

# Batman

**Batman**<sup>[a]</sup> is a superhero who appears in American comic books published by DC Comics. Batman was created by artist Bob Kane and writer Bill Finger, and debuted in the 27th issue of the comic book *Detective Comics* on March 30, 1939. In the DC Universe continuity, Batman is the alias of **Bruce Wayne**, a wealthy American playboy, philanthropist, and industrialist who resides in Gotham City. Batman's origin story features him swearing vengeance against criminals after witnessing the murder of his parents Thomas and Martha; he trains himself physically and intellectually, crafts a bat-inspired persona, and monitors the Gotham streets at night. Kane, Finger, and other creators accompanied Batman with supporting characters, including his sidekick Robin; allies Alfred Pennyworth, James Gordon, and Catwoman; and foes such as the Penguin, the Riddler, Two-Face, and his archenemy, the Joker.

Kane conceived Batman in early 1939 to capitalize on the popularity of DC's Superman; although Kane frequently claimed sole creation credit, Finger substantially developed the concept from a generic superhero into something more bat-like. The character received his own spin-off publication, *Batman*, in 1940. Batman was originally introduced as a ruthless vigilante who frequently killed or maimed criminals, but evolved into a character with a stringent moral code and strong sense of justice. Unlike most superheroes, Batman does not possess any superpowers, instead relying on his intellect, fighting skills, and wealth. The 1960s *Batman* television series used a camp aesthetic, which continued to be associated with the character for years after the show ended. Various creators worked to return the character to his darker roots in the 1970s and 1980s, culminating with the 1986 miniseries *The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller.

DC has featured Batman in many comic books, including comics published under its imprints such as Vertigo and Black Label. The longest-running Batman comic, *Detective Comics*, is the longest-running comic book in the United States. Batman is frequently depicted alongside other DC superheroes, such as Superman and Wonder Woman, as a member of organizations such as the Justice League and the Outsiders. In addition to Bruce Wayne, other characters have taken on the Batman persona on different occasions, such as Jean-Paul Valley / Azrael in the 1993–1994 "Knightfall" story arc and Dick Grayson, the first Robin, from 2009 to 2011. DC has also published comics featuring alternate versions of Batman, including the incarnation seen in *The Dark Knight Returns* and its successors, the incarnation from the *Flashpoint* (2011) event, and numerous interpretations from *Elseworlds* stories.

Bruce Wayne Batman	
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Cover of the <u>DC Comics Absolute Edition</u> of <i>Batman: Hush</i> (2011). Art by <u>Jim Lee</u> .	
Publication information	
Publisher	<u>DC Comics</u>
First appearance	<i>Detective Comics</i> #27 (cover date May 1939 / release date March 30, 1939) <sup>[1]</sup>
Created by	<u>Bob Kane</u> <u>Bill Finger</u> <sup>[2][3]</sup>
In-story information	
Alter ego	<u>Bruce Wayne</u>
Place of origin	<u>Gotham City</u>
Team affiliations	<u>Justice League</u> <u>Batman Family</u>

One of the most iconic characters in popular culture, Batman has been listed among the greatest comic book superheroes and fictional characters ever created. He is one of the most commercially successful superheroes, and his likeness has been licensed and featured in various media and merchandise sold around the world; this includes toy lines such as *Lego Batman* and video games like the *Batman: Arkham* series. Batman has been adapted in live-action and animated incarnations, including the 1960s *Batman* television series played by Adam West and in films by Michael Keaton in *Batman* (1989) and *Batman Returns* (1992), Christian Bale in *The Dark Knight Trilogy* (2005–2012), Ben Affleck in the DC Extended Universe (2016–present) and Robert Pattinson in *The Batman* (2022). Kevin Conroy, Jason O'Mara, and Will Arnett, among others, have provided the character's voice.

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# Publication history

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## Creation

In early 1939, the success of Superman in Action Comics prompted editors at National Comics Publications (the future DC Comics) to request more superheroes for its titles. In response, Bob Kane created "the Bat-Man".<sup>[5]</sup> Collaborator Bill Finger recalled that "Kane had an idea for a character called 'Batman,' and he'd like me to see the drawings. I went over to Kane's, and he had drawn a character who looked very much like Superman with kind of ...reddish tights, I believe, with boots ...no gloves, no gauntlets ...with a small domino mask, swinging on a rope. He had two stiff wings that were sticking out, looking like bat wings. And under it was a big sign ...BATMAN".<sup>[6]</sup> The bat-wing-like cape was suggested by Bob Kane, inspired as a child by Leonardo Da Vinci's sketch of an ornithopter flying device.<sup>[7]</sup>



First published image of Batman, in Action Comics #12, announcing the character's debut in the forthcoming Detective Comics #27<sup>[4]</sup>

Finger suggested giving the character a cowl instead of a simple domino mask, a cape instead of wings, and gloves; he also recommended removing the red sections from the original costume.<sup>[8][9][10][11]</sup> Finger said he devised the name Bruce Wayne for the character's secret identity: "Bruce Wayne's first name came from Robert the Bruce, the Scottish patriot. Wayne, being a playboy, was a man of gentry. I searched for a name that would suggest colonialism. I tried Adams, Hancock ...then I thought of Mad Anthony Wayne."<sup>[12]</sup> He later said his suggestions were influenced by Lee Falk's popular The Phantom, a syndicated newspaper comic-strip character with which Kane was also familiar.<sup>[13]</sup>

Kane and Finger drew upon contemporary 1930s popular culture for inspiration regarding much of the Bat-Man's look, personality, methods, and weaponry. Details find predecessors in pulp fiction, comic strips, newspaper headlines, and autobiographical details referring to Kane himself.<sup>[14]</sup> As an aristocratic hero with a double identity, Batman had predecessors in the Scarlet Pimpernel (created by Baroness Emmuska Orczy, 1903) and Zorro (created by Johnston McCulley, 1919). Like them, Batman performed his heroic deeds in secret, averted suspicion by playing aloof in public, and marked his work with a signature symbol. Kane noted the influence of the films The Mark of Zorro (1920) and The Bat Whispers (1930) in the creation of the character's iconography. Finger, drawing inspiration from pulp heroes like Doc Savage, The Shadow, Dick Tracy, and Sherlock Holmes, made the character a master sleuth.<sup>[15][16]</sup>

In his 1989 autobiography, Kane detailed Finger's contributions to Batman's creation:

One day I called Bill and said, 'I have a new character called the Bat-Man and I've made some crude, elementary sketches I'd like you to look at.' He came over and I showed him the drawings. At the time, I only had a small domino mask, like the one Robin later wore, on Batman's face. Bill said, 'Why not make him look more like a bat and put a hood on him, and take the eyeballs out and just put slits for eyes to make him look more mysterious?' At this point, the Bat-Man wore a red union suit; the wings, trunks, and mask were black. I thought that red and black would be a good combination. Bill said that the costume was too bright: 'Color it dark grey to make it look more ominous.' The cape looked like two stiff bat wings attached to his arms. As Bill and I talked, we realized that these wings would get cumbersome when Bat-Man was in action and changed them into a cape, scalloped to look like bat wings when he was fighting or swinging down on a rope. Also, he didn't have any gloves on, and we added them so that he wouldn't leave fingerprints.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Golden Age

### Subsequent creation credit

Kane signed away ownership in the character in exchange for, among other compensation, a mandatory byline on all Batman comics. This byline did not originally say "Batman created by Bob Kane"; his name was simply written on the title page of each story. The name disappeared from the comic book in the mid-1960s, replaced by credits for each story's actual writer and artists. In the late 1970s, when Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster began receiving a "created by" credit on the Superman titles, along with William Moulton Marston being given the byline for creating Wonder Woman, Batman stories began saying "Created by Bob Kane" in addition to the other credits.

Finger did not receive the same recognition. While he had received credit for other DC work since the 1940s, he began, in the 1960s, to receive limited acknowledgment for his Batman writing; in the letters page of *Batman* #169 (February 1965) for example, editor Julius Schwartz names him as the creator of the Riddler, one of Batman's recurring villains. However, Finger's contract left him only with his writing page rate and no byline. Kane wrote, "Bill was disheartened by the lack of major accomplishments in his career. He felt that he had not used his creative potential to its fullest and that success had passed him by."<sup>[12]</sup> At the time of Finger's death in 1974, DC had not officially credited Finger as Batman co-creator.

Jerry Robinson, who also worked with Finger and Kane on the strip at this time, has criticized Kane for failing to share the credit. He recalled Finger resenting his position, stating in a 2005 interview with *The Comics Journal*:

Bob made him more insecure, because while he slaved working on Batman, he wasn't sharing in any of the glory or the money that Bob began to make, which is why ...[he was] going to leave [Kane's employ]. ...[Kane] should have credited Bill as co-creator, because I know; I was there. ...That was one thing I would never forgive Bob for, was not to take care of Bill or recognize his vital role in the creation of Batman. As with Siegel and Shuster, it should have been the same, the same co-creator credit in the strip, writer, and artist.<sup>[17]</sup>

Although Kane initially rebutted Finger's claims at having created the character, writing in a 1965 open letter to fans that "it seemed to me that Bill Finger has given out the impression that he and not myself created the "Batman, t' [*sic*] as well as Robin and all the other leading villains and characters. This statement is fraudulent and entirely untrue." Kane himself also commented on Finger's lack of credit. "The trouble with being a 'ghost' writer or artist is that you must remain rather anonymously without 'credit'. However, if one wants the 'credit', then one has to cease being a 'ghost' or follower and become a leader or innovator."<sup>[18]</sup>

In 1989, Kane revisited Finger's situation, recalling in an interview:

In those days it was like, one artist and he had his name over it [the comic strip] — the policy of DC in the comic books was, if you can't write it, obtain other writers, but their names would never appear on the comic book in the finished version. So Bill never asked me for it [the byline] and I never volunteered — I guess my ego at that time. And I felt badly, really, when he [Finger] died.<sup>[19]</sup>



In September 2015, DC Entertainment revealed that Finger would be receiving credit for his role in Batman's creation on the 2016 superhero film *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and the second season of *Gotham* after a deal was worked out between the Finger family and DC.<sup>[2]</sup> Finger received credit as a creator of Batman for the first time in a comic in October 2015 with *Batman and Robin Eternal* #3 and *Batman: Arkham Knight Genesis* #3. The updated acknowledgment for the character appeared as "Batman created by Bob Kane with Bill Finger".<sup>[3]</sup>

## Early years

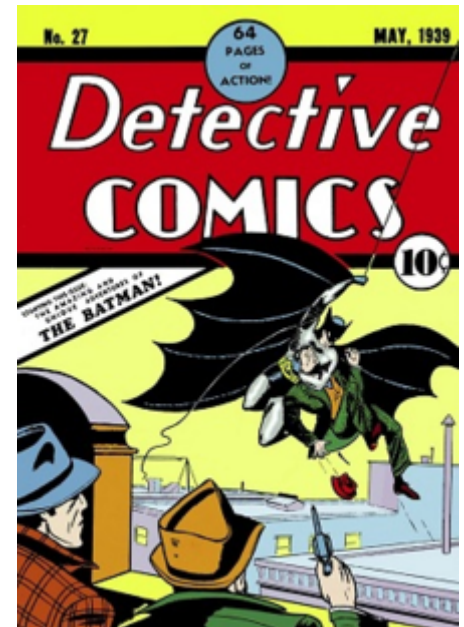
The first Batman story, "The Case of the Chemical Syndicate", was published in *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939). Finger said, "Batman was originally written in the style of the pulps",<sup>[20]</sup> and this influence was evident with Batman showing little remorse over killing or maiming criminals. Batman proved a hit character, and he received his own solo title in 1940 while continuing to star in *Detective Comics*. By that time, Detective Comics was the top-selling and most influential publisher in the industry; Batman and the company's other major hero, Superman, were the cornerstones of the company's success.<sup>[21]</sup> The two characters were featured side by side as the stars of *World's Finest Comics*, which was originally titled *World's Best Comics* when it debuted in fall 1940. Creators including Jerry Robinson and Dick Sprang also worked on the strips during this period.

