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## Writing for Those Just Getting Started\_Part III

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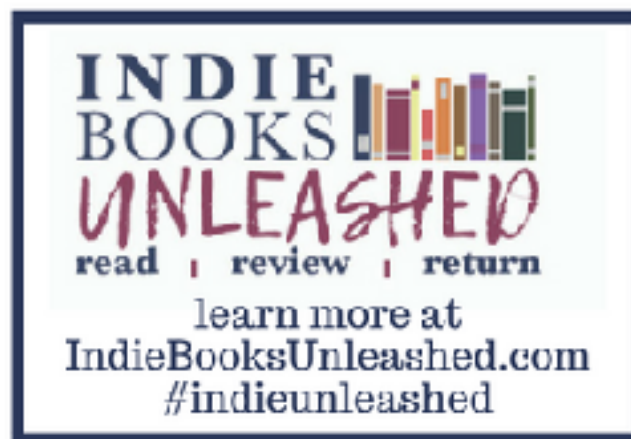
'There's nothing to **writing**. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and **open a vein.**'

—Ernest Hemingway



Writing. It's something you feel inside and something you can't let go. It's the glimmer of a story, the spark of an idea, and the flash of inspiration, all of which give a writer-at-heart the urge to get it all out and create something big. There truly is a story inside everyone.

So, how do you get started? Writing is a business these days, and if you desire some measure of success in your writing, then you should start out right. Follow the steps. Write what you know. And always keep writing!



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# Different Writing Methods -

## You must choose the one that's right for you

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There are writers who believe they need to know everything that will happen in their book. They create a detailed outline before they ever begin to write a single line. Every scene, every plot twist, every revelation, is planned in advance. Many of these writers came to the novel from film or television, where structure is everything. Here are some outlining methods; combine a few of these or use one or the other of them.

### a.) "W" Folder

This is a simple, low-tech method. All you need is a manila file folder, a pen or pencil, and your imagination to create a visual representation of your story. Open up a file folder and write a large "W" over the entire folder -- one V on each side. Your story starts at the first leg of the "W". Your initial crisis is at the bottom. The top middle indicates the point where problems may be resolved. The bottom of the next V is the blackest moment.

The story is completely resolved by the top of the last leg. Scenes and other notes can be penciled in along the legs of the "W". With this method, you can insert information that is missing. The folder can then double up to hold your research and other information necessary to your story.

### b.) Spreadsheets

Use Excel to make a simple chart. Spreadsheets can hold vast amounts of information. For example, columns can be used for each chapter for fifteen or twenty chapters, ad infinitum.

Your rows could be your main characters and the minor characters that influence your plot. Or else your columns could be the chapters and the rows could be the pivotal scenes in each chapter.

You can also add, delete, and move scenes around. As you start writing, you can pinpoint where a particular character appears in a given chapter without thumbing through hard copy to look up something.

### c.) Index Cards

Color-coded index cards are helpful in keeping track of whether or not your story has a balanced amount of goal, motivation, and conflict. The cards may be coded as follows:

Pink	=	Heroine's POV
Blue	=	Hero's POV
Purple	=	Goal
Yellow	=	Motivation
Green	=	Conflict

Put down scenes as they occur — no details, though — just enough to know what they are about. Write scenes in any order, keep adding cards and scenes till you can't think of anymore ideas.

Now organize your cards and keep them in order. The scenes should move in a linear fashion -- Event A should occur before Event B. Decide what scenes are most exciting to the main storyline.

Add details at the back of the cards, such as Location, Time -- what day and time is a given scene taking place? Characters -- list all the characters who will appear in the scene. Main POV -- each scene should have only one POV character. Main POV character's goal in the scene -- what is this character trying to achieve?

### d.) Post-It Notes

Post-it notes can be smacked on a big chunk of bulletin board paper, and like index cards, post-it notes can also be color-coded. Use a yardstick mark off columns on the bulletin board paper -- a column for each chapter. Jot down important scenes on colored post-it notes. Move them around as you construct your story. Put them on your wall, or buy a three-ply storyboard, and organize them as your book progresses.

*TIP: If you see too much of one color, then separate them and place them such that your story is balanced with the goals, motivations, and conflict of your main characters!*

## If you choose to outline, there are a number of options available:

- **Basic Document.** Use Microsoft Word and just get it out onto the page. Create a table with the various chapters for the key plot and action. Create a separate list of characters, themes, ideas and another document for research, etc.
- **Mindmapping.com** - Mind mapping is a creative and logical means of note-taking and note-making that literally "maps out" your ideas. All Mind Maps have a natural organizational structure that radiates from the center and use lines, symbols, words, color and images according to simple, brain-friendly concepts.

Mind mapping converts a long list of monotonous information into a colorful, memorable and highly organized diagram that works in line with your brain's natural ways. Use **mindmapping** to brainstorm in a non-linear fashion on plot lines, ideas, characters and then organize the mind maps into a bigger picture. Write to each arm of the mind map.

