

GRADENIK

Comic Book Grading, Precisely Done

Instruction Manual

gradenik.com

1. Getting Started

GRADENIK is a comic book condition grading tool for collectors, investors, buyers, and sellers. It walks you through a structured inspection of a comic and returns a grade on the standard 0.5 to 10.0 scale used across the hobby, built on the industry standard set out in the publicly available Overstreet Grading Guide.

The grading engine is deterministic, not artificial intelligence. It does not look at photographs. You inspect the comic yourself, answer a series of questions about what you see, and the engine applies a fixed set of rules to calculate the result. The same answers always produce the same grade.

Signing In

The first time you open GRADENIK, you will be asked to sign in with your email address. This uses a one time passcode, a short code sent to your inbox, rather than a password. There is nothing to remember and nothing that can be leaked from a data breach elsewhere. Once signed in, you stay signed in for an extended period.

Beginning an Inspection

From the home screen, tap Begin Inspection. You will first see a short Getting Ready screen with two reminders: use clean, dry hands, and lay the comic flat under bright, indirect light. Tap Continue when you are ready to begin.

Having Questions Read Aloud

Beside the heading on every question you will find a small set of controls. The speaker icon reads the current question out loud once. The AUTO button turns on continuous reading: with it on, every question that follows is read aloud automatically as you reach it. A speed control appears next to it once AUTO is on, cycling between 1x, 1.25x and 1.5x.

Both settings are remembered, so you only have to set them once. GRADENIK will never speak on its own until you have switched AUTO on yourself, which matters if you are grading at a convention table, a shop counter, or anywhere else with people nearby.

2. Grading a Comic

A full inspection covers 43 factors in three parts.

- **Initial Checks (factors 1 to 2).** Two questions covering restoration and personal writing or autographs. These are covered in detail in Section 3.
- **Condition Check (factors 3 to 39).** Thirty seven questions cover every part of the comic: the cover, spine, staples, interior pages, corners, and edges. Each question includes a short explanation of why it matters and background on what to look for, so the app doubles as a way to learn grading, not just a way to get a number.
- **Overall Impression (factors 40 to 43).** Four final questions ask for a broader judgement on eye appeal, cover presentation, printing quality, and paper freshness.

The four Overall Impression questions only come into play when your answers land the grade exactly between two values on the scale, in which case they decide which way it goes. They can only ever move a grade **up**, never down. Answering them honestly about a tired-looking book therefore costs you nothing: any defect you are thinking of has already been counted once in the Condition Check, and will not be counted twice here.

At any point during the Condition Check, you can tap Review Answers to see everything you have entered so far and jump back to change anything before continuing. The review list is numbered 1 to 43 to match

the certificate.

If a question was skipped because of an earlier answer, for example a question about a torn cover that only applies once you have said the cover is detached, tapping it in the review screen takes you back to that earlier, controlling question rather than letting you answer the skipped one directly. This keeps the grade internally consistent.

3. Restoration, Writing, and Autographs

The first two questions are the most misunderstood in the app, so they are worth explaining properly.

Restoration

GRADENIK cannot detect restoration, and does not claim to. Colour touch, trimming, tear seals and piece fill are often invisible to the naked eye. Identifying them reliably needs blacklight, magnification and chemical testing, none of which a phone app can replicate.

Because of that, this question records what *you* know, not what the app can see. There are three answers:

- **No restoration, as far as I know.** Grading proceeds normally.
- **Not sure, I can't tell.** Grading also proceeds normally. You are not expected to rule restoration out, and saying so does not affect your grade in any way.
- **Yes, known or visible restoration.** Grading stops. A restored book can only be assessed properly by a personalized grading service. This does not use up one of your grades.

When a grade is issued, the certificate states plainly that the book has been graded as unrestored, that GRADENIK does not detect restoration, and that no restoration was disclosed. This mirrors how the hobby already works: a raw book is traded as unrestored unless restoration is disclosed.

Without equipment you can still catch the obvious cases. Look for edges that read unusually sharp and square, a copy that measures short against another of the same title, glossy or matte patches that only show under raking light, or colour sitting on top of a fold rather than broken by it.

Two things are **not** restoration. Pressing, using heat, humidity or pressure to relax waviness without adding or removing material, is a widely accepted non-invasive practice. Ordinary sticky tape is treated as a foreign substance stuck to the book, not an alteration; record it under Tape Repairs in the Condition Check instead.

