



How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One

By Stanley Fish



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“Like a long periodic sentence, this book rumbles along, gathers steam, shifts gears, and packs a wallop.”

—Roy Blount Jr.

“Language lovers will flock to this homage to great writing.”

—*Booklist*

Outspoken *New York Times* columnist Stanley Fish offers an entertaining, erudite analysis of language and rhetoric in this delightful celebration of the written word. Drawing on a wide range of great writers, from Philip Roth to Antonin Scalia to Jane Austen and beyond, Fish’s *How to Write a Sentence* is much more than a writing manual—it is a penetrating exploration into the art and craft of sentences.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A whole book on the lowly sentence? Stanley Fish, America's English Professor, confides that he belongs "to the tribe of sentence watchers," and shares his passion and learning through an array of examples from sentence-making masters, among them Milton, James, Dr. King, Sterne, Swift, Salinger, Elmore Leonard, Conrad, and Gertrude Stein. For Fish, language is logic. He stresses how the sentence, regardless of length—whether declarative or embroidered with qualifiers—is a structure of logical relationships. He discusses the all-important opening sentence and closing sentence, especially as the latter can be isolated from its dramatic context to convey full rhetorical effect. The reader is advised to begin with form; with practice, writers can develop three basics of style (subordinating, additive, satiric) that will allow them to make an emotional impact with their words. In the end, the craft of sentence writing is elevated to the very center of our inner lives. Fish plays the opinion card well, though a piling on of example after example, particularly of long sentences drawn from literature or theology, might leave more experienced sentence-makers to cry, "Enough already!"

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From [Booklist](#)

New York Times columnist and college professor Fish appreciates fine sentences the way some people appreciate fine wine. In 10 short chapters, Fish takes readers through a cogent analysis of how to craft a sentence. He talks about form, content, and style, always taking care to illustrate his points with an ample selection of judiciously chosen quotations from virtuoso writers, from Milton and Shakespeare to Anton Scalia and Elmore Leonard. He then proceeds to drill down into the quotations, zeroing in on the tense, parts of speech, or precise phrasing that make the sentences sing. He also discusses famous first and last lines, always keeping in the forefront the extraordinary power of language to shape reality. And, befitting his subject matter, he does all this in the most luminous prose. He fluidly conveys the nitty-gritty details of crafting sentences, but, even more impressive, he communicates and instills in readers a deep appreciation for beautiful sentences that "do things the language you use every day would not have seemed capable of doing." Language lovers will flock to this homage to great writing. --Joanne Wilkinson

Review

"You'd get your money's worth from the quotations alone...if you give this book the attention it so clearly deserves, you will be well rewarded."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

April Little:

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive today, people have to do something to make them survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that at times many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a book your ability to survive improves then having chance to endure than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading a book, we give you this particular How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One book as beginner and daily reading book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Christopher Helland:

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Edna Dixon:

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Joseph Whitely:

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