

Pass It On®...

The Birth of Superman.

How two awkward teenage boys dreamed up the world's most popular superhero.

Young boys often dream of superpowers to solve their problems. "If I could just click my fingers, my homework would be done," many have imagined. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster put their ideas down on paper.

It was 1933, and while the country was still in the throes of the Great Depression, Cleveland was thriving. Two kids growing up in a middle-class neighborhood, Jerry and Joe became friends on that awkward social island: high school. They escaped potentially embarrassing encounters by becoming obsessed with comics.

Joe was the artist and sketched all the time, using bits of any kind of paper he could find. He hung out at newsstands poring over magazines, especially "Amazing Stories," and then took up a pencil or pen to recreate them at home. Jerry was the storyteller and the more ambitious of the two.

He describes how the creation of Superman came to him in the middle of a sleepless summer night: "I hop out of bed and write this down, and then I go back and think some more for about two hours and get up again and write that down." The inspiration for Superman's origin story started taking shape, and the next morning, "I dashed over to Joe's place and showed it to him ... we just sat down, and I worked straight through."

As is often the case, when we experience something traumatic in life, we deal with the feeling through creative expression. Jerry's father owned a haberdashery and had died during a robbery. A young child might process that experience by wishing something could have prevented it. For Jerry, out came the Man of Steel, who was impervious to bullets and had a penchant for protecting innocent people.

Creating storylines must have helped Jerry with the grieving process. Superman always wins. He stops trains and bad guys and cannot be killed. Like the best memories, nothing can take him away, and yet, being only a memory, he can never be completely there.

The story of Superman has inspired kids for generations. It has calmed their fears and driven their dreams. Most importantly, the Man of Steel has inspired us all to find our superpowers and use them to help others. So, the next time you are inspired to swoop in and save a friend from being bullied, or help the widow next door with your superpower smile, thank Joe and Jerry, two awkward high school kids who dreamt up Superman — making the world a little more safe and a little more fair.

Be Super... [PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

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