

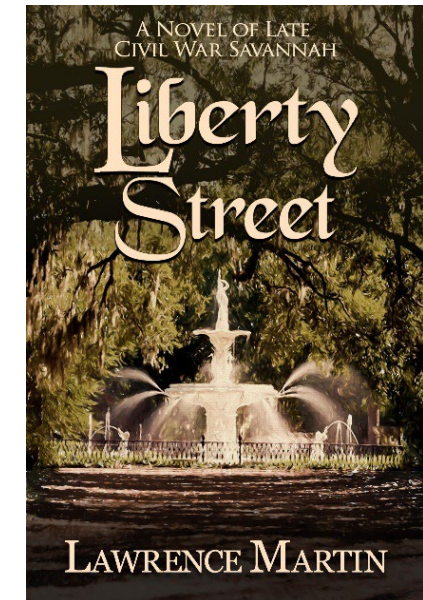
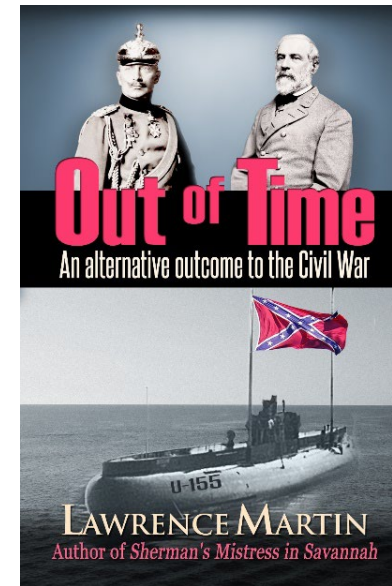
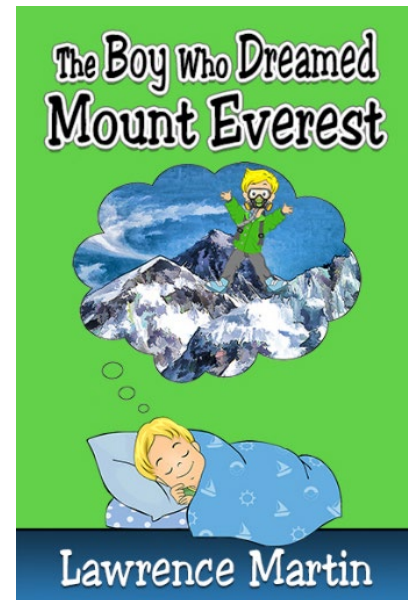
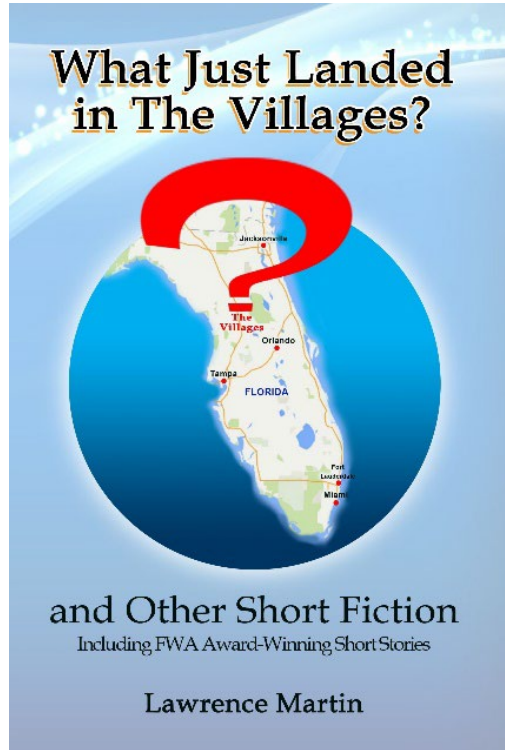
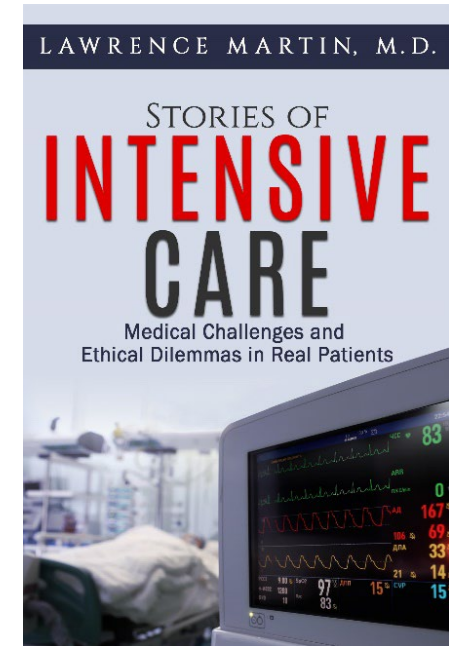
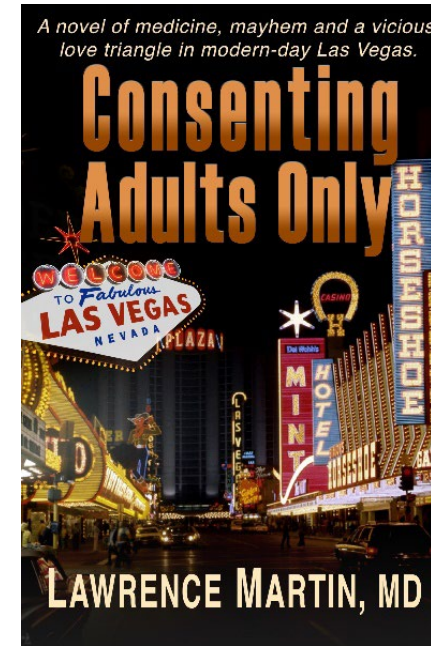
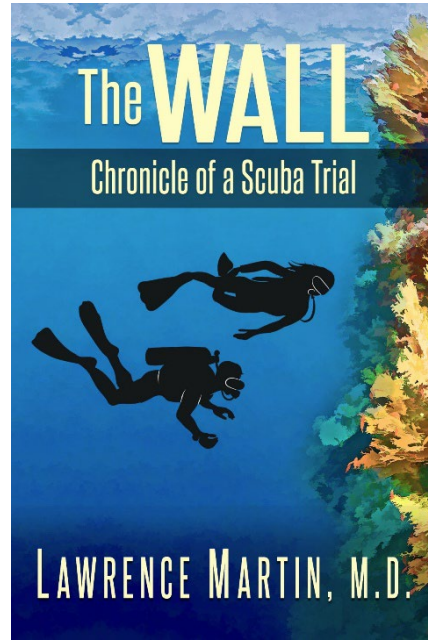
Self-Publishing: The Good and the Bad



Writers League of The Villages
January 12, 2022

Lawrence (Larry) Martin, M.D. (Retired Physician)
drlarry437@gmail.com

- Author of 23 books (about 2/3 self-published)
- Multiple genres





- 90% of Americans say they have a book in them: information to impart, a story to tell, or a memoir.
- If you write a book that you plan to publish, you will most likely have to **self-publish** it.

