

LegendFire's Writers Guide

How To Write Creative Fiction (Second Edition)

Presented By: LegendFire: Online Creative Writing Community

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Changes: If you find a grammatical mistake or have any general feedback for the book, please email me at dtigner@legendfire.com!

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Second Edition

Greetings! This little book has quite the history and it has been fun for me to read what I had written five years ago. You can really see how much you improve when you look at old projects. This goes for every hobby or profession. Save something for a long period of time (say, five years?) and then give it a gander. I'm sure you'd be shocked.

Shocked was the first emotions I felt, though then it was replaced by a dab of embarrassment. I can't believe how many grammatical mistakes I've found just from a lazy read through of a few sections. I've decided now is a good time to give this book a good rewrite and get it out there where it can be helpful to all writers. So, here it is, edition two. Enjoy!

Introduction

Have you ever had the experience where you plot out a great story in your head, though when you finally sit down to write it, nothing seems to go right? Where is the magic within my words? What does my story lack? What am I doing wrong? All sorts of questions often come to mind during this session of creativity, or the lack there of.

After several years of dealing with these questions I set out to discover the answers. I spent long hours within the library studying books on how to write. I also spent many more hours writing for practice. I took books that I loved and studied how the author wrote the book; studying his or her writing style, and then tried it for my self.

Now that I look back on that, I decided that many others might be going through the same things I was going through. So here it is, the LegendFire's Writing Guide, a free book written to help writers! It is a small book and is very concise.

Never stop learning! There are so many how-to-write books out there that host some very helpful information, both for the professional and beginner! This book concentrates mainly upon the basics of writing, so go explore and find something more advanced when you are done.

If you would like to participate within a good writing community, please check out LegendFire. This community is great for feedback, contests, making friends, and learning. The URL is: www.legendfire.com.

With all that said, I hope you enjoy your time reading this book! Good luck to you and your writing! Keep pushing yourself and eventually you will achieve your goals.

Part 1

Plot Outline

What is a plot and how can you use one to help your stories become more organized, interesting, to the point, and just over all better? To tell you the truth, before my large amount of homework, research, and writing practice, I was not too sure of what a story plot was, and how to use one effectively. Now, believe me when I say, by simply knowing the basics of a plot and story structure, I have been able to freely express my thoughts on paper far better than before.

What is a plot? The plot is simply your line of events within the story. It is the beginning, the end, your characters birth, your characters death - ultimately, it is what you want it to be and can be very flexible.

Everyone wants something different to help set their story apart from another. However, it's quite often to find your words mimicking the last good book you read or even a movie you've recently seen.

When you plot a story, your mimicking of other great stories will go away. Plotting allows you to sit back and see the whole story. From this point of view you can compare your story to others for similarities and easily make changes.

Story line plots can be very unique. They contain many different templates of how the story will flow. Following the template you've created will help you be more creative in a restricted area.

The more you plan your plot, the easier it will be to write the story. This approach also helps you maintain a direct scene-to-scene flow so that you do not get lost within your words or imagination.

Now that we understand the gist of a plot, lets go over a basic plot line. Every story line plot can be very detailed, or left open. However, the majority of plots will have something that covers each of the following:

1. Beginning (Change)
2. Main Goal (Question)
3. Middle
4. Goal Confrontation
5. Climax
6. End

These points are the backbone of a story, and thus, are the basic template of a story line plot. The next six chapters will go over the basics of a story line plot and detail how you can use them for the best results.

Enjoy!

Chapter 1

Beginning - Change

Beginning with change and threat

Have you ever picked up a book and within the first two pages, decided it wasn't going to be good? I have done it! And I know that many others have done it as well. It's not something to be proud of, though as a writer you must write for the majority. It is crucial to make your story interesting at the beginning, or your readers will not stick around to find out how good it is.

How do you hook the reader to insure they continue reading? It's fairly simple actually, you need to incorporate and understand change.

Change

Within the beginning of every book there should be some sort of change. A change is something that is different than before, and in often times, threatening. First day of school is a change and sometimes people can feel threatened by it. For a fantasy story, being sucked into another world is, by obvious reasons, a change.

We start with a change because it is interesting. No one wants to read about an uneventful story. A change tells us about the past, the present, and gives the reader some kind of glimpse into the future.

Main Character

While planning out how your book is going to lay out, you need to know who the protagonist is going to be. What are her traits, purposes, and desires in life? You need to know the protagonist by what she looks like, smells like, acts like, etc. The more you know about your protagonist, the easier it will be to write about her.

