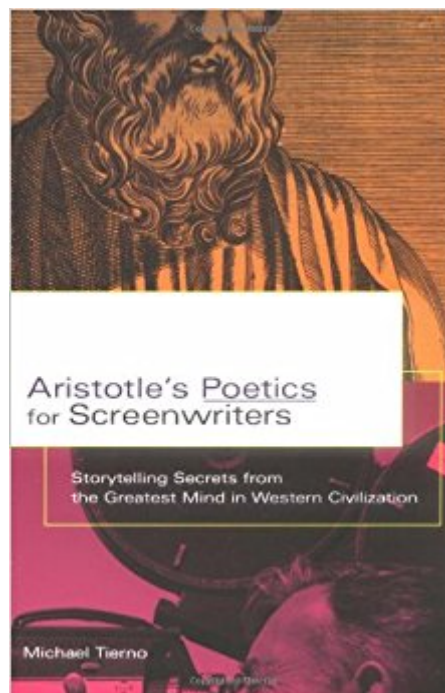




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# Aristotle's Poetics For Screenwriters: Storytelling Secrets From The Greatest Mind In Western Civilization



## 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

This earnest how-to puts a new spin on Aristotle as the master of philosophy, calling him not only the "greatest mind in western civilization," but also the "world's first movie story analyst." Asserting that Aristotle's Poetics has become a standard for constructing movies that reach audiences (and studio heads), Tierno, a director and Miramax story analyst, shows how to apply the basics of the great work to one's own screenplay. He introduces the "Action-Idea" as the way to understand the demands of the story, and debunks the belief that, in Poetics, Aristotle mandates a three-act structure. He also lays bare how people misread Aristotle's advice to employ the "imitation of a serious action." Tierno stresses the importance of ditching subplots for a story featuring "one

complete action" and constantly supports his points with examples of successful films, such as Titanic and Rosemary's Baby. The frequent capsule plot summaries of favorites including The Godfather and Gladiator make Aristotle's instructions concrete, and Tierno helpfully breaks the movies down into plot essentials. Throughout, he is respectful but informal toward Aristotle. Tierno praises Aristotle for representing "beautiful truth," although the breeziness and the eager tone he takes may, at times, put off more serious readers. Still, screenwriters looking beyond the "three-act structure" mantra will find applicable strategies, and those who dismiss Aristotle as old hat will find their perceptions set straight with Tierno's modern movie examples. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"A clever approach to screenwriting." -- Library Journal  
"Makes the precepts accessible with easy comparisons to contemporary hits." -- Variety.com

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.

A fantastic, down to earth, insightful explanation of Aristotle's principles of Story & Drama and how they practically correspond to the craft of modern-day storytelling. Tierno gives excellent examples throughout the book of the secret success behind many famous films in cinema which follow the same principles as Aristotle articulated thousands of years ago. I would highly recommend this to any teacher or student in the narrative /dramatic arts.

Less than I expected. More a review of select movies than anything substantial about Aristotelean worldview of literary tradition. Go to the source, i.e. Poetics in an English translation for the real deal.

Very inspiring and clarifying. Easy to read, short chapters. Unfortunately, almost every chapter ends

on the same note about your screenplay winning an academy award. But otherwise, quite useful and well thought out.

Bought this for a class I'm taking...appreciate the updated language...

Useful reference presented in an entertaining way.

One of my favorite books on screenwriting. I keep giving it away to friends and re-buying it for myself.

A very helpful and concise description with a view to screenwriting about aristotle's "the poetics".Bravo and thank you very much

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