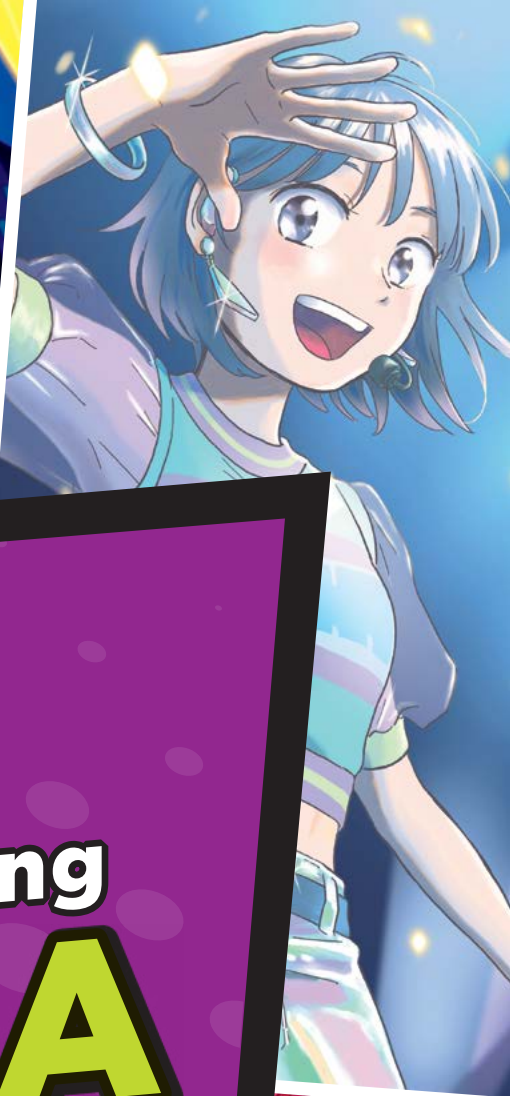




graphix

A Guide to Reading **MANGA** with Children and Teens

NEW FOR
2026

 **SCHOLASTIC**



Art © Hamachi Yamada 2020. Art © 2026 by Dav Pilkey. New art by Motojiro based on original art by Dav Pilkey. Art © HIKARU in the Light! © Mai Matsuda 2021 / Futabasha Publishers Ltd. Art © Trif/ Mecha-Ude Production Committee. Art © Marvel 2025. Art © 2024 by Gurihiru and Tezuka Productions Co., Ltd.

MANGA IS EVERYWHERE!

Around the world, readers of all ages are gravitating more towards comics and graphic novels than ever before, and they are enjoying titles that span every genre and style imaginable. This enthusiasm for comics, graphic novels, and sequential art, alongside the ever-growing influence and distribution of Japanese anime, video games, and other media, has driven a surge in global manga readership.

Scholastic has long been a trusted leader in publishing for kids and teens, and for over twenty years, Scholastic's Graphix imprint has helped parents, teachers, librarians, and readers fall in love with graphic novels. Now, Graphix is proud to expand on what readers love about Graphix titles by presenting manga in English with exciting and fun content curated especially for children and teens. Discover the latest Graphix manga publishing on pages 8–13 and page 16 of this guide.

But what is manga? How is it different than other comics and graphic novels? What does this specific form of comics have to offer readers, particularly when it comes to children and teens, learning, and literacy?

WHAT IS MANGA?

Directly translated as “whimsical pictures,” *manga* refers to comics originally published in Japan and created by mangaka, or professional authors and artists. Visual storytelling has a long history in Japan, and manga has been a widely celebrated part of the Japanese literary landscape for generations. In the 20th and 21st centuries, manga stories have traditionally been serialized in print or online magazines, and often later collected in a series of printed volumes, or *tankōbon*. Most manga is currently published for teen, adult, or “all-ages” audiences. This guide refers to some of these popular manga stories to help demonstrate the breadth and depth of the medium and contextualize manga's place in the broader literary landscape.

Manga is often associated with a particular aesthetic: manga books and magazines are frequently published in black and white, and are usually formatted to read from right to left per Japanese language conventions. However, just as manga publishing has seen crossover between genres and demographics, it has also experienced significant expansion outside of these format norms. Digital publishing and vertical-scrolling mobile comics (such as webtoons) are becoming more popular in Japan, as are full-color manga stories. These shifts represent another chapter in the ongoing evolution of manga publishing.

Manga has narratives that span genres, topics, art styles, and anticipated audience interests. Manga can be action-packed (with popular examples including series like *My Hero Academia*, *Demon Slayer*, *One Piece*, and *Sailor Moon*) and filled with drama, romance, and slice-of-life antics (see stories like *Yotsuba&!*, *Komi Can't Communicate*, and *Fruits Basket*). Some manga series are exaggerated and fantastical, whereas others are more grounded and realistic. Over the years, a tremendous blending of themes and styles has created a rich assortment of manga literature for readers to enjoy.

Find some common terms used to describe and categorize types of manga in the glossary on page 14!

It's important to remember that manga is not defined by one aesthetic or reader demographic, nor is manga a genre. Manga is a medium for visual storytelling that spans a broad array of art styles, subjects, genres, and audiences.

MANGA'S PLACE IN CULTURE AND LITERATURE

Community

While it's hard to estimate exactly how many people across the globe read manga, according to Grand View Research, as of 2024, manga had an estimated global market value of \$15.6 billion. Manga stories—often adapted into popular animated series, or anime—are enjoyed by fans worldwide. Every year, comic and anime conventions are stormed by millions of attendees eager to celebrate their shared fandom, learn more about their favorite series, hear from creators, and cosplay as their favorite characters. Some manga stories are published over many years, with fans that span multiple generations.

Literary Impact

Prior to the 1980s, very few manga stories were published outside of Japan or in other languages, and Japanese comics were regarded as a niche interest in Western culture. In the 21st century, as more Japanese comics stories have been published in other languages and as more audiences discover the vast variety of manga stories and art styles, manga has become increasingly mainstream, standing alongside Western comics and graphic novels. With the expansion of English-language manga publishing, librarians, educators, and caregivers have sought out age-appropriate manga for children and young adults—recognizing it as literature that powerfully motivates kids to read.

