



It's hard to believe now, but comics used to be the black sheep of reading! This powerful medium was once synonymous with juvenile delinquency and bad reading habits. But today, they're at the center of pop culture. Just because graphic novels are popular, that doesn't mean everyone understands how they can benefit libraries. Don't fear, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is here! We'll help you make the most of this incredible creative medium for all of your patrons!

# Comics – Start Here!

**An introduction to graphic novels for librarians looking to start, expand, or just better understand comic book collections.**

## Comics & Graphic Novels – What's the Difference?

For the most part, comics and graphic novels are the same thing, and the difference in name has more to do with marketing than it does with content.

From a physical point of view, the most important difference is that **graphic novels** appear in a book format, whereas comics can be thought of as **comic books** which are shorter, magazine style publications or the briefer **comic strips** that appear in a newspaper or online.

Of course, everybody knows the important part isn't the physical, but what's inside! Within those covers, graphic novels use the **language of comics** – which Scott McCloud defines as “the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea.” In other words, comics and graphic novels are just labels. But since we're talking to professionals who are stocking books, we'll use the label graphic novel from here forward!

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# Comics Are For Everybody!

Graphic novels are one of the fastest growing publishing categories, which means readers want more and more of them! It's also important to understand that graphic novels aren't a **genre**, they're a category of books that includes many genres! This includes more traditional comics genres like superheroes, science fiction, fantasy, humor, and horror, to real-life subjects like memoir, journalism, biography, and even literary fiction.

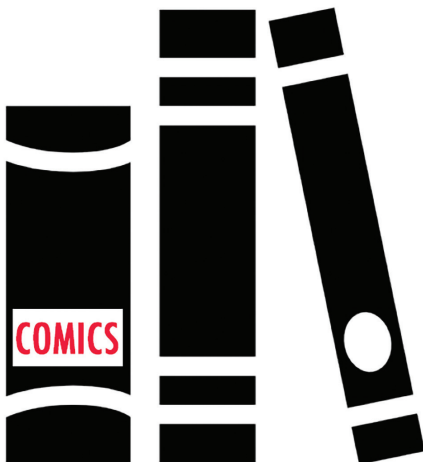
The same is true of **manga**, or comics originating in Japan and now making a huge impact in the United States thanks to the popularity of **anime**, or the animated adaptations of the original comics. In Japan, manga is a huge category, with works covering everything from kids adventures to wine tasting, cooking and golf.

This means there's no one-size-fits-all solution to building a graphic novel collection. While this may sound frustrating at first, it means that this medium can speak to everyone in your library, from the youngest patron to the most experienced, and everyone in between!

Librarians know comics are popular, and many librarians are avid comic book readers themselves. But with a rich history of characters that exist in hundreds of incarnations, and books that run the gamut from appealing to kids to exceptionally mature, shelving and cataloging can go from nuanced to nightmarish. That's why CBLDF teamed up with a few brilliant graduate students from iWashington to collect data from librarians on their best practices and potential problems, and developed a resource that can help! Let's get started!

## Cataloging Recommendations

If you have to interfile comics include a "COMICS" sticker on the spine to make them easier for patrons to locate.



### Where to Put Them?

Shelf browsing is a vital part of circulating comics. **We recommend that comics be collected into their own section, sorted by title and/or character as appropriate, with labeling and signage.** Shelving by author has the potential of breaking up runs of stories, since the Big Two often change authors in the middle of a story run.

Exceptions could be made for authors who are individually well-known, such as Neil Gaiman, G. Willow Wilson, or Gail Simone, however these exceptions should be rare and chosen carefully.

# Helpful Definitions:

**Comics:** A visual narrative using pictures and often words arranged to tell a story, for any age group and in any genre. This resource is designed specifically to address print comics.

**Manga/Manhwa:** Comics from Japan or Korea, respectively, with a distinctive art style. Intended for all age groups, from children to adults.

**Issue:** A single issue, magazine type publication generally about 22 pages. Sometimes referred to as a 'floppy' because of its thin, soft cover construction.

