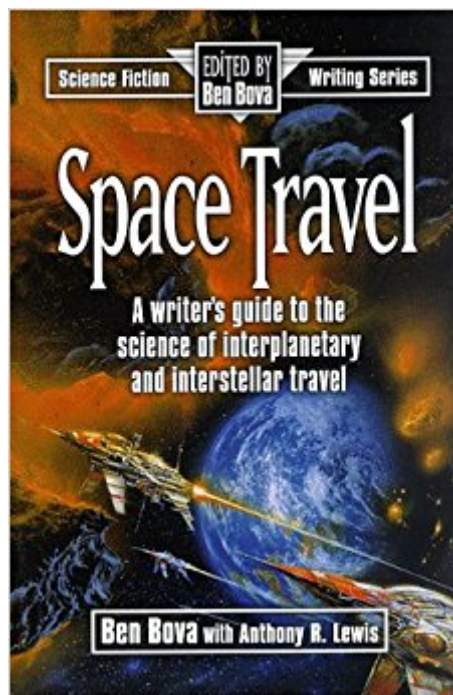




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Space Travel: A Writer's Guide To The Science Of Interplanetary And Interstellar Travel (Science Fiction Writing Series)



Synopsis

Space Travel explains science, to help you make your fiction plausible. You'll engineer your rockets with accurate technical data. Show your characters' physical responses to weightlessness. Know the environment of space, how inhospitable it is - and how it's opening for business. Build an Earth-orbiting habitat for your story's setting. Discover our solar system ... and the staggering immensity of interstellar space. Consider the prospect of near-light-speed travel. Imagine the conflicts, legal and military, your fictional missions might spark. In this book, you'll see what is real today - and what may become real tomorrow.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

... an excellent survey of rocketry basics, space conditions, industries, and habitats, the Moon, Solar System, and universe, relevant international treaties, military uses, and more. A very nice introduction to astronomy for either writers or beginning students. -- Analog, Tom Easton

Only a few chapters in but...this book is very interesting and exactly what I was looking for. Yes it's a little out of date--nearly 20 yrs--but it's breezy and has a good attitude as to how to USE the science in your own writing.

Prompt delivery, item as described, very informative.

This book seemed a little out of date and somewhat limited to current technologies when I read it about 10 years ago now, but it still provides a solid foundation for an aspiring sci-fi writer who may not have a strong science background. This book explores propulsion systems and shows how to estimate velocity and travel time to planets. But, there is not much coverage of possible future interstellar propulsion systems because, I suspect, that would be all speculation and this is a non-fiction book. Granted, the goal is to write fiction, but it is what it is.

I have to agree with the other negative review on this site--if you know so little about the mechanics of current and near-future space flight, it's hard to imagine what business you have trying to _write_ science fiction. The book focuses heavily on the technology we have _today_, and maybe extrapolating 50 years or so into the future, which terribly limits its scope. Even so, the presentation of this material is at such a simplistic, primitive level that it's hard to derive a lot of value from it. The other reviewer noted serious flaws in the presentation of the material (no metric units!), and, indeed, flat-out factual errors. The time-dilation miscalculation is a real howler. Even the presentation of the history of real-world space travel leaves much to be desired (Bova calls the cancellation of the Apollo program "short-sighted" on the part of the administration...without considering how many tens of billions of (adjusted) dollars were pouring into a national prestige program to bring back the world's most expensive dirt and gravel.) A shallow work of marginal value. Learn everything in here, and more, with a book or two explicitly on _real-world_ space travel, the solar system, and a few astronomy magazines.

I'm afraid this book is nowhere near the quality of its companions "World-Building" and "Aliens and Alien Societies." The writing style and the information are overly simplified, reading more like a children's book than a guide for aspiring SF writers. Indeed, some of the material is simplified to the point of being dead wrong. For instance, in discussing orbits it perpetuates the myth of centrifugal force. Bova also grossly exaggerates relativistic time-dilation, saying a 2,000-light-year journey at 90% lightspeed would take 20 subjective years for the ship's crew; the actual figure is about 872 years. Overall, I feel the book focusses too much on near-Earth, near-future space travel and too little on more cosmic stuff, but that's a matter of taste. The most frustrating thing, which had me yelling at the book several times, is that (save for a couple of copied diagrams and one table containing Kelvin degrees) the book gives all measurements in non-metric units, not even giving metric equivalents in parentheses. Since metric is the universal measurement system for scientists, and indeed for virtually the whole human race save us stubborn Americans, this book's state of

denial about the metric system sets a very bad example for aspiring SF writers. I cannot recommend this book.

This book was a great read! Even if you are not interested in learning to write science fiction you may find this book enjoyable. It may help you to understand current means of space travel as well as the possibilities for the future. I enjoyed this book immensely, and I would recommend it for anyone who enjoys reading science fiction because it helps you to understand some of the more technical details, adding to the enjoyment of the reading experience. I have found myself listening more closely to the technical jargon of my favorite show Star Trek now that I have read this book. I hope others enjoyed it as much as I did

If you have no time to dig online for free facts and SF tendencies, this book is the right tool for your next SF project. I highly recommend it to all serious wannabe writers, especially those oriented more into "speculative fiction" (SF) rather than "science fiction" (sci-fi). If you don't know the difference, once Isaac Asimov said that SF is most-likely probable scenarios (e.g., *Sphere* and *The Andromeda Strain*), etc.), whereas Sci-Fi is most-likely implausible and far-fetched entertainment (e.g., *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*). And while all that could be highly debatable, this book still offers great theories and hypotheses for your writing--all of them fantastic and quite faraway from our "real space exploration" ;-)

This is another of the books in this series that was put together by Ben Bova and a host of others. Mr. Bova has written a ton of Sci-Fi, and he is definitely an authority on the subject. This book covers the science behind spacecraft, and delves into the history of spaceflight, both manned and unmanned. It also covers the technology, even going into the math of calculating thrust, impulse, etc. I have used the section on theoretical spacecraft design in a novel that I am currently writing. I have found the information it includes to be very valuable.

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