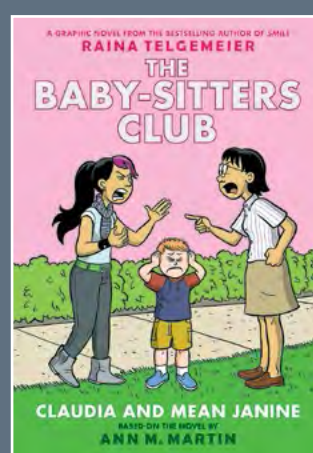
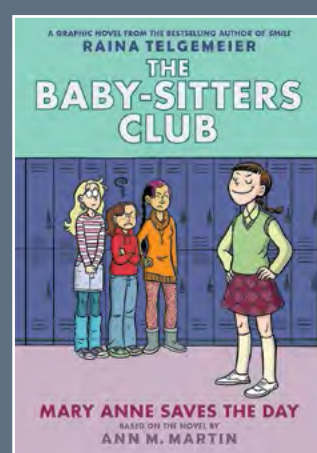
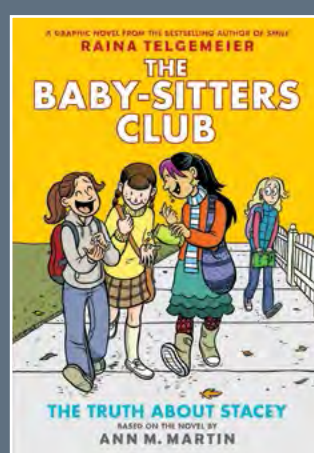
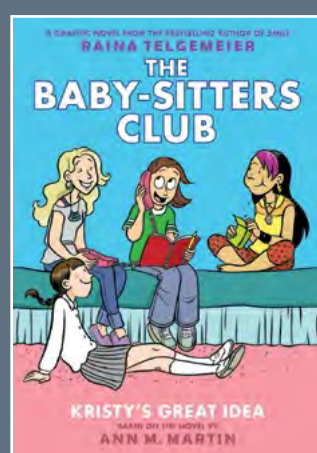
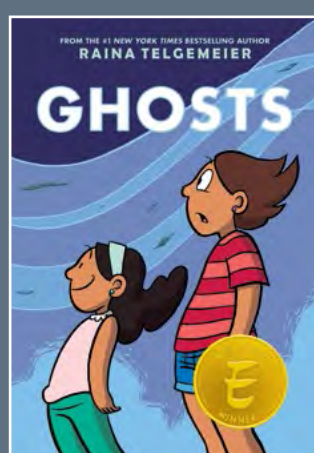
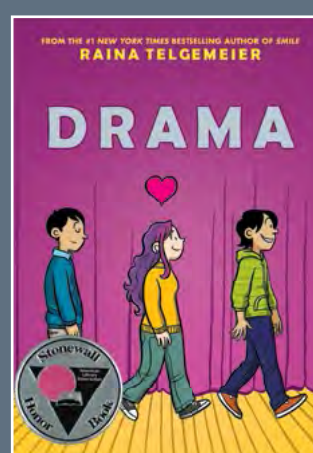
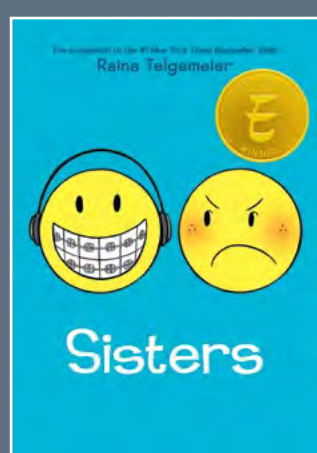


