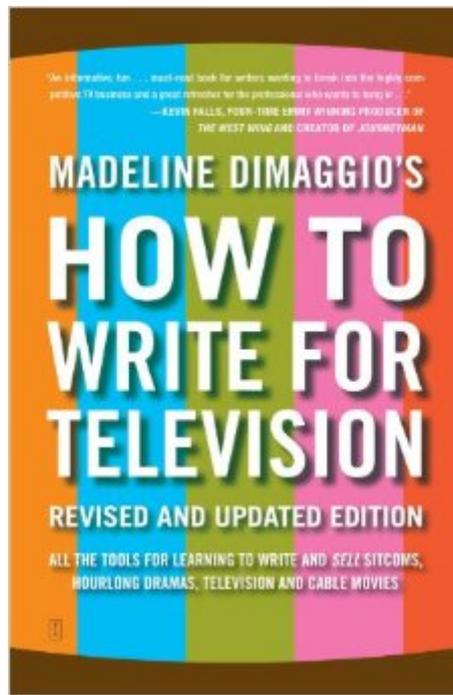


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# How To Write For Television



## Synopsis

TV Writing the Right Way! In this guide for every student of the small screen and every scriptwriter dreaming of breaking into the business, writer-producer Madeline DiMaggio hands you the tools of the trade. With dozens of examples from today's hit shows, as well as perennial classics, DiMaggio walks readers through the scriptwriting process, from learning how to watch TV like a writer to developing your script, pitching it, and eventually sealing the deal. DiMaggio answers the questions on every aspiring television writer's mind, with chapters on: The tools of scriptwriting Hooks that sell Creating the pilot Developing the episode, step by step How to create riveting characters Writing long form and cable movies Adaptations and collaborations Marketing your script DiMaggio combines her own experience with advice to writers from others in the trade, including agents, producers, animators, and more. This readable, reliable book has been a trusted reference for nearly two decades and is now revised to include the most up-to-date information from today's television climate, from writing for cable, reality, and TV-movie formats to the ever-evolving face of the sitcom. A must-read for anyone aiming to write for TV, How to Write for Television will continue to help budding writers reach their small-screen goals and will prepare them for working in the rapidly changing world of TV.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is one of the weakest scriptwriting book I have ever read. The author's references are dated, and the examples she uses from her own writing (episodes of "The Bob Newhart Show" and "Starsky and Hutch") are hardly good guidelines for any new writer to follow. The book is useful for

its occasional pearls of wisdom (the main character should be in the first and/or last scene of every act), but the beginning writer would be confused by her explanation of structure. As for her guidelines on format and marketing--who knows how much has changed since 1990? A new edition might be worth a look. For the novice writer, though, you're better off learning how to write screenplays and applying that knowledge to television. See authors like Christopher Vogler, Michael Hauge, and Michael Chase Walker.

Well, we all have opinions, and I must disagree with the prior reviewer. Perhaps he did the Evelyn Woods speed read on this book. Madeline is an experienced and gifted screenwriter with her finger on the pulse of the motivations that drive character and create the conflicts that move plot to resolution. This book is a FUN READ, informative, and insightful. It is used as a teaching text at USC and is the product of Madeline's extensive experience writing for television. I have been fortunate enough to attend two screenwriting courses taught by Madeline (I have done many of the other "famed" teacher's seminars also) and found her to be genuine, inspired, open, practical, visionary and experienced enough to know the hoops you need to jump through and the order in which to do it. Her classes were leagues above the others - primarily because she never loses sight of the dynamics of characters and their inherent flaws. 'How to Write for Television' is one of the best books on this subject available anywhere.

As a writer who has always wanted to explore television writing, I found Madeline's book an excellent introduction to the genres found on the small screen. As a neophyte to the industry of television writing, but not the craft of writing itself, I was able to understand her explanations on crafting dialogue, setting the scene, creating characters and finding their "voices", and moving the script forward without feeling like I was in over my head. Using fresh, very relevant examples ("Grey's Anatomy", "House", etc.), Madeline simplifies the process while still letting readers know it's a tough business to break into, but not an impossible one. She definitely doesn't present herself as the ultimate authority (although she has impressive credentials) and urges readers to explore the craft through writing and acting workshops. Tips are also included on finding an agent, networking, and marketing, making this book even more valuable to anyone looking to break into television writing. After reading "How to Write for Television", I actually will tackle television writing, rather than just dreaming about the possibility.

Contemporary, savvy and loaded with examples to illustrate each point, "How to Write for

"Television" is a must-have for writers working to perfect their craft and potential writers needing help navigating through their script -- and the industry! Madeline DiMaggio's guidelines for creating living & breathing, multi-dimensional characters are clear, specific and supported by examples and studies of some of our television and film favorites. Any writer working on their craft - whether for television, the big screen, a novel or short story - will find this book's exploration of character development and story structure more than helpful - it is incredibly illuminating. This book is not only a 'how-to' - it's also an 'ah-hah!'. The author's combination of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm for writing inspires long after you've finished the book!

Ironically I read this book before seeing DiMaggio's other book on Screenwriting (2007). Movie writing is my focus, not television. But her sections on character development (back and present life); how to develop the two hour movie (spine, time frame, turning points, et al.); what to do once you've written "your masterpiece", are succinct and to the point. She writes about common sense facts which are so easily missed - not seeing the forest through the trees. DiMaggio sounds like she's gotten her PhD from the University of Hard Knocks, with examples to back up her words. She shares the good, the bad, and the ugly. No pie in the sky, just what happens in real life. A good read, easy to follow. Can't wait to invest in her other book!

Not bad or misleading, but this book doesn't compare well with others in this genre. A better title would have been: "How to Make a Living Through Bad Television." Examples used include Fantasy Island and Starsky and Hutch. Professionally written, but someone's going to have to spend a few aeons in Art Purgatory for those stinkburgers. To be fair, the generic info is helpful if you have no other information, but there are several better books out there. For sitcoms, try: "Successful Sitcom Writing."

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