

SUPERHEROES DECONSTRUCTED



Deconstruction is taking something traditional and looking at it in a new, non-traditional way. Here are some Graphic Novels which look at the idea of a Superhero in some unique & different ways.



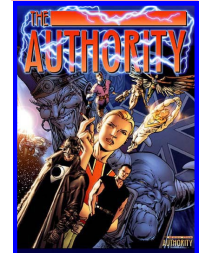
Astro City: Life in the Big City by Kurt Busiek (ASTRO)

An original take on the lives of superheroes. The first story is about a flying hero with super strength in a red & blue costume, here known as The Samaritan. At night he dreams of flying through the air for the pure joy of it, but in reality he is too busy stopping criminals, saving the world and balancing the life of his alter ego, reporter Asa Martin. Also try the other books in the Astro City series, including [Confession](#) and [The Tarnished Angel](#).



The Authority: Relentless by Warren Ellis (AUTHORITY)

The Authority is a superhero group with a harsh agenda. They will make the world a better place-- whether you like it or not. Threats are dealt with terminal prejudice as they pursue their perception of Utopia with a vengeful zeal and barely disguised fascistic undertones. In this volume, led by the group's sardonic British leader, the electricity-harnessing Jenny Sparks, The Authority faces a Fu-Manchu-like dictator whose army of superhuman clones are destroying cities and face an invasion from a Great Britain of an alternate Earth. Also try [The Authority: Under New Management](#).



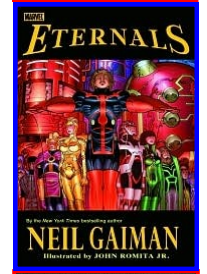
Batman: The Dark Knight Returns by Frank Miller (BATMAN)

Miller completely reinvents the legend of Batman in his saga of a near-future Gotham City gone to rot, ten years after the Dark Knight's retirement. Crime runs rampant in the streets, and the man who was Batman is still tortured by the memories of his parents' murders. As society crumbles around him, Bruce Wayne's long-suppressed vigilante side finally breaks free of its self-imposed shackles. The Dark Knight returns in a blaze of fury, taking on a whole new generation of criminals and matching their level of violence. Also try the sequel [Batman: The Dark Knight Strikes Again](#).



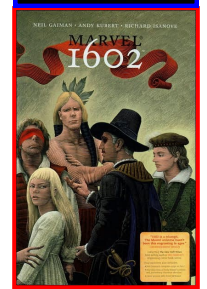
The Eternals by Neil Gaiman (ETERNALS)

You are thousands of years old. You have amazing powers. You have watched civilizations rise and fall. So why does no one remember any of this? The "Eternals" awake one by one from a strange dream and must come to terms with the fact that they are not ordinary people. Bestselling Author Neil Gaiman is joined by superstar artist John Romita, Jr. to present a tale that completely re-imagines Jack Kirby's *Eternals* and that will change and the Marvel Universe forever!



Marvel 1602 by Neil Gaiman (GAIMAN)

Gaiman transfers Marvel's classic characters to the Elizabethan period. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is equally reliant on government operative Nick Fury and magician Stephen Strange. Charles Xavier still shepherds a band of mutant teens, only now he's Carlos, and the mutants are known, and mistrusted, as "witchbreed." Carlos's mysterious nemesis has taken on a new job: grand inquisitor of the Spanish Inquisition. Peter Parquah is still a confused teenager who has yet to be bitten by a radioactive spider. These familiar characters must grapple with the evil King James of Scotland.



Kingdom Come by Mark Waid and Alex Ross (KINGDOM)

Superman's retired, Batman's too old to fight and Lex Luthor is finally poised to take over the world. Well, that's almost what happens ... This story takes place in the not too distant future when a new generation of super-"heroes" has emerged. The trouble is they're more concerned with using their powers for their own sake and little concerned with helping humanity. It's up to the old timers to show these young punks what it takes to be a real hero, but are the older heroes up to the challenge? A great story by Waid with truly amazing art by Ross!



[Planetary: All Over the World & Other Stories](#) by Warren Ellis (PLANETARY)

Follow the enigmatic heroes Jakita Wagner, Elijah Snow, and the Drummer as they excavate the secret history of the world from its wealth of bizarre happenings. The stories are both broad and deep, exploring a web of conspiracies and shadowy superheroes that manipulate and "protect" our world. From ghost cops in China to radioactive creatures in the Pacific, the group uncovers long-hidden wonders of the world.

[Powers: Who Killed Retro Girl](#) by Brian Michael Bendis (POWERS)

From the city's seamy underbelly to the gleaming towers inhabited by immortal beings, Detective Christian Walker and rookie Detective Deena Pilgrim investigate the murder of one of the world's most popular superheroes, Retro Girl. As hidden truths about Retro Girl come to light, Walker finds that to solve this crime, he may have to reveal a dark secret. The *Powers* series continues with [Powers Volume 2: Psychotic](#).

[Supreme: The Story of the Year](#) by Alan Moore (SUPREME)

This clever work retells the history of superhero comic books as reflected through Moore's retro drawings and superheroes modeled on characters and narrative styles from the 1930s to today. Suffering from amnesia, Supreme has returned to Earth, but must also return to his roots-his small town family, allies and bombastic enemies-to discover his origins. As Supreme investigates his past, readers are treated to a delightful series of tongue-in-cheek flashbacks to revised versions of the Golden and Silver eras of comics. Also try the sequel [Supreme: The Return](#).

[Tom Strong](#) by Alan Moore (TOM STRONG)

Tom Strong was raised in a high gravity chamber invented by his eccentric scientist father and given a special root that granted him longevity and health. As a result, he is extremely tough and strong, in addition to being a genius. Tom combines characteristics of the Superman and Tarzan legends, and includes elements of Doc Savage and other early pulp heroes. Also try [Tom Strong Book 2](#).

[Top Ten: Book 1](#) by Alan Moore (TOP TEN)

What if everybody had a superpower of some sort? Who would police the citizens in a world where ordinary people, as well as criminals big and small all had amazing abilities to fly, become invisible, or a myriad of other powers? Here Moore imagines just such a world and shows us the stories and lives of the police men and women in the precinct known as Top Ten. Also try the other books in Moore's award-winning Top Ten series, including [Top Ten: Book 2](#) and [Top Ten: The Forty Niners](#).

[Watchmen](#) by Alan Moore (WATCHMEN)

Boy, there sure is a lot of Alan Moore on this list, huh? But, hey, he's one of the best and is great at showing us "the other side" of superheroes. Here, in his masterwork and best known deconstructionist story, a group of super heroes plagued by all too human failings fall from grace while the concept of the super hero is dissected and inverted as strangely realistic characters are stalked by an unknown assassin. This graphic novel made *Time Magazine's* list of 100 best novels.

[The New X-Men](#) by Grant Morrison (YA X-MEN)

Sixteen million mutants dead - and that was just the beginning! In one bold stroke, writer Grant Morrison propelled the X-Men into the 21st century, masterminding a challenging new direction for Marvel's mutant heroes that began with the destruction of Genosha and never let up. Regarded as the most innovative thinker of the current comic-book renaissance, Morrison proceeded to turn the mutant-hero genre on its ear. Gone were the gaudy spandex costumes - replaced by slick, black leather and an attitude to match.

* Please also see our other reading lists: 'Superheroes for Grown Ups' and 'Superhero Novels'

