AN INTRODUCTION TO MANGA FOR LIBRARIANS

In cooperation with OverDrive
Hello, we’re Kodansha COMICS

We’re extremely excited to now have our entire digital book list available to libraries through OverDrive.

Kodansha is one of the leading publishers in Japan, and one of the largest in the world. While we are a general publisher, we are also one of the major publishers of Japanese comics, or manga, with a long and distinguished history of releasing some of the most popular titles in the world, including such classics as Sailor Moon, Akira, and most recently, Attack on Titan.

This brief introduction covers manga titles available from our U.S.-based manga imprint, Kodansha Comics, which publishes selected manga from our broader Japanese list into the English-reading world.

While the wide variety of genres (for all audiences) and long, complex storylines of manga can be bewildering for the uninitiated, we hope to break down some basic concepts here. In particular, we hope you take away from here a few key points about manga, and in particular digital manga, if you’re not familiar with them already:

**MANGA ARE THE KIND OF COMICS YOUNG WOMEN LIKE TO READ.**

Unlike most Western comics, manga is made for all categories, catering to all audiences, from young children to adults, girls and boys. In particular, manga has exposed the stereotype in North America that girls don’t like comics and are often the preferred type of comics young women like to read.

**MANGA SPEAKS TO TEENS.**

That said, teenagers are the core demographic of manga in the West. Manga has proven an excellent gateway for teens and younger readers into reading books, and they have provided the cornerstones to thriving teen sections in many libraries.

**MANGA MOVES FAST, IN SERIAL VOLUMES.**

Because of the way they are drawn, manga are read relatively faster than Western comics. They are also published in serial-numbered volumes, with cliffhangers from chapter to chapter, volume to volume, so once readers get into a series, they move through subsequent volumes quickly. Keeping every physical volume of a long manga series on shelf can be a challenge to libraries and bookstores alike, and this is where digital books come in. Digital manga have been a godsend for those readers who need that next volume of the story right now.

Beyond all the breakdowns and categorization though, we believe manga has a touch of magic to it. There’s something primal and universal in this graphic storytelling medium that draws readers around the world right into its worlds. We hope you come across some of that magic in your own manga journey.
Age Ratings

There are manga for everyone. We do try to provide guidance to our manga series via ratings to suggest appropriate contents for each age group.

**YOUTH**
Appropriate for all ages.

**TEEN**
Suggested for ages 13+. May feature intense fantasy violence and crude humor.

**OLDER TEEN**

**MATURE**
Suggested for 18+. May feature explicit violence and nudity.
Genres

There are many kinds of genres of manga. Some categories can be quite esoteric, and hardcore fans like to use the Japanese terms to refer to specific genres or situations. This is probably not the place to go into that kind of detail, but here are some basic categories to help understand how manga are broadly differentiated, based on target audience.

**SHONEN**
Action-packed stories that takes place in either fantasy or realistic settings, often involving the attainment of greater power or expertise. These stories are targeted at young teen boys, but girls make up a big part of shonen readership as well.
**Examples:** *Fairy Tail, The Seven Deadly Sins, Attack on Titan, UQ Holder, Noragami: Stray God*

**SHOJO**
Romance-driven stories that takes place in fantasy or real-life settings, focusing more on mood or situation rather than being intensely plot-driven. Since they are often about romantic relationships, they can be sexually suggestive, but the level of explicitness depends on the age target. These stories are targeted at teen girls.
**Examples:** *Say I Love You, My Little Monster, Missions of Love, Your Lie in April*

**SEINEN**
Targeted for older, college-age readers. The stories are often more sophisticated, with darker or more serious themes. Can be more graphically explicit as well.
**Example:** *Inuyashiki, Ajin: Demi-Human, Knights of Sidonia, Parasyte*
Sample a Series

All Ages, cute animals: **CHI’S SWEET HOME**
By Konami Kanata  
RATING: Y

Chi is a mischievous newborn kitten who, while on a leisurely stroll with her family, finds herself lost. Overcome with loneliness, she breaks into tears in a large park meadow, where she is rescued by a young boy named Yohei and his mother. The little kitty is then quickly and quietly whisked away into the warm and inviting Yamada apartment ... where pets are strictly not permitted.

**BUY ON:**  
**READ PREVIEW:**

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Fantasy-world action: **FAIRY TAIL**
By Hiro Mashima  
RATING: T

Cute girl wizard Lucy wants to join the Fairy Tail, a club for the most powerful wizards. But instead her ambitions land her in the clutches of a gang of unsavory pirates led by a devious magician. Her only hope is Natsu, a strange boy she happens to meet on her travels. Natsu’s not your typical hero—he gets motion sickness, eats like a pig, and his best friend is a talking cat. With friends like this, is Lucy better off with her enemies?

**BUY ON:**  
**READ PREVIEW:**

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Realistic school drama about bullying: **A SILENT VOICE**
By Yoshitoki Oima  
RATING: T

Shoya is a bully. When Shoko, a girl who can’t hear, enters his elementary school class, she becomes their favorite target, and Shoya and his friends goad each other into devising new tortures for her. But the children’s cruelty goes too far. Shoko is forced to leave the school, and Shoya ends up shouldering all the blame. Six years later, the two meet again. Can Shoya make up for his past mistakes, or is it too late? Read the manga that industry insiders voted their favorite of 2014!

