

# WORLD-BUILDING BY STEPHEN L. GILLETT



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## Amazon.com Review

Another in Ben Bova's series on Science Fiction Writing, here geologist and SF scribe Stephen Gillett helps you construct star systems and planets from the atoms up. While it may take you a little more than the proverbial seven days (well, six with rest), when you're done, your knowledge of gravity, weather patterns, cosmic mass and stellar patterns--in this universe--will be greatly enhanced.

## About the Author

Ben Bova is the author of more than a hundred works of science fact and fiction, including "Able One", "Leviathans of Jupiter" and the Grand Tour novels, including "Titan", winner of John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best novel of the year. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Arthur C. Clarke Foundation in 2005, and in 2008 he won the Robert A. Heinlein Award "for his outstanding body of work in the field of literature." He is President Emeritus of the National Space Society and a past president of Science Fiction Writers of America, and a former editor of "Analog" and former fiction editor of "Omni". As an editor, he won science fiction's Hugo Award six times. Dr. Bova's writings have predicted the Space Race of the 1960s, virtual reality, human cloning, the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars), electronic book publishing, and much more. He lives in Florida.

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# WORLD-BUILDING BY STEPHEN L. GILLETT PDF

This book is designed to give science fiction writers the background they need in real science to make their fiction read like fact. World Building is a blueprint in words, calculations, tables and diagrams to help writers transport readers from one world to another.

With Stephen Gillett's help, you'll be on solid ground, no matter what kinds of worlds you create for your science fiction.

World-Building explains science to help you make your fiction plausible. You'll give your worlds the pull of gravity, aware of the effects on inhabitants and the planets themselves. Mix elements and build planets with chemically credible, geologically accurate characteristics—and anomalies—that affect those who live there. Create planetary "engines," convincing atmospheres and fact-based weather patterns. Colonize a truly weird world: ancient Earth. Explore our neighboring planets and their satellites for SF possibilities. Light and heat your landscapes with the right types of stars. See how things might be on a "chloroxygen" world and other hypothetical places.

In this book, you'll follow calculations, read tables, view diagrams, learn what forces are at work in the universe, and see how you can harness them to give realism to the fantasy in your storytelling.

World-Building is a blueprint in words, filled with facts to help you write believable fictions that transport readers from this world to another... of your making.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

91 of 93 people found the following review helpful.

### A Helpful Guide to Constructing Star Systems and Planets

By Lawrance Bernabo

"World-Building" is the volume in the Science Fiction Writing Series edited by Ben Bova devoted to constructing star systems and life-supporting planets. Stephen L. Gillett has a doctorate in geology, was the science columnist at "Amazing Science Fiction" and has written SF under a pseudonym. My doctorate is in rhetorical studies, so I am starting at ground zero when it comes to understanding or at least appreciating the mathematical equations for escape velocity, scaling tidal forces or Roche's limit. While this book thoroughly convinced me that I have no aptitude for writing hard science, I can see how it would be extremely helpful to anyone interested in being on a strong scientific foundation when it comes to writing their own stories.

Gillett's volume has eight chapters: (1) Why World-Build? looks at the necessity of using real science to create the requisite sense of wonder in your science fiction writing; (2) The Astronomical Setting covers the important differences between planets and stars in general and gravity, orbits, seasons and tidal action in particular; (3) Making a Planet details how the formation of a planetary system impacts the resulting planets and the options for story writing; (4) The Earth looks at the interconnected aspects that make interesting variations possible with the home worlds you create because of plate tectonics, water and air, magnetic field, colors, etc.; (5) The Ancient Earth deals with avoiding the "Cenozoic Earth Syndrome" (creating an alien world by making a few slight changes on ancient earth) by better understanding our ancient past as an inspiration for creativity; (6) The Other Planet looks at the wealth of data we have accumulated from our deep space probes as another source of inspiration; (7) Stars and Suns looks at how such heavenly bodies can supporting interesting planets as well; and (8) Not as We Know It discusses differences in volatile content (e.g., wetworlds, nitroworlds, brimstone worlds) as a final means of providing major scope for variation in words.

Hopefully this will provide you enough information to decide if "World-Building" will help you in writing your own Science Fiction. I appreciate that for some people this book does not go far enough, but certainly for the vast majority of us it gives us enough information that we will not thoroughly embarrass ourselves when it comes to creating new worlds for our characters to inhabit and visit.

29 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

Worth reading even if you're not a writer

By A Customer

Required reading if you're an aspiring SF Writer. This book provides the basic information needed to design an "authentic" planet that is scientifically consistent. Most of the equations are in sidebars so they can be easily located and entered in a spreadsheet making it easy to try out a variety of scenarios for your planet and its environment. The author has packed lots of information in a small book.

If you find this book useful you will also find "Energies: An Illustrated Guide to the Biosphere and Civilization" (available from Amazon) equally thought provoking and just as useful. While World-Building takes a look at planets in general it does focus on Earthlike planets in particular. Energies takes a wide-ranging look at Earth itself (its biomass, climate, animals and technology) with extensive charts, graphs and equations and fills in some areas where World-Building is thin. The books complement each other amazingly well. In addition, both list other references and resources for additional research.

32 of 34 people found the following review helpful.

Unique in its beauty

By Alex

This is probably the best and only book that clearly states the current understanding of stars and formation/evolution of planets around them, in plain speech. The information is as extensive as it is scientifically accurate which is a great plus for an aspiring fiction writer who does not want to look over the

countless pages of an Encyclopaedia Formulae on astrophysics. Besides the numerous formulas one needs to create a (scientifically) cohesive world, Gillett also gives many tidbits from the fiction writing over the course of time, allowing you to become familiar with the possibilities of several future technologies/discoveries. Also included are several studies of fictitious odd-ball worlds ( one is an ocean world filled with sulfuric acid). This book will likely be useful to the writer as well as the explorer within everyone.

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