

Artistic Scoresheet

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Graphic Novel/Comic Book Content

Both graphic novels and comic books tell a story through sequential art. Comic books are shorter serialized issues, frequently featuring superheroes, monsters, or elements of fantasy. Graphic novels are longer than comic books and usually feature real or everyday people. They can be fiction or nonfiction and generally tell a complete story.

Content 1. Appeal. The book...

1. Appeals to audiences who enjoy stories told with pictures AND text.
2. Might interest readers who like short but impactful stories with many illustrations.
3. Might not interest readers who like stories where illustrations dominate.
4. Will not appeal to thoughtful readers.
5. It's hard to know who the audience should be.

Content 2. Organization/Length. The book is...

1. Easy to follow, and all the pieces fit together. Sections and chapters are effective. The length is appropriate for the content. If longer than expected, all parts are necessary to tell the story.
2. Mostly well organized and easy to follow. It leaves some questions unanswered, but the length is generally appropriate for the content. Could have edited more succinctly to get within the word count range.
3. Sometimes hard to follow due to poor organization, like jumping around in the timeline and/or the book is too short or too long.
4. Generally disorganized and difficult to follow, and/or too many facts thrown in that aren't needed to move the story along.
5. Nearly impossible to follow or finish due to lack of organization or inappropriate length.

Content 3. Message/Theme. The book's message is...

1. Appropriate, consistent, and understandable.
2. Mostly appropriate, consistent, and understandable.
3. Mostly appropriate, consistent, and understandable, but there are problems like extraneous additions.
4. Sometimes hard to see as appropriate, consistent, or understandable.
5. A real jumble of ideas.

Content 4. Balance of Art/Writing. The book is...

1. Perfectly balanced between artwork and writing. Both aspects are interdependent and aesthetically pleasing.
2. Mostly balanced between artwork and writing. Both aspects are mostly interdependent and aesthetically pleasing.

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3. Sometimes imbalanced between artwork and writing. The book needs more (or less) of one of these elements.
4. Too often imbalanced between artwork and writing. It needs a lot more (or less) of one or both.
5. Problematic with both aspects.

Content 5. Value/Impact. The book...

1. Tells an important or entertaining story in a compelling way.
2. Tells a story that might matter to some readers.
3. Tells a story that is light and insignificant but entertaining.
4. Tells a story with questionable significance.
5. Has little value.

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Pictorial/Coffee Table Book Content

A pictorial book relies on illustrations or photographs to tell a story or feature a place or event. Each rendition should have a caption, and pictures should be high quality. A coffee table book, usually large and hardcover, is meant to serve as casual decoration on a table and share the interests of the host. They are generally pictorial and portray themes that are inspirational, thought provoking, or interesting. They are intended to be looked at casually rather than read cover to cover.

Content 1. Appeal. The book...

1. Appeals to readers looking for stories/information with quality illustrations or photos.
2. Will probably appeal to readers looking for stories/information with quality illustrations or photos.
3. Might not appeal to readers looking for stories/information with quality illustrations or photos.
4. Is written for a small niche and will not appeal to broad audiences.
5. Will not appeal to most audiences.

Content 2. Organization/Length. The book is...

1. Beautifully organized. Chapters/sections are appropriate and in the right place. The book is the perfect length to cover the subject.
2. Mostly beautifully organized. Chapters/sections are mostly appropriate and in the right place—length was almost perfect.
3. Somewhat flawed in its organization. Chapters/sections seemed random: a bit too long or short.
4. Definitely lacking in its organization. Chapters/sections seemed haphazard: WAY too long or short.
5. Disorganized. Chapters/sections are added for little or no discernible reason. Changing the length won't help the book.

Content 3. Message/Theme. The book's message is...

1. Appropriate, consistent, and understandable.
2. Mostly appropriate, consistent, and understandable.
3. Mostly appropriate, consistent, and understandable, but there are problems like extraneous additions.
4. Sometimes hard to see as appropriate, consistent, or understandable.
5. A jumble of ideas.

Content 4. Balance of Imagery/Text. The book is...

