



The Book Writing Blueprint

BY F.C. SHULTZ



(YOUR NAME)

BOOK WRITING BLUEPRINT

INSPIRATION FROM THE GREATS

"I don't need an alarm clock. My ideas wake me."

—Ray Bradbury



"Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any."

—Orson Scott Card



"Most of the basic material a writer works with is acquired before the age of fifteen."

—Willa Cather



"Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer."

—Barbara Kingsolver



"The first sentence can't be written until the final sentence is written."

—Joyce Carol Oates

NOTE FROM F.C.

Congratulations! You've just taken a huge step toward writing your next book. Now comes the fun part.

I've taken your responses to the little survey and have made a plan just for you, based on your timeline and how many hours you're able to spend on your book each week. Look over each step of the blueprint, see what's coming, and then get ready...step one starts in one week!

I can't wait to read your book!

STEP ONE: GIVE YOUR STORY SOME BONES.

(DATE) - (DATE) · # Hours/Week

It's time to take your story idea and give it some bones. Who is your main character? What do they want? What's going to stop them from getting it?

This is not the outline step. So, even if you do not plan to outline, this step is still important. Get a notebook, or open a notes app, and start taking notes as you build your characters and your world.

STEP TWO: WHAT'S THE STORY?

(DATE) - (DATE) · # Hours/Week

You've answered some basic questions, now it's time to start thinking about scenes, and how those scenes fit together. I'm an outliner, so I suggest opening a blank document and writing 1-2 sentence descriptions for each scene.

Outlining for me is a way to help keep me from getting stuck. Writing is hard. If I have a plan for where the story is going, and I hit a wall, I skip the wall and pick up at the next scene and keep going, knowing I'll come back to it later. That being said, do what works for you.

STEP THREE: DO THE WORK.

(DATE) - (DATE) · #,### Words/Week

It's time to do the hard chair work and write the first draft. If you can write 1000 words a day, you'll have a 90k word novel in three months. That would be incredible.

During this phase, don't go back and edit your work. That will come later, and it will only slow you down. It's going to be bad. It's a first draft. It's okay. No one will see it. Just get the words on the page, and keep going toward your daily word count goal.

If your story goes a bit off-outline, let it go. You should still surprise yourself with worldbuilding details and maybe even characters who you hadn't considered adding.

(YOUR NAME)

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"People on the outside think there's something magical about writing, that you go up in the attic at midnight and cast the bones and come down in the morning with a story, but it isn't like that. You sit in back of the typewriter and you work, and that's all there is to it."

—Harlan Ellison



"It's none of their business that you have to learn to write. Let them think you were born that way."

—Ernest Hemingway



"If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it."

—Elmore Leonard



"It is perfectly okay to write garbage—as long as you edit brilliantly."

—C. J. Cherryh



"My only job is to tell the story. I think that if more writers focused on that, they'd be better off and probably more successful."

—Nora Roberts

STEP FOUR: LET IT COOK.

(DATE) - (DATE)

Good job! You just finished the first draft of your novel. That's no small accomplishment. You need a break. Save your file (and back it up and back it up again), and then put it away for 2-3 months.

Try not to think about it. Give your brain a break. Maybe start the brainstorming phase of your next book? Or, catch up on your reading.

STEP FIVE: MAKE IT BETTER.

(DATE) - (DATE) · # Hours/Week

Time's up. You've let your book cook and now you open it up and the sweet aroma of your novel fills your nostrils. Now it's time to cut away the excess, add some flavor, and make it the best it can be.

I suggest printing it out (just on 8.5x11 paper) and using a red pen to go through and make the edits. This is a catch-all edit. Make notes of spelling and grammar errors, as well as story elements you want to change.

There's something magical about holding the physical book in your hands. Once you've gone through and made your notes with your red pen, apply those edits to your working document. Now that you have version 2, go through it (digital is fine this time) and make a note of any scenes that need added or rewritten.

After you've got it the best it can be, run it through spell check on your word processor to check for any spelling errors you missed. You want this version to be as ready as it can be, like you were going to publish it.

STEP SIX: BETA READERS.

(DATE) - (DATE)

It's time to let others read your work. Find 5-10 beta readers (friends, acquaintances who read a lot, strangers from online writing groups) to read your book and give you feedback. When searching for beta readers, be clear on what you are expecting from them. Let them know the genre of your book, the word count, and when you would like to receive feedback.

I like to provide my beta readers with a physical proof copy as a keepsake for them, but also to get them invested. Out of your 5-10, you should expect half of them to read the book in a timely fashion and give you feedback. You'll also need to provide digital versions of your book to read.

(YOUR NAME)

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"I would advise anyone who aspires to a writing career that before developing his talent he would be wise to develop a thick hide."

—Harper Lee



"The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live: a live thing, a story."

—Ursula K. Le Guin



"The process of writing and creating and answering that very unique call inside yourself has nothing to do with agents and sales and all that."

—Elizabeth Berg



"Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



"Just write every day of your life. Read intensely. Then see what happens. Most of my friends who are put on that diet have very pleasant careers."

—Ray Bradbury

Quotes from writersdigest.com

STEP SEVEN: USE THE FEEDBACK.

(DATE) - (DATE)

This is one of the most difficult parts of the writing process. You've created this story, this world, and you've made it the best you can be, and now you're letting others in, and asking for their honest opinion. I have to warn you now, this will hurt.

Always thank beta readers for their feedback, positive or negative. Look for themes in the feedback you receive. Are multiple readers saying the dialogue is a bit clunky? Is just one person saying they were bored the whole time? If one person has harsh feedback, but you don't see it from any of your other readers, I would suggest not holding it as tightly as the feedback that is consistent among your beta readers.

All that to say, at the end of the day, it is your book, so you get to choose what you want to implement and what you want to disregard.

STEP EIGHT: THE FINAL POLISH.

(DATE) - (DATE) · # Hours/Week

The last step is to get your manuscript edited by a professional editor. No matter how many times you go through it, you're probably going to miss something. You'll have to shell out some cash for this, but it will definitely be worth it, because, once you get their edits back, and make the changes, your book is done! You did it! Congratulations!

NOW WHAT?

TALK ABOUT PUBLISHING OPTIONS HERE.