



500 Essential Graphic Novels

Gene Kannenberg , Gene Kannenberg

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500 Essential Graphic Novels is an all-in-one guide to this exciting form of visual literature.

Including more than 350 authors and 400 artists, this lush volume contains an essential mix of some of the finest visually-stunning stories of our time. From politically-charged non-fiction sagas to imaginative fantasy tales, this ultimate guide has something to satisfy everyone's taste.

The first of its kind, this book focuses on each graphic novel separately, honing in on art technique, style and prose, plus an age rating system so parents will know what is suitable for their children. Chapters are divided by genre, complete with individual plot synopses and star-scaled reviews for each book, providing the reader with a concise and balanced understanding of today's best graphic novels.

500 Essential Graphic Novels Details

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mandy says

nice overview of 500 graphic novels. Inclusions/Exclusions are debatable and it all came down to the author's personal preference, I'm sure. I found a lot of the categorizations to be a bit arbitrary. Many of the books in each category could easily fit into at least one other category. Still a nice way to explore graphic novels and comics which I hadn't heard of before, and have added a lot more titles to my to-read shelf while browsing this book tonight.

Anthoferjea says

Found some interesting new stuff. Too much superhero, action, v. male comics for me, but I'm a Lynda Barry/ Charles Burns type of guy so I'm not surprised.

Jaq says

Don't know where to start or you're like me re introducing yourself to the wonderful, awesome universes that the graphic novel can take you to, then this is the book for you.

I loved the way the graphic novels are grouped according to genre - making it easy to dip into the worlds of the superhero or the take a slide into the world at war. This is a great reference material to for the librarian who wants to build a collection of graphic novels for their patrons.

Well written, illustrated and informative to boot!

Smsu Library says

As the graphic novel emerges as a new art form / literary medium, (i.e. MAUS winning the Pulitzer), this would serve as a reference book for both collection development as well as general information on the works. It is also very useful for film, as many of these works have been adapted for the screen quite recently.

This is an excellent source guide that I use quite a bit at the public library (from my own collection) and is written with with an academic audience in mind.

NP

Matthew Noe says

A dated, but still useful tool for collections. That said, I disagree vehemently with so many of the ratings I

can't help but wonder...

Sooraya Evans says

Got a copy of this for a steal at the Big Bad Wolf sale.
A decent guide to some cool graphic novels, broken down by genre.
But some of the titles recommended here were rather disappointing.
So, I'm guessing it was solely based on the author's own personal taste.

George Marshall says

This book fails to deliver the fundamental requirements of a guide (especially an 'ultimate' guide) that you can trust it and can learn from it. I have consistently disagreed with its assessments - for example its glowing praise for the dire 'Can't Get No' (slated by Goodreads reviewers) or its lame criticisms of Jimmy Corrigan ("needs a more interesting subject") which I, and most others, regard as one of the masterpieces of modern comics. Kannenberg has a very poor visual sense, consistently rating storyline over art and overvaluing comics that are very poorly drawn. Nor is he able to assess any work within the history of the medium. Clearly he should never have been invited to write this book. For anyone wanting an excellent guide I recommend the vastly better and truly educational Graphic Novels: Stories to Change Your Life by Paul Gravett.

Zioluc says

Troppe scelte opinabili, troppo americanocentrico. Buono per degli spunti ovviamente.

Andy says

Great introduction for someone like me who's fairly new to graphic novels. I only wish Kannenberg had included next to the graphic novel pub. date the date(s) the individual issues or strips originally appeared. Otherwise, it's a great resource.

Stephen Arnott says

If, like me, you're relatively new to the world of graphic novels you'll find this a solid, comprehensive introduction to the subject.

There are some omissions that some might find surprising (no 'David Boring' for example, rated as the best graphic novel by some) but you can't please everyone.

This book has introduced me to a number of excellent comic series that might have otherwise passed me by.

I have a lot to thank it for.

Jason says

This collection rocks! For anyone who has even a slight interest in graphic novels, I highly recommend this compendium. Kannenberg does an excellent job of reviewing graphic novels from across the world and throughout the span of the past century. I really liked the fact that the book was divided in to genres (i.e. fantasy, horror, superhero, war, etc.). I found myself taking copious notes on titles that I wanted to pick up because the reviews sounded so great. This is a must read!

Jeffrey says

A very good way to be introduced to a broad swath of the best in graphic novels. It unfortunately (but necessarily) can only give the briefest of synopses to many of these works - but it does a great job of getting you interested in a lot of books you might not have come across or been interested in otherwise.

Kurt says

When I might have been reading as a young child, I was watching movies instead. When I finally started reading in my teens, instead of literature aimed at my age group, including Comic Books of all stripes, I dove straight into literature with a capital "L". My first books were THE GRAPES OF WRATH, CATCH 22, and THE HUMAN FACTOR by Graham Greene and I never looked back. In the past couple years though I have discovered the Graphic Novels or Comics that I did not read back in the day. Now WATCHMEN and MAUS are among my favorite books. My relative lack of knowledge led me to read a book cover to cover that I might have otherwise just dipped into from time to time like a reference book: 500 ESSENTIAL GRAPHIC NOVELS. This is a marvelously valuable reference sturdily bound for constant access and book marking--even wedging your foot between pages. Organized by genre, the best of the best is displayed page after page with each book's cover usually a half page tall and often there are brief samples of the work displayed as well. Each has a synopsis and review rating--for quality and age appropriateness. There are indexes to allow searches by titles, artists, writers and publishers. While these are nifty, they aren't perfect. I did notice a few omissions while referencing back and forth. Another odd thing is that the reviews don't always seem to match the star rating given to a particular work. Don't know if these were done independent of each other but it occasionally seemed that way. Each genre subheading has a nice introduction but something I missed was a more comprehensive piece talking about the best graphic novels over all. I may be addicted to lists, but I would have liked a top ten of each genre and then one overall. Sometimes also it was not clear when the original publication date of the work was when they are rating a recent reprint or new collection of older works. But these small quibbles aside, quite the invaluable reference book for someone who knew virtually nothing before I started reading it and I imagine it would hold more than a few surprises for even more hardcore readers.

Tyler says

A pretty decent list of comics. It includes a number that I don't like, but also includes all of my favorites with just few exceptions (notably Three Shadows). Anyway, it gives me some ideas of comics which I would like to read and it makes a great coffee table book.

David says

No doubt there's some great books featured here. Unfortunately, it all but ignores incredible and terrific work, specifically in the super-hero genre, especially the Silver and Bronze Ages. Virtually all of the books listed here are Indie type books. If you're looking for a historically balanced list of recommendations; this book utterly fails.

The authors very narrow preferences clearly trump many obviously missing classic works.
