

# Medical Breakthroughs: Vaccines—A Graphic History

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

**PAIGE V. POLINSKY**

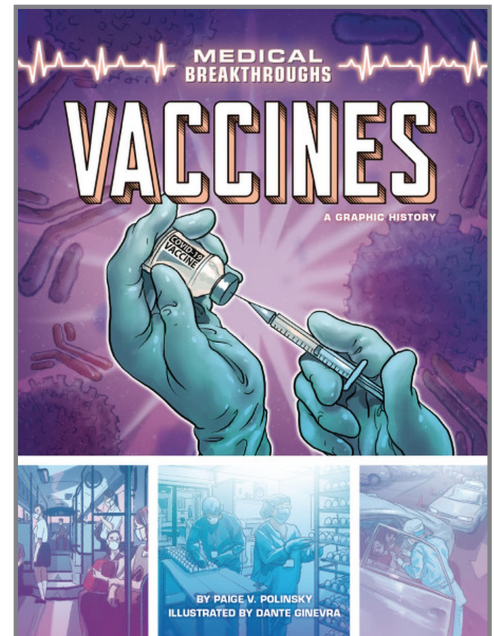
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Secondary



## SYNOPSIS

Vaccines safely introduce people's bodies to diseases. This allows the body to recognise and fight a disease later on. Vaccines save millions of lives each year. Early vaccinations took place centuries ago, as people used dry scabs from smallpox to promote smallpox immunity. Doctors and scientists across nations took and improved the method, developing vaccines for health crises from whooping cough to polio to COVID-19. Discover famous cases and current challenges, including the time frame for creating a new vaccine.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paige Polinsky is a writer, copy editor and professional freelancer based in Minnesota. She writes across many industries, from children's nonfiction to veterinary medicine. She is interested in the judicial system and loves to apply her skills to the legal field.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Dante Ginevra is a comic artist, illustrator, art director and freelancer. He is based in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
  - The title
  - The author
  - The illustrator
  - The publisher
  - The blurb.
- Based on the cover and title, what do you think this book is about?
- What are some of the facts you found most interesting about the history of vaccines? As a class or in small groups discuss what you were most surprised or interested by in the book. Individually, write a short statement about the part of the book that was most interesting to you.
- In small groups, choose one scientist or doctor who is featured in the book. Write a short biography of one or two paragraphs that culminates with their involvement with the history of vaccines. You may need to do some additional research online.

- Have a class discussion about science and medicine. How have we arrived at a point where eliminating diseases like smallpox is possible? Discuss the scientific method, and see if you can identify places in the story where our medical capabilities were limited by our knowledge of the immune system.
- Have a class discussion about misinformation and panic regarding vaccines. What do you think could be done to improve awareness of the benefits of vaccines? Do you think that it will be easy or difficult to counter misinformation about them? Why?
- In most graphic novels and comics, there is usually a white space between the panels called the gutter. Consider the difference between large and small panels, square and irregular shapes and full-page illustrations. Copy a page of the book, cut out the frames and arrange them on a piece of paper with a smaller gutter between each frame and then with a larger gutter. What difference does this make to our reading?
- Visual storytelling is the art of using images to convey a narrative. Compare *Vaccines* to another graphic novel. How does the visual storytelling differ in each? What techniques does the illustrator use to convey a particular mood?
- How has the illustrator, Dante Ginevra, used panel arrangement, colour and space to create a particular feeling? Look at the panel shapes in pp 4, 8, 12, and 22. What effect do these have on your reading of the story?
- Visit the websites provided in the 'Further Information' section at the end of the book, and try drawing one or two pages of your own graphic novel about some of the additional facts you learnt about vaccines. How can you use images to convey these facts in an exciting way?
- Read the 'Glossary' at the end of the book. How many of these words are unfamiliar to you? Look back through the book to check that you understand the context in which any new words were used.
- Write a book review of *Vaccines*. Include what you liked and disliked about it, who you think would enjoy it the most and whether you think the information provided is credible. Use persuasive language to make the reader understand your opinion.
- See if you can find another graphic novel in your library about real historical events. How are this graphic novel and *Vaccines* similar? How are they different? Do they use similar techniques to tell you their story? Why do you think that is?