

CYCLOPAEDIA 16 – SUPERHEROES

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OVERVIEW

When you think of superheroes, what comes to mind? Comic books? Cartoons? TV shows? Movies? Bright colors or lots of blacks and muted tones? Spandex, leather outfits, or body armor? How your answer speaks volumes for when you first got into the superhero genre.

But, what we can all agree on is that superhero stories and games are like modern myths, similar to the Greek, Roman, and Norse heroes and demigods of old. Superheroes are larger than life, morality plays of heroism, vigilantism, and good vs evil. Superheroes and Supervillains bring to mind certain ideals and aesthetics.

When did superheroes begin? There is not an agreed upon date or event, but many claim that the 1903 play *The Scarlet Pimpernel* could be the first masked avenger, a precursor to superheroes. Even the term superhero was first used in the early 1900s. From there, heroes such as Zorro lead to the pulp adventures of The Shadow and The Phantom. Then in the 1930s, Superman and Captain Marvel begin the Golden Age of Comics.

When we think of modern superheroes, certain common qualities come to mind such as super human abilities, secret identities, costumes, moral codes, and supervillains to pair against these superheroes. Whether you enjoy more over-the-top Four Color comic heroes or darker, more violent vigilantes, the superhero genre has a superhero, team, or storyline that will interest you.

COMIC BOOK AGES?

There is constant debate and discussion on what should be the ages of comic books. There are key events many collectors and historians note as turning points in comics. Here is one possible listing of ages and dates.

- Platinum Age (1897-1937)
- Golden Age (1938-1955)
- Silver Age (1956-1972)
- Bronze Age (1973-1985)
- Copper/Dark/Iron Age (1984-1991?)
- Modern Age (1985?/1991? to now)

Following are sources of information pertaining to Superheroes to assist prospective game masters, game designers, writers, and storytellers in knowing where to start their research.

ARTICLES

On the literary use of superheroes; or, Batman and Superman fistfight in heaven

By Cates, I.

Source: American Literature, v83 n4 (2011 12 01): 831-857

Superheroes and Heroic Journeys

By Rubin, Lawrence C

Source: Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, v1 n3-4 (2005): 237-252

Unmasking: on violence, masculinity, and superheroes in science education

By Broadway, Francis S and Leafgren, Sheri

Source: Cultural Studies of Science Education, v7 n3 (201209): 719-733

Wonder Women: Feminisms and Superheroes
By Gallardo, Ximena
Source: The Journal of Popular Culture, v38
n6 (200511): 1109-1111

Legend
By Lu, Marie

School for Sidekicks
By McCullough, Kelly

Sidekicks
By Ferraiolo, Jack

Soon I Will Be Invincible
By Grossman, Austin

Steelheart
By Sanderson, Brandon

Supergods: What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun God from Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human
By Morrison, Grant

Superheroes and Gods: A Comparative Study from Babylonia to Batman
By LoCicero Don

Superhero: The Secret Origin of a Genre
By Coogan, Peter

Super Human
By Carroll, Michael Owen

Violent Century
By Tidhar, Lavie

Watchmen
By Moore, Alan

Wild Cards
By Martin, George R.R.

The Young Elites
By Lu, Marie

BOOKS

The Awakening
By Carroll, Michael

Captain Underpants
By Pilkey, Dav

Comic Books and Graphic Novels
By Darkhorse Comics, DC, Marvel, & more.

Empire State
By Christopher, Adam and Staehle, Will

Even Superheroes Have Bad Days
By Becker, Shelly and Kaban, Eda

Ex-Heroes: A Novel
By Clines, Peter

Ferros
By King, Wesley

Hero Worship
By Long, Christopher

H.I.V.E.: Higher Institute of Villainous Education
By Walden, Mark

Holy Superheroes! Revised and Expanded Edition: Exploring the Sacred in Comics, Graphic Novels, and Film
By Garrett, Greg

