

C.B. *Hoffmann* & Dan Hoffmann's

How to turn your dreams into *do-it-yourself* projects: **Writing Books**

1. **Devotional**—For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?—[Mark 8:36](#)
2. Have thick skin, and anytime someone tells you that you can't do something, use it as motivation to prove them wrong!
3. Set daily, yearly and long-term goals and stick to them! As long as you are trying to accomplish your goals on a daily basis, and keeping an account of all accomplishments and possible improvements, you can handle any discouragement.
4. Research is essential for fiction and non-fiction. Time, place, people, and events all matter. Credit your sources and include people in your "thank you" section.
5. Develop your plot: Create a timeline. Create start, middle and end points. Create conflict and a ticking clock, which creates tension. Add incidents that happen along the way, leading up to the mid-point, or rising action, or up to the resolution of the conflict at the end.
6. As a kickstart for fiction, draw a 3-column graph on paper or in Word to brainstorm the strengths and weaknesses of 3 main characters: hero, victim and villain. This will be a visual reference that guides characters' thoughts and actions throughout your story and determines their interactions.
7. Now choose the setting/locality, where your story would most likely occur, always letting the time period of your story drive the location. (Unless of course, you're writing SciFi).
8. Rough First Draft: Start writing. Fill in the gaps from your timeline. If you get stuck, move to the next incident. Don't worry about chapters at this point, just get the broad strokes down.
9. If you don't like where the story is going or how it sounds, start over again. Keep the parts that you like and discard the others.
10. Second Draft: start refining and continue filling in the gaps. Start adding dialogue and details. Brainstorming, editing & revising are your best assets!
11. Always read what you've written out-loud! This prevents the majority of errors that you don't even realize you've made! Your brain works faster than your hands, so you may think you got down all your thoughts but you'd better check.

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12. Two essentials are a great story idea and a great first sentence that will hook your readers, like:
“*She was accustomed to coming here; she was an assassin embroiled in a sultry web of blackmail and deceit.*”
13. Third Draft and each subsequent draft: continue refining, filling gaps, adding dialogue and details. Never stop editing & revising. Save multiple versions of your drafts as you go & be sure to back it up and email them to yourself for an extra level of security.
14. **Copyright it** and celebrate!
15. Get a legal document drafted stating that you retain sole copyright to the content as well as to any content created for you as “work for hire.” Ask everyone to sign it before work begins.
16. Show your final draft to trusted friends and family.
17. Consider hiring freelance editors and proofreaders. Check the web for comments or reviews on professionals you’re thinking of using before you hire them.
18. Cover design: Go to Amazon, iTunes, or BN and start researching Book covers in your genre and making notes on what you like and don’t like.
19. Subsequent draft: you’ve incorporated any feedback or notes from trusted sources, and you’re very happy with it. Get it proofread and checked/edited for spelling and grammar.
20. Final Draft: you’re completely happy with it and are ready to look for an agent, publisher or you want to self-publish.
21. **Copyright it** again—“with changes!”
22. **Buy ISBNs.** You need to buy an ISBN for each format of your book and a barcode for each printed book.
23. Celebrate your achievement!
24. Next Steps: Look for an agent, publisher or start the self-publishing process. Check out our guide! —*Coming soon!*

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