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**HOW TO WRITE  
A SYNOPSIS**

# HOW TO WRITE A SYNOPSIS

## WHAT IS A SYNOPSIS?

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A synopsis is an important summary of your story, encompassing the key elements from beginning to end. Your synopsis is a selling tool for your book, and yourself, the author. Typically, a synopsis is anywhere from 1-4 pages long, written in clear, concise language, and follows the same structure of events that occur in your story. It's not to be confused with the blurb on the back of your book or the overview you might see in online bookstores.

## WHY WRITE A SYNOPSIS?

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If you're not planning to self-publish and are seeking a deal with a publisher or literary agent, you will be asked for a synopsis. The length will vary between agents, but the format and guidelines will be more or less the same. And your synopsis may be the deal-breaker, so it needs to be top-notch and written to absolute perfection.

## HOW TO WRITE A SYNOPSIS

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The end product will be concise, clearly organised, grammatically sound and error-free to pass initial screening. It needs to highlight the story arc, revealing the main premise and major twists, including spoilers.

### Writing Tips

- Write in the 3rd person
- Use active voice
- Focus on key words
- Use simple, concise sentences
- Use business-like language
- It's acceptable to tell instead of show
- Triple check your synopsis for accuracy.

### Presentation Tips

- Strictly keep to specified word count / page range
- Use simple, normal fonts
- Keep margins set to normal
- Have line spacing set at 1.0 – 1.5 max.

### Content Tips

- Follow the same story structure as your book
- Begin with a strong opening paragraph that sets the scene
- Include the protagonist and problem / conflict in first paragraph
- Use character names and briefly say who they are
- Demonstrate how the plot progresses
- Include major plot twists only
- Include climatic scenes and turning points
- Show how major conflicts are resolved in final paragraph
- Include character feelings / emotions and their development
- Indirectly highlight how your story is unique / different
- Focus on summarising the main story events
- Include only necessary information.

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### WHAT TO AVOID

While focusing on the above recommendations, be mindful of oversharing and inappropriateness. Below are some key tips on what to avoid:

- Complimenting yourself or elements of your story
- Mentioning all characters or events
- Overshooting the maximum word count or page quantity
- Over explaining character personalities and feelings
- Dwelling on scenes and oversharing
- Including all twists and spoilers – it isn't necessary
- Careless mistakes
- Wordiness and unnecessary details
- Writing a blurb instead of a synopsis.

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