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**YOUR**  
**ULTIMATE**  
**READING LIST**

**IF YOU WANT *to* BE**  
*an* **AUTHOR**



**JERRY JENKINS**<sup>TM</sup>

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING NOVELIST & BIOGRAPHER



## SELECT BOOKS ON WRITING

1. Marie Arana, *The Writing Life: Writers On How They Think and Work*
2. James Scott Bell (friend and colleague), *Plot & Structure: Techniques and Exercises for Crafting a Plot that Grips Readers from Start to Finish*
3. Brandilyn Collins (friend and colleague), *Getting into Character: Seven Secrets a Novelist Can Learn from Actors*
4. Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*
5. Stephen King (acquaintance), *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* [language]
6. Dean Koontz, *How to Write Bestselling Fiction* [mild language]
7. Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* [language]
8. Donald Maass, *Writing the Breakout Novel: Insider Advice for Taking Your Fiction to the Next Level*
9. Sol Stein (acquaintance), *Stein On Writing: A Master Editor of Some of the Most Successful Writers of Our Century Shares His Craft Techniques and Strategies*
10. William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*
11. William Zinsser, *On Writing Well: An Informal Guide to Writing Nonfiction*

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## SELECT NOVELS FROM WHICH TO LEARN SPECIFIC SKILLS

1. Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*—character development, character arc, pacing
2. John Godey, *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*—metaphor, tension, pacing, plot
3. Harper Lee, *To Kill A Mocking Bird*—voice, period, setting, social mores
4. Jack London, *The Call of The Wild*—man vs. nature, description, economy of language
5. Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*—inventiveness, experimentation, evocative language
6. Scott Turow, *Presumed Innocent*—dialogue, tension, suspense, plot twist
7. Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*—setting, description, dialogue, voice

## SELECT NONFICTION BOOKS FROM WHICH TO LEARN SPECIFIC SKILLS

1. Rick Bragg, *All Over but the Shoutin'*—poetic language, description, memoir; in my opinion, Bragg is our greatest living nonfiction writer
2. Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*—a masterpiece of a “nonfiction novel,” the ultimate in reportage, an example of author restraint
3. Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon John Series* (4 volumes)—a stunning, monumental life’s work, soon to be 5 volumes, that maintains its quality throughout; ultimate example of painstaking firsthand research and stellar writing
4. Samuel Clemens, *Autobiography of Mark Twain*—voice, wit, tone, memoir
5. Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*—economy of language, memoir, history
6. Frank McCourt, *Angela’s Ashes*—memoir, word choice, fiction technique in nonfiction, evocative scene setting, emotion, pathos
7. Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*—historical biography, research

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