# Read with Raina

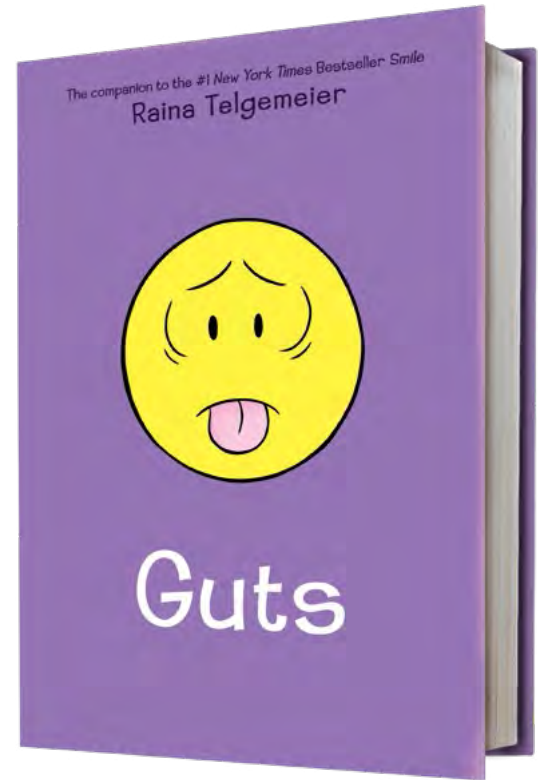




## About *Guts*

Raina wakes up one night with a terrible upset stomach. Her mom has one, too, so it's probably just a bug. Raina eventually returns to her elementary school, where she's dealing with the usual highs and lows: friends, not-friends, and classmates who think the school year is just one long gross-out session. It soon becomes clear that Raina's tummy trouble isn't going away . . . and it coincides with her worries about food, school, and changing friendships. What's going on?

Raina Telgemeier once again brings us a thoughtful, charming, and funny true story about growing up and gathering the courage to face—and conquer—her fears.



## Discussion Questions

1. A lot of the story of *Guts* happens inside Raina's mind—describing what she's thinking and what she's not saying. How do you get a peek inside Raina's thoughts? How does she learn to say things out loud?
2. Some people hold their breath when they get anxious or angry and don't notice it until they feel out of breath. Others clench their hands into fists when they are upset, or tap their toes when they're nervous. How do your feelings affect the ways you move and feel in your own body?
3. In *Guts*, Raina's fears tend to build on each other—if something bad happens once, she's scared it will happen again and does everything she can to avoid recreating the same sequence of events. Why does she think that avoiding things will stop her anxieties? Does it help? What makes her realize that it isn't working or worth what she's giving up?
4. Throughout *Guts*, Raina tries new foods—some that she likes and others that she finds gross. What are some foods that you love to eat? Are there any that you dislike? Were you ever surprised to enjoy something you thought you wouldn't like?
5. Deep breathing and feeling rooted to the ground help Raina when she feels anxious. Do you have any favorite techniques for calming yourself down? Have you ever shared them with your friends to see if your method might help those around you?
6. Sometimes talking about your fears and anxieties can be intimidating and scary, even if it's to a trusted adult or your best friend. How did Raina overcome her reluctance to tell others about her situation?
7. Mr. Abrams tells Raina to try to be nice to Michelle because "everyone is fighting a hard battle." What do you think this means? Have you ever found it difficult to get along with someone? How does Raina come to understand Michelle and settle their differences?
8. Raina doesn't tell her friends about going to therapy until almost the end of *Guts*, but when she does, she realizes that she's not alone in seeking help to make her feel better mentally and physically. Why do you think she felt like she had to keep it a secret? How do you handle the fear of what other people will think about you? How have you decided to be brave and honest about something others may think is weird or a weakness?

# How Comics Work

With *Smile, Sisters*, and *Guts*, Raina Telgemeier chooses to share her memories as comics in the long form of a graphic memoir. Comics use elements that make storytelling different from sticking to only words or only pictures. They use panels, sound effects, colors, symbols, and art style changes to lead you through a story. Think about how comics work by considering these pages in *Guts*.