Self-publishing: The Good and Bad News

- The good: self-publishing is easy to do.
- The bad: self-publishing is easy to do.

If you self-published before the internet, you had two choices

1) **You paid for the book to be printed**, and had to buy a minimum number, typically 1000. You took delivery of the books in your garage or basement. You then had to find a way to sell them.

- Craft and book fairs; Advertising; Local, independent book stores – sometimes
- Give them away



2) **You signed a contract with a “vanity-publishing” company** that produced your book, retained its copyright, and in the process fleeced you out of \$\$\$\$\$. Their only business plan was to sell books and services to you, the author, NOT to sell books to the public.

Many of these vanity-publishing companies are still around, and are to be avoided.



Self Publishing since the Internet and



- You can now do it yourself or pay some \$\$ to have your book converted into a publishable format; then, it costs nothing to list on Amazon.
- You don't need to take delivery of any books; now have print-on-demand.
- You retain full copyright.
- You get a large percentage of any sales.
- You can easily publish an e-book at no or minimal cost.
- For a narrator fee, can also create an audible version (or, if so inclined, can narrate it yourself).

Self Publishing since the Internet and



- Publishing your book on Amazon is free.
- The costs incurred are before publishing, i.e., getting your book into publishable format. These include:
 - Editing (\$0 to thousands)
 - Cover Design (\$0 to hundreds)
 - Formatting and uploading book to Amazon (\$0 to hundreds)
 - Audible narration (\$0 to hundreds)

Spectrum of options to get your book into publishable format:

Do-it-yourself-----Free lancers-----One-stop self-publishing company
\$0 \$ to \$\$ \$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$

WRITER BEWARE® - SFWA



Spend some time on this website and you will learn a lot about self-publishing.

Traditional vs. Self-publishing

Traditional

- No up front money
- Publisher takes all financial risks; may or may not pay an advance to the author
- Book will be professionally edited and formatted; publisher does book cover also
- Author gets 15% of sales (more for ebook); agent gets a percentage of author's income
- Book will be considered for B&N and other book stores
- Book has a chance to be reviewed in major media
- Average total sales per book: 3000

Traditional vs. Self-publishing

Self-publishing

- Author pays all costs
- Book will not be professionally edited or formatted unless author pays for these services; they can cost from several \$100 to several \$1000.
- Author keeps large percentage of all book sales (on Amazon, up to 70%)
- Book will not be considered for chain book stores (with rare exceptions)
- Author is responsible for all marketing
- Book will not be reviewed in major media
- Average total sales per book: 250

Traditional vs. Self-publishing

- Major publishers require manuscripts be submitted by an author's agent, and won't look at a manuscript sent "over the transom."
- Chances are, if you're a new author, you can't get an agent because most agents don't want to deal with new authors in our age group; they want to connect with writers who have a long career ahead of them.

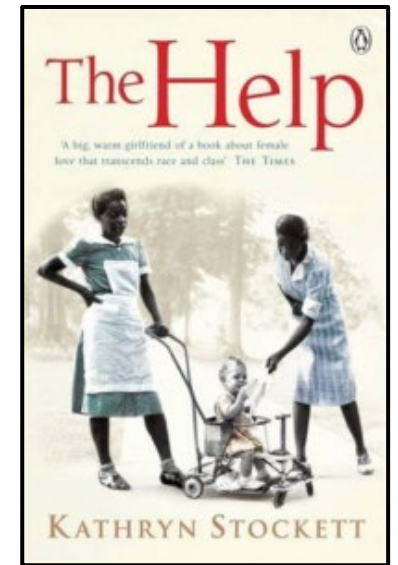
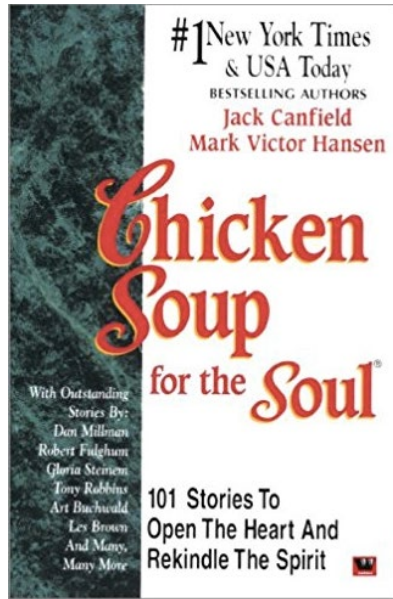
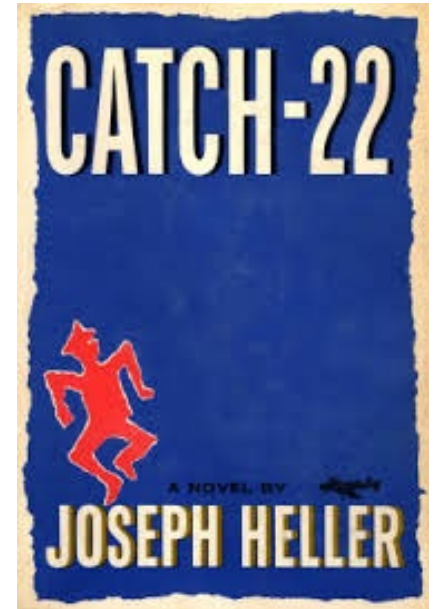
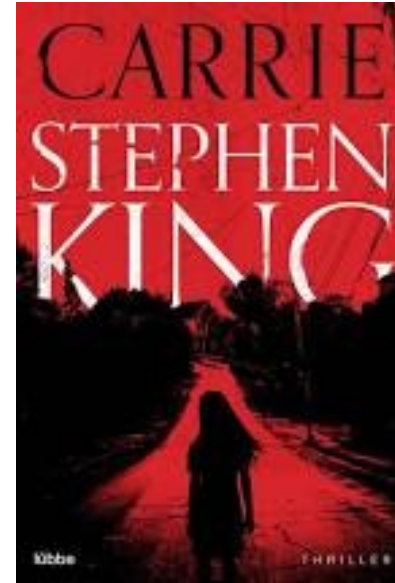
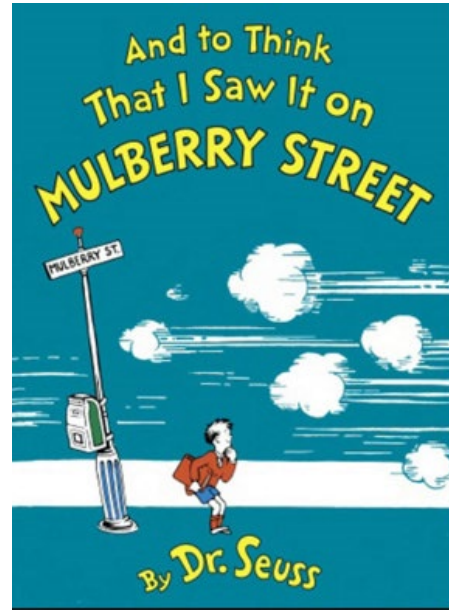
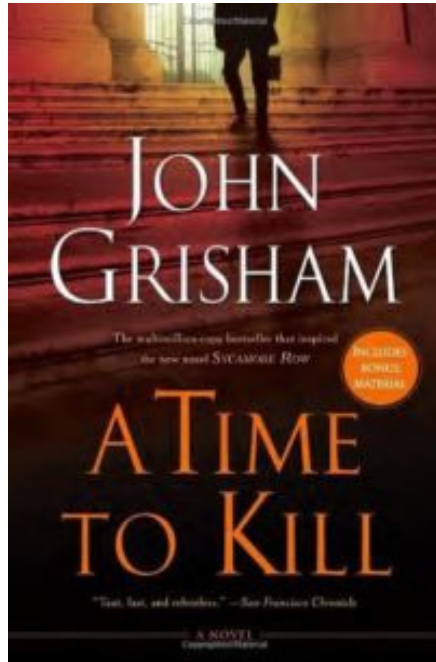
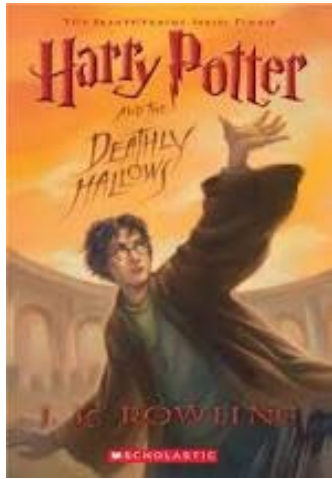