**Volume/Trade:** A volume collects a certain number of issues into a trade paperback book. For example, volume 1 of a comic may collect issues #1-6.

**Title and Subtitle:** Many comics include both a title and a subtitle. To ensure access, it is important to include the entire title and subtitle in a series.

**Reboot:** A reboot is a re-imagining of a character or story that already exists, usually with the participation of a new creative team. However, just because a different writer or artist is working with an established character, doesn't mean it is necessarily a reboot.

**The Big Two:** Marvel and DC are the two biggest comics publishing companies. Both Marvel and DC have several imprints, smaller publishing houses that can often have a more focused line of books.

**Creative Team:** Collectively, the individuals who worked on a particular comic story, which could include writer, artist/illustrator, penciller, inker, colorist, etc.

**Writer/Author:** The person who writes the story, but may not create the art. The writer is not necessarily the creator of the characters (but can be). Comics industry nomenclature assigns authorship to the creative team, not merely the writer, so to avoid confusion and maximize discoverability it is beneficial for all creators to be listed in the 100 field.

**Artist/Illustrator:** The person who draws or otherwise creates the pictorial aspects of a story. Sometimes the artist/illustrator is also the writer, and may be called a cartoonist.

**Penciller/Penciler:** The person who creates the initial line drawing. Sometimes the same person as the artist.

**Inker:** The person who draws over the initial pencil drawing, using inks to add depth and definition. Sometimes the same person as the artist.

**Colorist:** The person who adds color to the drawn art, which can create moods or themes in the piece. Sometimes the same person as the artist.

**Cover Artist:** The person who created special cover art only. Sometimes the same issue will have multiple, or variant, covers even though the interiors are the same. Cover artist is not an official realtor term, so Cover Designer should be used instead.

## Helping Users Find Comics

**Users' most frequent search strategy is by title** — so be sure to capture as much of the title as possible. For example, when cataloging a series like *The Walking Dead*, include the title of the series (*The Walking Dead*), the volume title (eg. *Miles Behind Us*) and the volume number (Vol. 2). Simply cataloging the book as *The Walking Dead* #2 is unclear; is it issue #2, trade paperback volume 2, hardcover edition volume 2, or omnibus edition volume 2? Also, be sure to include the title on the spine/cover if those are different!

**Two of the biggest frustrations are unclear volume numbers and organizational inconsistencies.** Make sure you include volume number in addition to the title in the appropriate area.

- Sometimes, Volume 1 in a series is not explicitly labeled as such. Make sure to check either the publisher's website or one of the recommended comic book sites above to verify volume number.
- Collections are often renumbered/rereleased. It is best to state which issues are in a trade volume.

**Publication date is very important for identifying comics.** Due to the frequency of reboots, especially in the superhero genre, the publication date helps users distinguish which book or storyline their library has. If possible, include the original publication date as well as the publication date of the collected volume.

- For example, when cataloging a trade paperback, include a 500 (general) note stating, "Originally published in single magazine form in *Batman* X-XX, *Batman Annual* X' --Title page verso."



### Spotlighting Your Comics

**Use front facing displays to showcase covers** — these will make your comics fly off the shelves!

**Include comics in seasonal / topical displays** — like *March* for Black History Month, *Maus* for a display about the Holocaust, *Persepolis* for Women's History Month, *American Born Chinese* for a display about fitting in, etc.

**Many comics include diverse characters and creators.** Reach out to your marginalized communities by collecting, recommending, and highlighting their stories, like *Ms. Marvel*, *Lumberjanes*, or the manga *Real*.

**Create special displays around movie releases.** For example, showcase Marvel superheroes if a new *Avengers* movie is coming out, or *Star Wars* in advance of new movies in the franchise.

## Additional Resources

### **Comic Book Legal Defense Fund**

[cbldf.org](http://cbldf.org)

Find additional resources for adding comics to your collection, what to do if someone challenges a graphic novel in your library, and how to connect with local creators to host special events.

### **Comic Book Database**

[comicbookdb.com](http://comicbookdb.com)

A massive wiki aimed at cataloging and cross referencing every issue of comics.