1. Perfectly balanced between photos/illustrations and explanatory text.
2. Mostly balanced between photos/illustrations and explanatory text.
3. Sometimes imbalanced between photos/illustrations and explanatory text. It needs more (or less) of one or the other.
4. Too often imbalanced between photos/illustrations and explanatory text. It needs a lot more (or less) of one or both.
5. Seriously problematic with both aspects.

Content 5. Value/Impact. The book is...

1. Visually compelling, beautiful, and worthwhile. It deserves a prominent place on a coffee table.
2. Mostly visually compelling, beautiful, and worthwhile. It might find its way to a coffee table.

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3. Mostly visually compelling, beautiful, and worthwhile, but something is missing. It might not find its way to a coffee table.
4. At times visually compelling, beautiful, and worthwhile, but a lot is missing in the execution. It won't find its way to a coffee table.
5. Not compelling and not worthwhile. Readers won't want it on their coffee tables.

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Style

Note: When considering a graphic novel/comic book's style, try to combine the overall impression you get from the artwork/illustrations with any text or bubble dialog. You will evaluate many of the same issues in the next section (Visual), which is appropriate, given its importance to these two genres.

For Graphic Novels/Comic Books, weigh your answers with the stated audience for the book. A comic book geared for a younger audience would be stylistically different from one directed to an adult audience.

Style 1. Readability. The book is...

1. Easy to understand and engaging throughout. Details are specific, concrete, and vivid, engaging the reader's five senses.
2. Mostly easy to understand and engaging. Details are mostly specific, concrete, and vivid, mostly engaging the senses.
3. Sometimes pedestrian or ponderous. Details are sometimes lost, not well-conveyed, or don't engage the senses.
4. Lost in the details or muddled. The prose detracted from the read.
5. Difficult to finish, and most readers will not make it to the end.

Style 2. Redundancy/Repetition. The book...

1. Contains no redundancies in information (whether it is plot, dialogue, setting, research, or conclusions), and the copy is clean and free of repetitious words, phrases, or sentences, with the exception of repetition for effect.
2. Contains repetitious words or phrases but generally avoids informational redundancies and overdone words or phrases.
3. Uses the same word multiple times in the same paragraph or repeats the same phrases throughout the book, along with informational redundancies.
4. Repeats scenes, includes multiple presentations of the same information, and repeats the same words and phrases frequently throughout the book.
5. Is rife with repetition of information, words, and phrases.

Style 3. Language/Diction. The author uses...

1. Precise, colorful, and easy-to-understand language that does not stray into melodramatic, flowery, or ornate writing with excessive emotion, strained metaphors, or an abundance of clichés: a thoroughly engaging read.
2. Specialized/unexplained/bland vocabulary, overuse of fragments, or overuse of repetition for emphasis. These elements sometimes slow the read, but the meaning is clear.
3. Specialized/unexplained/bland vocabulary, overuse of fragments, clichés, or repetition that detracts from the story/message.
4. Language or dialogue that is awkward or confusing, which obscures the story/message.
5. Language that is ponderous, pretentious, or inappropriate for the content.

Style 4. Balance of Narration/Description/Dialog. The author...

1. Always uses a good balance of artwork to text. Photos/Illustrations stand alone when appropriate; details provided when appropriate
2. Mostly uses a good balance of artwork to text. Photos/Illustrations stand alone when appropriate; details are mostly provided when appropriate.

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3. Sometimes uses a good balance of artwork to text. Photos/Illustrations stand alone when appropriate; details were either lacking or excessive.
4. Doesn't use a good balance of artwork to text. There are too many photos/illustrations and not enough text or vice versa.
5. Overuses narration or description when the artwork should tell the story.

Style 5. Point of View

Graphic novels or comic books are normally seen as visual, third-person accounts (like a movie). If any character's thoughts are depicted, it should be clear who's thinking or describing. The graphic novel uses different "camera" angles, varying close-ups or wide angles to convey the intended emotion or setting/action.

Pictorial/Coffee Table books use camera angles, wide-angle views, and close-ups to emphasize the topic of each individual picture.

The book's use of point of view (as described above)...

