



## Aliens and Alien Societies

*Stanley Schmidt , Ben Bova (Editor)*

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Teaches writers how to use real scientific knowledge of our universe to create more convincing extraterrestrial life forms in their science fiction or fantasy novel.

## Aliens and Alien Societies Details

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## From Reader Review Aliens and Alien Societies for online ebook

### Anthony Patten says

This book is just SO TOTALLY AWESOME!!! A must for anyone who appreciates science fiction.

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### Ethan Hulbert says

This is a book I've had for a long time. It's great. (Also I miss 90s covers like this one.)

This book's got everything. Science, language, lifestyle. It's over 20 years old now, but it still holds up remarkably well. What a wonderful resource! It really helps you think about making them alien, and not just Star Trek rubber forehead alien.

This is a book that I've had on my shelf for many years, and it will continue to stay on my shelf for years to come. A timeless classic!

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### Robert says

As a science-fiction writer I found this a valuable resource. It explained concepts in a easy to understand manner while laying out the foundational science behind them.

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### MT Bostick says

I wanted to create my aliens and I found this book to be incredibly helpful. Another great reference book. Keeping it handy as I write.

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### Synia says

This is the writing book for STEM ( Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics ) people wanting to create sci-fi fiction only someone with their talents could. It's a great guide to conceiving of alien races and societies, leaning more towards hard science fiction than space operas. The author expects you to work out equations, run simulations, and do research, going straight to scientific journals to latest science instead of relying on tropes or cliches. AS someone who is hopelessly inept at math and chemistry I found large chunks of books intimidating. I reread certain passages, but to anyone who has an average or above competence in those subjects it should prove rather simple. The edition I read was about 20 years old so some of the science has changed, but the methodology and logical approach suggested in the book should still be applicable. Even though I might not be able to write hard science fiction I now have a much deeper appreciation for it, and in this way I think this book is good for fans as well as writers.

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### **Lisa (Harmonybites) says**

This is from the Science Fiction Writing Series, and is geared towards those interested in writing science fiction, although I actually think this would be of interest to the general science fiction reader. According to the biography in the back, Stanley Schmidt was the editor of *Analogue Science Fiction & Fact*, has a Ph.D. in physics and has taught both physics and science fiction at the college level. So he's definitely well qualified to write this book--one on plausible world-building that illuminates the issues you'd have to take into account in creating well-thought out aliens. I love the suggested reading in the back--"A Xenologist's Bookshelf" made up of both non-fiction and fiction. Although both the reading and the science presented might be a little dated since this book was published in 1995.

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### **Kathryn Knight Harper says**

Awesome for what it is, but not useful for a fantasy writer (oops). It gave me a few great ideas for shaping up my novel, however, so it wasn't wasted time.

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### **Scott says**

This is the first volume in a four-volume set put out by Writers Digest Books under the umbrella Science Fiction Writing Series. This entire series is highly recommendable, and you'll probably see the other volumes reviewed here by me in the future. *Aliens and Alien Societies* features 11 chapters, an extensive bibliography of related source books, and a 7-page glossary of terms that are common to science fiction writing that focuses on believable science. Schmidt is the long-time editor of *Analog Science Fiction* magazine and has a PhD in physics. He provides scientifically-detailed, yet easy-to-understand explanations about astronomical history, biochemical basics, bioengineering, the logical underpinning of alien societies, creative use of non-human language, and the motivational psychology of non-human species. I really enjoyed the examples he spread throughout the book, from established science fiction authors, of alien species, societies and cultures as found in genre literature of the past 40 years. If you're an aspiring writer of science fiction, whose stories are likely to feature aliens in an alien environment, or humans interacting with aliens, this volume should be required reading. Originally reviewed for my local library's website: <http://www.lincolnlibraries.org/depts...>

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### **Eoghan Odinson says**

I thought this was an excellent book. Schmidt covers a broad swath of ideas for creating aliens and societies, as well as providing useful case studies - analyzing many works of fiction, and describing various approaches to the challenge. This is another book I'm sure I'll refer to regularly.

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### **April says**

You will never watch a science fiction movie or read a science fiction book about aliens the same way again. I am forever ruined, but gained a deeper appreciation of the science involved in creating fictional alien species.

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This book definitely leans towards hard science fiction. Coming from a humanities and social science background I felt a little discouraged as a writer reading through some of the technical chapters. What do I know about physics or chemistry? I have a vague understanding of astronomy and biology, but this book was useful in helping me realize what I don't know and what I need to research for more believable alien stories. I would take the book's recommendations with a grain of salt though. With the advice this book provides, I doubt Star Wars or even Star Trek would pass muster.

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### **Patty Jansen says**

I would classify this book as essential reading for the writer who wants to create worlds that could actually exist, based on existing knowledge, but doesn't know where to start researching.

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