

AN ANNOTATED CRITIQUE GROUP BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elements of Style, Strunk and White. Classic. Short on “style;” long on fundamentals.

“The Figure a Poem Makes,” essay by Robert Frost. As guide to poetics, still valuable; as prose, surprising and memorable.

The Poetry Home Repair Manual, Ted Kooser (U .S. Poet Laureate, 2004-2006).
“Brief, lucid, and often remarkably wise.” Tools, insights, instructions—and warnings.

On Writing, Stephen King. Useful, because unflinchingly honest.

The Writer’s Book of Checklists, Edelstein. Useful orientation to the business as well as creative sides of writing.

The Art of Fiction, John Garner. Theoretically for young writers; but valuable for beginning writers of any age.

Writing Fiction, Janet Burroway et al. For some writers, THE book. For some writers pursuing an M.F.A., THAT book. Now in its 9th edition.

Writing Down the Bones, Natalie Goldberg. The right-brain, creative/freewriting approach to poetry, prose, and productivity.

Bird by Bird, Anne Lamott. Different; but different is good.

How to Write Short Stories, ARCO Publishers. From the folks who brought us *How to Get Your GED*. But seriously—very good on basics and structure of the form.

Writing the Short Story, Jack Bickham. A famous self-teaching course. Our group learned a lot from his intensive approach when we used this book and the following one in our own short story course.

Writing for Story, Jon Franklin. Well-received approach to nonfiction story structure.

Specialized texts (recommended by author Wallace Swenson):

Characters and Viewpoint, Orson Scott Card

Plot and Structure, James Bell

Beginnings, Middles, and Ends, Nancy Kress

Conflict and Action, William Noble

Plot, Ansen Dibell

Grammars and Handbooks:

The Bluebook of Grammar and Punctuation, Jane Straus

The Macmillan Handbook

The Harbrace Handbook

The Chicago Style Manual

And from the Department of Advanced Stuff:

Writing Alone and with Others, Pat Schneider. The Amherst Writers & Artists approach; emphasizes on “voice” and “writing-as-process.” Most valuable, perhaps, for its examination of small group dynamics in critique groups.

Artful Sentences, Virginia Tuiyte. When she matches tactical choices of grammar and usage with strategic levels of subtext and symbolism, I get lost. But her illustrations are from the masters; and even at micro-levels of sentence construction, provide both good reading and great examples.

Ernest Hemingway on Writing, Phillips. The very little that Papa actually said—collected faithfully, organized usefully.