INSIDE THE RISE OF GRAPHIC NOVELS

TFK reports on this booming business.
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE Some public spaces, including this park in New Jersey, are closed to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

By Josiah Bates for TIME, adapted by TIME for Kids editors

To limit the spread of COVID-19, health experts say people should practice social distancing. But what does that really mean?

Social distancing means “avoiding mass gatherings” and “maintaining distance.” That’s according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even people who are six feet apart from one another can spread the virus. They can do so through droplets from coughs and sneezes. Social distancing limits the chances of that.

Dr. Susy Hota is an infectious-disease specialist. She’s at the University of Toronto, in Canada. “Social distancing is a very general term,” she says. “There are a bunch of different types of measures that can fall under it.” These include learning from home instead of at school and canceling playdates and sports events.

Denise Rousseau works at Carnegie Mellon University. That’s in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She says many people can’t stay home all the time, even during a disease outbreak. “People have lives that they need to continue to live,” Rousseau says. By keeping space between themselves and others, people “can reduce the likelihood that the virus can be transferred,” she says (see “Flattening the Curve,” page 6).

Hota and Rousseau know it can be hard to keep away from others sometimes, such as on public transportation. In these cases, social distancing means doing the best you can.
"I kind of DOMINATED the match, if I’m being honest,"
said HEAVEN FITCH, a high school wrestler. On February 22, she became the first girl to win a North Carolina individual state championship in wrestling. Heaven beat seven boys in her bracket.

$208 million is the amount that United States wireless carriers could face in FINES for selling customers’ location data. The Federal Communications Commission announced the fines on February 28.

3,549 people dressed in SMURF COSTUMES in Landerneau, France, on March 7. Participants wore blue face paint, blue shirts, and white or red hats. They beat a record set in Germany last year for the largest-ever gathering of Smurfs.

Nothing in particular, just tell me a good story.

- 20% in 2016
- 37% in 2018

Make me laugh.

- 20% in 2016
- 42% in 2018

Take me somewhere I’ve never been.

- 31% in 2016
- 40% in 2018

Tell me about a topic I want to become familiar with.

- 19% in 2016
- 26% in 2018

What do kids look for when choosing books to read for fun? The Scholastic company did surveys in 2016 and 2018 to find out. Take a look at the bar graph to see how kids’ answers have changed over time. What do you look for in a book?
TFK’s Shay Maunz learns about a new wave of graphic novels for kids that’s changing the way people think about comics.

When Raina Telgemeier was a kid in the 1980s, she fell in love with comics. “They were the perfect combination of all the things I liked: characters and stories and humor and artwork,” she told TIME for Kids.

But she had a problem: a shortage of reading material. Two types of comics were widely available to kids. There were comic books about superheroes. But those weren’t her thing. She wanted comics that told stories she could relate to as an ordinary kid. And there were newspaper comic strips. Telgemeier loved some of them, especially Calvin and Hobbes. But she wanted more.

At around 10, she started drawing her own comics. Twenty-three years later, she published Smile. It’s about Telgemeier’s middle school experiences with braces and dental surgery.

Before Smile was published, in 2010, it wasn’t clear the book would succeed. People in the publishing industry had doubts. They figured kids wouldn’t enjoy a graphic novel about an average girl.

They were wrong. Smile became a Number 1 best-seller. Since then, Telgemeier has published several more popular graphic novels. There are more than 18 million copies of her books in print. Telgemeier’s success has made a big impact. Industry experts say she paved the way for many more graphic novels for kids.

THEN AND NOW

Comics have been around since at least the 19th century. Traditional comic books are short. Often, they’re about adventure or superheroes. “Comics have this history . . . of either being very funny and silly or having a lot of punching of things,” Gina Gagliano says. She works on graphic novels at Random House. That’s a publishing company.

Today’s graphic novels are different. Authors use comics to tell a book-length story. It can be any genre. It can be realistic.

In 2018, sales of graphic novels for kids and teens jumped by more than 50%. Compare that to sales of printed books across all categories. They increased by about 1%.

REAL READING

As sales boom, attitudes about comics are changing. This year, New Kid became the first graphic novel to win the Newbery Medal. That’s a prestigious award in children’s literature.

New Kid author Jerry Craft says that when he was a kid, he read mainly comics. He knew some adults didn’t approve. “In certain schools, if they saw you reading a comic, they would confiscate it, because they thought it was rotting your brain,” he says. “They didn’t realize the amount of imagination and storytelling and vocabulary in those comics.”

New Kid’s Newbery shows what many kids already understood: Graphic novels are real books. “It’s a victory for all graphic novels,” Craft says.

—By Shay Maunz

genre noun: type; a category, such as realistic fiction, science fiction, or mystery

prestigious adjective: important; respected
FLATTENING THE CURVE

One chart explains how staying home can slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The coronavirus continues to spread throughout the world. Keeping your distance from others during the pandemic could slow the virus down. It could also save lives. A simple chart tells us how. It shows two situations. One is what would happen if nothing were done to stop the spread of the virus. Many cases of the disease that it causes, COVID-19, would appear all at once. The other is what would happen if everyone followed health-safety guidelines. These include social distancing (see “Social Distancing,” page 2).