Over the course of the first few Batman strips elements were added to the character and the artistic depiction of Batman evolved. Kane noted that within six issues he drew the character's jawline more pronounced, and lengthened the ears on the costume. "About a year later he was almost the full figure, my mature Batman", Kane said.<sup>[22]</sup>

Batman's characteristic utility belt was introduced in *Detective Comics* #29 (July 1939), followed by the boomerang-like batarang and the first bat-themed vehicle, the Batplane, in #31 (Sept. 1939). The character's origin was revealed in #33 (Nov. 1939), unfolding in a two-page story that establishes the brooding persona of Batman, a character driven by the death of his parents. Written by Finger, it depicts a young Bruce Wayne witnessing his parents' murder at the hands of a mugger. Days later, at their grave, the child vows that "by the spirits of my parents [I will] avenge their deaths by spending the rest of my life warring on all criminals".<sup>[23][24][25]</sup>

The early, pulp-inflected portrayal of Batman started to soften in *Detective Comics* #38 (April 1940) with the introduction of Robin, Batman's junior counterpart.<sup>[26]</sup> Robin was introduced, based on Finger's suggestion, because Batman needed a "Watson" with whom Batman could talk.<sup>[27]</sup> Sales nearly doubled, despite Kane's preference for a solo Batman, and it sparked a proliferation of "kid sidekicks".<sup>[28]</sup> The first issue of the solo spin-off series *Batman* was notable not only for introducing two of his most persistent enemies, the Joker and Catwoman, but for a pre-Robin inventory story, originally meant for *Detective Comics* #38, in which Batman shoots some monstrous giants to death.<sup>[29][30]</sup> That story prompted editor Whitney Ellsworth to decree that the character could no longer kill or use a gun.<sup>[31]</sup>

By 1942, the writers and artists behind the Batman comics had established most of the basic elements of the Batman mythos.<sup>[32]</sup> In the years following World War II, DC Comics "adopted a postwar editorial direction that increasingly de-emphasized social commentary in favor of lighthearted juvenile fantasy". The impact of this editorial approach was evident in *Batman* comics of the postwar period; removed from the "bleak and menacing world" of the strips of the early 1940s, Batman was instead portrayed as a respectable citizen and paternal figure that inhabited a "bright and colorful" environment.<sup>[33]</sup>



Batman made his debut in *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939), cover art by Bob Kane

## Silver and Bronze Ages

### 1950s and early 1960s

Batman was one of the few superhero characters to be continuously published as interest in the genre waned during the 1950s. In the story "The Mightiest Team in the World" in *Superman* #76 (June 1952), Batman teams up with Superman for the first time and the pair discover each other's secret identity.<sup>[34]</sup> Following the success of this story, *World's Finest Comics* was revamped so it featured stories starring both heroes together, instead of the separate Batman and Superman features that had been running before.<sup>[35]</sup> The team-up of the characters was "a financial success in an era when those were few and far between";<sup>[36]</sup> this series of stories ran until the book's cancellation in 1986.

Batman comics were among those criticized when the comic book industry came under scrutiny with the publication of psychologist Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954. Wertham's thesis was that children imitated crimes committed in comic books, and that these works corrupted the morals of the youth. Wertham criticized Batman comics for their supposed homosexual overtones and argued that Batman and Robin were portrayed as lovers.<sup>[37]</sup> Wertham's criticisms raised a public outcry during the 1950s, eventually leading to the establishment of the Comics Code Authority, a code that is no longer in use by the comic book industry. The tendency towards a "sunnier Batman" in the postwar years intensified after the introduction of the Comics Code.<sup>[38]</sup> Scholars have suggested that the characters of Batwoman (in 1956) and the pre-Barbara Gordon Bat-Girl (in 1961) were introduced in part to refute the allegation that Batman and Robin were gay, and the stories took on a campier, lighter feel.<sup>[39]</sup>

In the late 1950s, Batman stories gradually became more science fiction-oriented, an attempt at mimicking the success of other DC characters that had dabbled in the genre.<sup>[40]</sup> New characters such as Batwoman, the original Bat-Girl, Ace the Bat-Hound, and Bat-Mite were introduced. Batman's adventures often involved odd transformations or bizarre space aliens. In 1960, Batman debuted as a member of the Justice League of America in *The Brave and the Bold* #28 (Feb. 1960), and went on to appear in several Justice League comic book series starting later that same year.

### "New Look" Batman and camp

By 1964, sales of Batman titles had fallen drastically. Bob Kane noted that, as a result, DC was "planning to kill Batman off altogether".<sup>[41]</sup> In response to this, editor Julius Schwartz was assigned to the Batman titles. He presided over drastic changes, beginning with 1964's *Detective Comics* #327 (May 1964), which was cover-billed as the "New Look". Schwartz introduced changes designed to make Batman more contemporary, and to return him to more detective-oriented stories. He brought in artist Carmine Infantino to help overhaul the character. The Batmobile was redesigned, and Batman's costume was modified to incorporate a yellow ellipse behind the bat-insignia. The space aliens, time travel, and characters of the 1950s such as Batwoman, Ace the Bat-Hound, and Bat-Mite were retired. Bruce Wayne's butler Alfred was killed off (though his death was quickly reversed) while a new female relative for the Wayne family, Aunt Harriet Cooper, came to live with Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson.<sup>[42]</sup>

The debut of the *Batman* television series in 1966 had a profound influence on the character. The success of the series increased sales throughout the comic book industry, and *Batman* reached a circulation of close to 900,000 copies.<sup>[43]</sup> Elements such as the character of Batgirl and the show's campy nature were introduced into the comics; the series also initiated the return of Alfred. Although both the comics and TV show were successful for a time, the camp approach eventually wore thin and the show was canceled in 1968. In the aftermath, the Batman comics themselves lost popularity once again. As Julius Schwartz noted, "When the television show was a success, I was asked to be campy, and of course when the show faded, so did the comic books."<sup>[44]</sup>

Starting in 1969, writer Dennis O'Neil and artist Neal Adams made a deliberate effort to distance Batman from the campy portrayal of the 1960s TV series and to return the character to his roots as a "grim avenger of the night".<sup>[45]</sup> O'Neil said his idea was "simply to take it back to where it started. I went to the DC library and read some of the early stories. I tried to get a sense of what Kane and Finger were after."<sup>[46]</sup>

O'Neil and Adams first collaborated on the story "The Secret of the Waiting Graves" in *Detective Comics* #395 (Jan. 1970). Few stories were true collaborations between O'Neil, Adams, Schwartz, and inker Dick Giordano, and in actuality these men were mixed and matched with various other creators during the 1970s; nevertheless the influence of their work was "tremendous".<sup>[47]</sup> Giordano said: "We went back to a grimmer, darker Batman, and I think that's why these stories did so well ..."<sup>[48]</sup> While the work of O'Neil and Adams was popular with fans, the acclaim did little to improve declining sales; the same held true with a similarly acclaimed run by writer Steve Englehart and penciler Marshall Rogers in *Detective Comics* #471–476 (Aug. 1977 – April 1978), which went on to influence the 1989 movie *Batman* and be adapted for *Batman: The Animated Series*, which debuted in 1992.<sup>[49]</sup> Regardless, circulation continued to drop through the 1970s and 1980s, hitting an all-time low in 1985.<sup>[50]</sup>

## Modern Age

### *The Dark Knight Returns*

Frank Miller's limited series *The Dark Knight Returns* (February–June 1986) returned the character to his darker roots, both in atmosphere and tone. The comic book, which tells the story of a 55-year-old Batman coming out of retirement in a possible future, reinvigorated interest in the character. *The Dark Knight Returns* was a financial success and has since become one of the medium's most noted touchstones.<sup>[51]</sup> The series also sparked a major resurgence in the character's popularity.<sup>[52]</sup>

That year Dennis O'Neil took over as editor of the Batman titles and set the template for the portrayal of Batman following DC's status quo-altering 12-issue miniseries *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. O'Neil operated under the assumption that he was hired to revamp the character and as a result tried to instill a different tone in the books than had gone before.<sup>[53]</sup> One outcome of this new approach was the "Year One" storyline in *Batman* #404–407 (Feb.–May 1987), in which Frank Miller and artist David Mazzucchelli redefined the character's origins. Writer Alan Moore and artist Brian Bolland continued this dark trend with 1988's 48-page one-shot issue *Batman: The Killing Joke*, in which the Joker, attempting to drive Commissioner Gordon insane, cripples Gordon's daughter Barbara, and then kidnaps and tortures the commissioner, physically and psychologically.

