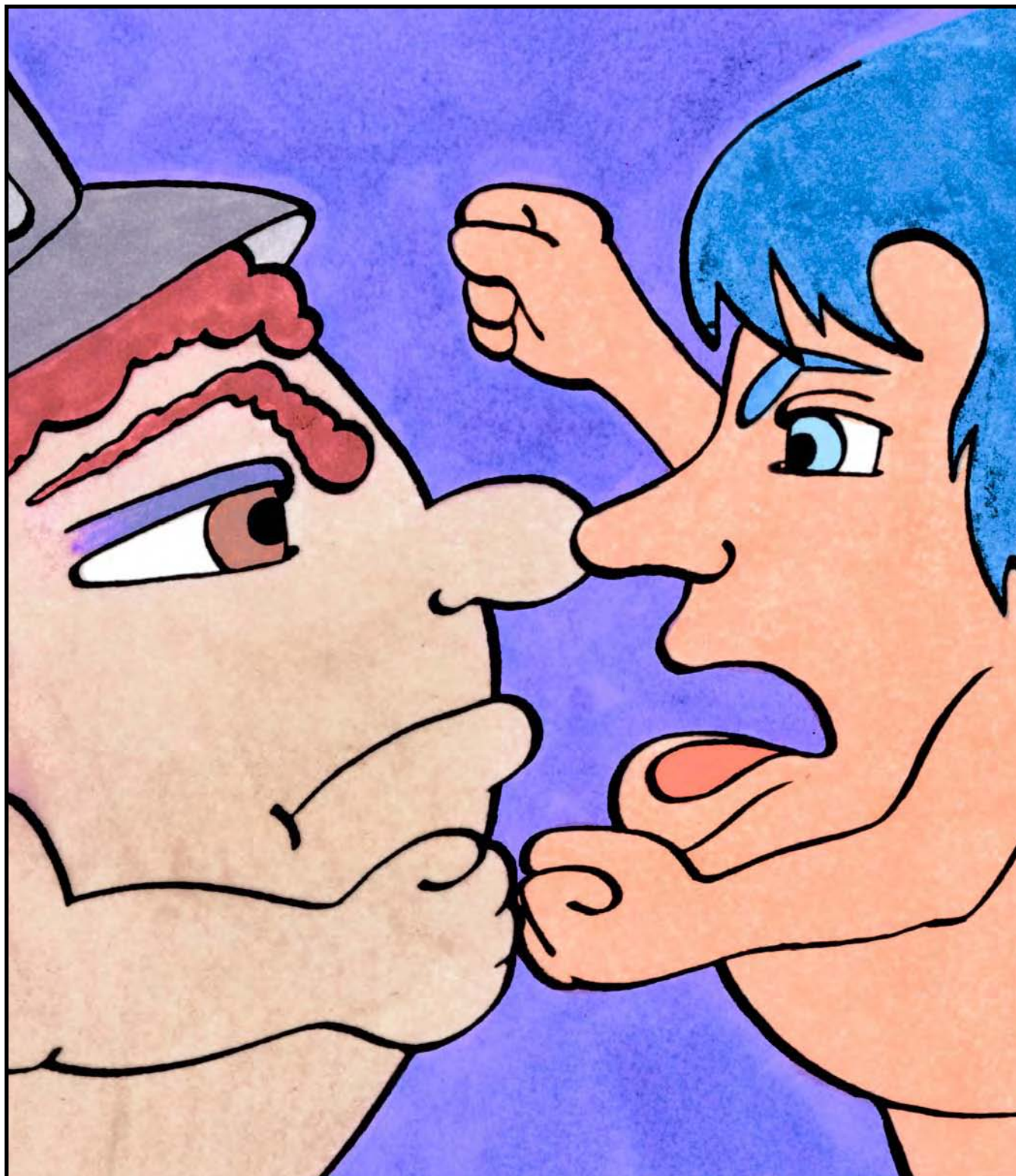
Happy Bubble People



Bubble Land Sinking



Arguing



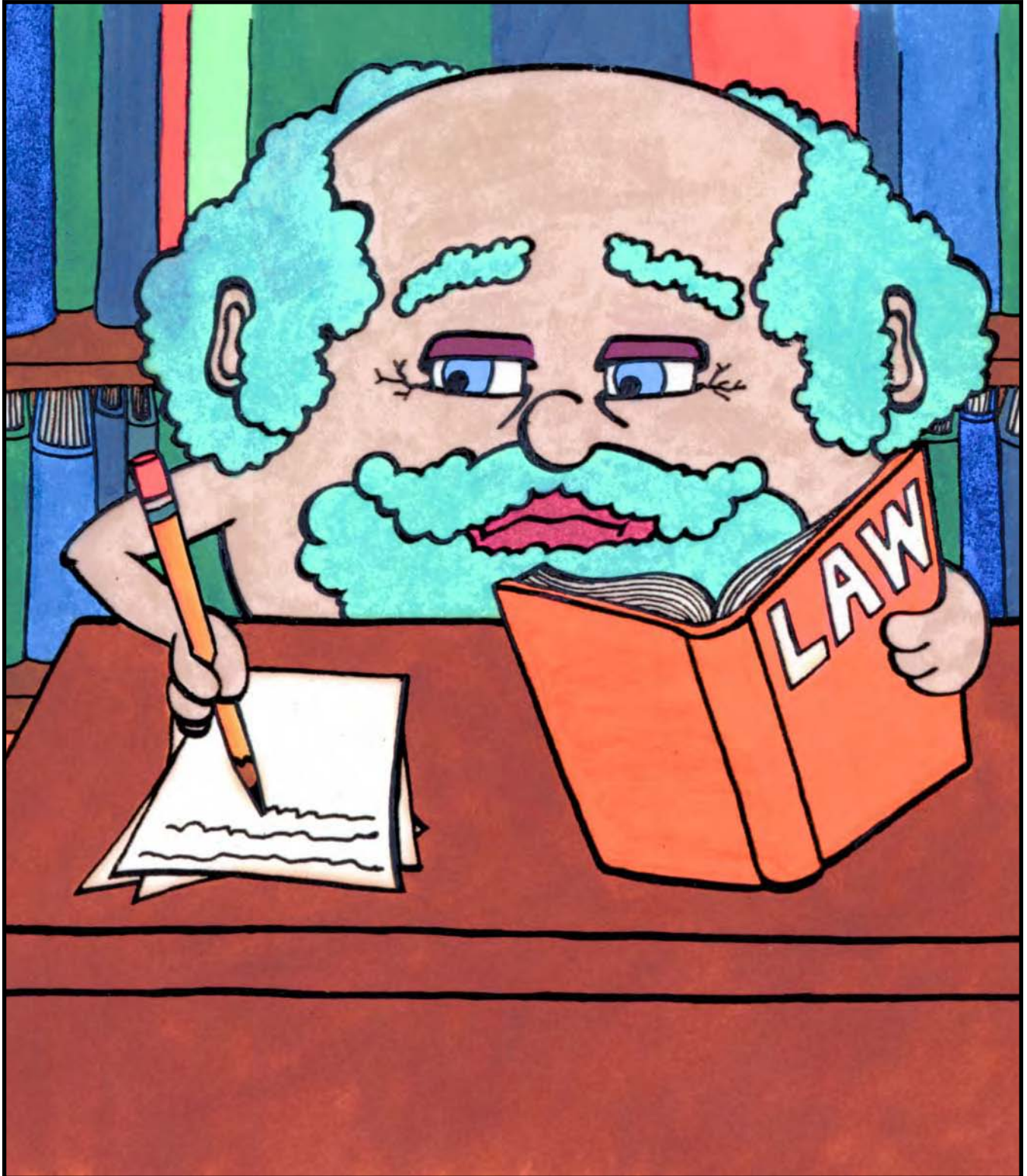
Purl



Town Meeting



Orb Writing the Rules



The U.S. Constitution



The Framers of the U.S. Constitution

