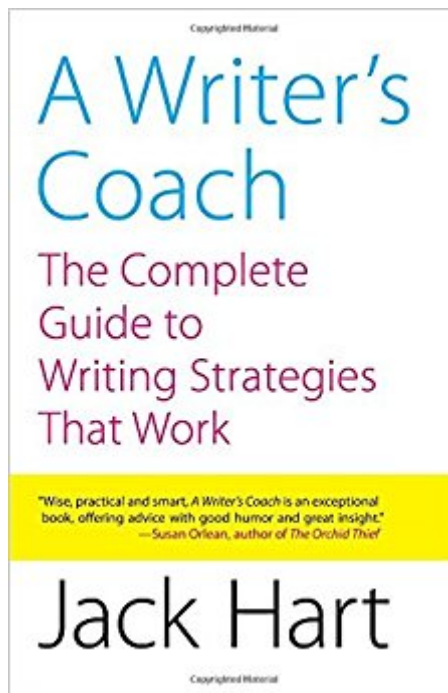




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# A Writer's Coach: The Complete Guide To Writing Strategies That Work



## Synopsis

Mystified over misplaced modifiers? In a trance from intransitive verbs? Paralyzed from using the passive voice? To aid writers, from beginners to professionals, legendary writing coach Jack Hart presents a comprehensive, practical, step-by-step approach to the writing process. He shares his techniques for composing and sustaining powerful writing and demonstrates how to overcome the most common obstacles such as procrastination, writer's block, and excessive polishing. With instructive examples and excerpts from outstanding writing to provide inspiration, *A Writer's Coach* is a boon to writers, editors, teachers, and students.

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## Customer Reviews

Good writing can dance, according to Jack Hart, "writing coach" and managing editor at The Oregonian. It has a rhythm "that pleases in its own right, creating cadences that give pleasure, regardless of content." This guide is intended to nudge insecure writers-especially those in the early stages of honing their craft-in the direction of their keyboards with practical tools for how to achieve clear, forceful and effective writing, no matter the subject. Hart's experience as a newspaperman is perhaps his greatest asset here; focused and clutter-free, chapters follow a logical learning sequence complete with one-word chapter titles ("Method" "Process" etc.) that get right to the point. His narrative tone is accessible and engaging, with anecdotes and advice from seasoned colleagues in the industry. Though positioned as a guide for tackling anything from a personal letter to a memoir, Hart's examples and terminology lean heavily on newspaper and feature writing, which

may frustrate some creative types. That journalistic approach (which Hart freely admits to in the book's introduction), however, makes for an insightful, methodical approach to developing an idea into a story. Structured more like a textbook than a general professional development or trade title, this makes an ideal addition to the classroom. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although Hart addresses his pithy writing guide to those working for newspapers and magazines, the managing editor of the Portland Oregonian offers such practical yet inspirational advice that both aspiring and longtime writers in any discipline would benefit from reading his book. He immediately strips away the mystique that often surrounds the writing process: "Great writing happens not through some dark art, but when method meets craft." He shoots down a litany of angst-ridden complaints, including writer's block and keyboard anxiety, with hard-nosed insight gleaned from years of working at a daily newspaper. Emphasizing that most of the work of writing comes in the thinking and information-gathering stages, Hart gives a finely detailed analysis of the steps needed to efficiently produce a finished piece. He also provides many excerpts from excellent writers illustrating the value of rhythm, color, and voice, and points out common pitfalls, such as spending too much time polishing the final draft instead of organizing the initial one. Best of all, Hart's writing is a model of the craft he so eloquently dissects. Joanne Wilkinson Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Writing is intrinsically a lonely calling. It's you, your thoughts and the blank page, whether electronic or paper. As the title implies, "A Writer's Coach" should be your coach, sitting at your side especially in the moments when you firmly believe that you have absolutely nothing of any interest to say and, in any event, no one would care even if you managed to scratch out a few words. Jack Hart aims to remind those of us who are dependent on our ability to put words on paper in a meaningful way, that there is rhyme and reason to what we do, that there are rules which if followed will let us get from the first word to the last and remain interesting to our reader. In twelve succinctly entitled chapters, Hart sets forth the basics that many of us forget from time to time and that others have never learned. Method; Process; Structure; Force; Brevity; Clarity; Rhythm; Humanity; Color; Voice; Mechanics; Mastery. And throughout the twelve chapters, Hart displays his command of each and every quality he describes and teaches. His style is up close and personal. Hart writes in a way that

emulates the well spoken word. This book could easily be read aloud and would flow as smoothly as warm maple syrup. Aimed primarily at journalists who have to turn out (hopefully) polished writing on a daily basis, "A Writer's Coach" is invaluable to anyone writing non-fiction. I write primarily for an audience of lawyers and judges and found virtually every word of Hart's advice valuable. If anything, my audience has less patience than the average reader. Hart is a teacher - and it shows. He is, in fact, a fine teacher. The book is loaded with examples, many of them of the "don't you be doing that" variety which are sure to provoke a belly laugh or two. Like its human counterpart, "A Writer's Coach" should be at the writer's side, day in and day out. This book is the perfect thing to pick up on a daily basis and just read and read again its nuggets of advice. It is also a way to feel that others know your angst as you try to produce strings of words that will inform, persuade and occasionally even enlighten. Jerry

A comprehensive yet succinct book on good writing. Jack Hart's decades of experience as a newspaper editor shine through in the masterful quality of both the content and the writing. Covers it all -- from high-level method and structure issues to low-level mechanics to stylistic issues like rhythm and color. The material on theme statements, jot outlines, beginnings, and endings was invaluable to me. Makes the point that good writing is more about process than inspiration. I'm on my second reading, and still learning from each page.

I've used this book over twenty times in college classes in journalism and feature writing. Invariably, it is a student favorite, and, more to the point, they take in and apply Hart's wisdom with little resistance. A winner for both students and established writers.

Very useful book. I've been borrowing a copy from the library for the past ten weeks, and it's high time I bought my own copy. It has helped me greatly in constructing my pieces. I'm a journalist/blogger with three deadlines every week and 50 or 60 clips, and Hart's book has been useful in more ways than I can summarize. I'll just say that I almost never buy writing books, and I never write reviews on . I'm making an exception to both rules for this great book. It's aimed at beginners, but journalists with dozens or even hundreds of pieces behind them will find useful ideas too.

Jack Hart offers much information for a writer to digest. I especially loved the concise writing and examples to help the reader better understand the concept.

Books about writing tend to fall into two groups. The first group are all about cheerleading and encouragement. Examples include *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* and *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* (Shambhala Library). These are great books to read if you want to get yourself writing and wish you could develop the habit of writing every day. Once you are writing regularly there is another group of books that you'll appreciate because they begin to help you develop your craft. This is a great example of this second type of book. It's full of tips and useful advice. The standout idea for me is his suggestion of writing a theme statement at the top of every piece that sums up what you are about to say. I've found this invaluable in drafting blog posts and other bits of writing. I found this a great help in writing *First, Know What You Want - why goals don't work and how to make them* and it continues to be useful. One for your bookshelf that you will come back to over and over again.

One of the best books on writing!

Great!

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