Traditional vs. Self-publishing

Spoiler Alert:

- Agents can tell good from bad writing, but have no special ability to know what will sell or be successful.
- **MANY** best-sellers have been turned down by agents (and publishers).

Turned down by multiple agents and/or publishers before finally finding a publisher





Traditional vs. Self-publishing

Even if you could get an agent interested in your book:

- The agent's contract is for a year, and if no publisher is found, you are out of luck and have lost a year.
- If a publisher is found, it will likely take *another* 1-2 years before your book is published.
- For most retirees, self-publishing is seen as the best option to getting your book before the public.
- From uploading a ready-to-publish book to being for sale on Amazon **can take only 1-2 days!**
 - **2007: 6% of all print books were self-published**
 - **2021: >90% of all print books were self-published**

Self-publishing: The Good News



- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon.**
- This is “light-years” better than pre-internet
 - No need to take delivery of a thousand books, or deal with a scammy self-publishing company
- Can self-publish your book at no or low-cost, depending on your own skills at cover design, formatting, and editing.
 - For the best result, expect to spend some \$\$ self-publishing your book.

Spectrum of options to get your book into publishable format:

Do-it-yourself-----Free lancers-----One-stop self-publishing company
\$0 \$ to \$\$ \$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$

- 1) Hire individual free lancers for each job you want (editing, formatting, cover design, etc.). They are listed all over the internet. Also on fiverr.com. Talk to other writers who have used free lancers.
- 2) Go with a legitimate self-publishing company that will do everything, typically at \$2-4K. To find one, **MUST DO YOUR RESEARCH. Many self-publishing companies are scammers.** They overcharge by thousands, and control your copyright. Their business model is based only on selling stuff to *you*, not selling your book to the public.
 - Google “Self-publishing companies to avoid.”
 - Talk to other writers who have used a self-publishing company.

Self-publishing: The Good News

Once your book is ready, it costs nothing to publish using Amazon's KDP



kindle | direct publishing

Bookshelf | Reports | Community | Marketing

i **Introducing Kindle Vella: New storytelling option available through Kindle Direct Publishing**
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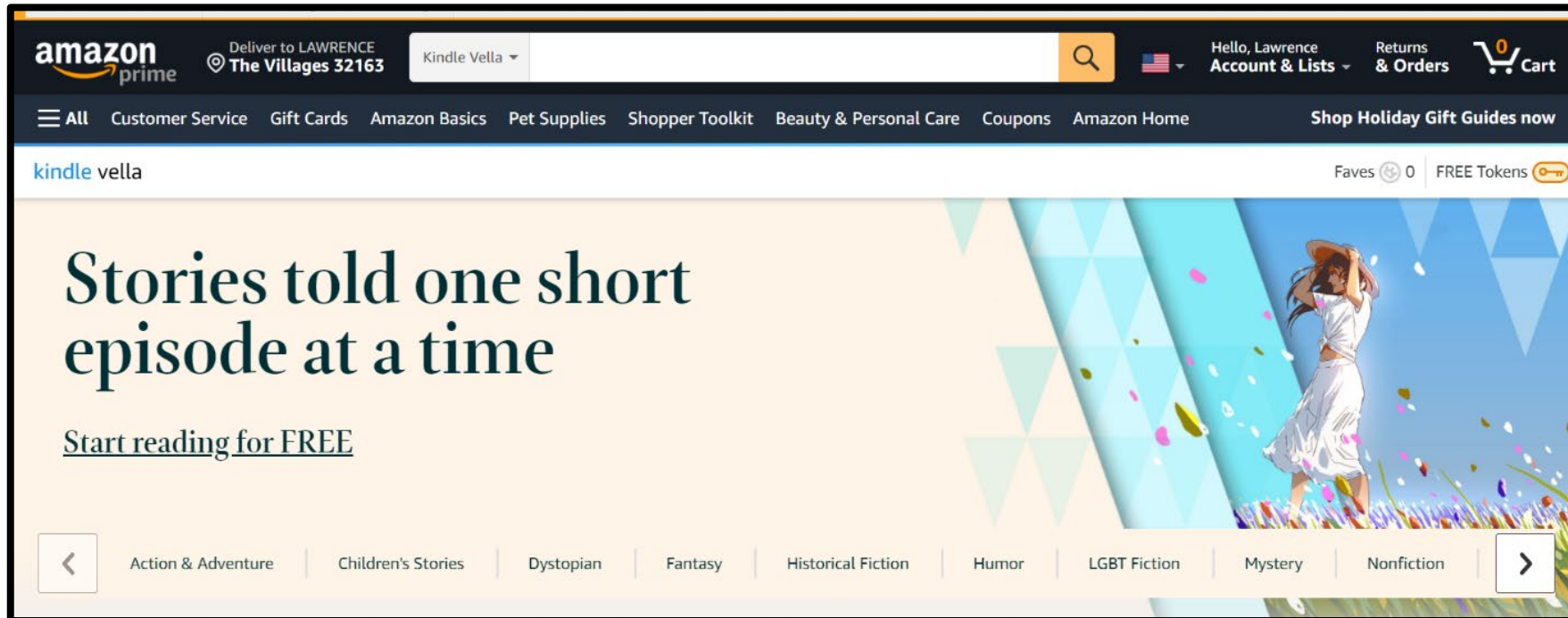
+ **BETA**
Hardcover

