

THE STORY PLAN CHECKLISTCourtesy of Karen Weisner, *Writer's Digest*

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The Story Plan Checklist can ensure cohesion between characters, setting and plot. This checklist connects all the dots between internal and external conflicts, and goals and motivations, thereby guaranteeing the cohesion all stories require. In its most simplified form, a Story Plan Checklist-which you can find an example of at writersdigest.com/article/first-draft-finish-novel- includes free-form summaries (or monologues) covering each of the following:

PART I: THE BASICS

- Working Title
- Working Genre(s)
- Working Point-of-View Specification
- High-Concept Blurb
- Story Sparks
- Estimated Length of Book/Number of Sparks

PART II: EXTERNAL MONOLOGUES

- Identifying the Main Character(s)
- Character Introductions
- Description (outside POV)
- Description (self POV)
- Occupational Skills
- Enhancement/Contrast
- Symbolic Element (character and/or plot-defining)
- Setting Descriptions

PART III: INTERNAL MONOLOGUES

- Character Conflicts (internal)
- Evolving Goals and Motivations
- Plot Conflicts (external)

I call this list a Story Plan Checklist not only because of its correlation with a home plan checklist, but because if you haven't consider each of these areas, written something solid about them and checked them off, your story may not be fully fleshed out and cohesive enough. Soon or later, the basic structure will begin to fall apart.

While you're in the beginning stages of forming a story plan, sit down and figure out some of the working details (which may change throughout the process).