



Panel

An individual square or rectangular-based shape used to frame the action in a comic strip or book. A typical comic book page has between 6 and 9 panels on a page, and your average comic strip contains 3 or 4 panels.

Word Balloon

A balloon-shaped graphic device that contains a character's spoken dialogue. The "tail" of the balloon points to the character that is speaking. Sometimes called a "speech bubble".

Thought Balloon

A "puffy cloud" shaped graphic device containing text that uses a trail of small "bubbles" instead of a tail to show the reader what the character is thinking. The popular comic strip cat *Garfield* uses thought balloons to communicate.

Caption Box

Rectangles placed within comic strip or comic book panels (normally at the top) that contain text used to help narrate a comic story. Very useful in establishing a story's setting and time. May also contain the protagonist's words, if story is told in first person.

Sound Effects

Words crafted in stylized lettering that are placed inside panels to indicate sounds, such as "BOOM!", "ZING!" (onomatopoeia) or simply letters, for example- to indicate snoring- "Z-Z-Z-Z".

Symbols

Common iconic images used in comics to communicate a mood, feeling or intention. For example; a light bulb drawn over someone's head is a commonly accepted symbol that means "I have an idea!" or drawing floating hearts to show a character's affection for something or someone.

Comic Strips

A graphic form of art that utilizes a sequence of panels containing both words and artwork, either color or black & white, to convey a sequential narrative, and typically deals with humorous subject matter. Normally printed in newspapers in a horizontal "strip" format of 3 or 4 panels, though today many strips are read online as "Webcomics".

Single Panel Comic

Just as the name implies, a single panel of artwork paired with a caption of text below that delivers the punch line or helps the reader interpret the "gag". *Dennis the Menace* is a popular single panel daily newspaper comic.

Comic Books/Graphic Novels

Generally refers to reading material that utilizes a combination of words and artwork placed in sequential panels to tell a story. Though they are similar in appearance, comic books are typically around 32 pages long, while a graphic novel is "novel" length- 100 pages or more. Graphic novels go beyond the superhero genre and include themes such as science fiction, fantasy, action/adventure and humor. Additionally, historic fiction, classic literature, myths and legends have all been adapted into graphic novels.