The Batman comics garnered major attention in 1988 when DC Comics created a 900 number for readers to call to vote on whether Jason Todd, the second Robin, lived or died. Voters decided in favor of Jason's death by a narrow margin of 28 votes (see *Batman: A Death in the Family*).<sup>[54]</sup>

### *Knightfall*

The 1993 "Knightfall" story arc introduced a new villain, Bane, who critically injures Batman after pushing him to the limits of his endurance. Jean-Paul Valley, known as Azrael, is called upon to wear the Batsuit during Bruce Wayne's convalescence. Writers Doug Moench, Chuck Dixon, and Alan Grant worked on the Batman titles during "Knightfall", and would also contribute to other Batman crossovers throughout the 1990s. 1998's "Cataclysm" storyline served as the precursor to 1999's "No Man's Land", a year-long storyline that ran through all the Batman-related titles dealing with the effects of an earthquake-ravaged Gotham City. At the conclusion of "No Man's Land", O'Neil stepped down as editor and was replaced by Bob Schreck.<sup>[55]</sup>

Another writer who rose to prominence on the Batman comic series, was Jeph Loeb. Along with longtime collaborator Tim Sale, they wrote two miniseries (*The Long Halloween* and *Dark Victory*) that pit an early-in-his-career version of Batman against his entire rogues gallery (including Two-Face, whose origin was re-envisioned by Loeb) while dealing with various mysteries involving serial killers Holiday and the Hangman. In 2003, Loeb teamed with artist Jim Lee to work on another mystery arc: "Batman: Hush" for the main Batman book. The 12-issue storyline has Batman and Catwoman teaming up against Batman's entire rogues gallery, including an apparently resurrected Jason Todd, while seeking to find the identity of the mysterious supervillain Hush.<sup>[56]</sup> While the character of Hush failed to catch on with readers, the arc was a sales success for DC. The series became #1 on the Diamond Comic Distributors sales chart for the first time since *Batman* #500 (Oct. 1993) and Todd's appearance laid the groundwork for writer Judd Winick's subsequent run as writer on *Batman*, with another multi-issue arc, "Under the Hood", which ran from *Batman* #637–650 (April 2005 – April 2006).

## 21st century

### *All Star Batman & Robin the Boy Wonder*

In 2005, DC launched *All Star Batman & Robin the Boy Wonder*, a stand-alone comic book miniseries set outside the main DC Universe continuity. Written by Frank Miller and drawn by Jim Lee, the series was a commercial success for DC Comics,<sup>[57][58]</sup> although it was widely panned by critics for its writing and strong depictions of violence.<sup>[59][60]</sup>

Starting in 2006, Grant Morrison and Paul Dini were the regular writers of *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, with Morrison reincorporating controversial elements of Batman lore. Most notably of these elements were the science fiction-themed storylines of the 1950s Batman comics, which Morrison revised as hallucinations Batman suffered under the influence of various mind-bending gases and extensive sensory deprivation training. Morrison's run climaxed with "Batman R.I.P.", which brought Batman up against the villainous "Black Glove" organization, which sought to drive Batman into madness. "Batman R.I.P." segued into *Final Crisis* (also written by Morrison), which saw the apparent death of Batman at the hands of Darkseid. In the 2009 miniseries *Batman: Battle for the Cowl*, Wayne's former protégé Dick Grayson becomes the new Batman, and Wayne's son Damian becomes the new Robin.<sup>[61][62]</sup> In June 2009, Judd Winick returned to writing *Batman*, while Grant Morrison was given his own series, titled *Batman and Robin*.<sup>[63]</sup>

In 2010, the storyline *Batman: The Return of Bruce Wayne* saw Bruce travel through history, eventually returning to the present day. Although he reclaimed the mantle of Batman, he also allowed Grayson to continue being Batman as well. Bruce decided to take his crime-fighting cause globally, which is the central focus of *Batman Incorporated*. DC Comics would later announce that Grayson would be the main character in *Batman*, *Detective Comics*, and *Batman and Robin*, while Wayne would be the main character in *Batman Incorporated*. Also, Bruce appeared in another ongoing series, *Batman: The Dark Knight*.

### *The New 52*

In September 2011, DC Comics' entire line of superhero comic books, including its *Batman* franchise, were cancelled and relaunched with new #1 issues as part of *The New 52* reboot. Bruce Wayne is the only character to be identified as Batman and is featured in *Batman*, *Detective Comics*, *Batman and Robin*, and *Batman: The Dark Knight*. Dick Grayson returns to the mantle of Nightwing and appears in his own ongoing series. While many characters have their histories significantly altered to attract new readers, Batman's history remains mostly intact. *Batman Incorporated* was relaunched in 2012–2013 to complete the "Leviathan" storyline.



With the beginning of *The New 52*, Scott Snyder was the writer of the *Batman* title. His first major story arc was "Night of the Owls", where Batman confronts the Court of Owls, a secret society that has controlled Gotham for centuries. The second story arc was "Death of the Family", where the Joker returns to Gotham and simultaneously attacks each member of the Batman family. The third story arc was "Batman: Zero Year", which redefined Batman's origin in *The New 52*. It followed *Batman* #0, published in June 2012, which explored the character's early years. The final storyline before the Convergence (2015) storyline was "Endgame", depicting the supposed final battle between Batman and the Joker when he unleashes the deadly Endgame virus onto Gotham City. The storyline ends with Batman and the Joker's supposed deaths.

Starting with *Batman* (vol. 2) #41, Commissioner James Gordon takes over Bruce's mantle as a new, state-sanctioned, robotic-Batman, debuting in the Free Comic Book Day special comic *Divergence*. However, Bruce Wayne is soon revealed to be alive, albeit now suffering almost total amnesia of his life as Batman and only remembering his life as Bruce Wayne through what he has learned from Alfred. Bruce Wayne finds happiness and proposes to his girlfriend, Julie Madison, but Mr. Bloom heavily injures Jim Gordon and takes control of Gotham City and threatens to destroy the city by energizing a particle reactor to create a "strange star" to swallow the city. Bruce Wayne discovers the truth that he was Batman and after talking to a stranger who smiles a lot (it is heavily implied that this is the amnesic Joker) he forces Alfred to implant his memories as Batman, but at the cost of his memories as the reborn Bruce Wayne. He returns and helps Jim Gordon defeat Mr. Bloom and shut down the reactor. Gordon gets his job back as the commissioner, and the government Batman project is shut down.<sup>[64]</sup>

In 2015, DC Comics released *The Dark Knight III: The Master Race*, the sequel to Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Dark Knight Strikes Again*.<sup>[65]</sup>

## ***DC Rebirth***

In June 2016, the DC Rebirth event relaunched DC Comics' entire line of comic book titles. *Batman* was rebooted as starting with a one-shot issue entitled *Batman: Rebirth* #1 (Aug. 2016). The series then began shipping twice-monthly as a third volume, starting with *Batman* (vol. 3) #1 (Aug. 2016). The third volume of *Batman* was written by Tom King, and artwork was provided by David Finch and Mikel Janín. The *Batman* series introduced two vigilantes, Gotham and Gotham Girl. *Detective Comics* resumed its original numbering system starting with June 2016's #934, and the *New 52* series was labeled as volume 2, with issues numbering from #1-52.<sup>[66]</sup> Similarly with the *Batman* title, the *New 52* issues were labeled as volume 2 and encompassed issues #1-52. Writer James Tynion IV and artists Eddy Barrows and Alvaro Martinez worked on *Detective Comics* #934, and the series initially featured a team consisting of Tim Drake, Stephanie Brown, Cassandra Cain, and Clayface, led by Batman and Batwoman.

DC Comics ended the *DC Rebirth* branding in December 2017, opting to include everything under a larger *DC Universe* banner and naming. The continuity established by *DC Rebirth* continues across DC's comic book titles, including volume 1 of *Detective Comics* and volume 3 of *Batman*.<sup>[67][68]</sup>

After the conclusion of *Batman* (vol. 3) #85<sup>[69]</sup> a new creative team consisting of James Tynion IV with art by Tony S. Daniel and Danny Miki replaced Tom King, David Finch and Mikel Janín.

## **Characterization**

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### **Bruce Wayne**

Batman's secret identity is Bruce Wayne, a wealthy American industrialist. As a child, Bruce witnessed the murder of his parents, Dr. Thomas Wayne and Martha Wayne, which ultimately led him to craft the Batman persona and seek justice against criminals. He resides on the outskirts of Gotham City in his personal residence, Wayne Manor. Wayne averts suspicion by acting the part of a superficial playboy idly living off his family's fortune and the profits of Wayne Enterprises, his inherited conglomerate.<sup>[70][71]</sup> He supports philanthropic causes through his nonprofit Wayne Foundation, but is more widely known as a celebrity socialite.<sup>[72]</sup> In public, he frequently appears in the company of high-status women, which encourages tabloid gossip. Although Bruce Wayne leads an active romantic life, his vigilante activities as Batman account for most of his time.<sup>[73]</sup>



DC Comics concept art of Bruce Wayne

Various modern stories have portrayed the extravagant, playboy image of Bruce Wayne as a facade.<sup>[74]</sup> This is in contrast to the Post-Crisis Superman, whose Clark Kent persona is the true identity, while the Superman persona is the facade.<sup>[75][76]</sup> In *Batman Unmasked*, a television documentary about the psychology of the character, behavioral scientist Benjamin Karney notes that Batman's personality is driven by Bruce Wayne's inherent humanity; that "Batman, for all its benefits and for all of the time Bruce Wayne devotes to it, is ultimately a tool for Bruce Wayne's efforts to make the world better". Bruce Wayne's principles include the desire to prevent future harm and a vow not to kill. Bruce Wayne believes that our actions define us, we fail for a reason and anything is possible.<sup>[77]</sup>

Writers of Batman and Superman stories have often compared and contrasted the two. Interpretations vary depending on the writer, the story, and the timing. Grant Morrison<sup>[78]</sup> notes that both heroes "believe in the same kind of things" despite the day/night contrast their heroic roles display. He notes an equally stark contrast in their real identities. Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent belong to different social classes: "Bruce has a butler, Clark has a boss." T. James Musler's book *Unleashing the Superhero in Us All* explores the extent to which Bruce Wayne's vast personal wealth is important in his life story, and the crucial role it plays in his efforts as Batman.<sup>[79]</sup>

Will Brooker notes in his book *Batman Unmasked* that "the confirmation of the Batman's identity lies with the young audience ...he doesn't have to be Bruce Wayne; he just needs the suit and gadgets, the abilities, and most importantly the morality, the humanity. There's just a sense about him: 'they trust him ...and they're never wrong.'<sup>[80]</sup>

## Personality

Batman's primary character traits can be summarized as "*wealth; physical prowess; deductive abilities and obsession*".<sup>[81]</sup> The details and tone of Batman comic books have varied over the years due to different creative teams. Dennis O'Neil noted that character consistency was not a major concern during early editorial regimes: "Julie Schwartz did a Batman in *Batman* and *Detective* and Murray Boltinoff did a Batman in the *Brave and the Bold* and apart from the costume they bore very little resemblance to each other. Julie and Murray did not want to coordinate their efforts, nor were they asked to do so. Continuity was not important in those days."<sup>[82]</sup>

**"I must have a disguise. Criminals are a superstitious cowardly lot. So my disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts. I must be a creature of the night, black, terrible...a...a...a bat!"**

– Bruce Wayne – *Detective Comics* #33 (November 1939)

The driving force behind Bruce Wayne's character is his parents' murder and their absence. Bob Kane and Bill Finger discussed Batman's background and decided that "there's nothing more traumatic than having your parents murdered before your eyes".<sup>[83]</sup> Despite his trauma, he sets his mind on studying to become a scientist<sup>[84][85]</sup> and to train his body into physical perfection<sup>[84][85]</sup> to fight crime in Gotham City as Batman, an inspired idea from Wayne's insight into the criminal mind.<sup>[84][85]</sup>

