SIX MONTH NOVEL

URBAN WRITERS' RETREAT



STARTING TO PLOT
FREE WORKSHEET

SIXMONTHNOVEL.COM



THE BASICS

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STORY

What is your story about at its heart? What is/are main theme/s you'll be exploring?

Story Summary

Name [your protagonist/main character]

is a [1-10 word description]

in [setting]

They [describe what they are trying to do/get]

but [describe the central conflict/choice/problem they face].

They are in conflict with [name and description. NB: antagonists are not always bad, they merely represent the opposing side of the issue and get in the main character's way. It can even be internal conflict.]

who is trying to [antagonist/opposing side's aim].

In order to succeed, [what the protagonist must do].

STORY ELEMENTS

This is a very brief worksheet to help you sort through and shape ideas.Use these spaces to jot down what you already know about or explore key story elements.

CHARACTERS

What do you know about your main characters? Who else needs to be in the story?

VOICE

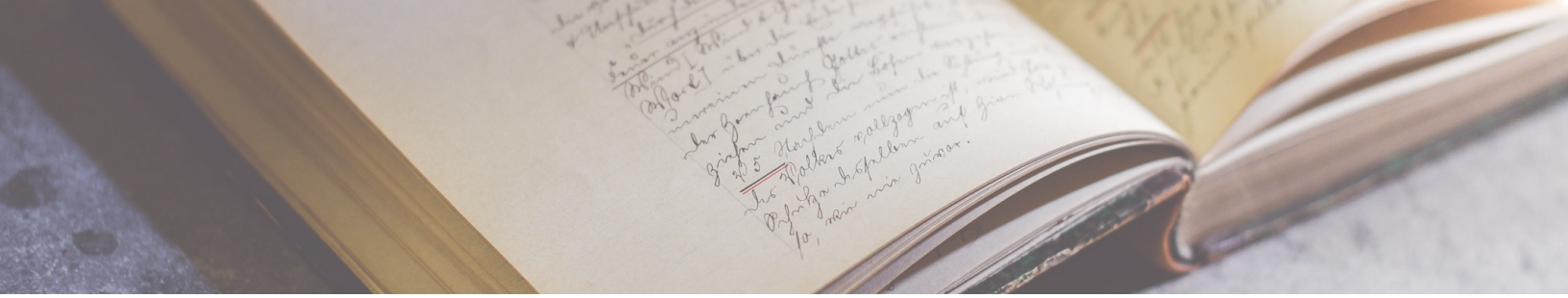
Do you know who your narrator is? Which tense and POV will be most effective?

SETTING

What do you know about your story's setting? Think of the world-setting, the wider place and time, but also the social setting of your story and important locations.

SUBPLOT

Do you have any ideas for subplots you want to explore. Why are they there, what will they add to your novel?



6MN QUICK AND FREE OUTLINE

Set a timer for 20 minutes and use this tool to play and start to build an outline. Fill in the start and end points first. Next try to fill in the climax or inciting incident. Then create problems for your main character and let them try (and fail) multiple times to resolve them, with the stakes and tension increasing toward the climax. Think cause and effect, actions leading to reactions.

What's the starting situation? How does your main character feel?

What is the inciting incident, the thing that first heralds a change? What's your character's reaction? What do they do or decide next, or what happens to them? Is there a point of no return? What raises the big issue that you will resolve at the climax?

What steps do your characters take toward their goal and what obstacles are in their way? What's the cause and effect?

Does something change at the midpoint? It might look like a big setback, or a big win followed by a downfall, or the revelation of another problem.

What does your main character do to get from this point to the climax? What else happens, what reactions to their actions raise the stakes? Is there a moment where it looks like all is lost?

What is the climax (big showdown that answers the main question/issue?)

What image will you leave the reader with, showing the new situation?