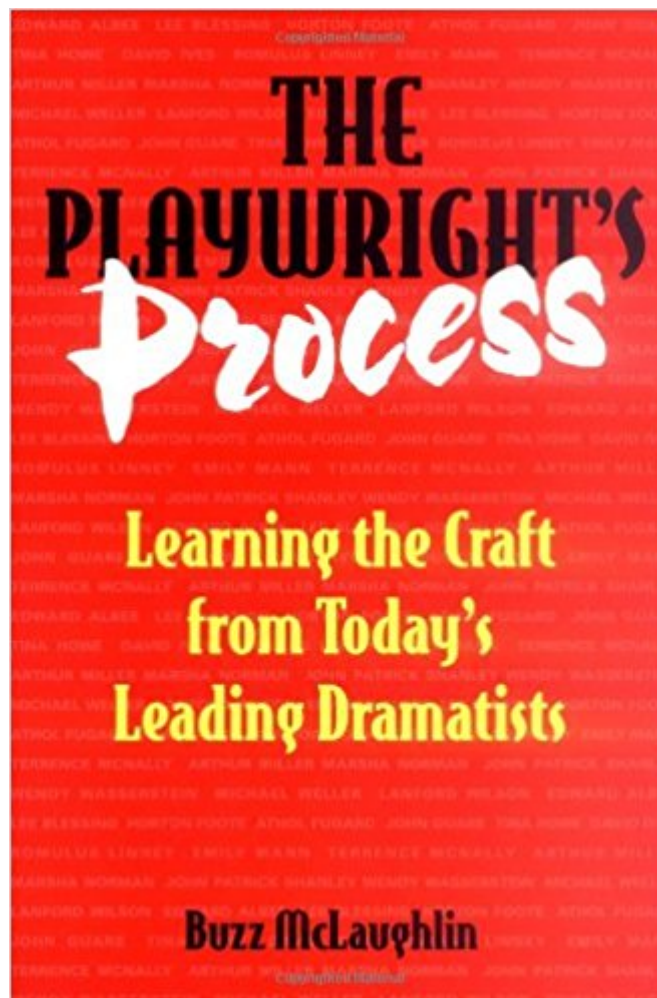




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# The Playwright's Process: Learning The Craft From Today's Leading Dramatists



## Synopsis

Here is the first and only manual for playwrights ever designed to draw directly from the wisdom of leading contemporary dramatists. Interwoven with hundreds of quotations from the author's own in-depth interview series at the Dramatists Guild, in New York City, *The Playwright's Process* offers a fresh and lively discussion of the indispensable ingredients of strong dramatic writing. Every essential step the writer must take to create a well-written, stageworthy play is examined and explored. Also mining his own experience as a dramatist and a teacher of playwriting, author Buzz McLaughlin details the entire process of developing the kernel of an idea into a fully realized play - from the writer's very first jottings to the readings and workshops that lead to a professional production. A resource for beginning and experienced writers, *The Playwright's Process* is a virtual guided tour of the dramatist's challenging and often mysterious creative process, chock-full of specific techniques, practical exercises, and candid observations on craft and method straight from the mouths of working, award-winning playwrights.

## Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Back Stage Books (May 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0823088332

ISBN-13: 978-0823088331

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #105,806 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Play & Scriptwriting](#) #42 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Theater > Playwriting](#) #110 in [Books > Textbooks > Communication & Journalism > Journalism](#)

## Customer Reviews

I am in the fortunate position to state that I will be attending New Hampshire Institute of Art (NHIA) next month to begin my Masters of Fine Arts in Writing for Stage & Screen. Buzz McLaughlin is not only the author of this book but also the director of that program, and after finishing this book today, I am thrilled to be an incoming student of this program. Even if I were not about to enter into my MFA program, after reading this book I would feel confident and increasingly competent regarding my

