

Storyteller's Oasis



Your Playful
Passport to Novel
Writing Resources



by: Jenifer Ruth

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BASIC NOVEL WRITING CHECKLIST



NOVEL TITLE:

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

SELF CHECK
HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT
MY PROGRESS?

<input type="checkbox"/>	STORY IDEA AND GENRE CHOSEN	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	CHARACTER CREATION COMPLETED	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	WORLD CREATED (GENRE DEPENDENT)	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLOTTING FINISHED (OR A BASIC OUTLINE)	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	FIRST DRAFT	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	MANUSCRIPT OUT WITH BETA READERS	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	REVISION COMPLETE	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	HARD EDIT COMPLETE	☆☆☆☆☆
<input type="checkbox"/>	BLURB/SYNOPSIS WRITTEN	☆☆☆☆☆

Most Popular Genre Choices for Readers

DYSTOPIAN

A story in which the world/government is harsh due to some tragic or controlling factor.

FANTASY

A story set in an imaginary world, often containing magic.

HISTORICAL

A story set in the past, often requiring extensive research.

HORROR

A story intended to disgust or scare the reader.

MYSTERY

A story where the central conflict/event, usually involving a crime, remains unsolved until the end.

ROMANCE

A story that revolves around love and/or developing a romantic relationship.

SCIENCE FICTION

A story that relies on speculation of advanced sciences.

THRILLER

A story that relies on moods such as tension or suspense.

YOUNG ADULT

A story that can be from any genre, but which focuses on an audience age 12-18.

Have Fun With Cross-Genre Choices





Common Genre Tropes

Dystopian:

- Post-apocalyptic or futuristic settings
- Totalitarian or flawed societies
- Themes of rebellion or resistance
- Survival against harsh conditions or regimes
- Loss of individualism or freedom

Fantasy:

- Magic systems and magical creatures
- Epic quests or adventures
- Different races like elves, dwarves, or dragons
- Otherworldly or medieval settings

Historical:

- Set in a well-defined historical period
- Incorporates real historical events or figures
- Authentic depiction of the lifestyle, customs, and attitudes of the period
- Often involves research or includes an author's note about the historical context
- Conflicts or challenges appropriate to the time period

Horror:

- Fear-inducing and suspenseful plot
- Supernatural elements like ghosts, monsters, or unexplained phenomena
- Isolated, confined, or creepy settings
- Themes of death, fear, and the unknown
- Often includes a surprising or chilling twist

Mystery:

- Crime or mystery at the core of the plot
- Investigation process, often by a detective or law enforcement
- Clues and red herrings to keep the reader guessing
- Usually includes a surprising reveal of the culprit
- Resolution and explanation of all mysterious elements

Romance:

- Central love story between characters
- Emotional tension and romantic conflict
- Relationship development and growth
- Often involves external obstacles to the relationship
- Typically ends with a happy or optimistic resolution

Science Fiction:

- Future settings or alternate realities
- Advanced technology or scientific concepts
- Exploration of space or alien civilizations
- Themes of progress and consequences of new technology
- Often includes social commentary

Thriller:

- Intense, suspenseful plot
- High stakes, often involving danger or risk
- Fast-paced, action-oriented scenes
- Unexpected plot twists

Young Adult (YA):

- Teenage protagonist(s)
- Themes of coming of age, identity, or self-discovery
- Issues and challenges relevant to modern teenagers
- Often includes school or family dynamics

"WHAT IF?" STORY IDEAS

Mix and Match the Columns to Spark a Story. Then Try Your Own Ideas.

What if...	Comic Character	Is now in Victorian England
What if...	Current Event	Discovers magic is real.
What if...	Historical Event	Is mixed with an action adventure.
What if...	Worst Villain Ever	Is now in space
What if...	Silliest Character Ever	Is (in) a spy thriller
What if...	Favorite Fairytale	Is (in) a horror story
What if...	Favorite Myth or Legend	Is now in a metro area
What if...	Favorite Action Hero	Is now set underground
What if...	Your Best Friend	Is involved in (revolves around) a robbery
What if...	Your Favorite Comedy	Is (in) a murder mystery
What if...	Your Favorite Fantasy Movie	Now is/has aliens
What if...	Your Favorite TV Series	Now is/has your favorite monster
What if...	The newest blockbuster	Shifted to a different era.
What if...	An assassin	Meets a Greek or Egyptian god
What if...	A serial killer	Is now in the circus or carnival
What if...	A high school math teacher	Is stuck babysitting

Quick Character Reference Cards

Name: _____

Hair and Eyes:
Height and Build:
Memorable Features:

Common Gestures:

Habits:

Common Facial Expression:

Verbal Ticks or Favorite Sayings:

Pet Peeves:

Friends, Pets, Things/People Loved:

Name: _____

Hair and Eyes:
Height and Build:
Memorable Features:

Common Gestures:

Habits:

Common Facial Expression:

Verbal Ticks or Favorite Sayings:

Pet Peeves:

Friends, Pets, Things/People Loved:

Name: _____

Hair and Eyes:
Height and Build:
Memorable Features:

Common Gestures:

Habits:

Common Facial Expression:

Verbal Ticks or Favorite Sayings:

Pet Peeves:

Friends, Pets, Things/People Loved:

Name: _____

Hair and Eyes:
Height and Build:
Memorable Features:

Common Gestures:

Habits:

Common Facial Expression:

Verbal Ticks or Favorite Sayings:

Pet Peeves:

Friends, Pets, Things/People Loved:

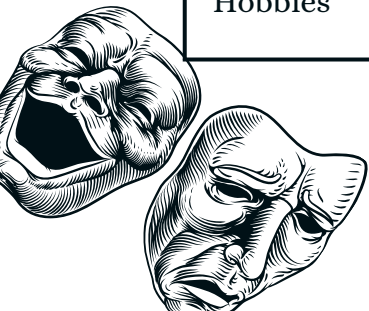
Character Creation Long Form



Character's First and Last Name	
Nickname and why (optional)	

Personality and Traits

Good Character Traits	
Character Flaws	
Optimist or Pessimist and why?	
Introvert or Extravert and why?	
Talents or Skills	
How does s/he feel about self?	
Greatest Strength	
Greatest Weakness	
Soft Spot	
Pet Peeve	
Habits (good or bad)	
Hobbies	





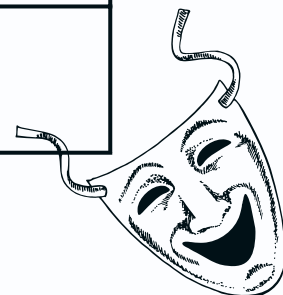
Character Creation Long Form

Physical Appearance

Age	
Height	
Build	
Eye Color and (glasses, contacts, or none)	
Distinguishing marks like: freckles, moles, scars, tattoos, etc.	
Do they resemble anyone famous?	

Background

Hometown (city or small town?)	
Type of childhood (good/bad?)	
Family description such as: number of siblings, parents together or not, are they close or not, why?	
Darkest Secret: Does anyone know?	



Character Creation by Zodiac

Character Name

[Red dotted rectangular box for character name]

Strengths

[Lined writing area for Strengths]

Fears

[Lined writing area for Fears]

Flaws

[Lined writing area for Flaws]

Goals

[Star-shaped lined writing area for Goals]

Loves

[Decorative lined writing area for Loves]

Hates

[Decorative lined writing area for Hates]

Physical Description

[Circular lined writing area for Physical Description with star border]

Background

[Circular lined writing area for Background with star border]

Character Creation by Zodiac

Zodiac Reference



Aries



Strengths

- Confident
- Optimistic
- Courageous
- Honest
- Passionate
- Ambitious

Flaws

- ◇
- ◇
- ◇ • Impulsive
- ◇ • Impatient
- ◇ • Short-tempered
- ◇ • Aggressive
- ◇ • Moody
- ◇ • Insecure
- ◇



Taurus



Strengths

- Practical
- Reliable
- Loyal
- Consistent
- Patient
- Responsible

Flaws

- Stubborn
- Intractable
- Possessive
- Unwilling to compromise
- Self-indulgent



Gemini



Strengths

- Gentle
- Affectionate
- Curious
- Easy to adapt and learn
- Talkative

Flaws

- ◇
- ◇ • Indecisive
- ◇ • Inconsistent
- ◇ • Nervous
- ◇ • Impatient
- ◇ • Superficial
- ◇ • Restless
- ◇



Cancer



Strengths

- Loyal
- Sympathetic
- Persuasive
- Tenacious
- Imaginative
- Dependable

Flaws

- ◇
- ◇ • Pessimistic
- ◇ • Suspicious
- ◇ • Insecure
- ◇ • Manipulative
- ◇ • Intense
- ◇ • Moody
- ◇



Leo



Strengths

- Passionate
- Generous
- Funny
- Cheerful
- Creative
- Confident

Flaws

- ◇
- ◇ • Self-centered
- ◇ • Lazy
- ◇ • Arrogant
- ◇ • Unwilling to compromise
- ◇ • Jealous
- ◇



Virgo



Strengths

- Analytical
- Hardworking
- Practical
- Kind
- Analytical
- Organized

Flaws

- ◇
- ◇ • Shy
- ◇ • Over-critical
- ◇ • Easily worried
- ◇ • Judgmental
- ◇ • Skeptical
- ◇ • Obsessive
- ◇

Character Creation by Zodiac

Zodiac Reference



Libra



Strengths

- Fair
- Gracious
- Cooperative
- Personable
- Diplomatic
- Sharing

Flaws

- Self-pity
- Holds a grudge
- Indecisive
- Hates confrontation
- Superficial



Scorpio



Strengths

- Courageous
- Stubborn
- Loyal
- Passionate
- Resourceful
- Resolve

Flaws

- Jealous
- Violent
- Paranoid
- Secretive
- Distrustful
- Resentful



Sagittarius



Strengths

- Idealistic
- Funny
- Generous
- Extremely social
- Adventurous
- Energetic

Flaws

- Impatient
- Blunt, no filter
- Procrastination
- Unpredictable
- Argumentative
- Reckless



Capricorn



Strengths

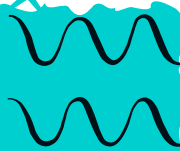
- Disciplined
- Responsible
- Self-controlled
- Dedicated
- Hard-worker
- Determined

Flaws

- Unforgiving
- Condescending
- Pessimistic
- Know-it-all
- Overly serious
- Arrogant



Aquarius



Strengths

- Independent
- Unique
- Humanitarian
- Innovative
- Witty
- Clever

Flaws

- Temperamental
- Aloof
- Uncompromising
- Cold
- Detached
- Impulsive



Pisces



Strengths

- Artistic
- Intuitive
- Wise
- Compassionate
- Adaptable
- Accepting

Flaws

- Sad
- Fearful
- Escapist
- Martyr
- Overly-Trusting
- Sensitive

Character Personality by Tarot

First, let me make it clear, I'm not saying to go out and play tarot to create your characters. I'm not even sure how you could do that. But tarot cards, like the zodiac, represent fully-formed character types. Looking at any kind of archetype can help flesh out a character. So why use tarot?