Like other comics and graphic novels, manga offers many of the same literacy benefits as prose texts—with the added advantages of encouraging visual and artistic literacies. For some readers, manga can spark increased excitement about reading and can offer pathways to exploring additional forms of literature. Manga also has the power to inform readers' worldview, provide opportunities for studying character growth and story development, provide important scaffolds for developing readers, and foster empathy. Manga can be nuanced, heartfelt, and inspiring, in addition to being visually striking and filled with high-stakes action. Junji Ito's *Uzumaki* and Gengoroh Tagame's *My Brother's Husband* are examples of modern manga classics with significant literary value and genre influence comparable to that of Western graphic novels like Art Spiegelman's *Maus* series, the *Watchmen* series by Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons, and John Higgins, and Raina Telgemeier's *Smile*, within their respective audiences. Manga stories like *Naruto* and the *Sailor Moon* series are additional examples of hugely influential manga stories that have not only fostered a love of reading and literature, but provided generations of children and teens with opportunities to explore and cultivate their understanding of ethics and morality.

Today, manga's rise in global readership is apparent in Western bookstores and libraries, with entire sections dedicated to the medium (often capitalizing on the popularity of the books' associated anime series or live-action adaptations), as well as on social media, websites, and apps, such as WEBTOON and Shonen Jump. Amongst a media landscape dominated by short-form videos and shaped by unprecedented competition for audience engagement, it is encouraging to see readers—especially those newer to reading—flocking to their local libraries and bookstores for the latest volumes of their favorite series.



CAN MANGA PROMOTE LITERACY AND LEARNING?

Literacy and Learning for All

In addition to making reading exciting and engaging, manga helps readers develop visual literacy skills. In the modern world, information often comes via a combination of text and images. This can be true of signs and billboards, instruction manuals, interpersonal communications, or video content like TV shows, movies, and the news. Reading comics and manga can help all readers build the skills necessary to quickly and fluently derive meaning from a combination of text and images and develop their media and literary criticism skills overall.

Literacy and Learning for Emerging and Selective Readers, Language Learners, and Neurodivergent Readers

Like comics and graphic novels, manga offers a unique entry point into books for those who may be new to reading, readers who may demonstrate limited or no interest in prose texts, and language learners. Engrossing stories and compelling visuals keep readers engaged and encourage them to persevere, even when they may struggle with comprehension or decoding. The visual nature of comics and manga gives readers multimodal context clues to help them understand words they may be unfamiliar with or are unsure how to pronounce, and to understand how body language and facial expressions can indicate a speaker's tone or mood. Additionally, the pacing of these stories encourages multiple read-throughs, which are a key tool to improve reading comprehension. Repeat reading empowers readers to make thematic connections and deepen their understanding of how visual or textual elements enhance a story.

These features of manga can also support neurodivergent readers, who may not find enough unique sensory inputs in prose texts to maintain long-term focus. The complex visual elements of graphic novels and manga offer a broader range of sensory input per page that motivates sustained engagement at the reader's own pace.

Domain-Specific Knowledge

Because manga stories can cover a multitude of topics, they have the potential to build readers' domain-specific knowledge (information unique to a particular topic or discipline) within a variety of subjects. For example, the *Demon Slayer* series may encourage readers to learn more about Japan's Taishō period and the folklore behind Japanese yokai—mysterious beings like tengu (trickster demons) and kitsune (shape-shifting foxes). *Hikaru in the Light!* teaches readers about Japan's affinity for pop idols. Sports manga like the *Haikyuu!!* series or *Medalist* may encourage a reader to try volleyball or figure skating. Stories like *Thermae Romae* offer insight into Roman and Japanese history and bathing cultures, and manga series like *Kitchen Princess* and *Food Wars* can encourage readers to re-create dishes in their home kitchens. Manga can be a gateway to learning and other forms of literature, especially for selective or emerging readers, as they discover their interests within the many genres and subjects found in this form of storytelling.

Sustained Interest

While Western graphic novels can take years to produce and publish, manga titles are often published within shorter intervals of time (more like Western serialized comic books). As a result of this faster publishing pace, many manga stories quickly become long-running series that can span tens of volumes and follow a wide range of characters and story arcs. The reduced wait time between installments supports sustained narrative continuity and deep character development as well as cliffhanger endings that heighten reader anticipation for the next volume. Manga series are uniquely positioned to keep readers engaged over long periods of time as they continue to build literacy skills, social-emotional skills, and domain-specific knowledge.



MANGA AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Emotional Awareness

Like other types of comics and graphic novels, manga is fantastic for encouraging social-emotional growth. Unlike prose texts, visual storytelling allows readers to see emotions on characters' faces and interpret their body language. Additionally, artistic techniques such as color choice, linework, panel and page composition, and sequential pacing can heighten emotional resonance. Delicate lines, bold brushstrokes, background patterns, and iconography (or manpu) also help communicate characters' feelings, which can range from subtle and nuanced to exaggerated or comical. This can be especially helpful for readers who may struggle to interpret body language or facial cues in social contexts. In these texts, readers can see the very clear emotions as well as what caused them, helping readers develop relational skills in their own lives.

Model Characters

Character growth and relationships are a central theme in many manga series. Protagonists are often teenagers or in their early twenties, which can offer younger readers aspirational role models. Because many manga stories take place over multiple volumes or books, protagonists have ample time and opportunity to meet scores of other characters and observe all types of relationships. Manga characters can be ideal models for self-actualization, patience, tenacity, navigating relationships, building community, and more—so much so that organizations like Geek Therapeutics use various manga characters and stories to help clients of all ages navigate social or emotional issues.

Cultural Awareness

Exposure to cultures and experiences that differ from readers' own helps build empathy and increases readers' awareness of the complexity and vibrancy of the world they inhabit. Because manga originated in Japan, and many manga stories take place in Japan or incorporate aspects of its history and culture, this medium offers unique, accessible entry points to learning more about Japan and other Asian countries' languages, history, and contemporary life.

WHY MANGA IN CLASSROOMS AND LIBRARIES?