The **(5)** Five essential characteristics of Mindmapping:

- Main idea, subject or focus is crystallized in a central image.
  - Main themes radiate from the central image as 'branches'.
  - Branches comprise a key image or word on its associated line.
  - Topics of lesser importance are shown as 'twigs' of branch.
  - The branches form a connected nodal structure.
- **Scrivener.com** is a great tool for outlining and writing for Mac users. For PC users, there's Page Four or Liquid Story Binder. Scrivener puts everything needed for structuring, writing and editing long documents at your fingertips. On the left of the window, the "binder" allows you to navigate between the different parts of your manuscript, your notes, and research materials. Break text into pieces as small or large without wrestling with one long document.

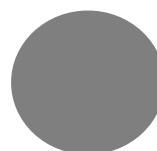
Restructuring a draft is as simple as drag and drop. Select a single document to edit a section of your manuscript in isolation, or use "Scrivenings" mode to work on multiple sections as though they were one: Scrivener makes it easy to switch between focusing on the details and stepping back to get a wider view of your composition.

- **The Snowflake Method** by Randy Ingermanson who said, “**Good fiction doesn’t just happen. It’s designed.**” Essentially, the process is to start small and then expand on each area. Begin with a 1-liner about the book, then a paragraph, then expand it out from there.

This method is quite scientific and gives you a very extensive plan. Definitely worth a look if you are struggling with where to start. The idea behind the name is that a snowflake doesn’t look like a snowflake at first, yet gradually becomes a complex, integrated fractal design.

### **Here are condensed rules of the Snowflake method:**

- Express the idea of the work in one sentence without names or details.
- Extend this sentence to the size of a paragraph and add the introduction, the conflict and the pay-off. Five or six sentences will be enough. That will take you about an hour, but this paragraph should be intriguing and give the impression of the future story. Now you may send it to the publishers.
- Describe the protagonists. Write their names, their brief life stories, their motivations, and don’t forget about the changing in their personalities.
- Now return to the first paragraph and extend these five sentences so that each of them will make the separate rubric. Mention the events happening with the main characters.
- Describe the actions of the characters making several separate stories. Then take a little rest and correct the mistakes and the clashes.
- Now make a list of the events that unite the characters. Use the scheme to ease that work.
- Then, simply extend these paragraphs and join all the parts together!



**As ideas form, eventually you have a one-of-a-kind snowflake!**

- **Or, you could just let your story flow, otherwise known as “Pantsing-it”**

And on the other side of the writing world, there are writers who start with an interesting problem, a few characters they can learn to care about, a setting, and a sense of what the stakes are. They let the story unfold as they write, listening to their characters and being open to new ideas.

Before some begin to write a book, they start by *writing about* the book. They just open the gates of creativity and let things flow -- no censorship, no self-criticism, no pressure. Write about the problem, the setting, the characters. Write out the biographies of the characters, letting *them* write about themselves, in the first person. What's at stake to figure it out -- what it is, why it matters, how each of the major characters stands on it?

You can even diagram the story flow. Ask questions... Who is involved? What's the worst thing that can happen? What's the best possible outcome? What's going to stop them from getting what they want? Where should they live and work? Who will help them? Who will hinder them?

Make notes for possible scenes and drop your major characters into those scenes; let them begin to talk to each other. Make mistakes on purpose, try out wildly improbable turns of events, and write scenes that have almost no chance of ever seeing the light of day. Why not? You may be the only person who will ever read them!

You may want to pants-it if...

- ¥ You want your writing process to be a journey of discovery.
- ¥ You want to ‘listen’ to your characters as they evolve and grow.
- ¥ You want to be open to new ideas and plot changes.
- ¥ You want to learn more about what you're writing as you go.

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## Quizzes, Writing Prompts and More

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Here is a fun **quiz** to help figure out what kind of writer YOU are!

What kind of writer are you? **8 Core Types**

Which **famous novelist** are you (most like)?

And, to get your creative juices flowing, here are some fun writing prompt resources to try out:

**Writers Digest.com**

**365 Creative Writing Prompts**

**Poets & Writers**

**Writing Forward**

Now, start writing here, the first thing that comes to mind... Go!

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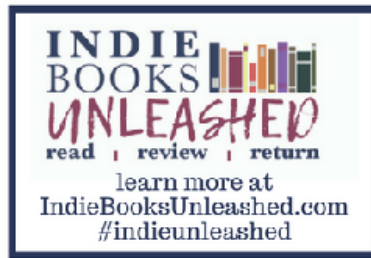
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**Indie Books Unleashed (IBU) is a community-driven program for self-published authors that helps them get printed books read and reviewed.** The goal is to provide forums for indie authors to distribute their books into markets that wouldn't otherwise be available to them.

**IBU circumvents the routes of traditional publishing *and* traditional book distribution. We do this by bringing authors' books to venues outside of normal paths...** to businesses such as salons, cafes, car dealerships, doctors offices, dentists offices, etc. They become participating members in IBU at no charge.

**Each author is required to bring three (3) new locations into the program.** However, if they choose not to contact locations directly, IBU will do so for them, and then we request that six business names be provided.

**Once an author joins IBU, they will receive the three posters to bring to their locations, as well as IBU and 'Buy Me' Stickers for the books that they will ship.** Authors can then go onto the IBU website and see what venues are available to ship their books, and away they go!

**IBU is a great opportunity for authors to make use of their initial free giveaways by sending them through IBU instead of to their aunt's bedside table.** It's also a great way to revive a book that's been out for a while for new publicity and awareness.

**WHY IBU? Simple. Because books are meant to read. Join us today!**