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## **Guide to cataloguing comic books and graphic novels**

Kitara Patry

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# Cataloguing Comics & Graphic Novels

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## General Description

This guide has been prepared to assist and inform those wanting to understand how comic books and graphic novels are catalogued in Western Libraries, including their structure and terms that are used. Comic books and graphic novels have been incorporated into curriculum by some professors and provide a popular part of Western Libraries collection for students. This material serves the university on many levels including literary, cultural, artistic and political.

Thanks to donations from seven different donors over the past 15 years, Western Archives and Special Collections is currently working to organize an estimated 70,000 donated comic books ([McInnes, 2022](#)). In addition, the Pride Library, located inside the D.B. Weldon Library, also has a [Queer Graphica Collection](#), thanks to donations from Mike Niederman and Joan Brennan. As for general circulation, items are spread across locations, in main and affiliate libraries, with most being found at the FIMS Grad Library, the Education Resource Center, and The D.B. Weldon Library. Most of this collection is available on the third floor of the D.B. Weldon Library in the PN6700s call number range.

However, because comic books and graphic novels are a format, not a genre, cataloguing and assigning call numbers often vary by library location.

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## Resources

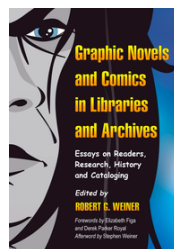
Because this guide is not able to fully capture every nuance that exist when cataloguing comic books and graphic novels, librarians are encouraged to use other resources to make decisions.

The following guide attempts to distill comic book cataloging best practices from several representative institutions, prepared by the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table.

[Best Practices for Cataloging Comics and Graphic Novels Using RDA and MARC21](#)

Below are items available through the library's catalogue (OMNI) on the topic of comic books and graphic novels in the library, which chapters dedicated to the issue of cataloguing this material.

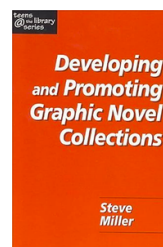
## Ask a Librarian



**Title:** Graphic novels and comics in libraries and archives: essays on readers, research, history and cataloging

**Author:** Robert Weiner

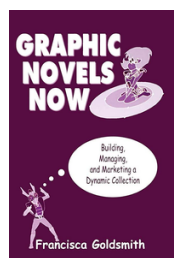
**Call number:** [Z692.G7 G7 2010](#)



**Title:** Developing and promoting graphic novel collections

**Author:** Steve Miller

**Call number:** [Z692.G7 M55 2005](#)



**Title:** Graphic novels now: building, managing, and marketing a dynamic collection

**Author:** Francisca Goldsmith

**Call number:** [Z692.G7 G65 2005](#)

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### Basics

## Call Numbers

Western Libraries uses the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system for their material in all locations. LCC's has the sub-class of *Comic books, strips, etc.* which falls under the call number range of PN6700-6790. This call number range is where the majority of comic books and graphic novel tend to be placed in most collections.

PN6244-6246	Literary extracts. Commonplace books
PN6249-6258	Ana
PN6259-6268	Anecdotes. Table talk
PN6269-6278	Aphorisms. Apothegms
PN6279-6288	Epigrams
PN6288.5-6298	Epitaphs
PN6299-6308	Maxims
PN6309-6318	Mottoes
PN6319-6328	Sayings, bon mots, etc.
PN6329-6338	Thoughts
PN6340-6348	Toasts
PN6348.5-6358	Emblems, devices
PN6361	Paradoxes
PN6366-6377	Riddles, acrostics, charades, conundrums, etc.
PN6400-6525	Proverbs
PN6700-6790	Comic books, strips, etc.

However, the sub-class of *Comic books, strips, etc.* can be paired with other key word terms (subject headings) and thus varies the possible call numbers that can be used.

