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**Cromartie High School #1**by [Kat Avila](#)

*Reviews may contain information that could be considered 'spoilers'. Readers should proceed at their own risk.*

**Publisher****ADV Manga**<http://www.adv-manga.com>**Credits**

Writer: Eiji Nonaka

Artist: Eiji Nonaka

Distributor: A.D. Vision, Inc.

Translator: Brendan Frayne

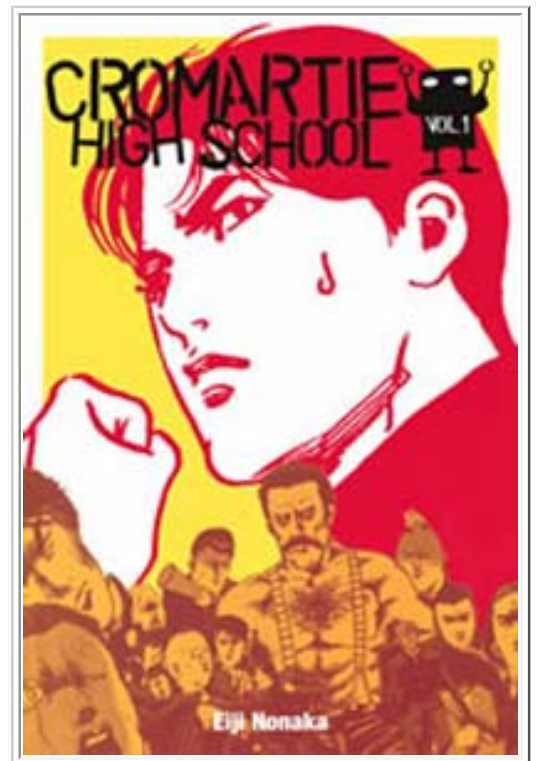
ISBN: 1-4139-0257-X

**Grade: 7**

"What is wrong with this picture?" That's the question that kept popping up as I read Eiji Nonaka's **Cromartie High**

**School**. Nonaka is constantly challenging the reader to accept increasingly implausible characters and situations in a slapstick kind of way. He must have been a stand-up comedian in a past life.

As you open the manga, there is a tongue-in-cheek timeline history of Tokyo Metropolitan Cromartie High School followed by the idealistic boastful lyrics of the "Our dear Cromartie High" school anthem.



I had put off reading ***Cromartie High School*** because of the cover. It is a close-up of 16-year-old Takashi Kamiyama holding up a clenched fist. A dull orange brown collage of tough-looking high school delinquents is pasted in at the bottom. Naturally I deduced ***Cromartie*** was your usual run-of-the-mill shounen manga where guys beat up on each other to prove who is the strongest. Still is, though the manga is actually more of a parody of the genre and pokes fun at arrogant punks.

Trying to be supportive of a buddy and to prove that one can study anywhere, good guy Takashi Kamiyama enrolls at bad rep Cromartie High School where he clearly doesn't belong. Yet he's not the only one as Nonaka mischievously introduces additional fish-out-of-the-water characters, each more outlandish than the previous.

Kamiyama does his best to adapt. Through his good fortune and the incredible stupidity of his fellow classmates, he manages to survive and even to make friends at his new high school.

I liked the bottom panel on page 10. It's a rough and realistically drawn medium shot of a classroom of heavily smoking students with Kamiyama in the distance hunched over his desk. A sweat drop rolls down his cheek. Compare this panel with an earlier panel on page 5 for the full effect. It looks like one or two students may have switched seats.

Review the translator's notes starting on page 160 for educational tidbits about Japanese culture and history. Also, you will learn how Nonaka came up with some of the chapter titles.

If you're feeling a bit down in the dumps, pick up a copy of ***Cromartie High School*** to remind yourself not to take life too seriously. Give the manga a chance, though it may not seem that you would like it at first glance.

Written: May 15, 2005

Published: June 1, 2005

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