Personal Writing and Autographs

Official store stamps, arrival dates and price marks are normal and fully gradable; they are handled later in the Condition Check. This question is about personal handwriting, including autographs.

A name written small and unobtrusively might cost a single point, while the same name written boldly across the artwork can gut the grade entirely. Autographs go further still, since GRADENIK cannot authenticate a signature, and even a verified one is a matter of opinion on value depending on where it sits. That range of outcomes is too wide for a fixed rule, so answering Yes here directs you to a personalized grading service. As with restoration, this does not use up one of your grades.

4. Understanding Your Grade

Once all questions are answered, your result appears immediately: a grade from 0.5 to 10.0, alongside its standard name, for example Very Fine or Near Mint, presented on a certificate-style result card.

Key Factor Capping This Grade

This shows the single most significant defect found, the one that set the ceiling for the whole grade. Every comic's grade starts at 10.0 and is brought down by the worst thing found on it, then adjusted from there.

Contributing Factors

This shows whether anything else pulled the grade down further from that ceiling. If nothing did, this reads plus 0.0 in green, meaning the ceiling itself is your grade. If something did pull it down, the real amount is shown as a negative number in a different colour, for example minus 0.6.

Good qualities elsewhere on the comic can cancel out those negative pulls, but they can never push the grade above the ceiling set by the worst defect. This matches how professional grading works: a single serious flaw sets the outer limit, no matter how clean the rest of the book is.

Sharing, Printing, and Saving

From the result screen you can tap Share Result to send a plain text summary through any app on your phone, or View My Answers to see the full, detailed record behind the grade. Both screens also offer Print Certificate, Print Answer Sheet, and Listing Card, each generating a ready-to-print PDF for that single comic (see Sections 9 and 10). Every result is saved automatically, covered next.

5. My Comics: Your Inventory

Every comic you grade is saved automatically to My Comics, reachable from the home screen. This is your personal inventory, not just a grading history.

Each entry can carry the following:

- Title, the comic's name
- Issue number, which takes digits only so that issues sort in the correct numerical order
- Variant, a short separate field beside the number. Keeping it apart from the number is what stops issue 181a from sorting between 1810 and 1811. Number and variant are always shown together, and how they join depends on the length of what you type. A short suffix of one or two characters runs straight on, so 181 plus a becomes #181a and 181 plus .1 becomes #181.1. Anything longer is a description of the copy rather than part of its number, so it is shown in brackets: 181 plus 35c becomes #181 (35c), and 1 plus Newsstand becomes #1 (Newsstand). This matters on price variants in particular, where running the text on would turn issue 181 into issue 18135
- Publisher, chosen from a list of the major publishers, from any publisher you have already added yourself, or typed in fresh using + Other publisher at the bottom of the list. See below
- Artist
- Writer
- A favorite marker, a star you can toggle on any comic
- A folder, for grouping comics however you like
- A value, covered in Section 7
- The full 43-factor record behind the grade, saved automatically so it can be revisited at any time

You can fill these in right on the result screen the moment you get a grade, or later at any time by tapping a comic in My Comics, which opens it for editing.

Adding Your Own Publishers

The publisher list starts with the majors, but it is not fixed. At the bottom of the list is + Other publisher, which opens a small text box. Type the name, tap Add, and it is saved with that comic.

From then on that publisher appears in the list as a normal option, alongside Marvel and DC, so you only have to spell it correctly once. This matters more than convenience: two spellings of the same publisher become two separate entries in your filters and in your Stats breakdown, so getting it typed once and reused is what keeps those counts honest.

Artist and Writer Suggestions

As you type into the Artist or Writer field, GRADENIK offers names already used elsewhere in your collection. Tap one to fill the field. Suggestions appear after two characters and match on any part of the name, so typing per will find George Perez, which is how most collectors think of a creator even though the field displays the first name first.

These suggestions come from your own collection, not from an outside database, so they work with no internet connection and they already know the obscure and small press names, because you entered them. If you have made a spelling mistake and want to correct it everywhere at once, see Section 6.

Quick Icons on Each Comic

Every comic in My Comics shows a small row of icons in the top-right corner of its entry, for quick actions without opening full edit mode:

- **Star icon:** toggles that comic as a favorite with a single tap.
- **Gold GRADENIK badge icon:** opens the comic's full certificate: the grade, the grading summary, and the complete 43-factor record behind it.
- **Document icon:** opens the same certificate view, focused on the answer record.
- **Play icon:** reserved for the upcoming Comic Book Reader feature, arriving in a future version. Tapping it now shows a short notice that it is not yet available.

