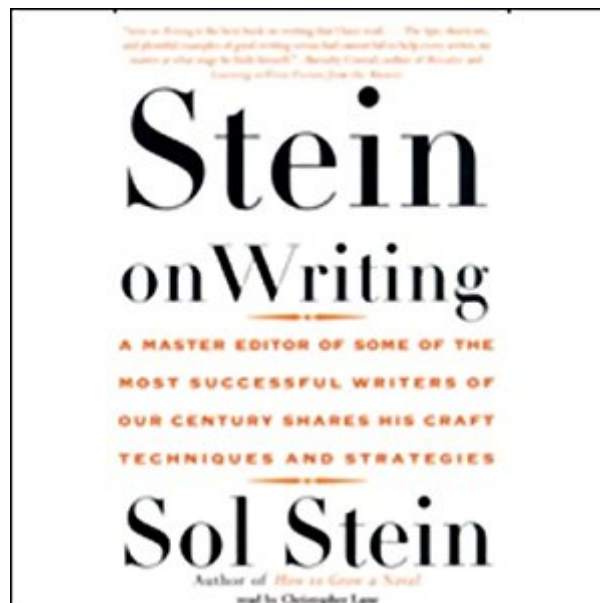




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# Stein On Writing: A Master Editor Shares His Craft, Techniques, And Strategies



## Synopsis

Stein on Writing provides immediately useful advice for all writers of fiction and nonfiction, whether they are newcomers or old hands, students or instructors, amateurs or professionals. As the always clear and direct Stein explains here, "This is not a book of theory. It is a book of usable solutions--how to fix writing that is flawed, how to improve writing that is good, how to create interesting writing in the first place." With examples from bestsellers as well as from students' drafts, Stein offers detailed sections on characterization, dialogue, pacing, flashbacks, trimming away flabby wording, the so-called "triage" method of revision, using the techniques of fiction to enliven nonfiction, and more. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

STEIN ON WRITING by SOL STEIN is clearly to date the most impactful book on writing I've read. If you were to glance inside my copy you'd find dog-eared pages, highlights galore, asterisks, and notes written throughout. STEIN ON WRITING is precise information, right to the point with useful examples. The language isn't over the top. A must read for writers at any stage of their journey, but especially for those new to the craft and unpublished. Here are a few notes I took pertaining to specific areas of the book: Page 8 - Feelings, no facts. Page 20 - Must grasp/shock in first sentence and or paragraph. Page 36 - The first paragraph should contain: Trigger curiosity. What will they see. Focus on an individual. Visible characteristics of the individual. Individual doing or saying something. Startling or odd fact to grab attention. Page 42 - Readers insist on seeing what they are reading because of TV. Page 43 - Description needs to be part of the storytelling, not static. Page 45

- Storyteller, not an interior decorator. Page 49 - If characters are alive, they become the story. You must know and be attached to the characters in order for the plot to work, not the other way around. Page 57 - Talk and act, not tell. Page 54 - Good examples of showing not telling. Page 55 - Show with eyes, not just state color. How/what are they expressing. Page 55, 56 - Words need to not be just informative, but evoke something. Need to stir feelings in readers, even in description. Page 62 - What makes a character. Page 71 - Individualize minor characters through main characters eyes, not narrative. Page 75 - Separate our lives/beliefs from characters. Page 81 - Character questions to ask. Page 197 - Get rid of the flab! Page 260 - Need to visualize each paragraph/scene first to get a sense of the surroundings to give great detail. If I had to pick one thing that stuck out the most that I learned from STEIN ON WRITING, I would have to say to cut out the flab. After reading about eliminating flab, I went to work on my own manuscript, getting rid of the words that clog our writing and hinder our reading experience.

Whether you're an advanced writer or a beginner, you can get a lot of information by studying this book, though really, I think Stein On Writing is more geared toward the serious side of writing. Mr. Stein leads the reader through a plethora of pitfalls and landmines that writers must traverse if they're to come out safely on the other side and he does it with flair and examples.

If you are deciding whether to buy this book or not, buy it. Read it. Yes, you can find some of this material in other books. But, Sol has a unique perspective on this and it is worth spending time with this book. There are some chapters that are exceptionally well done and I wished that they were longer -- Chapter 11 on dialog, for example. There are also parts of other chapters that seem to drag those out forever! The chapter on resonance was somewhat interesting, but I could not relate to most of the examples Sol presented. Possibly, if I was as intimate with the works Sol talked about as he was, those chapter examples would have made more sense. But, as a whole, to me this chapter was a disappointment. Sol also talks about writing non-fiction. Where I can see the relevance, as a scientific and technical writer for over 3 decades, this book is basically useless in that arena. I'm also a little disappointed that Sol let his literary snobbery show through. I find nothing wrong with commercial fiction. I enjoy reading both types for what they are. None the less, there is a lot of material here that I can use and his insights into revisions I think are golden.

I have only written for academic (technical) outlets so far. Hoping to try my hand at non-fiction, I have been reading avidly on the subject of writing. "Stein on writing" seems to me to be a nice

starting point because it covers useful guidelines that I found scattered across many books. As we should perhaps expect, Stein writes simply and clearly. Almost every chapter ends with succinct and useful tips for applying the ideas presented in the chapter. Although Stein covers both fiction and non-fiction, I felt that the book covered fiction much more thoroughly than non-fiction. While being superior for writers of fiction, the book has lots to offer for aspiring non-fiction writers as well. Those looking for additional resources on writing non-fiction might also benefit from the wealth of tips from numerous successful writers in *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide* from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University.

A must have for anyone who wants to be successful as a writer. Clearly outlines the approach to take and helps you hone your skills.

No one does a better job of instructing writers than Sol Stein. This particular volume, now thankfully in paperback, is recognized as a classic and mandatory reading for anyone who truly wants to succeed at writing professionally. Entertaining, challenging, and enlightening - this book lives up to everything you need as a writer, and more. Buy a hefty pack of highlighters and prepare to use them. You will want to drink in every word.

Of all the books on writing, this has to be the best! This is not a generic "you have to work on your writing skill" type of book. It is a step by step how-to book, and you can use all the techniques discussed in the book. I have listened and read this book over 20 times, and each time I find new things that I can use in my own writing. I'd say that if you write, you have to read this book before you let others see your work.

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