



Creative Writing

I Have an Idea

Adult

Introduction

So, you have an idea for the next best-selling novel and the next summer blockbuster movie. Before you bring that story to life, there is plenty of preparation to do. This program illustrates a step-by-step process of how to ensure that your finished story is rich, logical, smooth, and above all, interesting.

The Brainstorming Process

Coming up with a story is like organizing information in a library, but the library is yourself. You are using this brainstorming process to conduct research among the things you know and make connections between them. When you associate existing ideas, new ideas emerge.

Remember, the more time and effort you put into preparation, the less frustration and unnecessary work you will need later. Would you rather fix a plot-hole when it is written on an index card, or would you rather do that in your final draft?

You can find a visual guide of the step-by-step process at the end of this handout. Each step has a few bullet points of what you should keep in mind during that step.

Terminology

This list of definitions and points on some of the terms will be covered during the program. The list may be helpful as you use the visual guide.

- High concept – An easily pitched idea in a succinct statement. E.g. A guy goes back in time to meet his parents, but his mother falls in love with him (*Back to the Future*)
- Low concept – An idea that is more complex and relies on nuanced character development. It is harder to pitch. E.g. *Pride and Prejudice*
- Subtext – Content not expressively stated but often understood by the reader/audience
- Log line – A brief summary of the story highlighting its concept
- Mind map – A visual diagram of information that specializes in the hierarchy and associations between ideas. In the creative process, use this tool to interrogate your story and ask what a naturally curious observer may ask about each part of each idea
- Wall of recall – Our tendency to repeat what we consumed recently and mistake a stolen cliché to be our own fresh idea. To fight against it, eliminate the first three ideas that come to your mind when making creative decisions
- Key question – The main question that the reader needs answering by the story. E.g. Can Dorothy return to her home in Kansas?
- Event – In the context of storytelling, an event is simply a meaningful thing that happens. Ideally, every event should have an impact on the story
- Scene – A sequence of character interactions within a (usually) continuous time. A scene consists of events and dialogue. The definition can be fluid as creative writing is not a precise science
- Outline – A brief description of the story and its major events
- Treatment – A detailed description of the story and all of its scenes

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Additional Information

Explore additional resources on our [website](#) and blog [Plano Library Learns](#), including information about library [databases](#)

Lynda.com

Writing Training and Tutorials [Link](#)

Write a Bestselling Novel in 15 Steps [Link](#)

Develop Blockbuster Story Ideas that Sell [Link](#)

Kanopy

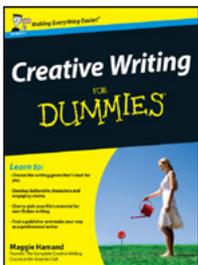
Writing Instruction [Link](#)

Great Courses: Screenwriting 101 [Link](#)

Great Courses: Writing Great Fiction [Link](#)

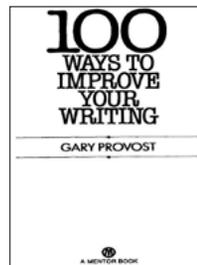
Books to Explore

Through the [Libby app](#) and your library card, you can read more with eBooks



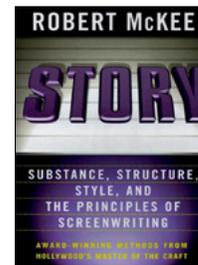
Creative Writing for Dummies
by Maggie Hamand

[Checkout](#)



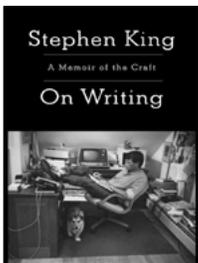
100 Ways to Improve Your Writing
by Gary Provost

[Checkout](#)



Story: Style, Structure, Substance, and the Principles of Screenwriting
by Robert McKee