Viewing a Certificate

Tapping the gold badge or document icon on any comic reopens its certificate exactly as it appeared right after grading: the grade and grading summary at the top, followed by all 43 factors numbered 1 to 43, matching the numbering used on gradenik.com.

Comics graded before a given feature existed will say so on the relevant lines rather than showing a blank. A factor may read Not recorded, meaning it was graded before that answer was being saved, or Not applicable, meaning it was skipped because of an earlier answer. The grade itself remains fully accurate either way.

Deleting a Comic

To delete a single comic, tap it to open editing, then tap Delete. You will be asked to confirm, and the comic's name is shown in that confirmation so you know exactly what is about to be removed. This cannot be undone.

This is separate from Clear History (Section 11), which removes your entire local collection at once. Deleting one comic only affects that one entry.

6. Search and Filter

At the top of My Comics is a search bar. Type any part of a title, issue number, artist, writer, or publisher, and the list narrows to match as you type.

Always-Visible Filters

Below the search bar sits a row of buttons that stay open at all times: All, Favorites, and one button for every folder you have created, shown in yellow. These are the filters most people reach for constantly, so they are never more than one tap away. The Favorites button shows a live count of how many comics you have starred. A folder only appears once at least one comic has been placed in it.

Creator and Publisher Breakouts

Below that are three buttons: Artists, Writers, and Publishers. Each shows a count of how many distinct names your collection contains, and each opens its own list when tapped. Only one list is open at a time, so the comics below never get pushed off the screen.

Artists and writers are sorted by surname but displayed the way you would say them, so John Byrne appears as John Byrne and sits under B, next to Buscema rather than under J.

- Tap a name to filter to that creator or publisher. Tap it again, or tap Show all, to clear just that filter without disturbing your search text.
- A small coloured dot appears on the button whenever its filter is active, so you can tell the collection is filtered even with the list closed.
- A button is dimmed and cannot be opened when your collection contains no names of that kind yet.
- **Press and hold any name to correct its spelling everywhere at once.** See below.

Search and a filter can be used together at the same time. Whatever is currently showing on screen, filtered and searched or not, is exactly what gets included if you print from My Comics.

Correcting a Misspelled Name

Sooner or later a name gets typed two ways. George Perez on one comic and Geoge Perez on another produces two separate entries in the filter list and two separate lines in your Stats breakdown, and correcting that one comic at a time is slow enough that most people would just live with it.

Press and hold any name in the Artists, Writers, or Publishers list. The row turns into a text box with the current spelling filled in. Correct it, tap Save, and every comic carrying that name is updated in one action. You will be told how many comics changed.

Because the correction is applied by exact name, renaming one spelling to another that already exists **merges** them. Correcting Geoge Perez to George Perez folds those comics into the existing entry rather than leaving two. The same works for publishers: renaming Marvel Comics to Marvel joins them up.

One caution. The change is applied to every comic with that exact name and cannot be undone. If several unrelated books are sitting under one vague name, set those right individually first, then rename what is left.

Surname sorting helps you find these. Two spellings of the same surname sort next to each other, so duplicates sit adjacent in the list rather than scattered apart alphabetically.

7. Tracking Value

Each comic's value has three modes, chosen right next to the value field.

- **Manual.** Type the value yourself.
- **Auto.** Intended to look up a current price automatically. This feature is not connected yet and currently shows a message that it is coming in a future version, so choosing it will not fill anything in for now.
- **Off.** The comic is not counted toward your total value.

Your combined value across the whole collection appears on the Stats screen, covered next.

8. Collection Stats

Tap View Stats from My Comics to see a dashboard covering your whole collection.

- **Total Value**, your combined tracked value, along with how many of your comics actually have a value entered
- **Grade Distribution**, how many of your comics are High, 8.0 and above, Mid, 4.0 to 7.9, or Low, 0.5 to 3.9
- **Publisher Breakdown**, a count and percentage for each publisher in your collection
- **Artist Breakdown**, the same, by artist
- **Folder Breakdown**, the same, by folder

Tap Customize at the top of the Stats screen to choose which of these blocks you want to see. Your choice is remembered the next time you open the app.

9. The Listing Card

The Listing Card is built for selling. It turns a grade into a clean, one-page document you can drop straight into an eBay, Whatnot, or Facebook sale group listing, so a buyer can see exactly what they are bidding on.

