

# Getting Started

*Writing your first book might seem like an impossible task but it really isn't. Quite often, the hardest part is just getting started.*

## Outline

Obviously, if you are contemplating writing a book, most likely you have a topic in mind. The best way to get started is to think long and hard about the story your book is going to tell. Make notes about pertinent factors that are on your mind that ultimately will become the subject matter and outline for your book. You can build on your notes over time as your memory and creative processes serve you.

When in the original development stage, it's a good idea to keep your notebook and a pen handy because memories and new data will come and go at unspecified times. Often your thoughts and ideas for the book will be sharper at times than others so it's advisable to make your notes at the earliest possible opportunity after conceiving them.

Writing a book is a lot like reading in reverse. You don't know exactly where the story will take you until you actually begin each writing session. Like reading, when writing, the story will take on a life of its own but it is up to you to fuel it with stimulating and interesting content that is relevant to your story.

Every book has a Beginning, Middle and End. The following are tips to get you through those stages of the book writing process.

## Beginning

Before actually writing your book, you may not know exactly how the story will unfold until you do physically write it. You should have a general idea of the plot (what the book is about). How did the plot come to be? That will usually lead you to the beginning of the book. The beginning is a good place to establish characters, locations, motives and associations. You don't have to reveal the whole plot at the beginning of the book and generally it's a good idea not to do so. Just use the beginning to lay the groundwork.

## Middle

Next, you will come to the middle of the book which will arise on its own once you have gotten past the beginning. The middle is actually the majority of the book as the beginning and end are merely the start and finish. The middle is the place for suspense, revelations, twists and turns and is essentially the meat of the book.

Before you start writing, you should at least have a good idea of how the story will begin. It will be centered around a specific event, timeline or activity. Usually you do not know what details will unfold in the middle and that is where the beauty of the magic or muse of writing lies. The middle allows you to build and grow the story from one sequence of events to another, which is exactly how the story materializes.

## **End**

You may or may not already know how you want the story to end. You may also find out that through the intricacies of the plot that the ending turns out entirely different than you originally imagined.

Some endings leave the reader elated or sad. Some endings are opaque and leave it up to the reader to discern their meaning. Just be sure that your ending is relevant to the beginning and middle.

## **Discipline**

Writing a book is a lengthy process and it is a good idea to discipline yourself to engage in a regular writing schedule. Do this to the best of your ability as your work schedule, family and social life allows. It is best to try to write every day if possible. Try to avoid too many days off between sessions. Writing in close succession will help with the continuity of the story and also help keep you on track and freshly familiar with the current subject matter.

Some people prefer to write longhand and then convert it into typed format. Others prefer to write the whole book on a computer. Either way is fine. It is just a matter of how your thoughts flow whether writing or typing. If you are exclusively using a computer, make sure you have a redundant method of saving your work. Be sure to save it as a computer file but also have a backup by saving it on cloud or external drive. Computers can and do crash. Don't have all of your hard work that you could never exactly duplicate at the risk of being permanently erased by a faulty computer. Always have a backup. If you are writing longhand, keep all of your original drafts -> those are your back-ups.

## **Self-Edit**

The self-edit process is a good habit and it will serve two very good purposes.

First, it will allow you to catch spelling and grammatical errors and also allows you to substitute wording that seems more appropriate and fluid when read. Secondly, when self-editing, you are reading what you have already written in the previous session and it usually will put you back into the zone and in sync with the story for continuation.

When beginning a new writing session, clearly mark where you started that session so when you end that session, you will know where to begin the self-edit process the next time you begin to write. You don't have to re-read the whole story every time you start writing because all previous material will already be self-edited and reviewed. Just begin the self-edit process from the point that you started writing the most recent session. Self-editing will get your story in shape and leave much less work for a professional edit.

## **Reading**

Reading greatly enhances your writing ability. It helps you to learn structure, flow and tempo. Every writer's style is different so it is a good idea to expose yourself to as many authors as you can to help you develop your own style of writing.

## **Summary**

There are no set rules for writing a book. Books have been written for thousands of years in many different languages and formats. When writing your book, remember IT'S YOUR BOOK. Write it however you like. Just remember to keep it interesting, informative and entertaining to potential readers. People have to want to continue reading your book. If you create that desire, then you have written a good book.

It's best to find a calm, quiet place to write where there are minimal distractions. You will be inside your own head a lot fleshing out the story and it is helpful to be in a stress-free environment where you can concentrate on your writing.

Of course, this isn't everything you will need to know to write a book. I doubt that anyone could tell you everything you will need to know. These tips should at least help you get started and give you an idea of a functional process. Just remember; Beginning, Middle, End. Beginning, Middle, End. Think about it, make notes about it, do whatever research is needed for substantiation and Write, Write, Write.

***Write often and write with enthusiasm!!***