

## **HOW TO BE AN INSTANT FICTION WRITER**

### **Nine Steps to a Story**

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**YOU** may never have written a story in your life, but—*is there a writer inside you waiting to get out?*

- You appreciate books and authors. You've had ideas that would make great stories, if only you knew where to begin. You may even have a sizzling beginning and/or ending, but aren't sure how to get from point A to point B.
- Hesitate no more. Here's your handy-dandy formula.
- "A formula?!" you exclaim. "That's not creative. Sounds like *paint by numbers*."
- This is exactly the same concept. Don't knock it till you've tried it. It's your springboard to better stories, which may end up as best-selling novels!

### **YOUR STORY**

*This form may be printed out to practice on.*

*Drawing on personal experience, summarize a situation where you solved a real-life problem. Shameless exaggeration and humor welcome. Complete steps 2 to 8 in one sentence each.*

1 • Main Character: That would be YOU, alias \*\*\* " \_\_\_\_\_ "  
Write as if you're talking about your alias (third person), instead of using "I."

2 • Problem to Solve: Situation bothering \*\*\* " \_\_\_\_\_ " in the  
area of (choose one): money, jealousy, betrayal, romance, loss, illness, competition, danger.

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3 • Obstacle: Why is \*\*\* unable to avoid this problem?

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4 • Detour: When does \*\*\* seek help, unsuccessfully?

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5 • Crisis: What does \*\*\* fear most about this situation?

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6 • Solution: How does \*\*\* solve the problem?

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7 • Progress: What does \*\*\* gain or lose from this experience?

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8 • Promotion to entice readers (Think *movie promo*) :

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9 • Title of story:

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THE END

Congratulations! You just wrote a short story—very short, but a legitimate story. If you're still having fun, you have what it takes to explore fiction writing seriously. **Read the books that inspired this workshop: "[The Hero's Journey](#)" by Joseph Campbell and "[The Writer's Journey](#)" by Christopher Vogler.**

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### **SAMPLE COMPLETION**

1. *Main Character:* Miss Monica Muddle
2. *Problem:* Monica falls ill with food poisoning.
3. *Obstacle:* She has no medicine and feels too ill to go to the doctor.
4. *Detour:* She wishes her neighbor could help but he is not home.
5. *Crisis:* Monica fears she could die from dehydration or worse.
6. *Solution:* She goes on the internet and finds helpful information.
7. *Progress:* She loses some excess weight she has been trying to get rid of.
8. *Promo:* Drama of survival against the forces of nature.
9. *Title:* "Less Is More"

### **SPINOFFS**

STAGE 2 • Add a paragraph of details to each section of the above story (hopefully on a computer for easier editing). This is where the "formula" becomes your individual creation.

STAGE 3 • Try the 9-step formula with a different alias and problem. The story structure is designed to give your ideas the most impact upon your readers. More practicing with this format will help you determine your best fiction genre—e.g. mystery, romance, adventure or humor.

STAGE 4 • Feedback is essential to hone your skills and find your audience. To further develop your creative writing, many resources are available including classes, seminars, publications, the internet, writers' organizations, and informal critique groups. • Learning to give and take criticism is an essential step for aspiring authors. The secret of success is to balance each concern with a compliment.