



# MANGA BOOK CLUB

# HANDBOOK

Starting and making the most  
of book clubs for manga!

## COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit organization protecting the freedom to read comics! Our work protects readers, creators, librarians, retailers, publishers, and educators who face the threat of censorship. We monitor legislation and challenge laws that would limit the First Amendment. We create resources that promote understanding of comics and the rights our community is guaranteed. Every day, we publish news and information about censorship events as they happen. We are partners in the Kids' Right to Read Project and Banned Books Week. Our expert legal team is available at a moment's notice to respond to First Amendment emergencies. CBLDF is a lean organization that works hard to protect the rights that our community depends on. For more information, visit <http://cblddf.org>



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# Introduction

Japanese comics, or manga, began making their way stateside in the 1970s, and in recent years, the format has seen exponential growth in terms of sales and popularity. A simple visit to the graphic novel section of your local book store or library reveals that a lot of shelf space is allotted to manga. There's a reason chain stores like Barnes and Noble are doubling their graphic novel sections: the demand for manga is massive!

## What does manga offer?

Quite literally, there is manga available for every type of reader, from the youngest early reader to the most sophisticated adult reader. Whether you're looking for comedy, complex science fiction, period drama, historical memoir, psychological thrillers, horror, romance, or coming of age stories, there's all this and more. And it's not just "kid stuff" — there are manga as elaborate and engrossing as the most acclaimed classic prose.

## What are some types of book clubs?

Book clubs can be held in a variety of places and run by a variety of individuals. The tips and guidelines offered in this handbook are most applicable to graphic novel book clubs held in the following locations:

- Libraries (curated by library staff or by an outside individual)
- Schools (independent, non-compulsory programs curated by teachers, students, or parents)
- Retail comic and book stores (curated by store employees or members of the community)

## Why start a manga book club?

The reasons to start a manga book club go beyond simply sharing the format we love with the people around us. For librarians, a manga book club is another avenue to reach the wider community, an opportunity to engage longtime and new patrons alike. Manga can be especially attractive to younger audiences and reluctant readers. You'll see increased circulation of manga (and by extension, graphic novels and other books), as well as more community engagement as you tap into an audience that isn't always served by libraries.

For educators, manga can be an amazing tool for making life-long readers, engaging reluctant readers, and assisting struggling students. For new and reluctant readers, manga are less daunting than prose and more likely to be read. For advanced readers, they offer a novel and expansive reading experience.

In the context of a book club, manga can help students build reading, discussion, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

For retailers, a manga book club can strengthen your ties to the community and bring in new customers. Even if you don't run the book club yourself, you can partner with your local library and schools to provide books and to host offsite meetings, which can generate new manga fans and increase your sales.

Whatever your motivation, a book club is a great way to engage your community with manga and to reach new audiences!



*Assassination Classroom (VIZ)*



## A (Very) Brief History of Manga

The roots of manga lie within a thousand years of Japanese art and printmaking culture. Some of the earliest examples of Japanese sequential storytelling date back to religious scrolls from the 11th and 12th centuries.

The term *manga* was coined in the early 19th century by Katsushika Hokusai, who used the word to describe the “whimsical pictures” in his long-running instructional series. The term wasn’t applied to Japanese comics as we know them until the early 20th century.

Modern manga began to emerge in the 1920s and 1930s with the children’s magazines *Shonen Club* (for boys) and *Shojo Club* (for girls). The popular comic series that ran in the magazines were collected into hardcover books. The interest in sequential storytelling — and indeed the skills of several manga artists — was also fueled by *kamishibai*, or paper theatre shows that employed a series of painted panels to tell a story. Some of Japan’s most influential post-war manga artists found their start in these paper theatre shows.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, manga were as popular among Japanese youth as comics were among Western youth. With the commercial success of Osamu Tezuka’s *New Treasure Island* (which sold nearly 400,000 copies in 1947), publishers raced to capitalize on the interest in manga. In the late 1950s, weekly magazines became increasingly important vehicles for manga, eventually jettisoning all other content in favor of comics. In the 1960s, publishers introduced a new format, a paperback-style perfect bound novel. Both the magazines and the longer books were sold at low cost primarily through train station kiosks and newsstands, making manga a favorite reading material for commuters of all ages. Even today, manga dominates Japanese publishing, making up a quarter of all book sales in the country.

## Coming to America

Japanese animation, or anime, began airing in the United States in the 1960s, when NBC began syndication of the anime adaptation of Osamu Tezuka’s manga *Astro Boy*. The first manga to be translated for American audiences was Keiji Nakazawa’s seminal anti-war memoir *Barefoot Gen*, in the 1970s. The American manga market

took decades to develop. Fueled by the increasing presence and popularity of anime on American television, interest in manga grew, and by 2006, manga had become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the American publishing industry. That growth has slowed, but manga continues to be a perennial favorite among fans.

