

Q. What is a "graphic novel"?

A. Graphic novels have a few defining characteristics. But first and most importantly, they are long comic books. (I'll get back to the rest.)

Q. What is a "comic book"?

A. You may think you know the answer to this one, but stick with me a few minutes:
A comic book is a magazine or bound book that contains "comics" (also known as "comix"). Comics is a medium for expressing information and/or artistic ideas that is defined by



... and that's it. However, comics also often feature such things as



These techniques aren't necessary to make comics, but they are quite common. There are other common, familiar, but even more optional elements of many comics, such as certain kinds of characters, like funny animals or super-heroes. But I'll get to that in a minute.

Here's how to read a comic:

1. Just as in our written language, you read the elements of a comic starting with...

2. ...the upper-left corner of a page, and then you read across to the right...

3. ...before proceeding down to the next row...

4. ...and then the next.

