# 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.