## Types of Manga

One significant way in which manga differs from American comics is that it is targeted at a very specific audience in a way that American comics aren't. Four major categories of manga are defined by both age and gender:

- **Shonen manga:** Easily one of the larger categories of manga, shonen is created for boys age 10 and up. Shonen manga are typically adventure stories with cinematic action and straightforward artwork. Shonen has crossover appeal and is frequently consumed by girls and adult readers.
- **Shojo manga:** Shojo manga is created for girls age 10 and up. Shojo storytelling also incorporates action-adventure, but it also explores romance and psychological issues and tends to be more long-form. Contemporary shojo is created almost entirely by women. Given its romantic themes, shojo has less audience crossover than shonen has.
- **Seinen manga:** Created for young men, seinen manga dominates Japanese manga publishing and has found a large audience in the West. Like shonen, seinen is enjoyed by diverse audiences and is accessible, contemporary, and entertaining.
- **Josei manga:** The least represented category of manga available in the West, josei manga is written for young women. Like shojo, josei tends to be romance-oriented, but it is more sexually frank.

As you read more manga, you may encounter other categories, such as *kodomo manga*, which is created for the youngest readers. A prime example of this category is *Pokemon*.

Some categories cater to the mature interests of adult readers. For example, *yuri manga* refers to stories featuring romantic or sexual relationships between women. *Yaoi manga*, sometimes called *Boys' Love manga*, features romantic or erotic relationships between men. Both fulfill small niches within the American market, but they are not typically found in library collections due to content concerns.

# How to Read Manga

## It's Not "Backwards"

In Japan, books are read right to left rather than left to right, and what Western audiences normally consider the back of the book is instead the front. This is also true for manga. Sometimes, English translations of manga are “flipped” so the book can be read left to right, but most manga in the United States is released in the original Japanese format. Pages are read in the following manner:



# Content Concerns

## Consult the Professionals

Understanding the target audience for manga — effectively, shonen, shojo, and so forth — can help you recognize whether a manga is appropriate for your book club. Further, many manga publishers offer age ratings. That said, don't hesitate to consult a librarian or professional journals to learn more about manga. We've also provided a list of resources at the end of this handbook to help you out!

## Manga Series

Many manga are long-running series that have been in print for decades. These series can have dozens of volumes for one contiguous story, which makes it difficult to read the books out of sequence or to start the series in a later volume.

## Western Misconceptions

While manga has grown in popularity in the West, there are still pervasive misconceptions regarding the format. Japanese manga have long engaged adult audiences in a way that American comics have only done in the last few decades, so some people think that manga are meant for the youngest readers. But many manga are specifically created with adult audiences in mind and contain mature content.

Japanese attitudes towards nudity and sexuality are different from American attitudes, and this is reflected in manga. This frank perspective is sometimes unfamiliar to or uncomfortable for Western audi-

ences. In manga, nudity is not necessarily sexual and can be employed for humor or to develop sympathy with certain characters. Some manga meant for younger readers may depict nudity in this way. In fact, shonen series such as *Dragon Ball* have been challenged in libraries for the depiction of non-sexual, cartoonish nudity. Because Japanese manga depict sex in a way that differs from Western mores, some people mistakenly believe that all manga are pornographic or obscene, and you may need to counter this idea as you establish your book club.



*Shaman King (VIZ)*



# Getting Started

Once you've decided to curate a manga book club, there are a few questions you should settle before you announce your book club and begin inviting participants:

## 1. Who is your audience?

The audience for a manga book club is as variable as the books themselves. Consider whether you want to run a book club for a specific age group or all ages; there are advantages to focusing on either. An all ages group may attract a larger or more diverse audience, but you may have more difficulty agreeing on the books the group wants to read. A book club for younger readers may need to address concerns over age-appropriate materials, community standards, and educational needs.

## 2. Where will your book club meet?

The location where you hold your meetings can affect who is able to attend. Are you going to hold your book club meetings in the local branch of your public library, at a school, or in a comic book shop? Is the location near public transportation? After your book club is assembled, the group may decide to meet elsewhere, but you still need a space to get started!

## 3. How big will your book club be?

A number of factors come into play when determining the size of your manga book club: the location of your meetings, your comfort level as a curator, the concerns of the venue, and so forth. A group that is too large can be unwieldy and difficult to moderate. In smaller groups, conversation can be difficult to maintain if members are absent. Many sources recommend a minimum of 8 members and a maximum of 15 members, but take into account your audience and your comfort level as a curator when making your size determination.

## Announcing Your Manga Book Club

Many book clubs start by word of mouth, but you can also advertise your book club in the following places:

- community announcement boards at your local library, school, or book store
- online using social media such as Facebook and Twitter or websites such as Craigslist ([craigslist.org](https://www.craigslist.org)) and Meetup

([www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com))

- email newsletters and mailing lists

## Holding Your First Meeting

Before you actually read any books, use the first meeting to establish some ground rules for your manga book club. Your group should answer the following questions during the first meeting:

### 1. What kind of manga do you want to read?

Some book clubs establish a theme for what they want to read. For example, your club could focus on a particular type of manga, such as shonen or shojo, or you could choose to focus on a genre, such as fantasy, science fiction, or historical manga, and so forth. If you decide that you are going to read a manga series, your group should also discuss whether you want to read multiple volumes of the series at a time or over the course of several meetings.

