

# FOR WRITERS: a booklist

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## Book Selector

The public library can be a valuable resource for writers. Whether you're an established writer wanting to improve your craft or an aspiring writer just starting out, don't forget about your public library. The Western Cape Library Service has many books on writing and publishing – some of these will be available in your local library, others need to be borrowed from larger libraries or from our Central Reference Section (SN) in Cape Town. We have built up quite a good collection of books on writing in SN. The public library can also be a good place to find out about writing groups in your area or can serve as a venue for starting your own group.

I've compiled a list of some of the books in the Library Service. This list is not exhaustive, but I've tried to select titles which will give you an idea of the scope and variety of our stock. There are many different types of books, some written by writers, others by publishers or editors. We also stock a selection of general books about the craft of writing and more specific books about particular types of writing, like writing a screenplay, a science fiction novel or a biography. There are both inspirational and more practical books. The list also contains creative writing books, books about writing for a particular readership (like children or teenagers), how-to guides providing tips and practical advice at ways of improving your writing, and there are language usage and style manuals, and many others. I have included only a few of these language reference works in my list but we have many others in stock which are just as good. These can be very useful to the writer; not only providing clarification about grammar and correct usage (for example, *effect/affect*, *uninterested/disinterested*), but also about the right, or accepted, way of writing certain names, foreign words, and so on. Obviously, this becomes much more important when writing non-fiction. The booklist also contains books about specific aspects of creative writing like characterisation, plot and how to create realistic dialogue.

Many writers will be interested in the books on publishing and how to get published. A number of local books will be very helpful in this regard. To make it easier I have separated the local titles in a section at the beginning of the booklist. Basil van Rooyen, a retired publisher's book, is particularly informative about mainstream

commercial publishing while Heather Parker Lewis's chattier, more anecdotal book provides a wealth of information about self-publishing. I strongly recommend **A rough guide to small-scale and self-publishing** by Colleen Higgs. She also wrote a short article on how to get published in the Jan/Feb 2006 issue of the **Cape Librarian**. She is well-known for her sterling work at the Centre for the Book, particularly with the Community Publishing Project.

The Centre for the Book is a unit of the National Library of South Africa. Its mission is to promote a South African culture of reading, writing and publishing in all local languages, and easy access to books for all South Africans. It's an important organisation for any new writer to be aware of and definitely worth contacting. In the **Small publishers' catalogue** and the **Guide to publishing in South Africa** you will find information about different publishers and what kind of books they publish. If you are planning on submitting work to a publisher this will help you choose which would be most suitable. It is not easy getting a book published by a mainstream commercial publisher in South Africa. This is due not only to the current economic climate, but also due to the traditionally small book-buying and book-reading market here. Only a very small proportion of books sent to publishers gets published. The large majority of books published locally are textbooks. Local writers should seriously consider self-publishing. There is, of course, vanity publishing too, but it's only recommended in a few instances. Apparently it's quite easy and inexpensive to publish your book as an e-book. In the **Small publishers' catalogue** there's an interesting article on e-books by Arthur Atwell, co-founder and CEO of the Electric Book Company, a digital publishing company in Cape Town. Free online services are available for converting your book to e-book formats as well as free online sales and distribution services.

The local titles in this section of the booklist are well worth reading and/or consulting that provide a wealth of information for the writer: organisations; publishers and types of publishing; the book trade; writing courses; publications like literary journals; editors and other freelancers; print-on-demand companies; various other resources and links, and much, much more. There are also various blogs which are worth checking out. One that's been recommended to me is Gary Cummiskey's blog <http://dyehard-press.blogspot.com/>. Using Google, or your preferred search engine, a number of web

sites will come up by simply searching on terms like 'creative writing' or 'how to get published'. However, all this information should be supplemented by information from the Internet. I've listed a few useful web sites below, including one which offers online writing courses.

