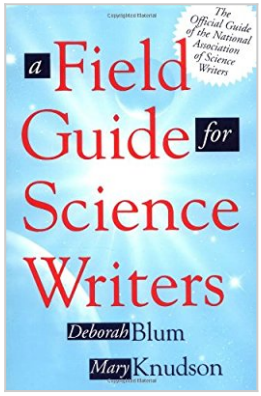

A Field Guide for Science Writers

From Oxford University Press

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"Science writing offers some wonderful adventures," notes Patrick Young, a former editor of *Science News*. "I've visited the South pole, stared into a steaming volcano, covered the first human landing on the moon, and dived with an underwater archaeology team investigating an old fur trade route." But as Young readily admits, science writing is, above all, an adventure of the mind. It is in fact probably the most fascinating beat in journalism, spanning everything from new advances in cancer treatment and the depletion of the ozone layer, to dinosaurs, black holes in space, human evolution, animal behavior, and much more besides. What science writers ultimately cover--and convey to the reading public--is the forefront of human knowledge, the leading edge of our understanding of the universe and of ourselves.

Now, in *A Field Guide for Science Writers*, the official guide of the National Association of Science Writers, budding journalists and veteran reporters have a superb roadmap to this exciting area of journalism. Here some three dozen of the best known science writers in America share their hard-earned knowledge on how they do their job. Boyce Rensberger describes how he covers stories for the *Washington Post*; two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner and *New York Times* reporter John Noble Wilford outlines the pitfalls and rewards of writing full-length books on scientific topics; NPR's Ira Flatow tells how radio pieces combine ambient sounds, music, voices, and facts to create a mental picture and evoke the feeling of "being there"; and Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Laurie Garrett, author of the best-selling *The Coming Plague*, discusses how to cover, and survive, a deadly epidemic. Each article brims with detailed, nuts-and-bolts information. For instance, Mary Knudson prints a section of a piece she has published, and then explains point by point how she researched every detail. Victor Cohn provides six tests to help reporters discern between probable facts and probable trash. And Sandra Blakeslee, a freelance writer who reports regularly for the *New York Times*, discusses covering the field of neuroscience: what you should know, which books give you a good background knowledge, which courses might help, which meetings to attend, which journals to read. In addition, readers will learn how newspaper writing differs from magazine stories, books, and science journals; how to tell a good story, use sources, do investigative reporting, write a solid but interesting op-ed piece or science column; how to translate a highly technical journal article; how to pitch ideas to magazine editors; and how to find ideas. Finally, a superb appendix offers a goldmine of resources for science writers, including both general sources of information as well as sources in fields such as anthropology, earth sciences, the environment, health and medicine, and technology.

A Field Guide for Science Writers gathers together insights and tips, personal stories and lessons of some of America's best-known science writers, men and women who work for *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The San Francisco Chronicle, The Chicago Tribune, The Los Angeles Times, Newsday, Time Magazine, Science, Science News,* National Public Radio, and other eminent news outlets. Filled with wonderful anecdotes and down-to-earth, practical information, it is both illuminating and a pleasure to read. If you want to be a science writer, this book will be your bible.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Science writers are translators of sorts: they transform the jargon-laden language and arcane concepts of the science world into something the rest of us can understand and even appreciate. For this, they must be able to comprehend (and assess the value of) the science at hand, then simplify, calling into action whatever metaphor and analogy they can find to get the idea across. For this indispensable guidebook, 39 committed and enthusiastic science writers chime in about what their jobs entail. Among them are newspaper reporters, magazine and journal contributors, book authors, and freelance, editorial, and op-ed writers. Specialists relate the intricacies of covering topics such as infectious diseases, neuroscience, the environment, and technology. A final section explores science-writing jobs for colleges and universities, government agencies, museums, and industry. Particularly fascinating is the chapter by Mary Knudson, a freelance writer who covered medicine for the *Baltimore Sun* for 18 years and one of the editors of this book; in the chapter, she dissects one of her articles, explaining how she arrived at each piece of information included therein.

From Library Journal
This is not a "field guide" in the sense of a reference or guidebook but a report from the field by more than 30 expert science writers from all disciplines. Each writes about his or her own area of expertise, often including a road map that shows how he or she ended up in a series of particularly interesting places, e.g., the New York Times, Science, and the President's Office of Technology. Somewhat similar to The New Science Journalists (LJ 4/15/95), although much more comprehensive, this well-written collection is full of interesting insights into professional science writing and serves as a valuable resource for current and would-be science writers. Collections emphasizing career planning, especially at institutions with programs in journalism, writing, and communication, should obtain this work. Nice for crossover collections between the liberal arts and the sciences as well.?Mark L. Shelton, Worcester, Mass.

Review

"This knowledgeable group of writers and editors points readers to the best sources and stories, discusses investigative reporting, tells how to pitch finished articles to editors, and much more."--*Science News*

"Pick a scientific field... and 1 of 38 science writers will tell you his or her secrets of writing clearly, and with the force of human narrative, about subjects often muddled in the public mind."--*The Bloomsbury Review*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clarence Hamm:

As people who live in the modest era should be upgrade about what going on or info even knowledge to make these keep up with the era which is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe may update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to anyone is you don't

know which one you should start with. This A Field Guide for Science Writers is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Thanh Johnson:

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Thomas Obrien:

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