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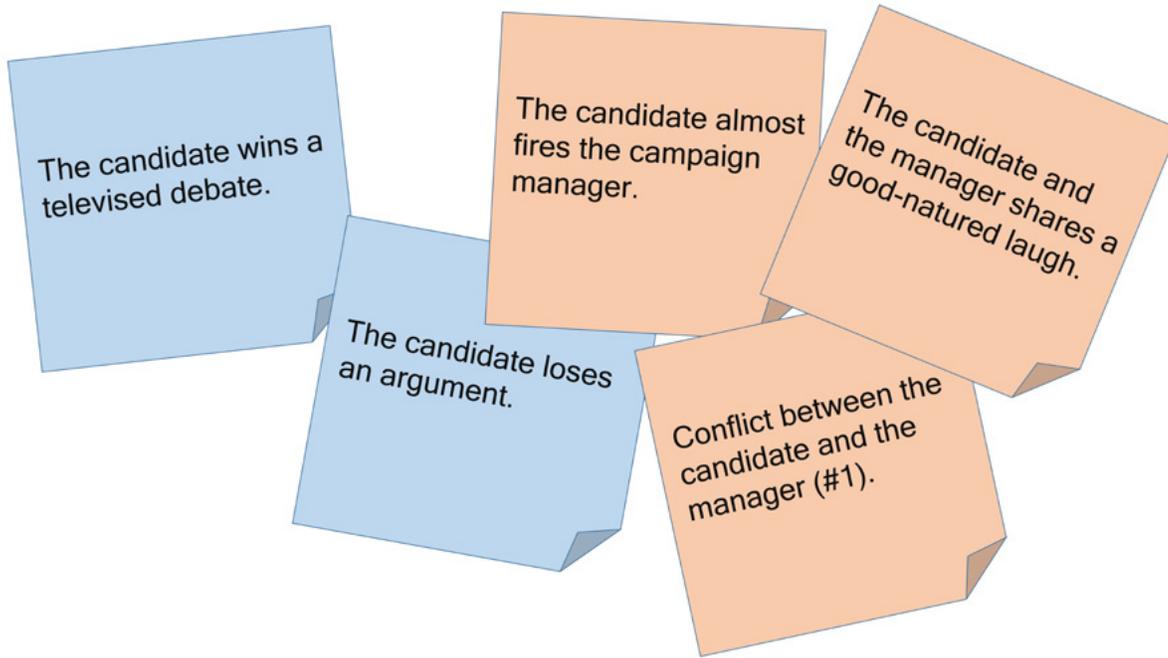
On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft
by Stephen King

[Checkout](#)

[Audiobook](#)

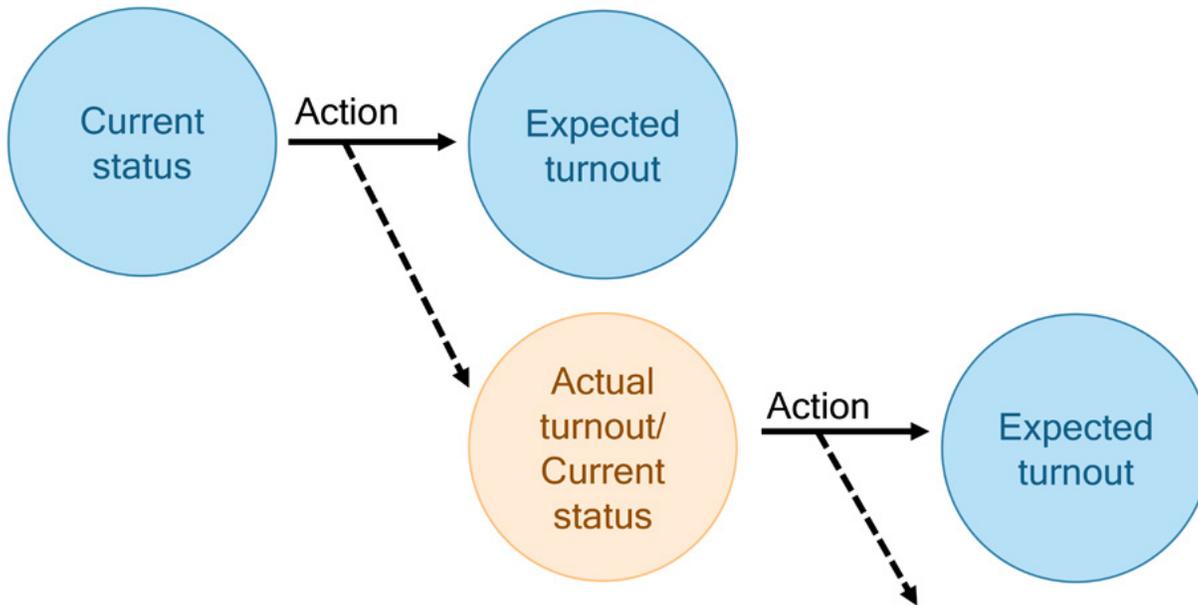
Indexing

Use notecards or sticky notes to record the events you want to take place in the story. Events relate to each other. So, naturally, when you come up with one event, there should be another event generated. For example, if our hero wins a debate at some point in the story, there may be another event in which the hero loses an argument or gets embarrassed. These related events make the bigger events more impactful and meaningful.