#### USEFUL WEB SITES:

<http://www.nlsa.ac.za>  
[www.writers.net](http://www.writers.net)  
[www.writersservices.com](http://www.writersservices.com)  
[www.litnet.co.za](http://www.litnet.co.za)  
<http://bookslive.co.za>  
[www.publishsa.co.za](http://www.publishsa.co.za) (Publishers' Association of SA)  
[www.act.org.za](http://www.act.org.za) (Arts and Culture Trust)  
[www.crimebeat.bookslive.co.za](http://www.crimebeat.bookslive.co.za)  
[www.nac.org.za](http://www.nac.org.za) (National Arts Council)  
[www.sawn.co.za](http://www.sawn.co.za) (South African Writers' Network)  
[www.sawriterscollege.co.za](http://www.sawriterscollege.co.za)  
[www.writersguildsa.org](http://www.writersguildsa.org)  
[www.anfasa.org.za](http://www.anfasa.org.za) (The Academic and Non-Fiction Authors' Assoc. of SA)  
[www.awwn.co.za](http://www.awwn.co.za) (African Women Writers' Network)

Also visit individual publisher's web sites as many of them provide information on their submissions policy. Most authors advise researching the different publishers as well as researching the different types of publishing.

Other advice which is common to most of the books in this booklist is: be aware of your reasons for writing and decide who you're writing for; get objective feedback about your work, and above all, read. Many authors warn that writing is not a good way of making money. As Van Rooyen points out: 'Those international authors who are household names make their money from a steady stream of titles plus extra's like film rights, foreign-language editions, et cetera' (p6).

Whatever you're writing, be it fiction or non-fiction, and whatever your reasons for writing, whether you're aiming for fame and fortune or just something for friends and family to read or simply for your own satisfaction, there should be something for you in this booklist.

#### Local titles

The Centre for the Book's pamphlet series for writers.

Cross, Michael and Brodie, Karin. **Getting published and getting read in South Africa: a handbook for writers of scholarly articles.** Juta, 1998.

Haarhof, Dorian. **The writer's voice: a workbook for writers in Africa.** Zebra, 1998.

Higgs, Colleen. **'n Kitsgids vir kleinskaal- en selfpublikasie.** Centre for the Book, c2006.

Higgs, Colleen. **A rough guide to small-scale and self-publishing.** Centre for the Book, c2005.

Kitson, Norma. **Creative writing: a handbook with exercises and examples.** Academic Bks., 1997.

Kollmer, Margaret. **To make a mocking word sing and get published!** Zyteck, c2005.

Lewis, Heather Parker. **Successful self-publishing in South Africa.** Ihilihili P., 2009.

Lewis, Heather Parker. **The wannabe writer in South Africa.** Ihilihili P., 2007.

Publishers' Association of South Africa. **Guide to publishing in South Africa.** PASA, 2011. [Previous editions published as The PASA directory]

\*Ross, Catriona. **Writing for magazines: absolutely everything you need to know.** Crink, 2009.

**Small publishers' catalogue, 2010.** (compiled and edited by Colleen Higgs and Bontle Senne). Modjaji Bks., 2010.

Van Rooyen, Basil. **Get your book published in 30 (relatively) easy steps: a hands-on guide for South African authors.** Penguin, 2005.

#### General

Baverstock, Alison. **Is there a book in you?** Black, 2006.

Billingham, Jo. **Editing and revising text.** Oxford U.P., 2002. (One step ahead series)

Buchman, Dian Dincin. **The Writer's digest guide to manuscript formats.** Writer's Digest Bks., 1987.

\*Burt-Thomas, Wendy. **The everything creative writing book: all you need to craft well-written and marketable stories, screenplays, blogs and more.** Adams Media, 2010.

Crofts, Andrew. **Ghostwriting.** Black, 2004.

\*Elkin, Susan. **Unlocking the writer in every child: the book of practical ideas for supporting writing.** Ransom, 2011.

