

Graphic Novels Defined

- “Sequential Art...the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatise an idea.” Will Eisner, 1985, *Comics & Sequential Art*, p. 5
- “Books created in the format recognized as graphic novels are presented in sequential art, with the requirement upon creator and reader to work between image and word for a full understanding of narrative content. Such books usually include a structure of panels. For review purposes, graphic novels include independently conceived full-length narratives, bound volumes of longer sequential art series, and collections of works as brief as comic strips.” ALA RUSA Codes Materials Reviewing Committee, 2005, *Elements for Basic Reviews: A Guide for Writers and Readers of Reviews of Works in All Mediums and Genres*, p. 14

Food for Thought

- “My father used to try and help me, and I got to loving to read, because he allowed me to read comics, which most people said you shouldn't let your child read because they will spoil him. But that gave me an extraordinary hunger for reading.”~ Desmond Tutu, 2004, *Desmond Tutu Interview Nobel Prize for Peace*, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/tut0int-1>
- “On the basis of my personal experience and the research available, I would go so far as to say if you have a child who is struggling with reading, connect him or her with comics. If an interest appears, feed it with more comics.” Jim Trelease, 2001, *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, p. 134
- “Readers in the 21st century need to be able to analyze what they read and understand the motive of the author and the accuracy of the reading. They need to see themselves as active users, not merely vessels to be filled. Graphic novels offer a forum for these essential discussions.” Nancy Frey, 2004, *Eek! Comics in the Classroom*, http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev105.shtml
- “Superman made me a reader. Dick and Jane tried their best, but they could not give me what The Man of Steel offered: a good reason to read. . . . I'd become a reader—someone who read, rather than someone who could read—through comics, not through school.” Stephen Cary, 2004, *Going Graphic: Comics at Work in the Multilingual Classroom*, p. 1
- “Comic books serve a great function in this one area: They make a young person equate reading with pleasure. Kids enjoy reading comic books. Once they can equate reading with some-thing they are enjoying, then reading is no longer a chore, but, rather, a fun thing to do. Nobody reads just comics; eventually, you read everything.” Stan Lee, 2005, *Comic Relief, Edutopia*, 1(6), 58.

Awards

- *Maus I* by Art Spiegelman won the 1992 Pulitzer Prize
- *Palestine: In the Gaza Strip* by Joe Sacco (1993) won the 1996 American Book Award.
- *Fax From Sarajevo* by Joe Kubert (1996) won several awards including the Don Thompson Award for Best Non-Fiction Work.
- *The Nam* by Doug Murray won the 1997 Best Media of the Vietnam War Award from the Bravo Organization
- *The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Singe Mom* by Katherine Arnoldi (1998) received two American Library Association Awards, A New York Foundation of the Arts Award in Drawing, and was named one of the top ten books of the year by *Entertainment Weekly*.
- *Pedro and Me* by Judd Winick (2000) earned several awards and honors including the 2000 Publisher's Weekly Best Book and the 2001 Notable Children's Book Selection (American Library Association).
- *Jimmy Corrigan* by Chris Ware (2001) won Britain's *Guardian* First Book Award.
- *2024* by Ted Rall won a Best Book of the Year (2001) award from Amazon.com
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (2004) was awarded several commendations for her work including the 2004 ALA Alex Award and the School Library Journal Adult Books for Young Adults.
- *Watchmen* (Alan Moore & Dave Gibbon, 1986) was included on TIME's 2005 list of all-time top 100 English language novels

What Does the Research Say?