So, you're looking to create some captivating characters. Well, Tarot cards can be a fantastic tool to help you with that! Each card in a Tarot deck represents a different archetype, a powerful symbol that embodies certain qualities and traits. By drawing a card, you can tap into the essence of that archetype and use it as inspiration to flesh out your characters.

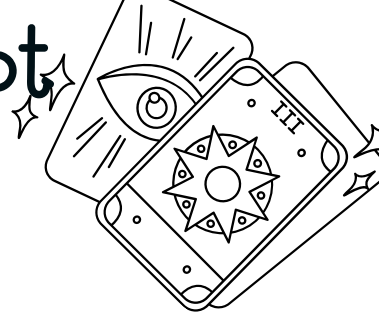
For example, let's say you draw the Knight of Swords. This card represents action, courage, and a thirst for adventure. You can take these qualities and weave them into a character who's fearless, always charging ahead, and ready to take on any challenge. Similarly, the Queen of Cups represents empathy, intuition, and emotional depth. You can incorporate these qualities into a character who's compassionate, perceptive, and deeply connected to their emotions.

Using Tarot archetypes as a starting point allows you to infuse your characters with rich symbolism and depth. It's like having a wellspring of inspiration at your fingertips. Now, you might be wondering how present card decks grew out of Tarot. Well, Tarot cards have a long and fascinating history, originating as a deck for playing games and evolving into a tool for divination and self-reflection. Over time, various artists and designers have created their own card decks, expanding on the traditional Tarot structure while still drawing upon its archetypal foundations.

So, if you're a writer seeking to create memorable characters, exploring the archetypes within Tarot can be an exciting and imaginative approach. Let the cards be your guide, and watch your characters come to life with depth, meaning, and a touch of magic!



Character Creation by Tarot



Character Name

[Red dotted line box for character name]

Strengths

[Lined area for Strengths]

Fears

[Lined area for Fears]

Flaws

[Lined area for Flaws]

Goals

[Star-shaped lined area for Goals]

Loves

[Lined area for Loves]

Hates

[Lined area for Hates]

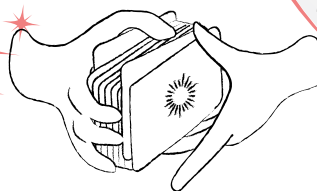
Physical Description

[Circular lined area for Physical Description]



Background

[Circular lined area for Background]



Character Personality by Tarot

Pick the Card You Feel Represents Your Character



King of Swords



Think of a silver-haired guy with piercing blue eyes that seem to see right through you. He's all about truth and logic, not much for small talk or emotional fluff. He's got this vibe of authority around him that just commands respect. And with his wise and strategic brain, he's someone you'd want on your side in a tough spot. Cool, calm, and just, that's our King of Swords!



Queen of Swords



Picture a woman with a quick wit and a sharp tongue. Her eyes sparkle with intelligence and she's not one to mince words or beat around the bush. You'd recognize her by her elegant yet practical attire, ready to tackle anything life throws at her. Behind her soft smile is a steel-hard determination, and her decisions are always based on a clear view of the facts. She's faced hardships, and that's made her tough and compassionate. You can count on the Queen of Swords for honest advice, even if it's a little hard to swallow at times!



Knight of Swords



Picture a young, fiery individual, who's all about charging ahead. You can't miss his restless energy and fearless spirit. He's the kind of guy you'd see in the thick of the action, his eyes burning with determination. Impulsive? Sure, a bit. But he's driven by his passion and ideals, and he'll fight for what he believes in, no matter what. With his sword always at the ready, he can be a bit of a whirlwind. Just try to keep up with the Knight of Swords - he's always onto the next big thing!



Page of Swords



Imagine a curious youngster with a thirst for knowledge. He's always got a million questions and won't rest until he gets answers. He's the kid you'd find perched up a tree with a book, or tinkering with some new-fangled gadget. Eager to learn and quick to think, he's like a little whirlwind of ideas and plans. Sure, he can be a tad over-enthusiastic and rush into things, but it's all part of his charm. Whether it's a new puzzle or a secret mystery, count on the Page of Swords to dive right in!

Character Personality by Tarot

Pick the Card You Feel Represents Your Character



King of Wands



Imagine a guy who's all about big dreams and bold actions. He's the charismatic type, with a warm smile and eyes that practically twinkle with optimism. He's got a fiery spirit that's infectious, inspiring everyone around him to dream bigger. He's the kind of man who'd spontaneously decide to build a treehouse for the kids on a Sunday morning, or rally the community to save the local park. There's never a dull moment around the King of Wands, but watch out – his energy can be as wild and unpredictable as a roaring bonfire!



Queen of Wands



Picture a vivacious woman who can light up a room just by walking in. She's the kind of person who throws the best parties, but also rolls up her sleeves to lead the neighborhood cleanup. With her warm laughter and radiating energy, she's a social butterfly, always surrounded by friends. But don't let that friendly exterior fool you. Underneath that charm, she's a powerhouse. She's got a fiery passion for whatever she sets her mind to, and she faces challenges head-on. Whether it's a charity marathon or a baking contest, the Queen of Wands is all in!



Knight of Wands



This guy's like a human firecracker, full of energy and always ready for the next adventure. He's the friend who'd convince you to go on a spontaneous road trip or try that super-spicy taco challenge. With his infectious enthusiasm and bold ideas, he's always the life of the party. He's a bit impulsive and can jump from one thing to another pretty quickly, but that's part of his charm. Just like a blazing flame, the Knight of Wands keeps things exciting and unpredictable!



Page of Wands



Think of a lively kid filled with energy and imagination. He's got a zest for life and a curiosity that knows no bounds, always exploring, always asking "why" or "how". His enthusiasm can get a bit overwhelming, but it's hard not to get swept up in his joy for discovery. Whether he's planning a neighborhood scavenger hunt or building the world's tallest LEGO tower, the Page of Wands brings a spark of magic into every day!

Character Personality by Tarot

Pick the Card You Feel Represents Your Character



King of Cups



Imagine a guy who's your personal peace in the middle of chaos. Kind eyes, calming voice, and always there with a warm cup of tea and a listening ear. He just gets you, you know? He's the one people turn to when they need advice or comfort. A natural-born therapist, teacher, or the best friend you could ask for - that's our King of Cups!



Queen of Cups



Picture a woman who embodies compassion and understanding. Her gentle eyes speak volumes about her empathetic nature. She's the kind of person you'd find comforting a crying child or helping a lost pet find its home. A great listener, she always makes you feel heard and valued. With a heart as deep as the ocean, she gives love and care without expecting anything in return. Whether she's your friend, your counselor, or your favorite aunt, the Queen of Cups has a knack for making the world a little bit warmer.



Knight of Cups



Picture a young man with a twinkle in his eye and a heart full of dreams. He's the one who writes love songs, plans surprise picnics, and always remembers your birthday. A hopeless romantic but also a dreamer with a deep soul. He follows his heart before his head, and that can lead him to the most unexpected adventures. Sometimes he can get lost in his own fantasies, but hey, who else would rescue that stray cat in the rain or help that old lady across the street? That's our Knight of Cups for you!



Page of Cups



She's the dreamy kid who chats with squirrels and doodles unicorns. She's all heart and imagination, lost in her own whimsical world. Sometimes she seems a bit naive, but that's just her innocence shining through. With her around, life is a fairy tale, full of wonder and magic. That's our Page of Cups for you!

Character Personality by Tarot

Pick the Card You Feel Represents Your Character



King of Pentacles



Imagine a man who's got it all together. He's the guy with the golden touch - everything he works on seems to thrive. He's not flashy, but there's a quiet wealth about him, from his well-tailored suit to his comfortable, well-kept home. But don't let the success fool you. He's worked hard for it and he's generous to a fault, always ready to share his abundance. Need a job, a loan, or some practical advice? The King of Pentacles is your man. He's the embodiment of stability, generosity, and the rewards of hard work.



Queen of Pentacles



She's like a superwoman who can juggle a successful career, a happy home, and a thriving garden all at once. She's got this earthy, nurturing vibe that makes you feel at home instantly. You'd know her by her warm smiles, her hearty home-cooked meals, and her practical, down-to-earth advice. She might run her own business or have a bustling family life, but she always finds time to lend a helping hand. In a world full of chaos, the Queen of Pentacles is a rock of stability and care.



Knight of Pentacles



Picture a young man, patient and hardworking. He's the reliable friend who always helps you move, the coworker who stays late to finish a project. He might not be the life of the party, but you can always count on him. He's all about the details and isn't afraid to get his hands dirty. Steady and stable, he might not rush into things like other knights, but give him a task and you can bet he'll see it through to the end. That's our Knight of Pentacles, reliable as they come!