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Kindle Vella

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Do you need an International Standard Book Number – 13-digit identifying code

- Every print book you intend to sell needs an ISBN.
- KDP gives you one for free, but then your book is “published by Amazon” and this limits outlets where you can sell the book.
- If you want your book published *by you* or your imprint, need to buy an ISBN from bowker.com. Expensive if only buy one. Bulk purchase is best option.
 - **1 - \$125**
 - **10 - \$295 (\$29.50 per ISBN)**

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Printed in the United States of America
Independently Published
ISBN: 978-1-7349355-7-8

For Ebook via KDP, you can use Amazon's free Amazon Standard Identification Number; don't need an ISBN

Ebook

Product details

ASIN : B083MXDNNF

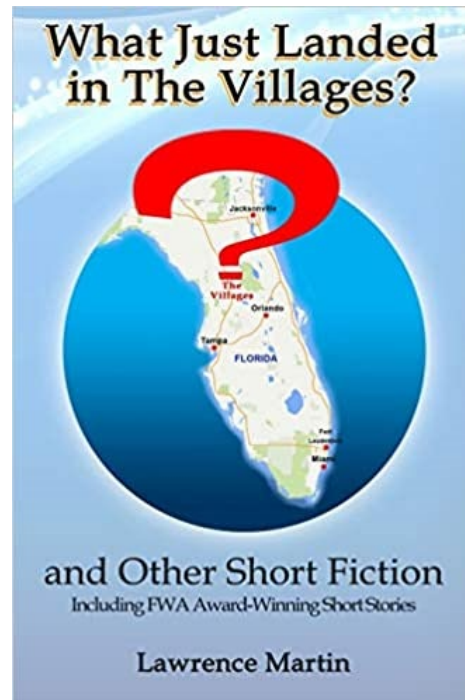
Publisher : Lakeside Press (January 7, 2020)

Publication date : January 7, 2020

Language : English

File size : 9660 KB

Simultaneous device usage : Unlimited



Print Book

Product details

Publisher : Lakeside Press (January 6, 2020)

Language : English

Paperback : 314 pages

ISBN-10 : 0997895969

ISBN-13 : 978-0997895964

If you do it yourself, or use free-lancers to prepare the book, next step is to publish the book.

Though Amazon's KDP is the most popular "do-it-yourself" route, there are other routes to making your book available to the general public, including listing on Amazon.com.

They all require uploading a fully-formatted, cover-ready file.

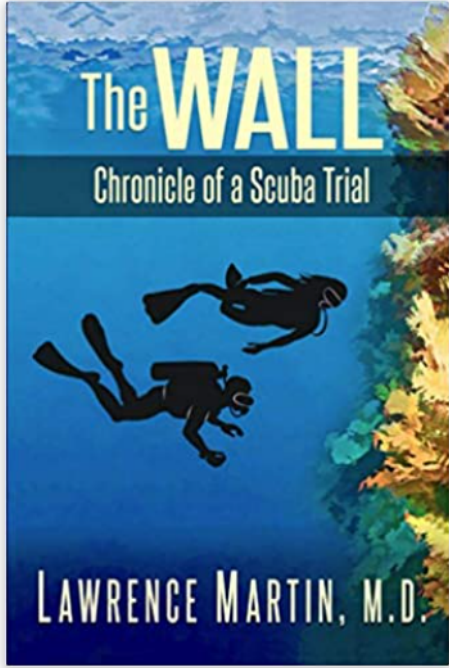
Amazon KDP – no charge (free ISBN)

Draft to Digital – no charge (free ISBN)

Smashwords – no charge (free ISBN)

Ingram Spark – \$49 (need your own ISBN)

Self-published: Kindle e-book, audiobook, and paperback




Look inside ↴

The Wall: Chronicle of a Scuba Trial Paperback – December 13, 2020

by Lawrence Martin M.D. (Author)


★★★★☆ 15 ratings


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 Listen



[See all 2 images](#)

A young woman is lost on a scuba dive in Grand Cayman. Did she suffer nitrogen narcosis? Or did she commit suicide? Experts argue both scenarios in a civil trial that takes place 14 months later. Her parents are the plaintiffs. The defendants are a large corporation and its dive master on that fateful day. There are several experts called to testify, including the author. The two lawyers object to each other's arguments, cite precedent, drill their experts. Yet one thing is missing: her body. It will never be recovered. The Wall is fiction but it reads like a real case. Put yourself in the jury box, listen to the experts and lawyers battle it out, then make your decision. How will you decide? For the plaintiffs or the defense?

Self-publishing: The Good News



- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon.**

Self-publishing: The Bad News



Self-publishing: The Good News



- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon.**

Self-publishing: The Bad News



- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon.**

Self-publishing: The Bad News



- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon**

As result:

- Consensus: @ 90% of self-published books are poorly written, poorly formatted, and/or poorly edited (google “bad self-published books”).
- @ 2 million self-published books every year; your book is unlikely to be reviewed, carried in book stores, or sell enough to make any money.
- Professional help in producing your book is recommended. However, let me repeat: **You need to be hyper-vigilant not to be ripped off by people who prey on authors wishing to self-publish.**



Self-publishing: The Bad News



- **Good editing is time intensive and, if done by a professional, expensive. However, you should not self-edit. So much can go wrong!**

- Its a glorious day.
- “What time is it, Martha?”
- “Come over hear, John.”
- I honed in on the starship.
- Bill picked up sword.
- They stormed the capital.
- “We are the righteous ones.”
- During the rein of Louis XIV.

- **It’s** a glorious day.
- “What time is it, Martha?”
- “Come over **here**, John.”
- I **homed** in on the starship.
- Bill picked up **the** sword.
- They stormed the **capitol**.
- “We are the **righteous** ones.”
- During the **reign** of Louis XIV.

So easy to screw up. Everyone does it.



Reins of a horse



Louis IV's reign

Self-publishing: Some More Bad News



For most self-published authors:

Writing is the **easier task**

Marketing your book is the **harder task**

- Most self-published authors put little effort/money into marketing. Marketing via social media is time-intensive and difficult.
- For each self-published book, the average no. of books sold is 250 total.
- Companies that sell “promotion packages” typically charge \$\$thousands, and are almost guaranteed to be a waste of money.