Many educators and librarians include manga in their classrooms, curriculum, and collections. Including manga in educational spaces and activities can be an exciting way to engage readers, diversify texts, and even differentiate learning! In the classroom, manga titles provide the unique benefits of:

- **Being novel, compelling, and exciting.** Manga looks and feels different than prose texts, but it offers just as much opportunity for literacy development and learning.
- **Expanding readers' worldview.** Manga can be an accessible and authentic way to expose readers to different customs and cultures, and present them with new ideas and ways of life.
- **Making readers feel seen and valued.** Presenting manga as texts for study and analysis will affirm and engage readers who already love manga and anime.
- **Building visual literacies.** Manga offers tools to scaffold literacy development and opportunities for art analysis and critical thinking.
- **Approachability and confidence-building.** Prose novels with high page counts can be intimidating to some readers, especially those with developing reading skills, while manga titles with similarly high page counts may have a higher ratio of images to text to tell their stories. Including manga in learning environments and curricula allows readers to build reading confidence and subject exploration as they devour more accessible, but equally rich, texts.



Art © HIKARU In the Light! © Mai Matsuda 2021 / Futaba Publishers Ltd.

SUPPORT FOR READING MANGA

Page and Panel Orientation

Most manga was originally written in Japanese, which reads right to left (the opposite direction from English). In order to enjoy the artwork as it was originally created, some manga published in English also reads right to left. With manga that reads right to left, hold the book so the spine is on the right and the cover opens on the left. You'll turn the pages from left to right and start reading at the top right corner of each page, working your way across the page and down from right to left (It can help to imagine your eyes are drawing a backwards Z as you read). If this style of reading is new to you, keep trying! Your skill will develop with practice.

Honorifics

The Japanese language uses a system of honorifics, which are usually special endings added to a person's name (for example: "Hikaru-chan"). Honorifics can tell you a lot about how people relate to each other. They can communicate closeness between two people, politeness and respect, and age or seniority. By including the original Japanese honorifics in the English translation, we are able to preserve this special meaning from the original work.

You may encounter these common honorifics:

- san**: Generally used with strangers and friends, shows politeness and respect
- chan**: For those who are dear to you, with a hint of cuteness; often used by girls, children, and close friends
- kun**: A standard polite honorific for boys
- sama**: One level above **-san**, this honorific conveys great respect
- senpai**: An honorific used to address one's senior in a school, workplace, or club environment. "Senpai" can also be used as a standalone title.
- sensei**: An honorific used to address teachers, doctors, creators, and other authority figures. Use of **-sensei** shows respect toward someone who has achieved a high level of mastery in their profession. "Sensei" can also be used as a standalone title.

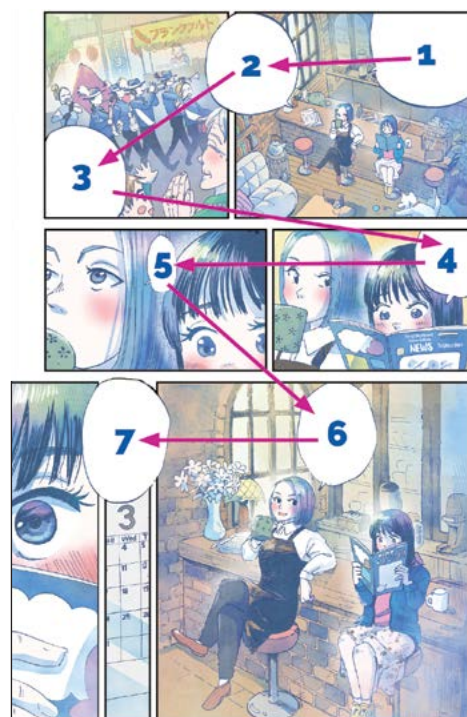
When no honorific is used with a name, it means that two people are very close—usually family members or close friends. It is a special privilege to call someone by name without an honorific!

Reading Tips

Pacing: When reading manga, panels often flow into one another with overlapping text bubbles and onomatopoeias, and readers might sometimes move *too* quickly from one panel or page to the next in anticipation of what will happen next—especially in high-stakes sequences! Encourage developing readers, particularly those new to manga, to remember to slow down and take in the details. This can help if readers are struggling to retain and comprehend information as they read.

Reading Order: With practice, reading panels and speech bubbles in order from right to left will become second nature. That said, those new to manga may find themselves confused if they have accidentally viewed speech bubbles or panels out of order. If readers are confused, encourage them to flip a few pages back, slow down, and take in everything on the page. Readers may need to try reading the text in a different order, and you can have them refer to the reading order diagram on this page. They may also want to start with manga series that are published left to right, such as *Unico Awakening*, which provide an entry point into the medium and allow readers to become familiar with the style and flow before moving on to manga publications with the more traditional right to left order.

Words and Pictures Are Equally Important: In comics, graphic novels, and manga, the pictures and written words work in harmony to convey settings, moods, actions, and emotions as they unfold in the story. When evaluating readers for retention and understanding, make sure to ask them about details in the images as well as the written text.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR ANY MANGA

Factual Recall: For many readers, manga might be an unfamiliar medium. Reading from right to left or learning to synthesize images and text may be new skills. During and after reading, it is important to make sure readers have a grasp of the plot and events within the book. Begin by asking them to summarize the book and ask them specific questions to ensure they remember and understand important plot details explicitly stated in the text and images.

Inferencing: Inferencing is a skill that requires readers to understand why things happen, subtle implications hinted at within the text and images, and what is happening in the page's gutters (the spaces in between panels). Ask readers why certain events happened or why characters made specific decisions. The answers to these questions may not be found explicitly in the text or images, but they can offer clues that may lead to inferred explanations.

Character Change and Growth: Even in a single volume of a manga series, protagonists often experience change and growth. Ask readers about character traits for various characters and ask them to explain how characters have changed throughout the book and why. Then ask readers if they can relate to the characters and how they can aspire to incorporate the characters' best qualities into their own lives.

Literary Themes: Manga features many of the same literary themes as other comics and prose texts. Common themes include identity, perseverance, good vs. evil, morality, and coming of age, amongst others. Ask readers to identify the book's themes and how they appear and develop throughout the book. Make sure they cite evidence from the text and images.

