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**Graphic Novel Notes**

**What is a graphic novel?**

Definition: A narrative work, often told in first person or autobiographical form, in which the story is conveyed to the reader using art

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| --- | --- |
| Graphic Novels | Comic Books |
| * Novel Length (usually 100-400 pages) | * Shorter Length (usually 30-40 pages) |
| * Full Story Arc/Plot | * Serial |
| * More real-world themes | * Usually focused on supernatural/super heroes/comedy |

**How do you read a graphic novel?**

* Read from left to right like a traditional book
* Words and dialogue are the primary focus with the image coming in second
* Transitions happen much faster in a graphic novel compared to a regular book
* Read the text first, then look at the image within that panel before moving on to the text in the next panel
* A rule to remember: the bigger the panel, the more time you should spend looking at it and analyzing it.

**Parts of a Graphic Novel: Vocabulary**

**Layout**

* Panel: a section, usually a box, containing a combination of image and text in endless variety. Panels offer a different experience than simply reading the text.
* Frame: the lines and borders that contain the panels
* Gutter: the space between framed panels
* Bleed: an image that extends to/beyond the edge of the page
* Foreground: the parts closest to the viewer
* Midground: The artist places an image centered or off centered to create visual tension .
* Background: provides additional information for the reader, such as time period and setting
* Splash Page: When one panel takes the entire page (usually used to emphasize emotions)

**Figures**

* Faces: Some faces depict an actual person, others are symbolic.
  + They can be dramatic when placed against a detailed backdrop
  + They can be drawn without much expression or detail, which invites the audience to figure out what the character is thinking. This is called an “open blank”
* Hands and Feet: the position of hands and feet can be used to express what is happening in the story. Hands with palms out might suggest surprise. Hands over the mouth might depict fear, shame, or shyness. Feet that appear in motion might create a sense of panic, urgency.

**Text**

* Captions: these boxes contain a variety of text elements, such as scene-setting, description
* Special-Effects lettering: highlights or draws attention to the text. Think about onomatopoeia in Batman comic strips (Blam! Pow!)
* Speech balloons: these enclose dialogue and come from a specific speaker’s mouth.
  + External dialogue is speech between characters (45)
  + Internal dialogue is a thought enclosed by a balloon that has a series of dots or bubbles going up to it. (97)