Two faces of the self-published author

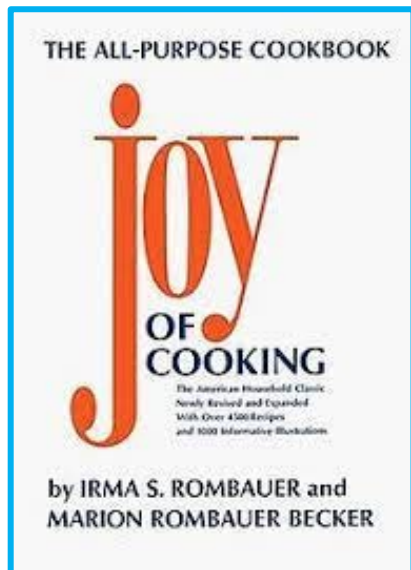
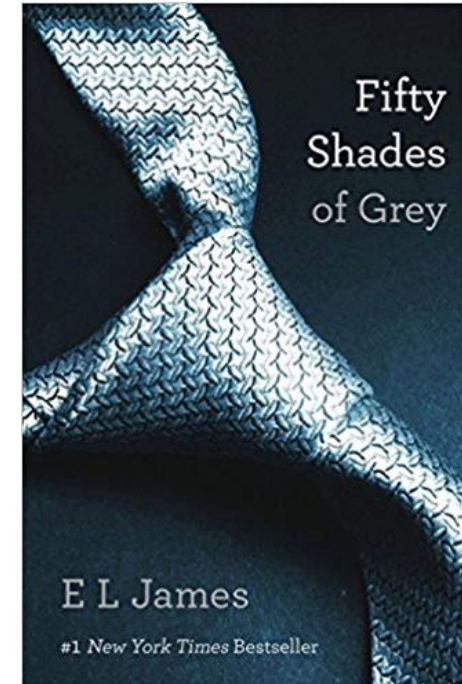
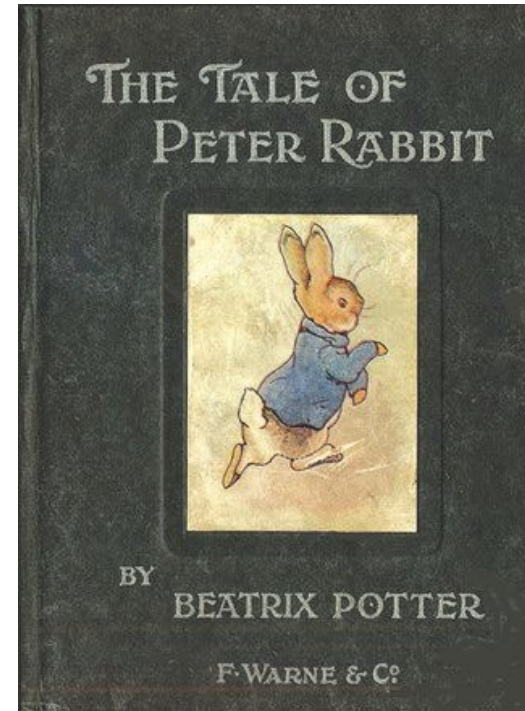
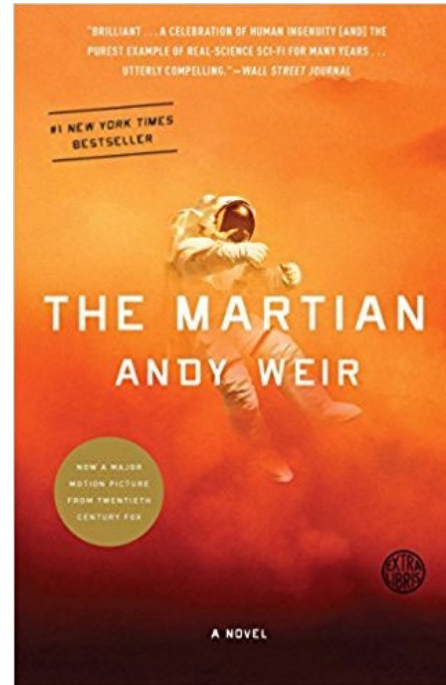
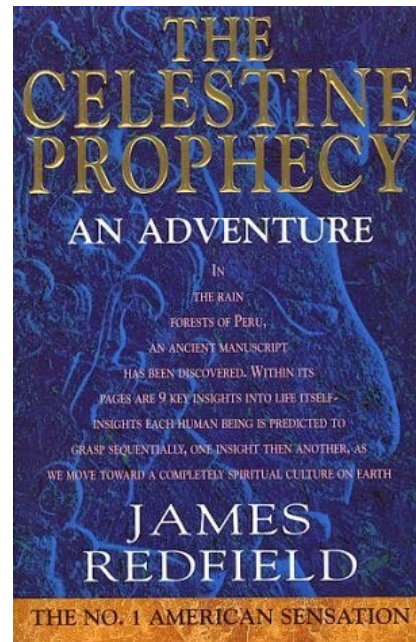
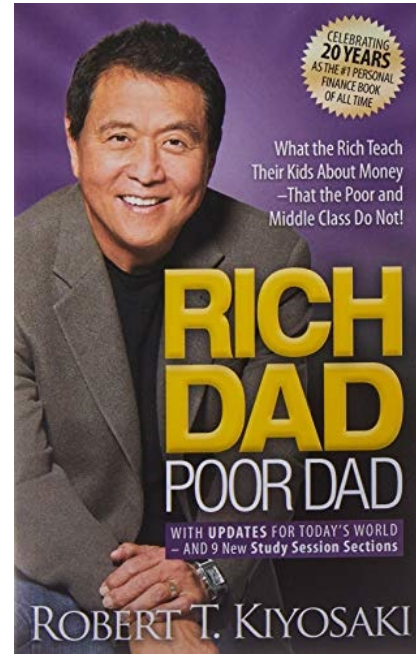
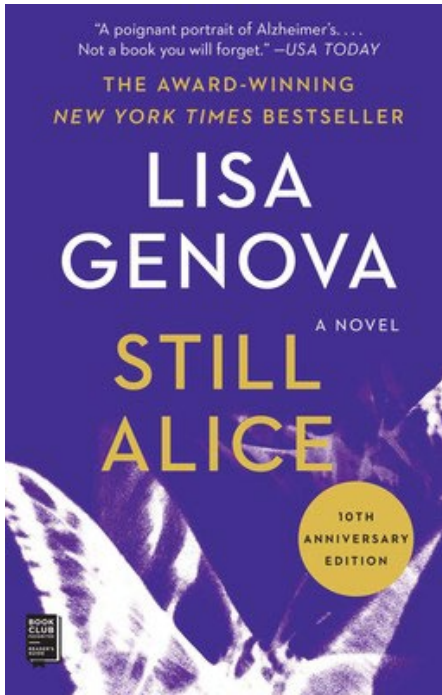
Writing and publishing
the book



Marketing the book



Some self-publishing successes that led to traditional publishers: Few & far between



Why bother self-publishing at all?

