# Fiction Writing: Where to begin

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Getting ideas

News articles

Reading books

TV / movie

Asking what if

A dream

Take a shower

Write the kinds of stories you like to read

Other launching points

An interesting character

Based of someone you know

Come up with something their good at and something they are equally bad at and what kind of conflict could you build around it

Maybe start with the Antagonist and figure out their motivation/back story, then how does that play into the Antagonist/conflict/ resolution

Write a type of character you’ve not written before

Build a world

Figure out the rules of the world, the feel of it, the overall setting and then populate it

A situation – what would happen if...

A first line

Write a scene and see where that goes then build around it

Pick a few words and build a story around them

Use a prompt

Know what you’re writing before you start – long or short fiction – so you can write accordingly

Differences between writing long and short

word economy

depth of plot and character

word count

chapters vs scenes

Where to start: As close to the end as possible

Where something is happening

At the point where something changes for the main character

Set a tone

Is this story going to be sad / serious / funny / dry / etc and try to stick with it

Plotter vs. Panster

Figure out if you’re a plotter – needs to outline, do research, make character sketches

Or a pantser who needs to sit down and figure the story out as you go.

Plots

Figuring out your beginning /middle/ end – before if you’re plotting or after your first draft

Short story plot vs novel plot

Character arcs

What kinds of plots do you find engaging? Model after those

What is driving the story - plot or character?

Names

Don’t get fixated on picking names. Write.

Find / Replace is your friend later

Placeholder names a fine. Write.

Titles

If you have one from the start, great.

If not, use a generic and figure out the real one during edits.

Don’t fixate. Write.

Details / World Rules / Technology / World history

These are all great things to add depth to a story, but for the first draft. Write.

For longer pieces, make notes on character details / names / places / timeline as you go to help with editing later and to save you from getting bogged down on the first draft

Getting the first draft down

Writing linear vs jumping scenes

Don’t get caught up in the details or research

Get to the end

Write what you’re good at for the first draft – dialogue /action / narrative /etc

First drafts aren’t perfect, in fact, they’re often full of suck

Picking up writing day to day without extensive editing

The goal:

Finish a story. To do that, write it. You need something to start with in order to edit it and make it shine.