

Typing “The End” on Your Manuscript Doesn’t Mean You’re Done Writing

Penny Thomas
Writers League of The Villages
April 13, 2022

Three Narratives To Promote Your Book

- Tag line – a one-liner hook that encapsulates your entire plot or theme in one sentence: 10 words, 2 – 4 seconds
- Log line, also called an Elevator pitch: (2 or 3 sentences), 25 – 50 words, 20 to 30 seconds
- Back cover blurb: 100-250 words

Know Your Genre:

- Fiction
- Non-Fiction

Three More Narratives You'll Need

- Short synopsis
- Long synopsis
- Author's Bio

Some of the main Fiction Genres

- Romance
- Action Adventure
- Science Fiction
- Fantasy
- Speculative Fiction
- Suspense/Thriller
- Horror/Paranormal/Ghost
- Mystery/Crime
- Historical
- Family Saga
- Western
- Women's Fiction
- Magic Realism
- Literary Fiction
- New Adult
- Young Adult
- Children

Some Non-Fiction Genres

- Biography/Autobiography
- Memoir
- History
- How To
- Cooking
- Arts and Crafts
- Sports
- Business
- Religion
- Spirituality
- Self-Help

Figuring out Your Genre

- Check the book cover of your favorite authors
- Amazon key words of books you wished you'd written
- Visit a book store. What shelf would your book go on?

The Four Narratives You Need

- Tag line – a one-liner hook that encapsulates your entire plot or theme in one sentence: 10 words, 2 – 4 seconds
- Log line, also called an Elevator pitch: (2 or 3 sentences), 25 – 50 words, 20 to 30 seconds
- Back cover blurb: 100-250 words
- Author's bio: 20 – 50 words

Tag Lines That Stay With You

- In space, no one can hear you scream. (Alien)
- An epic of miniature proportions. (A Bug's Life)
- Don't go in the water. (Jaws)
- The Toys are Back in Town. (Toy Story 2)
- EARTH—take a good look. Today could be your last. (Independence Day)

Log Line (a.k.a. Elevator Pitch) 25 – 50 Words

- Who is your main character?
- What does she want? What is her goal?
- Why does she want this (motivation)?
- What are the obstacles in her way?
- What makes the story unique?

Rules of Thumb for Log Lines

- Be succinct
- Don't use protagonist's name
- Use a descriptive adjective for main character
- Make the genre clear
- Make your protagonist pro-active
- Mention protagonist's main goal
- Include the stakes or ticking time bomb
- Do NOT reveal any twists or surprises.
- Do NOT reveal the ending
- Make every word count
- Sell it, don't tell it

Structures to help with your log line and your blurb:

The **Reds** are the elements of your plot. (Page 1)

The subject of the sentence will describe an imperfect but passionate and active **PROTAGONIST**. The verb will depict the **BATTLE**. And the direct object will describe an insurmountable **ANTAGONIST** who tries to stop the protagonist from reaching a physical **GOAL** on account of the **STAKES**, if the goal is not reached.

- To stop **A**, character **B** must do **C**, but **D** happens.
- When **A** happens, character **B** must take some action **C** but **D** happens.
- Character **B** does something, then when **A** happens they must do **C**, but **D** happens.
- **TITLE** is a **GENRE** about **ADJECTIVE/DESCRIPTION OF MAIN CHARACTER**, who wants to **DEFAULT ACTION**. But when **CALL TO ACTION**, he must **STORY GOAL**, which seems impossible because **CENTRAL CONFLICT**.

What's the Difference Between a Tag line and a Log line?

- A tag line, is a witty slogan or dramatic statement.
- A log line is a short description of a story's premise

- Tag lines are provocative.
- Log lines are descriptive

- A tag line is like a tap on the shoulder to get someone's attention.
- A log line is like a ship's captain's log recording the day's events.

Back to the Future:

Tag line:

17-year-old Marty McFly got home early last night—30 years early.

Log line

A young man is transported to the past, where he must reunite his parents before he and his future cease to exist.

Jaws

Tag line

Don't go in the water.

●Log line

A sheriff struggles to protect his beach community after a grisly shark attack, but greed rules the Chamber of Commerce. (21 words)

Aliens

Tag line

In space, no one can hear you scream.

