

Marvel comics

■ The birth

Marvel Comics, an American media and entertainment company based in New York City, is a giant in the comic industry. The precursor to Marvel Comics was founded in 1939 by magazine publisher Martin Goodman who created *Timely Comics* in order to exploit the growing popularity of comic books – especially those starring superheroes. Timely's first comic book was *Marvel Comics* no. 1 (1939), which presented several superheroes such as the *Human Torch*. *Timely Comics* introduced many superhero characters during the "Golden Age" of comics in the 1940s. Among them the most important was *Captain America*, who first appeared in *Captain America Comics* no. 1 (1941). Timely characters were often portrayed as fighting against the Nazis and the Japanese, even before the United States entered World War II.

■ A break with superheroes

At the end of the 1940s, readers were no longer interested in superheroes, so *Timely* cancelled the last of its books in this genre in 1950. In the same year, Goodman formed his own distribution company, *Atlas Magazines*, which published other genres of comics such as humour, western, horror, war, and science fiction.

■ Success and failures

In 1956, rival company *DC Comics* led the so-called Silver Age of comics by reintroducing superhero titles with a great commercial success. In the early 1960s *Atlas* changed its name to *Marvel Comics*. Throughout the 1980s and '90s Marvel changed hands numerous times, becoming a **publicly held company** in 1991. Problematic management decisions and a general decrease in sales in the comic book industry drove Marvel Comics into **bankruptcy** in 1996. The company re-emerged in 1998 and began to diversify its production, expanding its filmmaking offerings under the Marvel Studios **banner**. In 2007 Marvel began publishing digital comics.

■ Expansion of Marvel Entertainment

In 2009 Marvel Entertainment was purchased by Disney and the film-development plan which had just begun at the time of the purchase was strongly reinforced to give rise to many **top-grossing** films.

Adapted from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marvel-Comics>



1 Read and match the years and events of Marvel Comics.

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|-----------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. 1939 | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. Readers were no longer interested in superheroes. |
| 2. 1941 | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. DC Comics reintroduced superheroes titles. |
| 3. 1940s | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. Marvel became a publicly held company. |
| 4. End of 1940s | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Marvel began publishing digital comics. |
| 5. 1950 | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Martin Goodman created <i>Timely Comics</i> . |
| 6. 1956 | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. First appearance of Captain America. |
| 7. Early 1960s | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. Many superheroes were introduced. |
| 8. 1980s-1990s | <input type="checkbox"/> | h. Marvel Comics went into bankruptcy. |
| 9. 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> | i. Marvel was purchased by Walt Disney Company. |
| 10. 1996 | <input type="checkbox"/> | j. Timely cancelled the last comic books. Goodman founded <i>Atlas Magazine</i> . |
| 11. 2007 | <input type="checkbox"/> | k. Marvel changed hands numerous times. |
| 12. 2009 | <input type="checkbox"/> | l. <i>Atlas</i> changed its name to <i>Marvel Comics</i> . |