Tip

You can find character building questionnaires off the Internet for free. Load up your favorite browser and search for character questionnaires. Also, flash cards work great for planning out all your characters (and plots). It's nice to have an overview of your characters and see how they interact with each other.

First Paragraphs

It is within the first few paragraphs that you should hook your reader. this is critical so that your reader does not become bored while reading through the building of the foundation stage of your book. After you excite the reader to want to read on, you can build more on the foundation (the necessary and often times boring information) of the story. This is because they have been given a taste of what is to come and are not so prone to drop the book.

Quick Recap:

1. Something has changed
2. The protagonist is threatened
3. The protagonist vows to struggle

Chapter 2

Main Goal - Question

What is the story about?

What is the main reason someone wants to read your story? What attaches them to your story and keeps them reading through the sometimes not-so-exciting parts? It is the unanswered question. What does that mean? Every fiction story that is known to exist has a question developed at the beginning and answered at the end.

The Question

The question is merely stating whether or not the protagonist will achieve her goal. Usually no one truly thinks about the question or perhaps the answer, though by recognizing it as you write, it will surely help you stay on target.

Goal

The reason of the story is based entirely off of the protagonist's goal. How you develop the goal is merely stating what the story is about. The story is about what the protagonist wants to achieve.

The protagonist may have many goals, though what is the main goal? What does she want to accomplish over all? Does she want to ace her mathematics test or cast a magical spell? Perhaps she wants to learn how to fly with feathered wings of wax or save the queen of the fairies from ogres.

There are millions of story goals out there. You simply have to think one up! Take some time with this. Try to make your goal something that you want to spend a lot of thought and time on. If your goal doesn't excite you, then why would you spend so much time writing about it? Scrap it immediately and come up with something you want to write about!

Quick Recap:

1. Creating a question creates a reason for the reader to want to read
2. The main question states whether or not the main goal will be achieved
3. Make sure your goal excites you, if not, scrap it immediately!

Your main goal is very important! However, do not think you are off the hook after you come up with one. In chapter 3 and chapter 8 we will go over subplots and their goals.

Chapter 3

Middle

The new question

Now that you have reached the middle of your story, there are a few new questions that need to be asked. What has come of your main character? She has been introduced, the reader knows her well by now, the goal has been developed, and you have your foundation built!

Though is that all? What purpose does the middle of your plot line serve? The middle section of your book proves to hold many things! It is time to bring out other goals. Subplots and goals will be discussed in more detail in chapter 8 though as for the middle of your story, you need more to write about!

The middle of the story helps you see the end. It is the top of the hill. From here, everything should be a nice easy run with your words and imagination. You are so close to answering the main story question that it thrives through the reader as they read page to page. What happens when they realize that their answer is yet farther than it appeared? They may get discouraged and their reading speed will slow.

It is at this point that you may want to come up with a subplot with an answer that may appear far closer than the main answer. In doing this, the reader is now thinking more of the subplot answer. Therefore your reader continues to move excitedly through your book, page to page as before.

Tip

As you are writing your story it is crucial that you do not make any large changes to the beginning of the story. A lot of people make the mistake of finding inspiration or a desire of change that they start toying with the beginning. Do not touch the beginning! A few mark ups here-and-there is fine, though major changes is one of the biggest reasons why new authors don't finish their stories.

Quick Recap:

1. Your foundation is built
2. Your end is in sight
3. New questions are boiling to the surface
4. It is time to move on!

Once you get to the middle of the story, you need to start preparing for the goal confrontation that we will discuss in the next chapter. Please remember that there is still a huge gap in time and pages before the goal confrontation.

Chapter 4

Goal Confrontation

Goal confrontation with struggle

Creating your goal confrontation takes a lot of planning and organizing in order to do it right. I would suggest you wait until your half way done with your story before you start planning anything in detail. Your reader thrives for the goal confrontation and the climax right after. Why? Because this entire time your story has been working up to this specific point.

Creating your Goal Confrontation

Whatever your main characters goal is, she will soon get her chance to come face to face with it. If my story were written about a mathematics test, then my goal confrontation would be the test. What makes your goal confrontation exciting? It is the amount of struggle your character puts forth. It is unexpected events that could change the possibilities of the main plot answer.

If you simply had the protagonist walk into their goal confrontation and, if it was the test, had her sit down and ace the test, that would be boring! Perhaps to make it more interesting, she would sit down, look at the test and notice a bunch of questions that were not given to her to study. You need to create a worry for the character. Make doubt in a happy ending.

What's Next?