Page of Pentacles



Imagine a curious kid with a knack for figuring out how things work. He's the one taking apart gadgets and putting them back together, or saving up his allowance to buy that fancy telescope. He's always got his nose in a book or his hands in the dirt, learning something new about the world. He's a bit of a dreamer, but he's also practical, already thinking about how to turn those dreams into reality. Young and determined, the Page of Pentacles is always ready to roll up his sleeves and learn.

Character Creation by Enneagram Types



Character Name

[Red dotted line box for character name]

Strengths

[Lined area for Strengths]

Fears

[Lined area for Fears]

Flaws

[Lined area for Flaws]

Goals

[Star-shaped lined area for Goals]

Loves

[Lined area for Loves]

Hates

[Lined area for Hates]

Physical Description

[Circular lined area for Physical Description]

Background

[Circular lined area for Background]

Enneagram

Types



Type 1s, or "The Perfectionists," are all about integrity. They're like the world's moral compass, always striving to do what's right and just. But being a perfectionist isn't always easy - they set high standards for themselves and others, and they can get really frustrated if things aren't up to par. They're the sort of folks who always return their shopping carts and never miss a deadline. And while they may sometimes come off as a bit critical or controlling, deep down, they're just trying to make the world a better place. They're hardworking, reliable, and always striving for improvement - they really are the epitome of the saying, "good, better, best, never let it rest!"



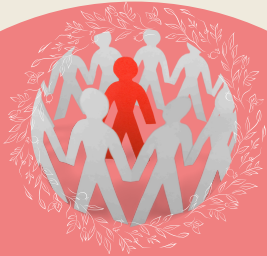
Type 2s are often call "The Helpers". These folks are the heart of the party, the friend who always remembers your birthday, and the person who brings you soup when you're sick. They're warm, caring, and they love to feel needed. Their radar for emotions is top-notch and they're always ready to lend a hand. But, being a helper can sometimes mean they forget to help themselves, they're so busy taking care of everyone else! It can also be tough for them when they feel unappreciated, because they put so much of themselves into their relationships. But when it comes down to it, Type 2s are the glue that holds us all together - their kindness and generosity make the world a more loving place.



Type 3s are known as "The Achievers." These are the people who bring their A-game to everything they do. They're all about success and they're not afraid to work hard for it. Goal-oriented, ambitious, and charming, they know how to present themselves in a way that shines. They hit every target, seem to do it all, and always have an exciting new project up their sleeve. But underneath, Type 3s also grapple with a fear of failure. They worry about what others think of them and sometimes lose sight of who they are in the pursuit of their goals. Still, their optimism, drive, and charisma can be inspiring, and their ability to achieve their dreams is second to none.

Enneagram

Types



Type 4s, are "The Individualists." These are the people who aren't afraid to stand out and shine. Creative, sensitive, and deeply introspective, they have an ability to understand their own emotions and the human condition. They're the artists, the poets, the musicians, those who can take the raw stuff of life and turn it into something beautiful. But it isn't always easy. They struggle with feelings of being different or misunderstood. However, their emotional depth, creativity, and authenticity can bring a richness to their own lives and the lives of those around them that is unique. They remind us all that it's okay to be different and that every emotion is worth feeling.



Type 5s are "The Investigators," your classic thinkers and problem solvers. They're curious, perceptive, and love to dive into their interests. Whether it's black holes, ancient history, or tech innovations, they're all about gaining knowledge. They're the friend who seems to know a little bit about everything, the one who's always reading a book, or the colleague who can always solve the tricky problems. But it's a balancing act - they often need a lot of personal space and struggle when they feel like their resources are being drained. They might come off as a bit aloof, but really, they're just trying to conserve their energy. Their keen minds show us that there's always more to learn and understand.



Type 6s, are the "Loyalists." These folks are your ride-or-die friends, the dependable and dutiful ones who always have a backup plan. They're brilliant problem solvers, always foreseeing potential issues, which, granted, can sometimes lead them into a spiral of worries. Yet, despite any self-doubt or anxiety, they're incredibly steadfast and reliable. In an often unpredictable world, you can count on the Type 6s to be your constant, showing us all the true power of loyalty.

Enneagram

Types



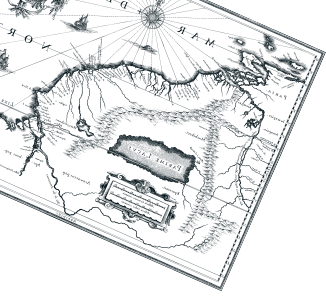
Type 7s are "The Enthusiasts." Imagine someone who's always up for an adventure, whose eyes light up at new ideas, and whose spirit is truly infectious. They love life and want to experience it to the fullest. They're spontaneous, fun-loving, and rarely miss an opportunity for excitement. But it's not all fun and games for the Type 7s. They often struggle with a fear of missing out or getting stuck in negative situations. This sometimes leads them to avoid pain or discomfort at all costs. But even in their pursuit of the next great thing, their zest for life and ability to find joy in the smallest moments is truly inspiring. They remind us all to seize the day and embrace the beauty of the world around us.



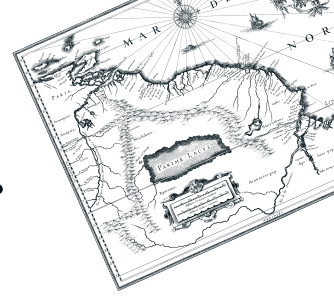
Type 8s are the "Challengers." These folks are the natural-born leaders of the world. They're confident, strong, and not afraid to take charge. They value honesty, protection, and directness, and aren't afraid to stand up for what they believe in. But being a Type 8 also comes with its struggles. They often worry about being betrayed or losing control, and they might come off as a bit intimidating or confrontational. But beneath that tough exterior, they're often big softies, deeply caring and fiercely protective of the people they love. Their strength, determination, and unwavering belief in themselves can be a beacon for those who need a little courage in their own lives.



Type 9s are the "Peacemakers." They are the calm in the middle of a storm. They're easygoing, accepting, and typically go with the flow. They have this ability to see and understand everyone's perspective, making them fantastic mediators. They're the friend who makes sure everyone feels included, and the family member who diffuses tense situations. But they often neglect their own needs or desires to maintain peace. They can also avoid conflict to a fault, which might lead to pent-up frustrations. But even with these struggles, their ability to bring people together and create harmony is truly admirable. They teach us the power of peace, understanding, and the simple joy of a quiet afternoon.



Basic World Creation Questionnaire



Describe the basic geography (ie. hills, mountains, forest, tropics, deserts, plains).	
What does the sky look like during the day and the night?	
What is the climate like?	
What are the seasons like? Be sure to include the weather for each.	
What animals does your land have? Include all types such as birds, reptiles, insects, fish, small animals, and large animals.	





Basic World Creation Questionnaire



What kind of plants does your world have?	
Are there cities or villages? What do they look like?	
Are there any other special types of buildings (government buildings, churches, parks, etc.)?	

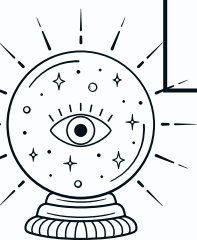


Magical World Creation

Questionnaire



<p>How does magic work in this world?</p>	
<p>Can everyone use magic or only certain people? Are only certain people allowed to use magic?</p>	
<p>What can be done with magic? What are the limitations?</p>	
<p>Are there different kinds of magic? How does that work? What are the rules? Is magic done through spoken spells, wands, charms, or what?</p>	

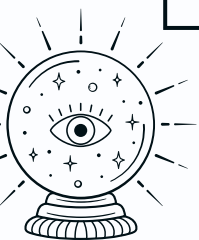


Magical World Creation

Questionnaire



<p>What are magic users called? Do you have to practice in order to get better at it? Are there schools? Is it innate?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Can everyone use magic or only certain people? Are only certain people allowed to use magic?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Are there different power levels between different magic users? If so, why?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Is there a limit to the amount of magic that can be used? Can people have their magic taken away? Does it tire the user? Can it harm the user?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

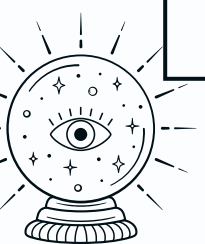


Magical World Creation

Questionnaire



<p>Are there ways to tell a person is a magic user just by looking at them?</p>	
<p>Can it be used for evil? Does using it for evil cost the caster?</p>	
<p>Are there any magical creatures? Describe them.</p>	



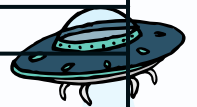


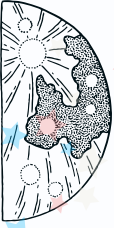
Alien Civilization Creation



Questionnaire

How are their environmental conditions reflected in their biology?	
What texture/color is their skin or outer layer? Why?	
Do they have hair or scales? If so, where and what color(s)? What texture(s)?	
Are they humanoid or not?	
How many limbs do they have? How are they shaped and used?	
How many fingers/toes do they have? Do they have more or less joints?	
How do they communicate: verbal, telepathic, gestures, other?	
How intelligent are they? Is their technology more advanced or less?	





