



the association of booksellers for children

Building a Great Graphic Novel Section for Kids

Best practices

Shelving

ABC strongly recommends separating your graphic offerings into under 12 and 12 + sections, and making sure they are shelved with some distance in between. If space permits, many stores have an Under 12, YA, and Adult sections, as well as a separate rack for shelving for Manga, which can take up a lot of space.

Picking a Good Graphic Title for Bookstores



Because bookstores rarely have the space to be comprehensive, and because the customer base may not be the same specialized group as a traditional comic store customer, you need to be selective. Because this is an emerging category for many bookstores, there are plenty of backlist treasures to be found. Don't worry about frontlist if you're just starting. We recommend that you start with key titles which have been vetted for bookstores, like the list below, or the excellent list from Diamond Kids, and then expand from there, using the following tools:

- **Customer input**-your customers will know more than you about this category. Ask questions. Let them help you. Their input is worth its weight in gold. Start an advisory group or a reading group to help you.
- **Rep picks**-make sure your reps come prepared with their top 3 graphic titles

- **Your own instinct as a buyer** – If you like the art, particularly in the younger titles, go for it. Just like picture books.
- **Reliable Resources and Reviews** – Make good use of the online resources that have done a fantastic job of culling the herd so you don't have to. Our favorites are: **No Flying, No Tights**, and **Good Comics for Kids**, listed below.

Handling Series Titles

Series titles are a real issue in this category, and if you have limited space here's what we suggest: Buy the first 6 or 8 titles and the last 1 or 2 in a series you want to try. Then, monitor your sales, and when you see the last book of the early numbers go, re-order it and the next 2 or 3. Then you can build your series following in that way. You may also want to bring in a couple of extra copies of the first book in a series, which will help build readership as you suggest new titles to hungry readers.

Fickle Readership, especially in the YA Category

This is a very fast-moving category, and we don't have great backlist information as of yet for our bookstore sales model. If you see a series die suddenly, don't waste any time returning it for something new. If you have a GN Advisory Panel or Reading Group, they will tell you what they think is done.

Top 12 for Under 12



Babymouse series, by Jennifer and Matt Holm, Random House ISBN-13: 978-0375832291 Babymouse is a sassy upper elementary-aged mouse with plenty of opinions on school, friends, fashion, and more. Lots of girl appeal.

Bone series, by Jeff Smith, Scholastic (individual volumes) and Cartoon Books (collected edition) ISBN-13: 978-1888963144 The 9-volume Bone series is an acknowledged masterpiece. A funny, perceptive, sweeping epic about three goofy-looking cousins who get lost in a mysterious forest and must help a young girl save her homeland.

Calvin & Hobbes, by Bill Waterson, Andrews McMeel. This core series which is most often shelved in the humor section deserves a spot in any Kids GN section where it will find a

whole new and very devoted readership. The series follows the humorous antics of Calvin, an imaginative six-year old boy, and Hobbes, his energetic and sardonic—albeit stuffed—tiger.

Johnny Boo, by James Kochalka, Top Shelf ISBN-13: 978-1603090131 A very cute young readers' comic about two ghosts and a monster, all of whom love ice cream! Second volume, **Twinkle Power**, also now available: ISBN: 978-1-60309-015-5

Korgi, by Christian Slade, Top Shelf ISBN-13: 978-1891830907 The charming wordless tale of an elfin girl and her trusted corgi, who must escape the clutches of a fiendish ogre. Beautiful black-and-white art.

Lions, Tigers, and Bears by Mike Bullock, Image ISBN-13: 978-1582409306 The tale of a little boy whose stuffed animals come to life and take him on a wild adventure. Skews toward younger elementary.

Magic Pickle series, by Scott Morse, Scholastic ISBN-13: 978-0439879958 Magic Pickle is a flying kosher dill secret weapon. This series chronicles his adventures with Jo Jo Wigman, an intrepid grade-schooler. Be prepared for vegetable puns galore.

