

## Learn German With Comics: 17 German Comics – Classics & Contemporary

André Klein · Friday, December 12th, 2014



Learning a language, any language, is hard. Especially when it comes to learning German, with all the endless grammar rules and exceptions, you'll need to find ways to make your language study fun. And comics can be a great way to practice your text comprehension skills.

Here are three reasons why comics are great language learning tools:

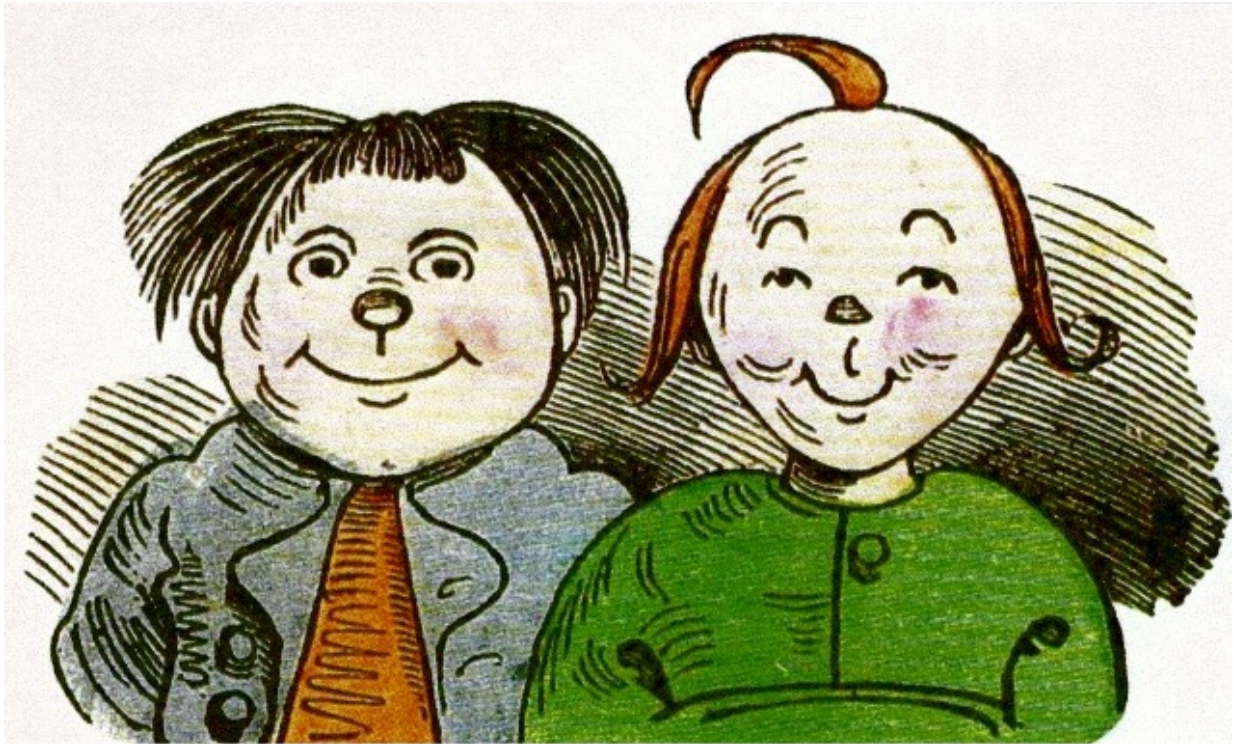
- They don't whack you over the head with walls of text.
- You can use the images as comprehension clues.
- Because they're short, you can get a quick sense of achievement

### A Brief History Of German Comics

German comic culture is very different from the one found in America or France, for that matter. If you're looking for a German equivalent of Batman and Superman, for example, chances are you'll come away empty-handed.

What many people don't know, though, is that Germany has a long and rich tradition of cartoons and caricatures. Already in the 19th century, artists like

Wilhelm Busch, author of *Max und Moritz*, and Rodolphe Töpffer from Switzerland were publishing their first comic strips.