### 2. What is your schedule?

During your first meeting, establish a schedule and time for your ongoing meetings. Most book clubs meet monthly, but you may want to meet every six weeks depending on participants' schedules.

### 3. Where do you want to meet?

As a group, discuss whether you want to continue meeting in the established location or whether you want to change things up with offsite events or meetings in members' personal homes.

### 4. What is the format of your meetings?

Determine the format of your meetings: Do you take turns moderating or hosting? Do you have food and snacks at the meetings, and who provides them? Do you want to follow a prescribed format?

### 5. How do you want to keep in touch with each other?

Determine how you want to communicate with each other. Social media can be an invaluable tool for communication. You can use Facebook or Google+ groups to communicate and make decisions. You may also want to designate a communications lead to send reminder emails and announcements.

# Selecting Books

After you establish the ground rules for your manga book club, it's time to select some reading material! There are a few ways to select books:

- **Vote:** Each member of the club suggests a book, and everyone votes on which book to read. The suggestions and voting can be done either in person or using social media.
- **Take turns:** Each member of the group takes turns selecting a book.
- **Combine the methods:** The members of the group each take turns suggesting books, giving everyone three options to consider. The option with the most votes is the book that will be read.

## Tips

- Consider limiting book selections to single-volume manga or short series. This reduces the expense for members.
- Some libraries carry book club sets, but they rarely do so for manga. Because it's unlikely your local library will have enough copies of a manga available for everyone in your group, develop a partnership with a local comics retailer or book store to ensure that you can get enough copies for everyone. Some retailers may offer a discount for members of your group.
- Discuss with your club whether you want to limit the length of the manga you read. Shorter books and series are easier on busy schedules.
- For longer books and series, you may want to consider breaking the discussion over multiple book club meetings.
- Make sure the books you choose are still in print.
- Choose no more than three books at a time. Choosing multiple books lets people read at their own pace, but you don't want to lock yourselves into a rigid schedule by selecting too many books at once.
- Emphasize variety! Even if you choose a theme for your book club, don't get stuck in a rut. Vary genres, lengths, styles, difficulty, and so forth to maintain interest and participation in the club.

# Reading Critically

Whether you're moderating a book club meeting or not, the ability to critically evaluate the material you're reading is essential to your experience of the work and the discussion of it. As you read, do the following:

- 1. Take notes.** Notes help not only with discussion of the material, but also with retention of what you read — if you take notes, you're more likely to remember what happened in the book. You can take notes on a separate piece of paper, in the margins of the book, or on self-adhesive note paper. Taking notes may increase the amount of time you need to finish reading a book or series, but it will enhance your ability to think critically about the material.
- 2. Ask questions.** If you're moderating the meeting about the book, include potential discussion questions in your notes. Don't be afraid to ask hard questions, and identify questions that you think will promote meaningful discussion of the material. Even if you aren't moderating, asking yourself questions can help you identify with the work.
- 3. Pay attention to both the art and the text.** Like comics, manga embrace both textual and visual cues to tell a story. Further, manga often uses symbols and gestures that may require some interpretation for Western audiences. Sometimes, it's easy to focus on an aspect of the story (text, art, or symbolism) at the cost of other aspects. As you read, make an effort to examine text, art, and symbols to see how the interplay among the components is greater than the parts. It may help to read the book multiple times, focusing first on one aspect, then the others, and then finally on everything together.
- 4. Identify themes and symbolism.** Analyze the deeper meaning behind the work: What are the ideas that the creators are exploring in the book? How do they use text and images as metaphors or similes, as symbols of something else? Evaluate the ways in which a Japanese audience might interpret the material differently from a Western audience, and how preconceptions might affect the interpretation of themes and symbolism in the story.
- 5. Examine the structure of the book.** As you read, pay attention to how the creators use color (or the lack of color) to convey



ideas, themes, temporal changes, and so forth. The creators may also use panel size, frequency, and structure to convey emotions and events or to develop a sense of urgency about the plot or characters.

6. **Evaluate the motivators behind the book.** Is the book plot- or character-driven? If it is plot driven, it will move from event to event quickly, with little time spent on character development. Character-driven books tend to have a slower pace, focusing less on events and more on individual reactions, emotions, and thoughts.
7. **Compare the book to other stories.** As you read, compare the book to other stories, whether they are prose, Western graphic novels, or other entertainment such as TV or movies. Consider the other work of the creators: Are their previous books similar in art style and subject matter? Are there common themes? Identify prose books, other manga and graphic novels, or movies that have similar themes or employ similar structure or visual style.