Your main character has confronted her goal and showed struggle. She was introduced to new information that created doubt for a happy ending. Now it is time to move on to the climax of the story!

Quick Recap:

1. Confronted goal
2. Showed struggle
3. Introduced new information
4. Create doubt in a happy ending

Some people get confused between what goal confrontation is compared to climax. "It's not the same thing?" Of course it's not, or I wouldn't have made separate chapters for them! Our next chapter will discuss what a climax is and what it should do within your story.

Chapter 5

Climax

All questions answered

What is a climax? How do you use it? Do you need one? A climax is the end of your story, which answers all of the unanswered, reader binding, questions. Yes, you have to include a climax! If your book doesn't include a climax, then the book would fail miserably and never be published.

The climax is probably one of the easiest yet most refrained areas in which you will plot, and write. Starting from the beginning of your story you have been creating questions that the reader has been wanting to know the answer to. All of the questions that you have not previously given the answer to, the climax will answer.

Have you ever read a book in which near the end it became really exciting and you did not want to put the book down? I have! That bit that you were reading is first, goal confrontation, and then story climax. Goal confrontation and climax works hand in hand. One starts it and the other finishes it. Over all, during this time your readers will be more excited than ever, don't let them down!

Creating a Climax

Creating your climax for your story should be easy if you have been keeping track of your questions. You have to know what the questions are! They are hidden some times so look closely.

Create a scene where the protagonist receives answers to all the story questions. You can answer question in many different ways:

1. Protagonist figuring them out on her own
2. Someone telling the protagonist
3. Reading them in a book, etc.

Every book is different when it comes to answering question. Ask yourself, “what is the best way for you to give the answers to your protagonist?”

Quick Recap:

1. The climax answers your unanswered questions
2. Whatever questions your story comes up with, write them down!
3. Now that there is nothing binding the reader, end

After answering your questions, the story is now less exciting, there is nothing holding the reader to the book rather than just the ending of the book. This leads us to our next chapter!

Chapter 6

End

Your story is done - now end

Welcome to the end of your plot line! Though, don't think you are done just yet, this is simply your plot! After you finish coming up with how you would like your story to end, you get to jump on that long road of actually writing your story, which can be very difficult.

The end of your book is just as important as the beginning. Have you ever seen a movie that was great though then ended horribly? If you end your story badly, your reader will be disgusted with you! Put as much time and thought into how you are ending the story as you would for the beginning of the story.

There are several ways to end the story, and they can be either good or bad for your story. Here are three general ways to end your story, though there are many others:

Lingering End

The lingering end normally consists of a chapter or two. These endings are usually good for long books that expect to release another book as a sequel. After the climax the story will close up all open ends and explain what goes on from there preparing for the next book.

Question

This ending is specifically designed to leave your reader frantically turning the blank pages at the back of the book looking for more of the story. This way is not the best way to end your story unless you are planning to release a sequel. A question ending is more to the point; it does not linger all too much.

Straight to the point

This is like ending the book as a question, though without the question. Your climax is done and your answers have been given, now you end your book as soon as possible. Although you are trying to end the book quickly, don't forget to provide enough closure for the reader. Readers often want to know what happens to the characters after the story is over. Wrap it up and refrain from lingering too much.

Quick Recap:

1. Your ending is just as important as the beginning!
2. There are several different ways to end your story
3. Choose an ending that suits your story. (Will there be another book?)

As stated before, there are many ways to end your book, these are just examples of what you can do. These last 6 chapters are only the basics of creating a plot line. There are far more things you can do to help make your story become that awesome best seller every author wants!

Part 2

Plot Inclusion

As stated in the last chapter, chapter 1 through chapter 6 only states the basics of the plot line. You will learn from this section that there are several other things to keep in mind as you are plotting your story.

I will only be going over a few additional points, though in reality, there are many others. Go to your local library and look up books concerning plot. I'm sure you'll find them very fascinating!

The following chapters will explain a few general terms and how to use them to make your plot line and story run smoother and become more interesting.

Chapter 7 - Peak & Valley

Chapter 7 will explain the usage of the terms Peak and Valley. Keeping this method of writing in mind will help balance your book with events and show the aftermath of emotion, thought, and decision. This chapter also introduces what a peak disaster is and how to use one.

Chapter 8 - Subplot

Chapter 8 will explain the usage of subplots and subgoals with their questions and answers. This chapter will help you motivate your reader with exciting new additions to your story. Subplots also helps control the flow of the story to make it easier to write and keep interesting.

