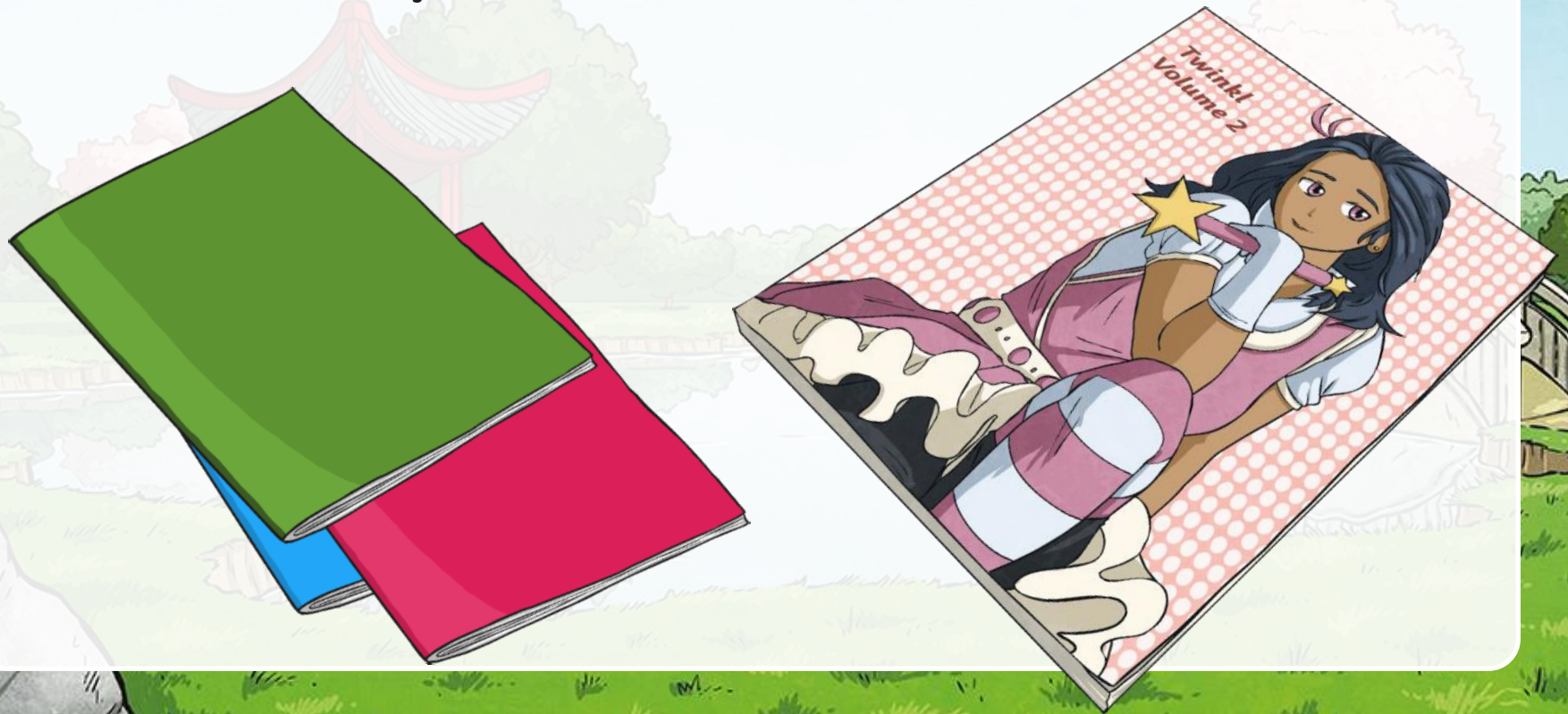# All About Japanese Manga

What Is Manga?

Manga is an art form, a type of Japanese comic book or graphic novel. First published in Japan in the early nineteenth century, it has become more popular and widespread in recent years. Manga is the form of telling a story through illustration. These stories often involve adventure or humour.

The History Of Manga

The art form that we now recognise as manga was published in newspapers as cartoon strips in the 20th Century. Although its roots may be earlier, Kitazawa Rakuten (1876-1955) is considered by many to be the father of modern manga. As its popularity became more global, the art form expanded to include anime (animated media, e.g. cartoons), clothing, graffiti and gaming.

Audience

Unlike traditional comic books, manga is not just read by children. There are many different types of manga, written to appeal to a wide audience:

- **Kodomomuke** often teaches morals to its audience of young children.

- **Shonen** appeals to teenage boys with its action and adventure stories.

- **Shojo** is primarily for pre-teen and teenage girls and include stories based on real-life situations as well as action and adventure.

- **Seinen** is written for older teenagers and men. These stories involve plenty of action.