Is *Max & Moritz*, published in 1865, the original German comic?

Imported by German immigrants, these early comic pioneers later influenced the development of the American comic strip in the Sunday papers. Here's an example of these early proto-comics:

## Die feindlichen Nachbarn oder Die Folgen der Musik



Ein Maler und ein Musikus,  
So Wand an Wand, das gibt Verdruß.

“A painter and a musician living wall to wall – that causes annoyance.” from:  
“Die feindlichen Nachbarn” (the antagonistic neighbors) by Wilhelm Busch via  
fulltable.com

## Contemporary Comics (translated)

Before we dive deeper into original German comics, let’s take a look at where to get German translations of popular international comics.

### From Golden Age to Mangas, Marvel & More

Probably one of the biggest and most famous resources for comics in German is [mycomics.de](http://mycomics.de). You can find anything there from beloved DC and Marvel Classics in German to user-created comics. The big publishers obviously don’t put up full-length copies for free, but the extracts are very generous and easy to access (no registration required).

Another resource I’d recommend checking out is the *Kindle Bestseller List* of Free [Comics & Mangas in German](#). Quality may vary but these are all full-length, and well, they’re completely free, as long as you have an Amazon account.

For Golden and Silver Age comics (1950s-70s) comicbookplus also has a number of [oldies in German](#) such as *Abenteuer der Weltgeschichte* which tells



the stories of historical figures.

Last but not least, I recently found out that the publishers of Asterix & Obelix started releasing a free [comic magazine in German](#). There are 8 issues so far which are available in PDF format.

## Classic German Comics

### Perry Rhodan



[cross-cult.de](#)

The “Perry Rhodan” comics are a captivating science fiction series based on the renowned German science fiction novel series created by Walter Ernsting and K.H. Scheer. The comic adaptations bring to life the thrilling adventures of the titular character, Perry Rhodan, an astronaut who discovers a stranded alien spaceship on the moon.

This encounter leads to humanity’s first contact with various alien races and the eventual formation of a vast galactic empire. The comics delve into complex storylines and explore a rich, expansive universe that has captivated fans for generations.

The comic is available on [Amazon](#) or [Apple Books](#). A free preview is available via [Cross Cult](#) (click on the Leseprobe tag next to the cover).

### Nick Knatterton



img via Wikipedia

Drawn by Manfred Schmidt, Nick Knatterton is a German comic from the 50s about a private eye, sporting a Sherlockian green plaid overcoat, cap and pipe.

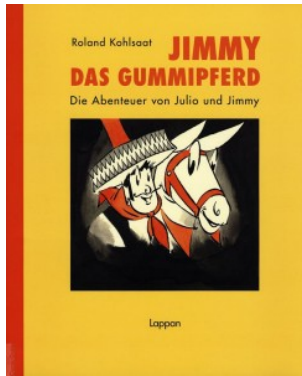
According to the author, this comic was originally intended as a parody of the American Superman-comics. Filled with political side jabs and innuendo, Nick Knatterton is a great mirror of post-war Adenauer Germany.

On [this French site](#), you can get an idea about the narrative and illustrative style of this comic. Some of the paperback and hardback editions are available via [Amazon](#).



Nick Knatterton, “Der indische Diamantenkoffer”, p. 46, via [ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de](http://ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de)

## Jimmy das Gummipferd



img via comicguide.de

Another popular German comic from the 50s is Roland Kohlsaat's Jimmy das Gummipferd, a story about an inflatable rubber horse and his rider Julio, a plump Gaucho. The comic was published weekly as part of the German *Stern* magazine and was later renamed "Julios abenteuerliche Reisen". It enjoyed huge popularity well into the 70s.

On [this site](#) you can find a few scans of the original comic. A reprint of the original weekly comic was issued in 2003 and is available via [Amazon](#) (much easier to find and cheaper on the German [site](#)).