You will find it beside the print buttons, both on the result screen right after grading and on any comic's certificate view in My Comics. It opens your phone's normal share sheet, so you can send it, save it, or attach it wherever you like.

What It Shows

Unlike the answer sheet, the Listing Card deliberately shows only what is **wrong** with the book. A buyer does not need to read that twenty nine factors came back clean; they need the short list of what actually affected the grade. Every factor that cost the book nothing is left off.

It always includes, regardless of the answer:

- The grade and its standard name
- Title, issue number with variant, and publisher
- Paper colour, since white pages are a selling point and their absence is information too
- Both declarations: what you answered for restoration and for writing or autographs

This makes the card self-scaling. A near mint book produces a short card with a lot of empty space, which reads as confidence. A well-read copy produces a long, honest list. Either way the document makes the case for you.

What It Is Not

The card is footed as seller-reported condition, not a certification, and it repeats that GRADENIK does not detect restoration. It is a clear, structured statement of what the seller has declared. It is not, and does not pretend to be, third party authentication.

10. Certificates & Printing

Every certificate and answer sheet can be turned into a print-ready PDF, laid out cleanly on its own page, suitable for printing at home or through any printing service your phone can reach.

Printing a Single Comic

From the result screen right after grading, or from a comic's certificate view in My Comics:

- **Print Certificate:** a one-page PDF of that comic's grade and grading summary, styled like a formal certificate, including both initial-check declarations.
- **Print Answer Sheet:** a one-page PDF listing all 43 factors and your answers to them.
- **Listing Card:** the seller-facing summary described in Section 9.

Each opens your phone's normal share sheet, from which you can choose Print, or save or send the PDF anywhere you like.

Printing Your Whole Collection, or a Filtered View

From My Comics, Print All Certificates and Print All Answer Sheets generate one combined, multi-page PDF, one page per comic, covering everything currently visible on screen. If you have searched or applied a filter, only that filtered set is included, and the button label updates to make this clear.

Printing a Chosen Selection

To print only specific comics rather than everything visible, tap Select Comics to Print at the top of My Comics. This turns each entry into a checkbox. Tick the comics you want, then tap Print Selected Certificates or Print Selected Answer Sheets, each showing a live count of how many you have chosen. Tap Cancel at any time to leave selection mode without printing anything.

Every certificate and answer sheet, whether printed singly, filtered, or selected, uses the same consistent page size and layout, so a batch always looks uniform when printed or bound together.

11. Keeping Your Data Safe

Your comic inventory is stored in a single database file that lives on your phone. Every comic you grade or edit is written into that one file, and it stays on this device, in the app's own private storage, for as long as the app is installed.

Automatic Backup

Every time you grade a new comic or edit an existing one, a copy of your whole collection, including saved answer records, is quietly sent to your account in the background. This happens on its own. You do not need to do anything for it to work, and it will never interrupt what you are doing.

Manual Backup

From My Comics, tap Back Up Now to trigger a backup on demand and see confirmation that it succeeded.

Restore from Backup

If you ever lose your phone, uninstall the app, or need to move to a new device, install GRADENIK, sign in with the same email address, open My Comics, and tap Restore from Backup. Your most recent backup is pulled back down and put in place, so your full collection, including saved answer records, returns even though nothing was ever on the new device before.

Restoring replaces whatever is currently on the device with your last backup. You will always be shown the date and number of comics in that backup and asked to confirm before anything is changed.

Clearing History

Clear History on My Comics deletes your entire local collection but deliberately does not touch your account backup. This is your safety net specifically for an accidental local deletion, so it stays in place even if you clear your device. To remove a single comic instead of your whole collection, use Delete on that comic (Section 5).

Exporting a List

Tap Export List at any time to send a plain text summary of your whole collection through any app on your phone, for a personal copy outside GRADENIK entirely.

12. Buying More Grades

Every account starts with a number of free grades. Once these are used, you can buy more from within the app in one time packs of varying sizes, with no subscription and no recurring charge.

13. A Note on Accuracy

GRADENIK provides an estimated grade for informational purposes. It is not a certified grade, carries no guarantee, and is not a substitute for professional third party grading. Estimates may differ from grades assigned by a certification service.

GRADENIK does not detect restoration. Unless restoration has been disclosed to it, every grade is issued on the stated assumption that the book is unrestored. Confirming that a book is unrestored requires a professional examination.

GRADENIK is an independent grading tool. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by, sponsored by, or connected to Certified Guaranty Company, CGC, Comic Book Certification Service, CBCS, PGX, or any third party comic book grading or certification service.