Chapter 9 – Patterns & Mirrors

Chapter 9 introduces the usage of Patterns and Mirrors to help create similarities within the story. This writing method helps create better flow and shows connections.

Chapter 10 – Plot Prologue

Chapter 10 is the main overview of plotting your story. It includes the gist of all the previous plotting chapters. The Plot Prologue is designed to be a reference to help you remember specific elements within each chapter.

Always remember that the plotting information here is mainly the basics. You can continue to advance these ideas and methods with your own and other authors' methods. Never stop learning! A writer is always a student.

Chapter 7

Peak & Valleys

Where is your wavy line?

When plotting your stories, there is this wavy line that states the high points and low points of your story. The high points are mini-climaxes, struggles, events, and everything else that makes your story move at a quick pace. These high points are called peaks. The low points within the story shows when the story is moving at a slower pace. These points are called valleys. Having too much of one is bad, and in order to use them correctly, they need to be in balance.

Peak

There is a common mistake with peaks that many writers overlook. What happens when your story is just a bunch of peaks and there are no valleys? The story moves too fast for the reader and becomes confusing.

After the struggle, the fast and exciting part within the story, it is important to create a valley in order to slow the story and allow the reader and character to think about what has happened. The lack of doing this will be the end of your story and no one will want to read it.

Peak Disaster

How do you keep your reader involved in your story? Create a question, right? Though what is better than just a question? It is creating a bad answer for the question! Would you like to read a book where everything is great and the protagonist goes through no hardships? NO!

To intrigue your reader, you need to create a disaster for him. (If you didn't pick up on that, I've changed the protagonist from a girl to a guy for this example).

Lets say we make our peak where the main character gets in a fight with the school bully. There is a question that is automatically formed, "will he win the fight?" If this was a peak disaster created in order to bring the reader into the book more, then what would the answer be?

Raising his fists, Josh looks at the large bully. The bully, clearly amused, laughs outs and points his stubby finger at Josh. "Is this joke?"

At this point, the reader wants the protagonist to beat up the bully (achieve his goal). And as much as you would like your character to be the one who shows up the school's bully, this is a peak disaster.

The group around them was fairly silent. Josh couldn t tell if they wanted him to win or not, though it didn t matter any more. Springing forward, Josh threw his fist as hard as he could. It was like slow motion. He watched his fist fly through the air, aimed perfectly for Albert s nose, though it didn t hit. Instead, pain seared through Josh s left temple and he fell to the ground.

Of course your story would want to include more detail about who this bully was and why the protagonist hated him. Having the character face a peak disaster makes the reader want the character to succeed even more.

Valley

Your valley is very important! Your valley comes right after the peak, which helps the reader and character think about what had just happened. Within a valley there are three main things that usually happen. You can

include all of these, add to them, or you can take some away. The three main points are emotion, thought, and decision.

After a peak disaster your character should show some emotion. Emotion is what makes a character seem real to the reader. The more emotion the protagonist shows, the more your reader will become attached to him. Though don't overdo it - too much of a good thing isn't always better. Try to include different emotions, don't limit yourself to anger or hate.

Your character can only show emotion for so long before the reader will either get the point or get sick of it. After or during the emotional stage, the protagonist need to show thought. Showing thought helps the protagonist define his goals within the story. The more thought and emotion that is shown, the more your reader will understand your character and actually care about what happens to him.

The last point is decision. At some point within emotion and thought, your character needs to make a decision that shows he is willing to struggle for his goal. He wants his goal and is willing to go out and do what is needed to achieve his goal. These points help build the story up for the next peak or peak disaster.

Quick Recap:

1. Balance your peaks and valleys
2. After a peak disaster comes your valley
3. Your valley include emotion, thought, and decision
4. When a character has no hardships, they are not interesting!

By simply seeing the overview of peaks and valleys, it should help with making your story line plot exciting. Also, peaks and valleys work very close in hand with subplots, which is next!

Chapter 8

Sub-Plots

Your additional questions

Just as you have your main plot, there are subplots that you can use as well. There are many points within the story that a subplot can come to exist. These subplots serve a great purpose within your story. For one, they make writing the story easier. They also help make your story more enjoyable.

Usually when planning your subplots, you plan them to interact with the main plot. Whenever you create a subplot you are creating another question, which the reader plans on finding out the answer. The more questions you have, the easier it is to write, for what you have to write about is broader. However, the more questions you create, the more confusing your story will become.

Subplots work hand in hand with our last chapter. Whenever you are at a peak within the story it is usually related to a subplot or the main plot being acted upon. Not all plots or subplots end happily, that is where your peak disaster comes from. Though don't think you have to end a plot to create a peak disaster, this is but one way a subplot can be used.