Gillespie, Sheena. **The writer's craft: a process reader.** HarperCollins, c1993.

Goldberg, Natalie. **Wild mind: living the writer's life.** Rider, c1991.

**How to write funny: add humor to every kind of writing /** edited by John B Kachuba. Writer's Digest Bks., 2001.

Mackie, Mary. **Creative editing: spot what's wrong with your writing before the editor does.** Gollancz, 1995.

Neff, Jack. **Formatting & submitting your manuscript.** Writer's Digest Bks., c.2000.

Rabiger, Michael. **Developing story ideas.** Focal P., c2006.

Ramet, Adele. **Creative writing: how to unlock your imagination, develop your writing skills and get published.** How To Bks., 2006.

Tedesco, Anthony and Tedesco, Paul. **Online markets for writers: how to make money by selling your writing on the Internet.** Holt, 2000.

Venolia, Jan. **Rewrite right!: how to revise your way to better writing.** Ten Speed P., c1987.

Walton, Todd and Toomay, Mindy. **The writer's path: a guidebook for your creative journey – exercises, essays, and examples.** Ten Speed P., 2000.

Wibbels, Andy. **Blogwild!: how everyone can go blogging.** Brealey, 2006.

\*Wolff, Jurgen. **Your creative writing masterclass: advice from the best on writing successful novels, screenplays and short stories.** Brealey, 2012.

\*Wolff, Jurgen. **Your writing coach: from concept to character, from pitch to publication – everything you need to know about writing novels, non-fiction, new media, scripts and short stories.** Brealey, 2012.

**Writers' & artists' yearbook, 2011: a directory for writers, artists, playwrights, designers, illustrators and photographers.**- Black, c2010.

**The Writer's handbook, 2009** / editor, Barry Turner.- Macmillan, 2008.

**Writer's market UK, 2008: the only guide to writing and publishing you'll ever need** / editor, Michael Cady.- David & Charles, 2007.

Yang, Jonathan. **The rough guide to blogging.**- Rough Guides, 2006.

## Fiction

Bell, James Scott. **Revision & self-editing: techniques for transforming your first draft into a finished novel.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 2008. (*Write good fiction series*)

Bickham, Jack M. **The 38 most common fiction writing mistakes (and how to avoid them).**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1992.

Conrad, Barnaby. **The complete guide to writing fiction.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1990.

Dibell, Ansen. **Plot.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1988.

George, Elizabeth. **Write away: one novelist's approach to fiction and the writing life.**- Hodder, 2004.

Hall, Oakley. **The art & craft of novel writing.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1989.

**How to write an uncommonly good novel** / edited by Carol Hoover; Writers Mentor Group.- Ariadne, c1990.

\*Kenyon, Sherrilyn. **Writer's Digest character naming source-book.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 2005.

Legat, Michael. **Plotting the novel.**- Hale, 1992.

Morrell, David. **The successful novelist: a lifetime of lessons about writing and publishing.**- Sourcebooks, c2008.

Obstfeld, Raymond. **Fiction first aid: instant remedies for novels, stories and scripts.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c2002.

Saunders, Jean. **How to write realistic dialogue.**- Allison, 1994 (1998 printing)

Swain, Dwight V. **Creating characters: how to build story people.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1990.

Zuckerman, Albert. **Writing the block buster novel.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1994.

## Graphic Novel

Chinn, Mike. **Writing and illustrating the graphic novel: everything you need to know to create great graphic works.**- Black, 2004.

Gertler, Nat and Lieber, Steve. **The complete idiot's guide to creating a graphic novel.**- Alpha Bks., c2004.

## Short story

Bickham, Jack Miles. **Writing the short story: a hands-on program.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1998.

O'Faolain, Sean. **The short story.**- Collins, 1948.

*Note: Although this is old, it is still worth reading: here the author considers and analyses the short story as a specialised form of the fiction writer's craft.*

## Genre Fiction

### Science fiction and fantasy

Bova, Ben. **The craft of writing science fiction that sells.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1994.