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The screenshot shows the 'LCC Enhanced Browser' interface. The search bar contains 'Comic books, strips, etc.' and the search button is labeled 'Schedules'. Below the search bar, the results are displayed as a list of call number ranges with checkboxes for each:

Call Number Range	Subject	Checkbox
Z286.C64	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
PN6231.C6116	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
HQ784.C6	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Z595A.C6	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Z688.C64)	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
NK217.C475	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
[NC1764-1764.8]	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
[PN6700-6790]	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC1849.C66	Comic books, strips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Ask a Librarian



Therefore, it is to the cataloguer's discretion on where to place a particular comic book or graphic novel. For ease of use and navigation of the library stacks it would be encouraged to keep most comic books and graphic novels within the PN6700-6790 call number range. For example, another location this type of material is sometimes placed is under the NC1300-1766 call number range for the sub-class of *Pictorial humor, caricature, etc.* This placement would split items between two floors with the D. B. Weldon Library. It may also not accurately describe the item since *Pictorial humor, caricature, etc.* generally refers to newspaper comics, as with the example below.



**Title:** Hot Dog Taste Test: A Book

**Author:** Lisa Hanawalt

**Call Number:**  
[NC1429.H3243H68 2016](#)



**Title:** The Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes

**Author:** Neil Gaiman

**Call Number:** [PN6728.S26G35 v.1 1991](#)

## Building Call Numbers

Most of the comic books and graphic novels are cataloged under the PN6700-6790 range, depending on the nationality of the main author.

PN6700	Comic books, strips, etc.
PN6702	Periodicals. Societies. Serials
PN6705.A1	Congresses
PN6705.A2-Z	Exhibitions, museums, etc.
PN6707	General works
PN6710	By region or country, A-Z
	Individual institutions are classed by country without further subdivision
	Encyclopedias, Dictionaries
	General works
	Including history
	For collective biography of cartoonists see NC1305
	Special topics
	Cf. HQ784.C6 Comic books and children
	Cf. HV9076.5 Juvenile delinquency
PN6712	Moral and religious aspects
PN6714	Other special (not A-Z)
PN6720	General collections
	By region or country
PN6725-6728	United States Table PN11
PN6731-6734	Canada Table PN11
PN6735-6738	Great Britain Table PN11
PN6745-6748	France Table PN11 modified

These items are further divided by either author, usually when it is a standalone or series with one primary author, or by series, when there are multiple authors.

### Example 1:

The Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes is an American series written by Neil Gaiman. The call number for the first volume is PN6728.S26G35 v.1 1991.

PN6728	American series
.S26	Series title (The Sandman)
G35	Main author of the first issue* (Gaiman, Neil)
v.1	Volume number**
1991	Date of publication

\* This cutter number will be used for all subsequent issues, whether or not the author is still the main entry.

\*\* Volume number precedes publication date when the volumes in a series are published in different years. If all issues of a series are published in the same year, the volume number is listed after the publication date. The historical practice for classification was to differentiate series issues with the second cutter number however, we now differentiate issues with a volume number. When cataloging a series Western Libraries already owns, follow the classification used for the previous items in the series.

### Example 2:

The stand-alone graphic novel SuperMutant Magic Academy is by Canadian illustrator Jillian Tamaki. The call number is PN6733.T34 S87 2015.

PN6733	Canadian creator
.T34	Author's last name (Tamaki, Jillian)
S87	Title of graphic novel
2015	Date of publication

# Library of Congress Subject Headings

Since call numbers can vary by cataloguer another point of access for comics books and graphic novels are Library of Congress Subject Headings.

The Subject Headings below show the variety of topics and therefore call number ranges that comic books and graphic novels can be placed.

