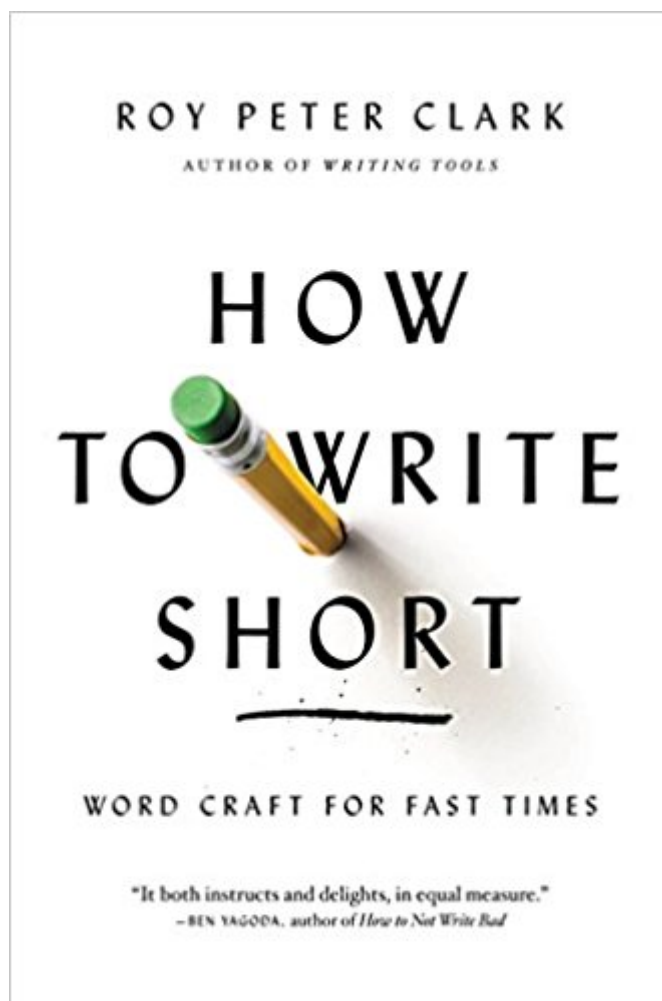


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# How To Write Short: Word Craft For Fast Times



## Synopsis

America's most influential writing teacher offers an engaging and practical guide to effective short-form writing. In *HOW TO WRITE SHORT*, Roy Peter Clark turns his attention to the art of painting a thousand pictures with just a few words. Short forms of writing have always existed—from ship logs and telegrams to prayers and haikus. But in this ever-changing Internet age, short-form writing has become an essential skill. Clark covers how to write effective and powerful titles, headlines, essays, sales pitches, Tweets, letters, and even self-descriptions for online dating services. With examples from the long tradition of short-form writing in Western culture, *HOW TO WRITE SHORT* guides writers to crafting brilliant prose, even in 140 characters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"HOW TO WRITE SHORT both instructs and delights, in equal measure. On every page there is some useful advice and an amusing observation or illustration. Read this book!" --Ben Yagoda, author of *How to Not Write Bad* "A fun, practical guide. Clark really knows his way around a sentence. Learn from him." --Christopher Johnson, author of *Microstyle* "Engaging, entertaining, indispensable." --James Geary, author of *The World in a Phrase* and *I Is an Other* "HOW TO WRITE SHORT comes at the perfect time and enshrines Roy Peter Clark as America's best writing coach. This book should be on every serious writer's shelf." --Tampa Bay Times "A deeply practical guidebook and an annotated collection of concise gems. HOW TO WRITE SHORT will make you a better writer at any length." --Robin Sloan, author of *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore*

Roy Peter Clark is vice president and senior scholar at the Poynter Institute, one of the world's most prestigious schools for journalists. He is the author or editor of seventeen books about writing and journalism, including *Writing Tools*, *The Glamour of Grammar*, and *Help! for Writers*. He lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.

I didn't really find it that educational or delightful as described on the front. It's a series of short chapters making points about writing short. But it read to me more like the author pointing out what he likes about short writing, with no real instruction. Just chapter after chapter of often repetitive examples. Some of the examples were fun/funny and some of the points good, but.....I didn't really learn much from it and it was a pretty boring read with the repetition. Each chapter also ends with grace notes to summarize the chapter - since each chapter was only 2-3 pages long and you had literally read the point seconds before....huh. You could just read the grace notes over to get what is in this book.

Write drunk, edit sober. No worthy quote is paragraphs long. It's a sentence at best. A house divided against itself cannot stand. I'll have what she's having. I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse. We the People of these United States... You get the idea. This book puts context behind what makes a worthy quote exactly that and then teaches you how to do it on your own. Some authors are like Tolkien with *LotR* and Martin with *A Song of Fire and Ice*; long, flowering chapters filled with every detail possible in the English dictionary and thesaurus. Other authors are like Hemingway; direct and almost laconic but rich with detail. Less is more. Call me Ismael. Write long and hard about what hurts the most. This book helps guide you to the principle of less is more.

Very useful tips as well as action steps for practicing the techniques and working them in to your writing. This book will convince you of the importance of quality short writing, but its lessons are applicable to writing pieces of any length.

I really enjoyed *How to Write Short*. The way it's organized allows for an easy grasp of the importance of short, tight writing. I'm fond of the Grace Notes that end each section because it allows you to apply each lesson right away. If you are a fan of *Writing Tools*, then you will really enjoy this book as well. The exciting concept in *How to Write Short* is the "When words are worth a thousand pictures" thesis. This bold spin on the popular saying really captures

what good writing (both long and short) needs to accomplish "paint a vivid narrative quickly so you don't lose your reader. Each chapter is short (3-6 pages) but delivers the goods. From "Read for focus" to "Summarize and define", How to Write Short delivers tantalizing tidbits of wit and wisdom that any writer can use right away.

Roy Peter Clark is an amazing teacher and writer. I use his writing tips constantly in the writing classes I teach. This book brings his knowledge of writing into the 21st Century in an easy to comprehend and, of course, well written text. Well worth the price!

Very easy read. A little didactic with the list of "to do" points at the end of each chapter. And the author has a real thing for baseball. But overall, if you want to think about something a little differently - or get a second point of view - this book delivers.

Well written. The lessons in each chapter are easy to put into practice, either in the suggested exercises or in my current writing projects. I feel like my writing has improved. Although, there is no short cut to writing, rewriting, rewriting, rewriting, and rewriting.

So. You are a boomer with a manuscript in hand terrified of having to promote a book in a new world of blogs and tweets. What do you do? Start by reading Roy Peter Clark's new book, How to Write Short. Clark writes his advice in 35 short reflections organized into two sections: "How to Write Short" and "How to Write Short with a Purpose". He caps these sections off with an epilog: "A Few Final Words--441 to Be Exact". Clark's first reflection focuses on getting you to open your eyes. In a world inundated with data in the form of writing, images, and sounds, what catches your attention? Coyly, Clark paraphrases the line from Sixth Sense. Not, "I see dead people", but "I see short writing"(15). Clark collects shorts like other people collect sidewalk pennies. In reviewing the sparse style of these shorts, he draws attention to the backstory that makes them interesting. Shorts sparkle because they remind you of something. A "grace note", Clark adds, increases the sparkle by reframing the sparkle in a new, interesting way. Or it may just offer a jolt (17-21). I did not expect a writing book to be a page turner. I did not expect How to Write Short would get me to look at my long writing differently. I do expect that I will be referring back to this book in my book's next edit. Yeah!

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