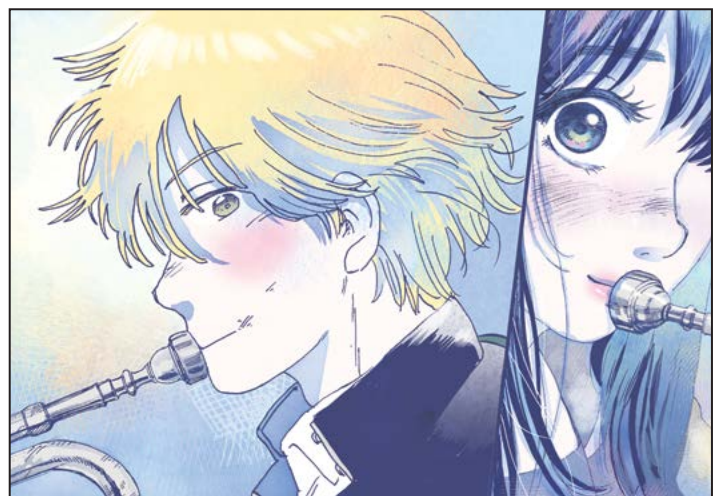
Cultivating Empathy: Characters and situations in manga can help students cultivate empathy for people in circumstances and cultures different from their own. Ask readers to identify characters' feelings in specific moments of the story and why they're feeling that way, using the artwork and facial features to help. You can also ask readers if they agree or disagree with characters' actions and decisions, and why. These offer opportunities for group discussion and for readers to hear the perspectives of others based off their lived experiences. This way, they are not only developing empathy through the characters in the book, but also through and with their peers.

Cultural and Historical Questions: Readers may have questions about certain cultural or historical topics referenced within the books they are reading. Depending on the book, this could range from explicit references to the history of Japan or other countries, to everyday cultural practices surrounding things such as food, school, or social customs. Ask readers what questions they had while reading about historical references or cultural practices in the book, and ask them specifics such as "What did you think about _____?" or "How was _____?"

For books with specific domain knowledge (such as *Hikaru in the Light!*'s focus on Japan's bathing and pop idol cultures), interested readers can be encouraged to learn more about these topics.

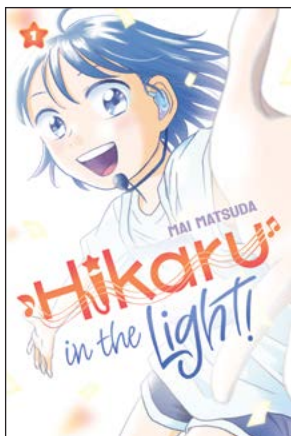
Art Analysis: Like Western comics, manga features many different art styles and techniques. Stylistic choices are made intentionally to enhance mood and emotion and to heighten certain moments. In addition, composition (where certain elements are placed and why) is crucially important to the artwork's impact and the reader's understanding of what is happening. Ask readers questions about how specific elements of the artwork impact their comprehension of the story as well as the characters' motivations and emotions. Ask readers to identify specific techniques such as linework, color choice (if applicable), composition, etc. that the artist uses to convey information and feelings.

Plot Analysis and Comparison: Although manga stories can be long-running and span many volumes, most include identifiable story arcs that are contained within one or a few volumes. When paired with other literature, it is easy to see how some manga adhere to familiar plot structure conventions (such as the Hero's Journey archetype), while others chart their own path. Readers can use this to become more familiar with plot devices and structure while also recognizing their flexibility and variety in implementation.

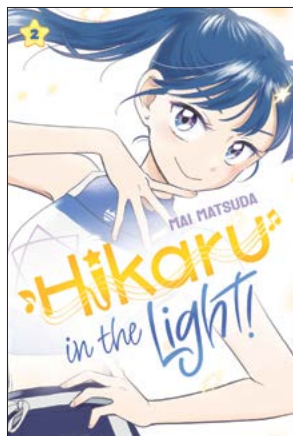


Art © Hamachi Yamada 2020

ABOUT HIKARU IN THE LIGHT!



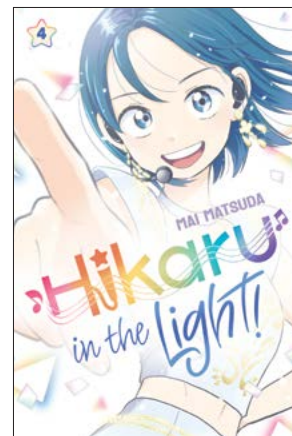
Hikaru in the Light! (Volume 1)
by Mai Matsuda
HC: 9781546140993 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546140986 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Hikaru in the Light! (Volume 2)
by Mai Matsuda
HC: 9781546141020 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546141013 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Hikaru in the Light! (Volume 3)
by Mai Matsuda
HC: 9781546141051 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546141044 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Hikaru in the Light! (Volume 4)
by Mai Matsuda
HC: 9781546141082 • \$25.99
PB: 9781546141075 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7

American Manga Awards Nominee: Best New Manga
ALA Best Graphic Novels for Children Reading List
Freeman Book Award Honorable Mention
Texas Maverick Reading List
SLJ Best Book of the Year

Best friends compete for the once-in-a-lifetime chance to become pop stars in this funny, feel-good manga series told in 4 volumes.

Middle-school student Hikaru Ogino is known as the songbird of her family's bathhouse in Tokyo. Her beautiful singing echoes from room to room as she cleans up after school, but she dreams of holding a microphone, not a mop! When her best friend, Ran—a former girl group idol—invites her to try out for a pop star survival camp together, it's the chance of a lifetime to put her talents to the test. Can Hikaru outshine the competition and make her stage debut, or will she fall flat?

