

Brian Henry Recommends

The best writing books ever

by Brian Henry of the Quick Brown Fox blog

***Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott** – A beautiful read, this book is full of wisdom and joy. Worth reading even if you're not an author. Worth reading over and over again. My absolute favourite, and the favourite of many other writers, too.

***Your First Page* by Peter Selgin** – By far the best book about the craft of how to tell a story in a novel every written.

***The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr and E.B. White** – If you went to university, you probably already have this book somewhere on your shelf. It's the most important book about writing good prose ever written. It's short enough and good enough to be memorized.

***Spunk and Bite: A Writer's Guide to Punchier, More Engaging Language & Style*, by Arthur Plotnik** – This book is an essential antidote to Strunk and White. While *The Elements of Style* contains the commandments of writing good prose {"Make the paragraph your basic element of composition," etc.} *Spunk and Bite* is full of "try this! kinds of suggestions.

***On Writing* by Stephen King** – Probably the best memoir of the writing life.

***Writing Down the Bones* by Natlie Goldberg** – Goldberg is the godmother of freefall writing. How do you write? Take a deep breath and go! {But then you need to rewrite.}

***The Fiction Editor* by Thomas McCormak** – This book is excellent on structural editing and there aren't many of those. It's perhaps more for editors than for writers, but of course you don't become a good writer unless you're also a good self-editor.

***Self-editing for Fiction Writers* by Renni Browne and Dave King** – The best book out there on self-editing. But, Writers, please remember, as you revise, rewrite, and edit, you must learn to breathe more life into your stories, not suck it out.