HELPFUL RESOURCES ABOUT GRAPHIC NOVELS

By Kat Kan for Brodart Books & Library Services

Websites

First Second Books
http://www.firstsecondbooks.com
Links on this page take readers to blog entries that sometimes cover cool behind-the-scenes publishing information, and also to some serialized webcomics.

No Flying, No Tights - Graphic Novel Reviews for Teens
http://www.noflyingnotights.com
Robin Brenner began writing about graphic novels on a website she created for a library school class. Now teens and librarians can go to her colorful and fun site to get her reviews and opinions. Robin features a section for younger readers, which is a great source of titles suitable for elementary and younger middle school students. She also includes links to various blogs for more comics and library information.

TOON Books
http://www.toon-books.com
Using the links on this page, teachers will find lesson plans using the TOON Books titles, as well as ideas for other classroom activities, such as Readers’ Theater, all for grades K-4. Other links lead to activities for children, including a cartoon maker, TOON Book audio readers in several different languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese), and more.

Good Comics for Kids
http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/goodcomicsforkids
This is a team blog run by Brigid Alverson, with such members/posters as Robin Brenner, Eva Volin, Mike Pawuk, and others, devoted to comics and graphic novels for children and teens. It’s updated almost daily and includes reviews, links to great sites, commentary, interviews with comics creators, and more.

PW Comics Week
Subscribe to this weekly newsletter from Publishers Weekly here: http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/email-subscriptions/index.html
PW Comics Week includes news items and reviews.

The Comic Book Project
http://www.comicbookproject.org
Started by Dr. Michael Bitz at Columbia University, this program provides materials for teachers who want to set up afterschool programs for students. “The goal of the project is to help children forge an alternative pathway to literacy by writing, designing, and publishing original comic books.”

Diamond Bookshelf
http://www.diamondbookshelf.com
This is the website for Diamond Books, a part of Diamond Comics Distributors. Here you’ll find comics news, reviews, lesson plans, and helpful articles, as well as links to more sites.

Reading With Pictures
www.readingwithpictures.org
Reading With Pictures is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting comics in schools to help with literacy. (Note: Kat Kan serves on the Board of Directors.) The website provides Educator Resources, including lesson plans and recommended reading lists. RWP sponsors Comics Out Loud, an annual day to promote comics in schools every April (in 2014 it is
scheduled for April 23), and provides free downloadable aids for teachers and librarians (free registration is required).

**News and Reviews Sites**

**http://www.comicbookresources.com**
This site has regular columns, movie news, interviews, and comics news.

**http://www.icv2.com**
This daily news website is aimed at retailers of comics, games, and toy specialty shops, but the industry news is often of interest to librarians as well. The site also provides reviews of graphic novels, manga, and anime.

**http://www.newsarama.com**
This site also includes news and interviews as well as some columns that might be of interest. It's very superhero-centric.

**http://www.comicsbeat.com**
This is Heidi MacDonald's blog, The Beat, which covers news about comics and includes library-related items. It's updated at least daily. One of her regular contributors, Torsten Adair, has an MLS and attends most ALA Annual conferences.

**http://www.comicsreporter.com**
Tom Spurgeon blogs about comics daily, and he includes a lot of library-related news. His links can lead you to interesting articles and blogs and keep you reading for hours. He won an Eisner Award in 2010, for best comics journalism. His Sunday interviews with comics people are wonderfully informative.

**http://www.graphicnovelreporter.com**
This monthly e-newsletter includes reviews, interviews, polls, lists of recommended titles, and other useful information about graphic novels.

**http://robot6.comicbookresources.com**
This blog site features a number of regular weekly columns as well as daily features that provide up-to-the-minute news about comics and comics-related media (movies, TV series, etc.).

**http://comicsworthreading.com**
Johanna Draper Carlson and Ed Sizemore share reviewing duties at this site. They cover graphic novels, comic books, manga, movies, TV, DVDs, and also provide cogent commentary on various issues regarding the comics industry.

**Sequential Tart**

**http://www.sequentialtart.com**
This online magazine is devoted to comics by and about women. It's definitely aimed at adult readers rather than children or teens, but some of the articles are good resources for libraries.

**Graphic Novels for Libraries**

**https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/gn4lib/info**
Librarian Steve Miller started this listserv in 1999. It’s open to librarians and other professionals connected with graphic novels and libraries. Many of the well-known professionals who write for the library world are members. Many members are librarians who are just beginning to acquire graphic novels for their collections. If you go to the site, you can read previous posts, and you can also sign up and join in the discussion. Members consider all questions posted and give advice and opinions; it’s lots of fun. In October 2007, the consensus opinion of the members was to move the list; it’s now hosted at yahoogroups.com. Anyone who wishes to subscribe can send an email to: **GNLIB-L-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**; you can either subscribe to the list itself
without setting up a Yahoo ID, or you can become a full member with access to archives and other material (reviews, lists, etc.) by using an established Yahoo ID or by creating one.

