

# The Disease Detectives

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## Introduction

There is a shortage of skilled outbreak epidemiologists. Future career choices originate in childhood experiences. Storytelling is a great teaching tool. Comics are fun.

## Results

We completed a 20-page comic book that can easily be adapted to different cultural backgrounds (fig 1a,1b). It is available for free at [www.disease-detectives.org](http://www.disease-detectives.org). Vivid artwork transports a compelling storyline (fig 2). The teaching annex refers back to the storyline and explains methodology in detail (fig 3).

## Methods

Available outbreak investigations and case studies used in training exercises were screened and scripted into a comic about a fictitious food-borne outbreak of salmonella after a neighbourhood barbeque. Illustrations were hand-drawn on A3 Bristolboard paper with pen and ink, scanned and edited with free open source software Inkscape and Gimp. Separation of graphics and text allows easy translation. Copyrights were put under a creative commons license.

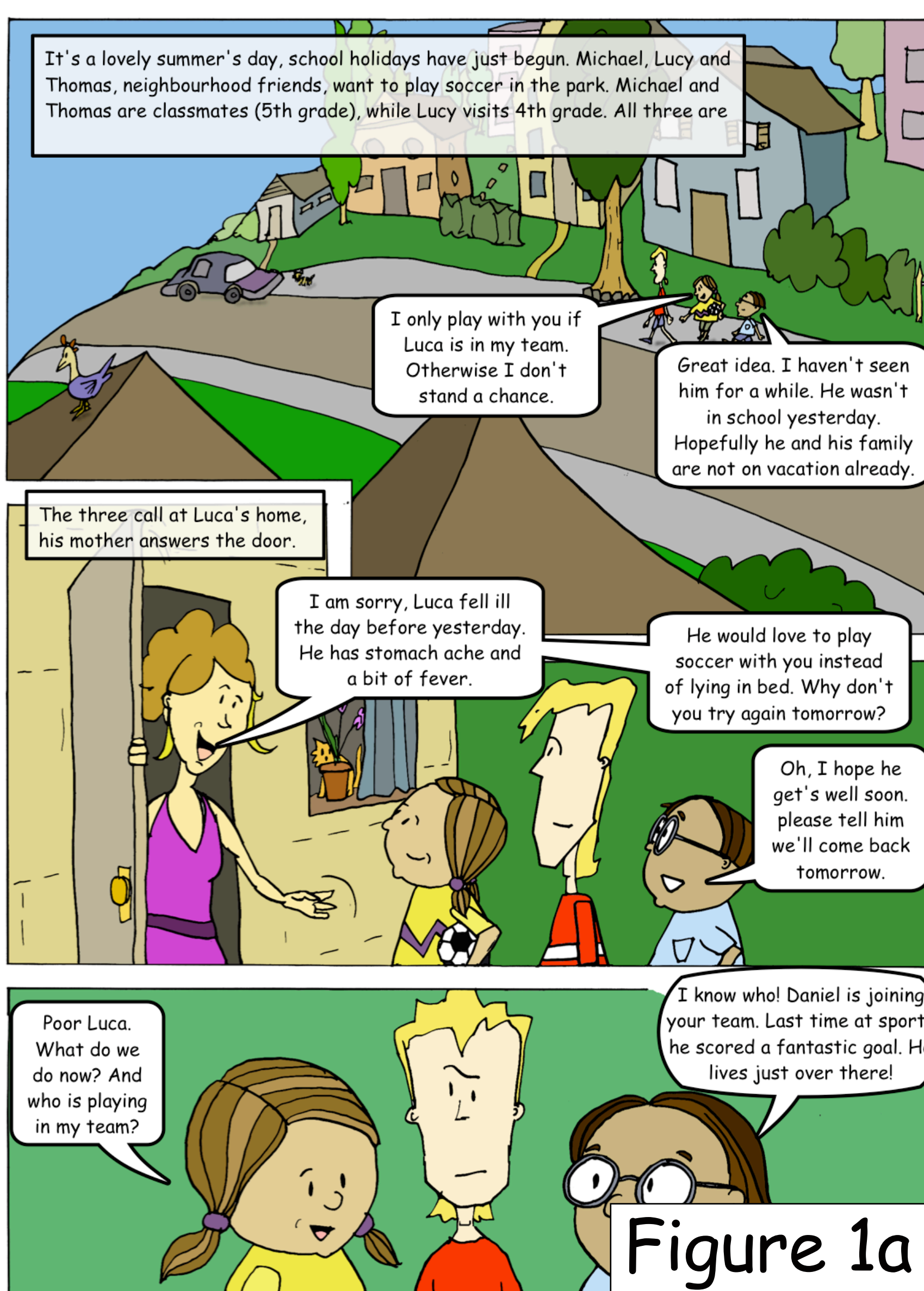


Figure 1a

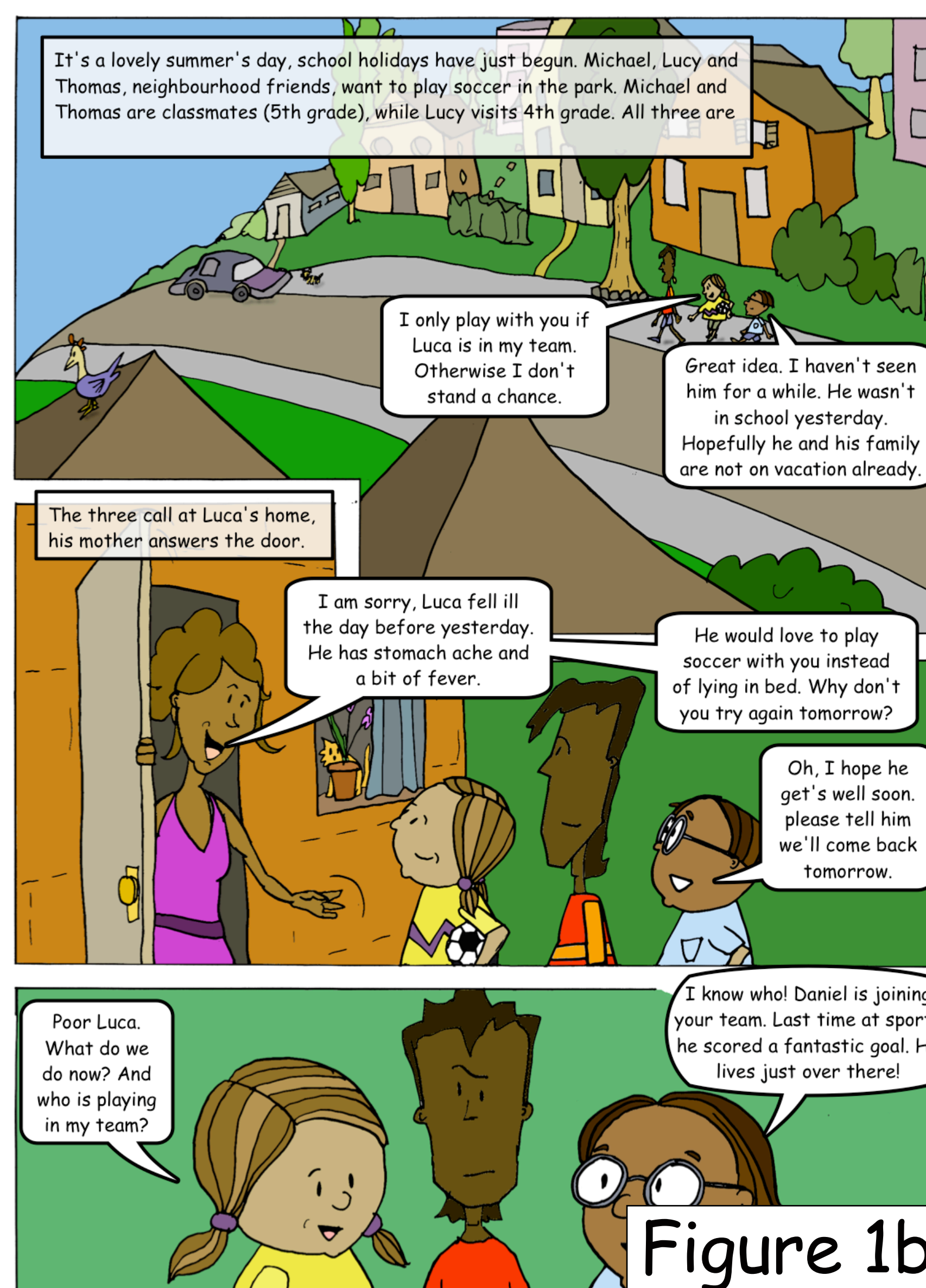
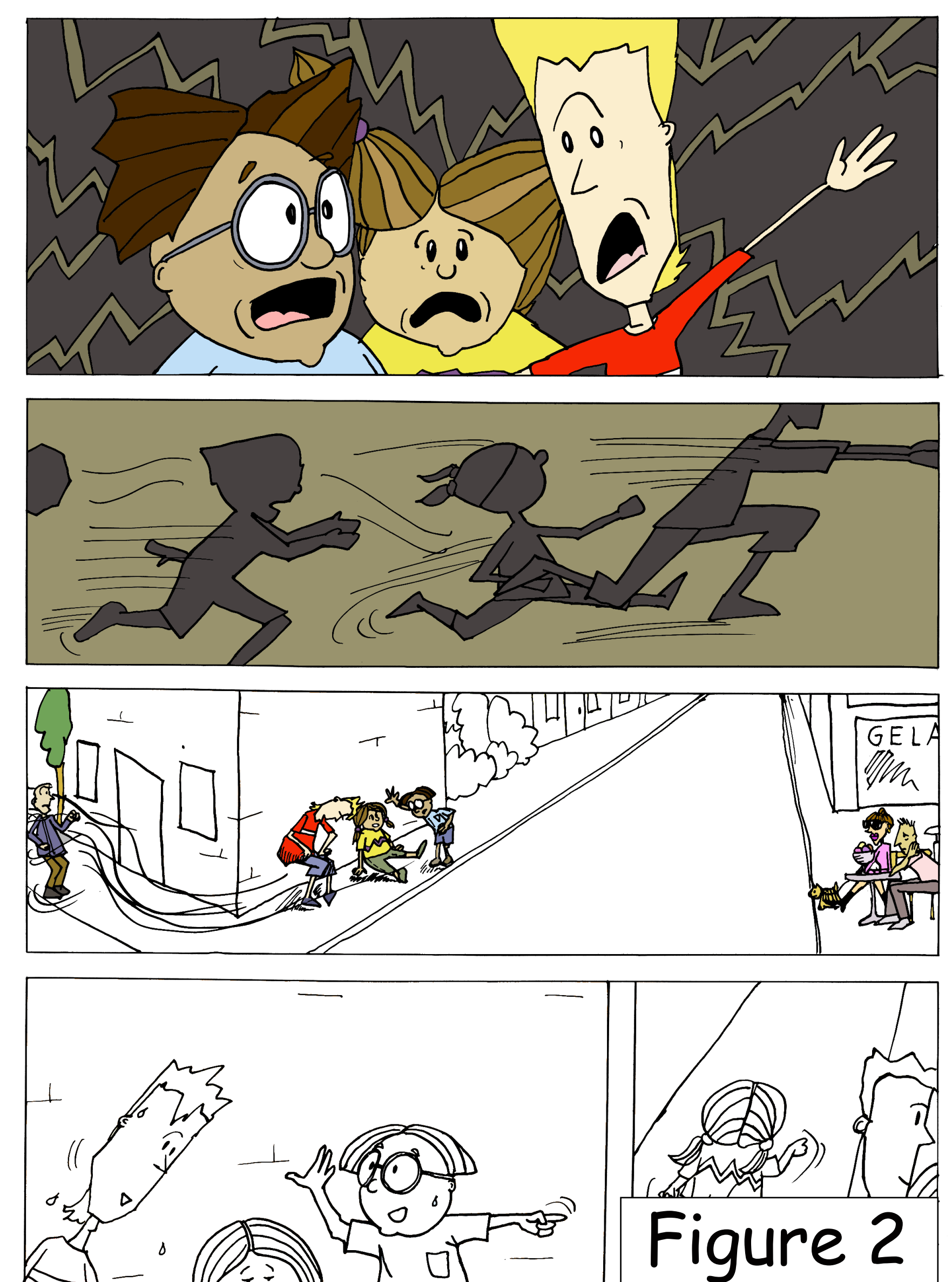
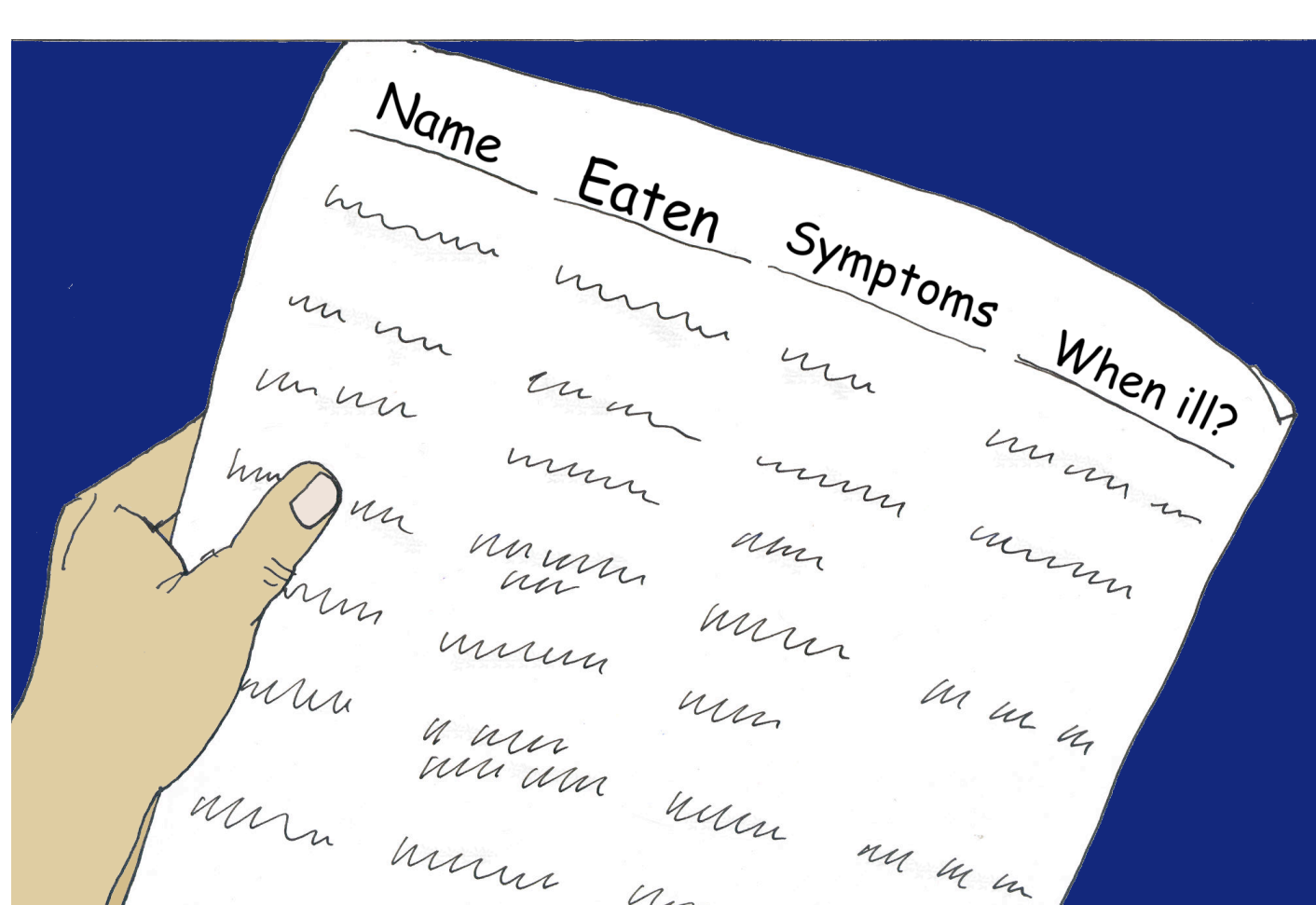


Figure 1b



## The Line List



The line list contains one case per line of text together with information on e.g. personal details, onset of disease, symptoms and exposure information.

Figure 3

## Conclusions

"The Disease Detectives" is a novel approach for teaching outbreak epidemiology to a non-scientific audience.

A liberal copyright regime and use of free open source software encourage participation and ensure availability even in low resource settings. Comic-based community health promotion needs to be explored further.

## Recommendations

Read more comics. Participate.

