

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Charting Major Characters As you develop your characters you might consider creating a chart that records their growth as it happens within the story. Suggested elements would be: Initial characteristic, the event or Person who caused a change, and the new characteristic. You might also include the chapter that it occurred within.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Character's Motivation When writing it is wise to remember that motivation and action are related to one another. This is another element you might want to chart. What motivation resulted in what action? How did this motivation come about? Was the action brief or long going?</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Interviews Some authors interview their characters. It reminds me of when I interviewed a character after the book was published. The interview took place in my blog. However, here I am talking about interviewing the character as you are writing! This can help shed light on the character's development.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Out of Character You never want your character accused of acting out of character. But it does happen. Review your character's actions, making sure that character is acting within his/her traits and experience. Characters grow, and their personality or abilities change. Make sure that these changes can be seen by the reader. At the book's end, the character may act in a way inconsistent with his/her original situation, but now it's understandable.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Contrasting Characters This is a recommendation from most authors that have commented on the subject, and I have read. Never pair characters of like personalities In other words, don't pair two type-A men, but you might pair a type-A man with a type-A woman. This might work because there are still major differences. But as a general rule it is best to have characters with contrasting personalities.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Complications It is good to include complications in your story. Something goes wrong, a character makes a mistake, a machine or car breaks down, and obstacles arise. A bodybuilder needs resistance to sculpture the body, and a character needs complications to grow by. Growth, toughness, and determination come from overcoming obstacles in real life and in literary life. Make sure your characters have the opportunity to grow. But don't just have complications to have complications. They work best when they teach the character or hone the character into a better, stronger person.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Choices <p>The complications mentioned above force characters into making choices. There are three kinds of choices, Good, Bad, and No Decision. It could be argued that a No Decision is a bad decision, but that's not necessarily true. If the No Decision results in a good end, then it could be a good choice.</p> <p>However, from a literary viewpoint and a real-life viewpoint it is the character letting circumstances decide his/her future. Indecisiveness is not a good characteristic. You want your character to make choices. If the character is your protagonist, then you want good choices. Others can make bad or weak decisions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tension <p>Complications have the responsibility of creating tension in the story. You want that tension to last and, essentially, carry the story to its end.</p> <p>An example of this was Joseph in the Book of Genesis. He was thrown in a pit and later sold into slavery. The complication was the unjust selling into slavery. He spent a good number of years struggling with that injustice.</p> <p>But then he was elevated to the second most powerful man in Egypt, and he comes face to face with his brothers who had sold him. This renews the tension with a different view. Instead of being the victim, he now can exact revenge or forgive. It is classic!</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle <p>When I was a teenager, I loved playing chess. Not that I was very good at it, but I enjoyed it. My problem was that I had a good opening and a strong ending, but the middle was weak.</p> <p>The reason my closing game was somewhat good is because I was forced to play aggressively. But I was always playing from behind.</p> <p>If you use the tools mentioned above, you should have a strong middle. Then comes the most important part: a strong ending.</p> <p>But if you don't have a strong middle then you will be playing from behind and may lose whatever you might have gotten from a strong finish.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ending <p>An ending should be satisfying on several levels. And there are different types of endings that strive to achieve a proper closure.</p> <p>Although fiction imitates life, having your characters simply die off, or live happily ever after are not really satisfying.</p> <p>Your ending needs to bring all the loose threads of the story into a conclusion, and each subplot will thereby need to be concluded. What follows are some types of endings. I have no preference, so these are listed alphabetically.</p>

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Type of Ending: Death</p> <p>Having your protagonist die is a risky venture. Your reader has identified with him or her and wants a good ending. But I have seen it done where the character died, or the situation was never resolved (just as bad as death).</p> <p>I read a story about a man murdered someone because he had wrongly felt the guy slept with his wife. The murderer was executed, and the remainder of the story was about the survivors. And it ended with the wife losing her sanity and dying, and the children losing their heritage. But I had gotten engaged in their struggles and the end left me unsatisfied.</p> <p>Some writers can do this and win, but I don't recommend it.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Type of Ending: Framing</p> <p>This is called Framing the Narrative. One author emphasized repetition. This can be repeating a phrase such as at the beginning and ending, or it can be repeating imagery used previously.</p> <p>The truth is that any writing element can be used. This can be the dialogue, the setting, the characterization, a phrase, or a single word. It depends on the theme and the aesthetic appeal you want to leave with your reader.</p> <p>It may take several writings to get it right, thus the need for beta readers. But the more you write the wiser and more experienced you will become. Eventually, you will master this.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Type of Ending: The Journey</p> <p>This is a traditional way of concluding a story and it is effective. Here you have the element of emotion which can lend itself to a satisfactory conclusion. Earlier I spoke of Joseph and his brothers. At the end of his life he said his goodbyes and charged them to carry his body to the Promised Land when God leads them out of Egypt. It signaled his forgiveness, confidence in them, and his trust in God.</p> <p>Another example would be friends parting and going their separate ways after facing a dangerous situation together. It's emotionally charged, yet satisfying.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Type of Ending: Recognition</p> <p>This term refers to <i>being told</i> what the ending is versus <i>experiencing</i> the ending. When I first started out writing I tended to tell rather than show. I mentioned that when talking about the beginning of a story. It is just as true in the ending.</p> <p>You want the reader to stay involved right up to the last word of the story. Then the reader puts down the book and, perhaps, imagines the future of the character(s).</p> <p>I don't mean they are left hanging in the wind with no idea how it really ends. That would be disastrous.</p> <p>Rather, I am talking about the reader naturally carrying on the story in the mind, or perhaps anticipating a future novel involving the same characters.</p> <p>If you ever watched Star Wars, the very first one where Han Solo and Leia met, the story concludes with her rewarding Hans and his friends for their heroism. But it also leaves you looking forward to their future. It really worked!</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Type of Ending: Response In modern fiction either the writer (author) draws it to a close, or the character. I have used both methods. It depends on the story, what has happened previously in the story, and what is happening now. If unsure, you could write two endings and see which works best.	<input type="checkbox"/> Type of Ending: Surprise This has also been called <i>revelation</i> . This is ending the story with an unexpected twist. When I was growing up, I used to watch Alfred Hitchcock on Television. He had the ability to grab the viewers attention, get them to expect a certain ending, and then insert that unexpected twist. It made him famous. But that takes a lot of talent. If you can do so, then go for it. But these days you are dealing with readers who are rarely surprised what with all that takes place in our world. One last word on this idea. Surprise endings work best when you involve the reader's emotion whether it be pity, irony, anguish, or simple wonder.
<input type="checkbox"/> Review Discuss the relationship between characters and the plot. What do you think is important? What are the different types of Endings? What do you think is the best ending?	