

## **Manga and Libraries: Exploring and Promoting a Rising Medium**

Rutgers Association of School Librarians (RASL)

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### ***Manga, like poetry, is a format, not a genre***

Scott McCloud uses the analogy of a pitcher that can contain all kinds of liquids

### ***What characterizes manga as a format?***

definition: Japanese comics

black and white art, usually 7 1/4" by 5" paperbacks

drawing style characterized by large eyes, flowy hair, speed lines, exaggerated

facial expressions, pictorial words

often include side panels where authors talk directly to audience

often read from right to left

flipping changed images like left-handedness

panel order and shape of text blocks designed for reading in Japanese

### ***The word "manga" is both singular and plural, and both a noun and an adjective***

"I'm reading this great manga book" vs. "My library owns a lot of manga"

### ***Manga genres and examples***

**Shōnen:** action/adventure/ninjas

**comparison:** Jackie Chan movies

Dragon Ball Z by Akira Toriyama

Fullmetal Alchemist by Hiromu Arakawa

Naruto by Masashi Kishimoto

Rurouni Kenshin by Nobuhiro Watsuki

**Shōjo:** romance

**comparison:** High School Musical

Fruits Basket by Natsuki Takaya

Little Butterfly by Hinako Takanaga (yaoi/shōnen-ai)

Marmalade Boy by Wataru Yoshizumi

**Seinen and Josei:** targeted to adult men and women, respectively

**comparisons:** Schwarzenegger and

Julia Roberts movies, respectively

Lone Wolf and Cub by Kazuo Koike et al

### **Nonfiction**

Japan Inc.: Introduction to Japanese Economics by Shotaro Ishinomori

**Retellings** of stories, or continuations of worlds, originally in other formats

Manga Shakespeare: Hamlet illus. Emma Vieceli

Star Trek the Manga by various authors

Avalon High: Coronation by Meg Cabot, illus. Jinky Coronado (manga, or manga-like?)

**Original stories** by non-Japanese authors, with Western premises

The Plain Janes by Cecil Castellucci and Jim Rugg (manga, or manga like?)

a manga format: magazines Shonen Jump and Shojo Beat  
 anime is also a format: the film equivalent of manga  
 stories are often told in both formats - anime/manga share series

Note: texts like Manga Shakespeare can function in two ways - they can be an introduction to Shakespeare for manga fans, or an introduction to manga for Shakespeare fans!

***Why do children and teens like manga?***

reading it is something that they can do better than adults can  
 books are short and easy to finish quickly = a sense of accomplishment  
 words and pictures together can be easier to read than just words  
 'coolness' factor  
 good stories

***Issues in collecting manga***

books tend to fall apart quickly, and are easy to steal  
 reinforce them with book tape  
 series can have long runs, and can take up a lot of shelf space  
 but only when they're all checked in!  
 consider owning the first few in a series, then buying the rest only if  
 they're popular - or using cooperatives for ILL  
 consider buying multiple copies of first volumes in series (Poitras)  
 content can be controversial and can vary even within a series  
 female toplessness isn't viewed the same way in Japan and America  
 female characters often drawn in ways that make their age ambiguous  
 adults can look like children - awkward in sexual situations  
 TokyoPop rating system, with reasons for each rating  
 A = all ages  
 Y = ages 10+ (youth)  
 T = ages 13+ (teen)  
 OT = ages 16+ (older teen)  
 M = ages 18+ (mature)

***How manga supports the curriculum***

can facilitate cultural diversity in your collection  
 can bring otherwise potentially inaccessible texts to readers  
 can inspire an interest in Japanese history and mythology  
 can make reading fun, and be a gateway to other reading  
 Krashen cites research studies and case histories that show:  
 reading comics can lead to improved reading skills and positive attitudes  
 toward reading  
 reading comics does not interfere with other reading  
 a comics collection can increase use of other library materials  
 and finally, they're good stories!

**Conclusion**

scenes from anime movie "My Neighbor Totoro" directed by Hayao Miyazaki

**Sources for further information:**

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