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A Graphic Novel Tasting: Develop Your Professional Palate for Young Adult Comics

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A Graphic Novel Tasting:
Develop Your Professional Palate for Young Adult Comics

2020 UNLV Online Summit on the Research and Teaching of YA Literature

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Introduction

Amanda Melilli

✘　UNLV Youth Literature Librarian since 2013

✘　Served on the Young Adult Library Services Associations' Great Graphic Novels for Teens selection committee from 2017-2018

✘　Served as co-chair for ALA's Graphic Novels & Comics Round Table's Awards & Reading Lists Committee from 2018-2019

✘　Currently a graphic novels reviewer for School Library Journal

✘　Moderator at Comic-Con International: San Diego

✘　Present locally and nationally on graphic novels in P12 education

Mission of the TDRL:
Our primary focus is on the promotion of contemporary inclusive curriculum materials which reflect the diverse identities and needs of the P-12 students in our communities.

Graphic Novels are Great

✘ Equal or greater text comprehension

✘ Increased reading motivation

✘ Increased content area literacy

✘ Increased interest in exploring additional texts

✘ Great for undiscovered readers, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities

✘ Lots of title options for diversity and inclusion

Source: Melilli, A., Covintree, K. & Abdul, A. (2019, November). *"That's not real reading": Making the case for graphic novel inclusion in every classroom.* Presented at the 2019 American Association of School Librarian's National Conference, Louisville, KY.

Presentation: https://aasl.digitellinc.com/aasl/sessions/1559/view

Slides: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/libfacpresentation/194/

Two Things I Hear Most Often

"Graphic Novels are not real reading. They are too easy."

"I just don't get graphic novels."

Educators who are new to graphic novels, often struggle to understand them because they expect them to be easy.

Graphic novels offer a complex reading experience.

Graphic Novel Literacies

Reading Literacy	Visual Literacy	Comic Literacy
- Character development - Comprehension - Grammar & syntax - Plot - Sentence structure - Setting - Text & subtext - Themes - Vocabulary development	- Elements of art - color, line, shape, space, texture, - Principles of design - balance, contrast, rhythm, movement - Interpretation - Observation - Visual symbolism	- Captions - Cultural "dialects" - Emanata/kei yu* - Gutter transitions - Panels & sequence - Speech balloons - Text or image based sound effects/on yu* - Typography

←————— Inference Skills —————→

* (Nakazawa, 2005)

Source: Melilli, A., Covintree, K. & Abdul, A. (2019, November). *"That's not real reading": Making the case for graphic novel inclusion in every classroom.* Presented at the 2019 American Association of School Librarian's National Conference, Louisville, KY.

Comic Fluency is Not Inherent

	Developed with Age	Developed with Experience
Eye Movement	✘	✘
Text Comprehension	✘	✘
Sequencing Skills	✘	✘
Inference Skills	✘	✘
Comic Literacy	??	✘

(Nakazawa, 2005)

Source: Melilli, A., Covintree, K. & Abdul, A. (2019, November). "That's not real reading": Making the case for graphic novel inclusion in every classroom. Presented at the 2019 American Association of School Librarian's National Conference, Louisville, KY.

What Does This Mean?

- Graphic Novels are not easy to read even though they have images.

- Inexperience readers often don't get them because they don't have comic fluency.

Before assuming that graphic novels aren't for you, you have to give yourself a chance to develop comic literacy.

Challenge Yourself

Read 25 graphic novels over the next six months.

Hold your own book tasting to get started.

Graphic Novel Tasting: Step One

Identify what kind of graphic novels you would like to read.

Questions you should ask yourself:

- What age levels do you enjoy reading?

- What genres do you enjoy reading?