## Fix und Foxi



img via kaukapedia

Fix und Foxi by Rolf Kauka is a very popular children's comic. The often formulaic series about two foxes was published for more than 40 years between 1953 and 1994. Re-launched as Fix & Foxi it ran again as a monthly magazine in 200, 2005 and 2010.

These comics are available via [Amazon](#), [iTunes](#) and many other sources. At [Rolf Kauka's Fix & Foxi-Club](#) there used to be some comics you could read online, but their site is currently under construction. Use [Google Image Search](#) for some impressions.

## Käptn' Blaubär (and other Moers Comics)



img by honk.de

Walter Moers, one of the best-known and most successful German comic authors, created many comics for adults, such as **Das kleine Arschloch** (the little arsehole), a comic about an irreverent little boy, or **Adolf, die Nazisau** (Adolf, the Nazi pig), a sarcastic interpretation of Adolf Hitler living in today's world.

Beside these often controversial stories he also created the more family-friendly **Käpt'n Blaubär**, a comic about a sea-fairing blue bear that first appeared in 1990 with the Ravensburger publishing house. The original comic was called **Käpt'n Blaubärs Seemannsgarn** and the character has since enjoyed great popularity on TV, in books and other media.

You can find many Moers comics (and his novels) on [Amazon](#).

## Werner



Another comic that should be mentioned here is Werner, a series by Brösel (Rötger Feldmann) about the same-titled protagonist, an unemployed biker whose two big interests in life are motorbikes and consuming copious amounts of beer. Over 10 million books have been sold and the movies based on the books have been a great success as well.

You can get some of the comics on [Amazon](#). Here's a [sample](#) I found by googling.

# Web Comics: The Next Generation

Now that we've looked at a few classic German comics, let's jump back into the present. Comic culture is alive and well in Germany, and when it comes to online web comics, it just makes it so much more accessible for readers worldwide. Some of these comics are more well-known, others more obscure, but there's such a big variety, that every learner will be able to find something that suits his or her tastes.

So, without further ado, here's a small collection of web-comics:

## Das Leben ist kein Ponyhof



sarahburrini.com

Das Leben ist kein Ponyhof" (life is no pony farm) is a semi-autobiographical/absurdist comic strip by Sarah Burrini about her life with the pony Butterblume, the hot-headed spore plant El Pilzo, and the elephant Ngumbe, who dreams of playing the trumpet as well as Miles Davis. You can find all the chapters on the [author's website](http://www.sarahburrini.com).