Relative and Non-Relative

When plotting your subplots you should think about how relative the subplot is to its original plot. Not all subplots have to be relative to the main plot, though the majority of subplots should be relative. Personally I like subplots that interact with the main plot secretly. When I say secretly I

mean the subplot interacts with the main plot though the reader does not see it until later on within the story. This is great for planning plot twists.

Moving Forward

A subplot should move the story forward, or bring excitement to the story. When a subplot pushes the story forward it does it by giving hints to the answer of the main question or a question within the story. Anything that gives information that is pertinent to the story is a good subplot. While pushing the story forward it is a good practice to try to make the subplot exciting. Try to find a way to hint at answers within the story and push the story forward while creating an exciting scene.

Quick Recap:

1. Subplots are additional questions within you main plot question
2. The majority of subplots should be relative to the main plot
3. All subplots should move the story forward and bring excitement
4. Always answer your questions!

A good subplot always belongs within a story. If writers never used subplots, stories would either be too short or long and boring. Feel free to experiment with subplots!

Chapter 9

Patterns & Mirrors

Buried but not hidden - connections.

This chapter may have a few people guessing how patterns and mirrors work within writing. I would just like to say, these two elements are nothing much! Don't be afraid of new writing terminologies. These will help your story gain unity and diversity.

As you plot your story and begin to write, you start creating patterns. This is nothing bad, as long as you know you are doing it. If you know that you are doing it, then you may control how the patterns and mirrors affects your story.

Patterns

A pattern will soon develop within your story as you create scenes and characters. By knowing where your patterns are, you can reword them slightly so that they help your readers understand certain points that you wish to make clear.

Certain similarities within your story helps your reader think of what is going on. It redefines your main question and restates who the good and bad guys are. *Patterns are used to help the flow of your story and to remind the reader of things that may have been forgotten.* In creating a pattern, simply include similarities when describing scenes, characters, and etc. within your story.

Mirrors

When you think of a mirror you think of two points. A mirror takes one side and reflects it to act as the other. Setting your story to use mirrors to reflect events is a good way to bring thought and good flow to the story. Mirrors are scenes that have buried but not hidden connections.

In creating your mirror within two events, you try to write the second event using thoughts and actions of the first. A mirrored scene should repeat the subject and terms of the first event. Repeating dialogue, thoughts, smells, actions, visuals, and many other things that will help you achieve a good mirror.

Don't limit yourself just to mirroring events! You can mirror many things, characters for one, objects, places, etc. A mirror is most commonly found within long fiction. This means that it is over a long period of time within the story that a mirror would then come out and be most effective.

Quick Recap:

1. Patterns redefines points within the story
2. Mirrors brings back memories or thoughts of previous things
3. Using these two terms will help story flow

Patterns and Mirrors will come in handy. They are the points within the story that brings back memories and help the reader understand new points and scenes without abusively over wording them.

Chapter 10

Plot Prologue

This chapter restates the gist of the last nine chapters. You should give it a quick scan through before moving on. If you have a great memory, you won't be losing much by skipping this chapter.

Chapter 1 - Beginning - Change

Beginning with change and threat

1. Something has changed
2. The main character is threatened
3. The main character vows to struggle

Chapter 2 - Main Goal - Question

What is the story about?

1. Creating a question creates a reason for the reader to want to read
2. The main question states whether or not the main goal will be achieved or not
3. Make sure your goal excites you, if not, scrap it immediately!

Chapter 3 - Middle

The new question

1. Your foundation is built
2. Your end is in sight
3. New questions are boiling to the surface
4. It is time to move on!

Chapter 4 - Goal Confrontation

Goal confrontation with struggle

1. Confronted goal
2. Showed struggle
3. Introduced new information
4. Create doubt in a happy ending

Chapter 5 - Climax

All questions answered

1. The climax answers your unanswered questions
2. Whatever questions your story comes up with, write them down!
3. Now that there is nothing binding the reader, end

Chapter 6 - End

Your story is done now end

1. Your ending is just as important as the beginning!
2. There are several different ways to end your story
3. Choose an ending that suits your story “Will there be another book?”

Chapter 7 - Peak & Valleys

Where is your wavy line?

1. Balance your peaks and valleys
2. After a peak disaster comes your valley
3. Your valley include emotion, thought, and decision
4. When a character has no hardships, they are not interesting!

Chapter 8 - Sub-Plots

Your additional questions

1. Subplots are additional questions within you main question
2. The majority of subplots should be relative to the main plot
3. All subplots should move the story forward and bring excitement
4. Always answer your questions!