1. Is excellent throughout.
2. Mostly consistent and discernible throughout.
3. Is sometimes lacking.
4. Often lacking throughout.
5. Misses the mark entirely.

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Visual

These criteria evaluate cover art and layout, cover design and font, interior layout, front and back matter inclusions, and use of artistic elements.

Visual 1. Cover: Art and Layout

All elements are properly aligned, and the color scheme relates to the content and carries through the spine and back cover. Images are high resolution and placed so that the title is easily read. If displayed on a shelf, the book will attract readers, and the title will be easily seen. The title and author's name are easily distinguishable from background art. Note: The back cover content does not have to be blocked. It can be left justified or centered.

The book's cover...

1. Is aesthetically attractive and relates to the contents of the book.
2. Is attractive but does not relate to the contents or is unattractive but relevant.
3. Has misplaced spine text, clashing colors, low-resolution imagery, etc.
4. Has background artwork that's so busy or bright that the copy can't be read OR there are blurry images.
5. Is unattractive AND does not relate to the contents of the book.

Visual 2. Interior Layout.

Margins: The margins should be at least ½ inch. Text or images near the gutter should be visible without having to apply pressure to flatten the book.

Font: Uses serif font of sufficient size. If the author opts for a different font, it should be easily legible and standardized throughout. Complex or ornate fonts can detract from the book's readability.

Page Numbers: Odd pages are ALWAYS on the right side.

Additional Element for Graphic Novel/Comic Book: Word balloons or additional text should be clear and in harmony with the illustrations.

This book's interior layout elements...

1. Meet or exceed the standards listed above: a professional, well-done layout.
2. Are generally well done, but I notice a defect or two in the above elements.
3. Contain a few layout problems, but the overall effect is still pleasing to the eye.
4. Contain several errors that detract from the overall presentation.
5. Contain so many errors that it is jarring to readers.

Visual 3. Flow/Support of book's story/theme

Graphic Novel/Comic Book: Overall Layout and artwork should be conducive to understanding story flow and time progression.

Pictorial/Coffee Table: Photos/Illustrations should be clean, clear, and relate to the overall theme/topic of the book.

Graphic Novel/Comic Book: The book's overall layout...

1. Is extremely conducive to understanding story flow and time progression.
2. Is mostly conducive to understanding story flow and time progression.
3. Sometimes detracts from a clear understanding of story flow and time progression.
4. Often detracts from a clear understanding of story flow and time progression.

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5. Is enough of a mess that the story is very hard to follow.

Pictorial/Coffee Table Book: The book's photos/illustrations...

1. Are clean, clear, captioned, and appropriate.
2. May not be of the highest resolution but are captioned and appropriate.
3. Sometimes lack resolution and/or are not properly captioned.
4. Are poorly depicted and/or unidentified but still add to the book's content.
5. Are poor, undefined, and/or add little or detract from the book.

Visual 4. Artwork/Focal Point

Graphic Novel/Comic Book: Character/Scene Depiction. The artwork...

1. Convincingly conveys scene, personality, and message.
2. Mostly conveys convincing scenes, personalities, and messages.
3. Sometimes misses the mark, tends to convey scene, personality, and message in a hit-or-miss fashion.
4. Often muddles the scene, personality, and message.
5. Is so poorly done it distracts from the scene, personality, and message.

Pictorial/Coffee Table Book: The focus and focal point...

1. Consistently draw your attention to the subject matter.
2. In most cases, emphasize the subject matter.
3. Sometimes do not allow the reader to determine the subject.
4. Often not effectively used by the photographer.
5. Are mostly ignored by the photographer.

Visual 5. Details

Graphic Novel/Comic Book: Artwork Detail and Use of Word Balloons. The book has...

1. Great panel layout with clear and emotive character expressions AND word balloons or accompanying text consistently harmonizes with the artwork.
2. Solid panel layout with mostly clear and emotive character expressions AND word balloons or accompanying text mostly in harmony with the artwork.
3. Fair panel layout, but character expressions sometimes are not clear or emotive AND word balloons or accompanying text are sometimes not in harmony with the artwork.
4. Poor panel layout with unclear or unintelligible character expressions AND word balloons or accompanying text are often garbled or not harmonized with the artwork.
5. No defining panel layout and is not in harmony with artwork.