Alien Civilization Creation

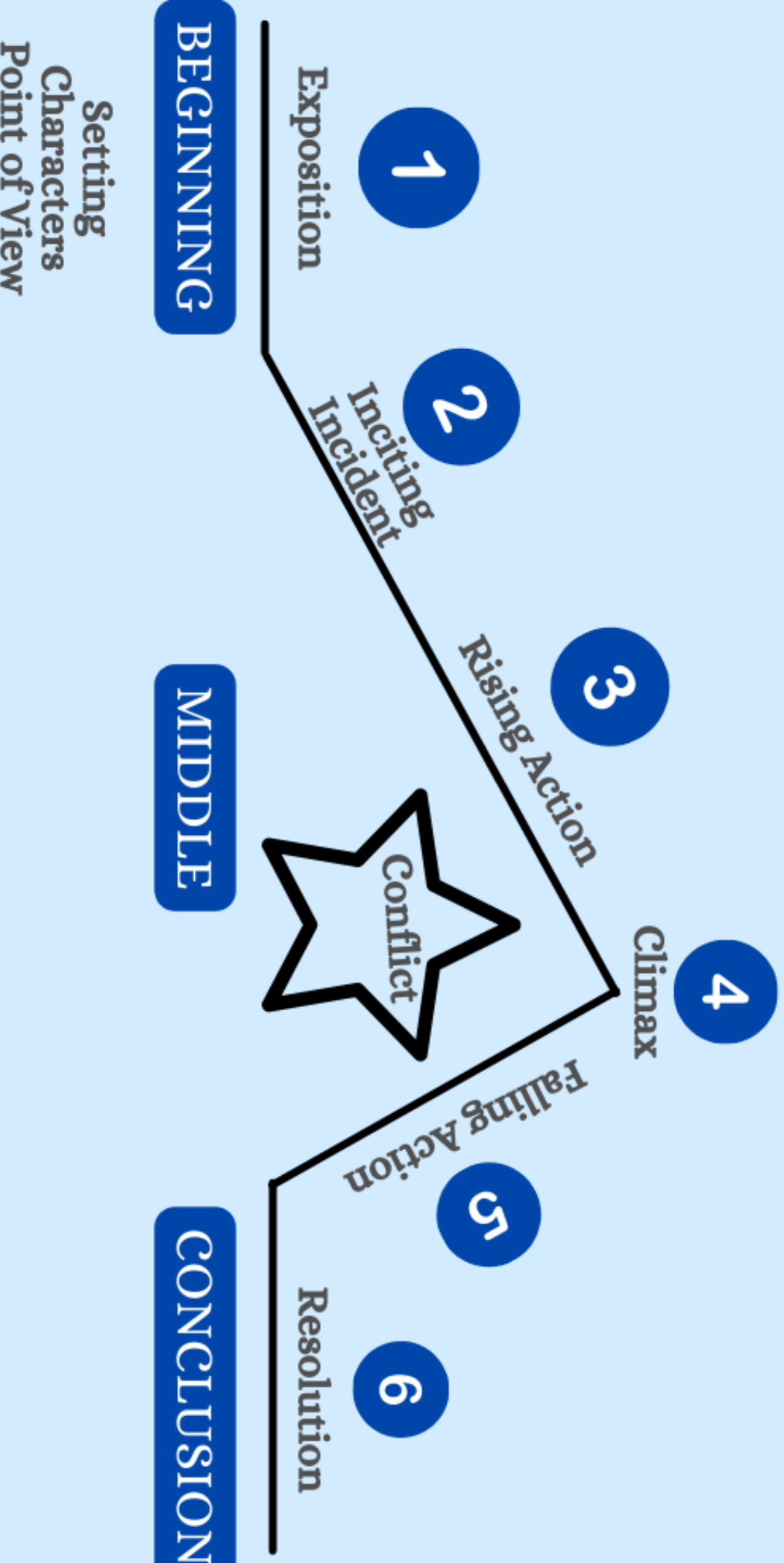


Questionnaire

Are they peaceful or war-like?	
Do they have different races or different cultures?	
Do they have a political structure? If so, what is it?	
What is their family structure?	
Do they have jobs? What kind of military or legal system do they have?	
Do they travel to other planets?	
What is their biggest problem?	
What scares them?	



Basic Plot Diagram





A hero is someone who, in spite of weakness, doubt or not always knowing the answers, goes ahead and overcomes anyway.

~Christopher Reeves

HERO'S JOURNEY

This is my personal go-to plotting method. I break it into three sections for planning purposes. As I write, things change. So I tend to go back to my original plan and make changes (the pencil is my friend). I'll use what is left at the end to help write my synopsis for publishers.

If you like this method I highly recommend getting Chris Vogler's book, *The Writer's Journey*.

HERO'S JOURNEY QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

- **The Call to Adventure:** The hero is presented with a challenge or quest.
- **The Refusal of the Call:** The hero refuses the call, usually out of fear.
- **The Meeting with the Mentor:** The hero meets someone who helps them prepare for the journey ahead.
- **The Crossing of the First Threshold:** The hero enters unknown territory and faces challenges for the first time.
- **The Road of Trials:** The hero faces many challenges and obstacles, each more difficult than the last. These challenges test the hero's resolve and help them grow as a person. If they are successful, they will be transformed by the experience.
- **The Approach to the Inmost Cave:** The hero prepares to face the final challenge. This step is usually the darkest moment in the story, where everything seems lost.
- **The Ordeal:** The hero faces the final challenge and triumphs. This step is the climax of the story.
- **The Reward:** The hero is rewarded for their bravery with treasures, power, or knowledge.
- **The Return:** The hero returns home, transformed by their journey. They may have to face challenges on the way back, but they are now better equipped to deal with them.

HERO'S JOURNEY ORGANIZER PART 1

<p>Call to Adventure</p>	
<p>Refusal of the Call</p>	
<p>Meeting the Mentor</p>	

HERO'S JOURNEY ORGANIZER PART 2

**Crossing the
Threshold**

**Road of
Trials**

This box is
bigger, as
there should
be multiple
trials.

HERO'S JOURNEY ORGANIZER PART 3

Approach to the Innermost Cave	
The Ordeal Remember this is the climax.	
The Reward	
The Return	



All the world's a
stage, and all the
men and women
merely players.

~William Shakespeare

3 ACTS STRUCTURE

I have several writer friends who swear by this structure, especially those who started as screenwriters. I've used it on occasion, particularly for my shorter works (I love it for novellas).

If you like this method I highly recommend Chike Camara's book, *Three-Act Structure: Classified: Mastering the 3-Act Structure in Screenwriting*.

3 ACTS STRUCTURE

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE



- **Act One: The Setup.** This is where we meet the characters and learn about the world they live in. The inciting incident happens in this act and sets the story in motion.
- **Act Two: The Conflict.** This is where the main conflict of the story plays out. The stakes are raised and the character faces challenges they must overcome.
- **Act Three: The Resolution.** This is where the conflict is resolved and loose ends are tied up. The character has changed by the end of this act and is ready to face the challenges of the new world they live in.

ACT 1 STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

Beginning	
Inciting Incident	
Second Thoughts	
Act One Climax	

ACT 2, PART 1

STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

Obstacle 1 with Result	
Obstacle 1 with Result	
Midpoint (Plot Twist)	

ACT 2, PART 2

STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

Obstacle with Result	
Crisis	
Disaster	

ACT 3 STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

Climax	
Falling Action and/or Obstacle	
Wrap-up	



Lives are snowflakes
- forming patterns
we have seen before,
as like one another
as peas in a pod, but
still unique.

~Neil Gaiman

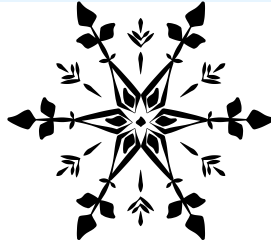
SNOWFLAKE METHOD

Okay, I admit that I haven't used this one personally at all. But I know several writers that swear by the Snowflake Method. They say it helps them from over-plotting and getting stuck wading in a sea of details.

If you want to try this method but could use more support, I highly recommend Randy Ingermanson's book, *How to Write a Novel Using the Snowflake Method*. He's the guru of the method and goes into much deeper details than I do here. I'm putting organizers here that makes sense to me visually.

