

THE WORLD OF ANIME AND MANGA

ANIME AND MANGA: GENRES AND THEMES

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CONTENTS

AT A GLANCE	4
INTRODUCTION	6
CONNECTING THROUGH ANIME AND MANGA	
CHAPTER ONE	12
SHONEN AND SHOJO	
CHAPTER TWO	24
FANTASY AND ISEKAI	
CHAPTER THREE	36
SCI-FI AND MECHA	
CHAPTER FOUR	48
SLICE OF LIFE AND SPORTS	
Glossary	58
Source Notes	59
For Further Research	60
Index	62
Image Credits	63
About the Author	64

AT A GLANCE

- Anime are films made by animators. Manga are comics made by artists called mangakas.
- Both anime and manga include many titles from a variety of genres.
- Different genres may use similar themes. Common themes are friendship, determination, and the hero's journey.
- Shonen is a genre made for teenage boys. Shojo is made for teenage girls.
- Fantasy is among the most popular genres in anime and manga. Animators and mangakas make the impossible possible for characters in this genre.
- Isekai is a subgenre of fantasy. Characters in isekai wake up and find themselves in a new world.



- The sci-fi genre features advanced technology and takes readers on adventures into the future or to other planets.
- Mecha is a subgenre of sci-fi. Mechanical beings such as giant robots are featured in mecha stories.
- In the slice-of-life genre, characters experience events from everyday life. Audiences often relate to these characters' experiences.
- The sports genre often explores themes of teamwork and competition.

1

SHONEN AND SHOJO

Animators and mangakas create stories with their audiences in mind. For example, most kids begin by watching or reading kodomomuke. This genre is created for all genders of young children.

The characters in this genre are drawn to appeal to kids. Hello Kitty wears a big red bow. Pikachu from *Pokémon* is bright yellow with rosy cheeks. Anime and manga

are also made for teenagers. Shonen and shojo are two of the most popular genres for teens.

In 2001, Pikachu from Pokémon began a long string of appearances in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.





The hero's journeys featured in My Hero Academia and Dragon Ball Z inspire some fans to dress up as characters from these series at anime and manga conventions.

THE SHONEN GENRE

Shonen is a genre based on age and gender. Boys aged 12 years or older often like this genre. Themes in shonen include action, adventure, coming of age, and friendship.

Shonen characters are heroes who work hard to learn new skills. They may gain power to win fights against villains. Anime viewers or manga readers follow the characters along a hero's journey. This theme often begins with a hero who leaves his home to go on a quest. Throughout his journey, he learns lessons as he works hard to reach his dreams. The hero defeats villains and learns lessons about growing up, such as how to be a friend or a leader. By the time he returns home, the hero has grown to become a better person.

EXAMPLES OF SHONEN

There are many popular shonen series. The anime and manga *My Hero Academia* was created by Kohei Horikoshi. He released the

first manga volume in Japan in 2014. As of 2023, the manga series was still published in *Weekly Shonen Jump*.

My Hero Academia features a hero named Izuku Midoriya. Izuku and his friends want to attend superhero school. But Izuku was born without a superpower. One of the themes of this story is working together for success. The anime version of *My Hero Academia* was released in Japan in 2016.

One Piece by mangaka Eiichiro Oda first appeared in *Weekly Shonen Jump* in 1997. This manga series is about a teen named Monkey D. Luffy. Luffy wants to be the king of the pirates. But to do so, he must find the treasure known as the One Piece. Other characters help Luffy. The story's themes explore friendship. Like many manga, this one also inspired an anime.

It was released in Japan in 1999. *One Piece* won the Crunchyroll Anime Award for Best Continuing Series in 2023.

THE SHOJO GENRE

Young girls aged 12 or older often prefer the shojo genre. Themes in shojo include drama, coming of age, love, and romance.

Shojo characters explore relationships between families and friends to empower

MANGA MAGAZINES

In Japan, many manga series appear first in magazines. For example, *Weekly Shonen Jump* is a best-selling magazine made for teenage boys. *Hana to Yume* is a magazine for teenage girls. Sometimes, the manga series in magazines are published in tankoubon, which are graphic novels.

TOP 5 BEST-SELLING MANGA TITLES

Ranking	Title	Genre	Duration
1st	<i>One Piece</i> by Eiichiro Oda	Fantasy / Shonen / Action & Adventure	1997– Present
2nd	<i>Golgo 13</i> by Takao Saito	Fantasy / Shonen / Action & Adventure	1968– Present
3rd	<i>Case Closed / Detective Conan</i> by Gosho Aoyama	Fantasy / Shonen / Crime / Mystery	1994– Present
4th	<i>Dragon Ball</i> by Akira Toriyama	Fantasy / Action & Adventure	1984– Present
5th	<i>Doraemon</i> by Fujiko F. Fujio	Science Fiction / Comedy	1969– 2014

Source: Suzail Ahmad. "The 14 Best-Selling Manga in History," Game Rant, April 18, 2023. <https://gamerant.com>.

Some of the best-selling manga titles have been in print for more than 50 years.

In both shonen and shojo, the characters grow as people. A seventh-grade student

GLOSSARY

androids

human-like robots

cyberpunk

a subgenre of science fiction that takes place in urban societies with advanced technology

cyborgs

humans who have mechanical parts built into their bodies

discrimination

the act of treating some people well while treating others poorly because of differences between them

humanoids

creatures with human-like characteristics

poignant

emotional, deeply connected to the heart

prosthetic

a human-made device to replace a missing body part

supernatural

something that cannot be explained by natural laws or science

trauma

a terrible experience that hurts physically or emotionally

SOURCE NOTES

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INDEX

- Astro Boy*, 40
Attack on Titan, 28
awards, 17, 31, 33
- Battle Angel Alita*, 8, 38–40
- Case Closed*, 22
cyberpunk, 38
- Detective Conan*, 22
Doraemon, 22
Dr. Stone, 33–35
Dragon Ball, 22
- fantasy, 8, 22, 24–35
Fruits Basket, 8, 27–28
- Golgo 13*, 22
- Hana to Yume*, 17
Hello Kitty, 12
- isekai, 30–35, 46
- Knight's & Magic*, 46
Knights of Sidonia, 44
kodomomuke, 12
Komi Can't Communicate, 51–52
- mangakas, 10–11, 12, 16, 24, 35,
36, 37, 44, 46, 51, 57
mecha, 42, 44–47
Mobile Suit Gundam, 47
My Hero Academia, 15–16
- Neon Genesis Evangelion*, 44–46
- One Piece*, 16–17, 22
Orange, 19–20
- Pluto*, 40–41
Pokémon, 12
- Run on Your New Legs*, 55–56
- Sailor Moon*, 20
Satoko and Nada, 52
science fiction, 8, 22, 36–41
shojo, 11, 13, 17–22
shonen, 11, 13–17
Slam Dunk, 8, 54–55
slice of life, 48–52, 57
Spirited Away, 6, 31–33
sports, 48, 53–57
Studio Ghibli, 31
Sword Art Online, 33–35
- That Time I Got Reincarnated as a
Slime*, 35
- Weekly Shonen Jump*, 16, 17