

Comic Books Help Students Learn To Read And Improves Comprehension

by Jen Thames | Apr 12, 2013 | Articles |

Comic Books and Graphic Novels used to be considered off limits for reading in school. However, comic books, graphic novels, and even comic strips are making their way into the classrooms. There is a growing movement based on research that shows how comics can not only inspire kids to read, but can increase reading comprehension along with a number of other skills. Comics break through one of the most important reading barriers with kids, and that is getting them interested in reading in the first place.

Studies show that even comic strips (as in the Sunday comics) can give children a great start to reading and improve comprehension because it helps them learn sequencing of events and how stories unfold in a visual way. This is especially the case with children that have learning disabilities. The Examiner explains, "Using a Main Idea Comic Strip is a fun and creative way for students to keep track of information while learning how to extract out what is important."

So, can reading about caped crusaders, superheroes, and Dennis the Menace lead to increased reading ability for children? Carol L. Tilley, an expert in children's literature and a professor of library and information science at the University of Illinois, explains that she believes that comics should have a place in the classroom since they are just as sophisticated as any other form of reading and is quoted as saying, "If reading is to lead to any meaningful knowledge or comprehension, readers must approach a text with an understanding of the relevant social, linguistic and cultural conventions. And if you really consider how the pictures and words work together in consonance to tell a story, you can make the case that comics are just as complex as any other kind of literature."

Here are some interesting facts on Graphic Novels from Teaching with Graphix:

- "Graphic novels can...help improve reading development for students struggling with language acquisition, as the illustrations provide contextual clues to the meaning of the written narrative."
- "They require readers to be actively engaged in the process of decoding and comprehending a range of literary devices, including narrative structures, metaphor and symbolism, point of view, and the use of puns and alliteration, intertextuality, and inference."
- "Reading graphic novels can help students develop the critical skills necessary to read more challenging works, including the classics."

Wondering where to start?

This is a list of the Top 10 Comic Books for children:

- 1) The Legion of Super-Heroes in the 31st Century
- 2) Marvel Adventures: The Avengers
- 3) Sonic the Hedgehog
- 4) Archie Comics
- 5) Disney Comics
- 6) Justice League Unlimited
- 7) Franklin Richards
- 8) Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane
- 9) Teen Titans GO!
- 10) Amelia Rules

Comic books may be expensive, but public libraries often have quite a large selection available.

Every year the first Saturday in May is Free Comic Book Day. A day when you can go to participating comic book stores and get a selection of comic books offered for free.



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