

THE BOOK ON

Expanded Outline Template for Fiction and Nonfiction Authors

Whether you're telling a true story or crafting one from imagination, a thoughtful outline is your most powerful tool. It provides structure without stifling creativity, allowing your ideas to flow with intention. This guide blends structure and inspiration to help both nonfiction and fiction authors turn a blank page into a powerful manuscript. Each section below is designed to clarify your message, engage your audience, and guide your writing with confidence.

Introduction / Prologue

Begin by setting the stage. For nonfiction, explain who you are, who the book is for, and what the reader will gain. This is your opportunity to establish credibility, empathy, and purpose. For fiction, the prologue may introduce a mysterious event, a crucial backstory, or a compelling scene that draws the reader into the world you're about to unfold.

Chapter 1: The Premise or Problem

In nonfiction, this is where you clearly define the central problem or theme your book addresses. For fiction, this is often the inciting incident—the moment that sets the story in motion or disrupts the normal world of your character. Both require clarity and urgency to keep the reader turning pages.

Chapter 2: Context or World-Building

This chapter provides the necessary background. Nonfiction authors may offer historical context, definitions, or industry insights. Fiction writers focus on world-building—introducing the setting, rules of the universe, or the social and emotional landscape that informs the characters' actions.

Chapter 3: The Core Idea or Central Conflict

Nonfiction authors introduce their unique framework, insight, or argument. What's your main message, and how will you support it? Fiction authors should now deepen the central conflict, revealing what the protagonist wants and what stands in their way. This chapter sets the tone for what's at stake.

Chapters 4–6: Development and Turning Points

Here, nonfiction authors expand their core idea into actionable strategies or layered perspectives, supported by examples or case studies. Fiction authors move through rising

action—encounters, setbacks, and decisions that escalate tension. These chapters should reveal growth, complexity, and unexpected developments.

Chapter 7: Challenges and Resistance

Nonfiction writers use this section to address objections, common mistakes, or psychological barriers to change. Fiction authors often use this chapter as a moment of crisis, where everything the protagonist believes is tested. Whether you're informing or entertaining, the story must now dig deep.

Chapter 8: Resolution and Results

Bring it home. For nonfiction, share the practical results of applying your ideas: transformation, clarity, or competence. For fiction, this is the climax and resolution—where the conflict reaches its peak and the story's questions are answered. Tie up key threads while leaving the reader satisfied.

Conclusion / Epilogue

Nonfiction conclusions should recap key takeaways, encourage continued growth, and invite the reader to act. Fiction epilogues can show the lasting impact of events on characters or offer a glimpse into the world after the story ends. A strong ending resonates and leaves the reader reflecting.

Optional Additions

Depending on your genre and goals, you may also consider including appendices, author's notes, additional resources, or sneak peeks of future books. These additions can deepen engagement and build momentum for your next work.

You've just finished another step on your path to authorship—but the real magic begins when you put these insights into action. Whether you're outlining your first chapter, polishing a manuscript, or preparing to launch your book into the world, remember this: every successful author once stood exactly where you are—uncertain, hopeful, and full of questions. The difference? They kept going. At The Book On Publishing, we're not just here to publish books—we're here to empower voices like yours.

So keep writing, keep learning, and above all, keep believing that what you have to say matters. Because it does. And we can't wait to help you share it.

If you need support at any stage of your journey, don't hesitate to reach out.

 Email: info@thebookon.ca

 Phone: +1 (647) 612-7729

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– The Book On Publishing Team