Pictorial/Coffee Table Book: Framing, Brightness, Contrast, & Clarity

1. Outstanding control and use of framing, brightness, contrast, and clarity in all photos/illustrations.
2. Good control and use of framing, brightness, contrast, and clarity in nearly all photos/illustrations
3. Adequate control and use of framing, brightness, contrast, and clarity in all photos/illustrations. However, I noticed several issues with the technique, which detracted from the impact of more than one photo.
4. Photos/illustrations often suffer from a lack of control and use of framing, brightness, contrast, and clarity. The photographer seemed to lack training, experience, and/or artistic ability.

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5. Photos/illustrations were mostly a mess.

Technical

These criteria evaluate spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, verb tense, and noun-verb agreement. We have included word counts every 20,000 words. Interpolate as needed.

NOTE: Questions 1 through 4 require you to count errors. The number of errors allowed varies with word count. A 120,000-word book is allowed more errors than a 60,000-word book. Use the table to determine which answer to select.

Allowable Error Scoring by Word Count					
	Score				
Word Count	1	2	3	4	5
120,000	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	>24
100,000	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	>20
80,000	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	>16
60,000	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	>12
40,000	0-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	>8
20,000	0-1	2	3	4	>4
10,000	0	1	2	3	>3

Technical 1. Spelling/Typos/Wrong Word

See the table above for the allowable number of errors. Count noticeable misspellings, typos, and extra or missing words, but don't go on a witch hunt looking for them. Note them in the comment section (their/they're/there, its/it's, horse/hoarse, cavalry/Calvary, etc.).

Technical 2. Punctuation/Hyphenation

See the table above for the allowable number of errors. Count missing or extra punctuation marks. Commas are tricky, so the major ones would be missing commas of direct address, missing commas between two independent clauses, and missing commas after long introductory dependent phrases. Hyphenation should be consistent throughout, including em dashes, which indicate an interruption in dialogue or a harder break than commas indicate in sentences.

Technical 3. Capitalization/Italics

See the table above for the allowable number of errors. English requires proper nouns to be capitalized (e.g., Pizza Hut, but the library). Military rank is capitalized when accompanied by a name (General Smith, but the general). Sir and ma'am are not capitalized (yes, sir; no, ma'am; but Sir Lancelot). Italics are used for ship names (but not USS) and for internal dialogue. Overuse of italics for emphasis is to be discouraged, as it micromanages the reader. Large portions in italics are more difficult to read. The use of italics for foreign words is not required.

Technical 4. Sentence Structure/Syntax

See the table above for the allowable number of errors. Count sentence sprawls, run-on sentences, awkwardly worded sentences, and lengthy sentence fragments that go nowhere. Generally, count an error if the sentence requires re-reading to make sense to the target audience.

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Technical 5. Verb Form and Noun-verb Agreement. The book...

1. Uses the simplest verb form (preferably simple past or present tense) AND has consistent noun-verb agreement.
2. Occasionally uses an inappropriate tense but strives for simplicity OR has several noun-verb disagreements.
3. Uses complicated/inappropriate verb tense forms on a regular basis throughout the book (even if used correctly) OR has more than a few noun-verb agreement problems.
4. Uses complicated/inappropriate tenses throughout the book OR regularly messes up noun-verb agreement.
5. Uses complicated/inappropriate tenses throughout the book AND regularly messes up noun-verb agreement.

Tech comment (required).

Do not comment on your interpretation of the editing (e.g., “best editing I have ever seen,” or “really needs an editor”). Instead, use objective language to note the errors you saw. If you did not notice errors, simply say you did not note any tech errors. However, if you lower a tech score, you must list enough of the errors you noted to vindicate lowering your score. Spelling errors can be noted individually (discrete s/b discreet). Others can be noted in greater detail, but we do not want to document the whole book. List enough errors to give the author some guidelines for where he went wrong.

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Current as of 12/6/2023