## General

- Comic books, strips, etc.
- Graphic novels
- Graphic novels – United States

## Libraries

- Libraries – Special collections – Comic books, strips, etc.
- Libraries – Special collections – Graphic novels

## History and Criticism

- Comic books, strips, etc. – History and criticism
- Graphic novels – History and criticism

## Authorship

- Comic books, strips, etc. – Authorship
- Graphic novels – Authorship

## Bibliographical Methodology

- Comic books, strips, etc. – Bibliography – Methodology
- Graphic novels – Bibliography
- Graphic novels – Bibliography – Methodology



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### Popular Resources:

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### MARC Record

## MARC 21

Most of the cataloguing for comic books and graphic novels will have MARC 21 Records that are similar to other items in the collection. However, there are some unique considerations because of its format and the access points that are used to find this material. Below are a few explanations and examples of MARC 21 Records.

### 090 – Local Call Numbers

This field is for the call number used by the Western Libraries and the location of that item. Follows and overlaps with the 050 – Library of Congress Call Number field. Cataloguers should search for similar or duplicate call numbers in the Alma and if there is a discrepancy, edit the call number accordingly.

050 0 4 \$a [Classification number] \$b [Item number/second cutter]

### 100 – Personal Name

This is the field where the first author is listed.

100 \$c [Statement of Responsibility]

### 245 – Title Statement

This is the field where the title of the comic book or graphic novel should be placed. It can also include the principal author and principal artist/s.

245 \$a [Title] / \$c [Statement of Responsibility]

For comic books and graphic novels that are part of a series, the formation of 245 and 246 should be used.

245 1 0 \$a [Title of series]. \$n [Volume number], \$p [Volume Title] / \$c [Statement of Responsibility]

### 246 – Varying Form of Title

For comic books and graphic novels that are part of a series, the formation of 245 and 246 should be used.

246 3 0 \$a [Volume Title]

For comic books and graphic novels in a series if each issue has its own separate title, each volume should be cataloged with its own record. However, if the issues in a series are only separated by volume number, meaning that each issue does NOT have its own unique title, the series should be cataloged as a continuing resource.

If you are unsure if the comic book or graphic novel is the first in a series use Wikipedia, Amazon, or Google search. Alternatively, search for the author's name to see if a series is listed. If none exists, then assume it is a standalone comic book or graphic novel and catalog accordingly.

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## Ask a Librarian



## 260 – Publication, Distribution, etc.

This field is used for the name of the publisher. Often with comic books or graphic novels, readers will use publishers as an access point. Commonly at comic bookstores inventory is organized in stores by publishers.

260 0 0 \$a [Place of publication] \$b [Name of publisher, distributor] \$c [Date of publication]

## 500 – General Note

Comic books and graphic novels in a series are often purchased in volumes, which are a collection of smaller issues. Therefore, this information, usually found in the indicia of the item should be place in this field.

500 0 0 \$a ["Contains material originally published in magazine form as TITLE #1-6" -- Indicia.]

## 490 – Series Statement

This field should only be added if the title of the series is not already stated in the 245 and 246 field.

## 650 – Subject Added Entry - Topical Term

This field is for the Library of Congress Subject Headings and works as an access point.

## 655 – Index Term - Genre/Form

This field is filled to indicate that this is a comic book or graphic novel and works as an access point.

655 0 7 \$a Comics (Graphic works) \$2 lcgft

or

655 0 7 \$a Graphic novels. \$2 lcgft

## 700 – Added Entry - Personal Name

This field is used for the first artist listed if not already in 100 field.

## 830 – Series Added Entry - Uniform Title

This field should only be added if the title of the series is not already stated in the 245 and 246 field.

## Example Records

### 1. *The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman

Record View

MARC BIBFRAME

LDR 03856nam a2200721 a 4500

001 991966838505151

005 20210214131427.0

008 020102m19911997nyua 000 c eng d

020 \_||a 1563890119 iq (v. 1)

020 \_||a 0930289595 iq (v. 2)

020 \_||a 156389016X iq (v. 3)

020 \_||a 1563890410 iq (v. 4)

020 \_||a 1563890933 iq (hrd. : v. 5)

020 \_||a 1563890895 iq (v. 5)

020 \_||a 1563891069 iq (hrd. : v. 6)