## Nicht-lustig





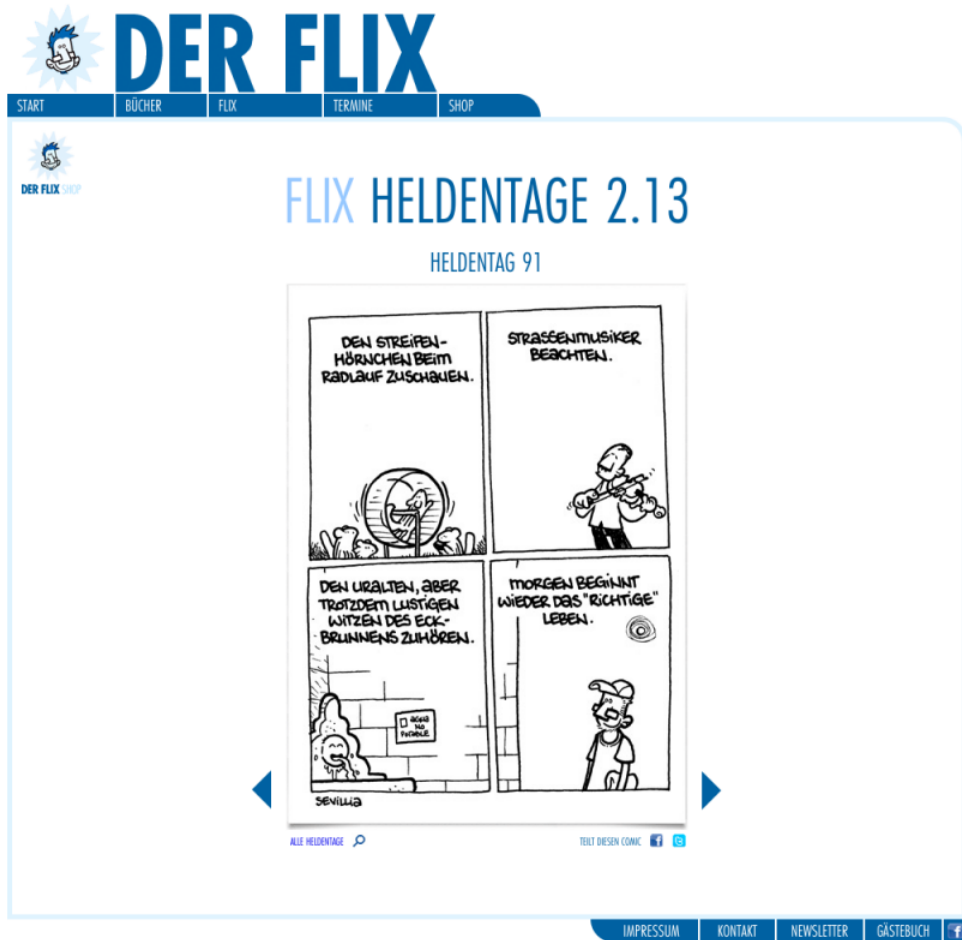
**Nicht lustig** (not funny) is the brainchild of Joscha Sauer, who, since 2000, has been publishing a great part of his comics for free on his website [nichtlustig.de](http://nichtlustig.de), which has quickly become one of the most popular German web comics.

## Wüstencomic



“Als ich mal plötzlich in der Wüste gewesen bin” (How I suddenly was in the desert) or simply “Wüstencomics” is a webcomic by Maximilian Hillerzeder. It’s about Bremen, or rather, not-Bremen, and Hiller’s search for answers to questions like “How do I get to the desert?” and “What role does Bremen play in all of this?” You can read up on his website, starting with the [Prologue](#).

## Der Flix



**Flix** is a comic artist from Berlin who has published various [graphic novels](#) and comic books. His comics have appeared in many notable German newspaper. On [der-flix.de](#) he regularly publishes new short comic strips.

**Ralph Ruthe**



Ralph Ruthe, comic artist, director and musician began drawing comics for the German MAD magazine in 1998. On his website [ruthe.de](http://ruthe.de) you can read many of his comics for free (check out the [archive](#)).

## Ahoi Polloi



“Since society is so divided, one can finally drink one’s beer in peace.”

There doesn’t seem to be much information out there about the mastermind behind [Ahoi Polloi](#), but these scans of hand-drawn comic strips have a very unique style and sense of humor. Every few days new ones appear and this site is always worth a visit.

**Katz & Goldt**





katzundgoldt.de – “Wege zum Ernährungsextremismus”

**Katz & Gold** is an artist duo founded in 1996, consisting of illustrator Stephan Katz and writer Max Goldt. Their comics appear regularly in German satire magazine *Titanic* and *Die Zeit*. On their site [katzundgoldt.de](http://katzundgoldt.de) you can find [selected works](#) and hilarious [t-shirts](#).

## Medi-learn



“Kiss me, I’m an enchanted surgeon!” – “Forget it”

On [medi-learn.de](http://medi-learn.de) you can find many comics about [medicine](#), rescue service, [fire fighters](#) and other topics. These comics may be especially interesting for medicine students, but many of them are still understandable without much precursory knowledge.