Chapter 9 – Patterns & Mirrors

Buried but not hidden - connections

1. Patterns redefines points within the story
2. Mirrors brings back memories or thoughts of previous things
3. Using these two terms will help story flow

Part 3

Writing Points

The last ten chapters discussed a lot dealing with plot and how to use it for creating your stories. This section deals more with writing as a whole. It is one thing to know how to plan your story, though it is a completely different thing to know how to write one.

The next seven chapters will discuss many vital writing points. Here is a simple overlook of the upcoming chapters and how they will be helpful to you.

Chapter 11 - Passive / Active Voice

Most people do not know a lot about passive and active voice. It's nothing to be scared of, though will likely take some practice to use it correctly in your writing. This chapter details what passive and active voice is and how to recognize it in your writing.

Chapter 12 - Point of View Character

Chapter 12 goes over the simple points of the point of view character. How to pick one out, what rules you should follow, how to do multiple point of views, and so forth.

Chapter 13 - Avoid Coincidences

Chapter 13 explains why it is a good idea to avoid coincidences, and how, by doing this, your story will be greatly improved.

Chapter 14 - Caricature Your Characters

Chapter 14 simply goes over how your characters should act. It's important to show who your characters are and maintain that knowledge with the reader over the span of your story.

Chapter 15 - Writing Speeds

Chapter 15 goes over several different writing styles and how they reflect on the reading speed of your story. A writer should embrace the majority of these styles to help find a balance for readers.

Chapter 16 - Reusing Events

Chapter 16 details how you can reuse events to help you plot a better story, one that is easier to write, and boost the interesting aspects of your story.

Chapter 17 - Ending Chapters

Chapter 17 states a few ways on how to end your chapters. The ending of a chapter play a great deal as to whether or not the reader will continue to read the next chapter.

Chapter 11

Passive / Active Voice

Stay in active voice

Passive and active voices are, in a way, writing styles. Though with this kind of writing style it is best to write in an active voice rather than passive. Writing in an active voice will keep your sentences concise and fast. Active voice sentences also tend to be more dynamic, easier to read, and understandable. There will be times that passive voice can be useful, and we'll talk about that in a bit.

Examples:

Active: *Josh fell to the ground with pain searing in his right temple*

Passive: *Falling to the ground Josh feels pain sear through his right temple*

Active: *Josh s nose was bleeding*

Passive: *Blood tricked down Josh s nose*

Active Voice

If you noticed, all the sentences that use the active voice style, are more to the point. When writing, it is best to keep everything to the point. If you don't, your story will seem more blurred with other things than what you really wanted to write about.

Passive Voice

Use passive voice when the doer of the action is unknown or at the time, unimportant. Passive sentences can be used to emphasize the thing done or the person / object it was done to. There are really not that many times within a story that you would use this form of writing style, though when it is used correctly it will make all the difference.

Quick Recap:

1. Active voice is when the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb
2. The majority of your story should be written in active voice
3. Use passive voice when the doer of the action is unknown

Overall it is best for your story to be written in active voice. At first this may be hard though over time it will become automatic and easy to use.

Chapter 12

Point of View Character

The world as your character sees it

The point of view character is a vital aspect to your story. Whose story is it? You need to find out whom you are writing this story from and declare him or her as the viewpoint character. What this means is, you explain the entire story as if it was happening to that character.

At this point, you are the character. You think as the character should think. You feel as the character feels. By doing this you eliminate a lot of troubles for yourself because you do not need to know what other characters can see, feel, or think. You worry about the viewpoint character and his or her experience.

Single Viewpoint

You can simply declare your story to use one viewpoint character. Though you are certainly not limited to just one. One viewpoint character is more straightforward and less confusing.

By using one viewpoint character, character development will become more direct and progress faster. This is my characters story and I do not need to worry about the thoughts or actions of others unless it is viewed through this character.

Multiple Viewpoints

Although writing from one point of view can be easier and more direct, there are several reasons why you would want more than one view point character. Multiple viewpoint characters can help you move the story forward. The story is told by several characters and thus, you have more flexibility and power over your reader.

When creating multiple viewpoint characters, try not to over create them. Every viewpoint allows you to include more character development with other characters, and gives the reader more of an overview feel of your story.

One problem several beginner writers face is including multiple viewpoints at the same time. Example:

The ringing in Josh s ears prevented him from thinking. Jessica wanted to help Josh, he looked so helpless on the ground.