Pokémon graphic novel series, by Toshihiro Ono, Viz ISBN-13: 978-1569313787 Follows the quest of the main character, Ash Ketchum, a Pokémon Master in training, as he and a small group of friends travel around the world of Pokémon.

Otto's Orange Day, by Frank Cammuso and Jay Lynch ISBN: 978-0979923814 Otto makes a wish and when it comes true, he discovers that he may have gone too far! Part of the **Toon Books** collection, by various artists. Toon Books is a new imprint specializing in comics for beginning readers (www.toon-books.com) We love the whole series:

Benny and Penny, by Geoffrey Hayes ISBN: 978-0979923807 A tale of sibling rivalry, featuring two spunky mice.

Jack and the Box, by Art Spiegelman ISBN: 978-0-9799238-3-8 A young child gets a very unusual present – it talks back!

Mo and Jo, by Jay Lynch and Dean Haspiel ISBN: 978-0-9799238-5-2 Two bickering superhero siblings must learn to work together when they face a nefarious villain.

Silly Lilly, by Agnes Rosenstiehl ISBN: 978-0979923821 A deceptively simple story about the four seasons, aimed at the earliest beginning readers.

Stinky, by Eleanor Davis ISBN: 978-0-9799238-4-5 A monster who is afraid of humans must face his fears when a young kid starts playing in his swamp.



Sardine in Outer Space series, by Joann Sfarr and Emanuel Guibert, First Second ISBN-13: 978-1596431263 Pirates and villains in outer space battle it out, led by the tiny, fearless Sardine, who cruises the galaxy in the spaceship Huckleberry. Hilarious action adventure.

Sonic the Hedgehog Archives series, by various, Archie Comics ISBN-13: 978-1879794207 Gag humor galore in these comics based on the popular videogame. Great for struggling readers.

Tintin, by Herge, Little Brown ISBN-13: 978-0316359405 The classic series featuring intrepid Tintin, his dog Snowy, and their escapades chasing bad guys around the world. Renowned for its clean artwork and timeless adventure.

Yam, by Corey Barba, Top Shelf ISBN-13: 978-1603090148 A wordless young readers' graphic novel about a little girl's adventures in a fantastical landscape. Based on a popular Nickelodeon Magazine comic strip.

Top 12 for 12+

Amulet, by Kazu Kibuishi, Scholastic 978-0439846806 A gripping tale of two siblings who must save their mother, who is dragged into an underground world filled with monsters, robots, and a particularly mysterious old man. Phenomenal artwork.

Coraline, The Graphic Novel, by Neil Gaiman, HarperCollins, ISBN-13: 978-0060825430. When Coraline steps through a door in her family's new house, she finds another house, strangely similar to her own (only better). At first, things seem marvelous. But there's another mother there and another father, and they want her to stay and be their little girl. They want to change her and never let her go.

The Courageous Princess, by Rod Espinosa, Dark Horse ISBN-13: 978-1593077198 A plucky princess makes a dangerous trip across the kingdom with only a hedgehog to help her. Lots of girl appeal.

Daniel X: Alien Hunter, by James Patterson, illustrated by Leopold Gout ISBN-13: 978-0316004251. After his parents' brutal murder, Daniel assumed his father's role as Alien Hunter. With his supreme abilities, like being able to shape-shift



and conjure up long-dead family members, Daniel is ready to take on the scum of the universe.

Knights of the Lunch Table, by Frank Cammuso, Scholastic ISBN 978-0439903226 Artie King is a new student at Camelot Middle School, trying to mind his own business – so how does he end up facing off against the school bully in an epic Dodgeball game?

Tiny Tyrant, by Lewis Trondheim, First Second ISBN-13: 978-1596430945 This tongue-in-cheek series chronicles the misadventures of a very spoiled little monarch.

To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel - By Siena and Mark Siegel ISBN-13: 978-0689867477 Through one dancer's experiences during the 1970s and '80s, readers are introduced to an important period in the world of ballet and are given an inspiring message about the dedication required to become a ballerina.