1. Colors are very important in comics. What colors do you see that are important in showing how Raina feels in *Guts*? Take a look at page 6, or pages 20–25. How do the colors and lines of these pages help you understand how Raina is feeling, both in her body and in her mind? Do you notice that some colors make you relax, or make you sad, or make you happy?
2. Take a look at pages 38–46. Notice all the ways comics use symbols, lines, and expressions to show you how the characters feel during these pages. Symbols are especially important in comics to telegraph emotions. Which symbols do you notice on these pages? What do they tell you about the story? The characters? Why do you think these symbols work so well?
3. Sound effects are another big part of how comics work. Our world is full of noises, from the loud grumbling of an unhappy tummy to the quiet sigh of someone who is feeling defeated. Which sounds effects did you most notice in *Guts*? Some spell out an actual sound (look at pages 6–8) and some are words that describe a sound (on pages 54–55). Can you hear them in your head or make the sound out loud while you're reading?
4. Sometimes comics show gestures or details with words that aren't spoken, a little like a silent sound effect or a subtle thought. Can you find any cues for things that aren't actually sounds (hint: check out page 50 or 64)? Why do you think those words are included? What do they tell you about the scene or the story?
5. Consider page 120. Artists use panels for a lot of reasons: to show a change in movement, to switch point of view, for a dramatic reveal, or for a shift in emotion. What do you think is indicated by these four panels? Why do you think they are similar but different at the same time? Can you find other favorite uses of panels to show changes like those listed above?

# Three Memoirs

Raina Telgemeier charms readers everywhere with her engaging, artful comics highlighting stories about girls, growing up, and the push and pull of relationships between family and friends. Use these questions to consider what similarities and what differences her memoirs have.

1. One of the common threads throughout *Smile*, *Sisters*, and *Guts* is friendship. Have you had experiences like Raina's with friendships in your life? Do you remember a time when you realized someone wasn't as good a friend as you thought they were? What were some of the best times with friends?
2. In all three stories about Raina's life, she's framed each story in time differently. *Smile* takes place over years, while *Sisters* is the story of one summer road trip with flashbacks interspersed. *Guts* takes place over her fourth-grade year. How do you think Raina chose to share these stories, and to tell them in this way? Could *Smile* be told over a shorter time span? What would that do to the story and how would it change? How would it change the story of *Sisters* if it were told over a longer period of time? What about *Guts*?
3. As a creator, Raina is very careful about which parts of her life story you need to know for each book. Pick out a part of your life that you think would make a good story. How far back into your own history would you go when beginning the story? A month? A year? Longer? Would you end at the present or at some point in the past? How would you decide which parts to tell and which to leave out?
4. In comics, a lot of details about a place and time are in the visuals, and clothes are a vibrant way that people remember different times in their lives. What do you notice about how the clothes in each of Raina's memoirs show when and where they happened? Do you have a favorite outfit from when you were younger that you can't imagine wearing today? Are there outfits or accessories, like the coveted earrings in *Smile* that Raina and her friends think are cool, that would still look fun today?
5. There are a lot of other details in these three stories' settings that show different technologies, cars, and buildings. Are there objects you notice, like the brand-new Apple computer in *Sisters*, that date the story to a specific time? What technology do you use today that would seem amazing to Raina and her family then? What activities, like slumber parties, are more or less the same?
6. Family is a key theme of all three of Raina's memoirs. Her family doesn't always get along, but they try their best to support each other. Comics are a great medium to show rather than tell how people are feeling. Which pages do you think show Raina's family at their best? At their worst? Did her family's journey together show you anything about how to better interact with your own family?
7. Now that you've read all three of Raina's memoirs, can you see how they fit together? Which pages do you think best show how Raina has grown and changed with each book?
8. Can you spot the details and references that connect all three memoirs together? (To get started, check out page 50 in *Smile*, and then go back to *Guts*.) Are there constants—people, objects, places—that would appear over and over again in your story?



# Colors and Feelings

Using *Guts*, look at the colors and lines used in different scenes to let you know how the characters are feeling. Is the word balloon a different color (page 138) or are the words a different shape (pages 98 or 125)? What about the backgrounds (pages 20–23)?

Pick a scene from your life when you were feeling something strongly. You could be excited, scared, proud, or lonely. Draw a simple sketch of the scene in the panel below. Don't worry about making it perfect—stick figures work great. If you were saying or thinking anything, add that in a word balloon or thought bubble that suits the mood of the moment.



Art from *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier.

Now, choose your colors. What would you use to emphasize the feeling? Would you use the colors in the background, in the clothing, in the sky? When you're finished, exchange your sketch with a friend or classmate. Do they understand the emotions and the action of the scene based on what you drew? Did they choose similar colors or layouts in their sketch?

