

How to Prepare to Write a Manuscript

Writing a manuscript can be a very fulfilling experience, however if you fail to prepare properly before embarking on your writing, then you may just find it a frustrating experience!

Whether you are writing an autobiography, fiction or non-fiction, you will always need to prepare before you commence the actual act of writing.

For fiction work, the first thing you will need to do is decide upon the subject matter and themes within your manuscript. This will then determine the genre of your manuscript e.g. romance, sci-fi, horror etc. You will then need to plan your storyline and the characters that will appear along the way. The easiest way to do this is to physically map out the story on paper through simple words and imagery. You could draw a timeline and plot events along the time line. For example, at what stage characters are introduced or at what stage key pieces of information will be revealed to the reader. A good way to ensure that you understand the relationships between characters is to compose family trees, and even if all the individuals you place within the family tree do not appear in your final manuscript, this information may be useful when it comes to you developing your characters and understanding their personalities and backgrounds. You also need to prepare a plan regarding the setting, time and place in which the story takes place. Once all these elements have been mapped together you will then be in a good position to start writing your manuscript.

For non-fiction work the first step is to decide on the subject matter of your manuscript and then the angle that you would like to take around this topic. Once this is decided the next step is to map out chapter headings so that you can see how your manuscript will develop in terms of the arguments you wish to make and the conclusions you wish to draw. From this manuscript outline you can then plan the areas you will need to research. In depth research is extremely important to ensure that your text is indeed fact and not fiction. This research should be focused around your manuscript plan, so that it is done in an organised manner. This will save you time and avoid you wandering down unnecessary avenues and confusing the structure of your manuscript.

If you have thoroughly prepared your manuscript, you will be armed with all the information you need for its completion, as such, the writing of it should become a much easier and more enjoyable task.

When you think your manuscript is ready for the publisher, send it to Words Worth Reading Ltd for appraisal and proofreading – make every word count!