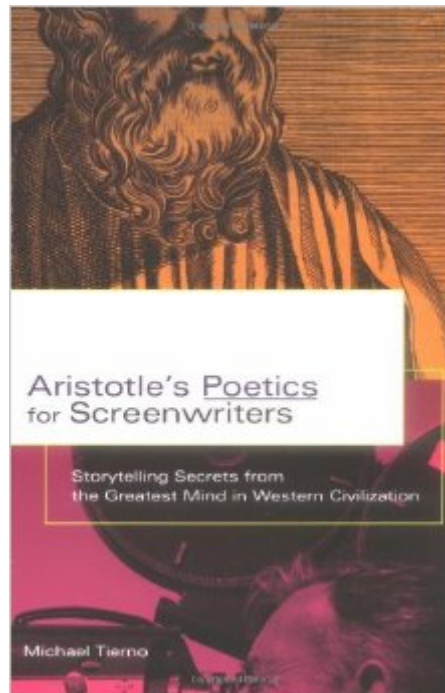


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# Aristotle's Poetics For Screenwriters: Storytelling Secrets From The Greatest Mind In Western Civilization



## Synopsis

An insightful how-to guide for writing screenplays that uses Aristotle's great work as a guide. Long considered the bible for storytellers, Aristotle's Poetics is a fixture of college courses on everything from fiction writing to dramatic theory. Now Michael Tierno shows how this great work can be an invaluable resource to screenwriters or anyone interested in studying plot structure. In carefully organized chapters, Tierno breaks down the fundamentals of screenwriting, highlighting particular aspects of Aristotle's work. Then, using examples from some of the best movies ever made, he demonstrates how to apply these ancient insights to modern-day screenwriting. This user-friendly guide covers a multitude of topics, from plotting and subplotting to dialogue and dramatic unity. Writing in a highly readable, informal tone, Tierno makes Aristotle's monumental work accessible to beginners and pros alike in areas such as screenwriting, film theory, fiction, and playwriting.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Many screenwriting gurus say "Everything you need to know about how to write good drama is in Aristotle's Poetics," but then they never explain what's actually in that work! I've tried reading Aristotle's original text, but it is really tough going. Tierno's book is a real find - it boils down a rambling, classics text into concise concepts, tips and techniques that I could understand and use. Tierno provides examples of how all this stuff really works in a variety of films, too. This book is not only practical, but pretty inspiring, too. It gets to the "heart" and "roots" of good drama, something you can forget about when you get bogged down with a script. After reading this, I was excited and motivated to return to my own work.

This book is useful for fiction writers as well as screenwriters. The author interprets Aristotle's ideas and suggestions and then renders them with examples into language applicable to modern drama. Many of Aristotle's original ideas are quoted and have timeless power. For example: "Beginners succeed earlier with Diction and Characters than with the construction of a story." Tierno relates how the parts of a modern script evaluation (Log Line, Brief, Plot Summary, Comments, Idea, Story, Character, Dialogue, and Production Values) mirror Aristotle's examination of the same elements. I especially liked how the film "Gladiator" was used for the example of "the mistake in a hero's reasoning, leading to the hero's subsequent related misfortunes." The short length makes the book a fast but powerful read.

If you are (or want to be) a serious screenwriter, you probably already know names like Robert McKee, Syd Field, Linda Seger, David Trottier and even David Bordwell... The good thing about Mr. Tierno's book is that it goes back to the one fundamental text who, 2300 years before the birth of Cinema, already thought about many of the things all other screenwriting authors still talk about - what do we do in order to achieve higher drama? And it is surprising how fresh Aristotle still sounds today, according to Mr. Tierno's reading. Even if we consider that the object of Aristotle's thought was not the Cinema, but the Classical Greek Theatre - or the mimetic form of representation. In fact, there is nothing new about Aristotle (or Cinema, or narrative, or screenwriting) here besides the fact that Mr. Tierno does an accurate reading of the great Greek thinker and explains many of his key concepts. In a nutshell, this book is an excellent reminder of how important, necessary and universal, good drama can be. Also it is a great reminder that screenwriting is a natural heir of most of storytelling's past traditions. It is also a proof that screenwriting is an art form by itself.

This book has not only helped me to understand the somewhat complex art of dramatic story telling - but it has helped me to help others. Recently working on a documentary project with a first time director, this book allowed him to internalize and distill his thoughts into a more cohesive vision, that was readily translatable to an audience. I would recommend this book to any one who wants to gain insight and understanding to "the movies."

I loved it, short and sweet a lot of good ideas, looks at the subject of screenwriting from a perspective a historian like myself will find enlightening. I had read Aristotle's poetics when I was in high school, this was a good refresher. I am an aspiring screenwriter and can use all of the help I

can find. When reading books on screenwriting I always pay close attention to the bibliography and recommendations for further reading from the authors. This book was recommended by several of them and it is now in my library. It is an easy read, I found it quite useful, well written and a book worth savoring, you need to read this one chapter at a time and then think about what Mr. Tierno is saying and how it applies to you and your writing. Enjoy the read.

This book will help a writer take her screenplay to the next level or two. I used it as one of three textbooks when teaching screenwriting at a top 20 American university. The author takes millennia-old storytelling fundamentals and applies them practically for today's scripts.

Being a professor of ancient Greek classics, I am impressed that a mass-market book about Aristotle's Poetics possesses such keen insights into the breadth of the work, including Tierno's fluidity with tying back the Poetics to Aristotle's greater system of thought. Perhaps if more Hollywood screenwriters would adhere to Tierno's teaching of Aristotle there might be more sophisticated enjoyable adult films coming out of the modern studio system. -Being a professor of ancient Greek classics, I am impressed that a mass-market book about Aristotle's Poetics possesses such keen insights into the breadth of the work, including Tierno's fluidity with tying back the Poetics to Aristotle's greater system of thought. Perhaps if more Hollywood screenwriters would adhere to Tierno's teaching of Aristotle there might be more sophisticated enjoyable adult films coming out of the modern studio system.-Ancient Greek Classics Professor

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