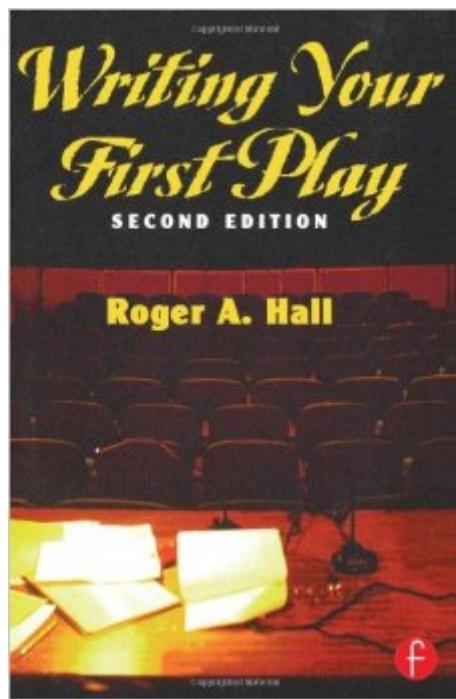


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Writing Your First Play



Synopsis

Writing Your First Play provides the beginning playwright with the tools and motivation to tell a story through dramatic form. Based in a series of exercises which gradually grow more complex, the book helps the reader to understand the basic elements of drama, conflict, and action. The exercises help the reader to become increasingly sophisticated in the use of dramatic formats, turning simple ideas into a viable play. Topics include: the role of action in drama; developing action and conflict to reveal character; writing powerful and persuasive dialog; writing from personal experience; pros and cons; how to begin the story and develop the storyline. This new edition is thoroughly updated and contains new examples based on contemporary plays. The author has added additional writing exercises and a new student-written one act play. It also contains a new chapter on how to sell your play once it is written. With examples based on student work, this text both inspires and educates the student and fledgling playwright, providing solid tools and techniques for the craft of writing a drama. Roger A. Hall, a professor of theatre at James Madison University, had taught playwriting for nearly 20 years. Many of his students have gone on to write for theatre, television, and the screen. He has written numerous plays and articles and has acted and directed extensively in the theatre.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As Director of an International Playwrights Retreat, I have had opportunity to lead workshops in playwriting world wide. I have and value a large collection of playwriting books, and have borrowed

exercises from many of them. I find Roger's opening exercise one of the best to get at the essence of what theatre is about. He has the student write a scene of action - no dialogue, no plot outline or character studies - just what we can see the character doing. The book moves swiftly on to the next essential - conflict. By now, the reader may well have become a writer, as the book progresses through character, dialogue, writing from life or from other sources, and more - all leading to completing that first play before you even realized it. The book is full of loads of useful exercises and examples. This at once opens worlds of possibilities to the creative mind, while providing achievable writing results - all leading to an exploration of your own stories. It provides a context, a process, useful advice and practise . . . all in a very user friendly fashion. It's a great way to get a process started.

This book is designed as a course, with exercises to do in each chapter. However, I wish I had read some of the other writer's books I have before buying this one. This makes a good second or third book once you have something that deals more directly with the dynamics of plot and it's relationship to character and setting. Especially lacking is an discussion of how audiences react to the emotional dynamics of each scene and act. McKee's "Story" is a great place to start. But Hall's book is a good place for the relative beginner who has some experience and wants to prime the pumps with a few exercises.

I had Dr. Hall as a professor of playwriting for two semesters. He uses this book as the text for his introductory course. The exercises and examples are an excellent place for an aspiring playwright to start. Dr. Hall introduces the ideas of conflict, character, action, etc. one at a time, and quite intensively. Following the exercises, each of your first three plays will focus on only one aspect of drama, leading to an all-inclusive one-act play; your first play. Although I have much respect for Dr. Hall, and enjoyed working with him for over a year, I would still have to rate this book "4 Stars." The title is a little misleading. Like I mentioned, you will not have a full-length written by the end of the book, but several short sketches and a one-act play. Were this called "Working Up to Your First Play," I'd give it a 5.

I'm in the middle of my first play, and read this as a refresher course. Learned a few things are new to me. One thing that I like about this book is that it's written in easy to read manner, and exercises really help you understand the techniques. Much better than the many books that focus on abstract theoretics that are hard to understand. I was pleasantly surprised by the writing samples from the

students who took the author's class - some of them are very very good, and gave me confidence to know that the person who wrote this book taught them. Recommended.

An excellent book for the amateur playwright. This was recommended to me from a former director of mine and was written by his former professor. I am glad I bought it and I highly recommend to anyone starting out. This is better than the book I just had to use for my college playwriting course.

So informational! This is a great help and it helps me understand a lot better how to construct and deconstruct a play. The instructions are clear and answers several questions I had been pondering. Examples are everywhere and provides you with a lot of readings that should be done and people to look up and study. So helpful!

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