Another of Batman's characterizations is that of a vigilante; in order to stop evil that started with the death of his parents, he must sometimes break the law himself. Although manifested differently by being re-told by different artists, it is nevertheless that the details and the prime components of Batman's origin have never varied at all in the comic books, the "reiteration of the basic origin events holds together otherwise divergent expressions".<sup>[86]</sup> The origin is the source of the character's traits and attributes, which play out in many of the character's adventures.<sup>[81]</sup> He also speaks over 40 different languages.<sup>[87]</sup>

Batman is often treated as a vigilante by other characters in his stories. Frank Miller views the character as "a dionysian figure, a force for anarchy that imposes an individual order".<sup>[88]</sup> Dressed as a bat, Batman deliberately cultivates a frightening persona in order to aid him in crime-fighting,<sup>[89]</sup> a fear that originates from the criminals' own guilty conscience.<sup>[90]</sup> Miller is often credited with reintroducing anti-heroic traits into Batman's characterization,<sup>[91]</sup> such as his brooding personality, willingness to use violence and torture, and increasingly alienated behavior. Batman, shortly a year after his debut and the introduction of Robin, was changed in 1940 after DC editor Whitney Ellsworth felt the character would be tainted by his lethal methods and DC established their own ethical code, subsequently he was retconned as having a stringent moral code.<sup>[31][92]</sup> Miller's Batman was closer to the original pre-Robin version, who was willing to kill criminals if necessary.<sup>[93]</sup>

## Others

On several occasions former Robin Dick Grayson has served as Batman; most notably in 2009 while Wayne was believed dead, and served as a second Batman even after Wayne returned in 2010.<sup>[56]</sup> As part of DC's 2011 continuity relaunch, Grayson returned to being Nightwing following the *Flashpoint* crossover event.

In an interview with IGN, Morrison detailed that having Dick Grayson as Batman and Damian Wayne as Robin represented a "reverse" of the normal dynamic between Batman and Robin, with, "a more light-hearted and spontaneous Batman and a scowling, badass Robin". Morrison explained his intentions for the new characterization of Batman: "Dick Grayson is kind of this consummate superhero. The guy has been Batman's partner since he was a kid, he's led the Teen Titans, and he's trained with everybody in the DC Universe. So he's a very different kind of Batman. He's a lot easier; He's a lot looser and more relaxed."<sup>[61]</sup>

Over the years, there have been numerous others to assume the name of Batman, or to officially take over for Bruce during his leaves of absence. Jean-Paul Valley, also known as Azrael, assumed the cowl after the events of the *Knightfall* saga.<sup>[56]</sup> James Gordon donned a mecha-suit after the events of *Batman: Endgame*, and served as Batman in 2015 and 2016.

Additionally, members of the group Batman Incorporated, Bruce Wayne's experiment at franchising his brand of vigilantism, have at times stood in as the official Batman in cities around the world.<sup>[56]</sup> Various others have also taken up the role of Batman in stories set in alternative universes and possible futures, including, among them, various former proteges of Bruce Wayne.

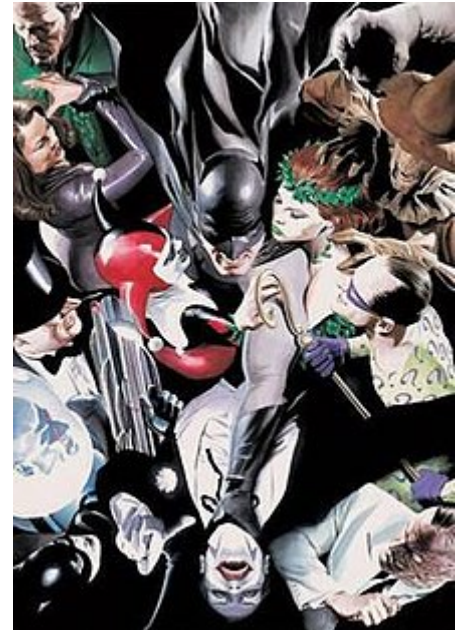
## Supporting characters

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Batman's interactions with both villains and cohorts have, over time, developed a strong supporting cast of characters.<sup>[81]</sup>

## Enemies

Batman faces a variety of foes ranging from common criminals to outlandish supervillains. Many of them mirror aspects of the Batman's character and development, often having tragic origin stories that lead them to a life of crime.<sup>[94]</sup> These foes are commonly referred to as Batman's *rogues gallery*. Batman's "most implacable foe" is the Joker, a homicidal maniac with a clown-like appearance. The Joker is considered by critics to be his perfect adversary, since he is the antithesis of Batman in personality and appearance; the Joker has a maniacal demeanor with a colorful appearance, while Batman has a serious and resolute demeanor with a dark appearance. As a "personification of the irrational", the Joker represents "everything Batman [opposes]".<sup>[32]</sup> Other long-time recurring foes that are part of Batman's rogues gallery include Catwoman (a cat burglar anti-heroine who is an occasional ally and romantic interest), the Penguin, Ra's al Ghul, Two-Face, the Riddler, the Scarecrow, Mr. Freeze, Poison Ivy, Harley Quinn, Bane, Clayface, and Killer Croc, among others. Many of Batman's adversaries are often psychiatric patients at Arkham Asylum.



Batman surrounded by his enemies, art by Alex Ross

## Allies

### Alfred

Batman's butler, Alfred Pennyworth, first appeared in *Batman* #16 (1943). He serves as Bruce Wayne's loyal father figure and is one of the few persons to know his secret identity. Alfred raised Bruce after his parents' death and knows him on a very personal level. He is sometimes portrayed as a sidekick to Batman and the only other resident of Wayne Manor aside from Bruce. The character "[lends] a homely touch to Batman's environs and [is] ever ready to provide a steady and reassuring hand" to the hero and his sidekick.<sup>[94]</sup>

### "Batman family"

The informal name "Batman family" is used for a group of characters closely allied with Batman, generally masked vigilantes who either have been trained by Batman or operate in Gotham City with his tacit approval. They include: Barbara Gordon, Commissioner Gordon's daughter, who has fought crime under the vigilante identity of Batgirl and, during a period in which she was confined to a wheelchair due to a gunshot wound inflicted by the Joker, the computer hacker the Oracle; Helena Bertinelli, the sole surviving member of a mob family turned vigilante, who has worked with Batman on occasion, primarily as the Huntress and as Batgirl for a brief stint; Cassandra Cain, the daughter of professional assassins David Cain, and Lady Shiva, who succeeded Bertinelli as Batgirl.

### Civilians

Lucius Fox, a technology specialist and Bruce Wayne's business manager who is well aware of his employer's clandestine vigilante activities; Dr. Leslie Thompkins, a family friend who like Alfred became a surrogate parental figure to Bruce Wayne after the deaths of his parents, and is also aware of his secret identity; Vicki Vale, an investigative journalist who often reports on Batman's activities for the *Gotham Gazette*; Ace the Bat-Hound, Batman's canine partner who was mainly active in the 1950s and 1960s;<sup>[95]</sup> and Bat-Mite, an extra-dimensional imp mostly active in the 1960s who idolizes Batman.<sup>[95]</sup>

### GCPD

As Batman's ally in the Gotham City police, Commissioner James "Jim" Gordon debuted along with Batman in *Detective Comics* #27 and has been a consistent presence ever since. As a crime-fighting everyman, he shares Batman's goals while offering, much as the character of Dr. Watson does in Sherlock Holmes stories, a normal person's perspective on the work of Batman's extraordinary genius.

## Justice League

Batman is at times a member of superhero teams such as the Justice League of America and the Outsiders. Batman has often been paired in adventures with his Justice League teammate Superman, notably as the co-stars of *World's Finest Comics* and Superman/Batman series. In Pre-Crisis continuity, the two are depicted as close friends; however, in current continuity, they are still close friends but an uneasy relationship, with an emphasis on their differing views on crime-fighting and justice. In Superman/Batman #3 (Dec. 2003), Superman observes, "Sometimes, I admit, I think of Bruce as a man in a costume. Then, with some gadget from his utility belt, he reminds me that he has an extraordinarily inventive mind. And how lucky I am to be able to call on him."<sup>[96]</sup>

## Robin

Robin, Batman's vigilante partner, has been a widely recognized supporting character for many years.<sup>[97]</sup> Bill Finger stated that he wanted to include Robin because "Batman didn't have anyone to talk to, and it got a little tiresome always having him thinking."<sup>[98]</sup> The first Robin, Dick Grayson, was introduced in 1940. In the 1970s he finally grew up, went off to college and became the hero Nightwing. A second Robin, Jason Todd, appeared in the 1980s. In the stories he was eventually badly beaten and then killed in an explosion set by the Joker, but was later revived. He used the Joker's old persona, the Red Hood, and became an antihero vigilante with no qualms about using firearms or deadly force. Carrie Kelley, the first female Robin to appear in Batman stories, was the final Robin in the continuity of Frank Miller's graphic novels The Dark Knight Returns and The Dark Knight Strikes Again, fighting alongside an aging Batman in stories set out of the mainstream continuity.



Batman and Robin, art by Jack Burnley

The third Robin in the mainstream comics is Tim Drake, who first appeared in 1989. He went on to star in his own comic series, and currently goes by the Red Robin, a variation on the traditional Robin persona. In the first decade of the new millennium, Stephanie Brown served as the fourth in-universe Robin between stints as her self-made vigilante identity the Spoiler, and later as Batgirl.<sup>[99]</sup> After Brown's apparent death, Drake resumed the role of Robin for a time. The role eventually passed to Damian Wayne, the 10-year-old son of Bruce Wayne and Talia al Ghul, in the late 2000s.<sup>[100]</sup> Damian's tenure as *du jour* Robin ended when the character was killed off in the pages of Batman Incorporated in 2013.<sup>[101]</sup> Batman's next young sidekick is Harper Row, a streetwise young woman who avoids the name Robin but followed the ornithological theme nonetheless; she debuted the codename and identity of the Bluebird in 2014. Unlike the Robins, the Bluebird is willing and permitted to use a gun, albeit non-lethal; her weapon of choice is a modified rifle that fires taser rounds.<sup>[102]</sup> In 2015, a new series began titled We Are...Robin, focused on a group of teenagers using the Robin persona to fight crime in Gotham City.

## Relationships

### Family tree



Helena Wayne is the biological daughter of Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle of an alternate universe established in the early 1960s (Multiverse) where the Golden Age stories took place. Damian Wayne is the biological son of Bruce Wayne and Talia al Ghul,<sup>[61][103][104]</sup> and thus the grandson of Ra's al Ghul. Terry McGinnis and his brother Matt are the biological sons of Bruce Wayne and Mary McGinnis in the DC animated universe, and Terry has taken over the role as Batman when Bruce has become too old to do so.

