

## WRITING WORKSHOPS

<http://www.steveliskow.com>

All sessions work best with between 8 and 15 participants and run 60-75 minutes.

### CHARACTERS CREATE STORY

Modern fiction relies on complex characters who will move your story along and make your reader care. Using examples from recent stories and films, this workshop combines techniques from drama, screenwriting, and fiction to create characters that will help you build a dynamic plot.

### STORY FIRST (Plotting your novel)

Even though many agents and editors want memorable characters who drive a series, they aren't enough to save a weak story. This workshop takes participants through the process of developing an idea into a workable premise that can generate a full story. From there, writers will examine how to build a plot that will keep readers asking questions and turning pages until they reach a powerful and satisfying ending.

### PRODUCING A FIRST DRAFT: Two sessions

W. Somerset Maugham once said, "There are only three rules for writing a novel. Unfortunately, nobody knows what they are." Maybe he was wrong, anyway. Different techniques work for different people, and Steve offers methods that take advantage of your own skills and interests. He offers a low-stress approach that will produce a few pages every day instead of trying to create a "whole novel" in one gulp. These exercises will help you whether you like to plan everything out, jump right in, or do a little of each.

### SAYS WHO? (Point of View)

One of the most overlooked and crucial decisions concerns who actually *tells* your story. Different narrators or perspectives can add texture or weaken your impact, and they all have special advantages and demands. Using recent examples, Steve helps you understand how to choose the narrator who can give your story that extra punch.

### KEEP IT SIMPLE, SAM (Short Story Basics)

We may be in a new golden age for the short story, a flexible form that writers can use to strengthen all the skills they need to create a novel, but stands as a rich form all by itself. Using writing prompts and recent examples, Steve will help you focus on the few absolute basics to create a satisfying short story.

### TALK THAT TALK (Dialogue)

Dialogue helps move your story along, depict character, enhance mood, and create tension.

Using examples from contemporary fiction, Steve will help you refine your dialogue to make your characters distinct, even as they strengthen your plot and establish a mood. The class includes exercises that apply to all fiction writing and will help train your ear for what works.

### I'VE GOT A FIRST DRAFT: NOW WHAT? (Revision)

In today's competitive market, a first draft is nowhere near good enough to show to an agent or editor. Steve offers a practical approach to polishing your work. He starts with the major issues (character, plot, structure, and pacing), then tackles smaller but crucial problems including dialogue, transitions, and tense. He offers hints on proof-reading and copy-editing, and the all-important beta reader to help you make your writing as strong as it can be.