

Fiction Techniques in Writing Nonfiction

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- ▣ Writing Can Change the World
- ▣ "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." Psalms 68:11, KJV
- ▣ "Give me 26 lead soldiers and I will conquer the world"
- ▣ Benjamin Franklin
- ▣ and Karl Marx
- ▣ "If you want to change the world, pick up a pen." Martin Luther

- ▣ What's The Deal?
- ▣ Writing is a transaction between the writer and the reader.
- ▣ Will you uphold your end of the bargain?

- ▣ The General Purposes of Communication
- ▣ To Inform
- ▣ To Entertain
- ▣ To Persuade
- ▣ To Inspire

- ▣ The Craft of Good Writing
- ▣ Good writing is a CRAFT
- ▣ Talent is a factor, but for the most part, writing is a craft that can be learned through hard work.
- ▣ Good writers are made by a lot of reading and a little writing -- this is the key.
- ▣ "Tell Me a Story"
- ▣ Jesus -- The Greatest Communicator

- ▣ Dickens
- ▣ Mark Twain
- ▣ C. S. Lewis
- ▣ J. R. R. Tolkien
- ▣ Ken Gire
- ▣ Frank Peretti
- ▣ Max Lucado

- ▣ Your Writing Should “Take Me There”
- ▣ The biggest thing a writer has to overcome in non-clarity.
- ▣ Write precisely.
- ▣ Write visually.
- ▣ We create mental pictures -- word images.

- ▣ “Take Me There” Writing
- ▣ Creating non-fiction books and articles using the fictional techniques of novel writing.
- ▣ These are the basic principles of storytelling.
- ▣ Learn to write in scenes.
- ▣ Plot your scenes -- organize and analyze.
- ▣ Determine where to place the scenes based on the plot plan.
- ▣ Include material that is conducive to narrative storytelling so they see it like they see a movie.
- ▣ Tell it as though it is happening in your presence.
- ▣ Scenes require good material.
- ▣ They are about conflict and confrontation -- just like life.
- ▣ Books are a series of scenes in conflict and confrontation.
- ▣ Set the themes in the first chapters.
- ▣ Write memorable lines consciously.

- ▣ Make every word work -- if one doesn't work, remove or change it.
- ▣ "Art begins with the first rewrite." Hemmingway

- ▣ The Key to Effective Writing is...
- ▣ ...pre-writing...
- ▣ ...writing...
- ▣ ...re-writing...
- ▣ ...and re-writing again.
- ▣ Mitchner: "I don't begin writing until the first draft is completed."

- ▣ "Take Me There" Writing
- ▣ Be conscious of developing good phrases.
- ▣ Do your own editing -- read out loud.
- ▣ Not every editor will like every phrase you write.
- ▣ Keep putting the good stuff out there -- when we overcome resistance then art comes forth.
- ▣ Everything Hinges on Reporting
- ▣ Without good material you won't have a good piece.
- ▣ Get rid of preconceptions of your subject.
- ▣ Observe -- using all of your senses in doing your reporting.
- ▣ You don't know what facts you need or don't need so you take all the material you observe.
- ▣ Show in the story: "Is it unique; has it happened before; what is the significance?"

- ▣ Analyzing and Outlining
- ▣ Analyze what is the piece really about.
- ▣ Don't write too soon.
- ▣ Know where you are going when you write.
- ▣ A writer's map is his outline.

- ▣ Organizing and Beginning
- ▣ Develop a folder on each chapter -- either electronically or in a portable case/cabinet.
- ▣ Compile all material necessary for writing the chapter.
- ▣ When you're ready to write, take out the file and begin to write from the material you have collected.
- ▣ At this point you begin to develop a sense that this book has a flow.
- ▣ If it doesn't flow you may need to rework the outline.
- ▣ Hook the reader good and fast.
- ▣ State your thesis in a 'zesty' creative manner that will help your reader remember.
- ▣ Set some of the themes and get the main characters or concepts on stage fast, within the first three chapters.
- ▣ Build tension and suspense.
- ▣ The strategic use of your material creates drama.
- ▣ You are in control of your material, not vice-versa.
- ▣ Use integrity, but use the material any way you want to tell a truthful story.
- ▣ The Heart of Your Book
- ▣ Transitions are vital.
- ▣ Plot your story with intervals to propel your reader -- usually done at the end of a chapter.
- ▣ Every couple pages of copy put in a reminder of why the reader needs to keep reading.
- ▣ Tell stories to make your point and maintain attention.
- ▣ Using "the template" – three part structure –
- ▣ Tell them what you're gonna tell them;
- ▣ Tell them;
- ▣ Tell them what you've told them.
- ▣ The Heart of Your Book
- ▣ Playing chapters against one another for the sake of pace.

- ▣ Play words against each other for pace and variety.
- ▣ Words have a rhythm, and can get sing-songy. Change the feel from time-to-time.
- ▣ The reader also tends to drift off so we use a short, snappy sentence or sharp word to grab their attention.

- ▣ The Story Question
- ▣ The question that the reader will press on to find the answer to -- the thesis.
- ▣ The good writer will insist on establishing the direction through the story question.
- ▣ In books it should be established in the first chapter.
- ▣ The reader is looking to determine if this book is something they want to read.

- ▣ The Take Away
- ▣ It's the one truth or one lesson the reader takes away from the book.
- ▣ You must remain consistent with the take away.
- ▣ The conceptualization of the book will come after you decide the take away.
- ▣ When they finish reading they should say, I like him/her, he's a good writer.

- ▣ Write Colorfully
- ▣ Be colorful, interesting, add humanity to the piece.
- ▣ Use imaginative verbs from time-to-time.
- ▣ Don't be a gee-wiz, breathless, over-excited writer.
- ▣ Let the words themselves bring the excitement.
- ▣ Choose words based on their sound -- look for rhythm, alliteration.
- ▣ Don't drop all your material in one place.

- ▣ Dialogue
- ▣ Dialogue is good for pace.

- ▣ Don't go too long with dialogue or it will go flat.
- ▣ Write non-dialogue for a sentence to break things up and then go back to dialogue.

- ▣ Credibility
- ▣ Answer the two key questions...
- ▣ So what?
- ▣ Who says?
- ▣ Be careful of exaggeration – don't write “evangelastically”.
- ▣ Some people are enthusiastic and prone to blowing up the story to be the way they want it to be.

- ▣ S. Alex Martin Rules of Fiction
- ▣ Use the simplest words possible.
- ▣ Don't include events or details that aren't important to characterization or plot.
- ▣ Use action to explain events where possible.
- ▣ Write at least 90% of the story in active voice.
- ▣ Dialogue is the strongest form of characterization.
- ▣ Pay close attention to the arc of change in your story.
- ▣ There should be a noticeable change in your main character...
- ▣ ...either for good or bad.
- ▣ If you can't avoid a cliché, do something different with it.
- ▣ If you can't decide whether you like what you wrote – REWRITE IT.
- ▣ Find out what time of day your imagination reaches its peak and make sure to ALWAYS write during that time.
- ▣ Keep a routine until you finish the project.
- ▣ <https://www.pinterest.com/thescalex/>

- ▣ Ending Well
- ▣ Tell them what you've told them.
- ▣ Have a kicker at the end -- the mega-zinger.
- ▣ The take away.
- ▣ The call to action.