## Romantic interests

Writers have varied in the approach over the years to the "playboy" aspect of Bruce Wayne's persona. Some writers show his playboy reputation as a manufactured illusion to support his mission as Batman, while others have depicted Bruce Wayne as genuinely enjoying the benefits of being "Gotham's most eligible bachelor". Bruce Wayne has been portrayed as being romantically linked with many women throughout his various incarnations. The most significant relationships occurred with Selina Kyle, who is also Catwoman<sup>[105]</sup> and Talia al Ghul, as both women gave birth to his biological offsprings, Helena Wayne and Damian Wayne, respectively.

Batman's first romantic interest was Julie Madison in *Detective Comics* #31 (Sept. 1939); however, their romance was short-lived. Some of Batman's romantic interests have been women with a respected status in society, such as Julie Madison, Vicki Vale, and Silver St. Cloud. Batman has also been romantically involved with allies, such as Kathy Kane (Batwoman), Sasha Bordeaux, and Wonder Woman, and with villains, such as Selina Kyle (Catwoman), Jezebel Jet, Pamela Isley (Poison Ivy), and Talia al Ghul.

## Catwoman

While most of Batman's romantic relationships tend to be short in duration, Catwoman has been his most enduring romance throughout the years.<sup>[106]</sup> The attraction between Batman and Catwoman, whose real name is Selina Kyle, is present in nearly every version and medium in which the characters appear, including a love story between their two secret identities as early as in the 1966 film *Batman*. Although Catwoman is typically portrayed as a villain, Batman and Catwoman have worked together in achieving common goals and are usually depicted as having a romantic connection.

In an early 1980s storyline, Selina Kyle and Bruce Wayne develop a relationship, in which the closing panel of the final story shows her referring to Batman as "Bruce". However, a change in the editorial team brought a swift end to that storyline and, apparently, all that transpired during the story arc. Out of costume, Bruce and Selina develop a romantic relationship during *The Long Halloween*. The story shows Selina saving Bruce from Poison Ivy. However, the relationship ends when Bruce rejects her advances twice; once as Bruce and once as Batman. In *Batman: Dark Victory*, he stands her up on two holidays, causing her to leave him for good and to leave Gotham City for a while. When the two meet at an opera many years later, during the events of the 12-issue story arc called "Hush", Bruce comments that the two no longer have a relationship as Bruce and Selina. However, "Hush" sees Batman and Catwoman allied against the entire rogues gallery and rekindling their romantic relationship. In "Hush", Batman reveals his true identity to Catwoman.



Catwoman is Batman's most enduring romance,<sup>[106]</sup> art by Adam Hughes

The Earth-Two Batman, a character from a parallel world, partners with and marries the reformed Earth-Two Selina Kyle, as shown in *Superman Family* #211. They have a daughter named Helena Wayne, who becomes the Huntress. Along with Dick Grayson, the Earth-Two Robin, the Huntress takes the role as Gotham's protector once Bruce Wayne retires to become police commissioner, a position he occupies until he is killed during one final adventure as Batman.



Batman and Catwoman are shown having a sexual encounter on the roof of a building in *Catwoman* (vol. 4) #1 (2011); the same issue implies that the two have an ongoing sexual relationship.<sup>[107]</sup> Following the 2016 *DC Rebirth* continuity reboot, the two once again have a sexual encounter on top of a building in *Batman* (vol. 3) #14 (2017).<sup>[108]</sup>

Following the 2016 *DC Rebirth* continuity reboot, Batman and Catwoman work together in the third volume of *Batman*. The two also have a romantic relationship, in which they are shown having a sexual encounter on a rooftop and sleeping together.<sup>[108][109][110]</sup> Bruce proposes to Selina in *Batman* (vol. 3) #24 (2017),<sup>[111]</sup> and in issue #32, Selina asks Bruce to propose to her again. When he does so, she says, "Yes."<sup>[110]</sup>

*Batman Annual* (vol. 3) #2 (Jan. 2018) centers on a romantic storyline between Batman and Catwoman. Towards the end, the story is flash-forwarded to the future, in which Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle are a married couple in their golden years. Bruce receives a terminal medical diagnosis, and Selina cares for him until his death.<sup>[110]</sup>

## Abilities

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### Skills and training

Batman has no inherent superhuman powers; he relies on "his own scientific knowledge, detective skills, and athletic prowess".<sup>[26]</sup> Batman's inexhaustible wealth gives him access to advanced technologies, and as a proficient scientist, he is able to use and modify these technologies to his advantage. In the stories, Batman is regarded as one of the world's greatest detectives, if not the world's greatest crime solver.<sup>[112]</sup> Batman has been repeatedly described as having a genius-level intellect, being one of the greatest martial artists in the DC Universe, and having peak human physical conditioning.<sup>[113]</sup> As a polymath, his knowledge and expertise in countless disciplines is nearly unparalleled by any other character in the DC Universe.<sup>[114]</sup> He has traveled the world acquiring the skills needed to aid him in his endeavors as Batman. In the *Superman: Doomed* story arc, Superman considers Batman to be one of the most brilliant minds on the planet.<sup>[115]</sup>

Batman has trained extensively in various different fighting styles, making him one of the best hand-to-hand fighters in the DC Universe. He has fully utilized his photographic memory to master a total of 127 different forms of martial arts including, but not limited to, Aikido, boxing, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Capoeira, Eskrima, fencing, Hapkido, Judo, Kalaripayattu, Karate, Kenjutsu, Kenpo, kickboxing, Kobudo, Krav Maga, Muay Thai, Ninjutsu, Pankration, Sambo, Savate, Silat, Taekwondo, wrestling and numerous different styles of Wushu (Kung Fu).<sup>[116]</sup> In terms of his physical condition, Batman is in peak, Olympic-athlete-level condition, easily-able to run-across rooftops in a Parkour-esque fashion. Superman describes Batman as "the most dangerous man on Earth", able to defeat an entire team of superpowered extra-terrestrials by himself in order to rescue his imprisoned teammates in Grant Morrison's first storyline in *JLA*.

Batman is strongly disciplined, and he has the ability to function under great physical pain and resist most forms of telepathy and mind control. He is a master of disguise, multilingual, and an expert in espionage, often gathering information under the identity of a notorious gangster named Matches Malone. Batman is highly skilled in stealth movement and escapology, which allows him to appear and disappear at will and to break free of nearly inescapable deathtraps with little to no harm.

Batman is an expert in interrogation techniques and his intimidating and frightening appearance alone is often all that is needed in getting information from suspects. Despite having the potential to harm his enemies, Batman's most defining characteristic is his strong commitment to justice and his reluctance to take a life. This unyielding moral rectitude has earned him the respect of several heroes in the DC Universe, most notably that of Superman and Wonder Woman.

Among physical and other crime fighting related training, he is also proficient at other types of skills. Some of these include being a licensed pilot (in order to operate the Batplane), as well as being able to operate other types of machinery. In some publications, he underwent some magician training.

## Technology

Batman utilizes a vast arsenal of specialized, high-tech vehicles and gadgets in his war against crime, the designs of which usually share a bat motif. Batman historian Les Daniels credits Gardner Fox with creating the concept of Batman's arsenal with the introduction of the utility belt in *Detective Comics* #29 (July 1939) and the first bat-themed weapons the batarang and the "Batgyro" in *Detective Comics* #31 and 32 (Sept. and Oct. 1939).<sup>[22]</sup>

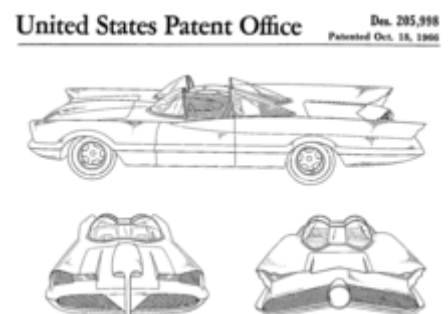
## Personal armor

Batman's body armored costume incorporates the imagery of a bat in order to frighten criminals.<sup>[117]</sup> The details of the Batman costume change repeatedly through various decades, stories, media and artists' interpretations, but the most distinctive elements remain consistent: a scallop-hem cape; a cowl covering most of the face; a pair of bat-like ears; a stylized bat emblem on the chest; and the ever-present utility belt. Finger and Kane originally conceptualized Batman as having a black cape and cowl and grey suit, but conventions in coloring called for black to be highlighted with blue.<sup>[117]</sup> Hence, the costume's colors have appeared in the comics as dark blue and grey;<sup>[117]</sup> as well as black and grey. In the Tim Burton's *Batman* and *Batman Returns* films, Batman has been depicted as completely black with a bat in the middle surrounded by a yellow background. Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* depicted Batman wearing high-tech gear painted completely black with a black bat in the middle. Ben Affleck's Batman in the *DC Extended Universe* films wears a suit grey in color with a black cowl, cape, and bat symbol.

Batman's batsuit aids in his combat against enemies, having the properties of both Kevlar and Nomex. It protects him from gunfire and other significant impacts. His gloves typically feature three scallops that protrude from long, gauntlet-like cuffs, although in his earliest appearances he wore short, plain gloves without the scallops.<sup>[118]</sup> The overall look of the character, particularly the length of the cowl's ears and of the cape, varies greatly depending on the artist. Dennis O'Neil said, "We now say that Batman has two hundred suits hanging in the Batcave so they don't have to look the same ...Everybody loves to draw Batman, and everybody wants to put their own spin on it."<sup>[119]</sup>

## Batmobile

Batman's primary vehicle is the Batmobile, which is usually depicted as an imposing black car, often with tailfins that suggest a bat's wings. Batman also has an aircraft called the Batplane (later called the "Batwing"), along with various other means of transportation. In proper practice, the "bat" prefix (as in Batmobile or batarang) is rarely used by Batman himself when referring to his equipment, particularly after some portrayals (primarily the 1960s *Batman* live-action television show and the *Super Friends* animated series) stretched the practice to campy proportions. For example, the 1960s television show depicted a Batboat, Bat-Sub, and Batcycle, among other bat-themed vehicles. The 1960s television series Batman has an arsenal that includes such "bat-" names as the Bat-computer, Bat-scanner, bat-radar, bat-cuffs, bat-pontoons, bat-drinking water dispenser, bat-camera with polarized bat-filter, bat-shark repellent bat-spray, and Bat-rope. The storyline "A Death in the Family" suggests that given Batman's grim nature, he is unlikely to have adopted the "bat" prefix on his own. In *The Dark Knight Returns*, Batman tells Carrie Kelley that the original



The 1966 television Batmobile, built by George Barris from a Lincoln Futura concept car

Robin came up with the name "Batmobile" when he was young, since that is what a kid would call Batman's vehicle. The Batmobile was redesigned in 2011 when DC Comics relaunched its entire line of comic books, with the Batmobile being given heavier armor and new aesthetics.