020 \_||a 1563891050 iq (v. 6)

020 \_||a 1563891387 iq (v. 7)

020 \_||a 1563891719 iq (v. 8)

020 \_||a 1563892057 iq (v. 9)

020 \_||a 1563892790 iq (v. 10)

035 \_||a (CaOLJ)/b41010243-01ocul\_uwo

035 \_||a (CaOLJ)/CaOLJ41010243 (P ExL

035 \_||a (OCoLJ)28384712

090	... la PN6728.526G35 1991
100	1, la Gaiman, Neil.
245	14 la The Sandman / jc Neil Gaiman, writer ...
246	13 la Sandman library.
260	... la New York, NY : Bc DC Comics, jc c1991 c1997.
300	... la 10 v. : Bc chiefly col. ill. : jc 26 cm.
500	... la Vol. 1 previously published in single magazine form as Sandman, nos. 1-8 ; v. 2 as nos. 9-16 ; v. 3 as nos. 17-20 ; v. 4 as nos. 21-28 ; v. 5 as nos. 32-37 ; v. 6 as nos. 29-31, 38-40, 50 ; v. 7 as nos. 41-49 ; v. 8 as nos. 51-56 ; v. 9 as nos. 57-69 ; v. 10 as nos. 70-75.
500	... la Although issued in a ten volume set an eleventh volume entitled Endless nights is listed as part of the Sandman library at the end of some volumes. According to the DC Comics/Vertigo website this title was issued in 2003.
500	... la v. 1. Preludes & nocturnes -- v. 2. The Doll's House -- v. 3. Dream country : Callope, A dream of a thousand cats, A midsummer night's dream, Façade, Original script
505	of Callope -- v. 4. Season of mists -- v. 5. A game of you -- v. 6. Fables & reflections -- v. 7. Brief lives -- v. 8. World's end : World's end, A tale of two cities, Urucan's tale, Hob's leviathan, The golden boy, Cereanta, World's end -- v. 9. The kindly ones -- v. 10. The wake.
650	.D la Sandman (Fictitious character : DC Comics, Inc.) In Comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Dreams Iv Comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Nightmares Iv Comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Fantasy comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Horror comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Graphic novels.
650	.D la Comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Fantasy fiction.
740	02 la Preludes & nocturnes.
740	02 la Doll's house.
740	02 la Dream country.
740	02 la Fables & reflections.
740	02 la Brief lives.
740	02 la World's end.
740	02 la Kindly ones.
740	02 la Wake.
902	... la 191105
907	... la b41010243 ib w jc -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.1 1991 j  39006031427406 jn Replacement requested 2011.12 jn Item suppressed from public view has been checked out since 2009 dc25aug11 jn Item record suppressed in Sierra jg 1 j0 .00 jo a r 0 ly .j55928109 is n
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.2 1995 j  39006031449731 jn Replacement requested 2011.12 jn Item suppressed from public view has been checked out since 2009 dc25aug11 jn Item record suppressed in Sierra jg 1 j0 .00 jo a r 0 ly .j55972664 is n
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.3 1995 j  39006032829196 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .i61566287 is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.4 1992 j  39006031449723 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .j55972676 is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.5 1993 j  39006031661392 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .j55982141 is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.6 1993 j  39006031661384 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .j5598213x is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.7 1994 j  39006032829204 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .i61566299 is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.8 1994 j  39006031449715 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .j55972718 is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.9 1996 j  39006031449707 jg 1 j2 4.98 jo - r 0 ly .j5597272x is -
949	...    wstk4 jc v.v.10 1997 j  39006031449699 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .j55972809 is -
976	... la MARS
976	... la GK iz A
998	... b:0 jc 060720 id m je a lf - jg 0