**BUY ON:**  
**READ PREVIEW:**
Supernatural action-comedy: **NORAGAMI: STRAY GOD**

By Adachitoka  
RATING: OT

Yato is a homeless god. He doesn’t even have a shrine, not to mention worshippers! So to achieve his ambitious goals, he’s set up a service to help those in need (for a small fee), hoping he’ll eventually raise enough money to build himself the lavish temple of his dreams. Of course, he can’t afford to be picky, so Yato accepts all kinds of jobs, from finding lost kittens to helping a student overcome bullies at school.

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Realistic drama about music students: **YOUR LIE IN APRIL**

By Naoshi Arakawa  
RATING: T

Kosei Arima was a piano prodigy until his cruel taskmaster of a mother died suddenly, changing his life forever. Driven by his pain to abandon piano, Kosei now lives in a monotonous, colorless world. Having resigned himself to a bland life, he is surprised when he meets Kaori Miyazono, a violinist with an unorthodox style. Can she bring Kosei back to music, and back to life?

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Dark, apocalyptic science-fiction: **ATTACK ON TITAN**

By Hajime Isayama  
RATING: OT

A century ago, the grotesque giants known as Titans appeared and consumed all but a few thousand humans. The survivors took refuge behind giant walls. Today, the threat of the Titans is a distant memory, and a boy named Eren yearns to explore the world beyond Wall Maria. But what began as a childish dream will become an all-too-real nightmare when the Titans return and humanity is once again on the brink of extinction...

*Attack on Titan* is the award-winning and *New York Times*-bestselling series that is the manga hit of the decade! Spawning the monster hit anime TV series of the same name, *Attack on Titan* has become a pop culture sensation.

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Noragami © Adachitoka/Kodansha Ltd.  
Your Lie in April © Naoshi Arakawa / Kodansha Ltd.  
Attack on Titan © Hajime Isayama/Kodansha Ltd.
Real-world school romance: SAY I LOVE YOU.
By Kanae Hazuki
RATING: OT

Mei Tachibana has no friends—and she doesn’t need them! Ever since her “friends” betrayed her in elementary school, she’s sworn off friendship entirely. All it leads to is betrayal and heartbreak, and she’s well enough on her own. But everything changes when she accidentally roundhouse kicks the most popular boy in school! However, Yamato Kurosawa isn’t angry in the slightest—in fact, he thinks his ordinary life could use an unusual girl like Mei! He won’t take no for an answer, and soon Mei and Yamato embark on an unwanted friendship that will change both of them forever.

BUY ON: Read Preview:

Medieval historical drama: VINLAND SAGA
By Makoto Yukimura
RATING: OT

As a child, Thorfinn sat at the feet of the great Leif Ericson and thrilled to wild tales of a land far to the west. But his youthful fantasies were shattered by a mercenary raid. Raised by the Vikings who murdered his family, Thorfinn became a terrifying warrior, forever seeking to kill the band’s leader, Askeladd, and avenge his father. Sustaining Thorfinn through his ordeal are his pride in his family and his dreams of a fertile westward land, a land without war or slavery ... the land Leif called Vinland.

BUY ON: Read Preview:

Real-world astronaut drama: SPACE BROTHERS
By Chuya Koyama
RATING: T

Two brothers looked to the starry skies as children and made a promise ... Now, in the year 2025, the younger brother, Hibito, is carrying his out. He is an astronaut who has been selected as a crew member for mankind’s first long-term base on the moon. Meanwhile, the older brother, Mutta, has just been fired from his job and is unemployed, but decides to trust himself just one last time. A text message from Hibito sends him applying to be an astronaut too and shooting for the stars ... The official Space Brothers manga is ready to launch!

BUY ON: Read Preview:
Sophisticated conceptual science-fiction: **INUASHIKI**  
By Hiroya Oku  
**RATING: OT**

Ichiro Inuyashiki is down on his luck. While only 58 years old, his geriatric looks often have him written off as a pathetic old man by the world around him and he’s constantly ignored and disrespected by his family despite all that he’s done to support them. On top of everything else, his doctor has revealed that he has cancer and it appears that he has little time left in this world. But just when it seems things couldn’t get any worse, a blinding light in the night sky strikes the earth where Ichiro stands. He later wakes up to find himself unscathed, but he soon starts to notice that there’s something ... different about himself. However, it turns out that these strange, new changes are just what Ichiro needs to take a new lease on life and now it seems like there’s nothing to stop him from being a hero worthy of the respect that he never had before ... unless, that is, there was someone else out there with these same “changes” ...

**BUY ON:**  
**READ PREVIEW:**

Inuyashiki © Hiroya Oku / Kodansha Ltd.

"WHERE'S MY NEWEST MANGA?"

Have you ever had a moment when someone asks for the latest volume of a manga series, but the physical copies haven’t arrived in the library yet? **Kodansha Comics** are available on **OverDrive** on the release date. So it’s a good way to fill in the gap between time and needs of the savvy manga readers!
KODANSHA COMICS.COM

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