

# Anachronism Noir's Writing Guide::

By Lincoln Reign

Rules:

- 1) I'll reiterate this point several times throughout this guide, but accept now that you'll probably end up scraping or shoving aside a lot of what you come up with as you plan and write your story.
- 2) No modern Politics. It will immediately date your work in the worst way. Whatever politics you think you're writing for, tomorrow your side will flip on itself-- regardless of what party you follow. If you're writing a political story, then the politics have to remain within your fictional setting. If you're writing something historical, then you need to write it from a historical perspective without current political influence.
- 3) No smut. Writing for pervs and creeps chops your audience down to a fifth of what it had the potential to reach. Sex does not sell as well as the industry will tell you it does. It may sell faster right off the bat, but it will not garner you a long-standing audience. Cut the smut and your story can reach anyone of all ages, maximizing your audience.
- 4) Regardless of if you're writing Fiction or Non-Fiction, write what you know. And if you're writing something you don't know, study it first. Don't jump into the unknown blind.
- 5) If you're writing Non-Fiction, then check your sources, and have MULTIPLE sources. Make sure that what you're reporting is the absolute truth, even if you come to a conclusion counter to what you originally believed. Non-Fiction MUST remain unbiased.  
(The rest of this guide focuses solely on how to write Fiction)
- 6) Edit EVERYTHING as you write it. Get into the habit of reading back through what you've written and making sure it clearly says what you're trying to convey. Also, keep an eye on our four Tipe-Os.
- 7) The most important rule, above all, is to enjoy what you're writing. If you're not having fun working on it, your audience won't have fun reading it.

## Step 1: Basics

Think up an idea-- it's where it all starts. You can't really sit down and just start writing a thing, unless you're trying to seriously challenge yourself. Even if it's just a simple concept, have a story in mind that you want to tell, but be prepared to change it as the process goes on.

Come up with your cast of characters-- your lead, your secondaries, your antagonist, and any minor characters you intend to have relevance. Background characters who come and go throughout the story are better to be made up on the spot when you actually get to writing your book, so don't worry about them. It's anyone who you deem important that needs to be thought out beforehand.

Design your world-- even if it's set in the real world, modern day or otherwise, make a map. Plan out the location you want this set in so you can keep an idea in your head of where in relation to each other each of your characters are.

Draw them-- you don't have to be an artist. A quick sketch of each major/ important minor character, and a vague map will be fine. Just so long as it helps you solidify what's what. You could draw it in crayon for all I care, no one's really going to see anything but the finished product anyway, so nothing so far has to look good.

## Step 2: Dossier

Don't just name your lead and draw what they're wearing. Write motives and relevant details for each important character. Write out what connections they have to other characters, specific scenes you want to have play out for them, why they're in this story/ the catalyst for their adventure. Write out their skills and failures, strengths and weaknesses. Write out their personalities and likes/dislikes. Plan out their history and how they got into the plot. Get into the mind of each of your characters and understand them on a fundamental level.

Do the same with your world, either completely fictional or real world. Ask why this is the setting. What's its relevance to the story? What's its history?

## Step 3: Organizing

Lay everything out in front of you. All your notes and drawings so far, either digitally or sprawled across your floor on paper. This is where you start constructing a timeline of events. When and where your characters meet up, fight/argue, go their separate ways, etc. Plot out how you want your story to progress from start to finish.

If any ideas contradict, this is where you're going to have to change or cut an idea altogether. Again, this is something you're going to have to accept as a writer. Even if you really like an idea, there will be moments where it just doesn't fit in the story you're writing. That's why you write other books, or even sequels. If an idea doesn't work here, put it away for something else. Just make sure THIS story, makes sense.

There will be many times throughout the process where you may have to cut ideas, even through to writing the finished product.

#### Step 4: 13 Pages (Optional, but recommended)

When I started out, I wrote short versions of my stories just to get the idea down in a single cohesive piece. And for whatever reason, it always ended up at exactly 13 pages. Don't know why. But, I think it's an excellent thing for new writers to do when they're starting out.

I even still do this from time to time if a story is giving me problems. It allows you to break the story down to its base elements, drawing out the things you think are absolutely necessary to tell the story. It will also help you see which ideas/concepts are contradictory and need to be cut.

#### Step 5: Outline

This is the major planning phase. You've got everything you need, now you just need to line it up in a way that's best for storytelling. This is where you decide how long the book is, how many chapters you want to write, how long those chapters are going to be, and how you're going to present information to the reader.

I recommend if you're starting out, at least 10 pages per chapter. You don't have to stick to that, it's just something to shoot for.

I also suggest making sure each chapter has a point to it. So long as SOMETHING relevant happens in that chapter, that's what matters.

Decide if you want a Prologue or an Epilogue, noticeable Acts or Parts to your story. These aren't important if you're not writing something grand scale though. This is more for Epic Fantasy or continuing adventures. Otherwise, it's best to just not have breaks between chapters and let the story flow from start to finish.

And again, while you're writing this outline, you may come up with new ideas or decide certain ideas don't work. Go with your gut. If it works, it works. If it doesn't, tuck it away for later.

You should also by now, hopefully, have an idea of what you want to call your story. Most of the time you'll probably come up with it during Step 1, but by now you should definitely have it locked down.

#### Step 6: Expansion (Optional, but recommended)

Your outline is most likely going to be short, blunt, bullet points listing the order of things. This step is for expanding on that. Write at least a paragraph or two for each chapter, explaining exactly what you're expecting to have happen here.

It's also important to start taking notes of plot pieces you want to keep in mind. Sometimes it can be easy to lose a concept as you're writing, and when you go back you'll see in the beginning of your story that you wrote something and completely forgot about that.

That won't happen if you keep notes.

#### Step 7: Formatting

This. Is. Important.

Decide the page size, border size, font size, font type, title page, copyright information, table of contents (optional but recommended) page numbering, and anything else you can think of on how you want your book to be presented. It's good to get this out of the way first so you don't have to reformat it later.

I've found what works best is--

Page size: 6x9 inches

Border indent: Half an inch

Font size: 10-12

And I suggest turning OFF Widow/Orphan paragraphs, and ensuring your lines are as tight as possible.

Use the space you give yourself, having too much empty space can look extremely bad unless it is intended. However, even if it's intentional, it can look cheap and lazy, making it look like you stretched a 100-page story into 200 pages just by adding more space.

#### Step 8: ACTUALLY WRITING YOUR BOOK!

With everything set, you can finally begin actually writing.

Open your document, scroll passed your title, copyright, and ToC, and get to Page 1.

Start writing. You've got everything you need now.

Keep your notes and outline close, and refer back to previous concept material.

From here though, I can't help you.

The rest is up to you.

Make your book your own-- your own style, your own technique.

Bring to life the worlds in your head.

Good luck.

