

The 3 Draft Structure

Transform Your Story into a Submission Ready Manuscript

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01

GOALS

the throughline

**What do you want?
How are you going to get it?
What is the outcome?**

This is the first step to reaching your end goal - your motivation.

Motivation drives you to the end goal - the big goal - THE DREAM

the end goal

I want to be published by...write it down in big letters on a sticky note, bristol board, green tape...Penguin, Grove Press, House of Anansi, Coach House Books, New Directions, Grey Wolf...

Tape this to your wall, fridge, computer, front door, bedhead, bathroom mirror...

RESEARCH the publisher, the agents, their writers guidelines - do this early in your process because that helps set your goals and keeps your going forward.

That's one end goal!

The second end goal is to get that manuscript ready to go to your chosen publishers or agents...

rituals

CREATE YOUR OWN WRITING RITUAL - YOU NEED A WRITING ROUTINE

- break down your end goal into smaller manageable daily goals -

We need to create a writing ritual, routines, habit. Within our lifestyles' allowance, of course.

What makes you most comfortable, at ease? Where? When? What is realistic?

DISCIPLINE is key. Discipline comes from three places, your throughline, your love of the craft and your desire to tell this story. Keep your eye on the end goal. Enjoy the pursuit.

Stephen King wrote 6 pages a day, the same time everyday. He would sit down at his desk with a cup of tea and write to music. His desk was always organized the same way. Tidy, nothing out of place.

Haruki Murakami wakes at 6am, writes for 4-6 hours, then goes for a 10km run or a 1500m swim then rests, and goes to bed at 9pm.

The great **Raymond Bradbury** said, "you have to be in love with writing to do this."

He also wrote, "Jump of the cliff and find your wings on the way down."

Which leads us to creating and completing our story's first draft.

02

FIRST DRAFT

sprint

Follow your ritual - stick to it - write fast - don't edit as you write.

Even on the days you feel spent, show up. A.M. Holmes said, just show up. That's half the battle.

Set a timer, if that works for you.

You'll be amazed at what you can achieve in 3 minutes, 15 minutes, 1 hour.

Use Ray Bradbury's noun method - write the first 5 nouns that come to your mind - pick one - ask it questions - then free write around that noun. Do that daily.

When and if you know your ending - write it!

Knowing your end enables you to write toward it, or backward from it to the beginning, with more clarity.

Don't worry about how long your manuscript is at the end of a first draft. It will inevitably get bigger, then smaller, then bigger, then just the right size.

When asked how to write a first draft, Ernest Hemingway said, "Do it."

03

SECOND DRAFT

goal reset

Second draft tips

- Keep your eye on the end goal
 - Stick to your ritual
 - Be Disciplined
- To be disciplined we also need to be selfish (and physically and mentally fit)
 - Check in with your throughline
- Write down a projected/loose deadline for this draft

isolate

First drafts are messy, out of order, explanatory.

They are the skeleton on which we flesh out the body of the manuscript.

The all important 2nd draft is where we strengthen our stories core, structure, and flow.

Where we strengthen our will to achieve our goals.

- Don't take on the manuscript as a whole.
- Build the second draft one element at a time.
- Read through your first draft.
- Ask it questions. Mine deeper.
- Get to know what you have written and what is crackling beneath the surface, one element at a time

"You have to go through the darkness to get to the light." Haruki Murakami

the process

Create a checklist or form that you can use to categorize the main elements of your manuscript.

Character/POV

Dialogue

Details and descriptions

Tone and atmosphere

Tackle one chapter at a time and concentrate on one element at a time, in this order. You can also keep a file that has a listing of: Who, What, Where and When. Sounds elementary but if you can ensure that the 5 W's are clear in your manuscript, the more submission ready it will be.

Once you have done the best you can with this draft, following this process, it could be time to call in a trusty reader, or an editor. The third reader's perspective will help you to know if your ready for the third draft.

04

THIRD DRAFT

the line edit

Once you've checked off your boxes and had another reader evaluate your manuscript, and you've made any necessary revisions, it's time for the line edit.

This entails:

Endurance

Discipline

Patience

Don't let that frighten you. One chapter at a time, one paragraph at a time, break your sentences onto their own line.

Read the sentence out loud, backward, forward, test out each word, detail, the punctuation. This will ensure your sentences are as strong as possible, that there are no superfluous words or details, that the rhythms are strong and your intention is clear.

Simplicity and clarity are key!

By taking the time to go through this step, you will get to know your story even more.

Now, revisit your dream goal.

the guidelines

**You have made it to the end.
Kept your bum in the chair.
Your hands on the keyboard.
Shown up everyday, no matter how long for.
Kept your eye on the finish line.
Stuck to your guns.
Followed through on your throughline.
Checked off all your revision boxes.
And loved the writing and creative process!**

NOW

**It is time to revisit the publishers and/or agents guidelines.
Are they asking for the first 30 or 50 pages, or the entire completed manuscript?
Time to go back over those first few pages to ensure they are rock solid and formatted exactly.**

It will be worth it!

THANK YOU

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Questions?