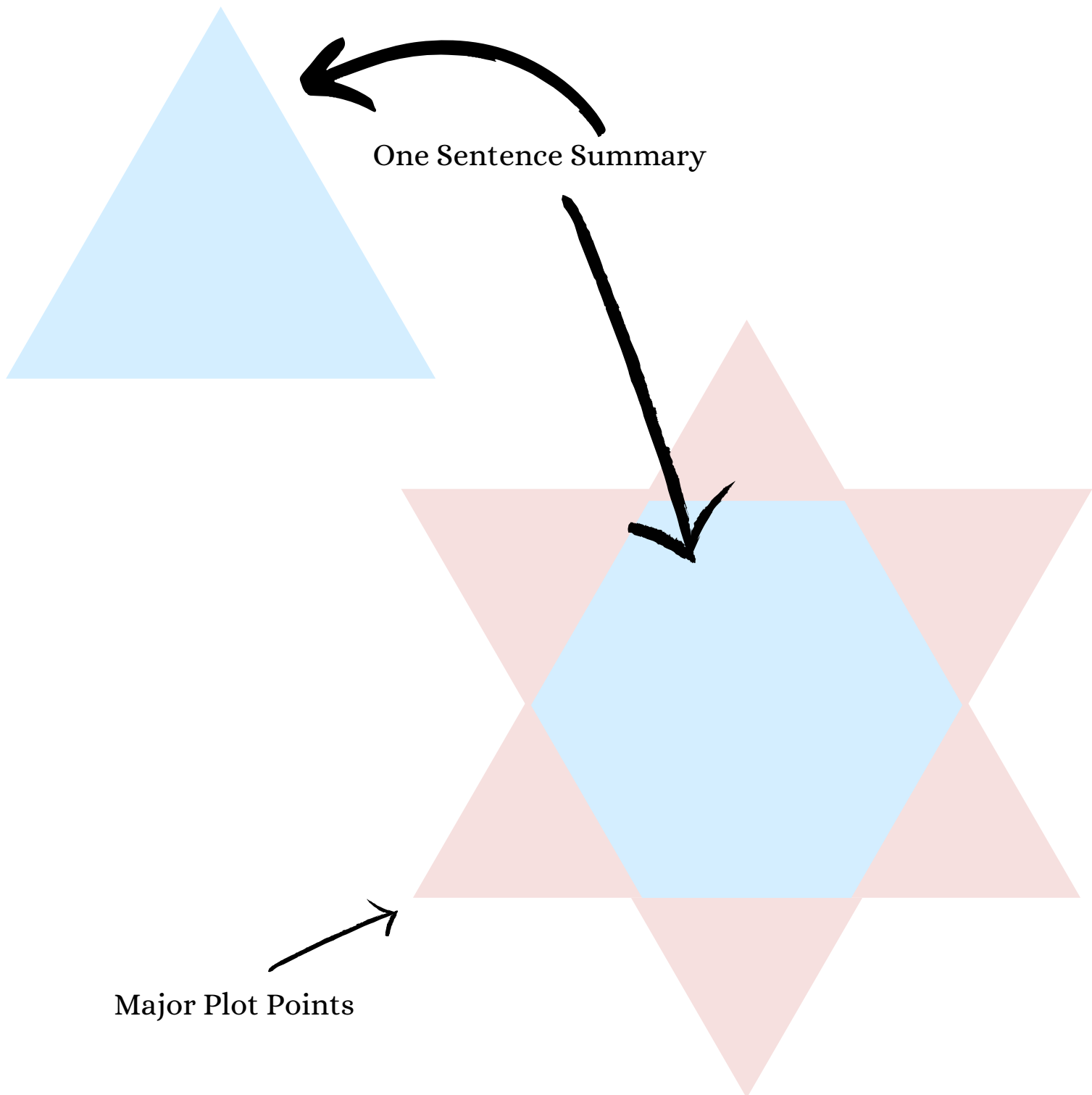
SNOWFLAKE METHOD

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE



- **Steps 1 and 2: Focus on the Plot** Write a single sentence summary. Then, add five more sentences describing your major plot points.
- **Step 3: Focus on Characters** With the basic plot in mind, begin developing characters. Include their goals, their conflicts (internal and external), and how they overcome their conflicts.
- **Step 4: Summary Expansion.** Here, I no longer use the snowflake visual (too messy for me). But each sentence from the plot snowflake now becomes a paragraph. In the end, you should have a page.
- **Step 5: Character Expansion.** Again, I abandon the visual. Here, so a complete character breakdown as well as a paragraph describing what happens to them in the story.
- **Step 6: Summary Mega Expansion.** Now, take each paragraph summary that you wrote and expand them into full pages. Consider your characters and their journeys as you do so.

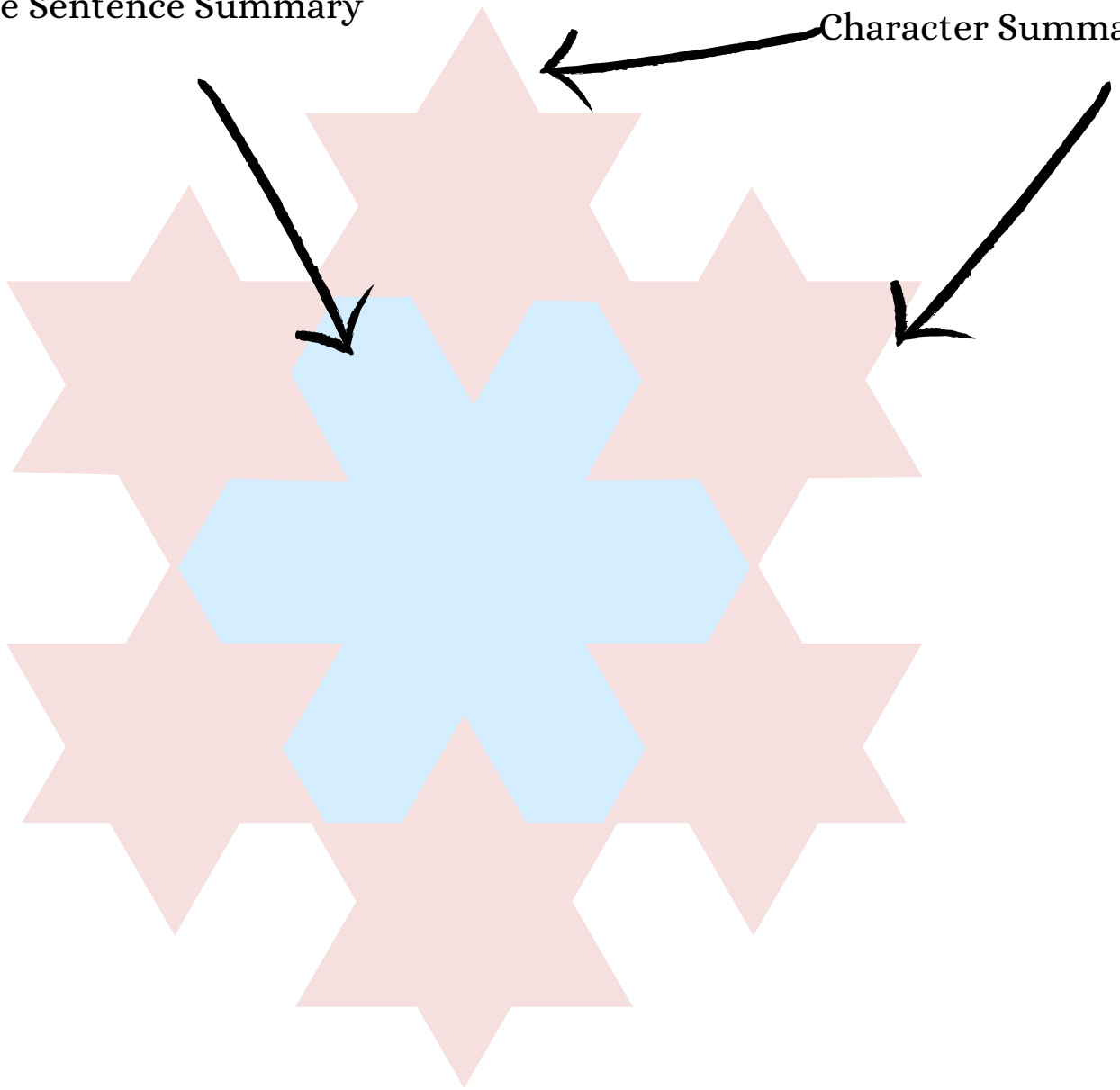
STEPS 1 AND 2 - PLOT



STEP 3 - CHARACTERS

One Sentence Summary

Character Summaries



STEP 4 - SUMMARY EXPANSION

STEP 4 - SUMMARY EXPANSION

STEP 5 - CHARACTER EXPANSION (COMPLETE FOR EACH CHARACTER)

Character's First and Last Name	
Nickname and why (optional)	

Personality and Traits

Good Character Traits	
Character Flaws	
Optimist or Pessimist and why?	
Introvert or Extravert and why?	
Talents or Skills	
How does s/he feel about self?	
Greatest Strength	
Greatest Weakness	
Soft Spot	
Pet Peeve	
Habits (good or bad)	
Hobbies	

STEP 5 - CHARACTER EXPANSION (COMPLETE FOR EACH CHARACTER)

Physical Appearance

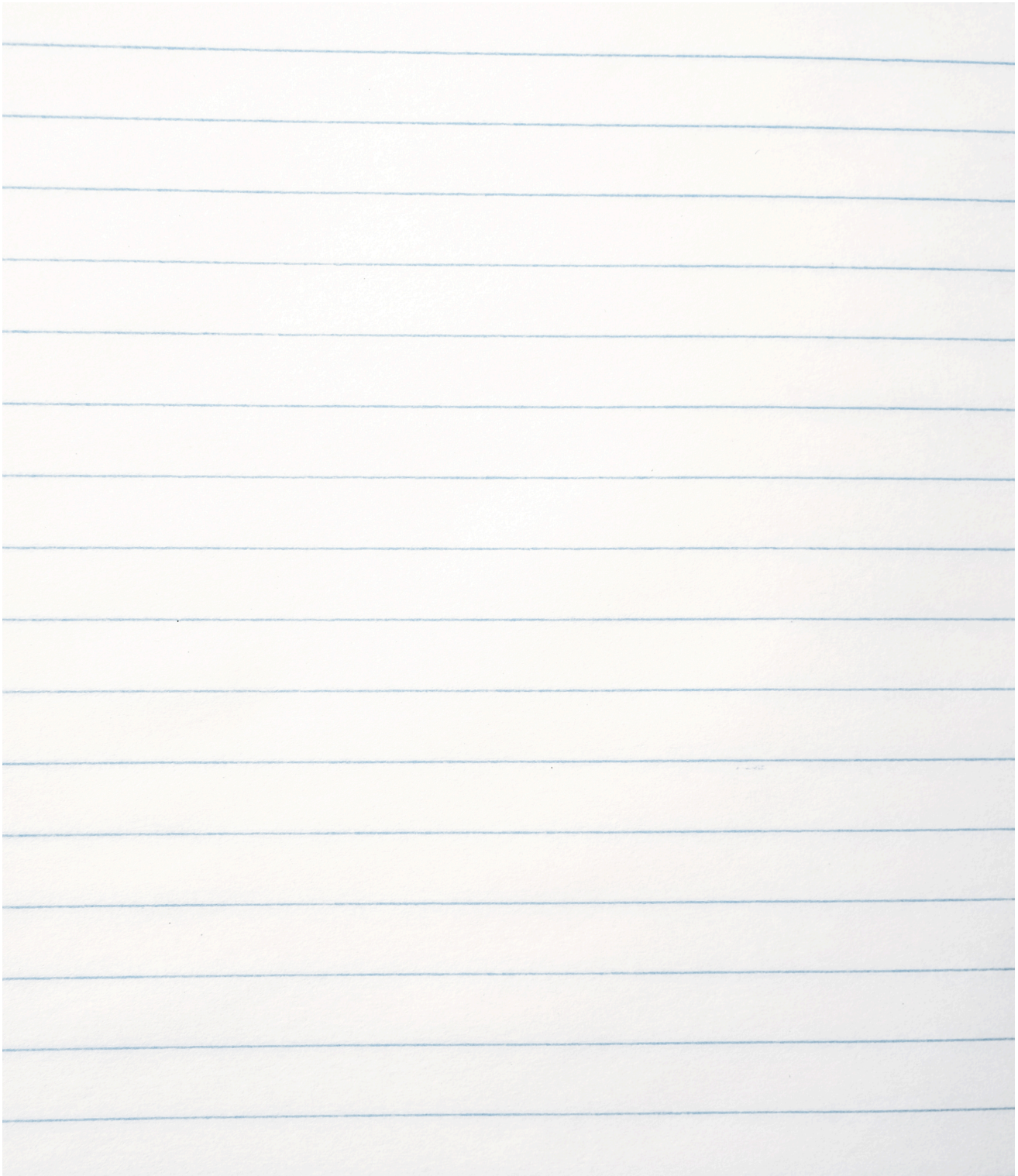
Age	
Height	
Build	
Eye Color and (glasses, contacts, or none)	
Distinguishing marks like: freckles, moles, scars, tattoos, etc.	
Do they resemble anyone famous?	