Evans, Christopher. **Writing science fiction.**- Black, 1988.

Nahin, Paul J. **Time travel: a writer's guide to the real science of plausible time travel.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1997. (*Science fiction writing series* / edited by Ben Bova)

Tuttle, Lisa. **Writing fantasy & science fiction.**- Black, 2001. (*Writing handbooks*)

### Horror

Van Belkom, Edo. **Writing horror.**- Self-Counsel P, 2000.

### Crime and mystery

Lyle, DP. **Forensics: a guide for writers.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 2008.

Mactire, Sean P. **Malicious intent: a writer's guide to how murderers, robbers, rapists and other criminals think.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1995.

Radice, Lisanne. **The way to write crime fiction.**- Elm Tree Bks., 1989

**Writing mysteries: a handbook** / edited by Sue Grafton with Jan Burke and Barry Zeman.- Writer's Digest Bks., c2002.

Wynn, Douglas. **The crime writer's handbook: 65 ways to kill your victim – in print.**- Allison, 1997. (*Allison & Busby's writers' guides series*)

### Romance

Balker, Donna. **Writing a romantic novel and getting published.**- Hodder, 1997. (*Teach yourself series*)

Grant, Vanessa. **Writing romance.**- Self-Counsel P, 1997.

### Erotica

Bailey, Mike. **Writing erotic fiction and getting published.**- Hodder, 1997. (*Teach yourself series*)

### Historical fiction

Martin, Rhona. **Writing historical fiction.**- Black, 1988.

### Writing for children and teenagers

Aiken, Joan. **The way to write for children: a complete guide to the basic skills of writing for children.**- Penguin, 1998.

**Children's writers' & artists' yearbook, 2011: a directory for children's writers and artists containing children's media contacts and practical advice and information.**- Black, c2010.

De Gale, Ann. **Writing for the teenage market.**- Black, 1995.

\*Halverson, Deborah. **Writing young adult fiction for dummies.**- Wiley, c2011.

**How to write and illustrate children's books and get them published.**- Macdonald Orbis, 1988.

Jones, Allan Frewin and Pollinger, Lesley. **Writing for children and getting published.**- Hodder, 1996. (*Teach yourself series*)

Salisbury, Martin. **Illustrating children's books: creating pictures for publication.**- Black, 2004.

\*Salisbury, Martin. **Children's picturebooks: the art of visual storytelling / with Morag Styles.**- Laurence King, 2012.

Underdown, Harold D. **The complete idiot's guide to publishing children's books.**- Alpha Bks., c2004.

**The writer's handbook guide to writing for children** / edited by Barry Turner.- Macmillan, 2004.

### Non-fiction

Campbell, Morag. **Writing about travel.**- Black, 1995

Clouse, Barbara Fine. **265 troubleshooting strategies for writing non-fiction.**- McGraw-Hill, c2005.

Dick, Jill. **Writing for magazines.**- A&C Black, 1994.

Haynes, Anthony. **Writing successful textbooks.**- Black, 2001. (*Writing handbooks series*)

Hennessy, Brendan. **Writing feature articles: a practical guide to methods and markets.**- Focal P., 1994.

Kervin, Alison. **Sports writing.**- Black, 1997. (*Writing handbooks series*)

Larsen, Michael. **How to write a book proposal.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c2003.

McCabe-Cardoza, Monica. **You can write a column.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 2000.

Macdonald, Janet W. **Travel writing.**- Hale, 2000.

Provost, Gary. **How to write & sell true crime: how to spot local stories and turn them into gripping national bestsellers.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1991.

Ricketson, Matthew. **Writing feature stories: how to research and write newspaper and magazine articles.**- Allen & Unwin, 2004.

Wolfe, J. Kevin. **You can write a cookbook.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 2000.

Wray, Cheryl Sloan. **Writing for magazines: a beginner's guide.**- NTC Pub., 1997.

