

## Resources

There are certainly tons of resources out there. So many of them are free that my general feeling is writers shouldn't need to pay much to learn the craft.

**By far, the best way to learn is simply to write a lot.** If you're not doing that, all of the tips and tricks in the world won't help you, because you won't be learning how to put them into practice. Learning how to do that takes a lot of time and a lot of actual words on the page. There's no getting around that.

In terms of things to read, **I also think a writer's time is generally better spent reading screenplays, fiction, and non-fiction related to their projects** (or simply their general curiosity). You can find screenplays for most popular movies online with a simple google search. Just be sure you're getting the actual script and not a transcript (if it's a transcript, it'll usually say so). Read a couple dozen scripts every year and you'll find yourself quickly getting a feel for the form.

There are some good books on screenwriting, though. None of them are gospel, but as long as you don't take them that way, here's a small, non-exhaustive list of some that I think offer value:

- **STORY** by Robert McKee  
*Dense and I don't agree with everything, but certainly offers a lot of great insights.*
- **THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT WORKS** by Bob Saenz  
*About half of this book is related to the business instead of the craft, but it's a worthwhile read. A little less targeted at people who want to write larger studio movies and a little more focused on people whose primary focus is to get their foot in the door and get working.*
- **SAVE THE CAT!** by Blake Snyder  
*Overly prescriptive and dogmatic, but offers a useful way of thinking about things. Most studio execs and producers have read this, so it's also worth being aware of it.*
- **THE WRITER'S JOURNEY** by Christopher Vogler  
*Breaks down Joseph Campbell for screenwriters. A useful way of thinking about things, even if it doesn't apply to all stories.*

Non-screenwriting books on writing that I still found pretty helpful:

- **ON WRITING** by Stephen King
- **THE EMOTIONAL CRAFT OF FICTION** by Donald Mass
- **PITY THE READER** by Kurt Vonnegut and Suzanne McConnell

In addition to books, there are quite a few digital resources that I think are fantastic.

- **WORDPLAYER** (<http://www.wordplayer.com/columns/welcome.html>)  
*Columns by Terry Rossio, one of the more successful screenwriters of all time*

- MICHAEL ARNDT'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL  
([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0RB9\\_hwffC0pN9PhgrW-bw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0RB9_hwffC0pN9PhgrW-bw))  
*Writer of TOY STORY 3 and LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE gives incredible insights*
- HOW TO WRITE A MOVIE (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSX-DROZuzY&t=20s>)  
*Scriptnotes episode in which Craig Mazin (THE LAST OF US; CHERNOBYL) gives one of the best talks I've ever heard*
- SCRIPTNOTES  
*One of the best podcasts out there. John August and Craig Mazin*
- THE TOWN  
*A business-related podcast that I've been listening to quite a lot, lately*

There are many more resources beyond those. Again, I don't think most writers should need to spend a whole lot of money. Most of those books can even be found through your library or used on ebay.

Classes have the potential to be useful in terms of providing deadlines, peer feedback, and expertise from the teacher, but unless the teacher actually has experience doing the thing you want to do, be wary. Many classes are simply regurgitating the information that can be found above.

Finally, let me reiterate that it's best to just spend most of your time writing. Let resources like the above be a supplement instead of a distraction. Always be cautious of the things that feel like the work but aren't actually the work.

All the best!

Nathan Graham Davis  
[www.nathangrahamdavis.com](http://www.nathangrahamdavis.com)