## Utility belt

Batman keeps most of his field equipment in his utility belt. Over the years it has shown to contain an assortment of crime-fighting tools, weapons, and investigative and technological instruments. Different versions of the belt have these items stored in compartments, often as pouches or hard cylinders attached evenly around it. Batman is often depicted as carrying a projectile which shoots a retractable grappling hook attached to a cable. This allows him to attach to distant objects, be propelled into the air, and thus swing from the rooftops of Gotham City. An exception to the range of Batman's equipment are guns, which he refuses to use on principle, since a gun was used in his parents' murder.

## Bat-Signal

When Batman is needed, the Gotham City police activate a searchlight with a bat-shaped insignia over the lens called the Bat-Signal, which shines into the night sky, creating a bat-symbol on a passing cloud which can be seen from any point in Gotham. The origin of the signal varies, depending on the continuity and medium.

In various incarnations, most notably the 1960s *Batman* TV series, Commissioner Gordon also has a dedicated phone line, dubbed the Bat-Phone, connected to a bright red telephone (in the TV series) which sits on a wooden base and has a transparent top. The line connects directly to Batman's residence, Wayne Manor, specifically both to a similar phone sitting on the desk in Bruce Wayne's study and the extension phone in the Batcave.

## Batcave

The Batcave is Batman's secret headquarters, consisting of a series of caves beneath his mansion, Wayne Manor. As his command center, the Batcave serves multiple purposes; supercomputer, surveillance, redundant power-generators, forensics lab, medical infirmary, private study, training dojo, fabrication workshop, arsenal, hangar and garage. It houses the vehicles and equipment Batman uses in his campaign to fight crime. It is also a trophy room and storage facility for Batman's unique memorabilia collected over the years from various cases he has worked on. In both the comic book *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #45 and the 2005 film *Batman Begins*, the cave is said to have been part of the Underground Railroad.

# Fictional character biography

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Batman's history has undergone many retroactive continuity revisions, both minor and major. Elements of the character's history have varied greatly. Scholars William Uricchio and Roberta E. Pearson noted in the early 1990s, "Unlike some fictional characters, the Batman has no primary urtext set in a specific period, but has rather existed in a plethora of equally valid texts constantly appearing over more than five decades."<sup>[120]</sup>

## 20th century

### Origin

The central fixed event in the Batman stories is the character's origin story.<sup>[81]</sup> As a young boy, Bruce Wayne was horrified and traumatized when he watched his parents, the physician Dr. Thomas Wayne and his wife Martha, murdered with a gun by a mugger named Joe Chill. Batman refuses to utilize any sort of gun on the principle that a gun was used to murder his parents. This event drove him to train his body to its peak

condition and fight crime in Gotham City as Batman. Pearson and Uricchio also noted beyond the origin story and such events as the introduction of Robin, "Until recently, the fixed and accruing and hence, canonized, events have been few in number",<sup>[81]</sup> a situation altered by an increased effort by later Batman editors such as Dennis O'Neil to ensure consistency and continuity between stories.<sup>[121]</sup>

## Golden Age

In Batman's first appearance in *Detective Comics* #27, he is already operating as a crime-fighter.<sup>[122]</sup> Batman's origin is first presented in *Detective Comics* #33 (Nov. 1939) and is later expanded upon in *Batman* #47. As these comics state, Bruce Wayne is born to Dr. Thomas Wayne and his wife Martha, two very wealthy and charitable Gotham City socialites. Bruce is brought up in Wayne Manor, and leads a happy and privileged existence until the age of 8, when his parents are killed by a small-time criminal named Joe Chill while on their way home from a movie theater. That night, Bruce Wayne swears an oath to spend his life fighting crime. He engages in intense intellectual and physical training; however, he realizes that these skills alone would not be enough. "Criminals are a superstitious cowardly lot", Wayne remarks, "so my disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts. I must be a creature of the night, black, terrible ..." As if responding to his desires, a bat suddenly flies through the window, inspiring Bruce to craft the Batman persona.<sup>[123]</sup>



Thomas and Martha Wayne are shot by Joe Chill in *Detective Comics* #33 (Nov. 1939), art by Bob Kane

In early strips, Batman's career as a vigilante earns him the ire of the police. During this period, Bruce Wayne has a fiancé named Julie Madison.<sup>[124]</sup> In *Detective Comics* #38, Wayne takes in an orphaned circus acrobat, Dick Grayson, who becomes his vigilante partner, Robin. Batman also becomes a founding member of the Justice Society of America,<sup>[125]</sup> although he, like Superman, is an honorary member,<sup>[126]</sup> and thus only participates occasionally. Batman's relationship with the law thaws quickly, and he is made an honorary member of Gotham City's police department.<sup>[127]</sup> During this time, Alfred Pennyworth arrives at Wayne Manor, and after deducing the Dynamic Duo's secret identities, joins their service as their butler.<sup>[128]</sup>

## Silver Age

The Silver Age of Comic Books in DC Comics is sometimes held to have begun in 1956 when the publisher introduced Barry Allen as a new, updated version of the Flash. Batman is not significantly changed by the late 1950s for the continuity which would be later referred to as Earth-One. The lighter tone Batman had taken in the period between the Golden and Silver Ages led to the stories of the late 1950s and early 1960s that often feature many science-fiction elements, and Batman is not significantly updated in the manner of other characters until *Detective Comics* #327 (May 1964), in which Batman reverts to his detective roots, with most science-fiction elements jettisoned from the series.

After the introduction of DC Comics' Multiverse in the 1960s, DC established that stories from the Golden Age star the Earth-Two Batman, a character from a parallel world. This version of Batman partners with and marries the reformed Earth-Two Catwoman (Selina Kyle). The two have a daughter, Helena Wayne, who becomes the Huntress. She assumes the position as Gotham's protector along with Dick Grayson, the Earth-Two Robin, once Bruce Wayne retires to become police commissioner. Wayne holds the position of police commissioner until he is killed during one final adventure as Batman. Batman titles, however, often ignored that a distinction had been made between the pre-revamp and post-revamp Batmen (since unlike the Flash or Green Lantern, Batman comics had been published without interruption through the 1950s) and would occasionally make reference to stories from the Golden Age.<sup>[129]</sup> Nevertheless, details of Batman's history were altered or expanded upon through the decades. Additions include meetings with a future Superman during his youth, his upbringing by his uncle Philip Wayne (introduced in *Batman* #208 (Feb. 1969)) after his

parents' death, and appearances of his father and himself as prototypical versions of Batman and Robin, respectively.<sup>[130][131]</sup> In 1980, then-editor Paul Levitz commissioned the *Untold Legend of the Batman* miniseries to thoroughly chronicle Batman's origin and history.

Batman meets and regularly works with other heroes during the Silver Age, most notably Superman, whom he began regularly working alongside in a series of team-ups in *World's Finest Comics*, starting in 1954 and continuing through the series' cancellation in 1986. Batman and Superman are usually depicted as close friends. As a founding member of the Justice League of America, Batman appears in its first story, in 1960's *The Brave and the Bold* #28. In the 1970s and 1980s, *The Brave and the Bold* became a Batman title, in which Batman teams up with a different DC Universe superhero each month.

## Bronze Age

In 1969, Dick Grayson attends college as part of DC Comics' effort to revise the Batman comics. Additionally, Batman also moves from his mansion, Wayne Manor into a penthouse apartment atop the Wayne Foundation building in downtown Gotham City, in order to be closer to Gotham City's crime. In 1974's "Night of the Stalker" storyline, a diploma on the wall reveals Bruce Wayne as a graduate of Yale Law School.<sup>[132]</sup> Batman spends the 1970s and early 1980s mainly working solo, with occasional team-ups with Robin and/or Batgirl. Batman's adventures also become somewhat darker and more grim during this period, depicting increasingly violent crimes, including the first appearance (since the early Golden Age) of the Joker as a homicidal psychopath, and the arrival of Ra's al Ghul, a centuries-old terrorist who knows Batman's secret identity. In the 1980s, Dick Grayson becomes Nightwing.<sup>[133]</sup>

In the final issue of *The Brave and the Bold* in 1983, Batman quits the Justice League and forms a new group called the Outsiders. He serves as the team's leader until *Batman and the Outsiders* #32 (1986) and the comic subsequently changed its title.

## Modern Age

After the 12-issue miniseries *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, DC Comics retconned the histories of some major characters in an attempt at updating them for contemporary audiences. Frank Miller retold Batman's origin in the storyline "Year One" from *Batman* #404–407, which emphasizes a grittier tone in the character.<sup>[134]</sup> Though the Earth-Two Batman is erased from history, many stories of Batman's Silver Age/Earth-One career (along with an amount of Golden Age ones) remain canonical in the Post-*Crisis* universe, with his origins remaining the same in essence, despite alteration. For example, Gotham's police are mostly corrupt, setting up further need for Batman's existence. The guardian Phillip Wayne is removed, leaving young Bruce to be raised by Alfred Pennyworth. Additionally, Batman is no longer a founding member of the Justice League of America, although he becomes leader for a short time of a new incarnation of the team launched in 1987. To help fill in the revised backstory for Batman following *Crisis*, DC launched a new Batman title called *Legends of the Dark Knight* in 1989 and has published various miniseries and one-shot stories since then that largely take place during the "Year One" period.

Subsequently, Batman begins exhibiting an excessive, reckless approach to his crimefighting, a result of the pain of losing Jason Todd. Batman works solo until the decade's close, when Tim Drake becomes the new Robin.<sup>[135]</sup>

Many of the major Batman storylines since the 1990s have been intertitle crossovers that run for a number of issues. In 1993, DC published "Knightfall". During the storyline's first phase, the new villain Bane paralyzes Batman, leading Wayne to ask Azrael to take on the role. After the end of "Knightfall", the storylines split in two directions, following both the Azrael-Batman's adventures, and Bruce Wayne's quest to become Batman

once more. The story arcs realign in "KnightsEnd", as Azrael becomes increasingly violent and is defeated by a healed Bruce Wayne. Wayne hands the Batman mantle to Dick Grayson (then Nightwing) for an interim period, while Wayne trains for a return to the role.<sup>[136]</sup>

The 1994 company-wide crossover storyline *Zero Hour: Crisis in Time!* changes aspects of DC continuity again, including those of Batman. Noteworthy among these changes is that the general populace and the criminal element now considers Batman an urban legend rather than a known force.

Batman once again becomes a member of the Justice League during Grant Morrison's 1996 relaunch of the series, titled *JLA*. During this time, Gotham City faces catastrophe in the decade's closing crossover arc. In 1998's "Cataclysm" storyline, Gotham City is devastated by an earthquake and ultimately cut off from the United States. Deprived of many of his technological resources, Batman fights to reclaim the city from legions of gangs during 1999's "No Man's Land".