### *Drama, Scriptwriting, Screenwriting*

Aronson, Linda. **Scriptwriting updated: new and conventional ways of writing for the screen.**- Australian Film, 2000

Costello, John. **The Pocket essential writing a screenplay.**- Pocket Essentials, 2002.

Davis, Rib. **Writing dialogue for scripts.**- Black, 1988. (*Writing handbooks series*)

Egri, Lajos. **The art of dramatic writing: its basis in the creative interpretation of human motives.**- Touchstone, 2004.

Field, Syd. **The definitive guide to screenwriting.**- Ebury, 2003.

Gooch, Steve. **Writing a play.**- Black, 1988.

McKee, Robert. **Story.**- Methuen, 1998.

Miller, William. **Screenwriting for narrative film and television.**- Columbus Bks., 1988.

\*Parra, Angelo. **Playwrighting for dummies.**- Wiley, 2011.

Pope, Thomas. **Good scripts, bad scripts.**- Three Rivers P, c1998.

Straczynski, J. Michael. **The complete book of scriptwriting: television, radio, motion picture, the stage play.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1987.

Wallace, Pamela. **You can write a movie.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 2000.

Wolff, Jurgen and Cox, Kerry. **Top secrets: screenwriting.**- Lone Eagle Pub., c1993.

### *Family history, biography, memoirs*

Dixon, Janice T. and Flack, Dora D. **Preserving your past: a painless guide to writing your autobiography and family history.**- Doubleday, 1977.

Bender, Sheila. **A year in the life; journaling for self-discovery.**- Walking Stick P, c2000.

Fitzhugh, Terrick V. H. **How to write a family history: the lives and times of our ancestors.**- Alpha Bks., 1988.

O'Connor, Ulick. **Biographers and the art of biography.**- Quartet Bks., 1993.

Oke, Michael. **Write your life story: how to record and present your memories for family and friends to enjoy.**- How To Books, 2006.

Osborne, Brian D. **Writing biography & autobiography.**- Black, 2004. (*Writing handbooks series*)

Smith, Nancy. **Writing your life story: a step-by-step guide to writing your autobiography.**- Piatkus, 1993.

Stephenson, Lynda Rutledge. **The complete idiot's guide to writing your family history.**- Alpha Bks., 2000.

Taylor, Ina. **Writing biographies and getting published.**- Hodder, 1999. (*Teach yourself series*)

Thomas, Frank. **How to write the story of your life.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1989.

### *Poetry*

Bender, Sheila. **Writing personal poetry: creating poetry from your life experiences.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1998.

Chisholm, Alison. **The craft of writing poetry.**- Allison, 1997. (*Allison & Busby's writers' guides series*)

Finch, Peter. **How to publish your poetry: a practical guide.**- Allison & Busby, 1998.

Moustaki, Nikki. **The complete idiot's guide to writing poetry.**- Alpha Bks., c2001.

### *Style manuals, language usage and books to improve your writing*

Brookes, Ian and Marshall, Duncan. **Chambers good writing guide: practical advice for better writing.**- Chambers, 2004.

Fiske, Robert Hartwell. **Thesaurus of alternatives to worn-out words and phrases.**- Writer's Digest Bks., 1994.

Fiske, Robert Hartwell. **The Writer's Digest dictionary of concise writing.**- Writer's Digest Bks., c1996.

\*Hendry, Owen. **The (essential) companion for writers & editors.**- Pharos, 2011.

**New Hart's rules: the handbook of style for writers and editors / R. M. Ritter.**- Oxford U.P., 2005.

Sullivan, K.D. and Eggleston, Merilee. **The McGraw-Hill desk reference for editors, writers, and proofreaders.**- McGraw-Hill, c.2006.

\*Uys, Isabel. **The new Macro English aid: language, grammar and general knowledge.**- Van Schaik, 2011.

Note: \*Titles not yet on library shelves

