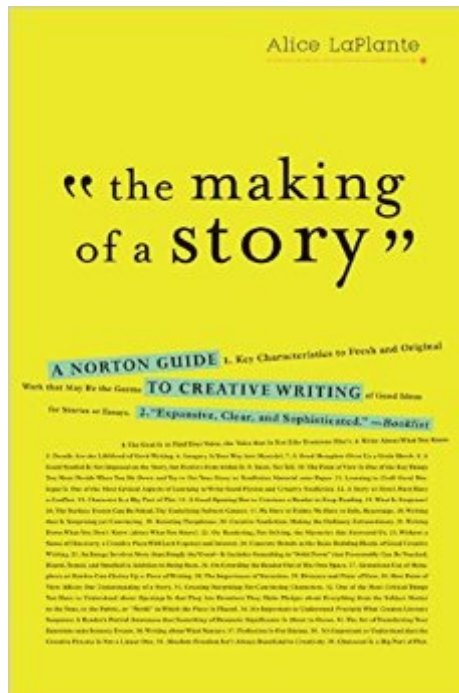




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# The Making Of A Story: A Norton Guide To Creative Writing



## Synopsis

A Los Angeles Times bestseller: wonderfully lucid and illuminating, Alice LaPlante's guide to writing fiction "recalls Francine Prose's bestseller, *Reading Like a Writer*" (Library Journal). *The Making of a Story* is a fresh and inspiring guide to the basics of creative writing—both fiction and creative nonfiction. Its hands-on, completely accessible approach walks writers through each stage of the creative process, from the initial triggering idea to the revision of the final manuscript. It is unique in combining the three main aspects of creative writing instruction: process (finding inspiration, getting ideas on the page), craft (specific techniques like characterization), and anthology (learning by reading masters of the form). Succinct, clear definitions of basic terms of fiction are accompanied by examples, including excerpts from masterpieces of short fiction and essays as well as contemporary novels. A special highlight is Alice LaPlante's systematic debunking of many of the so-called rules of creative writing. This book is perfect for writers working alone as well as for creative writing classes, both introductory and advanced.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A writer and seasoned creative-writing teacher, LaPlante has assembled a treasury of materials to back up her literary expertise. In her discussion of metaphor, for example, LaPlante quotes Byron, Denis Johnson, Flannery O'Connor, Shakespeare, and William Gass. In her extrapolation of the old adage, "write about what you know," she presents a poem by Sharon Olds, a page from the journals

of Leonard Michaels, and Eudora Welty's indelible advice: "Write about what you don't know about what you know." Comprehensive in its coverage of inspiration, craft, aesthetics, veracity, and purpose, this one-stop guide to writing is casual in tone and rigorous in content, elucidating the nature of fiction and nonfiction and clarifying the qualities unique to each and common to both. Each chapter contains an explication of such subjects as point of view, creating characters, and narrative structure; writing exercises, and an illustrative story by the likes of Tim O'Brien, ZZ Packer, Lorrie Moore, John Cheever, and Maxine Hong Kingston. Expansive, clear, and sophisticated, LaPlante's richly resourced guide is destined to become a standard. Seaman, Donna --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“This big, comprehensive book is almost a complete writing course.” - Book Passage  
“Comprehensive in its coverage of inspiration, craft, aesthetics, veracity, and purpose, this one-stop guide to writing is casual in tone and rigorous in content, elucidating the nature of fiction and nonfiction and clarifying the qualities unique to each and common to both. Each chapter contains an explication of such subjects as point of view, characters, and narrative structure; writing exercises; and an illustrative story by the likes of Tim O'Brien, ZZ Packer, Lorrie Moore, John Cheever, and Maxine Hong Kingston. Expansive, clear, and sophisticated, LaPlante's richly resourced guide is destined to become a standard.” - Booklist

Although it checks in at a pretty hefty size (677 pages), Alice LaPlante's 'The Making of a Story' has hardly a wasted word in its entirety. Each chapter deals with a separate aspect of writing (primarily covering character-driven fiction, but also creative non-fiction), including high-level concepts such as the true meaning and goal of writing as an art form, but also more rudimentary aspects of writing, such as characterization, dialogue, and point of view. Of course, this isn't the first, and certainly not the last, book to cover this material. Classics of the genre include Sol Stein's 'Stein on Writing', John Gardner's 'The Art of Fiction', EM Forster's 'The Aspects of the Novel', and many others (Stephen King's 'On Writing' comes to mind). 'The Making of a Story' stands up to all these works, and in many ways eclipses them, particularly with respect to accessibility. Where Gardner, Stein, and Forster are prone to esoteric pontification, LaPlante prefers the practical; this only enhances the value of what she has to say. Each chapter concludes with a few writing exercises that reinforce the chapter's material, and these exercises are followed by one or two pieces of published writing that further illustrate the topic. These examples, unlike those of Gardner or Stein, are excellent examples, and include a wide range of authors, from ZZ Packer and Denis Johnson to Chekov and

Tim O'Brien. The net effect of the three-part form chapters (her narrative, then exercises, then published writing) combine to create an immensely useful guide. I consider it one of the best (if not THE best) books I've read on creative writing.

I've read my share of creative writing books, and this is probably one of the best. First, I got hooked after the first two pages, and that is a rare thing when it comes to nonfiction, even creative writing books, as much as I love the subject. LaPlante finds a way to make it a very enjoyable experience, with lots of diversity. One of my favorite parts is the student examples she has in there, because I'm a student myself, and I find it more personal to me when I read them. It also helps with my own answers of the exercises I will no doubt have to do once my college class begins. Recommended for writers of all kinds!

This is probably the best "how to" book on writing short stories by the wonderful Alice La Plante. the information is the same book as her famous "Method and Madness" book but costs a lot less. It includes at least two short stories to illustrate each of the chapters (why you need to show and tell; whose telling this story anyway; etc.) some of which are different from Method and Madness. But the price different is astounding for basically the same book. All my short story writing friends have purchased this.

This book arrived quickly and was as advertised. This for me was one of the best books on writing that I've purchased, and I've purchased quite a few. LaPlante lays out a lot of information clearly, and provides examples of craft skills that are easy to understand. I would definitely recommend this to anyone seriously trying to master the skills of creative writing.

The book is absolutely wonderful for teaching creative writing or non-fiction writing. The examples and ideas were tremendously helpful and worked well for my students.

This book is beautifully written, retains one's interest and is not at all stuffy. It covers the creative process and practical matters surrounding writing. Examples from famous authors which illustrate Ms. LaPlante's points are well chosen. There is guidance in practicing writing and in finding one's own writing voice. Her writing is easy to follow, correct and more fun to read than is this review! It is so engaging that it tempts one to sign up for a class right away, especially Ms. LaPlante's class. Grab a copy of this book while you can. I've reduced the supply by one already!CK

This book is one of those few books that can truly make a difference in your writing. The chapters are well thought out, the examples clear. When I first got the book, I flipped through it came to a section on dialogue. Within 5 minutes, I thought oh wow, that's what I was missing! The rest of the book has been just as effective in improving my writing.

I'm a new teacher teaching high school creative writing next year for the first time. In terms of planning curriculum, this book is a freaking gold mine.

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