



Read On!

For the newsletter this month I am featuring the manga book format and the benefits of reading manga. I have also included the link to the BookTrust article about other formats that may switch young people onto reading for pleasure. There is also an update regarding the two major book prizes and the link to the Accelerated Reader BookFinder. Many thanks to Mrs Obot for being our guest book reviewer for this month.



Marvellous Manga

Manga books are extremely popular with our students, so I thought I would give a very brief history of manga and have included notes of how to read them. I will also feature some of the most popular series and explain why I stock them in the library.

What is manga?

The word manga is from the Japanese that translates as 'cartoon' and 'picture,' and manga is used as a collective term to describe the wide range of comic books that are published in Japan. Traditionally, manga titles are printed in black and white, with colour printing reserved for special editions. With origins that trace back to the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, the first known manga comic dates to 1902. Used by the Japanese government as propaganda during World War II, modern manga stems from the Occupation and post-Occupation years, when censorship policies did not include the comic format. This form of storytelling was cheap and proved popular. During the 1950s and 60s, two distinct markets evolved, shōnen manga which was aimed at boys and shōjo manga for girls.

Today, the global market for manga is estimated at over 15,500 million US dollars. The demand for digital manga is predicted to expand the market to new readers with global sales expecting to reach over \$468 million by 2030. Manga books cover every genre and subgenre that I can think of, including horror, school stories, and romance.

Reading manga

Manga books are made up of story panels which need to be read right to left and then top to bottom. Characters talk to each other (and the reader) in speech bubbles and these need to be read right to left. If there are two speech bubbles in the same panel, the highest bubble needs to be read first. Cloud bubbles are used to reflect the thoughts of the characters. I am often asked by students to explain the difference between manga and anime. Put simply, manga is print medium (which may be accessed digitally), and anime is an animated medium, usually viewed as episodes.



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Benefits of reading manga

Manga books are an example of multimodal texts meaning that the reader has more than one means of understanding the story. The reader will take 'clues' from the pictures, decoding their meaning/symbolism. The reader will also need to make the connection between the images and the text. For those students who find reading difficult, the images in multimodal texts will give additional clues to the context. Developing visual literacy skills is one of the reasons I take a selection of manga titles in the library. Manga books are often the format of choice for reluctant readers and then I can direct students to chapter books with a similar theme or genre as students become more confident in their reading. Manga books do 'count' as pleasure reading, and as we know, reading for pleasure has many benefits, both for the educational and personal development of our young people. The Literacy Trust reported their findings from the research they carried out in 2024, and I have included the link below:

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/reading-for-pleasure/families/>

Please note that manga titles are also written for older teens and an adult readership and the images and language will reflect this. Some of the publishers will display a rating guideline usually found on the back of the book to indicate the intended readership, which you may find useful.

What other formats could you try?

Some young people have a reading ability that is different to their interest age so I thought I would also share the BookTrust's list of recommended titles of other formats to try, which include graphic novels, dyslexia-friendly books, and verse novels.

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book-recommendations/booklists/books-for-a-high-interest-age-low-reading-ability-high-low-for-10/>

Check out the school Library ePlatform's collection of eBooks and audio books that can be accessed from home.