- The mere presence of comic books in a collection increased library use 82%, with a 30% increase in the circulation of non-comic book material. Dorrell, L., & Carroll, E. (1981). Spider-Man at the Library. *School Library Journal*, 27(10), pp. 17-19
- A study of “rare words per 1000,” showed that comic books introduced more new words than did adult books (53.5 vs. 52.7). Hayes, D. P. & M. G. Ahrens. (1998). Vocabulary Simplification for Children: A Case of 'Motherese'. *Journal of Child Language*, 15, pp. 395-410.
- A 1992 study of more than 200,000 students from 32 countries revealed that Finland, the nation with the highest proportion of comic book reading students (nearly 60%), also had the highest literacy rate (99%), as well as the highest library usage. Brunnell, V., & Linnakylä, P. (1994). Swedish speakers' literacy in the Finnish society. *Journal of Reading*, 37(5), pp. 368-375.
- Research showed that graphic novels are linguistically appropriate and bear no negative impact on language acquisition, and, in fact, light reading (e.g., graphic novels) positively correlates with achievement. Krashen, S. (1993). *The Power of Reading*. Englewood: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.
- In a 1993 study, researchers concluded that the average comic book introduced kids to twice as many words as the average children's book, and five times as many words as they were likely to be exposed to in the average child-adult conversation. Hampson, J., & Nelson, K. (1993). The relation of maternal language to variation in rate and style of language acquisition. *Journal of Child Language*, 20, pp. 313-342.
- Researchers concluded that children who grow up with comic books often seem to have a better vocabulary and understanding of how to use verb tenses than those who, all other things being equal, do not read comics. Kerr, S., & Culhane, T. H. (2000). *The humble comic: Possibilities for developing literacy skills and learning content*.
http://www.pearsonlearning.com/correlation/rsp/ResearchPaper_Comic.pdf
- Reading graphic novels may require more complex cognitive skills than the reading of text alone, thus appealing to highly motivated readers, creative kids, and gifted teens. Lavin, M. R. (1998). Comic Books and Graphic Novels for Libraries: What to Buy. *Serials Review*, 24(2), 31–46.
- Boys in particular gravitate toward reading materials that are highly visual. Smith, M. W., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2002). “*Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*”: *Literacy in the Lives of Young Men*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- In a graphic novel, readers must not only decode the words and the illustrations, but must also identify events between the visual sequences. Simmons, T. (2003). Comic Books in My Library? *PNLA Quarterly*, 67(12), p. 20.
- Reading comic books may help to (among others): develop an increased interest in reading, develop language skills and a rich and varied vocabulary, and foster interest in a variety of literary genres. Hill, R. (2004). *The Secret Origin of Good Readers*. <http://www.night-flight.com/secretorigin/SOGR2004.pdf>
- “...there is evidence suggesting that comic book reading can be a conduit to ‘heavier’ reading. In our study, we found that middle school boys who read comic books read more in general than boys who did not read comics, read more books, and enjoyed reading more.” Krashen, S. (2005). The “Decline” of Reading in America, Poverty and Access to Books, and the use of Comics in Encouraging Reading. *Teachers College Record*. http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/decline_of_reading/all.html
- A 2005/2006 International Boys' Schools Coalition (IBSC) Action Research Project, “How Might Graphic Novels Engage Boys in School Reading?,” that included classes from the US, Australia, and South Africa, concluded that “selected graphic novels generally engaged boys in reading.”
http://www.boyschoolcoalition.org/uploaded/Action_Research/IBSCSummary_Graphic_Novels_Di_May2006.pdf

Recommendations for Your Collection

- No Flying, No Tights
 - <http://www.noflyingnotights.com/>
- The Graphic Classroom
 - <http://graphicclassroom.blogspot.com/>
- Kid-Safe Graphic Novels for Your Readers
 - <http://www.graphicnovels.brodart.com/home.htm>
- Comic Books for Young Adults
 - <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/lml/comics/pages/recommended.html>
- Recommended Graphic Novels for Public Libraries
 - <http://my.voyager.net/~sraiteri/graphicnovels.htm>

Professional Journals that Review Graphic Novels

- *Voice of Youth Advocates*
 - <http://www.voya.com/>
- *School Library Journal*
 - <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/index.asp>
- *Publisher's Weekly*
 - <http://www.publishersweekly.com/>
- *Library Journal*
 - <http://www.libraryjournal.com/>

Lesson Plans

- *ReadWriteThink*
 - <http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/index.asp>
- *National Association of Comics Arts Educators*
 - <http://www.teachingcomics.org/resources.php>
- *Diamond Bookshelf*
 - http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/sample_lesson_plans.htm
- *Comics in the Classroom*
 - <http://comicsintheclassroom.net/oolessonplans.htm>

Other Sites Not to Miss

- What Parents/Teens/Teachers & Librarians Want to Know About Comics & Graphic Novels
 - <http://www.informationgoddess.ca/Comics&GraphicNovels/index.htm>
- Graphic Novels in Libraries
 - <http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/graphicnovels.asp>
- Diamond Bookshelf
 - <http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/>
- The Secret Origin of Good Readers: A Resource Book
 - <http://www.night-flight.com/secretorigin/SOGR2004.pdf>
- Comics in the Classroom
 - <http://comicsintheclassroom.net/>
- Kids Love Comics
 - <http://www.kidslovecomics.com>
- The Comic Book Project
 - <http://www.comicbookproject.org/index.html>

Reference Books

- *Boosting Literacy with Graphic Novels*. David Booth & Kathleen Lundy, 2007
- *Building Literacy Connections with Graphic Novels: Page by Page, Panel by Panel*. James Bucky Carter, 2007
- *Developing and Promoting Graphic Novels*. Steve Miller, 2005
- *Getting Graphic! Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy with Preteens and Teens*. Michelle Gorman, 2003
- *Going Graphic: Comics at Work in the Multilingual Classroom*. Stephen Cary, 2004
- *Graphic Novels 101*. Philip Charles Crawford, 2003
- *Graphic Novels in Your Media Center*. Allyson A. W. Lyga, 2004
- *Teaching Visual Literacy*. Nancy Frey & Douglas Fisher, 2008
- *The 101 Best Graphic Novels*. Stephen Weiner, 2001