- **Money?** Remote possibility
- **Fame?** Even more remote
- **Sense of accomplishment?** Definitely
- **Way to learn about a subject that interests you?** Great idea
- **Become part of a creative culture you enjoy?** Absolutely
- **Leave something important to your family?** Especially so, for memoirs

And, not least....

You simply enjoy writing

Self-publishing – some more good news



- If you're going to write and self-publish a book, you couldn't be in a better place than The Villages.
- More than a dozen writing clubs where you can get critiques, good feedback, and advice on self-publishing
- There are an estimated several hundred active writers in TV. The vast majority with books for sale are self-published.
- **Writers League of The Villages**, our club with more than 200 members; sponsors many activities for writers: presentations on writing skills, marketing, publishing.

Writers League of The Villages

writersleagueofthevillages.com

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Celebrate the Holidays at our next meeting
January 12, 2022

9 a.m. IN PERSON

Welcome To
WRITERS
LEAGUE
OF THE
VILLAGES

CLICK FOR
JANUARY 2022
NEWSLETTER

Hope to see you at our next meeting on Wednesday, January 12 at Laurel Manor Recreation Center from 9-11 a.m.

WLOV Monthly Newsletter



Quill de Ville

www.WritersLeagueofTheVillages.com

Writers League of The Villages Newsletter

January 2022

Facebook page: Writers League of The Villages
<https://www.facebook.com/The-Writers-League-of-The-Villages-162776817086391/>
Members-only FB Group for posting: Writers of The Villages Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2456384291302772/>



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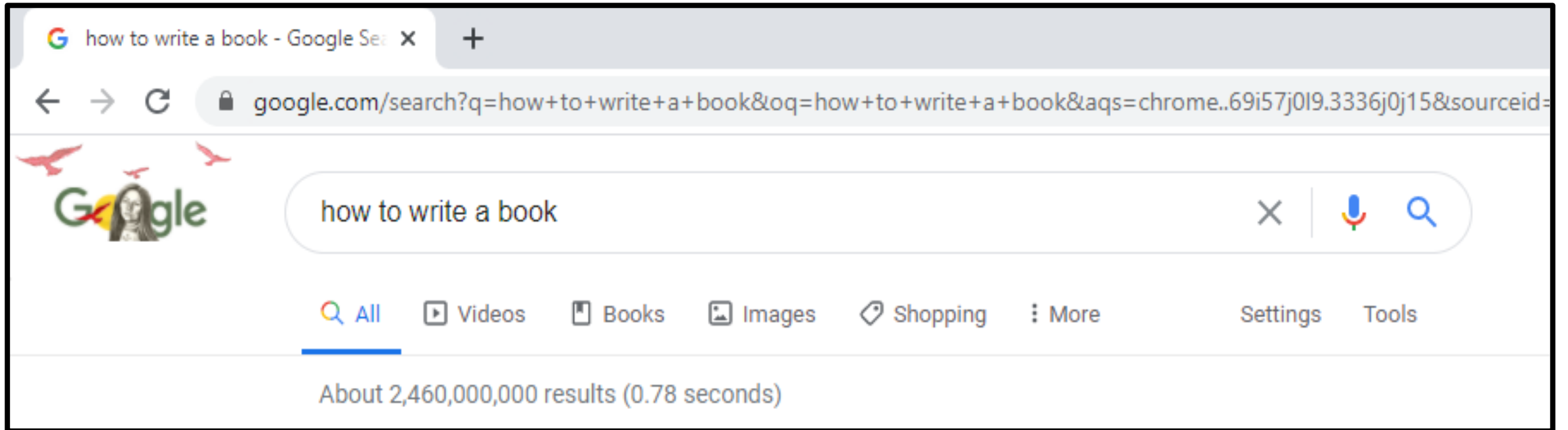
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So, how do you write a book?

Every month, 81,000 people Google the phrase
“how to write a book.”



Steps to “how to write a book” that you will find on a Google search

- Decide what to write about...
- Commit to doing it...
- Set a time to write...
- Decide on a daily word count...
- And a weekly word count...
- Commit to finishing...
- **Blah, blah, blah.**

The *really* best steps to writing a book:

Get idea

Start writing

Get feedback from other writers

Keep writing; rewrite as needed

Get feedback from other writers

Keep writing; rewrite as needed

Get feedback from other writers

Keep writing; rewrite as needed

Etc.

Pantser vs. Plotters

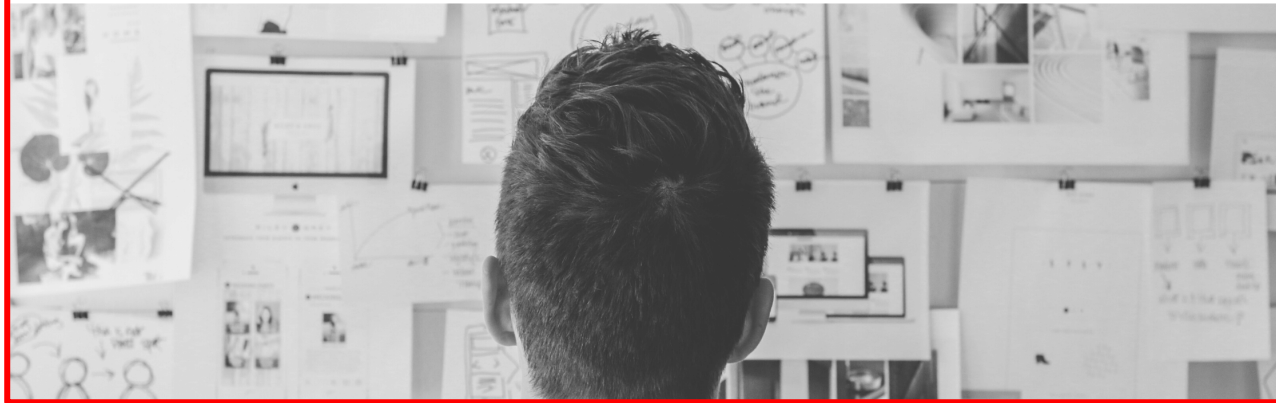
Pantser: To fly by the seat
of your pants.
Little to no planning
before writing.



Plotter: To plot, to plan.
Plans out the details
before writing.