### **Comic Vine**

[comicvine.gamespot.com](http://comicvine.gamespot.com)

A comprehensive wiki on comic books that also includes information on TV, movies, and relevant editorial content.

### **Book Riot Comics**

[bookriot.com/2016/09/07/welcome-book-riot-comics/](http://bookriot.com/2016/09/07/welcome-book-riot-comics/)

Website and newsletter, especially geared towards kids and YA related comics.

### **Anime News Network**

[animenewsnetwork.com](http://animenewsnetwork.com)

Strong database search with information about manga readily available.

### **Diamond Books**

[diamondbookdistributors.com](http://diamondbookdistributors.com)

Industry's leading graphic novel distributor. Sign up for the newsletter & check their website for the latest releases.

Amazon, Wikipedia, and Google Books are all great places to get help with summary statements.

## Important Cataloging Information

**Include the entire creative team.** Many different people play a part in creating comics, so making sure they receive credit is important. Also, some comic fans follow the careers of specific artists, so their art should be findable in searching. This can be especially important in academic libraries for supporting research needs. If possible, include creator characteristics such as gender and ethnicity as well.

**When crafting a series note, it is helpful to include Publisher as a qualifier in the 830 field.** Many comics change publishers or reboot storylines, often under the same title. An example is *Conan*; it was published by Marvel in the 1970s, then by Dark Horse in the 2000s, and will be published by Marvel again in 2019.

**For those using LC, we recommend classing comic book series by series title (PN6728), e.g. *Batman* would be PN6728.B36.** This is helpful as authors frequently change, especially for superhero comics.

**Set records vs. individual records.** Use set records for items that do not have individual volume titles, e.g. *Fullmetal Alchemist* or *Saga*. Catalog volumes individually if they do have unique titles or subtitles, e.g. *Death Note* or *Fables*.

**Use fictitious character headings.** Not all comics include the main character in the title (common for *Batman*, *Superman*, etc.). If a character has multiple incarnations, such as *The Flash*, try to include the fictitious character heading for the person 'under the mask', e.g. Barry Allen.



Want to help patrons to discover manga in your collection?  
**Start a manga book club!**

Go to [cblbf.org/library](http://cblbf.org/library) to download our guide to getting started, plus a ton of other resources, like links to 50 manga series every library should have!

**Manga is usually read from right to left.**

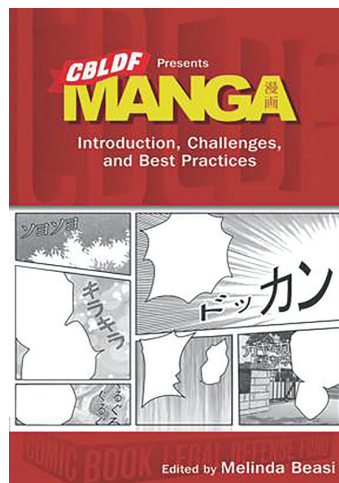
What would be the back cover of an American book is often the front cover of a manga. Each page follows the same pattern, with the panels being read from right to left, top to bottom.

It's an easy habit to get into because the manga creators, or **mangaka**, take special care to make the story flow naturally from right to left. Because of this, the panels and gutters (spaces between the panels) aren't as rigid as in western comics.

Manga's popularity has influenced comics from many countries. Similar comics from South Korea and China are called *manhwa* and *manhua* respectively.

Comics written in English that utilize the iconic look of Japanese comics can also be referred to as **manga** or OEL (Original English Language) **manga**.

Get started with *One Piece*, the best selling manga of all time. A shonen series written and illustrated by Eiichiro Oda that follows Monkey D. Luffy, a seventeen-year-old boy who gains special abilities from eating a supernatural fruit. He travels the oceans in search of treasure with the pirate crew, the Straw Hats.



For more information, check out the CBLDF guide *Manga: Introduction, Challenges, and Best Practices*. It delves into the history of manga, demographic divisions, significant creators, and some of the challenges it has faced in North America.

