Craftsman Fiction
Lesson Descriptions

JERRY B. JENKINS CHRISTIAN WRITERS GUILD

1. Brainstorming Your Book and Finding Your Theme

Dream up and hone your big idea. The more you look for ideas, the more attuned you become to what makes a good story. Learn to brainstorm with others to make sure you've created a concept vast enough to support an entire novel.

2. Your Synopsis and Structure

Develop the substance of your story. Starting to write without a strong synopsis is a recipe for disaster. Without it, you are not ready to plot or write. Learn to create a working synopsis to serve as the guiding light for your novel.

3. To Outline or Not?

Discover your writing style. Many novelists work up an outline before they write their first draft, sometimes even a detailed plan for each scene. Others avoid outlining for fear of killing their idea. Try both to determine what works best for you, but explore and learn vital foundational elements that must be in place before writing.

4. Characters

Build deep characters your readers will love. Good fiction is character driven. Readers get involved in a story primarily by connecting with characters. Learn to craft dynamic characters who engage your readers.

5. Point of View and Voice

Choose the approach that works best for your novel. Nothing impacts your novel more than point of view—who is telling the story. This decision determines the voice, language, scenes, and overall tone of your book. Learn to pick a point of view that complements your story.

6. In the Beginning...

Craft unforgettable first pages. How your novel starts is key. Those first words and pages need to grip not only editors and agents , but also your readers. Learn to write first pages that compel readers to want the rest.

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7. Scenes — the Guts of your Novel

Write memorable ones. Much of the delight of fiction rests in the vignettes you create. You can probably recall, with almost photographic clarity, scenes from your favorite novels that hit you with power. Learn to build unforgettable ones.

8. Showing vs. Telling

Put the reader on stage with your characters. Telling is one of the most common failures for beginning writers, and it's easy to correct. Learn to keep your story engaging by showing the action instead of just telling about it.

9. Location, Location, Location

Choose the best setting for your book. Where the action of your novel takes place has psychological implications for your characters and readers. Choose the best location and bring your story to life.

10. Dialogue — Say it Like You Mean It

Write better conversations. Dialogue is one of the most crucial aspects of the craft. If not done well, readers know it. Learn to write effective dialogue that convinces your reader your characters are real.

11. The Finale — Bringing Down the Curtain

Discover how to bring your story to a close. Beginnings are not easy, but endings are even harder. Endings must tie up loose threads and satisfy readers. Learn to write unpredictable endings that gracefully conclude your story.

12. Crafting Your Proposal and Checklist for Success

We've made you a list, now check it twice. Deliver an outstanding proposal and cover your bases with our handy checklist.

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