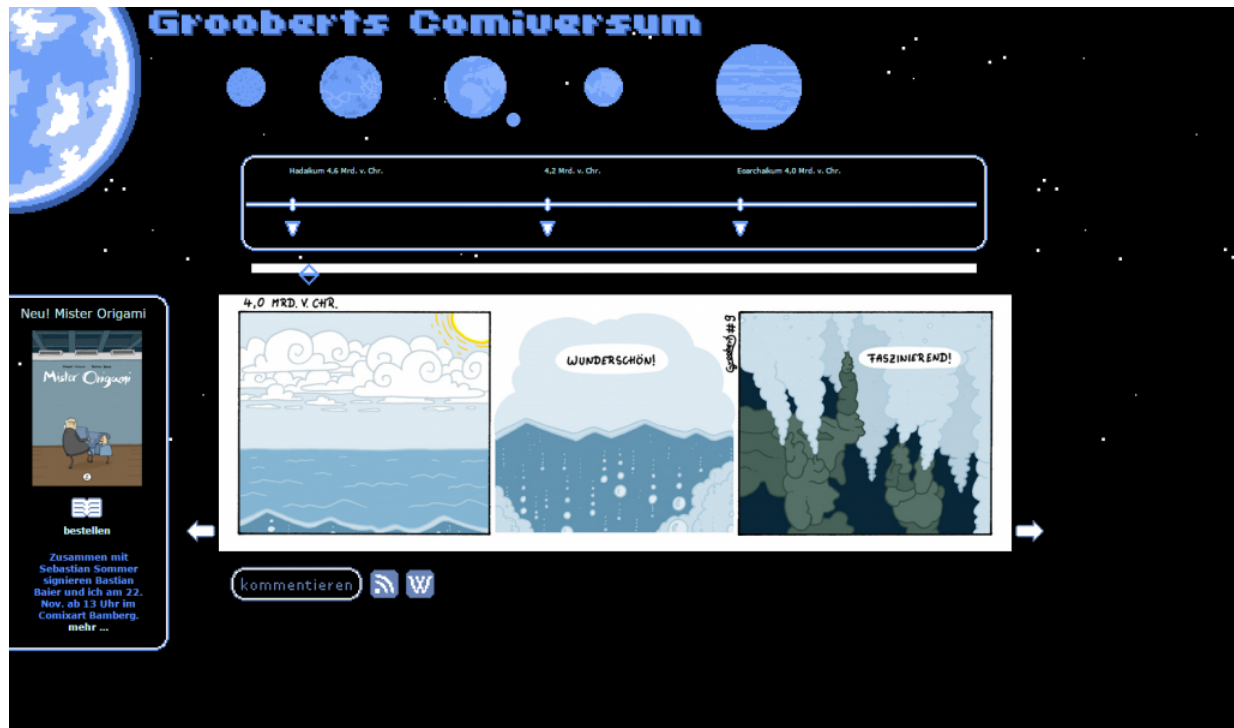


## Beetlebum



**Beetlebum** is a webcomic about science fiction, gaming, internet culture and daily life. It’s the brainchild of [Johannes Kretzschmar](#), a PhD student in the research field of artificial intelligence.

## Groobert's Universum



**Groobert's Comicversum** is a very unique webcomic by Robert Mühlich which is about nothing more and and nothing less than the story of our universe, from the beginning until the bitter end.

## Dramatized Depiction



**Dramatized Deception** is an autobiographical comic by Nick Noah, filled with true and fictitious moments from the author's life, and sometimes just silly puns

or parodies.

### **Even More German Comics ...**

Still can't get enough of German comics?

On [webcomic-verzeichnis.de](http://webcomic-verzeichnis.de) (webcomic directory) you can find an exhaustive list of German webcomics. They even have an RSS feed so that you can plug a never-ending stream of German comic goodness straight into your brain.

Another great site for German comics is [mycomics.de](http://mycomics.de). There you can find [tons of free comics](#) uploaded by community members. They differ in style and quality, but it's definitely worth exploring.

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