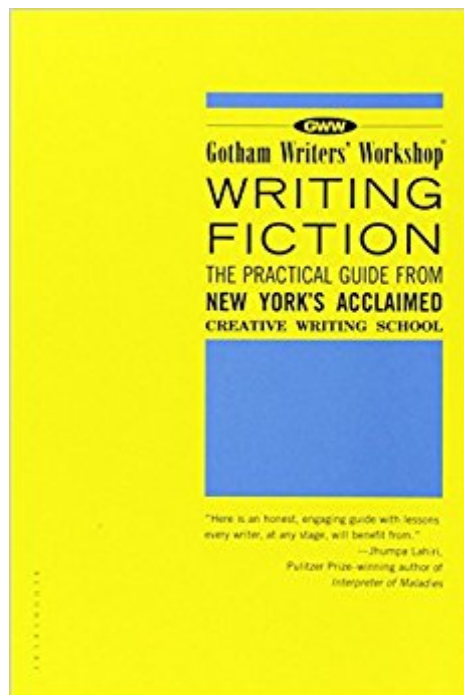


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# Writing Fiction: The Practical Guide From New York's Acclaimed Creative Writing School



## Synopsis

Gotham Writers' Workshop has mastered the art of teaching the craft of writing in a way that is practical, accessible, and entertaining. Now the techniques of this renowned school are available in this book. Here you'll find: - The fundamental elements of fiction craft-character, plot, point of view, etc.-explained clearly and completely - Key concepts illustrated with passages from great works of fiction - The complete text of "Cathedral" by Raymond Carver-a masterpiece of contemporary short fiction that is analyzed throughout the book - Exercises that let you immediately apply what you learn to your own writing

Written by Gotham Writers' Workshop expert instructors and edited by Dean of Faculty Alexander Steele, *Writing Fiction* offers the same methods and exercises that have earned the school international acclaim. Once you've read-and written-your way through this book, you'll have a command of craft that will enable you to turn your ideas into effective short stories and novels. You will be a writer. Gotham Writers' Workshop is America's leading private creative writing school, offering classes in New York City and on the web at [WritingClasses.com](http://WritingClasses.com). The school's interactive online classes, selected "Best of the Web" by Forbes, have attracted thousands of aspiring writers from across the United States and more than sixty countries.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The faculty of the Gotham Writers' Workshop-which now has 6,000 students not only in New York City but around the world (with online classes)-use an original approach in this how-to: Raymond Carver's classic story "Cathedral" (reprinted in the book) serves as a basis for their discussion of

technique. The contributors are not household names, but all are published authors of fiction. Chapters touch on all the essentials: character development, pacing, dialogue and revision ("Real Writers Revise" the chapter title exhorts). All expand on the idea that "good writing comes down to craft far more than most people realize," while also reminding aspiring authors that "rules are made to be broken." The writing is fresh and full of concrete advice (e.g., "Desire is in the heart of every dimensional character"), and exercises allow students to explore what they have learned. This is an excellent starting place for someone exploring the art and craft of writing fiction. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

• Here is an honest, engaging guide with lessons every writer, at any stage, will benefit from. I read it just after I'd finished writing my second book. Now I'm inspired to begin a third. • Jhumpa Lahiri, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Interpreter of Maladies

Gotham Writers Workshop: Writing Fiction has been the most helpful and informative of my many books on writing fiction. The instruction and examples demonstrate each element of the fiction-writing craft as though the instructor is providing one-on-one coaching. These are followed by challenges that stimulate my thoughts and, as I work with them, improve my skills in those areas. I can identify the improvements. I'm discovering how to give my characters more depth and power. I am building more precise plot development and gaining skills that help me keep the action alive in my story. I'm grateful to have found this material. It's built up my confidence and benefited my writing. Gotham Writers Workshop: Writing Fiction is a source I will review again and again.

Highly recommended for aspiring fiction writers who are self-directed and for whom teacher-directed learning doesn't necessarily enhance the learning process, or for those whose schedules preclude taking a Gotham workshop. The eleven chapters, each written by a different author, clearly convey the essentials of writing publishable fiction. A sample of chapter titles: FIC- TION: THE WHAT, HOW AND WHY OF IT, CHARACTER: CASTING SHADOWS, VOICE: THE SOUND OF THE STORY, and THE BUSINESS OF WRITING: DRIVING YOURSELF NUTS FOR FUN AND PROFIT. The founders of the Gotham Writers' Workshop, Jeff Fligelman and David Grae, accurately write in their introductory comments: "Now we've put the Gotham style of teaching into a book. The ability to write to write with excellence is in your hands."

I read and then passed this on to another person in my writers group. I'll re read it again when I'm about to write my first novel. (I often buy books on how to write and then stall reading them out of boredom.) I wasn't bored, so that's a plus, but I felt something was missing. Since I can't put my finger on what was missing (and this could be because I'm a novice at fiction writing), I gave it four stars. Gotham workshops are top notch so perhaps I missed something. Since I've written a few non-fiction books, and am thus a non-fiction author, I was looking for a book to "teach" me the mechanics on how to write fiction. Gotham remains the authority in my opinion. It wasn't what I expected though which is why I gave it four, rather than five stars. Maybe a workshop would have been better for me and kept me more engaged. There are people in my group who found the groups to be worth their money and, again, maybe that would have been the way to go for me personally.

I've read a number of fiction guides. What I hated most about almost all of them was the close to moral certainty ascribed to writing in a certain way, whether it be show or tell or some other aspect of writing right. This book does not do that. It covers all the craft elements and does not use the author's own work to demonstrate them which, at times, has felt like a marketing effort. The author uses the work of other authors, including some well-known names, like Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Carver, and Nabakov. It was a pleasure to see the work of such authors described as it related to craft. The author also understood that craft can't substitute for creativity or that special something that someone reading this review may have nor did he discourage that something. The description of examples from notable fiction, absent the push, push, push to do it my way in some guides, made it a pleasure to read. Also, it did not have the feel of an edited work by different authors, though it seems to suggest the contrary in the description. If it was, it was transparent to me. I always felt like it was the work of one author.

Excellent for authors and writers!

My daughter turned me onto this writing school because she had taken their online classes and felt very good about the teachers and feedback. I bought the book to see if I would like it and decide if I wanted to sign up for the classes. I find that they teach pretty much what I have read about in other books. I do not feel that I can gain anything new by signing up for their class that I do not find in this book. I would recommend it. If it a good reference book and I think very beneficial for the beginner fiction writer.

As a new writer without any formal training in creative writing, this book has been very educational. The book takes us through different topics with learning exercises to cement the point. It's enjoyable to read and is interesting as well as informative. My writing had undoubtedly improved since I read this book.

There are a lot of good tips here. You can find these same tips in many other books too, so there might not be anything new here if you're already read a few such books. But if you haven't, this is as good as any other book on the subject. There are chapters on such topics as plot, characters, dialogue, theme, point of view, voice,

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