

A short glossary of comics terms

Look at the words in **bold**. Do you know what they mean in connection to comics?

Artist is the person who draws comics. In large productions, there are at least three parts to this job, and each is done by a different person. A penciller does the basic artwork, and decides what the setting is, how to place panels, which figures go on a page, as well as what characters' faces and bodies look like. An inker finishes the art using ink and pen or brush. A colourist then adds colour. For smaller comics, one person does all three jobs on their own.

Big 2 are the two largest American producers of comics: Marvel Comics (Iron-Man, Spider-Man, Hulk, Captain America, Captain Marvel and others) and DC Comics (Superman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Batman, Aquaman, and so on).

Caption is a special box usually set in a corner of a panel or page, in which the text describes what is going on.

Comic books are editions with comics, or pictures that make a story. They started in the 1900s, and today they are often made into films, TV shows and video games.

Comic strip is a short type of comics which usually appears in the newspapers and has only one line of panels.

Graphic novel is the name for comics which tells a long story, and so fills an entire book, but which does not come in a series.

Letterer is the person who puts text into speech balloons and captions. Traditionally, comics have been lettered by hand, although in the more recent years computers have been used as well.



Manga is a special style of comics and print cartoons from Japan. It is a Japanese word that means “quirky pictures”. When in film form, they are called anime.

Panel, frame or box is a drawing surrounded by a border or outline, which shows a part of the action. A page has one or more panels. What a panel looks like – its size, shape and style, as well as characters and text – determines the atmosphere of the story.

Slice-of-life are comics and graphic novels that tell real life stories, instead of fantastical ones.

Sound effects or onomatopoeia are words without bubbles that mimic sounds other than speech (WHAM! POW! Ding-ding!).

Speech bubble is a part of comics that contains dialogue. A pointer or tail is the small part of the balloon which points at the person who is speaking.

Superhero genre is one of the most popular type of comics. The protagonists have extraordinary abilities which they use to protect humanity. Because they feature action, adventure and memorable characters, they are a form of modern mythology.

Webcomics is, as its name says, comics created for and published on the Internet. It is quite new, as it appeared in the 21st century, and often free.

Questions:

- 1 What is the difference between a comic book and a comic strip?
- 2 Which four types of jobs in the production of comics are mentioned in the glossary? Which do you think is most interesting?
- 3 Which two countries (mentioned in the text) are the leading producers of comics?
- 4 Why are some comics considered modern mythology? Do you agree? Why (not)?
- 5 What are three modern developments in the world of comics?

Task:

- 1) Find out more about one of the most popular comics today: X-Men, Justice League of America, New Avengers, Batman, Amazing Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk, Teen Titans, The Sandman, Tintin, One Piece.

Discuss

When were they made? How have they changed through history?

Who are the protagonists? Which positive and negative characteristics do they have?

What makes them interesting? How are they still relevant today?