

How to Outline a Short Story

Turn your short story idea into a real work of fiction! Follow the guide below to plan your short story.

- Step 1.** Decide on a *protagonist*. The protagonist is your main character, and the person all the interesting stuff happens to.
- Step 2.** Decide on a *setting*. The setting is the place where your story happens.
- Step 3.** Decide on a *goal or problem*. This is what motivates your protagonist and creates the conflict that makes your story interesting.

You can think of a plot as an upside-down checkmark:

Climax. The protagonist either succeeds or fails to reach the goal.

Rising action. Challenges the protagonist experiences in trying to get what he or she wants.

Problem or goal. What your protagonist wishes to achieve or avoid.

Ending. All of the different parts of the plot are resolved, and the protagonist makes peace with the outcome, whether it's positive or negative.

Your protagonist's name and description: _____

What he or she wants to achieve/avoid: _____

What happens at the climax (the most interesting part of the story): _____

What happens at the end: _____