Mouse Guard - By David Petersen ISBN-13: 978-1932386578 The Mouse Guard protects its fellow creatures and patrols the passageways used between the villages of the Mouse Territories. In this tale, three members of the guard investigate the disappearance of a traveling grain merchant.

Redwall: the Graphic Novel – by Brian Jacques, Penguin, ISBN-13: 978-0399244810 The classic fantasy adventure that began the Redwall phenomenon is finally available in a cool graphic format.

Rapunzel's Revenge, by Shannon Hale ISBN: 978-1599900704 Rapunzel teams up with Jack (of Beanstalk fame) in this swashbuckling, radical re-imagining of the classic fairy tale, set in a very wild Wild West.

Sabrina the Teenage Witch, by Tania del Rio, Archie Comics ISBN-13: 978-1879794191 A sprightly, original adaptation of the classic TV's teen witch. Tween girls will love the dialogue and plots.

Stormbreaker graphic novel, by Anthony Horowitz, Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0399246333 A manga-inflected graphic novel, based on the movie, based on the Alex Rider series. Thrill-a-second plotline will appeal to adventure lovers.

Manga to start with



Kilala Princess, by Rika Tanaka, Tokyopop ISBN-13: 978-1598167672 A girl-oriented manga about teenager Kilala, who has to save her best friend Erica with some help from the Disney Princesses and a handsome boy named Rei, along with her peculiar pet Tippe. (12+)

Kingdom Hearts, by Shiro Amano, Tokyopop ISBN-13: 978-1598162196 A popular manga series based on an even more popular videogame, following the story of a young boy, who must fight an epic battle against the darkness with the help of Donald Duck, Goofy, and other classic Disney characters. (12+)

Dragonball Z - By Akira Toriyama ISBN-13: 978-1569319307 Printed in the original Japanese right-to-left format, here is the first volume adventure in this runaway hit series. Goku discovers that his Saiyan enemy Raditz is really his brother! When Goku tries to rescue his son, Gohan, from Raditz, the adventure turns fatal. (14+)

Naruto - By Masashi Kishimoto ISBN-13: 978-1569319000 Scorned orphan Naruto wants to become the greatest ninja the village has ever seen, but first he must pass the difficult test to enter the Ninja Academy; deal with his rival, Konohamaru; and learn to get along with his new classmates, Sasuke and Sakura. (14+)

Key Definitions

Manga: Literally the Japanese word for comic book. Typically refers to a unique Asian style of trade paperback comics coming from Japan, Korea, and China. Usually smaller in trim, in black and white, and read right to left instead of the standard left to right.

Graphic Novel: A comic book that is longer in format than the usual comic book pamphlet. Now used to describe a large category in bookstores that includes comic bind-ups, original novels written in graphic form, manga series, and other distinct graphic formats. ***The key word here is format.*** You can find any genre—mystery, historical fiction, action, romance—in a graphic form.

Anime: The Japanese word for animation. Now associated with the distinct art style of Japanese animation.

Print Resources



Understanding Comics, by Scott McCloud, Harper Collins ISBN: 978-0060976255 McCloud, in an incredibly accessible style, explains the details of how comics work: how they're composed, read and understood. More than just a book about comics, this gets to the heart of how we deal with visual languages in general. A great primer for understanding the appeal of this category.



Getting Graphic! Comics for Kids, by Michele Gorman, Linworth Publishing ISBN: 978-1586833275 A comprehensive resource for selecting graphic novels for younger readers! Every public library and elementary school library needs a copy of this easy-to-use book.

Online Resources

No Flying No Tights

An excellent site about non-superhero comics, founded by Robin Brenner, a MA librarian and manga expert. The Sidekicks! section of the site is specifically for the youngest readers.

www.noflyingnotights.com

Diamond Bookshelf

an e-newsletter and archive about graphic novels in schools and libraries

<http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com>

Good Comics for Kids

a group blog authored by librarians, publishing insiders, and book journalists. Lively, highly informative, and regularly updated.

www.goodcomicsforkids.com

Awards & Selection Lists

The Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards

Known as the “Eisners”, the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards are considered the "Oscars" of the comic book industry. They celebrate the “best of the best” in the comics publishing industry each year.

www.comic-con.org/cci/cci_eisners_main.shtml

YALSA’s Great Graphic Novels for Teens List

Selected annually, this list of recommended graphic novels and illustrated nonfiction is selected by a committee of librarians for young people between the ages of 12 and 18. A great source for dependably good material to grow your GN selections.

www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm

COMIC VOCABULARY

ANIME: The Japanese word for "animation" has become associated with Japan's unique style of animated films and television. Anime encompasses many different genres and is typically either adapted from or into manga.