Background

Hometown (city or small town?)	
Type of childhood (good/bad?)	
Family description such as: number of siblings, parents together or not, are they close or not, why?	
Darkest Secret: Does anyone know?	

STEP 6 - SUMMARY MEGA EXPANSION

Plot Paragraph to a Page





There's almost always a point in a book where something happens that triggers the rest of the plot.

~Jonathan Carroll

FICHTEAN CURVE

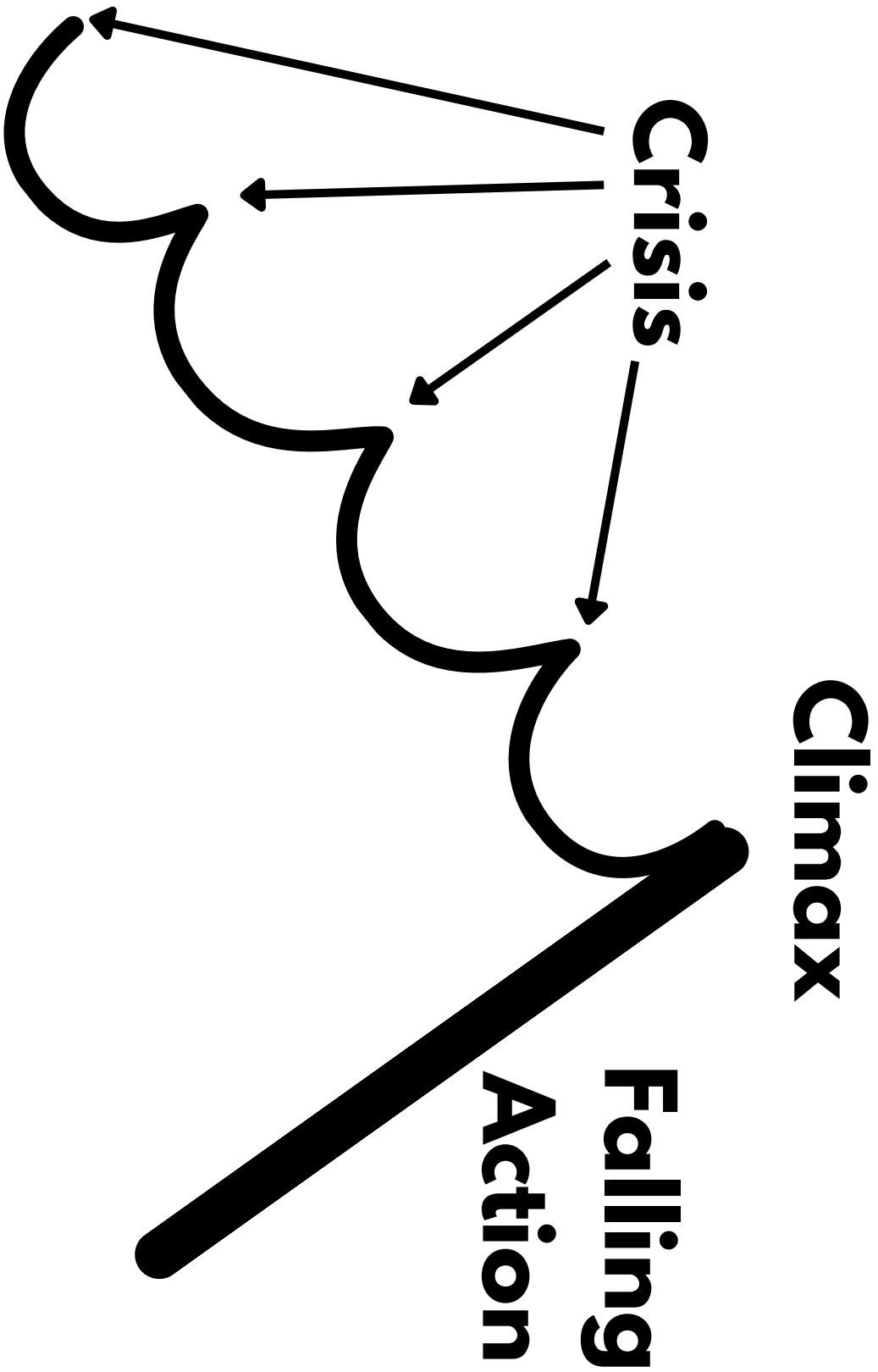
Have you ever looked at a generic plot diagram and wondered how on Earth an actual novel could fit on it? The Fichtean Curve uses that concept but tries to make it more useful. If you're writing a character-based story, or maybe something more episodic, the Fichtean curve may be just what you're looking for.

Check out these sites and blogs for more info on the Fichtean Curve:
<https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/story-structure/fichtean-curve/>
<https://www.dabblewriter.com/writing-with-the-fichtean-curve/>

FICHTEAN CURVE QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

- **The Goal:** What does your character want? This is the starting point of their journey.
- **The Reason:** Why does your character want this? What motivates them to take action?
- **The Obstacle:** What is preventing your character from achieving their goal? This is the main conflict of the story.
- **The Plan:** How does your character plan to overcome the obstacle and achieve their goal?
- **The Attempt:** Your character tries to execute their plan, but it doesn't go as expected.
- **The Crisis:** The situation reaches a breaking point and your character must make a decision.
- **The Resolution:** Your character either achieves their goal or learns something important about themselves. Either way, they are changed by the end of the story.

FICHTEAN CURVE PLOT DIAGRAM





There's almost always a point in a book where something happens that triggers the rest of the plot.

~Jonathan Carroll

DAN HARMON'S STORY CIRCLE

I have used this one before. I think of it as a more direct spin of the Hero's Journey. As a cycle, I've repeated the cycle for both stories and series.

There are several different books and sites dedicated to Harmon's Story Circle. I suggest reading up on it more before jumping in.

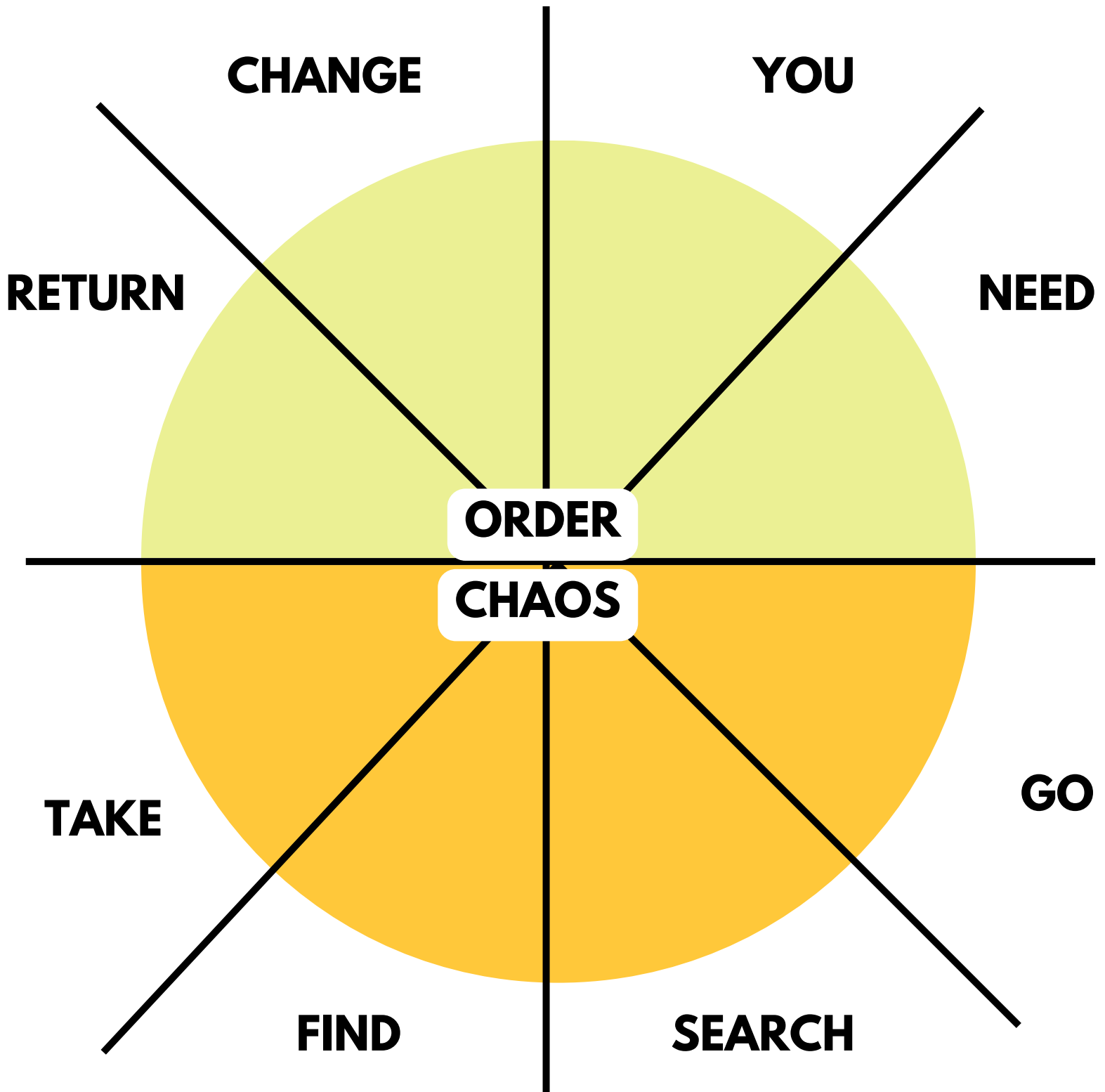
DAN HARMON'S STORY CIRCLE

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

Mark Harmon, creator of Rick and Morty along with other popular shows, set out 8 parts for a protagonist to move through.