Curricula Focus

- Social Studies
 - *Graphic History & Biography* by Capstone Press <http://www.capstonepress.com/graphics/>
 - *History Programs* by Learn Well Graphics <http://www.learnwellgraphics.com/>
 - *Edu-Manga Biographies* by Digital Manga Publishing <http://www.dmpbooks.com/>
 - *American History Ink* by Jamestown Education <http://www.jamestowneducation.com>
 - *Great Figures in History and Greek and Roman Mythology* by Ykids <http://www.myykids.com>
 - *Timeline* by Steck Vaughn <http://www.steckvaughn.com/timeline>
 - *300* by Frank Miller & Lynn Varley, 1999
 - *Age of Bronze Volume 1: A Thousand Ships* and *Age of Bronze Volume 2: Sacrifice* by Eric Shanower, 2001, 2005
 - *The Complete Maus: Maus I – A Survivor’s Tale/ My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II - A Survivor’s Tale/ And Here My Troubles Began* by Art Spiegelman, 1996
 - *The Four Immigrants Manga* by Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama, 1999
 - *Fax from Sarajevo* by Joe Kubert, 1998
 - *Palestine* by Joe Sacco, 2002
 - *To Afghanistan and Back: A Graphic Travelogue* by Ted Rall, 2002
 - *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* and *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return* by Marjane Satrapi, 2003, 2004
 - *A Jew In Communist Prague: Loss of Innocence, A Jew In Communist Prague: Adolescence, and A Jew In Communist Prague: Rebellion* by Vittorio Giardino, 1997, 1998
 - *Ethel and Ernest: A True Story* by Raymond Briggs, 1999
 - *King (The Complete Edition)* by Ho Che Anderson, 2005
 - *Comanche Moon, Secret of San Saba: A Tale of Phantoms and Greed in the Spanish Southwest, Lost Cause: John Wesley Hardin, the Taylor-Sutton Feud, and Reconstruction Texas, Indian Lover: Sam Houston & The Cherokees, The Alamo: An Epic Told from Both Sides* by Jack Jackson, 1979, 1989, 1998, 1999, 2002
 - *The Cartoon History of the Universe I, Volumes 1-7, The Cartoon History of the Universe II, Volumes 8-13, The Cartoon History of the Universe III: Volumes 14-19, and Cartoon History of the United States* by Larry Gonick, 1997, 1994, 2002
 - *9-11: September 11, 2001 (Stories to Remember, Vol. 1)*
 - *9-11: September 11, 2001 (Stories to Remember, Vol. 2)*

- Math
 - *The Ciphers Series* by Learn Well Graphics <http://www.learnwellgraphics.com/>
 - *Math Game Series* by Ykids <http://www.myykids.com>
 - *The Cartoon Guide to Statistics* by Larry Gonick & Wollcutt Smith, 1993
- Science
 - *Graphic Science* by Capstone Press <http://www.capstonepress.com/graphics/>
 - *Everyday Science* by Ykids <http://www.myykids.com>
 - *Clan Apis* by Jay Hosler, 2000
 - *Dignifying Science: Stories About Women* by Jim Ottaviani, 2000
 - *Fallout* by Jim Ottaviani, 2001
 - *Two-fisted Science: Stories About Scientists* by Jim Ottaviani, 2001
 - *The Sandwalk Adventures* by Jay Hosler, 2003
 - *The Cartoon Guide to Genetics* by Larry Gonick & Mark Wheelies, 1991
 - *The Cartoon Guide to the Environment* by Larry Gonick & Alice Outwater, 1996
 - *The Cartoon Guide to Physics* by Larry Gonick & Art Huffman, 1991
 - *The Cartoon Guide to Chemistry* by Larry Gonick & Craig Criddle, 2005
- Literature
 - *Graphic Classics* by Eureka Productions <http://www.graphicclassics.com/>
 - *Illustrated Classics* by Saddleback Publishing <http://www.sdlback.com/>
 - *AGS Illustrated Classics* by AGS Publishing
<http://www.agsglobe.com/group.asp?nGroupInfoID=a40320>
 - *Puffin Graphics* by Penguin Group <http://us.penguinclassics.com/>
 - *inZone Books* by Hampton-Brown <http://www.hampton-brown.com/>
 - *Manga Literay Classics* by Ykids <http://www.myykids.com>
 - *Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde* by P. Craig Russell, 1994, 1998
 - *Volume 1: The Selfish Giant/The Star Child*
 - *Volume 2: The Young King/The Remarkable Rocket*
 - *Volume 3: The Birthday of the Infanta*
 - *Volume 4: The Devoted Friend/The Nightingale and the Rose*
 - *Sundiata: A Legend of Africa* by Will Eisner, 2002
- SAT/ACT Vocabulary-Building Manga by Kaplan and TOKYOPOP
- Music
 - *The Magic Flute* by P. Craig Russell, 1990
 - *The Ring of the Nibelung Volume 1: The Rhinegold & The Valkyrie* and *The Ring of the Nibelung Volume 2: Siegfried & Gotterdammerung: The Twilight of the Gods* by P. Craig Russell, 2002
- Social Issues
 - *I Think I Was An Alcoholic...* by John Callahan, 1993
 - *Our Cancer Year* by Harvey Pekar, Joyce Brabner, & Frank Stack, 1994
 - *The Tale of One Bad Rat* by Brian Talbot, 1995
 - *The Amazing "True" Story of a Teenage Single Mom* by Katherine Arnoldi, 1998
 - *Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned* by Judd Winick, 2000
 - *Epileptic* by David B, 2005