*Bakuman (VIZ)*

# Discussing Books

Discussion is a must in any successful book club. The members of your group don't need to agree on everything — in fact, some disagreement is healthy and fosters conversations. However, it's important to respect the other members of the group and to steer the discussion in constructive directions. Whether you're leading the discussion or participating, there are several things you can do to facilitate discourse:

1. **Pay attention to your language.** Try to avoid value judgments and weighted terms, such as “hate” or even “dislike.” Describe how the book made you feel as you read it.
2. **Don't dismiss or interrupt other members of the group.** Respect the statements made by other members of your group, even if you disagree with them, and let everyone finish their statements before you comment. Try to understand another person's point of view before responding, and respect the fact that you can have differing opinions about the material.
3. **Speak up.** The more you participate in a discussion, the more you get out of it. Don't be afraid to share your thoughts and ideas, but be brief so everyone in the group has a chance to participate.
4. **Support your statements.** Support your opinions by citing specific passages or images in the book.
5. **Ask questions.** The discussion moderator will have plenty of questions ready to lead the conversation, but don't be afraid to ask your own questions; you may have an idea that didn't occur to the moderator, or you may have noticed something that everyone else missed.
6. **Respect the privacy of other members of the group.** When describing what happens in your manga book club on social media or with outside parties, respect the other members of the group by not sharing their personal opinions or your opinion of the individuals in the group with outsiders.

## Preparing in Advance

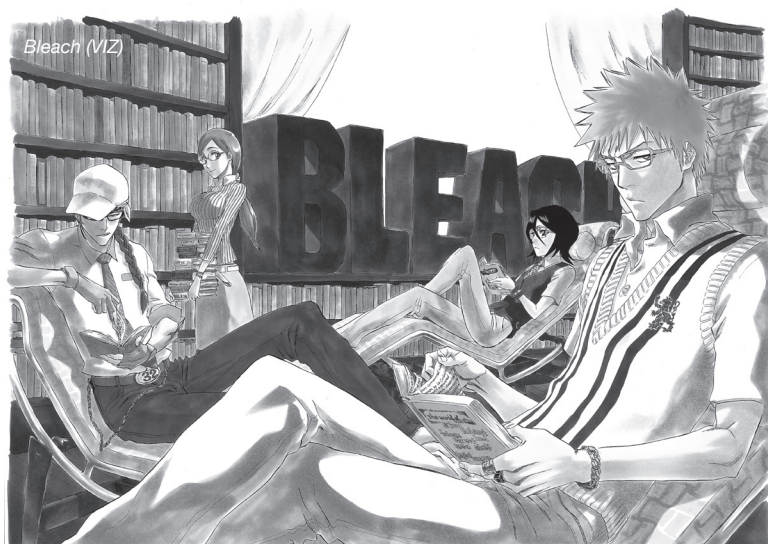
Leading a healthy discussion requires some advance preparation. As you read, take notes to inform your conversation and use your notes

to build discussion questions. Compile a discussion guide handout that you can provide to the group as a conversation aid. To best facilitate the conversation, include discussion questions, a plot summary, and character list in your guide.

## Leading a Discussion

Moderating a discussion carries some responsibility. As a moderator, you should:

- prepare 10–15 open-ended questions for discussion. Avoid yes/no questions, and ask them in turn. Don't be afraid to deviate from the prepared questions if the conversation is flowing naturally in another direction.
- consider using a physical object, video clip, or song related to the book or subject matter of the book as a discussion prompt.
- pick out specific passages or images from the book, and ask members of the group to comment on the material.
- choose a specific character, and ask members of the group to examine how that character develops over the course of the story, both visually and textually.
- encourage members of the group to give specific reasons for why they did or did not like a book. Don't let them stop with "I just didn't like it."
- avoid dominating the discussion. Share your thoughts and ideas briefly and then ask each member of the group to weigh in on a particular plot point, character, or discussion question.



## Sample Discussion Questions

- What was your experience as you read the book?
- Who is the intended audience for this book?
- What makes this manga distinctive from other books?
- Who is the narrator in this book, and how does the narrator's perspective inform the story?
- In what era is the book set, and how does it impact the story?
- What is the overall tone of the story? How does the art suit the tone?
- What motivated various characters in this book?
- With which character do you identify the most? Why?
- How do you think your perceptions of Japanese culture impacted your experience of the book?
- What images, symbols, gestures, or segments of the book did you find challenging to read or understand? Why?
- Was anything left unfinished? In what ways did the creators resolve the plot?
- Based on this book, extrapolate what you think the author's worldview might be.
- How does the panel structure convey meaning in the story?
- What are some visual or textual metaphors in the story?
- How did the artist use color, patterns, or textures to convey meaning in the story?
- What other pieces of art — paintings, prose, music, and so on — do you think influenced the work?
- Would this manga make a good movie? Why or why not? Who would you cast in the movie, and who would you hire to direct it?
- What would you change about the story? Why?
- How believable was the story?
- Would you recommend this book to another person? Why or why not?



# Managing Conversations

As a moderator or participant of a book club, you may have to contend with strong opinions about the content of a story. Occasionally, you may need to employ conflict management skills to steer the discussion away from negative or destructive avenues.

