

Resources to Help You Become a Better Writer

Useful books on the craft of writing:

- *Steering the Craft*, by Ursula K. LeGuin.
- *Self-Editing for Fiction Writers*, by Renni Browne and Dave King
- *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*, by Orson Scott Card
- *The Art of Fiction*, by John Gardner
- The *Elements of Fiction Writing* Series, including:
 - *Beginnings, Middles, and Ends*, by Nancy Kress
 - *Plot*, by Ansen Dibell
 - *Description*, by Monica Wood
 - *Scene and Structure*, by Jack M. Bickham

Useful books on the writing life:

- *Bird by Bird*, by Anne Lamott
- *Writing Down the Bones* and *Wild Mind*, by Natalie Goldberg
- *The Artist's Way*, by Julia Cameron
- *Zen and the Art of Writing*, by Ray Bradbury
- *Making a Literary Life*, by Carolyn See

Other types of books to buy/read:

- If you're writing science fiction, get some science books. A few I've bought used (they're out of print) are *Space Travel: A Writer's Guide to the Science of Interplanetary Travel*, by Ben Bova, and *Star Crossing: How to Get Around in the Universe*, by Judith Herbst. When going to the library, if you want a book that will teach you science, check out the young adult section.
- If you're writing near-future science fiction, do your research. A couple of books worth considering: *The Next Fifty Years: Science in the First Half of the Twenty-First Century*, edited by John Brockman, and *Beyond Calculation: The Next Fifty Years of Computing*, by Peter Denning and Robert Metcalfe.
- Learn specific names. Read books on trees, flowers, and weeds so you can say "Janxiemel leaned against the ash tree" rather than "Janxiemel leaned against a tree."
- Get a book on baby names. There are also many web sites you can use for this as well.
- If you're going to be writing any kind of combat, be it fist fights or fantasy army platoons, be sure to read books on the appropriate type of fighting.

Boston-area conventions with free writing workshops (generally just critique sessions):

- Arisia - www.arisia.org
- Boskone - www.boskone.org
- Readercon - www.readercon.org (no convention in 2004)
- Noreascon (WorldCon) - www.noreascon.org
- Not Boston-area, but worth traveling to: WisCon (Madison, Wisconsin). A very writer-friendly convention that's loaded with useful panels and authors who are willing to chat with new writers - www.sf3.org/wiscon

Online critique groups:

- Critters: www.critters.org
- Online Writing Workshop: sff.onlinewritingworkshop.com

Writing programs in the Boston area:

- Grub Street: teaches nothing but writing - www.grubstreet.org
- Harvard Extension School: has a well-respected writing curriculum. Register early for classes, as many fill quickly - www.extension.harvard.edu

Some good writing workshops:

- Viable Paradise (1 week, fall, moving from Martha's Vineyard to Cape Cod) - www.sff.net/paradise. Specifically about how to professionally publish science fiction and fantasy. Covers short stories and novels.
- Clarion (6 weeks, summer). Only covers short stories. In three locations:
 - East Lansing, Michigan - www.msu.edu/~clarion/
 - Seattle, Washington - www.clarionwest.org
 - Brisbane, Australia - www.clarionsouth.org
- Odyssey (6 weeks, summer). Fantasy-only. Prefers to work on short stories, but will critique novels. - www.sff.net/odyssey
- Oregon Coast Workshops (1 or 2 weeks) - www.oregoncoastwritersworkshops.com
- Ann Crispin's workshops. Ann traditionally runs workshops at both Shore Leave (www.shore-leave.com) and DragonCon (www.dragoncon.com). - www.sfga.org/members/Crispin