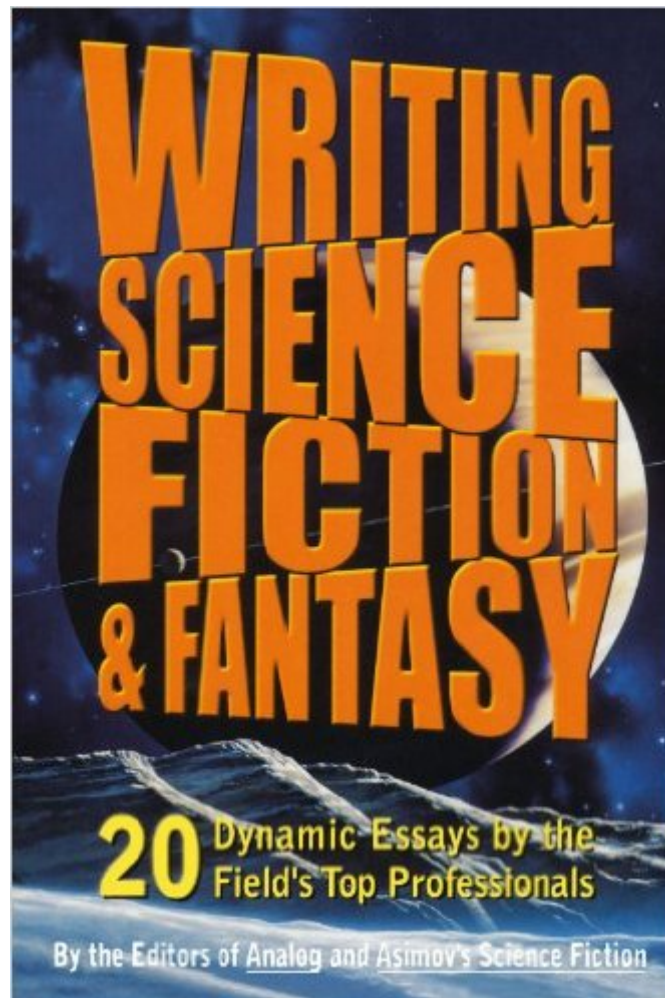


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Writing Science Fiction & Fantasy



Synopsis

Do you dream of -Crossing the galaxies? Living in the far future?Entertaining millions with your imagination?This book can help make those dreams come true!Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy brings you expert advice on how to craft and market tales of the fantastic. Award-winning writers such as John Barnes, James Patrick Kelly, Norman Spinrad, Connie Willis, and Jane Yolen reveal some of their secrets of crafting believable stories, while Grand Masters Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein provide timeless advice for beginners and veterans alike. The editors also provide valuable insights into the process by which stories get published and they offer helpful hints on getting your story out of the slush pile and into print.

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Customer Reviews

At the most basic level, this book delivers what the title and subtitle promises: How-to essays by some of the biggest names (as of the mid-1980s) in science fiction writing. The majority deal with science fiction (rather than fantasy) and with magazine (as opposed to book-length) pieces. Would-be fantasy writers should beware, but should also be willing to cut the editors a little slack on the subject. New writers with no track record and no agent (the book's target audience) have always had an easier time publishing short fiction than novels. Fantasy is (and has been for decades) almost entirely published as novels, but there's still (if only barely) a market for magazine-length science fiction. The book is not, however, what it clearly *wants* to be: THE book for writers trying to break into the genre. The essays in it were written at different times and for different purposes. They

vary wildly in length, depth, and (most critical) in the amount of knowledge they assume on the part of the reader. Trying to read the book straight through can give you a severe case of intellectual whiplash. If you want a unified, coherent book about how to write quality science fiction and fantasy, this is NOT it. (Try Orson Scott Card's *How To Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* or Barry Longyear's *Notes to a Science Fiction Writer* instead.) The real gems of this book include, as other reviewers have noted, Stanley Schmidt on worn-out plot devices and Connie Willis on humor. IF you want to write hard science fiction (stories where the scientific details are firmly in the foreground and integral to the story), then add Hal Clement's on aliens to that list. IF you want to write fantasy, then add Jane Yolen's superb essay on using elements from mythology and legend.

Aristotle had once said, in part, that a workable falsehood is better than an incomprehensible truth. If Science has any imagination, it is used in its ability to simplify complex concepts, by sometimes making small assumptions, in order to explain them better to the common laymen. Science fiction writers borrow heavily on this concept to tell their own stories. Since man, in reality, cannot travel faster-than-light to reach distant stars in his own lifetime, the writer of such a fantastic tale should be able to explain how such a fantastic journey could have ever taken place. How you explain this fantastic journey between the stars in your story (though now a well-established convention in SF) can mark the difference in fiction between science, fantasy, or just plain unbelievable (...). It is up to you, and if you want to write good believable science fiction, then you should make every effort to learn everything you can about your scientific subject, and then you can create your own workable falsehoods. The editors of *Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy* have divided the book into three sections, which they hope will inspire would-be-authors into writing credible fiction. Section One deals with *Storytelling* and includes the controversial essay from Robert A. Heinlein *On the Writing of Speculative Fiction*. Controversial because he advises, "you must refrain from rewriting except to editorial order." Section Two deals with *Ideas and Foundations*, which will advise you on how to write better believable science fiction by using real rational science. (The essay on *The Ideas that Wouldn't Die* is mandatory reading.

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