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Graphic Novels & Manga

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RESEARCH GUIDE

WINTER 2020



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Comic books and graphic novels have long been popular with a wide range of readers and influential for many in creative endeavors. These graphic works have become an important means of artistic and literary innovation, while gaining long overdue scholarly and academic attention.

Over the past few decades, the popularity of comic books and graphic novels has significantly risen...Up, Up and Away!

The Aurora Public Library offers an extensive collection of titles that can be found across all of our library branches.

[Superman # 1](#), created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, 1939.

What are graphic novels?

Graphic novels are stories collected in book format that are told using art, usually in comic book or comic strip style. Though the first graphic novels began appearing in the United States in the late 1970s and early-to-mid 1980s, the format did not break into the mainstream until the beginning of the 21st century when comic book publishers wished to begin to join manga publishers moving into the bookstore market.

Types of Comics & Graphic Novels



When reading or discussing any graphic novels, it's important to understand some background about them. First, remember that most (though not all) graphic novels in the United States start as comic books. Many graphic novels are basically bound collections of these comics. Second, there are generally two broad but different types of graphic novels; there are superhero oriented graphic novels and non-superhero oriented graphic novels.

When comic books first began to be published in the 1930s, the material was diverse and covered a variety of genres. Though the most popular and

apparently long lasting were superheroes (Superman appeared in 1938, Batman in 1939), those were not the only stories being told. Over the years concerns about comics and their content led to the creation of the Comic Code Authority (CCA). Because it was publishing doom to not get a seal of approval from the CCA, publishers began to shrink the material that they covered mostly into superheroes. Even today when the CCA is no longer an issue, the majority of material put out by American publishers is superhero heavy.

In the mid-1980s, cartoonists, artists, and writers began to explore telling stories using comic book format but not limiting themselves to superhero topics or even to superheroes at all. The prototype for this was Will Eisner, who in the late 1970s released his "Contract with God" series, telling the realistic adventures and misadventures of ordinary people living in the immigrant neighborhoods of the turn of the 20th century Bronx. But this non-superhero approach to storytelling only really became a hit in 1986 with the publication of "Maus" by Art Spiegelman. "Maus" was the story of Art Spiegelman's father Vladeck during the Holocaust. What was considered revolutionary about the story was not only that Spiegelman told the story in comic book format but that he used animals to represent all the different groups involved (i.e. Jews were drawn as mice, Germans as cats, French as frogs, etc...) That is when using a comic book and graphic novel format began to be seen as a respectable method of storytelling.

Meanwhile, at the same time that "Maus" was stretching the boundaries of graphic novel storytelling, superhero comics began to get a makeover as new writers began to rework the characters into more serious versions of themselves. This was the era when Batman became the Dark Knight that we are familiar with, when Daredevil stopped being a blind Spider-Man and suddenly discovered deep and grim roots as well as faith, and of course when Watchmen appeared to redefine the idea of how we might look at the interactions between heroes and villains. Today, there are a variety of materials to satisfy the pleasure of the reading public. There are still superhero stories but the field is no longer limited to them; like other forms of reading, graphic novels can cover anything and everything.

Manga



Manga are Japanese graphic novels usually available in the United States in English translation. The word *manga* has come today to be understood as referring to graphic novels though its literal meaning is "whimsical pictures". In Japan, graphic novels or manga are a much more mainstream phenomenon than in the United States, comparable with the American equivalent of magazines and newspapers rather than comic books. In the last fifteen years in particular manga has made a tremendous splash into the American market.

Types of Manga

In Japan, manga covers a variety of subjects and is aimed at a variety of audiences. Here are some of the audience names and genres. Remember though, most of the manga that is imported into the United States by domestic publishers usually comes from one or two genres.

Shonen: This genre of manga tends to focus on action, sports, or romance from a young male point of view. That is why it is called "Shonen", a word which means "Boy" in Japanese. Examples of Shonen series are DragonBall Z, Love Hina, and Sgt Frog.

Shoujo: This genre of manga is aimed at girls from about the ages of 12 to 18. Shoujo series focus on romance and relationships from a young female point of view. This is why it is called "Shoujo", a word which means "Girl" in Japanese. Examples of Shoujo series are Sailor Moon, Fruits Basket, and Peach Girl.

