

Why You Need to Write a Short Story: Plus, a Free Story Outline Template



You may not have considered short story writing before, but here are some reasons why you should. This article will also tell you how to go about crafting a short story.

Short stories are for everyone. They are fun and easy to read as well as easy to write. Short stories can be read in one or two sittings, they grip the reader's attention and don't let go until the end. They are popular. Remember all of those story ideas that just weren't developed enough for that novel? These are perfect little critters to get you started writing short stories.

Maybe you are a new author just starting out trying to finish up that first great book. Or maybe you're an experienced author working on a sequel or at best, trying to dream one up. As a writer you need to keep busy and stay focused. Writing is a

business, unless you truly believe you've only have just that one great one in you, you should be working on ways to expand your business of writing.

Reasons You Should Consider Short Story Writing.

- You will add more books to your brand.
- You will improve your exposure.
- You can write them fast.
- You will improve your skills as a writer.
- You will publish more often and have more books out there for consumers.
- You have the potential to reach more people and make more money.
- You will experience satisfaction from completing new works.

Your Story Outline

It helps when tackling a new short story project to have a plan. If you are participating in something like [NaNoWriMo](#), you definitely want a plan.

The key is to start simple, what's your idea. Write a short paragraph or two that describes what first comes to you. It doesn't have to be earth-shattering from the get go, just use the talent you have and the interests you've got and write out a blurb, a draft of what might be used to sell the book had you already written it.

You develop your short story the same way you do a traditional manuscript. Flesh out your idea with an outline. Start by separating your idea into three acts, the beginning, middle, and end. Each act has a beginning, middle and end as well. These can be chapters. And each chapter has a beginning and middle and end. These can be scenes. By writing each chapter as it unfolds like the flow of a book, you have the power to keep your story strong and your readers engaged.

Use your character development to drive your story arc and to seduce your readers into the story. I keep the draft of my story outline close at hand to pencil in scenes that help me frame the story arc. Recalling that we all relate on some level to many aspects of the different archetypes, I set the stage. Following the rise to the climax and, finally, the ending – I create sets of scenes featuring the characters that I

believe will pack the most punch and hopefully draw my readers into becoming emotionally attached to the progression of the story. This is probably the largest element that the readers will take away from the story – how they connect with it, it's feel.

The attachment is a story outline template. It describes the natural flow of a story and all of its major parts. Use it to help you create your short story outline, it can be the frame of your book and you can use it as you write. Having a completed outline will keep you from experiencing writer's block. If you are signing up for NaNoWriMo, your outline will be your best bet in your efforts to reach your daily word count. The outline tells you all you need to know about each scene – your just left to fill in the blanks from the details you've provided.



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Story Outline Template

If you have trouble setting up your outline, the steps below are ones that I refer to and find helpful.

The First Act:

1. **The hook:** the first page in the first chapter catches your reader's attention and convinces them to read on.
2. **The inciting event:** the first event that befalls in your story. This is what kicks everything off. What event starts the ball rolling in your stories plot?
3. **The key event:** this is what drags your protagonist into the plot. Your character has to be pulled into the mess. This is where your character becomes officially engaged in your story.
4. **The first plot point:** marks the end of the first act and the beginning of the second. This is where everything changes for your character. The first act sets up your characters 'normal' world and introduces the important characters, the settings, and describes the stakes. The first plot point should rock that normal world. Everything changes and your protagonist will be forced to start reaching to the new status quo.

The Second Act:

1. **The first half of the second act:** Your character is going to spend the first half of the second half of the book in reaction mode. For the next quarter of the book your protagonist will be fighting to keep their head above the water.
2. **The midpoint:** Your stories second major plot point. This is where everything changes again. But now your protagonist is prepared due to the last shake-up and is ready to start taking action rather than just reacting. This belongs smack in the middle of your story.
3. **The second half of the second act:** After the midpoint your character is going to start going on the offensive. They are no longer willing to let the antagonist simply bring the fight to them. They will start implementing their own plans and

throwing off their insecurities. This continues to three-quarters of the way through the book and the beginning of the third act.

The Third Act:

1. **The third plot point:** this is your final major plot point that changes everything. Whatever happens here is going to force your character to a low place. They will have to analyze their actions and motivations and get down to the core of their own personal character arch. This is where they will start to identify their own destructive or ineffective mindsets and start rejecting the personal traits that have held them back up until now. Begins at the 75% mark.
2. **The climax:** this is what it's all about. Your climax is where your story finally gets down to business. This is the point of the whole story. This is where the conflict must finally be resolved. Although events will be heating up all the way through the third act, the Climax Proper won't begin until around the 90% mark. The climactic moment itself won't hit until the very end, perhaps a scene or two from the end of the book.
3. **The resolution:** caps your story with finality. This important scene is the exhale to your climax's inhale. Here you give readers the opportunity to see how your character will react to the events of the climax. How are they a different person than they were in the beginning? How has the world changed around them? How does their future look from here?