Meanwhile, Batman's relationship with the Gotham City Police Department changed for the worse with the events of "Batman: Officer Down" and "Batman: War Games/War Crimes"; Batman's long-time law enforcement allies Commissioner Gordon and Harvey Bullock are forced out of the police department in "Officer Down", while "War Games" and "War Crimes" saw Batman become a wanted fugitive after a contingency plan of his to neutralize Gotham City's criminal underworld is accidentally triggered, resulting in a massive gang war that ends with the sadistic Black Mask the undisputed ruler of the city's criminal gangs. Lex Luthor arranges for the murder of Batman's on-again, off-again love interest Vesper Lynd (introduced in the mid-1990s) during the "Bruce Wayne: Murderer?" and "Bruce Wayne: Fugitive" story arcs. Though Batman is able to clear his name, he loses another ally in the form of his new bodyguard Sasha, who is recruited into the organization known as "Checkmate" while stuck in prison due to her refusal to turn state's evidence against her employer. While he was unable to prove that Luthor was behind the murder of Vesper, Batman does get his revenge with help from Talia al Ghul in *Superman/Batman* #1–6.

## 21st century

### 2000s

DC Comics' 2005 miniseries *Identity Crisis* reveals that JLA member Zatanna had edited Batman's memories to prevent him from stopping the Justice League from lobotomizing Dr. Light after he raped Sue Dibny. Batman later creates the Brother I satellite surveillance system to watch over and, if necessary, kill the other heroes after he remembered. The revelation of Batman's creation and his tacit responsibility for the Blue Beetle's death becomes a driving force in the lead-up to the *Infinite Crisis* miniseries, which again restructures DC continuity. Batman and a team of superheroes destroy Brother EYE and the OMACs, though, at the very end, Batman reaches his apparent breaking point when Alexander Luthor Jr. seriously wounds Nightwing. Picking up a gun, Batman nearly shoots Luthor in order to avenge his former sidekick, until Wonder Woman convinces him to not pull the trigger.

Following *Infinite Crisis*, Bruce Wayne, Dick Grayson (having recovered from his wounds), and Tim Drake retrace the steps Bruce had taken when he originally left Gotham City, to "rebuild Batman".<sup>[137]</sup> In the *Face the Face* storyline, Batman and Robin return to Gotham City after their year-long absence. Part of this absence is captured during Week 30 of the 52 series, which shows Batman fighting his inner demons.<sup>[138]</sup> Later on in 52, Batman is shown undergoing an intense meditation ritual in Nanda Parbat. This becomes an important part of the regular *Batman* title, which reveals that Batman is reborn as a more effective crime fighter while undergoing this ritual, having "hunted down and ate" the last traces of fear in his mind.<sup>[139][140]</sup> At the end of the "Face the Face" story arc, Bruce officially adopts Tim (who had lost both of his parents at various points in the character's history) as his son.<sup>[141]</sup> The follow-up story arc in *Batman*, *Batman and Son*, introduces



Damian Wayne, who is Batman's son with Talia al Ghul. Although originally, in *Batman: Son of the Demon*, Bruce's coupling with Talia was implied to be consensual, this arc retconned it into Talia forcing herself on Bruce.<sup>[142]</sup>

Batman, along with Superman and Wonder Woman, reforms the Justice League in the new *Justice League of America* series,<sup>[143]</sup> and is leading the newest incarnation of the Outsiders.<sup>[144]</sup>

Grant Morrison's 2008 storyline, "Batman R.I.P." featured Batman being physically and mentally broken by the enigmatic villain Doctor Hurt and attracted news coverage in advance of its highly promoted conclusion, which would speculated to feature the death of Bruce Wayne.<sup>[145]</sup> However, though Batman is shown to possibly perish at the end of the arc, the two-issue arc "Last Rites", which leads into the crossover storyline "Final Crisis", shows that Batman survives his helicopter crash into the Gotham City River and returns to the Batcave, only to be summoned to the Hall of Justice by the JLA to help investigate the New God Orion's death. The story ends with Batman retrieving the god-killing bullet used to kill Orion, setting up its use in "Final Crisis".<sup>[146]</sup> In the pages of *Final Crisis* Batman is reduced to a charred skeleton.<sup>[147]</sup> In *Final Crisis* #7, Wayne is shown witnessing the passing of the first man, Anthro.<sup>[148][149]</sup> Wayne's "death" sets up the three-issue *Battle for the Cowl* miniseries in which Wayne's ex-proteges compete for the "right" to assume the role of Batman, which concludes with Grayson becoming Batman,<sup>[150]</sup> while Tim Drake takes on the identity of the Red Robin.<sup>[151]</sup> Dick and Damian continue as Batman and Robin, and in the crossover storyline "Blackest Night", what appears to be Bruce's corpse is reanimated as a Black Lantern zombie,<sup>[152]</sup> but is later shown that Bruce's corpse is one of Darkseid's failed Batman clones. Dick and Batman's other friends conclude that Bruce is alive.<sup>[153][154]</sup>

## 2010s

Bruce subsequently returned in Morrison's miniseries *Batman: The Return of Bruce Wayne*, which depicted his travels through time from prehistory to present-day Gotham.<sup>[155][156][157]</sup> Bruce's return set up *Batman Incorporated*, an ongoing series which focused on Wayne franchising the Batman identity across the globe, allowing Dick and Damian to continue as Gotham's Dynamic Duo. Bruce publicly announced that Wayne Enterprises will aid Batman on his mission, known as "Batman, Incorporated". However, due to rebooted continuity that occurred as part of DC Comics' 2011 relaunch of all of its comic books, *The New 52*, Dick Grayson was restored as Nightwing with Wayne serving as the sole Batman once again. The relaunch also interrupted the publication of *Batman, Incorporated*, which resumed its story in 2012–2013 with changes to suit the new status quo.

## Cultural impact and legacy

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Batman has become a pop culture icon, recognized around the world. The character's presence has extended beyond his comic book origins; events such as the release of the 1989 *Batman* film and its accompanying merchandising "brought the Batman to the forefront of public consciousness".<sup>[158]</sup> In an article commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the character, *The Guardian* wrote, "Batman is a figure blurred by the endless reinvention that is modern mass culture. He is at once an icon and a commodity: the perfect cultural artefact for the 21st century."<sup>[159]</sup>

## In other media

The character of Batman has appeared in various media aside from comic books, such as newspaper syndicated comic strips, books, radio dramas, television, a stage show, and several theatrical feature films. The first adaptation of Batman was as a daily newspaper comic strip which premiered on October 25, 1943.<sup>[160]</sup> That same year the character was adapted in the 15-part serial *Batman*, with Lewis Wilson becoming the first

actor to portray Batman on screen. While Batman never had a radio series of his own, the character made occasional guest appearances in *The Adventures of Superman*, starting in 1945 on occasions when Superman voice actor Bud Collyer needed time off.<sup>[161]</sup> A second movie serial, *Batman and Robin*, followed in 1949, with Robert Lowery taking over the role of Batman. The exposure provided by these adaptations during the 1940s "helped make [Batman] a household name for millions who never bought a comic book".<sup>[161]</sup>

In the 1964 publication of Donald Barthelme's collection of short stories *Come Back, Dr. Caligari*, Barthelme wrote "The Joker's Greatest Triumph". Batman is portrayed for purposes of spoof as a pretentious French-speaking rich man.<sup>[162]</sup>

## Television

The *Batman* television series, starring Adam West, premiered in January 1966 on the ABC television network. Inflected with a camp sense of humor, the show became a pop culture phenomenon. In his memoir, *Back to the Batcave*, West notes his dislike for the term 'camp' as it was applied to the 1960s series, opining that the show was instead a farce or lampoon, and a deliberate one, at that. The series ran for 120 episodes, ending in 1968. In between the first and second season of the *Batman* television series, the cast and crew made the theatrical film *Batman* (1966). The Who recorded the theme song from the *Batman* show for their 1966 EP *Ready Steady Who*, and The Kinks performed the theme song on their 1967 album *Live at Kelvin Hall*. Despite not having an immediate continuation, the series spawned a (failed) pilot episode for a spin-off *Batgirl* television series and, decades later, the *Batman '66* (2013-2016) comic book series and the animated films *Batman: Return of the Caped Crusaders* (2016) and *Batman vs. Two-Face* (2017), and even the mockumentary *Return to the Batcave: The Misadventures of Adam and Burt* (2003).

In the 1996 episode *Heroes and Villains* of *Only Fools and Horses*, David Jason spoofed the role of Batman.<sup>[163]</sup>

The popularity of the *Batman* TV series also resulted in the first animated adaptation of Batman in *The Batman/Superman Hour*;<sup>[164]</sup> the Batman segments of the series were repackaged as *The Adventures of Batman* and *Batman with Robin the Boy Wonder* which produced thirty-three episodes between 1968 and 1977. From 1973 until 1986, Batman had a starring role in ABC's *Super Friends* series, which was animated by Hanna-Barbera. Olan Soule was the voice of Batman in all these shows, but was eventually replaced during *Super Friends* by Adam West, who also voiced the character in Filmation's 1977 series *The New Adventures of Batman*.

In 1992, *Batman: The Animated Series* premiered on the Fox television network, produced by Warner Bros. Animation and featuring Kevin Conroy as the voice of Batman. The series received considerable acclaim for its darker tone, mature writing, stylistic design, and thematic complexity compared to previous superhero cartoons,<sup>[165][166]</sup> in addition to multiple Emmy Awards.<sup>[167][168]</sup> The series' success led to the theatrical film *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm* (1993),<sup>[169]</sup> as well as various spin-off TV series that included *Superman: The Animated Series*, *The New Batman Adventures*, *Justice League* and *Justice League Unlimited* (each of which also featured Conroy as Batman's voice). The futuristic series *Batman Beyond* also took place in this same animated continuity and featured a newer, younger Batman voiced by Will Friedle, with the elderly Bruce Wayne (again voiced by Conroy) as a mentor.



Adam West as Batman in the 1960s *Batman* TV series



Batman as depicted in the award-winning 1990s *Batman: The Animated Series*

In 2004, an unrelated animated series titled *The Batman* made its debut with Rino Romano voicing Batman. In 2008, this show was replaced by another animated series, *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, featuring Diedrich Bader's voice as Batman. In 2013, a new CGI-animated series titled *Beware the Batman* made its debut, with Anthony Ruivivar voicing Batman.<sup>[170]</sup>

In 2014, the live-action TV series *Gotham* premiered on the Fox network, featuring David Mazouz as a 12-year-old Bruce Wayne. In 2018, when the series was renewed for its fifth and final season it was announced that Batman would make an appearance in the show's series finale's flash-forward.