Josei: This genre of manga is aimed at adult women, usually college age and up. That is why it is called "Josei", which means "Ladies" in Japanese. "Josei" manga are similar to Shoujo manga except they tend

to contain more mature content and topics. Examples of Josei series are Happy Mania and Honey and Clover.

Seinen: This genre of manga is aimed at adult men, usually college age and up. That is why it is called "Seinen", which means "Adult" in Japanese. "Seinen" manga are similar to Shonen manga except they tend to contain more mature content and topics. Examples of Seinen series are Ai Yori Aoshi and Battle Royale.

Shoujo-ai or Yuri: These are manga series that focus on stories revolving around lesbian relationships. "Shoujo-Ai" is a Japanese term that literally means "Girl-love". An example of a Shoujo-Ai series is Revolutionary Girl Utena.

Shonen-ai or Yaoi: These are manga series that focus on stories revolving around homosexual relationships. "Shonen-Ai" is a Japanese term that literally means "Boy-love". An example of a Shonen-Ai series is Gravitation.

Awards

Want to know what stories won the "Oscars" of the Comic Book/Graphic Novel World?

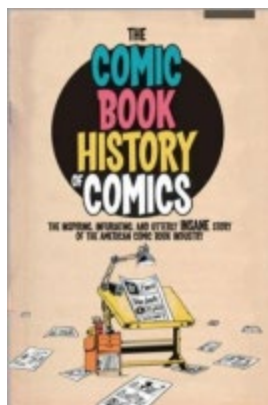
[The Harvey Awards](#)

[Hugo Awards](#)

[Eisner Awards FAQ](#)



Recommended Books from Aurora Public Library



The Comic Book History of Comics

Call #: 741.5 Van

ISBN: 9781613771976

Publication Date: 2012

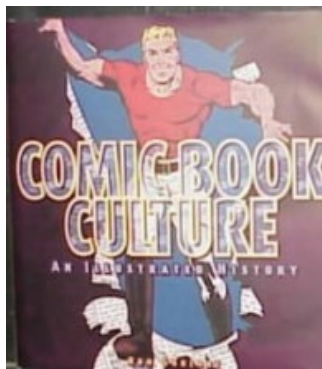


Comics: investigate the history and technology of American Cartooning

Call #: J2 741.59 Car

ISBN: 9781619302501

Publication Date: 2014

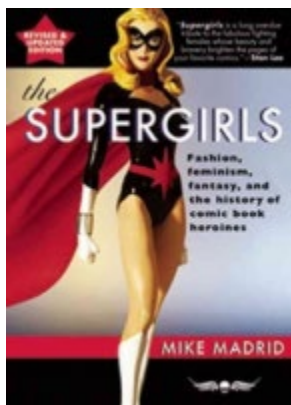


Comic Book Culture: An Illustrated History

Call #: 741.50973 Gou

ISBN: 1888054387

Publication Date: 2000

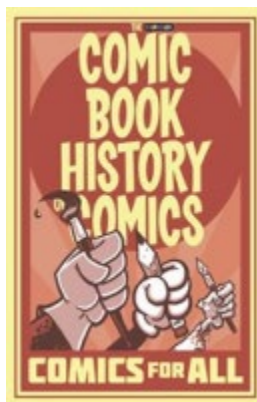


The Supergirls: fashion, feminism, fantasy, and the history of comic book heroines.

Call #: 741.5973 Mad

ISBN: 9781935259336

Publication Date: 2016



The Four Color Comic Book History Comics

Call #: eComic via Hoopla Digital

ISBN: 9781684065035

Publication Date: 2018

To see what other graphic novels we have available, please visit the Aurora Public Library and check out our card catalog:



Suggested Reading

Communications in
INFORMATION LITERACY

[The Case for Graphic Novels](#)

american.
libraries
THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

[The Case for Graphic Novels in Education](#)

THIS
PROGRESSIVE POLITICS, IDEAS & CULTURE

[In the Fight for Better Literacy, Comic Books are Teachers' Secret Weapon](#)



2020 Great Graphic Novels for Teens

Graphic Novel Resources Online

Research

[Comics Research.org](#)

An annotated bibliography of comics scholarship, including dissertations, periodicals, conferences, organizations, and library collections.

[The Comic Chronicles](#)

Provides historical sales and circulation data and statistics for American graphic novels and comic books reaching back to the 1960s.