ARTIST: Usually refers to the illustrator of a comic. Artists are divided among three specific groups: **penciler**, **inker**, and **colorist**. Traditionally, the three tasks were handled by three separate individuals, but today, it is becoming more and more common for a particular title to have one artist do all three tasks, or a combination of any two.

CAPTIONS: Text-filled boxes that typically narrate a comic's story. Originally, captions served to establish setting or to introduce new story elements and transitions. Recently, caption boxes have been adapted to convey the protagonist's internal monologue, adding an element of prose's first-person narration.



from Watchmen

COLLECTED EDITION: Refers to a **trade paperback** or **digest** that collects individual issues of a comic book series into a bound volume.

COMIC BOOK/COMICS: Used generically in the industry and throughout this catalog to refer to any sort of literature that combines story and art, whether as an **ongoing series**, **mini-series**, **maxi-series**, **graphic novel**, or other format.

CONTINUITY: The "timeline" of most **ongoing** comic book stories. All that has happened prior to a particular issue is adhered to in order to tell a cohesive story over many years. Continuity often also encompasses other titles that may be related to the title at hand. For example, if Superman and Batman have previously met, then they are considered to have interlinked continuity – what has happened in Superman's world has happened in Batman's as well. (See **Retcon**.)

CREATORS: A term used to describe the **writers** and **artists** responsible for the production of a particular comic or graphic novel. Often times, a comic is the collaborative work of a writer and a team of artists, though it is common for one person to create an entire work single-handedly (e.g., Frank Miller's *Sin City*).

CROSSOVER: A story that continues from one comic book title to a separate title, usually involving the lead character(s) of each one appearing in both for the duration of the story. Historically, such a story will showcase the exploits of two popular heroes battling a common enemy. Sometimes crossovers can even involve characters from rival publishing companies, as when DC Comics and Marvel co-published *JLA/Avengers*, which united their two major super-hero teams for one story.

DIGEST: A collected edition that is reprinted at a smaller scale than a **trade paperback** (which is reprinted at the same size as the original comic). A digest typically measures 4" x 5" and thus fits better on a traditional bookshelf...and in a small reader's hands!



EISNER AWARDS: Familiarly known as "the Eisners," the annual Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards recognize the finest stories, publications, and creators in the medium. The awards are named for the late Will Eisner, the writer/artist credited with creating and popularizing the storytelling format of the **graphic novel**.

GOLDEN AGE: The period of time during the 1930s and 1940s is generally considered to be comics' **Golden Age**. Books published during this period are some of the most sought after and historic. The period gave birth to some of comics' most enduring characters like Superman, Batman, and Captain America.

GRAPHIC NOVEL: A comic book that is longer in format than the usual "pamphlet," and typically contains a complete story unto itself. Graphic novels usually have higher production values than the typical stapled comic; i.e. hardcover volumes, squarebound, or dust-jacketed. Although a graphic novel usually stands on its own as a complete story, it is possible to have an **ongoing series** or **limited series** of graphic novels telling a single story or series of related stories.

HARVEY AWARDS: The Harveys are unique among awards given in the comics medium in that they are voted on entirely by professionals in the industry, meaning that winners are honored for excellence by their peers. This prestigious award is named after Harvey Kurtzman, co-founder of *MAD Magazine* and a seminal influence in the development of comics as a versatile storytelling vehicle.

INDEPENDENT/INDIE:

Used to identify non-mainstream comics, independent comics are not tied to a major publisher and can encompass a vast number of genres. Usually, the term is associated with a particular style of storytelling and art not found in traditional super-hero comics.