<https://www.hazelwick.org/teaching-and-learning/library>

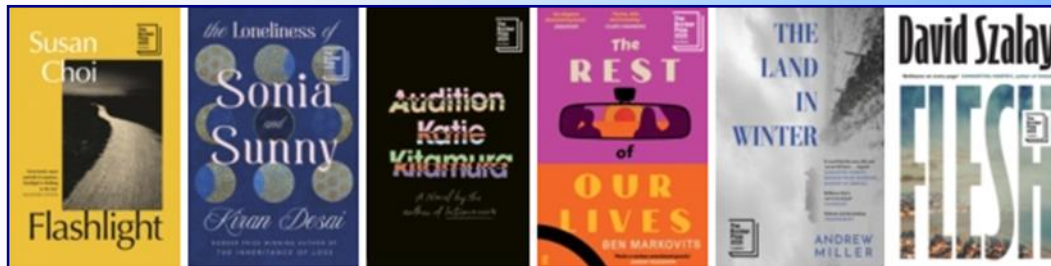
Accelerated Reader BookFinder

As our Year 7 and Year 8 students are now book quizzing during their Reading lessons, I thought I would share the link to the Renaissance Accelerated Reader BookFinder. When a parent or carer logs in, there is a helpful video and a detailed guide on how to make the most of the BookFinder. Students can also log in to check BookFinder too. You can check if their reading book has a quiz, what the book level is and the word count. If the book is not listed, select the 'Suggest Quizzes' option and complete the form. Just a reminder that not all books are suitable for quizzing.

<https://www.arbookfind.co.uk/UserType.aspx?RedirectURL=%2fdefault.aspx>



Read On Continued...



The Booker Prize

The six shortlisted nominees for this year's Booker Prize have been announced, and the judges will have to decide which of the novels is 'the best sustained work of fiction written in English and published in the UK and Ireland.' The winner will be announced on the 10th November, with the winner receiving £50,000. Past winners include Eleanor Catton, Margaret Atwood, Hilary Mantel, Julian Barnes and Kazuo Ishiguro, and winning the Prize can be career changing for an author. I have included the link to the 'Everything you need to know about the shortlist' guide, which includes a synopsis of each novel and biographical information about each author. For anyone running or attending a book group, there is also a reading guide for each novel, with some useful discussion questions.

https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/features/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-booker-prize-2025-shortlist?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email



The Carnegies

The books nominated for this year's Carnegies for writing and illustration will be announced on the 3rd November. The Carnegies are the longest running book awards for children's books and awarded by children's librarians. The Carnegie Medal for Writing is presented to the winner of the 'outstanding book written in English for children and young people'. The Carnegie Medal for Illustration is the prize for the 'outstanding book in terms of illustration for children and young people'. I have shared the link to the website for the announcement of the nominated authors/illustrators.

<https://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/home>

Keep reading!

Mrs Thornton BA (Hons) MCLIP
School Librarian



Read On Continued...

Guest Reviewer

Our guest reviewer this month is: Mrs Obot

Book Title: The Hunger Games

Author: Suzanne Collins



What is the book about?

The story is set in a bleak future where the nation of Panem, ruled by the tyrannical Capitol, controls twelve impoverished districts. Each year, to remind the districts of the Capitol's power, one boy and one girl from each district are chosen to compete in the Hunger Games, a televised fight to the death. Our heroine, Katniss Everdeen, volunteers to take her younger sister Prim's place in the Games. Alongside Peeta Mellark, her fellow tribute, she must fight for survival in an arena designed to entertain the wealthy citizens of the Capitol while tormenting the districts.

As the Games progress, Katniss begins to challenge the system that created them. Her courage and compassion start to inspire others, even as she struggles to balance her instincts for survival with her growing feelings for Peeta. Suzanne Collins builds incredible tension throughout the story, combining thrilling action with moments of deep humanity and moral reflection.

What do I think about the book?

I think The Hunger Games is powerful not only because of its gripping plot but because of what it says about society. It explores inequality, control, and how people can be manipulated through fear and spectacle. What I love most is how realistic Katniss feels; she is strong and brave, but also flawed and unsure. You cannot help but root for her.

Collins' writing is fast-paced, vivid, and emotional. The world of Panem feels uncomfortably believable, and the descriptions of the Games are both horrifying and fascinating. Even though it is aimed at young adults, the themes are complex enough to make any reader think deeply about power, survival, and justice.

Who would enjoy this book?



Anyone who enjoys stories full of suspense, strong characters, and thought-provoking ideas will love The Hunger Games. Fans of dystopian fiction such as Divergent or The Maze Runner would especially enjoy it. I would also recommend it to readers who like stories that mix adventure with heart; it is not just about action, but about loyalty, courage, and standing up for what is right.

If you have not read it yet, I would definitely suggest giving it a try. And if you think you would know how to survive the arena, maybe test yourself against Katniss's quick thinking.

Good luck and may the odds be ever in your favour!