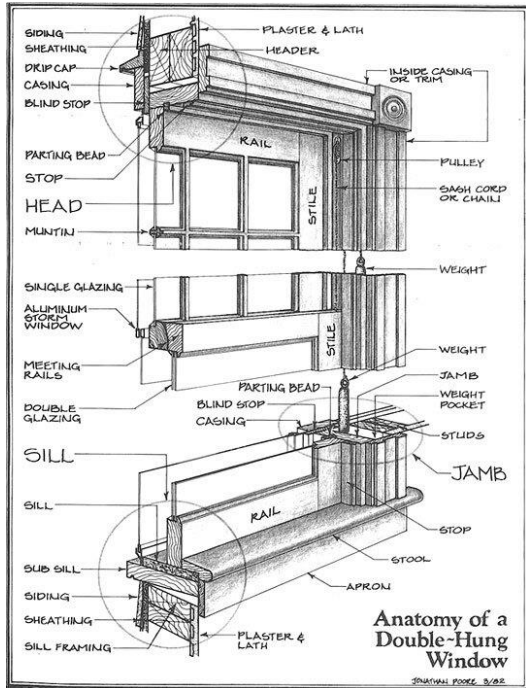


Historical Research: Writing a Window Into Another World



Research is important!

In order to write historical fiction that is believable and accurate, writers do a LOT of research. Sometimes we are tempted to show our readers just how much research we've done.

...but that's usually a mistake. Our readers DO want to learn as they read, but mostly they want to EXPERIENCE history by seeing the world through the eyes of your story's characters.

The research wasn't for them.

It was for YOU!

Writers do the research so they can write as if they experienced that era of history first-hand and are here to tell readers about how it felt...and how it smelled, how it tasted, what it sounded like.

Readers don't want to know how to build a window.

They want to see THROUGH the window you've already built for them!



Historical Research—Developing an Accurate Perspective on the Past

One of the truisms of writing is that authors should “ _____, don’t _____.”

When writing historical fiction, how do we SHOW readers the essence of

- _____
- _____
- _____

Through research, we can experience the past so we can give readers a historical tour.

Research is important, but we don’t do it for the readers. We do it for _____!

Readers don’t want _____.

The want to _____.

A story is about a person with a problem. If you have no _____, you have no story.

What’s your story about?

Someone _____

Wants something _____

Because _____

But _____

So _____

And that fails, so then _____

And in the end _____

Within the context of the story, ask what’s at stake for each character? How would it feel to be there?

The _____ of your story is at the _____ of the characters’ perspectives.

What do they want? (Conflict with “ _____ ”)

What keeps them from it? (Conflict with _____)

What comes between them? (_____ conflict)

Draw out the _____.

Why does it matter?

- Find the heart of the story by _____.
- Find the universal appeal by _____.
- Find the theme by discovering _____.
- Establish a _____.

Your goal is NOT to teach readers how to build a clock...

Your goal is to turn back the hands of time.