

Your Guide to the Ultimate Novel Brainstorm

Created By Author Megan Riann

View the companion video at www.authormeganriann.com/forwriters

Maybe you have an idea and want to grow it into a novel. Maybe you're drafting and realize you have nowhere to go. Maybe you're in a rut without an original idea in sight. **Wherever you are, I've been there.** This guide is designed to **combat common issues that stop us from writing our stories**, including:

- Lack of personal inspiration
- Lack of story conflict or tension
- Lack of character motivation and direction
- Lack of high plot stakes
- Lack of originality or specificity

Read through the prompts below and **write down everything that sparks your interest, keeping a focus on your specific story.** Use this Guide as a jumping-off point. If one of these exercises sparks something bigger—pursue that! Every writer and every story is different. Adding another antagonist might work for one while digging deeper into a protagonist's motivations may work for another. There's no right way to brainstorm, but I hope this Guide helps lead you toward inspiration.

Don't forget to watch the [companion video](http://www.authormeganriann.com/forwriters) and check out other writing resources on my website: www.authormeganriann.com!

THINK BIG PICTURE

What is socially affecting my characters? _____

Mentally? _____

Physically? _____

Magically? _____

Economically? _____

Other: _____

PLOTTING BACKWARDS

What is the characters' end goal? Where do you picture them ending the story (physically, emotionally, relationally, etc.)?

What emotionally/physically drove your character to that place? What *motivation* could they have for going there/doing that thing?

If it's a physical location, how did they hear about it? Why do they believe they will be closer to their goal by being there?

GIVE YOUR CHARACTERS A PLAN

Given the information that they have, what do they believe will bring them closer to their goal?

What does each character bring to the plan? What skills would they offer or refuse to offer?

How can that plan go wrong? _____

TROPE WISHLIST:

Things you enjoy reading in books such as tropes, character archetypes, arcs and storylines, plot twists, settings, etc.:

How could you bring aspects of the above into your story?

WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTERS' FEARS?

My character's worst fear: _____

What could make their fear a reality? _____

How would they emotionally/physically react to their fear? _____

What would be the fallout from their reaction? _____

WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTERS' MOTIVATIONS AND GOALS?

Their Goal: _____

Their Motivation: _____

What logical steps would they take to reach that goal? _____

Why have they failed to achieve that goal up to this point? _____

Whose goals conflict with their goals? _____

*[Check out this blog post](#) for more on character goals, motivations, and fears.

WHY IS YOUR CHARACTER TAKING THIS PATH SPECIFICALLY? HOW DO THEY SEE IT AS THE BEST PATH?

Other options are not possible for my main character because: _____

What other options appeal to other characters? Do they take those options into account?

CONSIDER CHARACTERS' PASTS

Are they holding onto any grudges or prejudices? _____

What would make them let go of or reaffirm those grudges or prejudices? _____

Are there any characters from their past they might encounter? _____

What past decisions/experiences affect them now? _____

TAKE THE VILLIAN'S SIDE

Who is the villain/antagonist? How are they stopping the main character from reaching their goal? How can they become a bigger threat?

Can you add another antagonist? Who else might be against the protagonist?

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