



# Growing readers!

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## Graphic Novels for Young Kids

Similar to comic books, graphic novels weave rich, lively visuals with a limited amount of text to drive the narrative. Graphic novels can be especially appealing to young readers who are reluctant to pick up a more traditional book. Graphic novels are a great way to help struggling readers strengthen vocabulary, build reading confidence and stamina, and develop a deeper appreciation of storytelling. And, they are fun!

### What are graphic novels?

Graphic novels are stories written and illustrated in the style of a comic:

- Vivid illustrations combine with short bursts of text, often presented in a series of rectangular panels
- The story unfolds in a clear sequence, and is often action-packed (and funny)

Graphic novels can be fiction (for example: historical fiction, fantasy, science fiction, fairytales) or nonfiction (for example: history, biography, informational)

The main characters don't have to be superheroes!

### Are graphic novels “real books”?

Yes! Graphic novels are widely accepted by youth librarians and teachers as books worth reading by kids of all ages and reading levels. Top children's publishers now offer graphic novels that are high quality (with strong characters, vocabulary, and storylines) and appropriate for young readers.

Popular authors who have published graphic novel series include: Jennifer Holm and Matt Holm (Babymouse and Squish series), Shannon Hale (*Rapunzel's Revenge*), Jarrett Krosoczka (Lunch Lady series), Raina Telgemeier (*Ghosts*), Gene Yang (Secret Coders series), James Burks (Bird and Squirrel series), Jeff Smith (Bone series), and Scott Morse (Magic Pickle series).

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## How graphic novels help build children’s literacy skills

**Reading motivation.** Graphic novels are very popular, and especially appealing to readers who may not pick up a more traditional book on their own. They can be a “welcoming door” for reluctant or struggling readers (especially boys) who are drawn to the lively storylines and illustrations, and the smart but limited text. Quick, fun reads build confidence!

**Visual literacy.** The pictures in graphic novels are expressive, simple, and rich all at the same time. The images provide big clues about character and plot and encourage readers to look closely. Some graphic novels (such as *Owly* and *The Adventures of Polo*) are wordless, so the pictures must carry the full story.

**Story structure.** Most graphic novels for young readers have easy-to-follow plots. This can help children learn about how a story is stitched together. After sharing a graphic novel together, ask your child to tell you the basic plot of the story: “First this happened, then this ... and at the end ...”

**Word learning for struggling readers and English language learners.** Although individual words in a graphic novel can be sophisticated, the side-by-side illustrations and text provide strong clues to their meaning.

**Don’t forget to share graphic novels together — they make great read alouds!**

## Where to find great graphic novels for kids

See our booklist, [Graphic Novels: Read the Pictures](#), for recommended reads. Or, browse these [lists from the American Library Association](#) — and ask the children’s librarian at your local library for more suggestions. Expose your kids to the world of graphic novels through different genres. Here are some of our favorites:

### Biography and Memoir

- *El Deafo* by Cece Bell
- *Smile and Sisters* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Women’s Rights Pioneer* by Connie Colwell Miller
- *March Trilogy* by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin (for older readers or to read together)

### Historical Fiction

- *One Dead Spy (Nathan Hale’s Hazardous Tales series)* by Nathan Hale

### Mystery

- *Secret Coders* by Gene Yang

### Folktales, Fairy Tales and Myths

- *Rapunzel’s Revenge* by Shannon Hale
- *The Lightning Thief: The Graphic Novel (Percy Jackson & the Olympians series)* by Rick Riordan

### Fantasy and Science Fiction

- *The Stonekeeper (Amulet series)* by Kazu Kibuishi
- *Sardine in Outer Space* by Emmanuel Guibert

### Classic Literature

- *The Odyssey* by Gareth Hinds (for older readers or to read together)

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