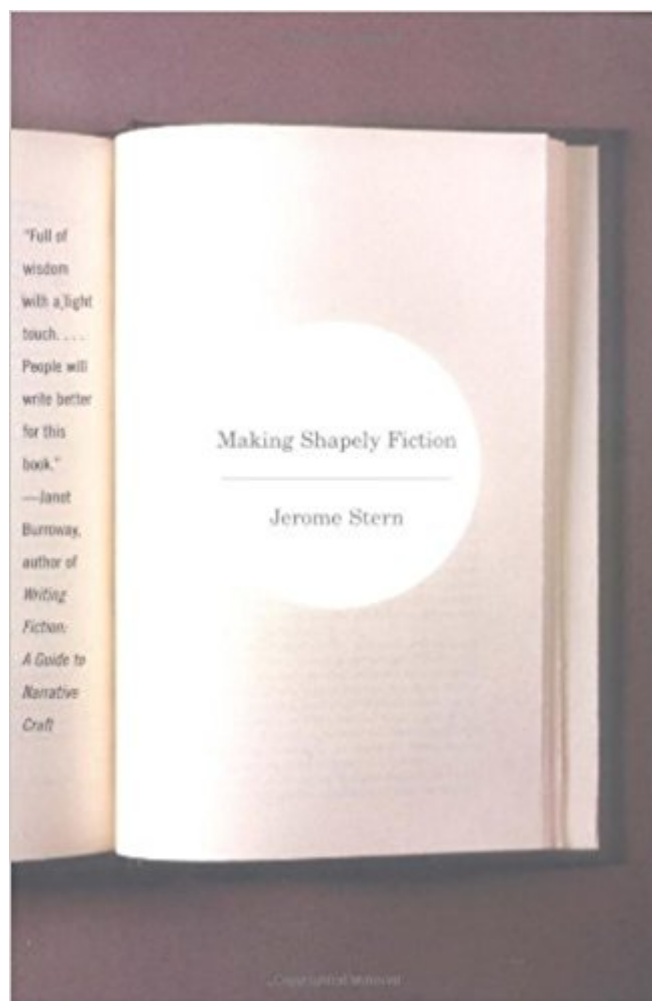


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# Making Shapely Fiction



## Synopsis

A deft analysis and appreciation of fiction—what makes it work and what can make it fail. Here is a book about the craft of writing fiction that is thoroughly useful from the first to the last page—whether the reader is a beginner, a seasoned writer, or a teacher of writing. You will see how a work takes form and shape once you grasp the principles of momentum, tension, and immediacy. "Tension," Stern says, "is the mother of fiction. When tension and immediacy combine, the story begins." Dialogue and action, beginnings and endings, the true meaning of "write what you know," and a memorable listing of don'ts for fiction writers are all covered. A special section features an Alphabet for Writers: entries range from Accuracy to Zigzag, with enlightening comments about such matters as Cliffhangers, Point of View, Irony, and Transitions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Useful on the most practical level.... [Stern] plunges his readers into the middle of things.” - New York Times  
“Offers a raft of examples that explain the techniques used by novelists from Flaubert to Updike—can eminently helpful and engaging writer's guide.” - Booklist  
“A complete original. The warm, witty, wise voice draws you in, and you leave the book wanting to write—and knowing how.” - Jesse Lee Kercheval, director, Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing, University of Wisconsin  
“Jerome Stern has done us all a favor with this canny little book. If you are interested in writing, read it now. This is an expert writer and teacher sending his notes from the trenches. Never has caution been so

exhilarating, advice so wry. I will use this book. – Ron Carlson, author of *The Hotel Eden*  
“Clarifies the mumbo-jumbo. For serious students of fiction, Jerome Stern is the Alpha crow. Follow him and shave the miles off your flying time.” – Bob Shacochis, author of *Swimming in the Volcano*

This book is different from other books on writing. You can start writing serious fiction from the first page -- because, as Jerome Stern makes clear, learning to write spontaneously is the first step to writing well. As you begin to grasp the principle of momentum, tension and immediacy, you'll find your fiction has shape and form. You'll discover how to "write what you know," and avoid the traps and pitfalls awaiting fledgeling authors. A cross-referenced Alphabet for Writers includes incisive entries for such writerly concerns as Anti-Heroes, Dialogue, Sex, and Style. Whether you're a beginning, a seasoned professional, or a teacher of the craft, you already know there are no rules in writing fiction . . . but Jerome Stern will inspire you to find your personal path. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I first read this book in college and had kept my old copy for years. When I needed it recently, I realized it had disappeared. How excited I was to discover it on ! It's the best story development text I've ever read, with easy to understand principles. I recommend it for any budding writer.

There are plenty of books on writing and I can think of a couple better books off the top of my head. Where this book stands out is that it covers a great deal with just enough depth to help get you going again whenever you might be stumped for where to go next or just how to execute an idea better. It works perfectly as a quick reference but written in such a way that reading it front to back was enjoyable as well. This book is likely to never be out of arms reach while I'm writing.

This book cuts to the heart of how fiction is structured without getting bogged down in example after example. It introduces many of the concepts experienced writers employ, but in a way that is accessible and entertaining. For example one of the shapes, "Iceberg," --in which much of the conflict is below the surface of the story-- is a solid introduction to the concept of subtext. I use this book in college intro to fiction writing all the time and haven't found a book of similar size and price that can do as much.

Great book on writing. It breaks down each issue a new writer has about writing. Few examples are

POV, description and diction. I recommend this book to any level of writer.

A virtual encyclopedia of writing tips. One of the best books on writing I've yet discovered. Arranged alphabetically, every writing technique is discussed and explained in an informal, engaging style. One of those books you will keep open for regular referencing.

The facade, juggling, specimen, day in the life, journey, bear at the door and blue moon, are but a few story arcs that any avid reader will recognize, but probably hasn't categorized or given much thought too. I used juggling to write an award winning short story (nothing major). This book is a must for any fiction writer.

It's one of the best and easiest book to start writing with, or even continue writing. The shapes are short but effective as they focus on specific points. The dictionary will probably help you realize and fix some of the issues you may encounter while writing. You can navigate through the book in any way you want. You can focus on one particular subject or browse through it. It really is a must have!

Far from the typically dogmatic academic approach to writing, Jerome Stern takes a practical, no-nonsense approach to the subject. His wit is droll and entertaining and the structure of the work lends itself both to casual "dipping" and thorough reading. This is a text book that one can enjoy reading.

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