

NOTE: This outline is a VERY general outline for fiction to move a story through 20 chapters. Within the Community Novel Project, it is used to give writers a general idea of what point we are at in the story, NOT to dictate exactly what has to happen during a particular chapter. **As the story is written, we may stray a bit from this outline, which is okay.** Eventually we need to reach the end of the book though, so try to move it along and help out the writers who come after you with what they need to accomplish also. Please send suggestions to improve this general fiction outline to estaley@tscpl.org.

Outline for 50,000 word novel of 20 chapters - 2500 words each

General advice for chapters and scenes

- Every chapter must contain action/reaction, conflict and decision (scenes too)
- Each scene has action, reaction, tension, stumbling block/road block
- Each scene starts with a goal - what does mc want, why, what willing to do for it?
- Decide what block will keep your character from reaching his or her goal - who or what
- Don't start too intense, or have nothing to build to
- Peaks and valleys of tension/intensity - arrange in order of importance

1. - intro main character
- spell out his/her goals
- at least one conflict

2. Event/motivating incident
-what happens in character's life to set his course of actions
- reader learns what character wants
Intro 2nd MC

3. by end, mc reaches his or her first turning point
- send mc into new or different direction

4. Decision to act -> 1st major event away

Type of scenes include cause-effect and action/reaction/conflict/decision. Just when one event wraps up....

5. 2nd event

Advance/retreat scenes - Don't let characters do more in one day than is credible - too many fast-paced days leave readers out of breath - they need some breaks. Description slows action. Use background to ease out of a tense scene - new, calmer setting (night, dark, place of escape, breath sigh of relief). Subtle transition into day, light, sense of hope, new day breaking is symbolic. Humor is good transition from tension too. Transitions should be visual.

6. Lay groundwork/journey - Confront - Explore

(looking ahead: At mid-point, your mc's should be at total cross-purposes.)