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Writing for Story: Craft Secrets of Dramatic Nonfiction (Reference)

By Jon Franklin



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The new "nonfiction"—the adaptation of storytelling techniques to journalistic articles in the manner of Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, and John McPhee—is an innovative genre that has been awarded virtually every Pulitzer Prize for literary journalism since 1979. And now Jon Franklin, himself a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and undisputed master of the great American nonfiction short story, shares the secrets of his success. Franklin shows how to make factual pieces come alive by applying the literary techniques of complication/resolution, flashback, foreshadowing, and pace. He illustrates his points with a close analysis and annotation of two of his most acclaimed stories, so that the reader can see, step-by-step, just how they were created. This lively, easy-to-follow guide combines readability and excitement with the best of expository prose and illuminates the techniques that beginning journalists—and more experienced ones, too—will find immensely helpful:

- Stalking the true short story
- Drafting an effective outline
- Structuring the rough copy
- Polishing like a pro
- and the tips, tools, and techniques that will put your stories on the cutting edge



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Writing for Story: Craft Secrets of Dramatic Nonfiction (Reference) By Jon Franklin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #168784 in Books
- Published on: 1994-09-01
- Released on: 1994-09-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .80" w x 5.30" l, .55 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

One of Ludwig Miës van der Rohe's favorite aphorisms was that "God is in the details." Jon Franklin would beg to differ. A pretty turn of phrase is no use at all, says he, if you don't have a firm structure on which to hang it. Franklin pioneered the field of creative nonfiction by applying fiction's classical complication-resolution form to standard nonfiction (specifically to news stories, most of which, he states, are generally "endings without beginnings attached"). Instead of focusing on style, grammar, and word use, as do many books on writing, *Writing for Story* provides a rigorous lesson in building a nonfiction story (short or long) that has structural integrity. Franklin advocates starting with an outline, writing the climax first, and engaging in other grueling tasks that seem like hard work because they are.

Review

"All in all, an impressive introduction to a difficult subject, done with disarming candor. Franklin provides concise, no-nonsense tips ... in a lively, easy-to-follow style that's refreshingly free from the usual 'creative writing' jargon. It's a technique that beginning journalists, and even those more experienced, will find especially helpful and revealing. Franklin knows what he's talking about and shares his knowledge with admirable generosity."

—**Kirkus Reviews**

"Learning to write the short story, always a challenge for budding fiction writers, is for Franklin ... the royal road to success in feature writing today. Thoroughly and methodically, he shows aspiring journalists how to 'nail down' the operative elements of a story—complication/resolution, flashback, foreshadowing, and pace—and, through close analysis of two of his prize-winning features, what to do and in what order to do it ... a sound, fertile book, recommended for attaining effective writing skills."

—**Library Journal**

About the Author

Jon Franklin is a well-known pioneer in creative nonfiction. His innovative work in the use of literary techniques in the non-fiction short story, novel, and explanatory essay won him the first Pulitzer Prizes ever awarded in the categories of feature writing (1979) and explanatory journalism (1985). His books include **Writing for Story**, **The Molecules of the Mind**, **Guinea Pig Doctors** (with J. Sutherland), **Not Quite a Miracle** (with Alan Doelp), and **Shocktrauma** (with Alan Doelp). He is a professor at the University of Oregon.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Charles Jones:

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Kent Ibarra:

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