- **Josei** are often realistic tales and capture an audience of girls in their late teens to older women.
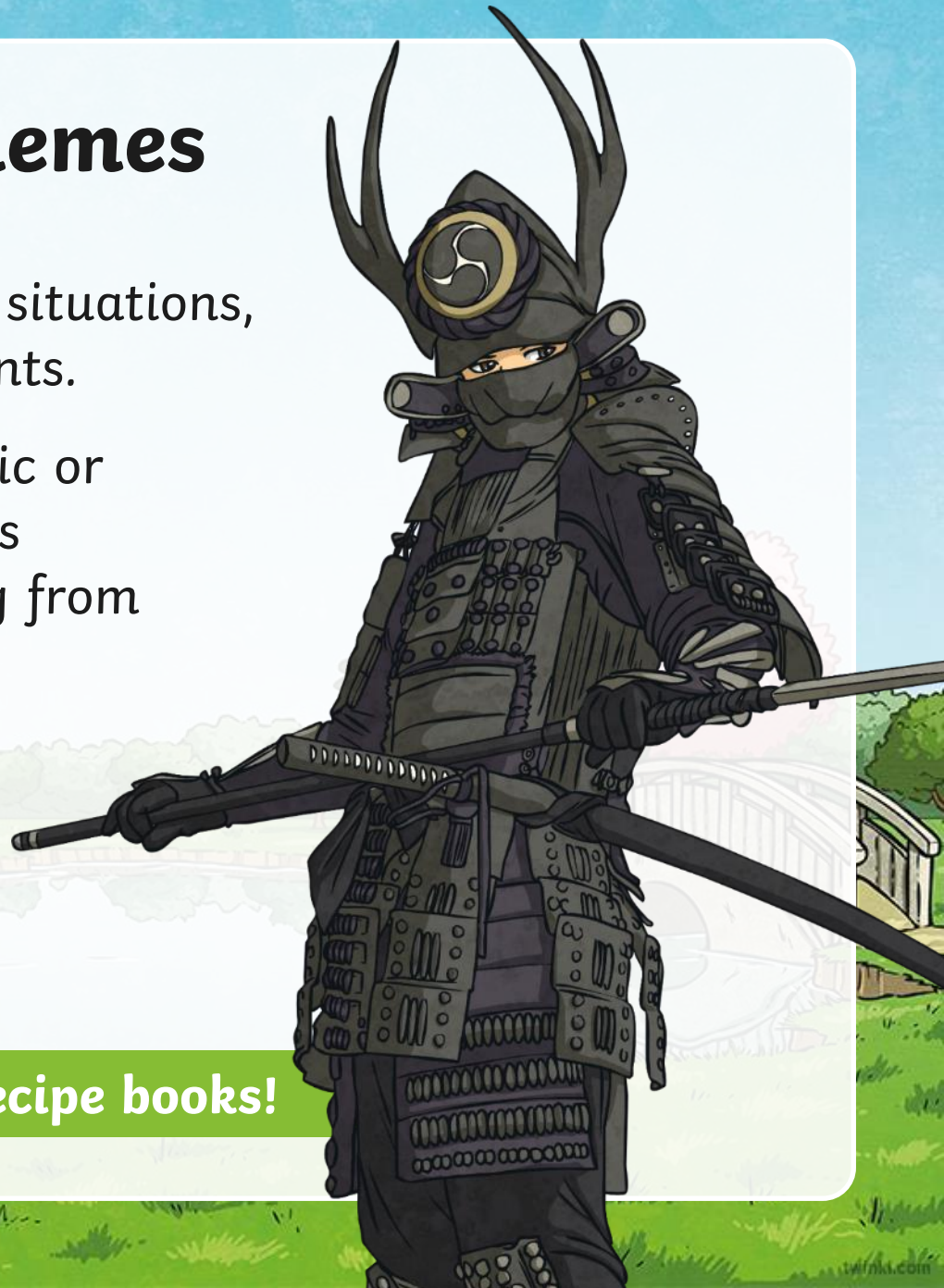
Themes

Themes range from real-life situations, to humour, to historical events.

Manga fiction can be realistic or fantastical with protagonists (leading characters) ranging from samurai warriors to robots.

