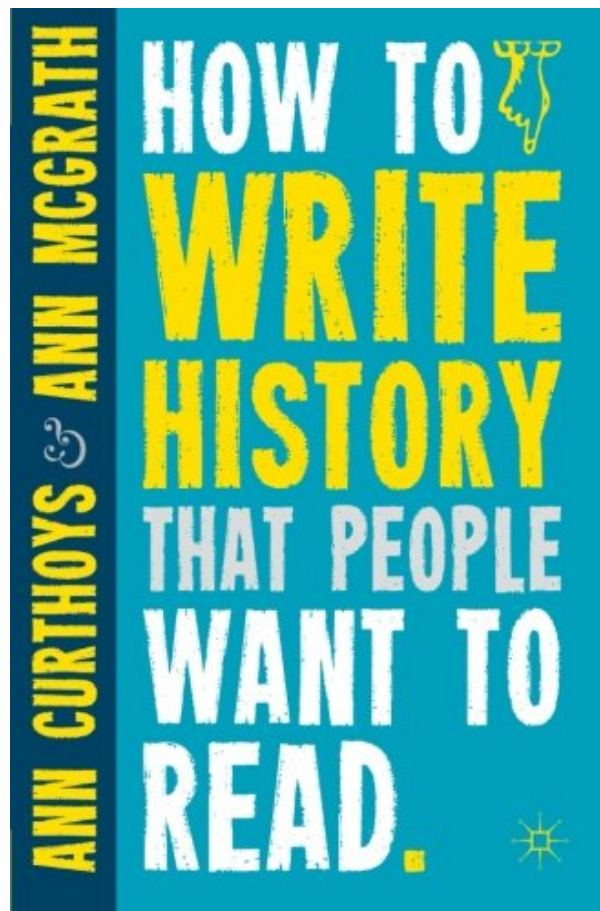
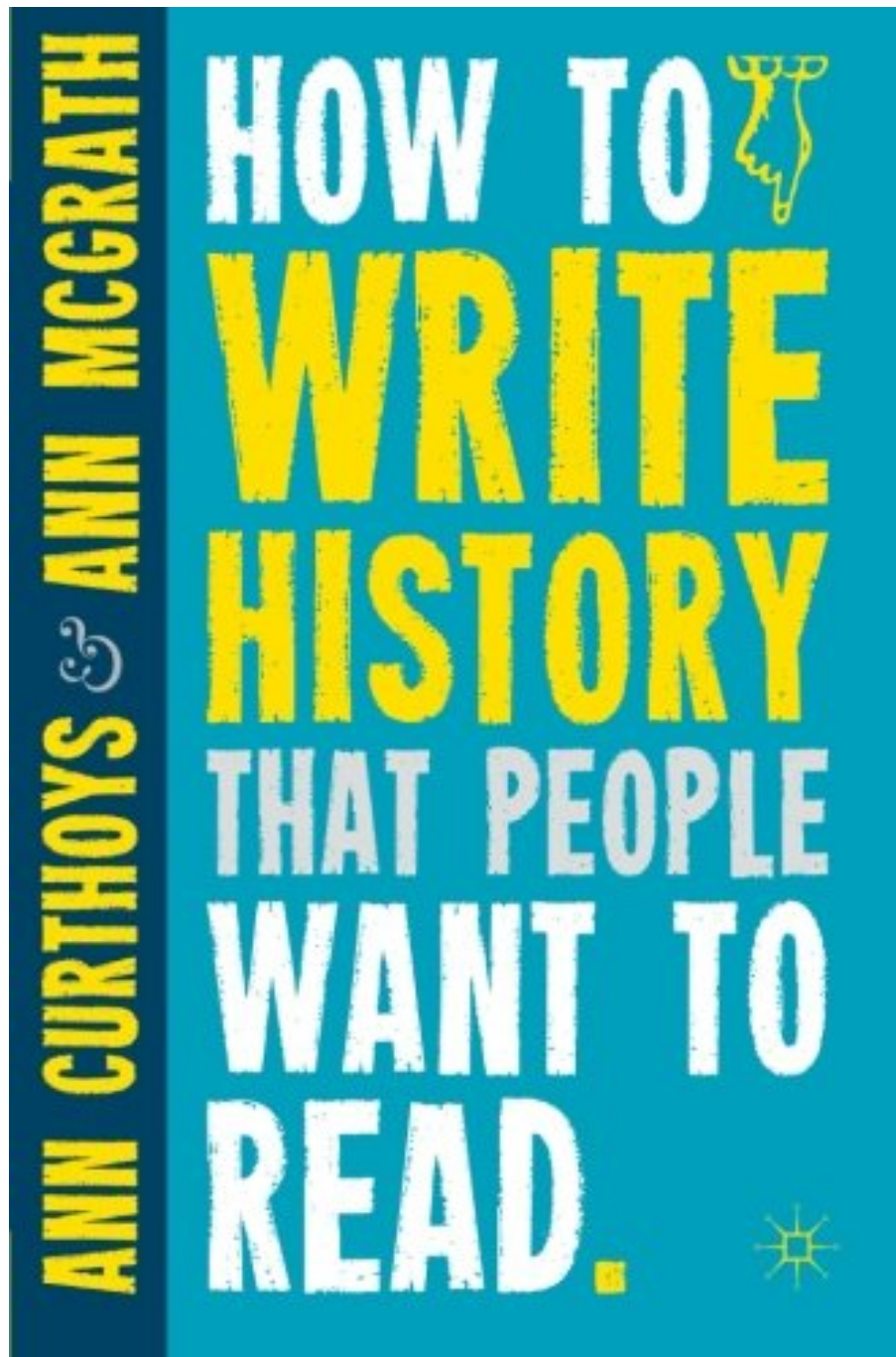