In recent years, podcasts became very popular, and there are a lot of comics podcasts vying for peoples’ time. Check these links for some recommended podcasts:
https://player.fm/features/comics - links to comics podcasts, with a helpful “explicit” icon to note those using strong language
http://www.comicspodcasts.com – Comics Podcast Network links to a whole bunch of comics podcasts that people can explore

I generally spend at least two hours every day going through all the sites I've listed, to catch up on news and see what's new. What a fun way to work, yes?

Most comics publishers also have websites, you can usually use their company names to search the Internet to find their sites.

BOOKS

Bitz, who founded the Comic Book Project, writes about one after-school comics club in a New York City high school, highlighting the lives and creations of the students involved in the club and exploring their passion for manga, Japanese comics.

Brenner provides lots of cultural and other information for any librarian who wants to learn about manga and anime. She explains the visual symbols, Japanese history, and gives recommended titles, programming ideas, and lots more. Her book was nominated for a 2008 Eisner Award.

Editor Carter presents essays by educators on using graphic novels in the language arts classroom; ideas range from pairing graphic novels with classics to using graphic novel adaptations of classics, to using superhero comics to encourage student participation in learning.

Cary, a second language learner specialist, provides ideas on using comics, cartoons, and graphic novels for ESL teachers and their students. He addresses concerns about appropriateness of content and provides a list of suggested titles; he also includes some student-created comics.

While focusing only on actual monograph graphic novels, Goldsmith discusses practical matters such as cataloging and shelving them and dealing with intellectual freedom challenges.

Combines lots of practical advice for librarians on how to do readers’ advisory on graphic novels for all age groups with descriptions of many titles. Her list of “Books to Know” gives general age recommendations and is divided by genres. Her appendix, “A Short Course for the Advisor New to Graphic Novels,” is especially helpful for those who want to learn more about the format.
This is basically an annotated bibliography of books that are suitable for younger readers, mostly in the ages 8-12 range. It includes an original comics story by Jimmy Gownley, starring his Amelia Rules! cast.

This book is useful for schools, with ideas for using graphic novels in the curriculum; it also includes information on collection development, promotion and programming, and lists of recommended titles for intermediate and high school collections.

This collection of essays includes information on practical issues in collecting graphic novels in libraries, on censorship, graphic novels in academic libraries, international graphic novels, and four growing subject areas: African American interest, Latino/a interest, gay/lesbian interest, and religious themes.

This volume of The Reference Shelf series collects articles from newspapers and scholarly journals about graphic novels and comics books and their place in libraries and schools, with a focus on their value as literature.

This book collects 29 essays on graphic novels and comics in all kinds of libraries (with a strong focus on academic libraries), on who reads graphic novels, on how to shelve and catalog them, and includes several essays on nomenclature.

This is an inclusive resource for school librarians, not only for getting graphic novels into the school library, but also for using them in teaching reading.

This is one of the classic titles explaining comics, and it has been in print for 20 years (and counting).

Miller provides information on collection development and lots of program ideas to promote the use of graphic novels in the libraries. He also provides nitty-gritty details on how to maintain the library’s graphic novel collection.

This is just what the subtitle says, a guide to graphic novels and manga, organized by genre. The introduction is done as a comic book, which is delightful.

Serchay, David S. *The Librarian’s Guide to Graphic Novels for Adults.* Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2010. 320pp. $65.00. 978-1-55570-662-3. In this book, Serchay provides information on why libraries should have graphic novels for adults, explores the many genres, and discusses the many practical issues of building and maintaining a graphic novel collection. He also includes a lengthy bibliography of recommended titles for adults.


Thompson, Jason. *Manga: The Complete Guide.* Del Rey Manga, 2007. 556pp. $19.95. 978-0-345-48590-8. Manga expert Thompson reviews more than 900 Japanese manga series that have been published in the U.S. over the years. His reviews include age guidelines that are fairly accurate, and a quality rating system with which I mostly agree. He’s been updating his manga reviews at [www.animenewsnetwork.com/house-of-100-manga](http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/house-of-100-manga).

UXL Graphic Novelists. Edited by Tom Pendergast and Sara Pendergast. Thomson Gale, 2006. 3 vols. $165.00. 1-4144-0440-9 (set). This set includes biographical essays about 75 comics creators who produce work that children and teens enjoy. Some manga creators are included. Note: I contributed several essays to this work and also helped to select the 75 creators to be included.