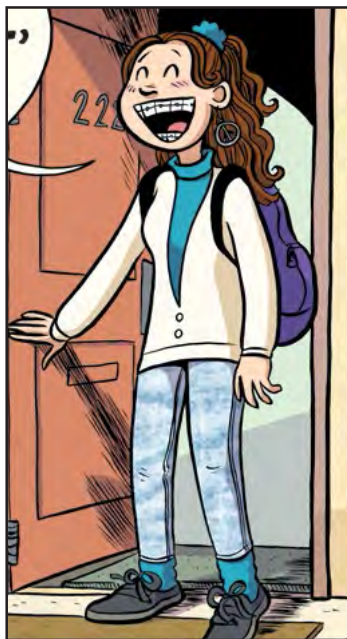


# Costume Change!

Using images of different times for characters from Raina's works, discuss the trademarks of how each character is designed over the years: their posture, their expressions, their clothing, and the colors used in each illustration. Each character wears clothes, shoes, and accessories that show how quickly fashion and trends change. At the same time, some things remain the same—like hairstyle or face shape—and keep you knowing who is who.

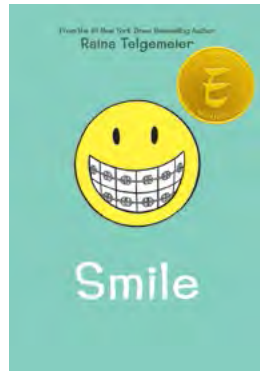
If you were drawn in Raina's style, what might define your look? Do you have a favorite piece of clothing that you frequently wear? A hairstyle? Jewelry? Shoes? Would you never be without your phone or another item that is important to you?

Find some older photos of yourself—family photos or favorite snapshots from years ago—or ask someone who you've known for a long time what things they remember about you from when you were younger. How would your portrait change if you were drawing yourself from three years ago? Last year? In the summer? In the winter? Did you have one article of clothing that you wore the longest? Draw your self-portrait in the box below.

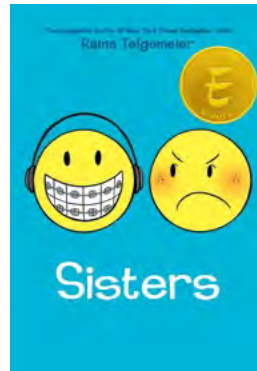


Art from *Smile, Sisters, and Guts* by Raina Telgemeier.

# From Bestselling Author Raina Telgemeier



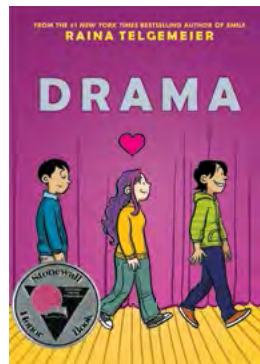
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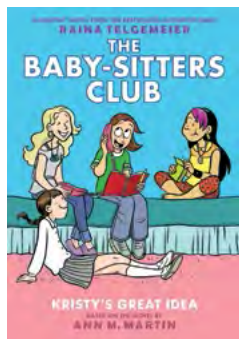


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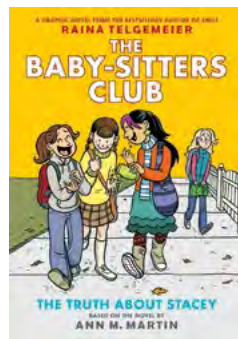


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## The Baby-sitters Club Graphic Novels By Ann M. Martin, Adapted and Illustrated by Raina Telgemeier



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Photo credit: Joseph Fanvu

## About the Author

Raina Telgemeier is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling, multiple Eisner Award-winning creator of *Smile*, *Sisters*, and *Guts*, which are graphic memoirs based on her childhood. She is also the creator of *Drama* and *Ghosts*, and is the adapter and illustrator of four *Baby-sitters Club* graphic novels. Raina lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. To learn more, visit her online at [goRaina.com](http://goRaina.com).

### Contributor Bio:

Robin Brenner is the Teen Librarian at the Public Library of Brookline in Brookline, Massachusetts. She has been writing and working as an advocate for comics in libraries for almost two decades, and she is the Editor-in-Chief of the graphic novel review website *No Flying No Tights*.



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