

Resources to Help  
You Learn About



Bring  
your story  
to life!



# MAGIC TREE HOUSE<sup>®</sup>

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

and LOVE Graphic Novels!

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# What Is a Graphic Novel?



**Graphic novel n. 1:** a book-length work in comics form; can be fiction or nonfiction; can be any genre; must be long enough to have a spine.

**2:** a storytelling format with pictures and words!

**3:** The best way to read a book!

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**We Love Them!** Here are a few reasons:

## Reading Pictures

Graphic novels are great at teaching kids how to interpret, understand, and take meaning from a picture—important skills for navigating everyday life and the world around them!

## Super Engaging

Because of their visual nature and reduced text, graphic novels are great for any kind of reader, but especially helpful for those who struggle with text. They can help kids learn how to express what they are feeling by seeing it on the page!

## Quality Stories, Less Words

Like prose books, graphic novels have complex characters and stories. The images tell the story just as much as the text, giving readers a chance to develop their visual literacy and creative critical-thinking skills.



# How to Read a Graphic Novel?



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1. Start at the beginning. Open the book. Get excited. This will be fun.
2. Read left to right and top to bottom. Start with the first panel in the top left corner and read across from there.
3. Take your time. Graphic novels have fewer words on a page than prose novels—but resist the temptation to rush.
4. Words AND art are important in a graphic novel! Both the art and the dialogue have a part to play in the story.
5. Every element is intentional. Check out the fonts, backgrounds, character expressions, and body language. It all contributes to the story.
6. Graphic novels are created by a wide variety of authors in different styles and genres on a range of subjects. No matter what kind of books are your favorite, you can find graphic novels to love.



# Helpful Terms!



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**Panel:** A single drawing (often contained within a border, often rectangular) that consists of one moment of a story.



**Gutter:** The space between comics panels; the gutter indicates a transition between two moments of the story.

**Word balloon/speech balloon:** Comic characters' dialogue is shown in a word balloon, often oval, with a tail that points at the speaking character's mouth.

**Thought bubble:** Comic characters' thoughts are shown in a thought bubble, often cloud-shaped, with small cloud puffs that form a trail between the bubble and the character's head.

**Text box:** Narration, especially narration not done by a character present in the panel, and captions in a comic are often depicted in a box.

**Sound effect:** Non-speech sounds (for example, Crash!) are frequently incorporated into the artwork rather than being depicted in balloons or boxes.

**Emanata:** Symbolic icons used in comics to indicate specific emotions, moods, or movement. Examples include speed lines (indicating motion), sweat drops (indicating fear, stress, or surprise), stars (indicating injury), and lots more.

Looking for additional resources and activities that use graphic novels? Check out [ReadWriteThink.org](http://ReadWriteThink.org), NCTE's [graphic novel units and activities!](#)