

How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy

by Orson Scott Card

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Introduction

1 The Infinite Boundary *What is, and isn't, science fiction and fantasy, and by whose standards: publishers', writers', readers'. What basic concepts and approaches qualify a story as true speculative fiction, and how SF and fantasy differ from one another.*

2 World Creation *How to build, populate, and dramatize a credible, inviting world that readers will want to share with you. Dragging ideas through "the idea net" of why, how, and with what result. Developing the rules of your world . . . and then abiding by them and making them matter: the rules of Time, Space, and Magic. Working out the history, language, geography, and customs of your invented world.*

3 Story Construction *Finding a character for an idea, or developing ideas for a character to enact. Qualifications for the main character: who hurts the most? Who has power and freedom to act? Should the viewpoint character be the main character? How do you decide? Determining where the story should begin and end. The MICE quotient: milieu, idea, character, event-knowing which is most important in your story will help you decide its proper shape.*

4 Writing Well *Keeping exposition in its place. m Leading your reader into the strangeness, step by step. Piquing the reader's interest. Keeping the "level of diction" appropriate to the story's imagined world. Using invented jargon sparsely and effectively.*

5 The Life and Business of Writing *The markets for short and long speculative fiction-magazines, anthologies, fanzines-and how to reach them. Classes, workshops, conferences and conventions. Collaboration, adaptation, and shared worlds. N Professional writers' organizations. Awards in speculative fiction.*