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Mai Matsuda is a manga artist from Chiba, Japan. Her works include *Houkago Kitaku Biyori* and *Kinshi-chou Night Survive*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for *Hikaru in the Light! (Volume 1)*

1. In Chapter 1, Ran tells Hikaru, "If you can put in the effort, that means you're already a special person" (p. 45). Do you agree with Ran's statement? Why or why not?
2. By the end of Chapter 1, what have you learned about Japanese idol culture? What is and isn't valued in idols? How does "Girls in the Light" promise to be different? Use evidence from the text and images to support your answer.
3. Why do you think Hikaru declines Ran's offer to audition with her to be an idol? Why does Hikaru say that she's "better off singing in a public bath?" (p. 36)?
4. What are some of Hikaru's personality traits? Which of her traits allow her to be successful during the audition process? How about Ran?
5. Do you think that Producer Hayama gave fair criticism and feedback to Ran in the 2nd round audition? How would you feel if you received that feedback?
6. At the end of Chapter 5, consider how Hikaru has changed since the beginning of the book. Use evidence from the text and images to support your answers.
7. What do you think "youth" means? Do you agree with the definition given by Ran or Hikaru's parents? What do you think influences each character's definition of "youth"?
8. During the Survival Camp, Hikaru notices all of the "special" girls around her. Do you think that Hikaru is special? Why or why not? Does Hikaru think she's special? How do you handle situations when you are around "special" people? What can you learn from Hikaru in this situation?
9. The book makes frequent use of thought bubbles and captions. How does knowing the character's inner thoughts change the reading experience? How would the book be different without thought bubbles and captions?

ABOUT MECHA-UDE: MECHANICAL ARMS



Mecha-Ude: Mechanical Arms (Volume 1)

by Yoshino Koyoka and TRiF Studio
HC: 9781546142560 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546142553 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Mecha-Ude: Mechanical Arms (Volume 2)

by Yoshino Koyoka and TRiF Studio
HC: 9781546142591 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546142584 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Mecha-Ude: Mechanical Arms (Volume 3)

by Yoshino Koyoka and TRiF Studio
HC: 9781546142621 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546142614 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Mecha-Ude: Mechanical Arms (Volume 4)

by Yoshino Koyoka and TRiF Studio
HC: 9781546142652 • \$25.99
PB: 9781546142645 • \$12.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7

Based on the anime by Okamoto and TriF, currently available on Crunchyroll!

An ordinary middle-school student's life takes a thrilling turn when he encounters a powerful mechanical being in this exciting new manga series told in 4 volumes.

Kita-Kagami City is a pretty normal town . . . except that some people have gotten their hands on Mecha-Ude: powerful, sentient, mechanical beings that attach themselves to their human hosts and have awesome capabilities. When middle-school student Hikaru accidentally activates a mysterious Mecha-Ude named Alma, he forms an unlikely bond with the talking arm. But where did Alma come from? And why are shadowy organizations with dangerous Mecha-Ude of their own suddenly after them, determined to capture Alma at all costs?

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Yoshino Koyoka is a manga artist based in Tokyo. Her works include the manga adaptation of *Aria the Scarlet Ammo*. Loves: robots and tokusatsu films. Dislikes: raw eggs and raw fish (despite being Japanese).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for *Mecha-Ude: Mechanical Arms (Volume 1)*

1. Why do you think the voices and lit-up sky at the Kagami building catch Hikaru's attention?
2. At the end of Chapter 1, the text reads, "This is just the story . . . of how I might have taken a tiny little step toward growing up" (p. 22). By the end of Volume 1, do you think Hikaru has grown? Use evidence from the text and images to support your answers.
3. Hikaru notes that Alma is "nothing but trouble" (p. 59) yet he passes up many opportunities to simply leave Alma behind. Why doesn't Hikaru leave Alma?
4. Why do you think Alma might be called "The Trigger Arm"?
5. Why do you think Aki agrees to train Hikaru?
6. Who do you think created the Mecha-Ude? Do you think it was ARMS, or the Kagami Group? Why do you think that?
7. How do you think Hikaru might be feeling at the end of Volume 1? Why do you think that?
8. Why do you think he can power Alma even though Hikaru doesn't have enough arbitrium to do so?

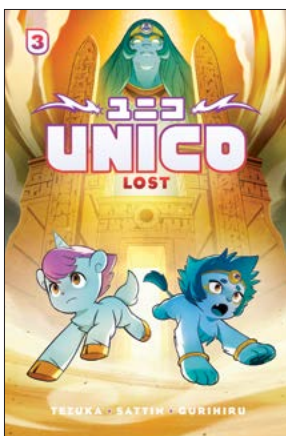
ABOUT UNICO AWAKENING



Unico: Awakening (Volume 1)
by Samuel Sattin and Gurihiru
based on Unico by Osamu Tezuka
HC: 9781339036342 • \$24.99
PB: 9781339036335 • \$12.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Unico: Hunted (Volume 2)
by Samuel Sattin and Gurihiru
based on Unico by Osamu Tezuka
HC: 9781546110477 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546110460 • \$12.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Unico: Lost (Volume 3)
by Samuel Sattin and Gurihiru
based on Unico by Osamu Tezuka
HC: 9781546111221 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546111214 • \$12.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7

"A spellbinding masterpiece."
—Dav Pilkey, #1 bestselling
creator of *Dog Man*

A National Bestseller

**CBC KIDS FAVORITES Award
Winner**

SLJ Best Book of the Year

**An adventure across space
and time awaits!**

Unico Awakening tells the incredible story of a young unicorn who, after enraging the evil goddess Venus, is banished from the heavens and forgets all he once was. Saved from oblivion by the kindhearted West Wind, Unico continues to help others, before having to escape Venus again and begin a new adventure.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Osamu Tezuka (1928–1989) was a visionary Japanese cartoonist, animator, and film producer. His prolific output, pioneering techniques, and innovative redefinitions revolutionized Japanese comics and anime and he is often honored as the "God of Manga."

Gurihiru is an Eisner Award–winning illustration team based out of Saitama, Japan. Though widely known for their work in American comics, they also work in games, manga, and anime in Japan. Their clients include Disney Japan, Nintendo, Square Enix, Tsuburaya Production, and many others. Major works include *It's Jeff*, *Superman Smashes the Klan*, *Gwenpool*, *The Unstoppable Wasp*, and *Spider-Man & Venom: Double Trouble*.

