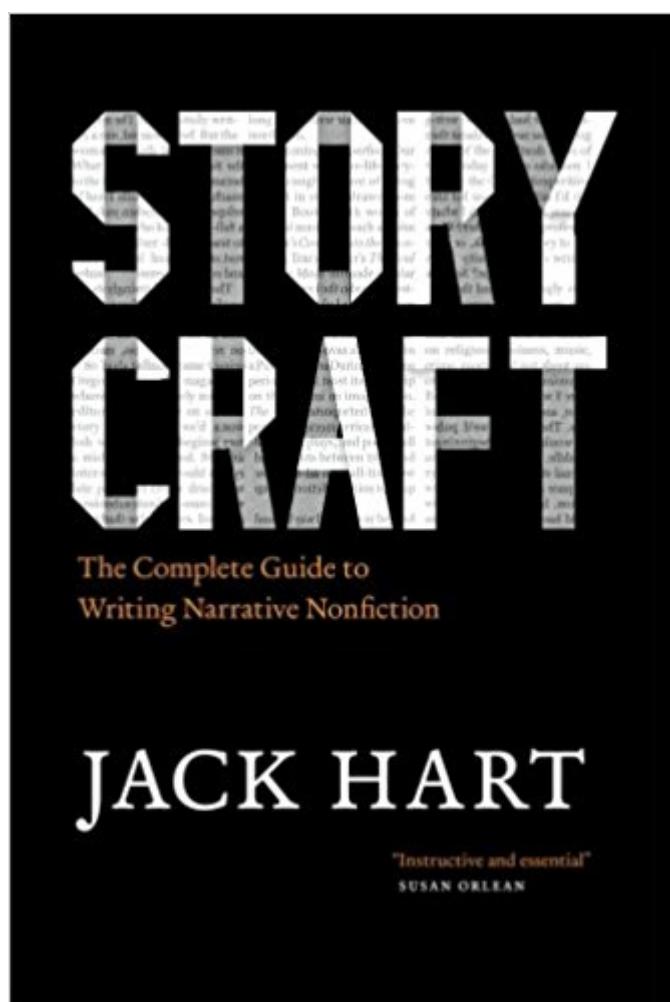


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# Storycraft: The Complete Guide To Writing Narrative Nonfiction (Chicago Guides To Writing, Editing, And Publishing)



