

If I had to explain to someone what manga is, the very first thing I would tell them is that it is a visual story. These visual stories result from a long standing tradition in Japan. Many great works of Japanese art are painted scrolls that depict a story, with little narrative next to the characters. This is very much the same as modern manga. Manga has pictures depicting a story with text of what the characters are saying or thinking. In some ways this is very similar to American comics. There are a number of differences, some subtle, some not so subtle. While American comics are printed in color, manga is almost always in black and white, with the occasional first page or two in color. Also, while American comics are very limited to how much space they have, manga writers (or manga-ka) are given vast amounts of space, often around 2,000 pages, to work with. Also, the way in which manga-kas use their given space usually differs from how comic artists use their space. Mangas spend more time setting the mood, while American comics are much more action packed. These mangas can be found in magazines dedicated to manga that are usually released either monthly or bimonthly. These magazines are usually focused toward either males or females, with male-oriented manga being called shounen manga, and female-oriented manga being called shoujo manga. Shounen is usually aimed at younger boys, although males of all age groups, and even females of all age groups, also read them. It is the same with shoujo; it is aimed at younger females, but readers of both genders and all ages tend to read them. If this person is interested in finding out more about manga, I would refer them to read one of the popular manga magazines, such as "Shounen Jump," and to read some of Tezuka Osamu's mangas, since many believe he made manga what it is today.