



COLLECTING COMICS:

A Snapshot of Graphic Novel
Research in Libraries



Welcome to Graphic Novels!

Graphic novels use a combination of unique storytelling devices (Yee, n.d.), typical literary techniques and symbolism to depict ideas such as thought and movement.



Storytelling devices and symbols

Complexity



Not just about superheroes!



Graphic novels can be seen as "a medium," not a genre (Kok, 2024), which means that they are not bound to any genre convention. They are limitless in style, subject and audience.



How Do Graphic Novels Work?

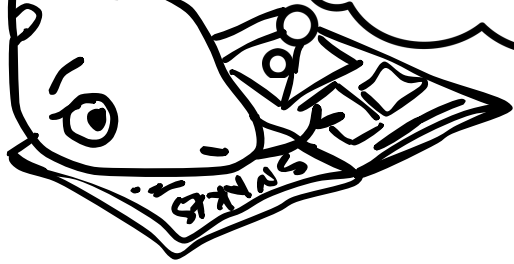
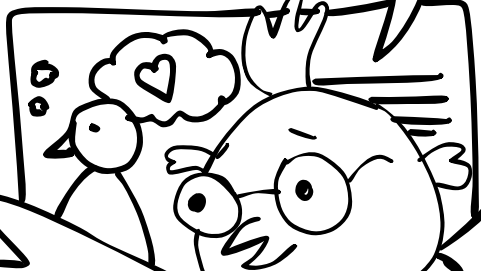
Reading graphic novels is a complex process of decoding information (Cabero et al., 2021).

...and responsiveness into the story.


This allows room for diverse subject matter such as mental health (Hill, 2017) and social justice (Garrison & Gavigan, 2019) to promote feelings of empathy.

Reading them is non-linear (Conners, 2017) and invites the reader's creativity

Graphic novels can be about anyone - and anything.



Intro to Graphic Novel and Library Research



Library research relates to various information behaviours and experiences (Williamson & Johanson, 2017).

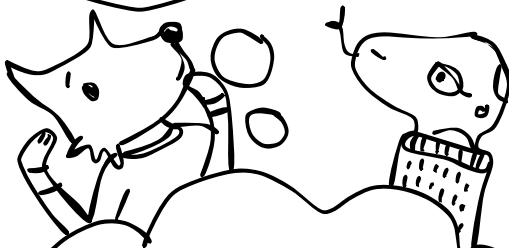
Some Research Highlights

A central theme in the literature is a focus on participants' interpretations of their experiences and memories with reading graphic novels in libraries (Moeller, 2023).

➔ Graphic novels continually show high levels of circulation in libraries (Moeller & Bechel, 2022; Lo et al., 2019) which demonstrates a need for further research into how libraries can better engage with the medium.

What can Graphic Novel & Library Research tell us?

The research is often very practical such as identifying a relationship between Comic Con and library attendees (Schneider & Cannon, 2020) that can be better leveraged.



Graphic novels have also been the subject of intensive investigation, classification and book bans of late (ALIA Graphic, 2023)...

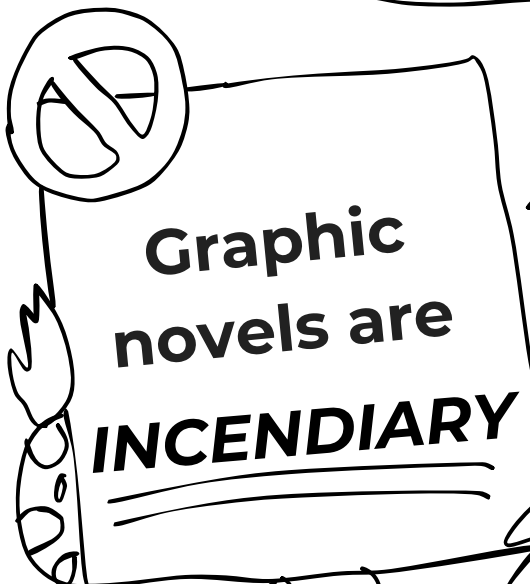


Comic-Conversation




@ Ashfield Library


Stigma and Censorship




**Graphic novels are
INCENDIARY**



And face unique censorship challenges.

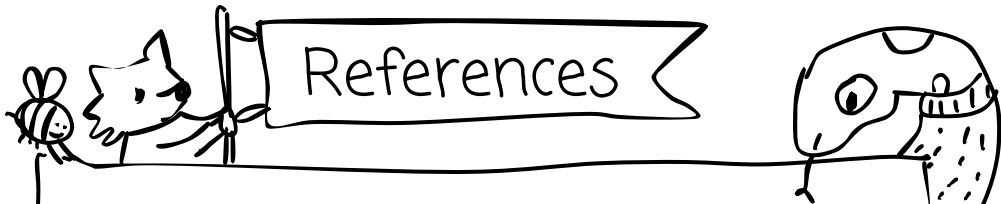


Censorship of books including graphic novels is on the rise (Clark-Hunt & Creel, 2024), with librarians facing internal (stigma) and external challenges (book bans, censure) when selecting graphic novels for their collection (Lo et al., 2019).



Graphic novels need protection and further research.





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Photos of Comic-Conversation at Ashfield Library by Gabby Cundy on behalf of ALIA Graphic Novels and Comics. Illustration by Mary-Helen Daly. All other graphics courtesy of Canva.



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