

HOW TO WRITE YOUR NOVEL & CHAPTERS DIALOGUE & CHARACTERS

Several Ways to Write a Novel: (There are no rules!)

- 1) Outline the whole novel in advance, OR
- 2) Write the first chapter (s), and then when you get a feeling/idea of how the story might go, outline the rest, OR
- 3) Write the whole story without outlining, OR
- 4) Write 'island' chapters. Meaning, write chapters as they come to you, and figure out when you have many chapters, how they are organized, or fit together. Thus, you can write the last chapter, or middle chapters first. Knowing the END of our story helps a great deal.

You can also work with **ideas** for your novel. Write down interesting scenes, or ideas, events, and put them down on a big piece of cardboard, etc, and fit them together in the order that feels right. Build it as you write, or before you begin.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

Chapters should read like mini-stories. There should be a character, goal/desire, obstacle/s, problem/s, and cliffhanger or questions at the end to keep the reader reading.

DIALOGUE should always further the plot, story, and conflict. Avoid tags as much as possible (said, mumbled, shouted, etc.) Avoid dialogue that has no purpose.

CHARACTERS

Main characters, and all characters, should have:

- 1) Details about description, & behavior to single them out
- 2) Strengths—eg, perhaps they are smart, persistent, loyal, kind, or can withstand pain etc
- 3) Weaknesses (emotional, psychological, and/or physical), impatient, stubborn, snobby, procrastinate, etc.

The two most beloved superhero characters are:

SPIDERMAN and WOLVERINE because they are flawed characters. They have emotions, conflicts, turmoil, do stupid things at times, and can get hurt. SUPERMAN has none of these issues, and is less relatable to readers. He's GQ, perfect, & indestructible.

WEAKNESS: The character's weakness should get the character into trouble somehow, and should be tied into the character and story arcs somehow. Eg: The character is always stubborn, and thus does something out of stubbornness that hurts him/her or others, or gets in the way of obtaining the MC's goal.

STRENGTH: The character's strength should help the character overcome their weakness, and should be tied into the character and story arc, too, and help the character complete their goal.

CHARACTER 'HOLE'/Problem/Trouble

In general, the MC (main character) should be in a 'hole'/trouble immediately in the first chapter, and the hole/problem should get deeper and deeper during the story, so the reader is wondering, feeling the MC can't succeed. It should look hopeless. And then, unless it's a depressing ending, the MC finds a solution to it all, through striving, effort, etc., using their strengths and resources.

A) CHARACTER & B) STORY ARCS

A) An example of **Character Arc**, is:

Character in the beginning is racist, at the end of the story is not, s/he's changed. Ch. Arc is about how the character has changed during the story. Character arc is an inner change in perspective.

B) An example of **Story Arc** is: a treasure hunter looks for gold and romance, and by the end of the story finds both. Story arc is what's happened in the story. It's the outer action.

WRITE FROM WHAT YOU KNOW, OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE, AND WHAT YOU LOVE—PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT.