

Outlining Your Novel or Short Story

7 Steps To Creating A Flexible Outline For Any Story

1. Craft your premise. Your premise is the basic idea for your story. ...
2. Roughly sketch scene ideas. Armed with a solid premise, you can now begin sketching your ideas for this story. ...
3. Interview your characters. ...
4. Explore your settings. ...
5. Write your complete **outline**. ...
6. Condense your **outline**. ...
7. Put your outline into action.

Taken from Writer's Digest at www.writersdigest.com

Four Popular Outlining Methods...

There are many different ways to outline a novel. Keep in mind, we're not talking about the various story structures you can use to map out your stories' major beats or the many outlining styles and mediums (e.g. bullet-point lists, the alphanumeric style, outlining software, etc.) you can employ. We're talking specifically about the many outlining methods you can utilize, which are mostly defined by the level of depth they encourage and the process by which they are created. Not sure what I mean? Here's a quick breakdown of four popular outlining methods frequently used by fiction writers:

1. THE SYNOPSIS OUTLINE.

Many writers find that creating a one- to two-page synopsis provides the perfect balance of structure and flexibility in an outline. A traditional synopsis includes all of a story's major beats — the hook, inciting incident, major plot points, midpoint, climactic sequence, and resolution — without going into so much depth as to make the drafting process seem clinical.

If you crave the creative discovery of a draft zero but know that writing without any sort of outline will only leave you lost or overwhelmed, utilizing a synopsis may just be the right choice for you.

2. THE IN-DEPTH OUTLINE

Need as much help as you can get when drafting? Don't be afraid to create an in-depth outline that summarizes each individual chapter or scene in your book.

As someone who dislikes drafting and prefers to write the rough draft as quickly as possible, creating an in-depth outline has proven extremely helpful to me. And when I say in-depth, I mean *in-depth*. My most recent outline wrapped up at a whopping 10,460 words.

3. THE SNOWFLAKE METHOD

Created by Randy Ingermanson, The Snowflake Method is an extremely popular outlining method that sees you expanding your story idea little by little until you've created not only an outline of your story's plot, but gained a strong understanding of your characters, settings,

4. THE BOOKEND METHOD.

Are you fond of a *lot* of wiggle room when drafting? You may enjoy the Bookend method, in which you "bookend" your novel by mapping out where you want your story to begin and end while choosing to discover the journey from Point A to Point B in drafting.

To use this method effectively, you'll need to have a strong understanding of the type of story you want to tell. Take time to define your story's premise, as discussed in the section below, before getting started.

With your premise defined, you should have enough information to map out your story's exposition and resolution while still retaining the freedom to do a little discovery drafting in between.

Taken from: <https://www.well-storied.com/blog/my-outlining-process>