Go to [cblbf.org/library](http://cblbf.org/library) to get your copy today!

Japanese manga simply refers to comics and graphic novels. If you're from Japan, this word represents all forms of sequential art, but for those in the western world it has come to represent the highly stylized comics from Japan that have taken the world by storm. In 2016, manga sales rose 29% in America, bringing it to a \$110 million dollar industry.

Don't think of manga as a genre but rather a broad class of published works that contains within it as many different genres as there are readers to enjoy them.

**In manga, black pages and backgrounds often denote flashbacks. If a background transitions from black to white, the story is moving from past to present.**

The shape of word balloons can provide clues about how the dialogue is intended, or even who is speaking.



# MANGA

## 101

### Know Your Audience

**Kodomo** manga: created for younger kids, 7 - 10. Simple tales that usually have a strong moral. Popular examples: *Hello Kitty* and *Pokémon*

**Shonen** manga: comics for young teenage boys, 10 - 15. Often have a young male hero, with priorities being placed on action and adventure. Despite being aimed at young boys, these tales have a cinematic quality that appeals across demographics. Popular examples: *Dragon Ball* and *One Piece*

**Shojo** manga: comics for young ladies, 10 - 18. Tend to focus more on romance and friendships than shonen. Female and gay male leads dominate the genre. Popular examples: *Sailor Moon* and *NANA*

**Seinen** manga: comics for young men, 15 - 24. More violent and complex stories than shonen manga, also can contain nudity. Compelling action makes these popular for people around the world regardless of age or gender. Popular examples: *Ghost in the Shell* and *Hellsing*

**Josei** manga: aimed at adult women, 18+. Not common outside of Japan, they include more "slice-of-life" stories and less idealized relationships than other manga types. Often handle sexuality in a frank and open manner. Popular examples: *07-Ghost* and *Loveless*

# Dealing With Challenges

Comics and graphic novels are among the most frequently challenged books. In part, this is because images are easier to take out of context than words. However, there is also an outdated stigma that comics are low value speech, or made for children. This goes back to the moral panic of the 1950s that emerged from *The Seduction of the Innocent* by Dr. Fredric Wertham. However, in 2013, University of Illinois researcher Dr. Carol Tilley proved that Wertham had falsified many of his claims! Although there are some unique issues affecting comics, dealing with challenges to graphic novels is not that different than dealing with challenges to print material.

## Making Strong Policies

Strong policies are key for protecting access to library materials, including comics. The American Library Association has developed a number of excellent tools to assist school and public libraries in the essential preparation to perform before books are challenged at: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/banned/challengeslibrarymaterials/essentialpreparation>

## Challenge Essentials

What do you do when a comic is challenged? After you call CBLDF, check out these resources the American Library Association developed to cope with challenges:

**Conducting a Challenge Hearing**  
[ala.org/tools/challengesupport/hearing](http://ala.org/tools/challengesupport/hearing)

**Challenge Support**  
[ala.org/tools/challengesupport](http://ala.org/tools/challengesupport)

**Sample Request for Resource Reconsideration**  
[ala.org/tools/challengedmaterials/support/samplerconsideration](http://ala.org/tools/challengedmaterials/support/samplerconsideration)

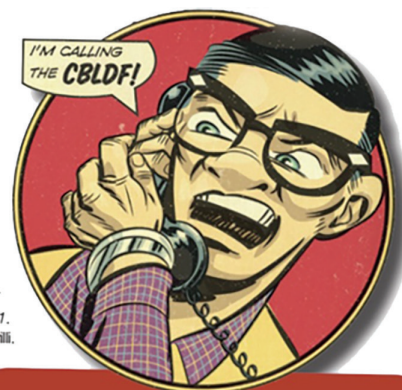
## Report Challenges When They Occur!

Not only does reporting challenges give **Comic Book Legal Defense Fund** a chance to offer guidance and support if needed, but it also helps illuminate where problems are happening and what books are effected.

**Also make sure to report all challenges to the American Library Association.** They take care to track censorship statistics around the country and publish their findings each year.

