



Writing Places: The Life Journey of a Writer and Teacher

William Zinsser

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“William Zinsser turns his zest, warmth and curiosity—his sharp but forgiving eye—on his own story. The result is lively, funny and moving, especially for anyone who cares about art and the business of writing well.”

—Evan Thomas, *Newsweek*

In *Writing Places*, William Zinsser—the author of *On Writing Well*, the bestseller that has inspired two generations of writers, journalists, and students—recalls the many colorful and instructive places where he has worked and taught. Gay Talese, author of *A Writer's Life*, calls *Writing Places*, “Wonderful,” while the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* praises this unique memoir for possessing “all the qualities that Zinsser believes matter most in good writing—clarity, brevity, simplicity and humanity.”

Writing Places: The Life Journey of a Writer and Teacher Details

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Author : William Zinsser

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Steven says

This is a well-written memoir by one of the most highly regarded writers of the 20th century. In addition to the many things Zinsser does well, he manages to keep his book brief--heeding, as always, his own advice. He cuts everything that is not essential.

I enjoyed not only his craft, but his story. He lived an interesting life and the stories in this book capture much of the adventure of being a soldier, a journalist in Manhattan, a professor at Yale, a globe-trotting freelance writer, and the best-selling author of ON WRITING WELL (a book he updated regularly).

WRITING PLACES was a pleasure to read.

Finally, the audio book was made better by the voice of Mr. Zinsser. He is one of those few writers who can read his own work decently. I enjoyed his aging voice, his obvious affection for his subject matter, and the accent of a life-long New Yorker. (He grew up in Yorkville--and so long ago, he confessed even as an old man that no matter the day, no matter the occasion, he would not appear in the City without a coat and tie).

Ana says

This book made me look for my father's old typewriter. Turns out it was stolen or lost, but after a few hours of googling I managed to find out that my father owned an Underwood Leader 1956 portable typewriter, which is not for sale anywhere. I did bid for an Olivetti Valentine, though.

Zinsser writes so lovingly about his Underwood, and about the green metal desk that accompanied it for so many years, that it really broke my heart when he enters an IBM showroom and acquires that huge Displaywriter.

I read this a few days after finishing "On Writing Well", only because I found Mr. Zinsser so likable and honest. But as another reviewer put it, the first half of the book is a bit slow, and it picks up by the time he accepts a teaching position at Yale University.

Steve says

Zinsser had a long and fascinating career, and he writes about it with humor and specific detail. He worked for old-time newspapers, magazines (including the wonderful Life magazine), a college alumni magazine, and as a freelancer. He taught writing and wrote books about writing. He moved from using typewriters into the digital age.

Roben says

Though sadly I will never meet Mr. Zinsser, I feel after reading *Writing Places* that we are old friends. He is a generous soul telling the story of his life with good humor. The last sentence came too quickly.

David Macpherson says

A nice memoir of a working writer. Its a good way to sample his earlier work. I have looked at his earlier books and he lifted whole pages from the previous work to fill up this one. That doesn't kill the enjoyment of the book, just to know, this is territory he has tread before

Terry says

I like this author! I have known about his books, but I had not previously actually read one. It was a pleasant nostalgia trip to read his impressions of Yale. He made even New York City sound appealing. He is a bit of a Luddite. I will be reading more of his books.

RuthAnn says

Would recommend: Yes

Reading *Writing Places* made me want to get out there and write! Right now! Just thinking about it gives me a thrill.

Taylor Church says

A quick read worth its time. The author was a little all over the place, and at times was reaching. But I kind of like authors that narrate as if truly from their mind, for who has completely coherent and organized thoughts all the time? I recommend this to anyone who likes writing, and is imagining a future in it. The author does wax a little verbose at times while describing architecture and local flora.

Yvonne Raphael says

I cherry-picked just chapter 10 On Becoming A Teacher at the moment, but all Zinsser books deserve close reading. *Writing Places* is no exception.

Joseph says

This memoir from the author of *On Writing Well* supports the notion that, if you want to write well, it helps to read the work of writers who write well. Crisp, clear prose that draws you from paragraph to next paragraph, page to next page.

Marty says

WRITING PLACES is a memoir of a writer, of Bill Zinsser's experiences as a journalist, freelance writer, and teacher. I think writers are super cool and secretly want to be one, which is why I picked this.

I feel terrible saying this, since Zinsser seems like a very nice older gentlemen, but I found the first part of this book to be pretty unreadable. It sort of like reading a Dominick Dunne social column in that it was full of names that I didn't know, little anecdotes that I didn't really see the significance of. The book picks up a little bit when he gets to Yale and writes ON WRITING WELL, but I just didn't see a lot of insight or thoughtfulness about his life here.

I wouldn't recommend it.

Doug Page says

Bottom line - no matter where you set up your Underwood (nka word processor), keep your fingers moving. And it doesn't hurt to be well-connected.

Kris says

I liked this simply because I like Zinsser's writing style, and so I'll read pretty much anything he writes about. It's a good read, even though this is not the best of Zinsser's work. I enjoyed the sections on the history of places he worked, his writing process behind *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*, and some of his jokes are good. But other places grew stale, and there's a lot of name dropping and insider references. This is not a must-read.

Kathleen says

I used to be a newspaper reporter, and my editor recommended reading William Zinsser's "On Writing Well." I fell in love with his style, his perspective, and his cadence. Truthfully, he reads a lot like my old editor, and it feels like I'm catching up with my good friend when I read Zinsser's work.

I listened to Zinsser narrate his nonfiction book, "Writing Places," where he describes the different places he wrote and the types of jobs he had. He explains the birth of his most famous book, the death of the newspaper, and life in NYC. I found the read fascinating, but then again, I feel like I know Zinsser. If you haven't read his work before, he considers himself a student of E. B. White, and I have found the two to be very similar.

Amanda says

I thought this was going to be advice about writing about places (travel writing) in the vein of On Writing Well, so I was disappointed to find it is a memoir about places the author has written. It's okay...a bit long winded, especially as I am not that inherently interested in his life. Short, though.