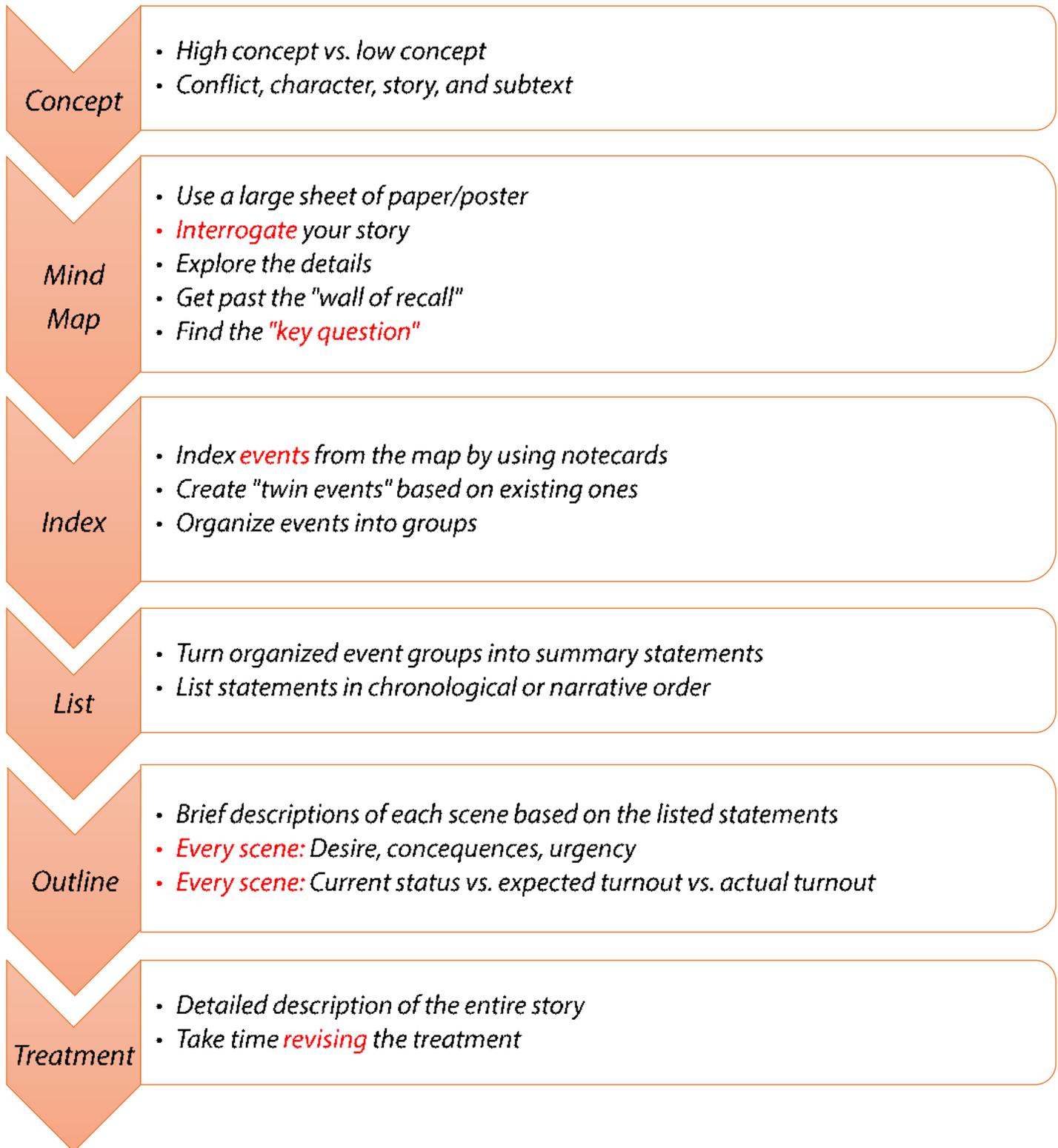


Make a Scene

In each scene, the "main character" of the scene expects a turnout from the interaction, but the actual turnout is often different from expectation. This difference creates conflict, the driving force of storytelling. It also allows the storyteller to keep building the story using the new status quo.



Brainstorming Process Guide



Now you are ready to begin writing!