INKER: The artist who uses black ink to enhance the initial penciled artwork. Inks are used to add depth and shadow to the images.

LETTERER: Responsible for placing and filling the **word balloons** and **captions** over the finished artwork.

LIMITED SERIES: A mini-series or maxi-series.

MAINSTREAM: Comics that appeal to the broadest fan base. In the comic book industry, that fan base is predominately interested in titles that feature super-heroes.

MANGA: Literally the Japanese word for "comic book," manga typically refers to a uniquely Asian style of **trade paperbacks** from Japan, Korea, and China. **Manga** is usually smaller than traditional **graphic novels** (often **digest-sized**) and printed in black & white. Also referred to as **manhwa**.



MANHWA: Another term that refers to Asian styled comic books. The term is most identified with Korean **manga**.

MAXI-SERIES: A comic book series that is scheduled to run only a certain number of issues (usually more than six), and then end. An analogy would a television program such as *Revelations*.

MINI-SERIES: A comic book series that is scheduled to run only a certain number of issues (usually six or fewer), and then end. An analogy would a television program such as *The 4400*.

ONGOING: Usually used in conjunction with "series." This implies a comic book series that has no ending planned and will continue until sales dictate its cancellation. An example is *Action Comics*, published by DC Comics, a series that has been published nearly continuously since 1938. Ongoing series can have a frequency from weekly to semiannually. Most are monthly or bimonthly.

ORIGIN: A character's beginnings. Origins set up the primary motivation for a super-hero's or super-villain's actions.



from All-Star Superman Volume 1

PAMPHLET: Used by some to describe the slim, periodical-like format of original comic books.



from Melting Volume 1

PANELS: The basic unit of storytelling in a comic book. Usually square or rectangular, panels frame the action of a comic book and graphic novel. The placement and construction of panels on a page can represent anything from movement to time.

PENCILER: Responsible for the initial layout of a comic's art. Provides the basis for the rest of the book's art, i.e. inks, colors, etc.

REUBEN AWARDS: Voted on and presented by the National Cartoonists Society, the **Reuben Award** is bestowed upon illustrators in numerous categories, including comic strips, comic books, and animation. Winners have included many of the world's most famous cartoonists, including Charles Schultz (*Peanuts*), Scott Adams (*Dilbert*), and Will Eisner (*The Spirit*, and the man for whom comics' coveted **Eisner Award** is named). The Reubens are named for legendary cartoonist Rube Goldberg, who founded the Society.

RETCON: A word made up from the words "retrospective continuity." Refers to a newly published story that changes or contradicts already-known details of a particular character's past. The new story takes precedence not only for all future stories, but also for all previous stories.

SHOJO: Genre of **manga** typically aimed at young teenage girls, usually involving drama and romance.

SILVER AGE: The period of time during the 1950s and 1960s is generally considered to be comics' **Silver Age**. During this time, comics saw a resurgence in popularity and gave birth to such popular characters as Spider-Man, the X-Men, and the modern Flash.

SPLASH PAGE: A comic book page not broken up into separate panels, in which the artwork takes up the majority of the space.



from Invincible Volume 1

STORY ARC: A story arc is a specific story told in an **ongoing** series over a course of many issues. The story arc will often have its own title, with each issue being a "chapter."

SUPER-HERO: The genre most associated with "mainstream comics."

TRADE PAPERBACK: A squarebound edition that collects and reprints **mini-series**, **maxi-series**, or **story arcs** in this sturdier format, giving readers a complete story at one time, rather than over a period of months. Sometimes, a trade paperback may collect stories that are not interconnected, but rather are related by some theme. Many trade paperbacks also contain additional material not available in the original serialization, such as an introduction or foreword, or character sketches, much like "DVD extras."



from Usagi Yojimbo Double

WORD BALLOONS: The text-filled "bubbles" that contain a story's spoken dialogue.

WRITER: Responsible for the story's script to be interpreted by the artist team. The writer plots the story, provides the dialogue, and lays the foundation for the book.