GAMES

Aberrant - RPG
BASH! - RPG
Batman: Arkham Asylum - Computer Game
Batman Fluxx - Tabletop Game
Batman: Gotham City Strategy Game - Tabletop Game
Batman Love Letter - Tabletop Game
Brave New World - RPG
Capes & Cows - Tabletop Game
Champions - RPG
City of Heroes CCG - Tabletop Game
City of Heroes - Computer Game
City of Mist - RPG
DC Adventures - RPG
DC Comics Deck-Building Game - Tabletop Game
DC Heroes Role Playing Game - RPG
DC Universe Online - Computer Game
Dice Masters - Tabletop Game
Freedom Force - Computer Game
Godlike - RPG
Guardians' Chronicles - Tabletop Game
GURPS Supers - RPG
HeroClix - Tabletop Game
Heroes of Metro City - Tabletop Game
Heroes Wanted - Tabletop Game
Heroes Unlimited - RPG
Heroscape Marvel: The Conflict Begins - Tabletop Game
ICONS - RPG
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction - Computer Game
Injustice: Gods Among Us - Computer Game
Justice League Strategy Game - Tabletop Game
Justice League: The Board Game - Tabletop Game
Legendary - Tabletop Game
Lego Batman - Computer Game
Lego Marvel Super Heroes - Computer

Game

Marvel Heroes - Tabletop Game
Marvel Superheroes Adventure Game - RPG
Marvel Ultimate Alliance - Computer Game
Marvel vs Capcom - Computer Game
Mortal Combat vs. DC Universe - Computer Game
Mutants & Masterminds - RPG
Necessary Evil - RPG
Sentinels of the Multiverse - Tabletop Game
Sentinels Tactics - Tabletop Game
Silver Age Sentinels - RPG
Smallville Roleplaying Game - RPG
Superhero 2044 - RPG
Superworld - RPG
Villains and Vigilantes - RPG
Vs. System - Tabletop Game
Wild Talents - RPG
X-Men Arcade - Computer Game
X-Men Legends - Computer Game
X-Men Origins: Wolverine - Computer Game
X-Men Revolution - Tabletop Game

CINEMA

Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl in 3-D
Arrowverse - TV
Batman (1966) - TV
Batman: The Animated Series - TV
Batman Beyond - TV
Black Scorpion - TV
Blade
The Cape - TV
Captain Nice - TV
Condorman
The Crow
Darkman
Daredevil
DC Animated Universe
DC Extended Universe
Electra Woman and Dynamics's Girl - TV

Elektra
Fantastic Four
Generation X - TV
Ghost Rider
Gotham - TV
Greatest American Hero - TV
The Green Hornet
Hancock
Heroes - TV
Howard the Duck
The Incredibles
The Incredible Hulk - TV
Justice League Unlimited - TV
Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman - TV
M.A.N.T.I.S. - TV
Meteor Man
The Middleman - TV
Manimal - TV
Marvel Cinematic Universe - TV and Movies
Megamind
Mutant X - TV
Mystery Men
My Super Ex-Girlfriend
Nightman - TV
The Phantom
The Phoenix - TV
The Powderpuff Girls Movie
Powerless - TV
Push
The Secrets of Isis - TV
The Shadow
Shazam! - TV
Sky High
Smallville - TV
Spawn
Steel
Super Friends - TV
Superhero Movie
Superman - TV
Swamp Thing
The Toxic Avenger
Ultraman - TV

Unbreakable
Underdog - TV
Watchmen
Wonder Woman - TV
X-Men: The Animated Series - TV

LOCATIONS

Hall of Heroes Superhero Museum
<https://www.hallofheroesmuseum.com/>

Super Museum - Metropolis, IL
<http://www.supermuseum.com/>

PEOPLE

Alex Alonso
Dan Buckley
Chris Claremont
Jeff Dee
Dan DiDio
Steve Ditko
Richard Donner
Will Eisner
Gardner Fox
Mark Goodman
Geoff Johns
Jack Kirby
Jim Lee
Stan Lee
Frank Miller
Christopher Reeve
George Reeves
John Romita Jr.
Alex Ross
Joe Schuster
Jerry Siegel
Jim Steranko
Malcom Wheeler-Nicholson