1. **Be aware of cultural differences.** Manga contains images, symbolism, and ideas that may be foreign to Western audiences. Some people may have difficulty interpreting the content, or they may express discomfort with material due to preconceptions. Don't discount their opinions, and try to incorporate cultural differences into the discussion.
2. **Try not to get angry.** When a book instills strong emotions in book club participants, it's important to remain as neutral as possible as a moderator. People may say something they don't mean or that is easily misinterpreted. It may be difficult, but try not to take anything that is said personally.
3. **Keep the conversation constructive.** If members of the group start using negative language, try to steer the conversation toward positive aspects of the material. Instead of talking about things people didn't like, encourage people to discuss what they did like about the book.
4. **Take a break.** If a discussion becomes too heated, stop for a restroom break, have a snack break, ask everyone to get a breath of fresh air, or otherwise interrupt the meeting in an effort to break participants out of an uncomfortable rut or argument.
5. **Ask for help.** If you're running a book club at a library or school, ask the employees at the institution for advice on how they handle difficult conversations. If the tone of the book club has become excessively negative, consider bringing in an outside moderator.

Occasionally, you may need to consider asking someone to leave the group because their participation is more detrimental than beneficial. As with book selection policies in libraries, it's a good idea to have a policy in place before you begin the book club or establish some guidelines with the group during the first meeting to guide discussions and to use as a more objective determinant for when someone needs to be asked to leave the book club.

# Staying Connected

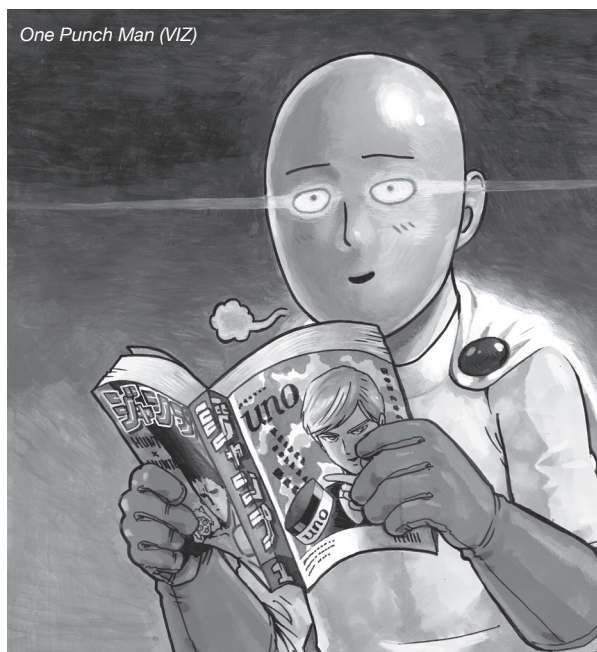
Communication is a pretty essential part of any organization, whether it's a library, school, or your friendly neighborhood manga book club. Stay connected between meetings using these outlets:

**Social media:** Use Facebook groups or Google+ Hangouts to check in with the other members of your book club between meetings. You can send notifications, plan logistics, or contend with sudden scheduling conflicts on these platforms. You can also use these platforms for scheduling and to discuss your next book club pick!

**Blogs:** Use Tumblr or similar blogging sites as a historical document, recording photos and minutes from each meeting to share with each other and with your community.

**Email lists:** Use email lists to send reminders about upcoming meetings and community outreach events.

**Meetup.com:** Web-based platforms such as Meetup are great tools for getting the word out about new book clubs or the latest meeting. Meetup is also a useful tool for identifying people who have similar interests in manga.



# Expanding Beyond the Book Club

A manga book club doesn't have to be all about the books. There are a number of things you can do to make meetings and book club events more exciting:

- **Snacks:** Food and drink are a great way to help people relax during a book club meeting. Get creative and make snacks inspired by the books you read!
- **Movie / TV night:** Many manga have animated or live-action adaptations. Watch the movie or television adaptation of the manga you just read or a movie or show that has a similar plot or themes.
- **Paired reading:** Pair a prose novel with the manga selection and compare how the two differ and how they are the same. Paired reading is also a great way to introduce manga to a traditional book club — after reading a prose novel, encourage members to read a manga adaptation of the prose novel.
- **Parties:** It's OK to meet with nothing more on the agenda than to have fun! Once or twice a year, plan a party to help the members of the group bond over something other than the latest manga book club selection.

## Special Events

A manga book club taps into an often underserved audience, and the enthusiasm for manga can be contagious, especially among younger audiences. In Japan, there are massive fandoms focused on a favorite manga series or other pop culture entertainment, and many fans engage with the material in novel ways:

- **Cosplay:** Short for “costume play,” fans dress up as their favorite characters, often investing significant time and resources into making elaborate costumes and emulating the characters in roleplay. Organize a cosplay event for your book club and the wider community, inviting participants to dress up as their favorite manga characters. You could also invite a professional cosplayer or costume maker to teach a workshop.
- **Doujinshi:** Small-press and self-published manga, or doujinshi, are made and sold at events throughout Japan, including the world's largest exhibition of comics, Comiket, which takes place twice a year in Tokyo. Many doujinshi are fan fiction, or

derivative works based on popular manga, anime, and games. While some doujinshi feature copyrighted characters, they are rarely discouraged by the Japanese copyright holders because they expand the popularity of a series and are printed in very small quantities. Consider hosting a doujinshi event, allowing members of your manga book club and community to share their own self-published comics and fan art.

- **Conventions:** Manga and anime conventions are popular events in Japan, and they've also found a following in the United States. There are sizable events around the country, so you may be able to take a field trip to a convention near your community.