Samuel Sattin is an American writer. His books include the Eisner-nominated *Buzzing*, *Side Quest*, *The Silent End*, and (as co-author) both *A Kid's Guide to Anime & Manga* and *The Essential Anime Guide: 50 Iconic Films, Standout Series, and Cult Masterpieces*. He has also adapted the Academy Award–nominated films *Wolfwalkers*, *Song of the Sea*, and *The Secret of Kells* to the graphic novel format. He graduated with an MFA in comics from the California College of the Arts and works as a studio writer for Schulz Creative Associates, aka Snoopy Central. Samuel resides with his wife in San Francisco, and travels frequently to Japan.

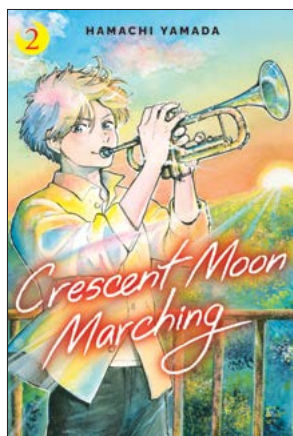
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for *Unico: Awakening (Volume 1)*

1. After reading *Unico: Awakening*, what do you think the book has to say about the relationship between humans and nature? How is this illustrated throughout the book?
2. Venus is supposed to be the goddess of love and beauty. Why does she act the way she does? What is her ultimate goal?
3. On pages 43–44, Zephyrus says, "Was Venus always so cruel? No. Long ago, she feared beauty's power, even as she shaped it. Now she doesn't create, she only consumes." What do you think Zephyrus means by this? Why might Venus have changed?
4. What do you notice about the artwork and panel layouts (how the panels are arranged) on pages depicting Earth and pages depicting goddesses, winds, and places beyond Earth? What makes these pages different from each other? Why do you think the creators made these choices?
5. What initially leads Chloe to ask Unico to make her a human? How does her reasoning for this request change throughout the book? What does Unico think about Chloe's request, and why is he hesitant to agree?
6. What does the reader know or learn about Granny throughout the book? What can the reader infer about Granny, and what remains unknown? What about Byron, the hunter? Why do you think Venus says that "he is an easy kind to sway" (p. 111)?
7. What does the book teach us about kindness and caring for others? How do various characters use love and kindness, and how do other characters react to it?
8. Why does Chloe go to see Byron even though Unico tells her not to? Why doesn't Chloe sense that Byron is a dangerous person, even though other animals do? What does Byron want with Chloe?

ABOUT CRESCENT MOON MARCHING



Crescent Moon Marching (Volume 1)
by Hamachi Yamada
HC: 9781546186274 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546186267 • \$11.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7



Crescent Moon Marching (Volume 2)
by Hamachi Yamada
HC: 9781546186304 • \$25.99
PB: 9781546186298 • \$12.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7

A new student dreams big and finds inspiration and friendship when she joins the ultra-competitive high school marching band in this full-color manga for fans of *Haikyu!!* and *Hikaru in the Light*!

Mizuki has never played a musical instrument. She's never marched in time with a group (it's harder than it looks!). And she's never spent time on school activities when she could be studying. But after leaving behind her high-stress high school in Tokyo and moving to small-town Akita with her aunt, she's looking for a fresh start. And when she crosses paths with Akira, a cute-but-grumpy trumpet player who introduces her to their school marching band, this may be just the chance she needs to take a leap and find herself.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Hamachi Yamada won the 16th Kamikaze Prize in 2019 for her one-shot *Aitsu wa Sorairo no Kuruma de (He Drove a Sky-Blue Car)* and made her serialized manga debut in 2020 with *Crescent Moon Marching*. Her other major works include *Hanaikeru: Kawakita Koukou Kadou-bu (Hanaikeru: Kawakita High School Flower Arrangement Club)*. She lives in Japan.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for *Crescent Moon Marching (Volume 1)*

1. Before reading the book: what do you know about marching bands? Have you ever seen a marching band perform? Have you ever been a part of a marching band or known someone who was? Based on your knowledge (or lack thereof), what are your expectations for this story?
2. The first chapter is titled "I'll Look Up as I Walk." How does this sentence relate to Mizuki's life experiences and her new adventures in Akita?
3. Auntie Yukie says to Mizuki, "Once you find something that sets your heart racing . . . Don't let go of it. You'll regret it when you're older" (p. 39). Why do you think some people "let go" of their passions, particularly as they get older?
4. What does Akira think of Mizuki when she joins the marching band? Does his opinion of her change throughout the book? If so, how? Use evidence from the text and images to support your answer.
5. What is it about marching band that sets Mizuki's "heart racing"? What motivates her to pursue it?
6. The fundamentals of marching band (formation and marching) may seem easy to an outsider, but they are actually quite difficult to master. Can you think of other skills or activities that appear easy but are difficult to master?
7. When Mizuki begins to second-guess her choice of instrument, Megumi responds, "I get what you mean with being right or not for something . . . [but] that's something you can overcome if you really love it enough" (p. 99). How does Megumi exemplify this sentiment? Do you agree with Megumi? What is the difference, if any, between "being right for" for something and loving something?
8. How would you describe Akira's style of communication? How are his comments received by others?
9. Do you think the trumpet section leader is right to ask Mizuki not to play in the competition? Why or why not? What advice might you give Mizuki in that situation?
10. On p. 132, Mizuki says, "But there is something I can do in two weeks." Use evidence from the text and images to make an inference about what Mizuki was referring to.
11. How would you describe the tone of the book? How do the text and images contribute to its tone?
12. How do you think the book, and/or your reading experience, might change if a similar story were told with an American setting, characters, or creator?

ABOUT SPIDER-MAN: SHADOW WARRIOR



Spider-Man: Shadow Warrior
by Shogo Aoki
HC: 9781546148494 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546148470 • \$12.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 9–12 • Grades 4–7

CBC KIDS FAVORITES Award Winner

CBC OMG: Only for Middle Graders Book List Selection

A cool new manga format for Spider-Man, one of the most iconic characters of all time! A reimagined Peter Parker, Miles Morales, and Gwen Stacy travel to feudal Japan to take on the Kingpin in this original manga from Japanese writer/illustrator Shogo Aoki!

