The DC Comics Guide to Writing Comics

By Dennis O'Neil

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For any writer who wants to become an expert comic-book storyteller, *The DC Comics Guide to Writing Comics* is the definitive, one-stop resource!

In this valuable guide, Dennis O'Neil, a living legend in the comics industry, reveals his insider tricks and no-fail techniques for comic storytelling. Readers will discover the various methods of writing scripts (full script vs. plot first), as well as procedures for developing a story structure, building subplots, creating well-rounded characters, and much more. O'Neil also explains the many diverse formats for comic books, including graphic novels, maxi-series, mega-series, and adaptation. Of course, there are also dozens of guidelines for writing proposals to editors that command attention and get results.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
There must be dozens of books on how to draw comics, but even the best artists need to tell a good story. Who can teach them? Dennis O'Neil. A comics writer and editor for more than 20 years, O'Neil oversees DC Comics' Batman titles--one of the most successful comics franchises ever. In addition, he's a bestselling novelist, a screenwriter, and a writing teacher. So when it comes to storytelling, O'Neil knows his stuff. In this guide he delivers his knowledge in a succinct, no-nonsense style.

O'Neil explains three-act story structure and examines subplots, characterization, and methods for developing drama and suspense. He then applies these concepts to comics' specific forms: graphic novels, miniseries, maxiseries, and the rare megaseries (such as *Batman: No Man's Land*, a year-long über-narrative played out across five comics titles). As in good comics, words and images work together in this book. Every idea is illustrated by panels or pages from great moments in DC Comics lore. Especially illuminating are the script excerpts that come paired with the comic book pages they describe.

Strangely, the book ignores the visual side of comics writing. Modern comics scripts specify shots, angles, and blocking in movie-director fashion, but that craft is never addressed. (DC has a good opportunity here for a second volume.) However, what this book sets out to teach--storytelling--it does quite well. Aspiring comics writers won't just learn theory, they'll be empowered, because O'Neil provides a framework for crafting new tales. *--J.B. Peck*

From School Library Journal
Adult/High School-This witty, clear, and concise guide is tailored to those who want to create comics. O'Neil is adamant that there is no One True Way, although he stresses the importance of practice. He discusses story structure, characterization, script preparation, and other general writing topics. He also covers those more specific to comics writing such as miniseries, maxiseries, and continuity. O'Neil addresses the visual component of the art, the importance of page layout, and the relationship between the writer and the artist. He concludes with a short essay, "Writing Humor Comics," by Mark Evanier. The book is lavishly illustrated with black-and-white examples from various DC comics. In addition, the author includes many pages of scripts, which are usually juxtaposed with the finished page. He provides excellent advice and guidance for beginners. Although the examples focus on DC characters and stories, the content should have broad appeal. This is a nice balance to the many how-to-draw-comics books in most collections. Even for nonwriters, the book is interesting for the background look it provides into how comics are created.

Susan Salpini, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA

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From [Booklist](#)
O'Neil has been scripting comics professionally for nearly two generations, and he offers much good sense and valuable information about his craft. Although an ex-Marvelite endorsed in a foreword by Stan Lee himself, O'Neil's principal experience has been with DC, for whom he started with *Batman* and *Superman* and proceeded to most of the other titles in the company's catalog. He provides everything from a basic glossary, complete with visual examples, of scripting concepts to advice on characterization--something vulgarly and erroneously supposed not to exist in comics--to guidance on work habits and concludes by discussing the various kinds of comic books, broadly conceived. He exemplifies from DC's stable, which

may make the book enticing to even the fan who isn't particularly interested in becoming a scripter. But above all, O'Neil addresses the universals of writing in a way that makes the book useful to all aspiring scripters, regardless of their knowledge of comics. *Roland Green*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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