## Community Outreach

As a moderator or member of a manga book club, you can reach the community in the following ways:

- **Banned Books Week:** Volunteer at your local library or school to facilitate the celebration of graphic novels during Banned Books Week, which takes place the last week of September.
- **Professional visits:** Unfortunately, few manga creators visit the United States. If there is a university in or near your community, contact the Asian studies department to see if a member of the faculty can visit your group for a discussion about manga and Japanese pop culture.
- **CBLDF's Comics Connector** is a directory resource that connects educators and librarians with comics professionals who are able to visit classrooms or libraries: <http://cbldf.org/resources/comics-connector/>





# Books to Get You Started

Manga is as expansive and diverse as prose, and there's something available for any age group, maturity level, and interest. We've compiled a list of just a few titles to get you started, but there's so much more to explore! Ask your local librarian or comic shop proprietor for their recommendations as well.

TITLE	CREATOR(S)	PUBLISHER	GENRE	AGE GROUP*	DESCRIPTION
7 Billion Needles (multiple volumes)	Nobuaki Tadano	Vertical	Science Fiction		Follows the life of a teenage girl who is possessed by an alien caught up in an intergalactic manhunt.
Abandon the Old in Tokyo	Yoshihiro Tatsumi	Drawn & Quarterly	Drama		A gritty collection of short stories about Tokyo in the 1960s.
Afterschool Charisma (multiple volumes)	Kumiko Suekane	VIZ	Science Fiction	Teen Plus / 16+	A teenager whose classmates are clones of historical figures tries to find out the real purpose of his boarding school.
Ajin: Demi-Human (multiple volumes)	Tsuina Miura, Gamon Sakurai	Vertical	Horror / Fantasy		A high school student dies in a traffic accident but comes back to life as a near-immortal on the run.
Akira (multiple volumes)	Katsuhiro Otomo	Kodansha	Science Fiction	Teen Plus / 16+	The lives of two streetwise teenage friends change forever when one develops paranormal abilities.
All My Darling Daughters	Fumi Yoshinaga	VIZ	Slice of Life	Teen Plus / 16+	Five short stories centered on 30-something Yukiko, her friends, and her mother.
All You Need is Kill	Ryosuke Takeuchi, Takeshi Obata, Hiroshi Sakurazaka, Yoshitoshi ABe	VIZ	Science Fiction	Teen Plus / 16+	Alien invaders force humans into mechanical battle armor, in which they kill each other and are continually reincarnated.
The Ancient Magus' Bride (multiple volumes)	Kore Yamazaki	Seven Seas	Fantasy	Teen Plus / 16+	A powerful sorcerer engages a troubled teen as his apprentice and bride-to-be.
Another	Yukito Ayatsuji, Hiro Kiyohara	Yen	Horror	All Ages	A high school student tries to find out what is killing his classmates before he dies, too.
Astro Boy (multiple volumes)	Osamu Tezuka	Dark Horse	Science Fiction	Teen / 13+	The robotic Astro Boy battles a deadly underground tank, helps solve a murder, and prevents the world from being destroyed.
Attack on Titan (multiple volumes)	Hajime Isayama	Kodansha	Science Fiction	Teen Plus / 16+	Humans in a post-apocalyptic wasteland battle the gigantic Titans.

TITLE	CREATOR(S)	PUBLISHER	GENRE	AGE GROUP*	DESCRIPTION
Barakamon (multiple volumes)	Satsuki Yoshino	Yen	Comedy / Slice of Life	All Ages	Newly moved to a rural island, a curmudgeonly calligrapher befriends an exuberant young girl.
Barefoot Gen (multiple volumes)	Keiji Nakazawa	Last Gasp	War / Memoir		Nakazawa's classic memoir of the Hiroshima atomic bombing and its aftermath.
The Book of Human Insects	Osamu Tezuka	Vertical	Drama		A young woman becomes a multimedia star by mimicking others' work but leaves a trail of death in her wake.
A Bride's Story (multiple volumes)	Kaoru Mori	Yen Press	Historical Romance	Teen Plus / 16+	As Amir and her husband adjust to their arranged marriage, she strives to find her role as she settles into a new life and home.
Children of the Sea (multiple volumes)	Daisuke Igarashi	VIZ	Fantasy / Mystery	Teen Plus / 16+	Three children try to find out why all the fish in the world have disappeared.
Death Note (multiple volumes)	Tsugumi Ohba, Takeshi Obata	VIZ Media	Horror / Mystery	Teen Plus / 16+	Teenager Light Yagami finds a notebook that will cause the death of anyone whose name is written in it.
Dororo	Osamu Tezuka	Vertical	Horror / Fantasy		A young swordsman's hunt for the demons who stole his body parts.
Dragon Ball (multiple volumes)	Akira Toriyama	VIZ Media	Fantasy / Adventure	All Ages	Goku's quiet life is disrupted when he meets Bulma, who is searching for seven Dragon Balls.
A Drifting Life	Yoshihiro Tatsumi	Drawn & Quarterly	Memoir		An autobiographical account of growing up in post-WWII Osaka.
The Drops of God (multiple volumes)	Tadashi Agi, Shu Okimoto	Vertical	Adventure		About a son's battle to win his deceased father's prized wine collection.
A Drunken Dream and Other Stories	Moto Hagio	Fantagraphics	Science Fiction / Fantasy / Drama		A collection of short stories by the "founding mother" of shojo manga.
Food Wars (multiple volumes)	Yuto Tsukuda, Shun Saeki	VIZ	Comedy	Teen Plus / 16+	A teenager enrolls in a competitive cooking school.
Ghost in the Shell (multiple volumes)	Shirow Masamune	Kodansha	Science Fiction	Mature	The groundbreaking dystopian manga that follows a cyborg super agent's hunt for "ghost hackers."
Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly	Kyoko Okazaki	Vertical	Drama	Mature	Multiple plastic surgeries finally catch up with a top fashion model.
Inuyashiki (multiple volumes)	Hiroya Oku	Kodansha	Science Fiction	Teen Plus / 16+	A man dying of cancer is miraculously healed and soon discovers he has other new powers.

