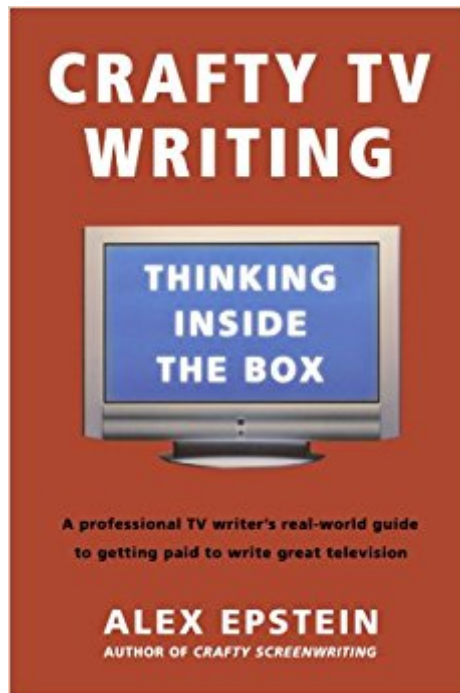




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# Crafty TV Writing: Thinking Inside The Box



## Synopsis

A professional TV writer's real-world guide to getting paid to write great television. Everyone watches television, and everyone has an opinion on what makes good TV. But, as Alex Epstein shows in this invaluable guide, writing for television is a highly specific craft that requires knowledge, skill, and more than a few insider's tricks. Epstein, a veteran TV writer and show creator himself, provides essential knowledge about the entire process of television writing, both for beginners and for professionals who want to go to the next level. *Crafty TV Writing* explains how to decode the hidden structure of a TV series. It describes the best ways to generate a hook, write an episode, create characters the audience will never tire of, construct entertaining dialogue, and use humor. It shows how to navigate the tough but rewarding television industry, from writing your first "spec" script, to getting hired to work on a show, to surviving--even thriving--if you get fired. And it illuminates how television writers think about the shows they're writing, whether they're working in comedy, drama, or "reality." Fresh, funny, and informed, *Crafty TV Writing* is the essential guide to writing for and flourishing in the world of television.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Epstein, author of *Crafty Screenwriting* (2002), draws on his experiences writing for the television shows *Naked Josh* and *Charlie Jade* to create an essential guide for those hoping to break into television writing. Epstein starts with the big picture by examining what great television series have in common: a hook that draws viewers in, compelling characters the audience cares about, and stories that unfold naturally on the small screen and make people want to return to the world of the

show every week. From there he gets into the specifics of how to write a good script. Here he tells writers to create a beat sheet--something similar to an outline--of their episode before sitting down to write the script. After offering insightful writing hints and tips on how to write comedy, Epstein walks writers through finding jobs writing for television--and how to get along with everyone from story editors to show runners once one does. Enlightening and straightforward, this is a must for anyone who wants to write for television. Kristine Huntley Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

No need for me to ever write a book on TV writing. Alex Epstein has covered it all . . . along with a few things I wouldn't have thought of. Save yourself five years of rookie mistakes.~ Crafty TV Writing~ and talent are pretty much all you'll need to make it.--Ken Levine, writer/producer,~ MASH,~ Cheers,~ Frasier,~ The Simpsons,~ Wings,~ Becker"After offering insightful writing hints and tips on how to write comedy, Epstein walks writers through finding jobs writing for television--and how to get along with everyone from story editors to show runners once one does. Enlightening and straightforward, this is a must for anyone who wants to write for television."- Booklist

It's a good read for anyone interested in writing teleplays. A bit dated, but the information is excellent and well written in simple, declarative language the mind retains. He details the how-to brilliantly, and for the 'hungry' aspiring writer, it reads like a novel. Further, he doesn't pull any punches when it comes to the difficulty of becoming a staff writer. He emphasizes the quality of writing is always foremost but that a professional attitude toward improving the script and the production is highly prized. In production, cost dominates. He explains how a spec script must be appropriate to the series template; and, an original spec script must be high concept, cost conscious and well written. Included are appendixes on resources, contests, software, payments, samples, script pages, a glossary, notes and an index. In total, an insider's professional experience in the business.

This book is super useful. We're using it in a screenwriting class at NYU, and it really helps build on the curriculum. I'd also recommend it to anyone who wants to learn a nice, structured way to write an episode from brainstorm to the end.

Sold a script after this so I would say it works!

I just finished my compulsive three-day read of "Crafty TV Writing" after following Epstein's blog for quite some time. The same things I like about his blog are totally on display here: straightforward, no-nonsense, right-to-the-point advice about every aspect of TV writing you can think of. He's got multiple audiences with this book: I imagine only a sliver of his readers are in a position to actually pitch pilots to important people, but there's still a ton to be gleaned about the techniques of episodic storytelling that are of use in a wide range of contexts - I picked up the book because I've been writing and developing episodic internet shows, for instance, and although I may never get to enjoy sitting in a professional writers' room, the insight into collaborative storytelling is quite valuable. Ultimately what I appreciate most about the book is that, like the best television, it's not pretentious; it acknowledges that television at its best is a wonderful art form, but it's also a craft, and frankly, it's also a day job for the people who are doing it right. Shed some romanticism and learn the nuts and bolts - that's what I appreciated most about this book.

I got this from the library and I knew it something I had to own for continual reference. I have read other books on writing for various genres, and this is the most practical writing for TV book that I have ever read. For me, I felt like I was getting a real insider's perspective on how to write for TV. Not just some information from a teacher who has never actually been to Hollywood.

Everything you wanted to know including the mechanics of writing scenes that grip viewers. Well done!

GREAT book about TV writing. But, desperately needs to be updated. A lot has changed since '06. Please put out a new edition!

I think this is one of the more all encompassing books I've read about television writing recently. I really liked that there was a separate part for comedy and a nice section at the end for tips for being inside a writer's room. Very helpful. I recommend it.

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