[Comics Research Bibliography](#)

A fairly extensive bibliography of books, articles, and other publications related to comics, cartoons, and animation, provided by John Bullough of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

[Comic books and graphic novels: Digital resources for an evolving form of art and literature](#)

This article from College & Research Libraries News (Feb. 2005) is a research guide for web resources on graphic novels, many not covered here.

<https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/viewFile/7384/7384>

Library Collections

[Comics Research Libraries](#)

This page lists and describes the holdings of major comics research collections worldwide. Created and maintained by Randall W. Scott, Comics Librarian at Michigan State University

Digital Collections

[Cartoon Image Database](#)

This digital image database of the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum at Ohio State University contains thousands of scanned images from the collections of Ohio State's manga collection, the Treasury of Fine Art and San Francisco's Academy of Comic Art.

Reviews

[School Library Journal](#)

Provides reviews of comics titles for K-12 audiences.

[No Flying, No Tights](#)

Created and maintained by Robin Brenner, the Teen Librarian at the Brookline, MA, Public Library, this website provides reviews of graphic novels split up into adult, teen, and children's categories, as well as into genre categories.

[Comics Worth Reading](#)

A comics, manga, a graphic novel review blog created by Johanna Draper Carlson, a reviewer from Publisher's Weekly.

[The Comics Journal](#)

Online journal of articles and reviews concerning current and classic sequential art published by Fantagraphics Books.

Organizations

[Friends of Lulu](#)

An organization which promotes both readership and creation of comics by females.

[Prism Comics](#)

This website of Prism Comics, a non-profit organization which supports LGBT comics; provides news coverage of, and for, LGBT comics, creators, and readers.

[Comic Book Legal Defense Fund](#)

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund was created in 1986 as a non-profit organization which works in defense of First Amendment Rights for the comic book community.

News

[Comic Book Resources](#)

This website provides news, columns, and reviews covering both past and current comic books, as well as comics movie adaptations.

[Newsarama](#)

This website provides news and reviews covering current comic book titles.

[Fleen](#)

This blog, maintained by Gary Tyrell and Anne Thalheimer, provides news coverage of many major webcomics.



Citation Guide

Graphic novels, comic books, and comic strips can often be frustrating to cite. Most works have multiple creators (author, artists, letterers), many have multiple titles (Ultimate X-Men, Vol. 18: Apocalypse), and some get reprinted in dozens of formats.

Allen Ellis, a professor at Northern Kentucky University, has put together a guide for citing comics sources.

- [Comic Art in Scholarly Writing A Citation Guide](#)

Publishers

- [ComicsResearch.org List of Publishers](#)
- [Dark Horse](#)
- [DC Comics](#)
- [Drawn and Quarterly](#)
- [Fantagraphics](#)
- [IDW Publishing](#)
- [Marvel Comics](#)
- [Oni Press](#)
- [Slave Labor Graphics](#)
- [Top Shelf Productions](#)
- [Image Comics](#)

Manga Distributors/Publishers

[Dark Horse Manga](#)

This American comic book publisher also has a manga division that releases series such as Neon Genesis Evangelion, Card Captor Sakura, and America's longest running manga series Oh My Goddess.

[Del Rey Manga](#)

This manga publishing imprint is owned and operated by Random House.

[Kodansha Comics USA](#)

Kodansha is a major Japanese manga publisher. This is the link to their American division.

[Seven Seas Entertainment](#)

A publisher of both Japanese manga series and original American inspired works as well.

[Vertical, Inc.](#)

This manga translation and distribution company is responsible for translating and releasing most of the works of Osamu Tezuka for an American audience. Tezuka is considered the "Walt Disney of Japan" and among works they have translated are Black Jack, Princess Knight, Dororo, and Buddha, an 8 volume interpretation of the life of Buddha.

[VIZ, Inc.](#)

Owned by major Japanese Manga publishers Shogakukan and Shueisha, Viz is one of the oldest publishers of manga in the United States. Viz Manga tends to be action oriented such as Dragon Ball Z and One Piece. Viz also publishes American versions of Shonen Jump and Shoyo Beat manga magazines.

[Yen Press](#)

Yen Press is a newcomer to the manga publication scene in the United States. They release original work and Korean Manhwa in addition to Japanese manga.

Free Speech



The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the First Amendment Rights of Comic Book Creators.

<http://cbldf.org/>