- **You** - Establish your protagonist and what is normal for them (like the Ordinary World in a Hero's Journey)
- **Need** - What is it that your character needs? Introduce the conflict and goals.
- **Go** - Now the action starts and the world begins to change. This is where the story really starts moving.
- **Search** - This can be a literal search, but covers obstacles that the protagonist overcomes along the way.
- **Find** - The character finds what was needed, but the story is only a little more than half over. Things get complicate. Maybe what they thought they needed isn't really what they need.
- **Take** - They found their need, now they have to take it and escape. The key here is to remember that there should be losses involved in the acquisition.
- **Return** - This is the falling action, or the homestretch. They make their way back to the normal world with whatever it was that they found.
- **Change** - The resolution of the story should involve a change of some kind. You're character has learned something and is now different from the person who started the journey.

DAN HARMON'S STORY CIRCLE



Scene Cards Directions

Scene Title: Give the scene a brief title that will help you remember its essence at a glance.

Characters: List the characters who are present in the scene. Note the main character(s) or point of view for this particular scene.

Location: Describe where the scene takes place. This could be a general location or a specific setting, depending on the needs of your story.

Time: Note the time of day, date, or duration of the scene, especially if it's significant to the plot or character development.

Summary: Write a short summary of the main events that take place in the scene. This should include any key actions, dialogue, or emotional shifts.

Objective: Note what each main character wants in this scene. Their objective might be a physical action, an emotional change, or a piece of information they need to discover.

Outcome: Describe the outcome or result of the scene. Did the characters achieve their objectives? What has changed by the end of the scene?

Conflict: Identify any conflicts that occur in the scene, whether they're internal (within a character) or external (between characters, or between a character and their environment).

Purpose: What is the purpose of this scene in the larger context of the story? Does it move the plot forward, reveal something about a character, or set up a future event?

Notes: Space left for any additional notes or ideas you might have about the scene. This could include thoughts on the tone, mood, important subtext, or potential revisions.

Remember, Scene Cards are a tool to help with your writing process. They don't have to include every detail; just enough to remind you of the scene's main elements and how it fits into your overall story.

Scene Title	
Characters	
Location	
Time	
Summary	
Objective	
Outcome	
Conflict	
Purpose	
Notes	



Scene Title	
Characters	
Location	
Time	
Summary	
Objective	
Outcome	
Conflict	
Purpose	
Notes	





General Tips for Formatting Your Manuscript



Please note that specific requirements may vary depending on the publisher or agent, so it's always a good idea to check their guidelines.

Page Setup: Use standard 8.5" x 11" paper size, and set margins to at least 1 inch on all sides.

Font and Size: Use a 12-point, standard, easily readable font. Times New Roman and Courier are commonly used.

Line Spacing: Double-space the entire text. This makes it easier to read and to make annotations if needed.

Paragraph Indentation: The first line of each paragraph should be indented by 0.5 inch. Do not use the Tab key for this; set it in your formatting preferences.

Chapter Breaks: Start each chapter on a new page. Center the chapter title, then drop down two double-spaced lines to begin the text.

Page Numbers: Include page numbers in the top right corner or centered in the footer.

Headers: Include a header on each page (except the title page) with your last name, the title of your manuscript (or a shortened version), and the page number.

Title Page: The title page should include the title of the work, the author's name, and contact information. Some authors also include word count here.

Scene Breaks: Indicate scene breaks with a blank line and a centered symbol (often "#") or simply use a blank line.

Text Alignment: Align your text to the left margin (also called 'ragged right'). Do not justify your text.

Italics: Use italics to indicate italicized words. (In the past, underlining was used, but this practice has largely been replaced with italics.)

End of Manuscript: Signify the end of your manuscript with the centered word "End", or simply leave it blank after the last sentence.

Finally, save your work often and create backups to prevent any loss. It's also a good practice to save your manuscript in a commonly accepted file format, like .docx or .rtf, unless a specific format is requested.





Beta Reader Reference



Before You Begin Reading...

Is the title interesting? From the title alone, what impressions do you have of the story?

Hand-drawn arrow-shaped box with horizontal lines for writing.



As you read, please mark any place that you put the story down with a brief description of why you stopped there.

The First Five Pages

- At what point did the story grab you?
- Was the first sentence gripping, or can you suggest an improvement?
- Were the setting and main character clear? Did it grab your attention?
- Were the descriptions vivid and the dialogue believable?
- Did anything in the first pages distract you from the story?

Large blue notepad area with a hole-punch top and horizontal lines for writing.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



Main Character Questions

- Did the MC seem like a real person to you?
- Was there anything unbelievable about the MC's personality or motivation?
- Did the MC seem too perfect anywhere?
- Did the MC's relationship to other characters seem believable, or were any relationships problematic?
- What did you like the most and least about the MC?
- Is there anything I should consider adding or changing about the MC?

A large light blue rectangular area with a white border on the left side, containing 12 horizontal black lines for writing.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



Minor Character Questions

- Were the minor characters described well?
- Did any essential minor character seem two-dimensional or in need of more development?
- Did dialogue between characters seem believable? Were there any areas where the dialogue flowed unnaturally?
- Did any character rub you the wrong way or annoy you? Why? Should that be changed, or does it work?

A large light blue rectangular area with a white border on the left side, containing 15 horizontal black lines for writing.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



Antagonist Questions

- Was the antagonist believable?
- Was the antagonist's motivation clear and relatable?
- Were the antagonist's actions ever unbelievable, i.e., too evil or too kind?
- Did the antagonist come off as cliché? Why or why not?
- Did the relationship between the MC and antagonist make sense, or did something stick out as unrealistic?
- Do the antagonist's actions seem realistic considering the motivation of the character?

A large light blue rectangular area with a white spiral binding on the left side. It contains 15 horizontal black lines for writing answers to the questions.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



Plot Questions Page 1



As you read, please make note of any place where the story seems to drag and why you believe it's lagging.

- Did any part seem overly simplistic, confusing, or annoying to you?
- Did you find any inconsistencies in the plot or characters?
- Did any event seem far-fetched to you?
- Was there too much or not enough description?
- Were descriptions vivid enough, or did they need more sensory details (sounds, smells, etc.)
- Was the conflict enough, or was more tension needed? Was the central conflict believable and sufficient to support the story?
- Did you notice any glaring errors in the action?

A large light blue rectangular area with a white border on the left side, containing ten horizontal black lines for writing.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



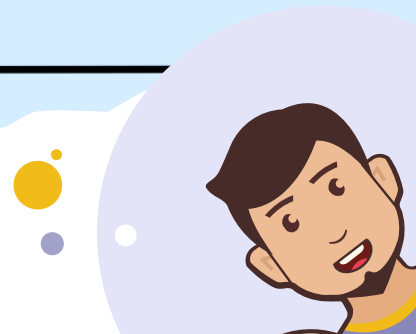
Plot Questions Page 2

- Were there any scenes that you felt were unnecessary to the story as a whole?
- What part was your favorite? Why?
- What part was your least favorite? Why?
- Did any part seem redundant?
- What were the places that you skimmed through?
- What were the places where you couldn't put the story down?
- Were any scenes too predictable? Why?

A large light blue rectangular area with a white border on the left side, containing 12 horizontal black lines for writing.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



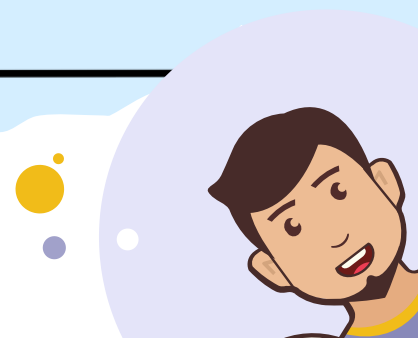
Climax Questions

- Did the ending fit, or did it seem contrived/too easy?
- Were you satisfied with the climax, or did you feel let down?
- Did the tension building up to the climax fit the finale?
- Did the climax pass too quickly or too slowly?
- Were there any loose ends left (unintentionally, of course)?
- Any suggestions for improvement?

Lined writing area for responses.



Thank you





Beta Reader Reference



After You Finish

Overall, did you enjoy the story? Why or why not?

○ _____

- Was there ever a place where you lost interest? Where?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the story?
- Were there any places with too much description? Were there any scenes that felt like an info dump?
- Any final suggestions?



Thank you



Revision for Sensory Details

Scene Title and Description

Emotional Connection and Usage

As you find these details, make sure they match both the characters' emotions and the work's mood. Also, try to keep a balance between the sense you use. At the same time, don't overuse your details. That can be distracting.

