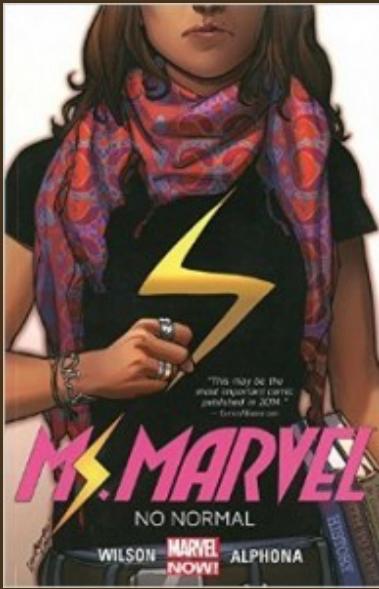


# Ms. Marvel Reading Guide



## Questions and Ideas for Consideration

- Graphic Narrative:** How does the comic style of *Ms. Marvel* affect the message and meaning of the story? How does it differ from other books we've read?
- Race, Culture, & Religion:** Do you think Wilson and Alphona portray adolescent culture effectively? What other cultural representations does she offer, and do you think these are positive portrayals? Why or why not?
- Depiction Details:** What artistic choices does Alphona make to purposefully present certain ideas? Consider use of line, color, perspective, framing, etc.
- Powers:** How do Kamala's powers reflect some of the inner struggles she faces?
- Assimilation and Identity:** How does Kamala struggle to fit into her New York world, both assimilating and retaining family values, history, and beliefs?
- Self-Reflexive:** In what ways is this comic self-reflexive, providing meta-commentary on comics more generally, especially by casting Kamala as having a "sad nerd obsession with the Avengers."
- Marvel Universe:** How is Kamala like Carol Danvers' Captain Marvel and how does she differ? How does she define herself as a Marvel hero while redefining too?

## Daybook Possibilities

- Try your hand at graphic narrative art yourself by drawing a short comic of a story you've read or an experience you have had in your life.
- Research the Marvel Universe and the development of the Ms. Marvel character within it, as well as the media releases about some of the choices to approach Kamala's character.
- Visit the library and check out some of the other graphic narratives or comic books for teens. How is *Ms. Marvel* similar or different to these? Which draw your attention and why?
- Plot how you might revision another comic book superhero to focus on new issues, cultures, etc.
- Consider some of the design choices that Alphona makes, such as color, use of text/dialogue, frame shape/size, etc. How do these affect the story?
- Learn about how graphic novels are viewed and what people's perceptions of them are (possibly looking at news or web forum spaces). Do you agree/disagree?
- Compare the portrayals of the Bildungsroman in this book to others we've read this semester.
- Check out the Using Graphic Novels In Education: Ms. Marvel website from the CBLDF at <http://cbldf.org/2015/04/using-graphic-novels-in-education-ms-marvel/>.

## Suggested Critical Reading

"Comic Art, Children's Literature, and the New Comic Studies" by Charles Hatfield

"The Graphic Novel and the Age of Transition: A Survey and Analysis" by Stephen E. Tabachnick

"Decoding Comics" by Hilary Chute

I especially recommend Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, a scholarly book written as a comic book. If you'd like to read a section, I'm happy to make copies of a chapter that interests you.

## Background and Context

*Ms. Marvel: No Normal* is the collection of the first issues featuring Kamala Khan, Marvel's first Muslim character to star in her own comic book. Debuting in 2014 and created by writer G. Willow Wilson and artist Adrian Alphona, Khan is a teenage Pakistani American from Jersey City, New Jersey with shapeshifting abilities (aka, she is a polymorph). A story that delves into selfhood from a variety of viewpoints, the first volume of *Ms. Marvel* won the Hugo Award for best graphic story in 2015.