Travel to a parallel universe where the shogunate still rules Japan and the evil Kingpin, Wilson Fisk, has fled America to establish himself as Governor of Edo. Spider-Man, Miles Morales, and Ghost-Spider are hot on his trail. But the Kingpin has a trick up his sleeve: He's brought an alien parasite capable of granting extraordinary powers. When a young man named Hyo accidentally bonds with the symbiote and seemingly transforms into the infamous Venom, things go from bad to worse!

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Shogo Aoki is a manga artist and illustrator who launched his career with his one-shot story "Mina Harker" that was published on "Good! Afternoon" magazine from Kodansha in October 2015. For Tokyo Comic Con 2018, he drew a Japan limited edition variant cover for "Amazing Spider-Man #12" and now works on several Japanese manga magazines. His latest ongoing work is "Goblin Slayer Side Story Daikatana," which is published by Square Enix.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS *for Spider-Man: Shadow Warrior*

1. Who is your favorite Spider-Hero?
2. *Spider-Man: Shadow Warrior* takes place in nineteenth-century Japan, and its characters are unique versions of themselves—even though they share names and other qualities with similar characters featured in other Spider-Man media, games, and comics. Can you think of other examples of this storytelling technique in popular culture? Why might creators choose to tell stories this way?
3. Many stories begin "in medias res," which means "in the middle of the narrative or plot" (Merriam-Webster). *Spider-Man: Shadow Warrior* begins in the middle of an action scene between Spider-Man and Kingpin. Does this mean it begins "in medias res"? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of Hyo's decision to investigate Kingpin's manor after being revived by the symbiote? Would you have acted similarly or differently? Why?
5. On p. 49, Kingpin tells to Hyo, "I reduced security on purpose to make sure you ended up right where I wanted you!" Between pages 39–49, what visual clues indicate that Hyo was walking into a trap?
6. In Chapter 3, Spider-Man and his team agree to retreat, rather than fight Kingpin. Why do they do this? What do you think about this decision?
7. At the end of the book, which story threads are left unresolved? What do you think might happen in a sequel?
8. On p. 144, Hyo says, "This is my fault . . . I wanted so badly to be stronger . . . But even after Kuromitsu the symbiote merged with me, I didn't make any effort to change . . . I'm hopeless." Do you think Hyo is right? Why or why not? What does he understand correctly, and what does he misunderstand?
9. What is the significance of each chapter title? How does each relate to the events of that chapter?
10. Many manga, like *Spider-Man: Shadow Warrior*, are produced in black-and-white. How can the color palette of a book affect your reading experience? How might your experience of reading this book be different if the art was full-color?
11. Near the end of the book, Hyo's father says, "With great power comes great responsibility." Versions of this phrase have appeared in Spider-Man media since 1962, and it gained mainstream recognition thanks to the 2002 live-action film. What does this phrase mean to you?
12. How is this Spider-Man manga different from other Spider-Man comics? Why do you think Shogo Aoki decided to use manga to tell a Spider-Man story?

ABOUT CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS: THE FIRST EPIC MANGA



Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga
Written and adapted by Dav Pilkey
Artwork by Motojiro
HC: 9798225016715 • \$24.99
PB: 9781546151210 • \$14.99
Also available in ebook
Ages 7 & Up • Grades 2 & Up

“Pure fun.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Dynamic, clever, and funny.” —*School Library Journal*

The #1 global bestselling Captain Underpants series returns! Based on the first sensational chapter book, it's a reimagined adventure perfectly paired with all-new manga artwork. *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga* is written and adapted by Dav Pilkey, illustrated by manga artist Motojiro, and totally reinvented for a new generation of readers. Tra-la-laaa!

Following the story arc of the first original chapter book, *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga* is reenvisioned as an engaging graphic novel reading in Western style (left to right). With dynamic manga artwork by Japanese artist Motojiro, all-new Flip-O-Ramas, and much more, it will captivate existing fans, capture new readers, and appeal to comics, manga, and anime aficionados alike! Motojiro's full-color artwork incorporates beautifully rendered, untranslated Japanese sound effects, lending authentic manga flair to a book that reads left to right in the Western style. Readers who are curious about these sound effects can find a full list of pronunciations and translations on PlanetPilkey.com.

Combining humor and action with empowerment and empathy, *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga* features the amazing adventures of best friends George Beard and Harold Hutchins and their waistband warrior superhero creation, Captain Underpants!

ABOUT THE CREATORS

When **Dav Pilkey** was a kid, he was diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. Dav was so disruptive in class that his teachers made him sit out in the hallway every day. Luckily, Dav loved to draw and make up stories. He spent his time in the hallway creating his own original comic books—the very first adventures of Dog Man and Captain Underpants. In the second grade, Dav's teacher ripped up his comics and told him he couldn't spend the rest of his life making silly books. Fortunately, Dav was not a very good listener.

Motojiro has been creating manga for over thirty years. His work includes a wide range of stories, including the Time Warp series and the Battle Brave series (Asahi Shimbun Publications). Motojiro also creates manga for educational materials for elementary and junior high students. He is a member of the Japan Cartoonists Association and lives in Japan.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga*

1. Before reading this book: based on your understanding of manga, how do you expect this book to be different from other Captain Underpants books?
2. Many comics feature sound effects, or onomatopoeia, in the illustrations. In this book, they are written using Japanese characters. How does this affect your reading experience? Does reading the “Notes and Fun Facts” section at the back of the book change your understanding of the story?
3. What does the word “responsible” mean as used on p. 8? What is the joke being made on this page?
4. Why does Doctor Diaper want to blow up the moon? What is your opinion about Doctor Diaper's ultimate goal?
5. Why do you think Doctor Diaper says, “I went to Yale!!!” after correcting people who call him “Mister Diaper”?
6. Why do George and Harold choose to change Captain Underpants back into Mr. Krupp? Why don't they leave him as Captain Underpants?
7. Do you think George and Harold have learned anything by the end of the book? Use evidence from the text and images to support your answer.
8. What role does imagination play in *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga*?
9. What is your favorite funny moment in *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Manga*? What about the text and/or images makes that moment funny?