ARE YOU A PLOTTER OR A PANTSER?

erinlafond.com



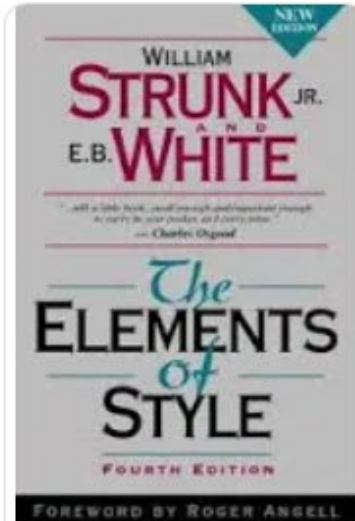
My preference: Pantser

If the plot or story is not clear in your mind as you write, an outline or detailed plan probably won't help much. Also, if you just start writing your story, you can always revise as needed.

However, being a plotter is OK as well. Whatever works for you.

What about “Rules of Writing”?

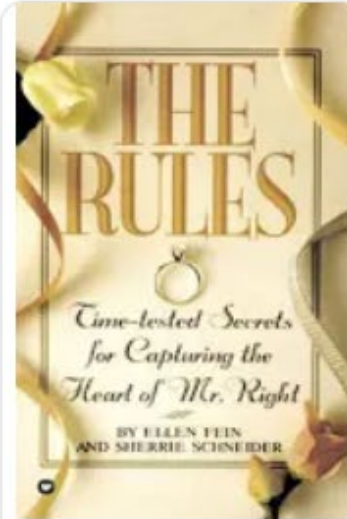
Ads · Shop rules of writing book



The Elements
of Style,...

\$5.10

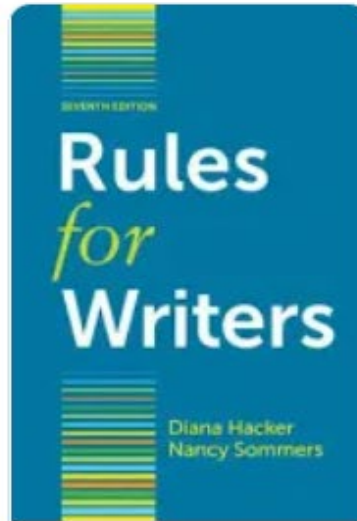
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The Rules
(ebook)

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Rules for
Writers by...

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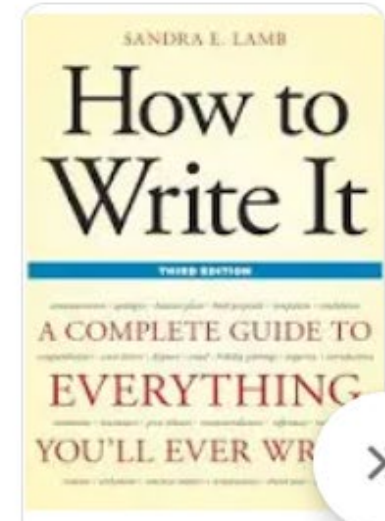
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So many rules. It's best to learn about them as you go along.

One of the most common: “Show don't tell.”

- This is “telling” the reader -- **weak**: The man on the sidewalk was homeless.
- This is “showing” the reader -- **strong**: The man lived in a small tent on the sidewalk, one of many such tents occupying the whole block. As I got closer to him my nostrils flared, from the awful odor of the unwashed.

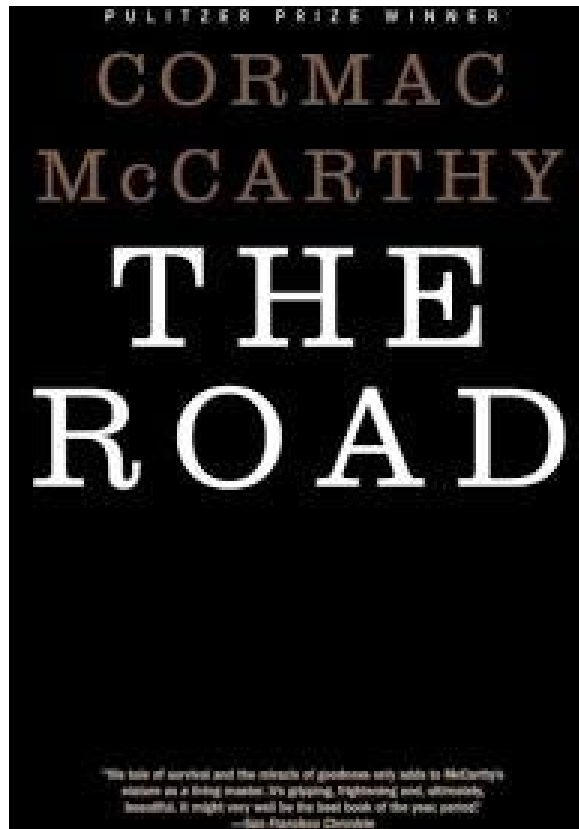
Another common rule: Avoid use of passive voice.

Passive: The theory of relativity was published by Einstein in 1905.

Active: Einstein published his theory of relativity in 1905.

Think of every rule as a “suggestion.” Great writers break them all the time (but they know what they're doing).

Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer-Prize winning "The Road" has **no quotation marks!**



He was a long time going to sleep. After a while he turned and looked at the man. His face in the small light streaked with black from the rain like some old world thespian. Can I ask you something? he said.

Yes. Of course.

Are we going to die?

Sometime. Not now.

And we're still going south.

Yes.

So we'll be warm.

Yes.

Okay.

Okay what?

Nothing. Just okay.

Go to sleep.

Okay.

