

Manga

Time Required	Approximately 30 minutes
Key Skills	Vocabulary
Type	Pairs, groups of four
Overview and Goals	
<p>Some extensive-reading books are in manga format. Picture books and easy-level reading books often include illustrations to amplify, summarize, or explain the content. Many beginning learners prefer books with illustrations because the images reinforce the meaning of the text. For readers who find text-only material too challenging, English versions of manga (comics, four-panel manga, etc.) offer a refreshing change. However, reading manga in English can be more challenging than you might think. Therefore, it can be helpful for teachers to explain certain manga conventions, such as the use of onomatopoeia or mimetic words. There is a side benefit, too; since English onomatopoeia is rarely the subject of focused instruction, the novelty of such a class can spark learners' interest.</p>	
Advance Preparation (Required Materials, Equipment, etc.)	
<p>Manga (the <i>Doraemon</i> series is used here).</p> <p>Teaching materials that introduce onomatopoeia.</p> <p>Worksheet (A sample is presented at the end).</p>	
Procedure	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce onomatopoeia in a quiz format. The sample worksheet is provided here includes exercises featuring animal sounds, sounds of daily life, etc. 2. Print and distribute manga excerpts. 3. Instruct the students to read the manga and write down any onomatopoeia they encounter. (Teachers should extract the onomatopoeia in advance). 4. Discuss the results in groups or in the class. 	

[Application and Explanation]

This activity introduces the first episode of the English version of *Doraemon*. Virtually all students know *Doraemon*, which has easy-to-understand content and short stories, so the class introduction is easy (the first story is 15 pages—about 1,000 words in English).

The reason for using manga instead of English comics is that, English comics can be difficult to understand without knowing the cultural background, and this can make them too challenging for extensive reading. In addition to *Doraemon*, I also introduce the four-panel comic *The Peanuts* as

an example of an English comic; however, even though the character Snoopy is well-known, students often say things like “I do not get the punchline [of this four-panel comic]” or “I do not understand its point.” In fact, humor is one of the most difficult aspects of cross-cultural understanding. To promote extensive reading, we can sufficiently expand the range in the class by using English versions of Japanese manga rather than manga from English-speaking countries, side-stepping the complications of requiring foreign cultural knowledge.

For teaching onomatopoeia, it can also be effective to use picture books instead of manga. For example, Dr. Seuss’s *Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?* contains onomatopoeia commonly used in English-speaking countries, such as moo, eek, knock knock, choo choo, slurp, and pop. The illustrations make it easy to connect the words to what makes the sounds, and the book is just 24 pages with only a few words on each page. Some manga use a lot of onomatopoeia, while others do not. Akira Toriyama’s *Dragon Ball* is full of onomatopoeia. In some cases, the Japanese onomatopoeia is directly transliterated, but if you are interested in manga onomatopoeia, I recommend *Dragon Ball*. By the way, the first episode of *Doraemon* contains the following onomatopoetic words: klam klatta klam, gobble gob, da-da-dum, wap, wah, swoop, sloop, shaps, bwoom.

Cf. Sample Worksheet

1. Animal noises (Whose noises?). Choose an answer from the options in the box.

- 1) bow wow
- 2) meow
- 3) squeak
- 4) baa
- 5) neigh
- 6) oink
- 7) chirp
- 8) quack
- 9) croak/ribbit
- 10) buzz/hum

Bird	Mouse
Duck	Dog
Cat	Frog
Bee	Sheep
Pig	Bat
Horse	
*There are more options	

(Text: Megumi Kobayashi)