This example starts off with the point of view from Josh and then suddenly passes over to Jessica. This is a no-no in writing and should be avoided! To switch viewpoint characters, you need to end a chapter or include something noting that the viewpoint is changing.

Quick Recap:

1. You become your viewpoint character
2. You can have one viewpoint character or more than one
3. The more viewpoint characters you have the more confusing your story may become
4. Do not show the viewpoint from more than one viewpoint characters at one time!

Chapter 13

Avoid Coincidences

Everything has purpose

While writing fiction you need to know one thing. Everything has purpose. There cannot be any coincidences or anything that plays illogical within your story. Yes, life itself has thousands of coincidences, though fiction writing is far more logical than life. Stories have to be logical, there are just too many factors within them that if they were not logical they would instead be confusing.

If you write your book making sure there are no coincidences, then you will find your writing far easier and effective. The more you have to find the logical path within a story, the more you have to be creative and come up with something. Thus, after you have logically created your story you will be able to look at it and see how it has grown and matured.

Bad Example:

James walked to the side of the remains of an old burnt house. He wanted to figure out the mystery of how it had burned down. The wind blew very gently and it was cold for such a time during the year. A sudden gust of wind blew through the remains and caught hold a piece of paper. Before it could get far, James caught the paper and noticed it had writing on it:

To whom it may concern, my guilt has brought me down to earth with sorrow that many have never felt. It was I Julia Hem Niace that burned the small wooden cottage to the ground.

No one wants to read something that the answers fall out of the sky. The reader wants to read something that shows the viewpoint character really striving for the answers. They want to know how he figures it out, how he discovers the answers, and perhaps watch him put the puzzle pieces together.

This is just like every story. If you simply give the answers away with no struggle, you are taking the excitement away. Coincidences will form on your story like weeds in a garden. It is up to you to scout through your story word-by-word, find where coincidences may occur, and fix them.

Quick Recap:

1. Avoid coincidences
2. Logical stories are far more interesting and easier to write
3. Never give out answers without a struggle
4. Life is illogical, Fiction is logical

Chapter 14

Caricature Your Characters

The constant reminder

Caricature your characters means to exaggerate your characters. The way you make a character seem real within your story is to constantly remind us of things that the character does.

Example

When Josh gets nervous, he taps his fingers on the table. When you write, you cannot just leave it at that. You have to constantly show Josh tapping his fingers on the table! Before the reader will see Josh, you need to bring him out a bit - exaggerate things that he does. *Amy and Gary were talking over the sound of Josh's finger tapping.* That sentence alone brings back that Josh is still tapping his fingers. After you get the point across to the reader that Josh taps his fingers when he is nervous, you can use it to your advantage!

Real People

You cannot write an exciting fiction story with real people. It just simply cannot be done. The only way you can do this is to exaggerate that person's personality. And after you do that, the character is no longer the person you intended to write about.

You need to face the fact that real people are boring! Why do you think people read creative fiction? Is it to read about normal people? Reading is something that takes the reality of life out of the picture and

lets the reader fall into another world. How might you achieve this will real boring people? You cant.

Quick Recap:

1. Exaggerate your characters
2. Don't write about real people!
3. People don't read creative fiction to read about reality

Overall, you want your characters to stand out. Don't hide who they are and think that's how real life is. Real life is not the reason people are reading your stories!

Chapter 15

Writing Speeds

Don't write too fast, or too slow!

Have you ever tried to write a story though found it was just moving too slow or too fast? One of the reasons this happens depends on what writing style you are using.

Each writing style is used in different parts within the story to get the best results. Remember as you write, you write to push the story forward. A reader simply does not want to sit in the same place. They want some excitement. You cannot get to the excitement by not moving forward. Here is a list of six writing styles organized by their speed:

Exposition - Slowest

Exposition is the slowest form of writing and not move your story forward at all. Exposition is used to give forth a lot of data to the reader about the story. Think of it as an information dump. Use it sparingly!

Description - Slow

Description is slow and doesn't move the story forward very well. However, it is mandatory that you include descriptions within your story, just make sure you do not over use it. Find a good way to include descriptions without slowing the story too much, such as combining it with a faster type of writing style.

Narrative - Fast

This form of writing is very fast and provides continuous movement. If you were thinking of a play, this form of writing is on stage. Everything written in this style is happening right now, moment by moment with no summary. The narrative writing style will prove to be the most used writing style you will use within your story.

Dialogue - Faster

Dialogue is basically when your story characters talk back and forth. This form is well faster than narrative though shows very little action and thought. Playing with emotions using this style and you will receive varied results.