Sight: What colors, shapes, movements, and sizes dominate the scene?

Revision for Sensory Details

Hearing: What are the ambient sounds? Are there any sudden or surprising noises?

Smell: What scents fill the air? Are there any unexpected or contrasting odors?

Revision for Sensory Details

Taste: If applicable, what are the characters tasting? How does the taste reflect the atmosphere of the scene?

Touch: What are the textures around the characters? How do the characters interact with their environment physically?

Revision for Sensory Details

Revision Space: Here, you can write down any new descriptions you would like to add or descriptions you wish to change, based on your answers to the previous questions.



Tips for Revising Dialogue



Ensure Realism: Dialogue should sound like real people talking, but be a more polished version. Too much realism (um, ah, huh) can be distracting.

Use Contractions: Most people use contractions when they speak. Avoiding them can make dialogue sound stiff and formal unless that's characteristic of the character.

Distinguish Characters: Characters should have distinct voices. Consider their background, education, and personality when writing their dialogue.

Avoid Information Dumps: Characters shouldn't tell each other things they already know to give information to the reader. It feels forced and inauthentic.

Show, Don't Tell: Use dialogue to reveal character traits and emotions indirectly rather than explicitly stating them.

Keep it Brief: People often speak in short sentences and fragments in real conversation. Long, uninterrupted speeches are unusual in casual conversation.

Balance Dialogue and Action: Action and description can make dialogue more dynamic. Show your characters doing something while they're talking.

Avoid Fancy Dialogue Tags: "Said" and "asked" often work best. More descriptive tags (like "exclaimed," "muttered," or "opined") can be distracting.

Use Dialogue to Advance Plot: Every line of dialogue should serve a purpose, whether moving the plot forward, revealing something about the character, or setting the scene.

Read Dialogue Aloud: This is the best way to check if the dialogue sounds natural.

Subtext is Key: What characters are not saying or implying is often as important as what they are saying.

Remember, dialogue is a powerful tool in storytelling. It can breathe life into characters, accelerate the plot, and create dynamic interactions. The key is to keep it engaging, purposeful, and true to your characters.



Rules for Editing Dialogue



These rules follow Standard American English.

1. **Commas and Periods:** Go inside the quotation marks.
 - **Examples:**
 - He said, "I'm going to the store."
 - "I'm going to the store," he said.
 - "I'm going to the store." (Here, the dialogue is a full sentence so it ends with a period.)
2. **Question Marks and Exclamation Points:** These also go inside the quotation marks when they're part of the dialogue. But if they apply to the whole sentence, they go outside.
 - **Example:**
 - He asked, "Are you going to the store?"
 - "Are you going to the store?" he asked.
 - Did he say, "I'm going to the store"?
3. **Multiple Paragraphs:** If a character's dialogue extends over multiple paragraphs, each new paragraph begins with opening quotation marks. The closing quotation marks are only added at the end of the final paragraph.
 - **Example:**
 - He said, "I went to the store. I needed to buy some milk.
 - "Then I realized I also needed bread. So I bought that too."
4. **Dialogue Tags:** If a dialogue tag (like "he said") interrupts a sentence, it should be set off by commas. If the tag comes in between two complete sentences, it should be followed by a period and the next piece of dialogue should start with a capital letter.
 - **Example:**
 - "I'm going to the store," he said, "to buy some milk."
 - "I'm going to the store." He grinned. "I need some milk."
 - **Extra Dialogue Tag Tip:**
 - When using description along with dialogue, you may be able to avoid the dialogue tag all together. This is a good idea, as the tags can get repetitive.
5. **Single vs. Double Quotation Marks:** Dialogue should be enclosed in double quotation marks. Single quotation marks are used for quotes within dialogue.
 - **Example:**
 - He said, "I asked her, 'Are you going to the store?' and she said yes."

Synopsis: A How To Blueprint

Before Reading Further: This is just one possible way to write your synopsis. It is a good place to start. But always read a publisher's submissions guide first so that you can make necessary changes.

Title of Manuscript

Genre: (e.g., Historical Fiction, Science Fiction, Thriller, etc.)

Word Count: (e.g., Approximately 80,000 words)

Author's Name: (Your name or pseudonym)

Author's Contact Information: (Your email address, and if applicable, your phone number and mailing address)

Act One: Setup

- Introduce the protagonist(s): Briefly describe the main character(s), conveying their essential characteristics and circumstances at the story's outset.
- Describe the inciting incident: The event or situation sets the story in motion.
- State the initial goal or objective: What does the protagonist want to achieve after the inciting incident?

Act Two: Confrontation

- Outline the main conflicts: What significant obstacles does the protagonist face? Are there key antagonistic forces or characters?
- Describe the development of characters and relationships: How do these evolve in response to the conflicts and challenges?
- State the midpoint: This pivotal moment changes the protagonist's understanding or approach, often intensifying the conflict.

Act Three: Resolution

- Describe the climax: This is the most intense point of the story, where the protagonist confronts the central conflict or antagonist.
- State the aftermath: What are the results or consequences of the climax?
- Explain the resolution: How does the story end? What is the final state of the characters and their world?

Main Themes & Style

- Themes: Briefly discuss the central themes of the novel.
- Style/Tone: Describe the tone and style of your novel, especially if they're distinctive.

Remember that a synopsis should be written in the third person, present tense. Avoid getting into details about subplots or minor characters; focus on the main plot. Try to make your synopsis reflect the spirit of your novel, including its pacing and mood. You aim to engage the reader, just as your novel aims to engage its audience.

10 Tips for Writing Blurb

It is common to be asked to write a short blurb for your book, whether self-publishing or working with a publishing company. The blurb is what you would see on the back of your book. You try to keep it short while trying to grab your reader by the throat.

How to Write a Book Blurb

- 1. Identify the Core Elements:** At its most basic, a blurb should include:
 - The protagonist(s)
 - The setting
 - The conflict
 - A hint at the resolution (without spoilers)
- 2. Hook the Reader:** The first line of the blurb should grab the reader's attention. Introduce your protagonist, the setting, or a key conflict in a way that piques curiosity.
 - a. **Example:** "In the smog-choked city of Veril, former detective John Hart is about to stumble upon a secret that could cost him his life."
- 3. Introduce the Protagonist(s):** Give a little more detail about your main character(s). Show what's unique or relatable about them. Be concise but vivid.
 - a. **Example:** "John Hart, a hard-boiled investigator with a soft spot for the downtrodden, has been trying to escape his past, but it's about to catch up with him."
- 4. Set Up the Conflict:** Without giving too much away, present the primary conflict or problem of the story.
 - a. **Example:** "When a mysterious woman begs him to investigate a string of strange disappearances, Hart finds himself drawn into a web of deception and danger."
- 5. Tease the Stakes:** Make it clear what's at risk for the protagonist, escalating the tension and stakes. Do not reveal the climax or ending.
 - a. **Example:** "With the city's powerful elite on his trail, Hart must uncover the truth before he becomes the next to vanish."
- 6. End with a Bang:** The final line should tease the reader, making them want to know more. It could be a question, a surprising statement, or a hint of what's to come.
 - a. **Example:** "In a city where trust is a luxury and secrets are currency, will Hart survive long enough to unmask the darkness?"
- 7. Genre and Tone:** Make sure the blurb reflects the genre and tone of the book. A thriller should have a suspenseful blurb, a romance a passionate one, etc.
- 8. Keep it Short:** A blurb should be between 100-200 words. It's not a synopsis, but a teaser.
- 9. Proofread:** Make sure the blurb is free of typos and grammatical errors.
- 10. Test it Out:** Get feedback from others. Does it hook them? Does it give too much away?

Remember, the blurb is one of the first things a reader sees. Its job is to entice the reader to dive into the story. So make every word count!



Self-Publishing and Traditional: Pros and Cons

When it comes to getting your novel into the hands of readers, there are two primary routes: traditional publishing and self-publishing. Each has its strengths and drawbacks, and the choice between the two often depends on your specific goals, resources, and personal preferences.

Traditional Publishing

Pros:

Professional Editing and Design: Publishers provide professional editing, cover design, and formatting, ensuring a polished final product.

Advance Against Royalties: Traditionally published authors usually receive an advance against royalties.

Marketing and Distribution Support: Publishers handle marketing to some extent and have established distribution networks that can get your book into major retailers and bookstores.

Prestige and Validation: Being selected by a publisher can lend credibility and can be validating.

Cons:

Loss of Creative Control: The publisher has final say on things like title, cover design, and even content edits.

Longer Process: The process from submission to publication can take a long time, sometimes years.

Lower Royalty Rates: Typically, authors receive lower royalties (often around 10-15% of retail price) compared to self-publishing.

Need for an Agent: In many cases, particularly with larger publishers, you'll need an agent, which is another relationship to manage.

Self-Publishing

Pros:

Complete Creative Control: You make all the decisions about your book's content, cover, pricing, and more.

Higher Royalties: Self-published authors can receive around 60-70% of the retail price as royalties.

Speed: The timeline from finished manuscript to published book can be much quicker.

Direct Audience Connection: You have the opportunity to build a direct relationship with your readers.

Cons:

Upfront Costs: Editing, cover design, formatting, and other services are your responsibility, which means paying for them out of pocket.

Marketing and Distribution: You're responsible for promoting and distributing your book, which can be time-consuming and require new skills.

Less Prestige: Some people still consider traditional publishing the more prestigious route.

Quality Risk: Without a professional editing team, self-published books can run the risk of containing more errors or less polished content.

Deciding which path to take depends on your personal goals for your book. If you crave complete control and a larger share of the profits, self-publishing may be for you. If you're drawn to the idea of having a team of professionals handling the editing, design, and some of the marketing, and you value the prestige that comes with traditional publishing, then that may be your best route. Consider your strengths, your resources, and your vision for your book before deciding.