## 2. SuperMutant Magic Academy by Jillian Tamaki

Record View	
LDR	02008nam a2200421 a 4500
001	992016514105151
005	20210218175959 0
008	14102120152015quca 6 000 1 eng
020	... la 9781770461987 iq (pbk.)
020	... la 1770461981 iq (pbk.)
035	... la (CaOLU)j64848486-01ocul_uwo
035	... la (CaOLU)CaOLLucov72107693 j9 ExL
035	... la (OCoLC)884539726
040	... la NLC j9 eng je rda jc NLC jd YDXCP id BTCTA id BDX id OCLCO id WIM id OCLCO id JQM id WIM id ZCU id CaOLU id CaOLLU
043	... la n-cn--
050	.4 la PN6733.T33 jb S87 2015
055	.0 la PN6733.T33 jb S86 2015
082	04 la 741.5/971 j2 23
090	... la PN6733.T34S87 2015
100	1, la Tamaki, Jillian, id 1980- je author, je illustrator.
245	10 la SuperMutant Magic Academy / jc Jillian Tamaki.
246	30 la Super Mutant Magic Academy
250	... la First edition.
264	.1 la Montréal : Bc Drawn & Quarterly, jc 2015.
264	.4 jc ©2015
300	... la 274 pages : Bc chiefly illustrations ; jc 22 cm
336	... la text j9 txt j2 rdacontent
336	... la still image j9 sti j2 rdacontent
337	... la unmediated j9 n j2 rdamedia
338	... la volume j9 nc j2 rdacarrier
520	... la "SuperMutant Magic Academy is a prep-school for mutants and witches but their paranormal abilities take a back seat to everyday teen c headed Trixie frets about her nonexistent modeling career; in another, the immortal Everlasting Boy tries to escape this mortal coil to no avail.
650	.D la Teenagers Iv Comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Private schools Iv Comic books, strips, etc.
650	.D la Comic books, strips, etc. jz Canada.
655	.D la Graphic novels.
902	... la 191105
907	... la .b64848486 j9 w jc -
949	...    wstk4 j  39006035829292 jg 1 j0 .00 jo - r 0 ly .j81004552 is -
976	... je Coutts

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### Glossary

#### Comics books

Also known as just a comic or floppy, is a bound collection of comic strips, usually in chronological sequence, typically telling a single story or a series of different stories. They can be published as an ongoing series, a limited series, or as a one shot.

#### Graphic Novels

Usually used to refer to book-form comics, although this usage is not consistent. The decision between the title of comic book versus graphic novel is done by the publisher but are used interchangeably.

#### Sequential art

Used synonymously with comics and coined and popularized by Will Eisner.

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#### Webcomics

Webcomics, comics published on the Internet since the beginning of the 21st century. Webcomics can incorporate multimedia elements, such as sound, animation and scrolling panels.

#### Manga

The Japanese word for comic book and is used in North America for translated reprints of Japanese comics, or North America comics that are strongly influenced by the Japanese style.

#### Bandes dessinées (BD)

The French term for comic books and is used to refer to Franco-Belgian comics.

#### Cartoonist

Also known as a comic strip creator, can refer to the person who does most or all of the art duties, and frequently, but not always, implies that the artist is also the writer.

#### Writer

Also called a scripter, plotter or author, this person scripts the work, which may include the plot, dialogue, and action, so that the artist can interpret the story into visuals for the reader.

## Artist

The artist is the person who handles the visuals. This job may be broken down further into several other people.

### Penciller

The person responsible for the basic artwork for a page, deciding on panel placement and the placement of figures and settings in the panels, the backgrounds and the characters' facial expressions and poses.

### Inker

The inker, or sometimes known as the finisher, completes the pencilled artwork using ink and a pen or brush to create a high-contrast image for photographing and printing.

### Colourist

The person responsible for adding colours to the finished artwork.

### Letterer

Usually separate from the writer, this is the person who fills, or even places, speech balloons and captions with the dialogue and other words. Letterers can also provide the lettering for sound; however, this is more often done by the artist.



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<https://news.westernu.ca/2010/01/lifetime-collector-donates-comics-to-library/>

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