



# Graphic Novels

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Comic Book Death** – used in the comic book fan community to refer to the killing off and subsequent return of a long-running character. This irony addresses the fact that while death is a serious subject, a comic book death is generally not taken seriously and is rarely permanent or meaningful.

**Comic-con International (San Diego)**: It is traditionally a four-day event (Thursday through Sunday — though a four-hour preview night on Wednesday is open to professionals, exhibitors, and some guests pre-registered for all four days) held during the summer in San Diego, CA. Comic-Con is both the name of the annual event and the common name of the organization. The convention is the largest in the Western Hemisphere and the second largest in the world.

**Continuity** - The term continuity has come to relate to the history of a comic book and the storylines that previous writers have told. When a writer and artist create and tell a story, for better or worse, they become ingrained into the character and are typically a part of that comic and character for the rest of time. The benefit of having a continuity is that it allows other writers and artists to play off of these previous stories.

**Crossover** - The placement of two or more otherwise discrete fictional characters, settings, or universes into the context of a single story.

**Film Adaptation** - the transfer of a written work (in this case a graphic novel) to a feature film. Comic book characters, particularly superheroes, have long been adapted into film, beginning in the 1940s with Saturday movie serials aimed at children. *Superman* (1978) and *Batman* (1989) are two later successful movie adaptations of famous comic book characters.

**Graphic Novel** - A *graphic novel* is often a set of collected comic books or a stand alone story that is [squarebound](#). Graphic novels are usually cheaper than the collected comic books and are often found in book stores. The term *graphic novel* was coined as a marketing term to separate itself from being categorized with other "funnies" or children's comic books. The term gained popularity after it was used on the cover of Will Eisner's "A Contract With God, and Other Tenement Stories", in 1978.

**Independent** – The term refers to comic book companies that are creator-owned. Independent publishers often self-publish in limited print runs.

**Origin Story** - an account or back-story revealing how a character or team gained their superpowers and/or the circumstances under which they became superheroes/supervillains.

**Panel** - A "panel" in a comic book is one part of a comic book page. Typically a comic book page is made up of individual panels that, when put together, tell a story in a sequential order.



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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Graphic Novels



**Squarebound** - The term squarebound refers to the way a comic book may be assembled. The squarebound method is similar to a book or magazine in that the pages are glued to the spine rather than stapled like a regular comic book. The term comes from the fact that a comic book that has been squarebound has a square shape to the spine. Most graphic novels are squarebound comics.

**Variants** - In comic books, a variant is usually attributed to a comic book that has more than one cover. There is usually the main cover for the series, but sometimes comic publishers will get famous artists to contribute a cover for another edition. The insides of the comic are the same, just the cover is different. One cover may be rarer than another, making that book more collectable.

**Webcomic** - The term "webcomic" has come to describe any comic book designed for viewing on the internet. Although this is a very broad term, most webcomics fall into a certain format of comic very similar to the comic strips found in the newspaper.

For more information on Graphic Novel terms, please see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search/Comic\\_book\\_terminology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search/Comic_book_terminology)

### Manga Vocabulary

*(Words to Know to be in the Know!)*

**Anime [Ah-knee-meh]** – Japanese animated cartoons; anime series used to be hand-drawn, but today most series are computer-generated (CG).

**Josei [Jo-seh]** – Literally 'woman'; comics for women. They feature realistic romance stories about adulthood, growing up, collage, complicated relationships and other post-modern realistic topics with female protagonists. Josei is something like a rather mature version of shoujo.

**Manga [Mahn-gah]** – Literally 'comic'; Japanese comic book. Most Manga are black and white and are read from right to left, which might be a bit confusing for foreign readers at first. In economic terms, weekly sales of comics in Japan exceed the entire annual output of the American comic industry.

**Manhua [Mahn-wah]** – Chinese comic book.

**Manhwa (or Manwha) [Mahn-(h)wah]** – Korean comic book.

**Manga-ka [Mahn-gah-kah]** – Professional manga authors.

**Mecha [Meh-kah]** – Anime/manga genre centering on mechanical things (usually giant fighting robots).



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**Otakon [Oh-tah-con]** – A three day anime convention held annually in Baltimore (usually in July or August). Otakon is now one of the largest anime conventions in America, with attendance in 2009 exceeding 26,500.

**Otaku [Oh-tah-koo]** - An insult in Japan, an Otaku is basically a geek. However the term has been taken on as a badge of pride by manga lovers outside Japan.

**Seinen [Seh-nen]** – Literally ‘young adult’; comics for men. Most often it deals with issues of university students, adulthood and the working world. Can also contain sexual situations, violence, and bad language.

**Sho(u)jo [Shoh-joh]** – Literally means ‘girl’; comics for girls. The most common scenario frequently revolves around a young schoolgirl who is torn between two stunningly handsome boys.

**Shoujo-ai [Shoh-joh-ay]** – female/female romance; less graphic than yuri. [See **yuri**]

**Sho(u)nen [Shoh-nehn]** – Literally ‘boy’; comics for boys. Most common shounen settings are action adventures of the male protagonist in a fantasy world that features fighters and super powers.

**Sho(u)nen-ai [Shoh-nehn-ay]** – Male/male romance; less graphic than yaoi. [See **yaoi**]

**Yaoi [Yow-ee]**– Male/male romance; despite the gay subject matter, these comics are actually most popular among young women.

**Yuri [You-ree]** – Female/female romance.