Look for graphic novels similar to the books you enjoy
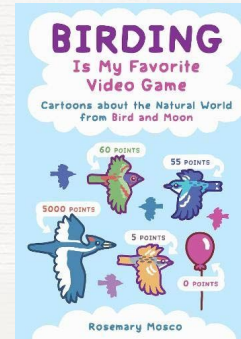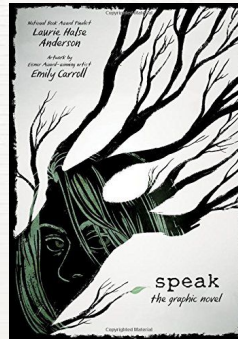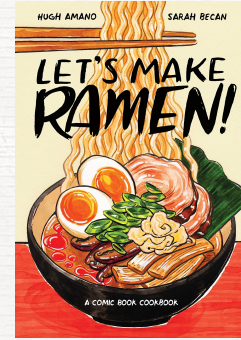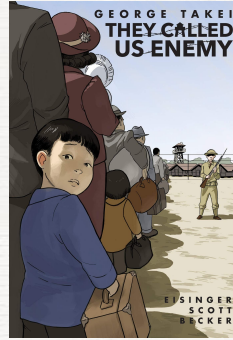
Graphic Novel Tasting: Step Two

Select Titles

Pick 10 titles that sound interesting to you based on your personal reading preferences

Obtain graphic novels.

- Hint: Use your libraries
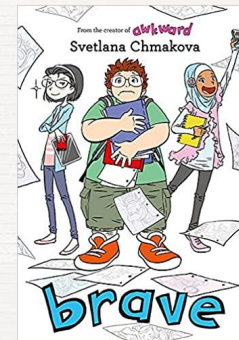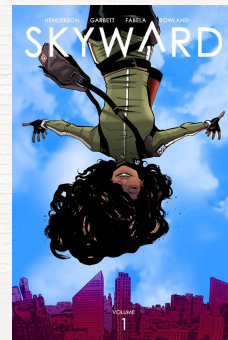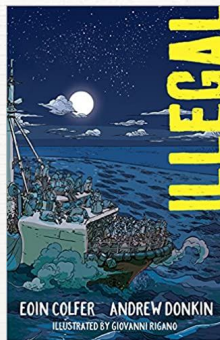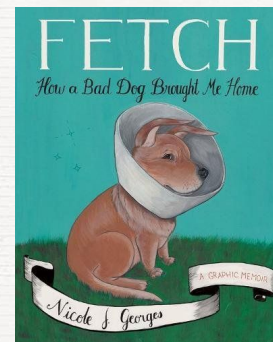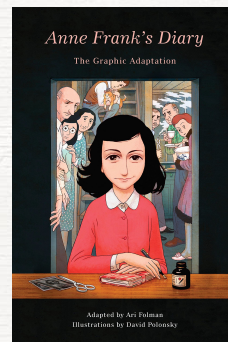
Graphic Novel Tasting: Step Three

Conduct a Tasting

Take five-ten minutes to review each book:
- Look at the artwork and physical features of the book (if in print)
- Start from the beginning and read for at least five minutes

When finished, ask yourself if you want to keep reading it:
- If you find yourself wanting to continue reading, keep it to read later.
- If you do not like it enough to want to continue reading, set it aside for now.
  - You may enjoy it later once you have developed greater comic fluency. Try it again once you are more confident.

Graphic Novel Tasting: Step Four

Read!

Once you have found a few graphic novels that you are interested in, read them!

- You do not have to find all 25 books at once

- You are allowed to put down books that you aren't enjoying (but lean into the discomfort you may feel for the format).