For more information, links to all the resources mentioned in this booklet, and much more, go to:

**[cbldf.org/library](http://cbldf.org/library)**



Art by J Gonzo.  
From "Dangerous  
Customs," CBLDF  
Liberty Annual 2011.  
Written by Dave Grill.

**Call 1-800-99-CBLDF  
or email  
[info@cbldf.org](mailto:info@cbldf.org)  
at the first sign of a  
First Amendment  
emergency!**



# CBLDF RESOURCES

CBLDF has developed tools to keep people informed about censorship and to help retailers, educators, and librarians explain the benefit of comics.

## **Web Resources**

***Raising a Reader:*** An advanced resource about the learning benefits of comics in the Common Core and more. Written by Dr. Meryl Jaffe. [cbldf.org/resources/raising-a-reader/](http://cbldf.org/resources/raising-a-reader/)

***Panel Power:*** Inspire kids to become lifelong readers! A CBLDF resource for battling misconceptions about comics – filled with information, activities, and reading recommendations. [cbldf.org/panel-power/](http://cbldf.org/panel-power/)

**Using Graphic Novels in Education:** In this column we examine graphic novels, especially those that have been targeted by censors, and provide teaching and discussion suggestions. [cbldf.org/using-graphic-novels/](http://cbldf.org/using-graphic-novels/)

**Adding Graphic Novels to Your Library or Classroom Collection:** Provide information about comics, including reviews, praise, awards, and other CBLDF resources, that educators and librarians can use to justify adding a book to their collections. [cbldf.org/adding-graphic-novels/](http://cbldf.org/adding-graphic-novels/)

**CBLDF Discussion Guides:** Tools to lead conversations about graphic novels. Great for teachers, librarians, retailers, book clubs, and parents to start a dialogue about reading. [cbldf.org/cbldf-discussion-guides/](http://cbldf.org/cbldf-discussion-guides/)

**CBLDF Newsletter:** A weekly email that keeps you informed about censorship news, book challenges, and everything CBLDF is doing on the front lines of free expression. Sign up at [cbldf.org](http://cbldf.org)

## **Publications**

**CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook:** An essential annual guide to the banned and challenged graphic novels every book lover needs to read! [cbldf.org/librarian-tools/cbldf-banned-books-week-handbook/](http://cbldf.org/librarian-tools/cbldf-banned-books-week-handbook/)

**CBLDF Presents: *She Changed Comics*:** This concise, lively history is a vital guide to the women whose work advanced free expression! CBLDF has also developed teaching guides and other resources to support educators using this text. [cbldf.org/she-changed-comics/](http://cbldf.org/she-changed-comics/)

**CBLDF Presents Manga: *Introduction, Challenges, and Best Practices*:** A concise and informed overview – delving into the history of manga, demographic divisions, significant creators, and challenges it has faced in North America. [cbldf.myshopify.com/products/manga-introduction-challenges-and-best-practices](http://cbldf.myshopify.com/products/manga-introduction-challenges-and-best-practices)

**Book Club Handbooks:** Learn how to start and make the most of book clubs for comics and manga with these helpful guides. [cbldf.org/book-clubs/](http://cbldf.org/book-clubs/)

**Find all these resources and much more at [cbldf.org/library](http://cbldf.org/library)**

# Appendix – Subject Headlines & Genre Terms

(Up to date as of May 15, 2018)

## **LC Subject headings for comics (LCSH)**

Comic books, strips, etc.-main subject heading, form division.	Biographical comic books	Erotic comic books, strips, etc.	Newspapers—Sections, columns, etc.—Comics
Caricatures and cartoons	Comic art paraphernalia	Fantasy comic books, strips, etc.	Romance comic books, strips, etc.
Wit and humor	Comic book covers	Fotonovelas	Science fiction comic books, strips, etc.
Autobiographical comic books, strips, etc.	Comic strip characters	Graphic novels	Sex—Comic books, strips, etc.
	Detective and mystery comic books, strips, etc.	Grassroots comic books, strips, etc.	Steampunk comic books, strips, etc.
	Documentary comic books, strips, etc.	Horror comic books, strips, etc.	Suspense comic books, strips, etc.
		Motion pictures and comic books	

