Some Graphic Novel Basics

• Graphic novels use text and pictures to present information

• Graphic novels use the same format as comic books

• Graphic Novels differ from comics in that they usually contain stand-alone stories with complex plots

• For more information on graphic novels, visit: Graphic Novels in Middle & High School Classrooms
Parts of a Graphic Novel

A graphic novel consists of:

cover and inside pages
A Graphic Novel Page

Pages consist of a variety of elements

- **Panels** - squares or rectangles that contain a single scene
- **Gutters** - space between panels
- **Dialog Balloons** - contain communication between/among characters
- **Thought Balloons** - contain a character’s thoughts
- **Captions** - contain information about a scene or character
- **Sound Effects** - visual sound clues i.e., Wonk! Pow!
How to Read a Graphic Novel Page

Graphic novels are read left to right, just like traditional texts.
Dialog Balloons

dialog balloons are read left to right or top to bottom as is appropriate.

1. Remember when I told you about that creepy guy who thought the Satanists were brother and sister?

2. Yeah... he came here and talked to me for like two hours! He's a total nut!

3. He kept talking about himself and acting like he was going to buy a ton of stuff, but he wound up only buying an old egg beater for ten cents!

4. Now wait, who is this guy?

5. Who is this guy?
Sometimes it can get a little more complicated...
But the basic left to right rule still applies to panels.
and dialog balloons as well
Further Reading

For more information about Graphic Novels, take a look at these books, articles and websites

- **Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art** by Scott McCloud
- **Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel** by Stephen Weiner
- **Comics and Sequential Art** by Will Eisner


• **Get Graphic! with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library**

• **History of Sequential Art**

• **Diamond Comics Bookshelf**