Dramatic Summary - Fastest

This is by far the fastest form of writing you can choose to write in. There are several places where you can use this type of writing style. Every place that you do not want to go into any extensive detail you can use this writing style. This style is like hitting the fast forward button on the VCR, it bumps you forward to the next exciting scene of your story by summarizing long parts of a story into fast smooth paragraphs.

Quick Recap:

1. Exposition is used for data (slowest)
2. Description for detail and scene building (slow)
3. Narrative for continual moment to moment writing (fast)
4. Dialogue for character speech (faster)

5. Dramatic Summary for quick summarized paragraphing (fastest)
6. Every writing style has a place within your story

Remember, by knowing each writing style and how to use it, will help your story progress at the speed you want it to. If your story is moving far too slow, start using some narrative and dialogue to speed it up. Just as if the story was moving far too fast, then include more detail.

Chapter 16

Reusing Events

Make the best of your events!

Have you ever run out of ideas of new events to write about? Your story thrives off of events, they are used to push your story forward. Have you ever tried coming up with new events over and over and in the end just looked at your story seeing a jumble of events? It's more common than you may think!

When you come up with an event, think about how that event can become something larger or how it can be used again. Let us say our event is a phone call from a mysterious man. The man gives the protagonist some information on a case that he is working on. How might you use this event to further the story? Perhaps the protagonist needs more information and he tracks down this man. Or perhaps the information led the protagonist to a bomb that was meant to kill him?

There are many things you can do with one event. It is best to do all you can with one event rather than having a thousand and one short events that are all unrelated to each other. The more events that you have within your story, the more confusing it becomes.

Another Example

Lets say our main character is Josh. He rides his bike down a dark road and accidentally rams right into someone. How might you take this event and make it bigger? How might you use this later within the story?

Perhaps the person Josh runs into is a girl and this is the starting a love story. In addition to that, later on in the story, the girl proves to be a vital necessity in figuring out some part of a mystery.

Quick Recap:

1. The more events you have, the more confusing the story will become
2. Always try to make each event into everything it can be
3. The more you use an event, the more believable, smoother, and logical it will become

You can do many things with events. The one thing you should not do is leave it once it's over. By coming up with additional things to do with your events, you can make your story far more believable, smoother, and logical.

Chapter 17

Ending Chapters

It is how you end the chapter that counts

Have you ever wondered when you should end a chapter? The only answer I have received from that question was: end when you feel the time is right. What kind of an answer is that? There are actually a lot of reasons and ways to end a chapter.

When to end:

When all is said

This is the general reason for ending a chapter. You end the chapter when all has been said. You have done everything that you wanted to do within the chapter and feel that a new chapter is in need.

When switching viewpoints

When you switch the viewpoint characters, you need to end the chapter. If you do not wish to end the chapter then you need to find a way to let your reader know there has been a change. A good indicator of a change uses asterisks *** across the center of the page.

Changing between large scenes

Whenever you are changing between large scenes it is ideal to end the chapter. This helps the reader grasp what's going on.

How to end:

Asking a new question

When ending the chapter, it's your goal to keep the reader reading. To do this, ending the chapter with a small cliff hanger or beginning of a new peak. It is also a good idea to end with the answer in site. This way the reader thinks, "I'll put down the book once I figure out what just happened!"

Ending in suspense

This is somewhat like ending the chapter with asking a question. Ending in suspense is more of a general statement. When you end in suspense your reader will obviously want to read the next chapter. Mastering this technique will help your story a lot. It will help the story read through faster and it will keep the reader wanting more.

Quick Recap:

When to end:

1. When all has been said
2. When switching viewpoints
3. Between large scenes

How to end:

4. With asking new questions
5. In suspense!

Prologue

Now that you have finished the book, it is time to take the things in which you have just learned and start using them! I hope this book has helped you, it has certainly been fun writing it!

The following provides a quick recap from chapter 11 through to chapter 17. Use this information as you can, and continue to research and learn from other books!

Chapter 11 - Passive / Active Voice

Stay in active voice

1. Active voice is when the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb
2. The majority of your story should be written in active voice
3. Use passive voice when the doer of the action is unknown

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The world as your character sees it

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Chapter 17 - Ending Chapters

It is how you end the chapter that counts

End chapters:

1. When all has been said
2. When switching viewpoints
3. Between large scenes
4. With asking new questions
5. In suspense

Join the Community

You have reached the end! I hope this book has been helpful and it influences your writing for the better. If you have not done so already, please join the LegendFire creative writing community!

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