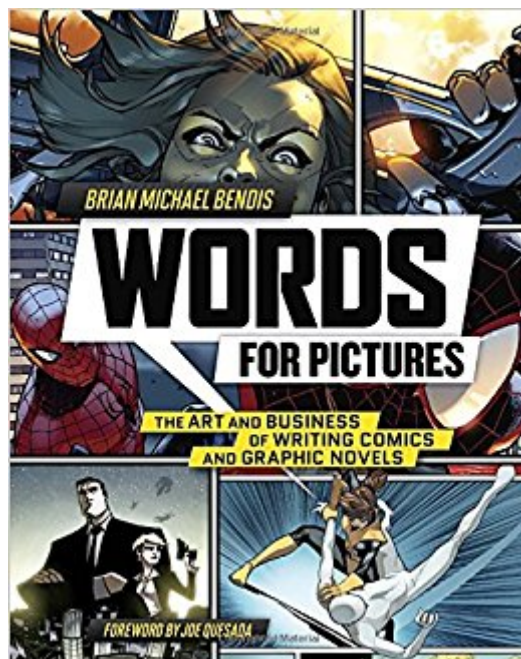




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# Words For Pictures: The Art And Business Of Writing Comics And Graphic Novels



## Synopsis

Best-selling Marvel Comics writer Brian Michael Bendis reveals the comic book writing secrets behind his work on *The Avengers*, *Ultimate Spider-Man*, *All-New X-Men*, and more. One of the most popular writers in modern comics, Brian Michael Bendis reveals the tools and techniques he and other top creators use to create some of the most popular comic book and graphic novel stories of all time. *Words for Pictures* shows readers the creative methods of a writer at the very top of his field. Bendis guides aspiring creators through each step of the comics-making process—from idea to script to finished sequential art—for fan favorite comics like *The Avengers*, *Ultimate Spider-Man*, *Uncanny X-Men*, and more. Along the way, tips and insights from other working writers, artists, and editors provide a rare, extensive look behind the creative curtain of the comics industry. With script samples, a glossary of must-know business terms for writers, and interactive comics-writing exercises, *Words for Pictures* provides the complete toolbox needed to jump start the next comics-writing success story.

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## Customer Reviews

"Brian Michael Bendis illuminates the craft, and commerce, of becoming a comics pro...*Words for Pictures* covers everything from making a pitch to script writing; the book even goes over the delicate process of creative collaboration."—David Betancourt, *The Washington Post* Bendis puts his classroom lessons down into a single textbook for aspiring and professional writers to help guide and encourage them in their endeavors to completing their journey towards completing their

10,000 hours and beyond." —•Forrest Helvie, Newsarama"Highly recommended, — Words For Pictures — will inspire readers to craft their own ideas and become better storytellers." —•Jorge Solis, MSTARs"It's an enjoyable read and — for those looking to break into comics as a writer, it's a strong compilation of advice and specific tips to help you survive an industry that's wildly different on the inside than it might seem from a fan's point of view on the outside." —•Augie De Blieck Jr., — Comic Book Resources"A very handsome how-to guide, presenting the information in a visually engaging way and spicing up the text with artwork from some of the industry's top talents. —• —•Oliver Sava, The Onion A.V. Club" — A fantastic text...comes from the heart of an educator, but more importantly, the mind of a writer." —•Anthony Schultz, Examiner"Acclaimed bestselling comics writer Bendis (Ultimate Spider-Man, — Alias) has been the main architect of Marvel's universe for a decade, and he gives a step-by-step break down to the art of writing comics, with script styles, art tips, and interviews with his fellow scripters such as Ed Brubaker and roundtables with artists and editors. Only a few guides to comics writing have been produced and this will quickly leap to the top of the list." —•Publisher's Weekly"With script samples, a glossary of must-know business terms for writers, and interactive comics-writing exercises, — Words for Pictures — provides the complete toolbox needed to jump start the next comics-writing success story." —•Gift Pick: Forces of Geek"There is no one better qualified in the field of graphic novels to write this wonderful book." —•Warren Ellis, author of Gun Machine, RED, Transmetropolitan — "There are writers, there are great writers and then there are those very few great writers who redefine the medium like Brian Bendis has with his mastery of dialogue, character, and graphic storytelling. I'm always asked, 'What book should I read to learn how to write and produce comics?' Now I finally have something to recommend, written by the one of the modern legends himself. —• —•Geoff Johns, CCO of DC Entertainment and Eisner Award-winning writer of Green Lantern — and Justice League"Bendis is a pro's pro, and he probes the creative process of writing — visually with the power of an atomic microscope! Any five pages — alone are worth the price of the book. Everyone harboring the dream — of assaulting the comics universe must begin with Words for Pictures." — —•STERANKO"As one of the definitive comic writers of the last 20 years, — Brian Michael Bendis has done more to inspire the medium than almost anyone I can think of. His writing has pushed the field forward not just once or twice, but multiple times, and he remains one of the most vibrant and inspiring writers working right now. There's simply no one better to write a book like this than Bendis. This is exactly the book I'd wished existed when I was a young writer trying to break into the industry, full of insight and terrific advice. The wisdom on writing

that fills these pages will prove priceless for new writers and pros alike." —•Scott Snyder, Eisner Award-winning writer of Batman, The Wake, and American Vampire"This book isn't just dedicated to the craft of writing—it's a master class in it. Packed with thoughtful advice, hard-learned lessons, and obsessive minutiae that I would've killed for, Words for Pictures is the remarkable result of a life dedicated to an art." —•Brad Meltzer, best-selling author of The Inner Circle and Identity Crisis

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS is an award winning comics creator and one of the most successful writers working in mainstream comics. For the last twelve years, Bendis's books have dominated the top of nationwide comic and graphic novel sales charts. As a leading writer for Marvel Comics, he works on their best-selling properties like The Avengers, Spider-Man, the X-Men, and Guardians of the Galaxy. In addition, his original projects include Scarlet, Brilliant, Powers (currently in development as a TV series at FX), Torso (being developed as a film by Circle of Confusion), and the Hollywood tell-all Fortune and Glory. The winner of five prestigious Eisner Awards, Bendis lives with his family in Portland, where he writes and teaches comics and graphic novel writing at Portland State University and the University of Oregon.

I enjoyed the book. Beyond the chapters on scriptwriting it was a sobering look at the comics industry. My only beef was that the business aspect was worth an entire book in itself. Still, it's a good book that tells like it is and doesn't pull any punches. The business of working for the majors (as this seems to be the book's focus) is not for the faint of heart. Dreamers beware. One last note: one of my main beefs with the comics being published today is that they are really ten page stories stretched to twenty or so. If you don't believe me, grab a Lee/Kirby comic book from the sixties or a comic written and drawn by Steranko or a Frank Miller Daredevil or Master of Kung Fu by Doug Moench and compare how much story you get in those twenty pages or so to what you get nowadays and you'll see what I mean.

So far, this book has met my expectations from a content point of view. I was hoping for a clearly written breakdown of the writing process for comics that, in particular, demystifies the preparation and development phases. This section, in particular, has been very helpful and is, for me, what makes this book essential. I will update and finalize my review when I have finished reading the entire book. I did, however, feel compelled to write a quick review at this time because I do not like the way the Kindle version handles the supplemental material. Instead of just printing the outlines,

treatments, scripts and illustrated pages as pages in the book, the Kindle version lists a hyperlink to the publisher's website where that material must be obtained. The reader has the option of reading the material on the site or downloading it to their tablet via PDF. Both of these options are extremely inconvenient and force the reader to juggle either the book and a PDF reader or a browser on their tablet. Constantly switching back and forth gets old fast. Frankly, I don't understand why these materials weren't just included in the sections that they were intended for? That is how any other How-to Writing book that I have read has handled this particular issue. Obviously, material costs (ie paper) couldn't have influenced this decision but, whatever the case, this choice really mars this highly-anticipated and, so far, excellent book. I certainly hope this issue will be corrected in a later update. If you're dithering between the Kindle version and a physical copy, I suggest going with an actual book. This weird issue may cause me to double-dip, depending on how essential I find the overall book.

This may not be the ultimate book on writing comics, specially since the actual process of creating comics involves different phases, both creatively and technically. However I really appreciate the interviews and the experiences of the author. It may not go into detail to the process but the testimonials are good enough to have an idea of do's/don't in the business. The art samples are great although the examples for the writing part seem a bit confusing if you're not familiar with the actual stories they correspond to, so I recommend getting those too. The exercises part could be improved IMHO.

I've read a lot of books on comic book scripting and none of them approach comic book writing as much as this one does. It takes an honest look into the industry itself while providing samples and talking to artists who work with comic book writers, which I have barely seen in other comic book teaching and reference books. I was skeptical of this at first frankly because I'm not a huge fan of Bendis' work. I enjoy his plot approaches more than I do his dialogue approach which I think is a little too real for me at times. I have to say though that Bendis knows his material and I would be really lucky if I could take a class of his in the future. Buy this book. The advice is priceless.

It was my most highly anticipated purchase of the year but I am struggling to get through it. Overall I have found it to be somewhat misleading. Don't get me wrong I am a huge fan of Bendis and was eager to devour a book full his insights, tips and advice on comic book narrative. But if I wanted Matt Fraction or Sam Humphries' guidelines to writing, (and I really do not, especially Humphries with

only a handful of books to his name and half of those bored me silly) I would have been seeking out their books on the subject, not one with Bendis credited as the writer.

The advice of Bendis, the artists, and editors is worth every penny of this book. It is very focused and helps to establish a mindset of success and good business techniques. If you are dedicated to the idea, the story and mastering your craft you can use the same principles that are laid out here to sell almost anything with a few minor tweaks. I highly recommend this book for the aspiring writer and artist alike.

As a comic writer on a small scale looking to move onto the big stage I found Brian Bendis's *Words for Pictures* extremely informative and entertaining. The book peels back the curtain on many "mysteries" of the comic industry. Most important, to me at least, was not the sections from the writer's perspective but the ones from the artists and editors. There are plenty of books on how to write in this medium and almost none with first hand accounts on how to collaborate.

This holds for all mediums I would say, the advice here really is gold. Write if you're gonna write, this doesn't give you the basic step by step stuff, there's a bit of that, but the gold is the exercises, and the Advice. This is high level secrets actually. Just do what he says. Exactly, what's the worst that could happen? Write.

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