



Middle Grade Outline Starter

An Author Brain Dump

THE STORYTELLER'S SHELF PODCAST



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Contact us at:
TheStorytellersShelfPodcast@gmail.com



Introduction



How Theresa planned writing her book - or how she didn't and what she wishes she knew on how to outline now.

How to use this brainstorm sheet. This is the sheet you carry around and brain dump everything when you first get an idea so you can write it down and not forget. This is the first step to world building.

How to use this sheet while considering MG readers.



Idea & Concept

Working Title

Genre & Audience

Core Premise or Spark

What's the central idea, conflict, or problem that kicks off your story?



Characters



Main Character (Protagonist)

Name & Age

Key Personality Traits

Who are they? What are their strengths, quirks, weaknesses?

Desires & Fears

What motivates them?



Tone & Mood

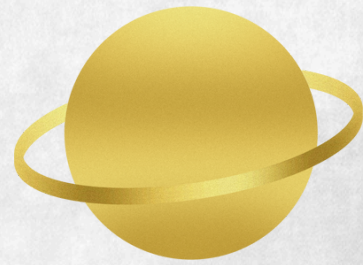
Core Themes of the Book

Mood of the Story

Takeway Lessons

Notes





Setting Your World

Location/World Name:

When in Time?

What timeline is your world in? Is it historical, in a parallel universe, or entirely unique?

World Landmarks, cities, places, and things?

Write out whatever a map would contain.



Setting Your World



A Note About the Culture

Local Lore & Legends

Fine Details (weather, politics, currency, overall spirit of the people, holidays, traditions, etc.)

Pick one of the settings (or create your own). Imagine stepping into that world for the very first time. Describe what you experience through all five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. How do these sensory details shape your character's feelings and actions in this new environment?



Sketch a Map



Plot & Structure



Act 1: The Beginning

Hook:

Inciting Incident:

What sparks the journey?

Act 2: The Middle

Rising Action:

What challenges does the protagonist encounter?



Plot & Structure



Intermediary: Subplots & Twists

Elements of Surprise:

Act 3: The End

Climax & Resolution:

How is the main conflict resolved?

Hints for the Future

What open plotlines will you leave for sequels to address?





Writing Goals

Overall Word Count

Milestones

Per week:

Per Month:

Research To Do List

To support themes, characters, and the plot, what do you need to learn more about?

Expert Support Needed

Write down your needs so you don't forget them. Do you need a sensitivity or beta reader? Do you need a developmental editor?