“There’s an opportunity here to take power over this virus,” Drew Harris told TIME for Kids. Harris is a researcher at Thomas Jefferson University, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He’s one of the creators of the chart.

TAKING CONTROL

Experts like Harris say it’s important to slow the spread of the coronavirus. They call this “flattening the curve.” The chart shows two curves. The red one has a steep peak. It represents a surge of COVID-19 cases. This happens if no protective measures are taken. The blue curve has a flatter slope. This represents a slower rate of infection over a longer period of time.

And that’s the goal: to spread out infections over time. Then hospitals can care for patients before more people get sick. There will be beds and medical equipment for those who need them.

Harris offers a comparison: Imagine everyone in your family got the flu. You couldn’t care for one another. He says, “Wouldn’t it be better if everyone took turns getting the flu so there is always somebody healthy to care for others? That’s what we want to do in our society.”

To slow the spread of COVID-19, officials have closed some schools and businesses. Big events have been canceled. This may make people feel disconnected. But the chart shows that we’re not really alone. “We are connected in many more ways than just being near each other physically,” Harris says. “All of us, young and old, have a responsibility to take care of each other.” —By Brian S. McGrath
WEAR IT PROUD

The CROWN Coalition wants to end hair discrimination.

Jonathan Brown, 8, is from Texas. He rocks his dreadlocks proudly. He wants to grow them long. But in late 2019, he was sent home from school with a note. It was from the assistant principal. The note said Jonathan had to have his hair cut to follow the school dress code. His mom is Tiffany Brown. She refused to cut it. “On the way home, Jonathan cried,” she told TIME for Kids.

Many schools have dress codes. They are meant to help students focus on learning. Some prevent boys from wearing their hair long. This bans styles such as afros and dreadlocks. Some ban braids, twists, and other styles associated with black culture.

Jonathan’s story isn’t the only one of its kind. In January, Texas teen DeAndre Arnold was told he needed to cut his dreadlocks to go to his graduation. Twins Mya and Deanna Cook are from Massachusetts. In 2017, they were given detention at their school. The school said their hair extensions violated code.

Esi Eggleston Bracey sees these types of rules as hair discrimination. She helped start the CROWN Coalition. CROWN stands for Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.

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ACT NOW

Tiffany took the issue up with the school board. After about six months, Jonathan’s school changed its code. The CROWN Coalition hopes to prevent other students from having to go through this process. That’s why it champions the CROWN Act. The act seeks to prevent schools and workplaces from discriminating against black people for wearing their hair in “natural styles.”

Bracey wants kids to feel proud of their hair. “There have been far too many incidents of children being sent home, suspended, or expelled from school because of their textured hairstyles,” she says.

The CROWN Act has passed in five states. And there are efforts to pass it nationally. “I think it’s empowering,” Tiffany Brown says. “The CROWN Act is now saying ‘No longer will we be forced to not be who we are. And our hair is included.’”

—By Constance Gibbs

Power Words

champion verb: to fight or speak up for discrimination noun: unfairly treating one group of people differently from another group

ALL NATURAL Long dreadlocks are banned in some dress-code policies.
Get ready to jam out with *Trolls World Tour*. It’s a sequel to the 2016 *Trolls* movie. The film follows friends Poppy and Branch as they make a big discovery: Theirs is not the world’s only troll tribe. Poppy and Branch learn that every tribe is dedicated to a different type of music—funk, country, techno, classical, pop, and rock. Rock troll King Thrash and his daughter, Queen Barb, want to destroy the other tribes and transform all trolls into rock zombies.

**RON FUNCHES** is the voice of Cooper, a four-legged troll. “Cooper is a member of the Snack Pack,” Funches told *TIME for Kids*. Its other members, including Poppy and Branch, are pop trolls. But Cooper, a funk troll, stands out. “He becomes determined to find more trolls that look like him,” Funches says.

The movie shows that it’s okay to be different. “We need each other in order to create this symphony called life,” Funches says. *Trolls World Tour* will be available at online streaming services on April 10.

—By Constance Gibbs

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**ROCK ON**

What do you want to be when you grow up? When **NATALIE LABARRE** was a kid, she hated that question. None of the careers she knew about—like being a doctor or lawyer—seemed like something she wanted to do. “But when I learned that animator was a job that grown-ups could have, I calmed down,” she told *TFK*. Labarre went on to become an animator. Now she’s written and illustrated a book: *Incredible Jobs You’ve (Probably) Never Heard Of*. It includes professions like window cleaner, snake milker, and wigmaker. Labarre hopes the book will help kids imagine their future. “Just because you’ve never heard of a job you like doesn’t mean you won’t find the perfect one,” she says.

—By Shay Maunz

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