TITLE	CREATOR(S)	PUBLISHER	GENRE	AGE GROUP*	DESCRIPTION
Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service (multiple volumes)	Eiji Otsuka	Dark Horse	Fantasy / Horror / Comedy	Teen Plus / 16+	Five students at a Buddhist college start a business that fulfills the last wishes of the dead.
Lone Wolf and Cub (multiple volumes)	Kazuo Koike, Goseki Kojima	Dark Horse	Action / Adventure	Teen Plus / 16+	The story of a disgraced samurai who, with his young son, seeks revenge on the clan that framed him for the murder of his lord.
Mardock Scramble (multiple volumes)	Tow Ubukata, Yoshitoki Oima	Kodansha	Science Fiction / Mystery	Teen Plus / 16+	A young girl develops special powers after a private investigator saves her life.
Master Keaton (multiple volumes)	Naoki Urasawa, Hokusei Katsushika, Takashi Nagasaki	VIZ	Adventure / Mystery	Teen Plus / 16+	A Japanese-English archeologist and insurance investigator solves cases and fights bad guys around the world.
Monster (multiple volumes)	Naoki Urasawa	VIZ	Mystery / Suspense	Teen Plus / 16+	A surgeon sets out to stop a serial killer whose life he saved years before.
Nijigahara Holograph	Iniio Asano	Fantagraphics	Mystery / Psychological Horror		Children attempt to sacrifice a classmate to a monster they believe lives under their school.
No Longer Human (multiple volumes)	Usamaru Furuya	Vertical	Surreal / Existential		An autobiographical masterpiece exploring what it means to be human.
Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths	Shigeru Mizuki	Drawn & Quarterly	War		A semi-autobiographical account of Japan's final weeks in WWII.
Paradise Kiss (multiple volumes)	Ai Yazawa	Vertical	Drama		A straight-laced student is kidnapped by a group of rogue fashion designers.
Planetes (multiple volumes)	Makoto Yukimura	Dark Horse	Science Fiction	Teen / 13+	Follows a team whose sole job it is to clean up the space debris left by interplanetary travel.
Pluto: Urasawa x Tezuka (multiple volumes)	Naoki Urasawa	VIZ	Drama / Mystery	Teen Plus / 16+	A robot detective must find the elusive murderer behind a string of both human and robot deaths.
Ranma 1/2 (multiple volumes)	Rumiko Takahashi	VIZ Media	Humor / Martial Arts	Teen Plus / 16+	The gender-bending tale of martial artist Ranma.
Real (multiple volumes)	Takehiko Inoue	VIZ	Drama / Sports	Teen Plus / 16+	Three teenagers find a mutual love for playing basketball.
Real Account (multiple volumes)	Okushou, Shimizu Watanabe	Kodansha	Adventure	Teen Plus / 16+	The world of the most popular social networking game becomes reality.