- Repeat the book tasting activity until you meet your reading challenge.
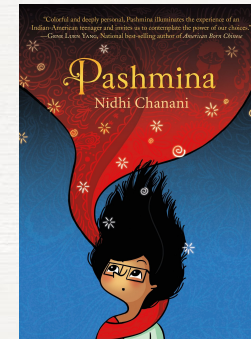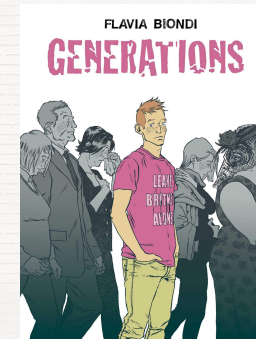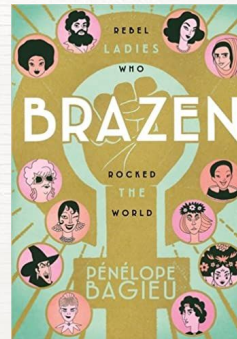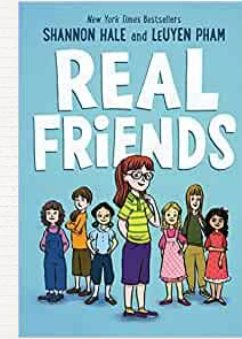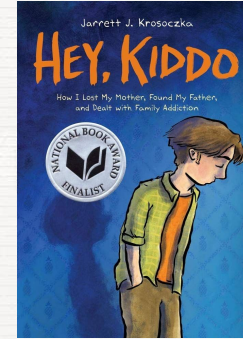
Graphic Novel Tasting: Step Five

Reflect

At the end of the challenge, ask yourself these questions:

- How have you changed as a reader?

- Are you a more confident graphic novel reader?

- Do you enjoy reading graphic novels more now?

Bonus: How would a similar experience affect your students and their own perceptions of their identities as readers?
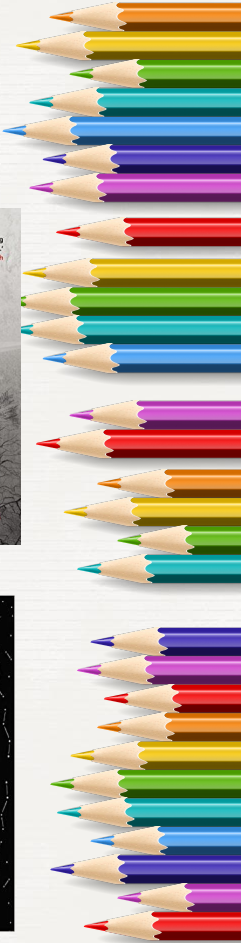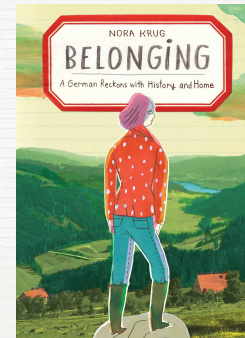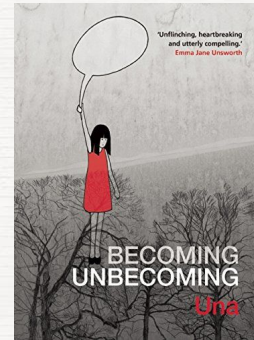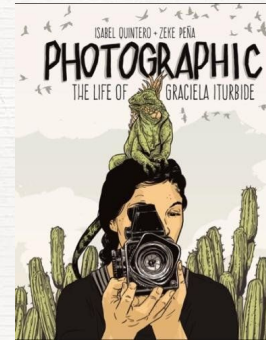
Where do I find graphic novels?

Beginner
Annual Book Lists
- [Great Graphic Novels for Teens](#) (ages 12-18)
- [Little Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List](#) (Grades K-5)

