

EXPLORING ART

# ANIME AND MANGA

by Christine Ha



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# AT A GLANCE

- Anime and manga are art forms from Japan. They are known for their distinct style and immersive storytelling. Manga are comic books, and anime are animated cartoons.
- The word *anime* comes from the English word “animation.” In Japan, *anime* describes all animation. But the rest of the world usually uses the word *anime* to describe animation that comes from Japan.
- The word *manga* comes from an artist named Katsushika Hokusai. He was a well-known artist who compiled his works into a book titled *Hokusai Manga*.
- The first manga were published in magazines in Japan after World War II (1939–1945). Manga magazines are still popular today.

# WHAT ARE ANIME AND MANGA?

**A**nime and manga use pictures to tell stories. These stories can be from many **genres** and for different age groups. Some are funny and heartwarming. Others are serious and dark. Some are for kids. Others are for teenagers or adults. Anime and manga feature diverse



***Stores in Japan offer anime and manga for all audiences.***

worlds, characters, and situations. Many anime and manga include relatable and realistic characters.

Master animator Hayao Miyazaki once said animated films let viewers explore other lives they could have lived. He said these other lives were like “lost possibilities.”

Miyazaki explained, “For example, I might have been the captain of a pirate ship, sailing with a lovely princess by my side. . . . There are selves which are lost possibilities, and selves that could have been. . . . And I think that’s exactly why the fantasy worlds of cartoon movies so strongly represent our hopes and yearnings. They illustrate a world of lost possibilities for us.”<sup>1</sup>

Modern anime and manga have a distinct visual style. This style helps them tell stories. The most defining feature of anime and manga is their characters’ eyes. The eyes are often large and



exaggerated. In Japan, eyes are seen as strong emotional indicators. They can tell viewers a character's true emotions, even if the character's words or actions say otherwise. Eyes may also indicate a character's personality. Larger eyes usually show a person is **earnest** and sweet.

### DOUJINSHI

A unique form of manga is called doujinshi. This means “one-person magazine.” These are self-published works that appeal to a specific audience. They are typically fan creations that use characters from existing media. However, they can also be original stories. Doujinshi are often distributed online or sold at **conventions**. Some physical stores carry doujinshi as well.



More serious characters or villains typically have narrower eyes.

Expressions and actions are often exaggerated too. If a character is crying, tears may flow like rivers out of his eyes. If the character is embarrassed, his whole face might turn red. Steam might even rise from his head.

Despite this exaggeration, other parts of anime and manga often have a dedication to realism. Artists work to ensure quality even with challenging production schedules. They keep the art consistent. Each frame has a purpose and adds to the story.



***Anime-style backgrounds are often realistic and rich with detail.***

Backgrounds and objects such as food are given special care. Most backgrounds in anime and manga are grounded in reality.

When possible, they look like the real places they are based on.

# GLOSSARY

**continuity**

consistency between different parts of an anime or manga

**conventions**

events where fans come together to celebrate their favorite books, shows, or movies

**demographic**

an audience for a particular kind of media

**earnest**

sincere and honest

**genres**

categories of media

**onomatopoeia**

a word that sounds like the noise it describes, such as “boom” or “meow”

**panels**

the outlines around individual images that make up a manga

**propaganda**

information that is created and spread to influence an audience to think a certain way

**storyboard**

a set of drawings used to plan out an anime

**translates**

changes the written or spoken parts of media from one language to another

# SOURCE NOTES

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# FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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