

Title:

WRITING A BETTER STORY

Word Count:

583

Summary:

Follow these tips for organizing and writing your next story. Organizing well will make you more productive and give you a better chance at success.

Keywords:

writing, success in writing, writing success, writing organization, organized writing, better writing, learn to write, learn to write well, good writing, improve your writing

Article Body:

Check below for hints and suggestions on how to organize your writing and make it a better read for your audience.

Story Summary.

State in one or two sentences the kernel of your book, story, or blog. Do not exceed thirty words total.

Outline Structure.

Provide yourself with a rough outline of the story's structure as you see it now. This would include story arcs (beginning, rise, climax), character introductions, main themes, pivotal events, key information, plot points intended to maintain tension, etc.

In the beginning this doesn't need to be extensive, but have it set aside to refer to, and flesh it out as important points occur to you. After you have a good outline to work with, you can use it like a map. Try to avoid adding ideas on small slips of paper. Instead, incorporate them into your outline. If you're not sure where they go, guess, and mark them with an asterisk as a reminder to review them later.

Character Traits/Development Log.

List the vital statistics of your characters, leaving room to flesh out the

information. As you think of back-story for them, traits, thoughts, etc., list them here. If they are main characters in a long piece, consider setting up separate documents for them, or even databases. Chart a time line for your characters as you go, noting development (growth or decline), change, conflict, back story, relationships with other characters, etc. These thoughts should work in tandem with the outline you are developing. REMEMBER, MOST CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE MADE THROUGH DIALOGUE. THIS IS THE MOST RELIABLE WAY TO CREATE VIVID CHARACTERS THAT THE READER WILL RECOGNIZE. A READER WILL OVERWHELMINGLY BELIEVE A SPOKEN CLUE TO CHARACTER OVER AN EXPOSITORY ONE.

Note: Characters can and probably need to be witty, but biting wit creates unsympathetic characters and the protagonist should not be unsympathetic. There are exceptions, but the rule is to keep your protagonist likeable.

Exposition

Use this as a device to increase tension and augment the dramatic tone of your work. Be careful to limit self-indulgent wallowing or too much repetition. Topics could include goals, plans, fears, and dreams. Exposition shouldn't be long-winded, and should have variety. Build on previous revelations, and vary short and long sentences to give your exposition rhythm and punch.

Remember, when readers get tired or bored, this is the stuff they skip. Make your exposition as readable as possible. If you're going to lose someone, this is probably where it will happen.

Conflict

Stories are about conflict. Conflict is an essential element of fiction. In your writing there should always be at least two things in your story that are sources of conflict. There should be one conflict which follows through the whole story and is only resolved at the end.

Secondary conflicts are necessary because they propel the reader through slower sections of the story and maintain tension and momentum. You should structure your work to include secondary conflicts where they will keep your writing moving at a pace that will make the reader keep the book in his hand. Try diagramming the story by conflict to see where the gaps are.

Have Fun

If you're having fun writing, your reader will know it. One of the easiest things you can do to improve your writing is to enjoy it. Whatever your level

of skill, you're creating something. The more enthusiasm you have for the process, the better the end product will be.