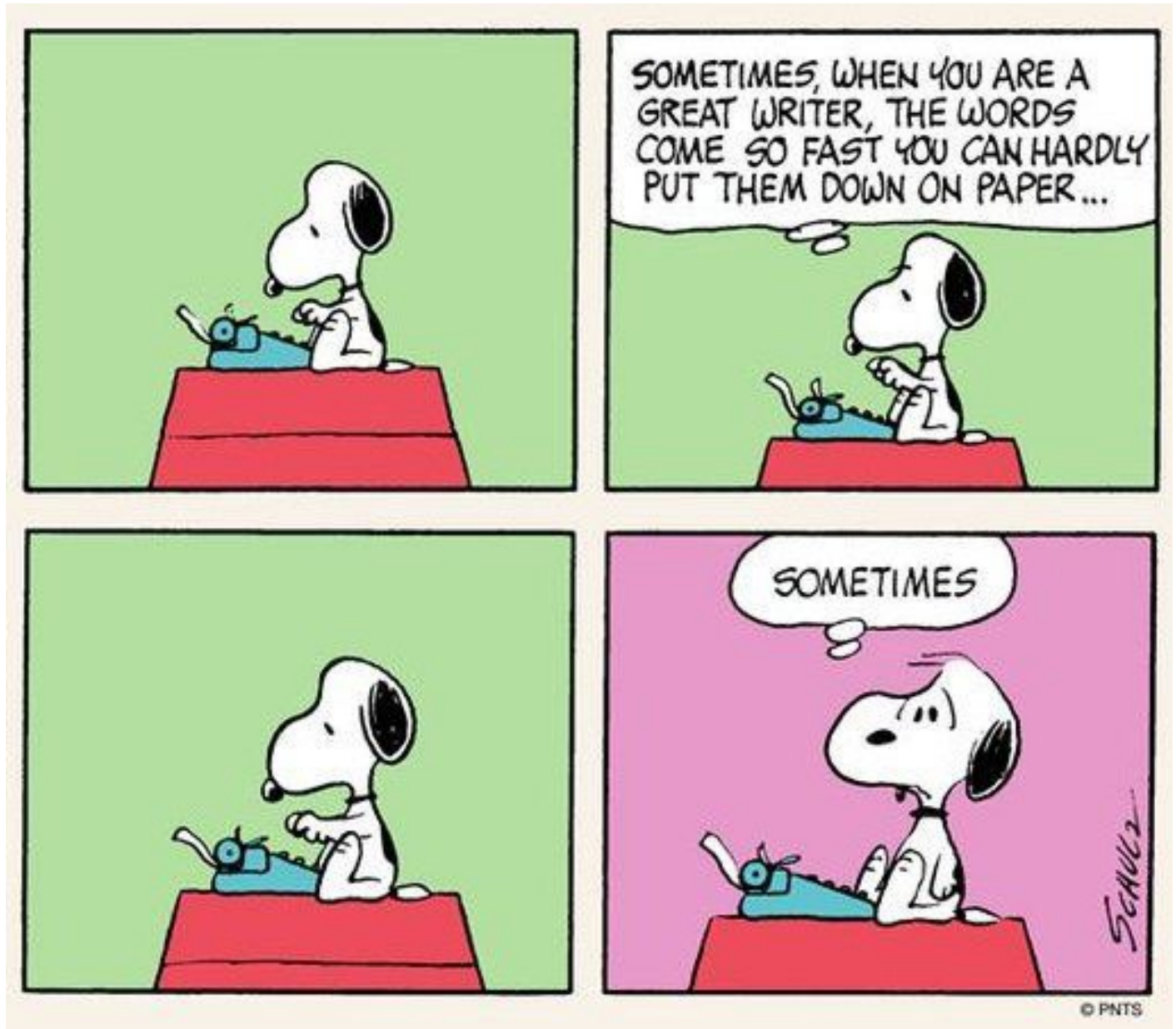
I'm going to blow out the lamp. Is that okay?

Yes. That's okay.

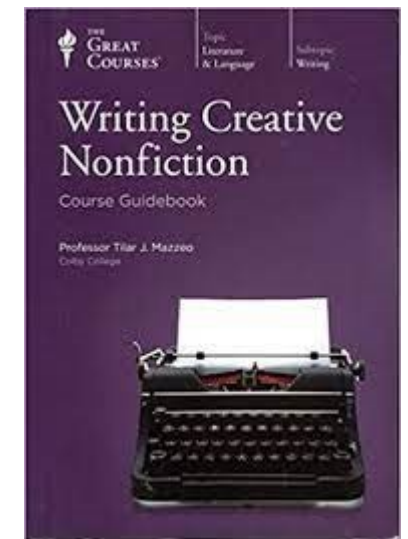
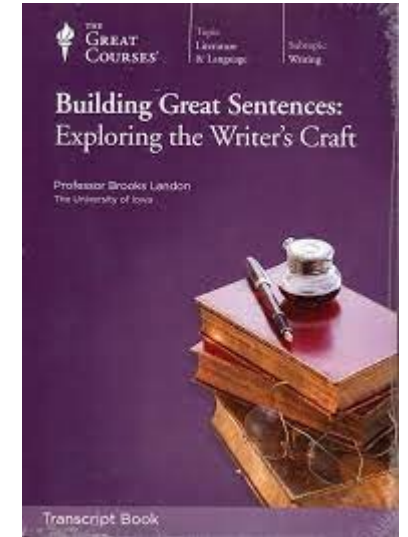
If you're a
beginner, don't
worry about rules.

But, do learn as
you go.

Writers write.



Learning the Craft: Abundant Resources



Thursdays @ 3 pm -- Great Courses on Zoom for WLOV members

- How to Write Best-Selling Fiction, by James Scott Bell, JD
- Hosted by Paula Howard, past president, WLOV
- Zoom link sent to all members each Thursday morning



James Scott Bell, JD

"The tools and techniques you learn can be applied at any stage of your writing and will serve you the rest of your writing life."

Alma mater: University of Southern California Gould School of Law

[Learn More About This Professor](#) →

There are dozens of web sites that list “rules of writing.” Best to learn them as you go along, from reading and from feedback from other writers.

If there is one cardinal rule, it is this:

There are dozens of web sites that list “rules of writing.” Best to learn them as you go along, from reading and from feedback from other writers.

If there is one cardinal rule, it is this:

Always think of your reader.

Don't write in a vacuum. Join a critique group for feedback. Many groups to choose from in TV.



Interested in joining a Critique Group to Help Your Writing?

For a List of All Writing Groups in The Villages
-Click the red button below-

[CLICK HERE](#)

Always think of your reader.

- For example, if you write a memoir, vitally important to decide who you are writing it for. Two general possibilities.
 - Only for family or people who know you well
 - For the general public

Always think of your reader.

- ANECDOTE: John read chapter 1 of his memoir, and mentioned “Alice” several times, but never stated who she was. When he was finished, we asked him. “Oh, she’s my wife,” he replied. Yet he stated his memoir was for the general public! “Alice” was clear in his mind, but he never considered his readers, who didn’t know his wife.
- ANECDOTE: Jill read chapter 1 of her memoir, starting with her early childhood. But she neglected to mention the year, the city or state, or anything about the setting. All this information was clear in her mind, but she left the reader clueless.
- If your memoir is for **the general public**, need to clarify and identify people, places, dates, and make sure the work is properly edited. However, if your memoir is for **family only**, attention to this detail is not so critical. Family may accept a poorly-edited memoir, but the general public will not.

Always think of your reader.

If your memoir is for the general public, also need to make it **interesting** for the general public.



- ANECDOTE: In a writing club, over a period of weeks, Greg read his memoir about his career in corporate management. Each chapter went over business meetings, corporate conventions, and other minutiae for the company he worked for. It was interesting to Greg...but not so much to anyone else. It's hard to imagine that the general reader, who doesn't know Greg at all, would find this memoir interesting.
- Possibly everyone's life/career can be made interesting, but you have to work hard at it if you want to engage the general reader. Seek frequent feedback from people who don't know you well or at all. Critique groups are good for this purpose.

Do you have a book to write?

Just start!

Today!