**Articles Justifying Graphic Novels in Libraries**

After all the years since the 2002 YALSA preconference, “Getting Graphic @ the Library,” one would think librarians shouldn’t have to justify getting graphic novels, but some librarians still face opposition from administrators, trustees, and members of the public they serve. School librarians still have to convince their administrators, teachers, and parents. These articles may provide some help.


The January-February 2013 issue of Knowledge Quest, the official journal of the American Association of School Librarians, was devoted to coverage of comics and graphic novels in schools and libraries.

In addition, Graphic Novels and Comic Books: The Reference Shelf, listed above in the BOOKS section, includes a number of articles that can be used for justification of adding comics and graphic novels to school and public library collections.

GENERAL ARTICLES


[https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/libraries-and-culture/v047/47.4.tilley.pdf](https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/libraries-and-culture/v047/47.4.tilley.pdf)


**ARTICLES FOR SCHOOLS** 


Cohen, Lisa S. “But This Book Has Pictures! The Case for Graphic Novels in an AP Classroom.” CollegeBoard AP Central, accessed 10/03/2015 11:04 p.m. 


[www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/328?articleID=74165](http://www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/328?articleID=74165)

[www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/182?articleID=135656](http://www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/182?articleID=135656)


[www.graphicnovelreporter.com/blog/archives/201212](http://www.graphicnovelreporter.com/blog/archives/201212)

**Magazines**
Just about every professional library journal includes graphic novel reviews, including Booklist, School Library Journal, Library Journal, Library Media Connection, and Voice of Youth Advocates. VOYA also has the longest-running column devoted to graphic novels in the library media, "Graphically Speaking," written by Kat Kan. This column has been appearing in the magazine since 1994.

**The ICv2 Guide** comes out monthly from the folks at ICv2, and the monthly issues rotate coverage from graphic novels to manga/anime to games. Each issue includes reviews, many of which are written by librarians. This is a good source for manga and anime reviews.

**Graphic Novel Lesson Plans and Activities**
The following sites have lots of information for teachers, librarians, and parents.

Association for Library Service to Children Graphic Novel Reading Lists 2016
[www.ala.org/alsc/graphicnovels2016](http://www.ala.org/alsc/graphicnovels2016)
These lists include recommended, core titles for libraries, but parents can use them as reading lists. There are 3 lists: K-2nd, 3rd-5th, and 6th-8th.

Brodart Graphic Novel page
This page includes all the recommended graphic novels lists Kat Kan has created for Brodart Books & Library Services. The lists will be updated for summer 2016.

Diamond Bookshelf
[www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/163](http://www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/163)
This is a newsletter produced by Diamond Comics Distributors, and includes booklists, interviews with comics creators, lesson plans from Dr. Katie Monnin, and more.

Graphic Novels Educators’ Guides: Art and Text Unite
[www.randomhousekids.com/media/activities/GraphicNovels_EducatorGd_15_WEB.pdf](http://www.randomhousekids.com/media/activities/GraphicNovels_EducatorGd_15_WEB.pdf)
Reading and teaching expert Teri Lesesne created this guide for teachers using graphic novels published by Random House.

Lerner Graphic Universe – Teaching Graphic Universe
This link brings you to a pdf of a 20-page teaching guide for use with the Graphic Universe Mythology series and Twisted Journeys series.

Reading With Pictures
[www.readingwithpictures.org](http://www.readingwithpictures.org)
This is the website for the nonprofit organization that works to get comics into schools and libraries. On this page you will find a link to the pdf of the 146-page teaching guide with lesson plans for every story in the book *Reading With Pictures: Comics That Make Kids Smarter.*

Scholastic Graphix
[www.scholastic.com/graphix](http://www.scholastic.com/graphix)
This is the graphic novel imprint for Scholastic Books. On this page you will find tutorials on drawing, making comics, and more. You can also find the link to the pdf, "Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom.”
Teaching with Comics and Illustrated Novels: A Guide for Parents, Librarians, and Educators
This guide was developed by Katie Monnin for AMP! Comics for Kids.

TOON Books
www.toon-books.com
Click on the tab “Just for Kids” to find TOON Books online that you can read aloud, or listen to the stories in English and several foreign languages, including Spanish, French, Russian, and Chinese. You can also find video read-alongs for some TOON Books, along with online cartoon makers, and more.

Young Adult Library Services Association Great Graphic Novels for Teens
http://www.ala.org/yalsa/2016-great-graphic-novels-teens
This is an annual list, begun in 2007, of graphic novels recommended for teen readers. Some will be more adult in content. The 2016 list includes 112 titles.

Your Life in Comics: 100 Things for Guys to Write and Draw – Teacher’s Guide
Bill Zimmerman’s teacher’s guide provides ideas on how to use his book to work with students so they can create comics. While his book’s title focuses on “guys,” the teacher’s guide advocates using the book with all students.