## **LC Genre terms for comics (lcfgt)**

Action and adventure comics	Fantasy comics	Pornographic comics
Apocalyptic comics	Fotonovelas	Religious comics
Autobiographical comics	Funny animal comics	Romance comics
Bible comics	Gay comics	Samurai comics
Biographical comics	Graphic novel adaptations	Science fiction comics
Cartoons (Humor)	Graphic novels	Sports comics
Comics adaptations	Grassroots comics	Spy comics
Comics (Graphic works)	Historical comics	Steampunk comics
Coming-of-age comics	Horror comics	Superhero comics
Detective and mystery comics	Humorous comics	Thriller comics
Documentary comics	Instructional comics	Tijuana bibles (type of comic)
Dystopian comics	Lesbian comics	True crime comics
Educational comics	Mythological comics	Underground comics
	Nonfiction comics	Vampire comics
	Noir comics	War comics
	Paranormal comics	
	Political comics	

The information in this resource was made possible by the research and hard work of Allison Bailund, Hallie Clawson, and Staci Crouch, graduate students at University of Washington iSchool in 2018, as supervised by CBLDF Board Member Katherine Keller.

# FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO READ - JOIN CBLDF TODAY

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Member   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Defender Member   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter Member  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Protector Member  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Associate Member  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Champion Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm already a member, but I'd like to make an additional donation of _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Guardian Member |

Members joining at the \$100 level and higher will receive a 2018 CBLDF shirt, with art by Mike Allred! T-shirt size (circle one):    **S**    **M**    **L**    **XL**    **XXL**                       Please send no premiums.

## PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Make checks payable to CBLDF – Located at 811 SW Naito Parkway, Suite 100 Portland OR 97204
- Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number

Exp.

CVV

Type of Card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

CBLDF is recognized by the IRS as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 institution, and donations are tax deductible in the year in which they are given. Please contact us for more information on deductible amounts for CBLDF premiums, and consult your tax advisor as to the extent to which your donation is tax deductible.

### CBLDF Thanks our Guardian Members:

Grant Geissman, Philip Harvey, and Shadowline Comics

CBLDF's education program made possible with the generous support of the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!



### Corporate Members





“There are a lot of stories that need to be told.”  
— DAVID STEWARD II, Lion Forge Founder and CEO

**Our lives are a collection of stories.**

And the stories we read influence who we want to be. Which is why Lion Forge believes in creating comics and graphic novels for everyone, so that regardless of gender, ethnicity, or cultural background, our readers can find heroes who speak to their life experiences.

From new standout titles like *Sheets*, to graphic novels with social impact such as *Lighter Than My Shadow*, Amazon’s 2017 Graphic Novel of the Year, Lion Forge prides itself on creating honest heroes.

Creating heroes isn’t the same as being a hero, but it’s close. The gap between creating heroes and being a hero narrows when we stand together on publications such as Lion Forge’s nationally recognized Hurricane Maria benefit anthology, *Puerto Rico Strong*.

At Lion Forge we create comics for everyone because we believe that everyone deserves to be a hero.

**LION FORGE SUPPORTS FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND DIVERSITY IN ALL ITS FORMS, WHICH IS WHY WE CREATE COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS FOR EVERYONE!**



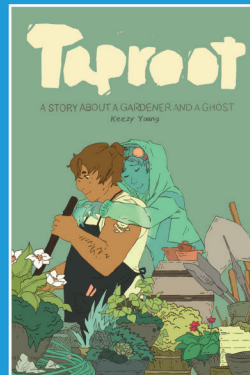
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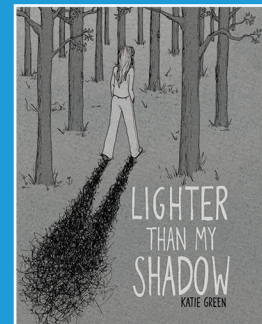
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