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Review

'A really excellent book. It is written in a bright, informal style with some hard-and-fast rules balanced with advice, warning and very positive encouragement.' Alan Atkinson, author of *The Europeans in Australia*

'This witty little volume reveals the tricks and tips of the profession and recounts endearing anecdotes about the authors' own experiences as historians. A delightful read, this is also a seriously good advice manual. Refreshing, sensitive, thorough, here are two wise women who practise what they preach.' Philippa Levine, author of *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*

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About the Author

ANN CURTHOYS Professor of History at the University of Sydney, Australia. In addition to writing about historical theory and method, she has written about many facets of Australian history, especially the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Her previous books include *Freedom Ride: A Freedomrider Remembers* (2002) and (with Mary Spongberg and Barbara Caine), *A Companion to Women's Historical Writing* (Palgrave, 2005).

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Drawn from decades of experience, this is a concise and highly practical guide to writing history. Aimed at all kinds of people who write history academic historians, public historians, professional historians, family historians and students of all levels the book includes a wide range of examples from many genres and styles.

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Eminently Readable

By Marcela Landres

Good historians must master the tools of the researcher, interviewer, and storyteller. A tall task to be sure, and you can have no better guide than *How to Write History that People Want to Read* by Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath, an eminently readable primer which offers practical advice on how to prepare for library visits, conduct audio and video interviews, and write a compelling narrative.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Easy to read, intelligent how-to guide

By Jenny Schwartz

How to Write History that People Want to Read is one of those enjoyable, professional books that does exactly what its title promises. In this instance, Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath cover the things you should consider when writing history-from research in far flung places to dealing with criticism. They offer sensible advice on structure and style-and their own style is extremely readable.

From my reading, the book started off welcoming and encouraging everyone to write history (be it a privately published family history book, a textbook or a blog), but then gradually focussed in on people in academia-namely students. I imagine history students would find it a useful guide.

Twenty years ago I was a history student. These days I write steampunk instead. Steampunk is history with a twist. It is part technological invention (steam) and part social critique (punk). So when I was reading *How to Write History that People Want to Read* I was doing so from the perspective of someone who researches history to purposely skew its retelling.

There is a lot of similarity in how I construct my fictional world, and Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath's advice for historians: use the five senses, develop characters, hone your own style, and so on.

But what intrigued me was their discussion of historians' moral position. Ethics in history (in anything) fascinates me. It's one of the reasons I enjoy writing fiction: the exploration of good and evil. In steampunk, the social critique can be the reason for the story. Forcing the reader to the point where they have to make a moral judgement is what powerful fiction does-even if readers express their experience of it as "I love/hate the book".

This thread of critiquing the here and now by telling a story of the past is a theme throughout *How to Write History that People Want to Read*. This is historians-as-activists and it's not a role everyone's comfortable with. But being aware of why you write is a challenge all authors ought to accept.

How to Write History that People Want to Read is an interesting way to look behind the scenes and see how your favourite history books and journal, websites and television shows come into being.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Not just for historians

By Donald A. Sharpe

Very much enjoyed this book, very helpful advice for anyone writing non-fiction that has a historical element, especially academics. While written by Australians, the advice is universal. I especially liked their checklist for what to be keeping an eye out for after you have written a manuscript but before you send it off to publishers or reviewers. I have bought two additional copies for friends, one a historian of economics,

one a historian of psychology. And I find myself revisiting my copy of the book as I write a journal article. Excellent.

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