TITLE	CREATOR(S)	PUBLISHER	GENRE	AGE GROUP*	DESCRIPTION
Sakuran	Moyoco Anno	Vertical	Period Drama		A glimpse into the mysterious world of the Edo period pleasure quarter and the life of a young courtesan.
Showa: A History of Japan (multiple volumes)	Shigeru Mizuki	Drawn & Quarterly	Historical		An autobiographical and historical account of Japan's Showa Period.
A Silent Voice (multiple volumes)	Yoshitoki Oima	Kodansha	Drama / Slice of Life	Teen / 13+	An adolescent delinquent wants to redeem himself.
Solanin (multiple volumes)	Inio Asano	VIZ	Romance / Slice of Life	Teen Plus / 16+	Two recent university graduates seek solace and inspiration in music and life's unpredictability.
Summer Wars (multiple volumes)	Mamoru Hosoda, Igura Sugimoto	Vertical	Science Fiction		A math genius combats a malicious A.I.
Sunny (multiple volumes)	Taiyo Matsumoto	VIZ	Drama / Coming of Age	Teen / 13+	Delves into the everyday lives, hopes, and dreams of a group of foster children.
Tropic of the Sea	Satoshi Kon	Vertical	Fantasy		The tale of a family's struggles to protect a mermaid's egg and their town's prosperity.
Two Faces of Tomorrow	James P. Hogan, Yukinobu Hoshino	Dark Horse	Science Fiction	Teen / 13+	Explores how much autonomy artificial intelligence should be given to manage world affairs.
Usubora: The Story of a Novelist	Asumiko Nakamura	Vertical	Drama / Mystery		A psychological tale of suspense and infatuation.
Uzumaki	Junji Ito	VIZ	Horror	Teen Plus / 16+	One quiet town's horrific descent into obsession.
Vagabond (multiple volumes)	Takehiko Inoue	VIZ	Historical / Action / Adventure	Mature	A glimpse into the life of Japan's greatest swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi.
Vinland Saga (multiple volumes)	Makoto Yukimura	Kodansha	Historical / Action / Adventure	Teen Plus / 16+	Set in 11th century Viking-controlled England.
Wandering Son (multiple volumes)	Shimura Takako	Fantagraphics	LGBTQ / Slice of Life		The coming-of-age story of two transgendered friends.
Wolf Children: Ame & Yuki	Mamoru Hosoda	Yen	Fantasy/ Romance	Teen / 13+	The story of a boy who is part wolf and the girl who falls in love with him.
Your Lie in April (multiple volumes)	Naoshi Arakawa	Kodansha	Drama/ Romance	Teen / 13+	A piano prodigy, who can no longer hear the piano, meets a violinist who might be able to help him.

\*Age groups based on publisher classifications. If no age group is listed, the publisher did not specify an intended audience, so consult your librarian or comics bookseller for recommendations.

*Table compiled with the assistance of Eva Volin and Deb Aoki.*

# Resources

## Manga Resources

- *CBLDF Presents Manga: Introduction, Challenges, and Best Practices*, edited by Melinda Beasi. <http://cblldf.myshopify.com/products/manga-introduction-challenges-and-best-practices>
- *Manga! Manga!: The World of Japanese Comics* by Frederik L. Schodt (Kodansha, 2013)
- *Manga: 60 Years of Japanese Comics* by Paul Gravett (HarperDes, 2004)
- *Mechademia: An Annual Forum for Anime, Manga and the Fan Arts*, edited by Frenchy Lunning (multiple volumes, University of Minnesota Press) <http://mechademia.org/>
- “Must Have: Manga for Teens,” recommendations from No Flying No Tights: <http://noflyingnotights.com/2014/04/21/must-have-manga-for-teens-2014-update/>
- “Manga 101: Tips for the Curious, the Confused, and the Clueless,” an introduction to manga by librarian Robin Brenner: [www.readersadvisoronline.com/ranews/oct2008/brenner.html](http://www.readersadvisoronline.com/ranews/oct2008/brenner.html)
- “Manga 101,” a resource from *School Library Journal*: [www.slj.com/2015/06/collection-development/manga-101-a-primer](http://www.slj.com/2015/06/collection-development/manga-101-a-primer)
- “Introduction to Manga for Librarians,” a resource from Kodansha Comics: <http://kodanshacomics.com/2016/01/25/introduction-manga-librarians/>

## Book Club Resources

- *Comic Book Club Handbook*, a resource from CBLDF to help people start a book club for comics and graphic novels: <http://cblldf.org/resources/comic-book-club-handbook/>
- “Book Club,” compiling posts about San Diego-area graphic novel book club meetings from Comic-Con International’s Toucan Blog: <http://www.comic-con.org/toucan/categories/book-club>
- “Starting a Book Club,” from [www.ilovelibraries.org](http://www.ilovelibraries.org), an initiative of the American Library Association: <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/booklovers/bookclub>
- “Book Discussion Groups,” from the American Library Association: <http://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/book-discussion-grps>
- “How to Start a Book Club for Kids,” from PBS Parents: <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/reading-language/reading-tips/how-to-start-a-book-club-for-kids/>
- “Book Groups,” from Great Books, a literacy advocacy program for preK–12: <http://www.greatbooks.org/book-groups-more/book-groups/>

- “The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress,” a general resource from the Library of Congress that provides information about books for various age groups: <http://www.read.gov/cfb/>

## CBLDF Resources

- *CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook 2016*: Everything you need to celebrate Banned Books Week! Boasting a cover by Nate Powell, the artist behind Congressman John Lewis’ acclaimed memoir *March*! **On shelves September 7, 2016!**
- *Raising a Reader! How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!*, CBLDF’s signature resource for parents and educators! Starts at a \$5 donation for a bundle of ten, <http://tinyurl.com/o9zrtsn>
- *CBLDF Defender*, CBLDF’s quarterly news magazine with interviews and the latest censorship news from around the world: <http://cbldf.org/resources/cbldf-defender/>
- “Banned and Challenged Comics,” CBLDF’s online resource compiling case studies about banned and challenged comics: <http://cbldf.org/banned-comic/banned-challenged-comics/>
- Visit <http://cbldf.org/> regularly for news and features, including CBLDF’s ongoing column “Using Graphic Novels in Education,” discussion guides, and more!



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