RECOMMENDED READING

Learning about Manga

A History of Modern Manga: The Beginner's Guide to Manga and Anime
by Shuichiro Takeda

A History of Modern Manga by Insight Editions

A Kid's Guide to Anime & Manga: Exploring the History of Japanese Animation and Comics written by Samuel Sattin & Patrick Macias,
illustrated by Utamaru

Manga edited by Nicole Rousmaniere and Ryoko Matsuba

Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics by Frederik L. Schodt

One Thousand Years of Manga by Brigitte Koyama-Richard

Understanding Manga and Anime by Robin E. Brenner

Mangasplaining podcast created by Deb Aoki, David Brothers,
Christopher Butcher, and Chip Zdarsky/Steven Murray

Manga Mavericks podcast hosted by Colton Solem and LumRanmaYasha

Manben: Behind the Scenes of Manga with Naoki Urasawa
documentary series by NHK WORLD-JAPAN

Teaching with Manga

Manga in Libraries: A Guide for Teen Librarians by Jillian Rudes

Manga Goes to School: Cultivating Engagement and Inclusion in K-12 Settings by Ashley Hawkins, Emily Ratica,
Sara Smith, Julie Stivers, and Sybil "Mouna" Touré

Manga adaptations of classic literature published by Manga Classics

Teaching with Comics and Graphic Novels: Fun and Engaging Strategies to Improve Close Reading and Critical Thinking in Every Classroom by Tim Smyth



GLOSSARY

anime: a Japanese term referring to animated movies or TV shows. Although many anime series are based on manga, original anime stories are also very popular.

cosplay: a combination of the words “costume” and “play,” cosplay is the art of dressing up as a favorite character from manga, anime, or other pop culture properties. Many cosplay artists spend considerable amounts of time and effort crafting their garments and accessories.

manpu: the visual symbols used in manga to express emotions, movement, humor, or moods.

mecha: short for “mechanical,” “mecha” often refers to giant robots, spaceships, tanks, robotic weaponry, and vehicles with futuristic features.

shōjo manga: “shōjo” means “girl” in Japanese, and “shōjo manga” refers to comics created with tween and teen girls as the primary audience. It includes but is not limited to romance, mystery, sports, fantasy, comedy, science fiction, horror, and slice-of-life stories.

shōnen manga: “shōnen” means “boy” in Japanese, and “shōnen manga” refers to comics created with tween and teen boys as the primary audience. It includes but is not limited to action, fantasy, sports, romantic comedies, gag humor, horror, and science fiction stories.

seinen manga: “seinen” means “adult man” in Japanese. Today, “seinen manga” refers to comics created with older teen and adult readers of all genders as the primary audience.

josei manga: “josei” means “adult woman” in Japanese. Today, “josei manga” refers to comics created with older teen and adult readers, mostly women, as the primary audience.

Graphix, home to kid-favorite and bestselling graphic novels, including *Dog Man*, *Amulet*, *The Baby-sitters Club*, and more, brings its thoughtful, quality-first approach to publishing manga.

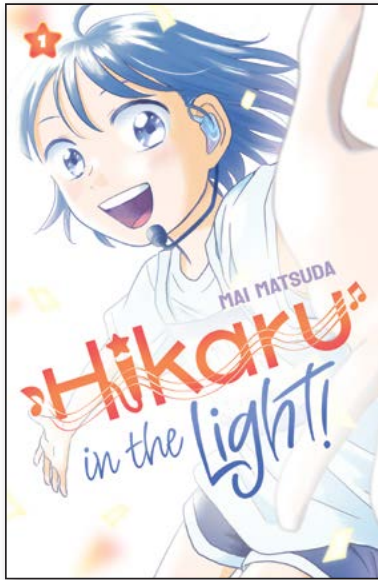
With age-appropriate books, exciting visual storytelling, and unforgettable characters, Graphix manga provides a new world of books to get kids drawn into reading.



Art © 2025 by Gurihiru and Tezuka Productions Co., Ltd. Art © 2026 by Dav Pilkey. New art by Motojiro based on original art by Dav Pilkey.

About the writer of this guide: Matt Slayter is an educator, comics editor, curriculum writer, and public speaker. He is a former classroom teacher and most recently served as the Director of Education at Pop Culture Classroom. Matt has acted as the managing editor for the *Colorful History*, facilitated the Excellence in Graphic Literature Awards, led professional development for teachers across the country, and he has written graphic novel teaching guides for publishers including VIZ Media, Macmillan, Pantheon, IDW, and Kodansha.

Find Your Next Read with Graphix **MANGA!**



- Slice-of-Life
- Pop Idol Competition
- Friendship
- Following Your Dreams
- Four-Volume Series

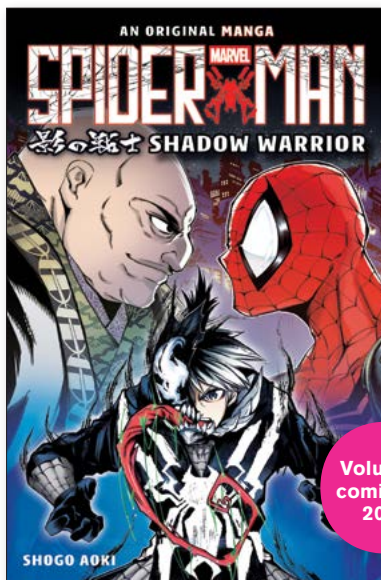


- Epic Action & Adventure
- Super Heroic Middle Schooler
- Sentient Mechanical Beings
- Mysterious Tech
- Four-Volume Series



Volume 4
coming in
2027

- Friendship
- Epic Fantasy & Mythology
- Lovable Characters
- Making the World a Better Place
- Eight-Volume Series



Volume 2
coming in
2027

- Classic Characters Reimagined
- Parallel Universe
- Feudal Japan
- Extraordinary Powers
- Ongoing Series



Volume 2
coming in
2027

- Creative Collaboration
- Epic Action and Adventure
- Laugh-Out-Loud Funny
- Unlikely Heroes and Friendship
- Ongoing Series



Volume
3 & 4
coming in
2027

- New Girl in School
- Fresh Start
- Cute Musician Crush
- Ultra-Competitive Marching Band
- Six-Volume Series



SCHOLASTIC

Scholastic.com/Graphix

TM/® SCHOLASTIC INC. © MARVEL 2025