Intermediate
Review Sites
- School Library Journal - [Graphic Novel Reviews](#) & [Good Comics for Kids Blog](#)
- [No Flying No Tights](#)
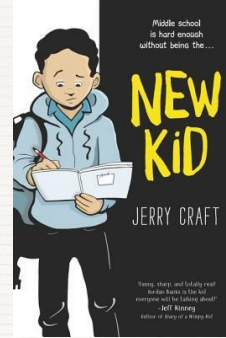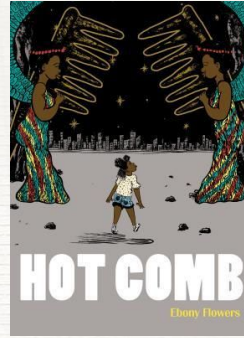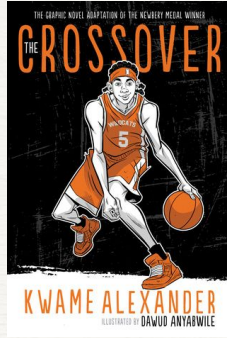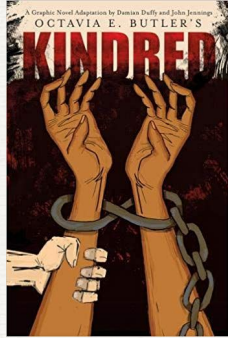
Access to Materials
Electronic Advance Reader Copies
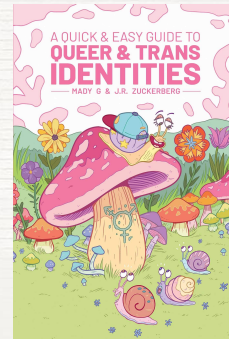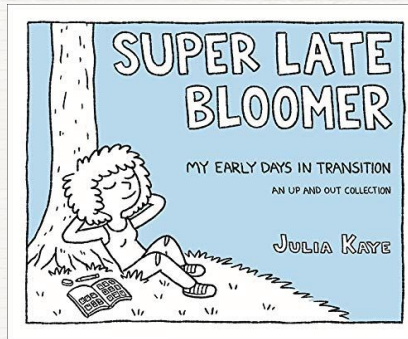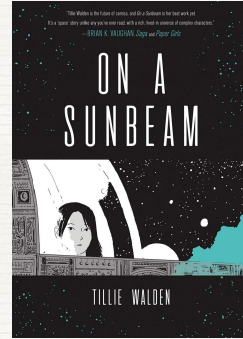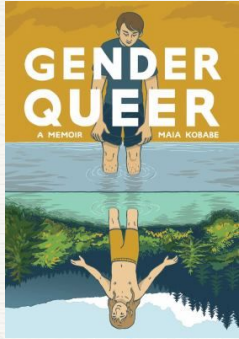- [Netgalley](#)
- [Edelweiss](#)

Library Collections
- TDRL
  - Start at the [Children's & Young Adult Literature Guide](#))
- Your Local Public Library
  - NoveList
  - Hoopla
  - Print Collections

Black Voices
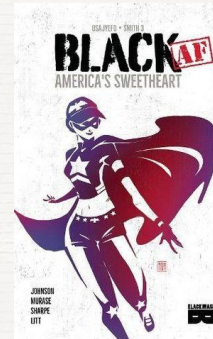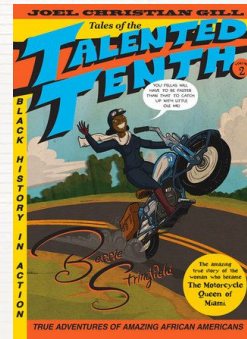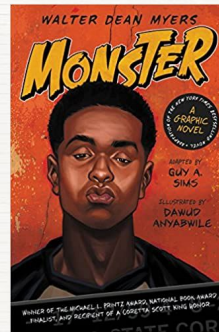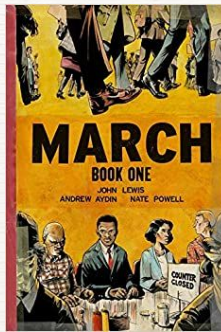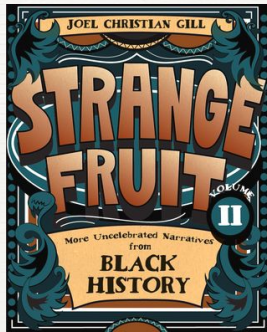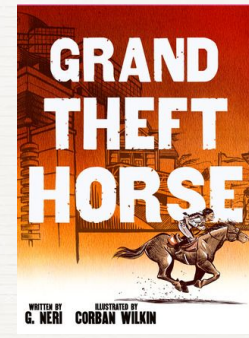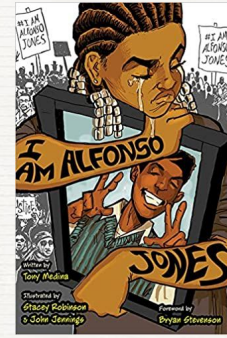
Rainbow Books

Thank you!

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