ability to create a life for myself as a playwright in the theater. The first half of the book focuses on the craft of playwriting, and doing the actual work. This is a sticking point for me, and the one I am most concerned with as I turn my life towards that of being a playwright. There are some important aspects of style, form, and consistency that I read and re-read, taking margin notes, knowing that these are aspects of the field that I need to pay close attention to. I believe in the Muse and artistic combustion, but I also believe in having the tools necessary to create the art of which you dream. Together, having both the tools/knowledge and the muse/inspiration can create magic. Having recently (last month) self-produced my first full length comedy, I connected with so many aspects of this book, but rather than feeling repetitive or obvious for me, it was invigorating - and I truly wish I had read this book prior to embarking on my first full-length foray, from beginning to end (first draft to production). I would have altered some of my practices, and certainly implemented them better. This book balances practical, pragmatic suggestions while also tapping into the emotional saliency and mystery of what we do. Interwoven throughout are fascinating, perfectly placed quotations by some of the best playwrights, most of them personally interviewed by the author. They are carefully chosen and utilized, and certainly inspiring. Rather than being an opportunity for the author to namedrop, these quotes heightened my understanding of the concept(s) at hand, and added to the humanity and human connection of the craft. Although certain "rules", concepts and suggestions might be strongly asserted and encouraged, McLaughlin carefully treads that balance between best practices and artistic creation, completely aware and encouraging of exceptions to the rule and/or creative license to do what we please, how we please, to create the art that we please. But we are assured that it at least helps to be cognizant and competent in what would be considered the best practices in the field, or at the very least to know the rules before we break them. I am very impressed with this book, and will be revisiting it repeatedly throughout my time developing this magnificent and fascinating craft. How exciting!

I wish I would have read this book six years ago. McLaughlin's book follows the playwright's process from conception to completion -- offering practical exercises and also advice from leading contemporary playwrights. The true brilliance of this book, other than its stunningly lucid practicality, is supporting quotes from working playwrights, who expound in keen detail on the playwrighting process. The title of this book is misleading. This book is just as pertinent to screenwriters and fiction writers. It offers practical advice for problems every writer encounters. In particular, the "Playwright's Process" presents helpful exercises on nursing an initial idea into a functional, three-dimensional story. Rather than impress reader's with his knowledge of theatre vocabulary,

McLaughlin charts a clear course for readers by focusing on the elements of playwrighting most newcomers struggle with -- particularly structure (character development, plotting, etc.). What makes this book so pragmatic is that McLaughlin, an experienced teacher and playwright, asks relevant questions concerning the mechanics of playwrighting. The playwright's quotes aren't presented in a round table fashion, but rather in response to insightful questions. This book covers all angles. It address the nuts and bolts of story writing, and also touches on issues like writer's block, and more importantly, how to deal with it. I was depressed after reading this book because I felt I had wasted six years, aimlessly throwing ideas and characters onto the page. If you are an aspiring screenwriter and have read Syd Field's "Screenplay," place it on your reference shelf. The "Playwright's Process" should be your writing Bible.

I know that this is a book on playwriting, but I found myself using what I learned in all of my writing. I haven't read too many books on writing, so I may not be an expert on these kinds of books. Regardless, this book resonated well with me and helped me simplify the writing process.

I started college to become a Drama Major, not knowing which part of the industry I would enjoy most but, I knew I would not enjoy being an actor so after taking theatre appreciation I decided to try my hand at writing, and while my grammar may not be the best on earth if you've been reading this and grading me. This book helped me understand the process of creating everything about my characters and how to fit them into the world I had created for them. Also what elements to work with first, and how to decide if what I had in my mind was even worth pursuing. All, in all. this is a awesome book recommended to me by my teacher. Thanks!

The Playwright's Process delivers exactly what it promises: a step-by-step guide on how to write a play. McLaughlin stresses the pre-writing process of creating structure and character development as the secret to a successful script. I found the exercises he provides to take you through this part of the process unique and invaluable. Great for beginners and seasoned writers alike.

This is the best book on playwriting I've read (and I've read plenty). Not esoteric or lofty: Clear, concise, informative, and helpful.

Loved the quotes from established playwrights. Some real good exercises in here. Info can be basic for experienced playwrights, but sometimes it's good to hear such things again. Well organized.

This book reached my door the day that playwright Wendy Wasserstein died so it was a bit ironic. Here I was ordering the book to write my first play. So far I have found this to be a helpful and entertaining book. Hopefully my play will someday appear in a future chapter.

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