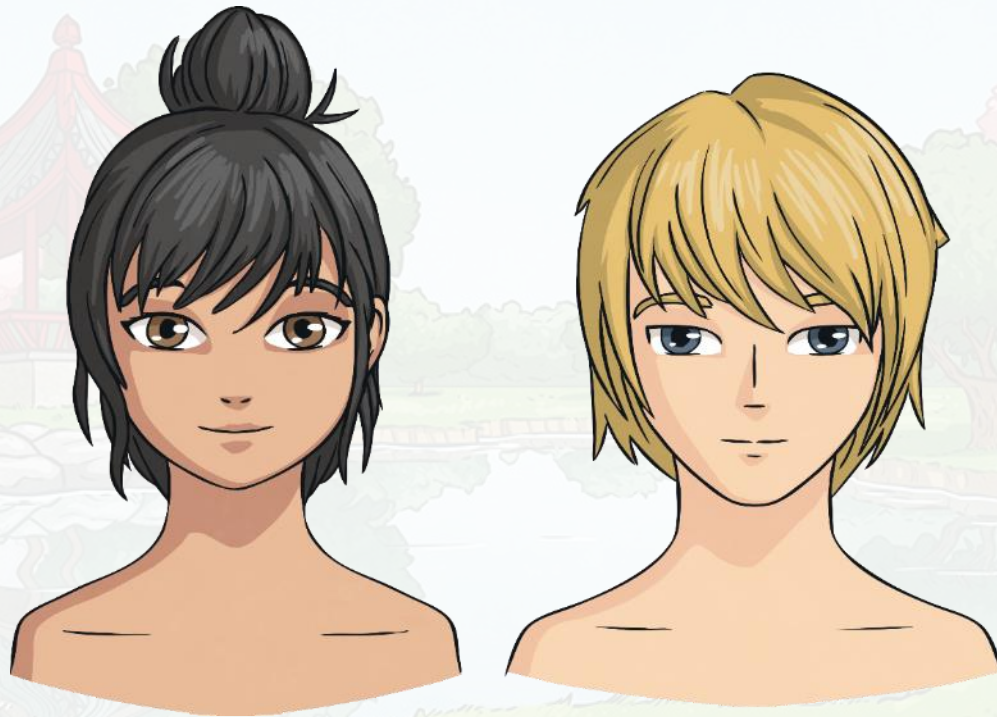Manga can be found filling the shelves in bookshops all over Japan.

Did you know?

You can even get manga recipe books!

The Manga Style

Manga has a specific style. It is drawn by hand in pencil, or pen and ink. Characters are depicted with large eyes, small mouths and often unnatural hair colour. Much manga is still printed in black and white.
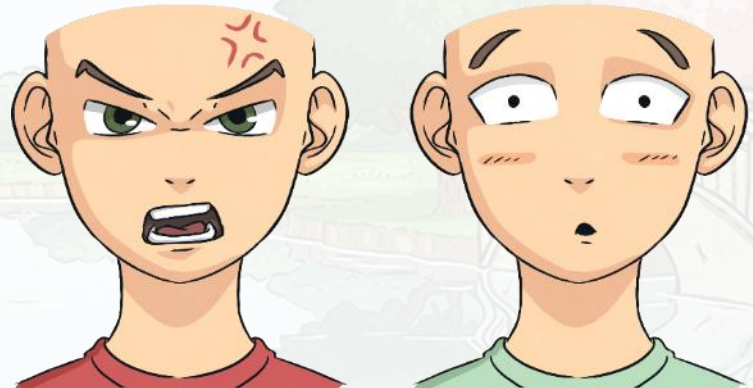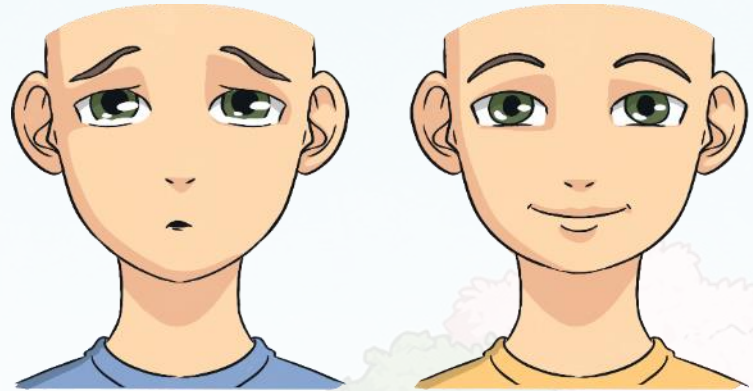
Telling A Story

Manga can include some text but the focus is on the illustrations.

Emotions are shown through highly exaggerated illustrations, e.g. a **sad** character would be depicted crying a waterfall of tears.

A **happy** character's smile would be really wide and almost fill the face.

An **angry** character would be depicted with red, rosy cheeks and have steam coming from them.

Draw Your Own Manga Character

1. Draw a circle, with a light line down the middle.

2. Draw two vertical lines from both sides of the circle, angling towards the central line, to create a chin.

3. Half way down the circle, draw the eyebrows and below that, large eyes.

4. Halfway down the bottom half of the face, draw a simple line for the nose, or two nostrils. Add ears, with the bottom in line with the nose.

5. Add a simple lip outline, halfway between the nose and chin.

6. Add choppy hair, with sweeping strands.

7. Add colour and further details to depict your character's emotions.