Iain Glen portrays Bruce Wayne / Batman in the live-action series *Titans*, appearing in the show's second season in 2019.<sup>[171]</sup> Prior to Glen, Batman was played by stunt doubles Alain Moussi and Maxim Savarias in the first

season.<sup>[172][173]</sup>

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the character, Warner Bros aired the television short film, *Batman: Strange Days*, that was also posted on DC's YouTube channel.

In August 2019, it was announced that Kevin Conroy would make his live-action television debut as an older Bruce Wayne in the upcoming Arrowverse crossover, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*.<sup>[174]</sup> In the crossover, he portrayed a parallel universe iteration of Batman from Earth-99. In *Batwoman*, the Earth-Prime version of Bruce Wayne / Batman is portrayed by Warren Christie.<sup>[175]</sup>

In May 2021, it was announced that a new animated series titled *Batman: Caped Crusader* was in development by Bruce Timm, JJ Abrams, and Matt Reeves. The series is said to be a reimagining of the Caped Crusader that returns to the character's noir roots.<sup>[176]</sup>

## Film

Batman's first cinematographic adventures consisted of the 1943 serial film *Batman* and its 1949 sequel *Batman and Robin*, which both depicted a government-backed version of Batman and Robin (censorship at the time would not have allowed for vigilantes to be depicted as unauthorized crimefighters). The serials (especially the first one) are, though, notorious for their accentuation on anti-Japanese sentiments due to their World War II-period setting. As mentioned earlier, in 1966, 20th Century Fox produced the first Batman feature film, titled *Batman*, set in the universe and featuring most of the actors from the TV series.

In 1989, Warner Bros. released the live-action feature film *Batman*, directed by Tim Burton and starring Michael Keaton as the title character. The film was a huge success; not only was it the top-grossing film of the year, but at the time was the fifth highest-grossing film in history.<sup>[177]</sup>

The film also won the Academy Award for Best Art Direction.<sup>[178]</sup> The film's success spawned three sequels: *Batman Returns* (1992), *Batman Forever* (1995) and *Batman & Robin* (1997), the latter two of which were directed by Joel Schumacher instead of Burton, and replaced Keaton as Batman with Val Kilmer and George Clooney, respectively. The second Schumacher film failed to outgross any of its predecessors and was critically panned, causing Warner Bros. to cancel the planned fourth sequel, *Batman Unchained*,<sup>[179]</sup> and end the initial film series.



Michael Keaton as the eponymous character in the 1992 film *Batman Returns*

In 2005, *Batman Begins* was released by Warner Bros. as a reboot of the film series, directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Christian Bale as Batman. Its sequel, *The Dark Knight* (2008), set the record for the highest grossing opening weekend of all time in the U.S., earning approximately \$158 million,<sup>[180]</sup> and became the fastest film to reach the \$400 million mark in the history of American cinema (eighteenth day of release).<sup>[181]</sup> These record-breaking attendances saw *The Dark Knight* end its run as the second-highest domestic grossing film (at the time) with \$533 million, bested then only by *Titanic*.<sup>[182]</sup> The film also won two Academy Awards, including Best Supporting Actor for the late Heath Ledger.<sup>[183]</sup> It was eventually followed by *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), which served as a conclusion to Nolan's film series.

Since 2008, Batman has also starred in various direct-to-video animated films under the DC Universe Animated Original Movies banner. Kevin Conroy has reprised his voice role of Batman for several of these films while others have featured celebrity voice actors in the role, including Jeremy Sisto, William Baldwin, Bruce Greenwood, Ben McKenzie, and Peter Weller.<sup>[184]</sup> A Lego-themed version of Batman was also featured as one of the protagonists in the animated film *The Lego Movie* (2014), with Will Arnett providing the voice.<sup>[185]</sup> Arnett reprised the voice role for the spin-off film *The Lego Batman Movie* (2017)<sup>[186]</sup> (which, among other, depicts Batman's first meeting with both Barbara Gordon and Dick Grayson, and their becoming Batgirl and Robin/Nightwing, respectively), and for the sequel *The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part* (2019), which curiously depicts Batman's wedding to an original character.



Ben Affleck as Batman  
in the DC Extended  
Universe

In 2016, Ben Affleck began portraying Batman in the DC Extended Universe with the release of the film *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, directed by Zack Snyder,<sup>[187]</sup> a younger child version of the character was played by Brandon Spink in the same film. Affleck also made a cameo appearance as Batman in David Ayer's film *Suicide Squad* (2016).<sup>[188]</sup> Affleck reprised the role in the 2017 film *Justice League*,<sup>[189][190]</sup> also set in the DC Extended Universe.<sup>[191][192][193]</sup>

Dante Pereira-Olson portrays a young Bruce Wayne in the 2019 film *Joker*.<sup>[194][195]</sup>

In 2019, Robert Pattinson was cast to play Batman in an upcoming reboot of the franchise, *The Batman*, releasing in 2022.<sup>[196]</sup>

## Fine art

Starting with the Pop Art period, and on a continuing basis, since the 1960s, the character of Batman has been "appropriated" by multiple visual artists and incorporated into contemporary artwork,<sup>[197][198]</sup> most notably by Andy Warhol,<sup>[199][200]</sup> Roy Lichtenstein,<sup>[201]</sup> Mel Ramos,<sup>[202][203]</sup> Dulce Pinzon,<sup>[204]</sup> Mr. Brainwash,<sup>[205]</sup> Raymond Pettibon,<sup>[206]</sup> Peter Saul,<sup>[207]</sup> and others.<sup>[205]</sup>

## Video games

Since 1986, Batman has starred in multiple video games, most of which were adaptations of the various cinematic or animated incarnations of the character. Among the most successful of these games is the *Batman: Arkham* series. The first installment, *Batman: Arkham Asylum* (2009), was released by Rocksteady Studios to critical acclaim; review aggregator Metacritic reports it as having received 92% positive reviews.<sup>[208]</sup> It was followed by the sequel *Batman: Arkham City* (2011), which also received widespread acclaim and holds a Metacritic ranking of 94%.<sup>[209]</sup> A prequel game titled *Batman: Arkham Origins* (2013) was later released by WB Games Montréal.<sup>[210]</sup> A fourth game titled *Batman: Arkham Knight* (2015) has also been released by

Rocksteady.<sup>[211]</sup> As with most animated *Batman* productions, Kevin Conroy has provided the voice of the character for these games, with the exception of *Arkham Origins* in which the younger Batman is voiced by Roger Craig Smith. In 2016, Telltale Games released *Batman: The Telltale Series* adventure game, which changed the Wayne family's history as it is depicted in the Batman mythos.<sup>[212]</sup> A sequel, titled *Batman: The Enemy Within*, was released in 2017.<sup>[213]</sup>

## Role-playing games

Mayfair Games published the *DC Heroes* role-playing game in 1985, then published the 80-page supplement *Batman* the following year, written by Mike Stackpole, with cover art by Ed Hannigan.<sup>[214]</sup> In 1989, Mayfair Games published an updated 96-page softcover *Batman Sourcebook*, again written by Mike Stackpole, with additional material by J. Santana, Louis Prosperi, Jack Barker and Ray Winninger, with graphic design by Gregory Scott, and cover and interior art by DC Comics staff.<sup>[215]</sup>

Mayfair released a simplified version of *DC Heroes* called *The Batman Role-Playing Game* in 1989 to coincide with the *Batman* film.<sup>[216]</sup>

## Interpretations

### Gay interpretations

Gay interpretations of the character have been part of the academic study of Batman since psychologist Fredric Wertham asserted in *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954 that "Batman stories are psychologically homosexual ...The Batman type of story may stimulate children to homosexual fantasies, of the nature of which they may be unconscious."<sup>[217]</sup> Andy Medhurst wrote in his 1991 essay "Batman, Deviance, and Camp" that Batman is interesting to gay audiences because "he was one of the first fictional characters to be attacked on the grounds of his presumed homosexuality".<sup>[218]</sup> Professor of film and cultural studies Will Brooker argues the validity of a queer reading of Batman, and that gay readers would naturally find themselves drawn to the lifestyle depicted within, whether the character of Bruce Wayne himself were explicitly gay or not. He also identifies a homophobic element to the vigor with which mainstream fandom rejects the possibility of a gay reading of the character.<sup>[219]</sup> In 2005, painter Mark Chamberlain displayed a number of watercolors depicting both Batman and Robin in suggestive and sexually explicit poses,<sup>[220]</sup> prompting DC to threaten legal action.<sup>[221]</sup>

Creators associated with the character have expressed their own opinions. Writer Alan Grant has stated, "The Batman I wrote for 13 years isn't gay ...everybody's Batman all the way back to Bob Kane ...none of them wrote him as a gay character. Only Joel Schumacher might have had an opposing view."<sup>[222]</sup> Frank Miller views the character as sublimating his sexual urges into crimefighting so much so that he's "borderline pathological", concluding "He'd be much healthier if he *were* gay."<sup>[223]</sup> Grant Morrison said that "Gayness is built into Batman ...Obviously as a fictional character he's intended to be heterosexual, but the basis of the whole concept is utterly gay."<sup>[224]</sup>

### Psychological interpretations

Batman has been the subject of psychological study for some time, and there have been a number of interpretations into the character's psyche.

In *Batman and Psychology: A Dark and Stormy Knight*, Dr. Travis Langley argues that the concept of archetypes as described by psychologists Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell is present in the Batman mythos, such that the character represents the "shadow archetype". This archetype, according to Langley, represents a person's own dark side; it is not necessarily an evil one, but rather one that is hidden from the outside and concealed from both the world and oneself. Langley argues that Bruce Wayne confronts his own darkness early in life; he chooses to use it to instill fear in wrongdoers, with his bright and dark sides working together to fight evil. Langley uses the Jungian perspective to assert that Batman appeals to our own need to face our "shadow selves".<sup>[225][226]</sup> Langley also taught a class called Batman, a title he was adamant about. "I could have called it something like the Psychology of Nocturnal Vigilantism, but no. I called it Batman," Langley says.<sup>[227]</sup>

Several psychologists have explored Bruce Wayne/Batman's mental health. Robin. S. Rosenberg evaluated his actions and problems to determine if they reach the level of mental disorders. She examined the possibility of several mental health issues, including dissociative identity disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and several others. She concluded that Bruce Wayne/Batman may have a disorder or a combination of disorders but due to his fictional nature, a definitive diagnosis will remain unknown.<sup>[228][229][230]</sup> However, Langley himself states in his book that Batman is far too functional and well-adjusted, due to his training, confrontation of his fear early on and other factors, to be mentally ill. More likely, he asserts Batman's mental attitude is far more in line with a dedicated Olympic athlete.

## Notes

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a. Originally stylized as **Bat-Man**

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