## Synopsis

From the work of the New Journalists in the 1960s, to the New Yorker essays of John McPhee, Susan Orlean, Atul Gawande, and a host of others, to blockbuster book-length narratives such as Mary Roach's *Stiff* or Erik Larson's *Devil in the White City*, narrative nonfiction has come into its own. Yet writers looking for guidance on reporting and writing true stories have had few places to turn for advice. Now in *Storycraft*, Jack Hart, a former managing editor of the *Oregonian* who guided several Pulitzer Prize-winning narratives to publication, delivers what will certainly become the definitive guide to the methods and mechanics of crafting narrative nonfiction. Hart covers what writers in this genre need to know, from understanding story theory and structure, to mastering point of view and such basic elements as scene, action, and character, to drafting, revising, and editing work for publication. Revealing the stories behind the stories, Hart brings readers into the process of developing nonfiction narratives by sharing tips, anecdotes, and recommendations he forged during his decades-long career in journalism. From there, he expands the discussion to other well-known writers to show the broad range of texts, styles, genres, and media to which his advice applies. With examples that draw from magazine essays, book-length nonfiction narratives, documentaries, and radio programs, *Storycraft* will be an indispensable resource for years to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"If you have any interest in trying to craft the kind of narrative nonfiction practiced by the likes of John McPhee, Mary Roach, Tracy Kidder, Susan Orlean and Erik Larson, this is a book for you. . . . It offers any nonfiction writer, and freelancer, concrete ways to think about a topic, visualize the most interesting way of presenting its narrative arc, and organize most effectively the presentation of material." (Writer 2011-08-01) "Instructive and essential, reading *Storycraft* is like finding the secret set of blueprints to the writer's craft. Better still, it is engaging, funny, and wise." "wonderful to read and wonderful to learn from." (Susan Orlean 2010-12-16) "For narrative nerds interested in learning about how stories work to move people" "or fall flat" "this is a must-read to revisit every six months." (Vox) "Jack Hart was hands-down the best narrative editor ever to work in newspapers." (Jon Franklin, author of *Writing for Story* and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner 2010-10-29) "When I think back on what I have learned about storytelling over the last 30 years, the trail of memory leads back time and again to Jack Hart. No one has done more to inspire better narrative writing in America." (Roy Peter Clark, author of *Writing Tools* and *The Glamour of Grammar* 2010-10-28) "I'd tell you that I am the best writing coach there is" "if I didn't know Jack Hart." (Bruce DeSilva, former Associated Press writing coach, author of *Rogue Island* 2010-10-29) "In *Storycraft*, Jack Hart vividly explains a lifetime of valuable lessons in nonfiction narrative. For all the celebrity star power he brings to this book, his introduction makes the topic welcoming and accessible to students and reporters who may be new to the subject. And he practices what he preaches; this book entertains the reader. It's like listening to Mark Twain on how to tell a story." (Norman Sims, University of Massachusetts Amherst) "The importance of understanding and utilizing established methods of narrative writing is emphasized throughout the book (structure, point of view, voice and style, setting, scene construction, interviewing), but *Storycraft* transcends typical writers guides through Hart's insights to what story is and how human nature determines the fundamentals of any well-written story. Rather than confine his scope to how to write well, Hart makes a case for why one should write well." (Oregonian) "Hart's new book is quite remarkable. . . . It's the story of how to succeed. . . . How to make your mind observe, how to put your observations into words, how to turn reporting into vision and words into power. . . . Read it. It speaks for itself." (Jon Franklin) "Despite a career focused on the world of journalism, the author demonstrates much insight into the canon of more "literary" creative nonfiction by choosing sound examples that are both accessible and widely acclaimed. . . . This book can function as both a practical introduction to narrative nonfiction and a concise refresher for

professionals. (Choice) "For me, [Hart's] book's appearance was fruitful timing, not unlike finding a new recipe the morning of a dinner party and realizing all the ingredients are in your pantry. Hart's *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction* fortified me. It underscored lessons I thought I'd already mastered, prompting me to think deeper and talk to my editors more about the importance of theme." Nieman Reports (Nieman Reports)

Jack Hart is a former managing editor and writing coach at the Oregonian. He received the first National Teaching Award from the American Society of Newspaper Editors and a University of Wisconsin Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to journalism, has taught on the faculties of six universities, and was named the Ruhl Distinguished Professor at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication. He is the author of *A Writer's Coach*.

Superb book that is a must read for those that want to write or speak stories.

Obscure, but interesting.

Extremely clearly written (and diagrammed) with real world examples. This is actually a book about writing non-fiction. Most books that claim they are about that are really books about getting published. If you want to learn how to write narrative non-fiction, this is the book to read.

I'll admit that I just got this book and that I am not all the way through it, but already I feel as if I'm on firm ground. I've a story that I've tried for years to write and it swirls through page after page not really going anywhere. I've needed someone to identify the basics of how to put together a nonfiction narrative. Now I feel confident that I will produce a true and compelling story when I finish writing (and illustrating). Mr. Hart writes from years of hard-earned experience working with other writers which makes him a great teacher. I'm going to stop now and pick up my pen and work on my own story!

What a wonderful guide, enlightening especially to me, an academic attempting creative nonfiction for my book. Appreciated the analysis of Larson's *Devil in the White City*. Agree that the narrative structure and storytelling are exemplary, but that we must be careful about not venturing into fiction for the sake of evocative detail.

Fantastic book to give you an edge on how to craft your story, whether it be a scientific paper or creative piece. Every paper needs a story, and this teaches you the key elements to engage your reader across disciplines. Plus, it's a quick, easy read (as one might expect).

A great book for those wanting to learn how to structure and develop their non-fiction story to make it great and it covers a topic I have only seen here - a chapter of ethics of writing non-fiction, against the temptation of adding fictional elements just to spruce up a story.

Just an all around great writer reference book with helpful advice and no chest pounding. I often find a lot of writer reference books have an author nobody has heard about, yet they are really into themselves. This book doesn't do that. This book really provides information needed to write quality nonfiction.

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