●Log line

After responding to a distress signal, a space crew is forced to confront a deadly alien who stows aboard their ship, leaving one member to fend for herself. (28 words)

Yes – Do this for Back Cover Blurb

- Reference the genre and central theme
- Create intrigue around the main conflict
- Introduce the protagonist (you can name him/her)
- Keep it short (200 -250 words)
- Use key words
- Reference your credentials, if it relates to your book

No – Do NOT Do This for Back Cover Blurb

- Give away any spoilers.
- Give a summary of the first chapter.
- Say how amazing your book is.
- Compare yourself or your book to other books or writers.

Formula for writing a Fiction Back Cover Blurb

by Beth Bacon

- **Situation.** Briefly, describe the circumstances of the story.
- **Problem.** Next write about the situation or hitch that makes change inevitable.
- **Hopeful Possibility.** Here you provide the hope of overcoming the crisis. This is the cool character or long shot possibility that gives hope that the difficult problem can be overcome.
- **Mood.** This part describes the emotional state that readers will have from reading your story. Example phrases include: “dark, dystopian tragedy”, “humorous chick lit cotton candy”, or “suspenseful, romantic and awash in...magic”.

Here's a back book blurb example for [*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*](#) by J.K. Rowling.

“Till now there's been no magic for Harry Potter. He lives with the miserable Dursleys and their abominable son, Dudley. Harry's room is a tiny closet beneath the stairs, and he hasn't had a birthday party in eleven years.

But then a mysterious letter arrives by owl messenger: a letter with an invitation to an incredible place called Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. And there he finds not only friends, flying sports on broomsticks, and magic in everything from classes to meals, but a great destiny that's been waiting for him ... if Harry can survive the encounter.” 99 words.

A Template For Writing A Non-Fiction Book Blurb

Courtesy of Kelly Exeter

- Introduce the problem
- Outline how you propose to solve it (bullet points are good)
- Tell the reader how their lives will be better after reading your book

Back book cover example of Jen Sincero's Non Fiction, *You Are a Badass*

"You Are a Badass is the self-help book for people who desperately want to improve their lives but don't want to get busted doing it.

In a refreshingly entertaining how-to guide ... Jen Sincero serves up 27 bite-sized chapters ... helping you to:

- Identify and change the self-sabotaging beliefs and behaviors that stop you from getting what you want.
- Create a life you totally love. And create it NOW.
- Make some damn money already. The kind you've never made before.

By the end of *You Are a Badass*, you'll understand why you are how you are, how to love what you can't change, how to change what you don't love, and how to use The Force to kick some serious ass." 121 words

Author's Bio for Back-Cover Copy

- Keep it short. 20 – 50 words
- Only include pertinent details that relate to your book
- Write in third person

Short example of first-time authors

- Paul Mendez was born in Dudley. He began writing in 2002, and has contributed to the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Brixton Review Of Books*. He lives in London, and *Rainbow Milk* is his first novel. [36 words]
-
- Kevin Kwan was born and raised in Singapore. He currently lives in Manhattan. *Crazy Rich Asians* is his first novel. [20 words]

Example of a seasoned author bio:

Author of eagerly awaited and sparkingly readable novels often centered around the domestic nuances and dilemmas of life in contemporary England, Joanna Trollope is also the author of a number of historical novels and of Britannia's Daughters, a study of women in the British Empire.

[45 words]

Basic Elements of a Synopsis

- A good place to start is with the tag line you created
- Open with a hook
- Use present tense
- Use action verbs
- Make sure the story flows in a logical manner from scene to scene
- Avoid backstory
- Leave out minor characters
- Stay in the protagonist's viewpoint
- Tell us what's at stake for the heroine
- Reveal the ending – very important

In Conclusion

You need to know your genre so you can pigeonhole your book for:

- Prospective readers
- Amazon
- Competitions

You need the following narratives to sell your book.

- Tag line – a one-liner hook
- Log line (2 or 3 sentences. 25–50 words) a.k.a. Elevator Pitch
- Back cover blurb – 200 - 250 words
- Author's Bio 20-50 words

And you need these if you're entering competitions, querying editors and/or publishers.

- Short synopsis
- Long synopsis

The Finalist

By Joan Long

Tag Line [10 words]

Strangers trapped on a remote tropical island...what could go wrong?

[This is on her bookmarks and business card]

Log Line [46 words]

Five authors, each with their own secrets, are chosen to complete a deceased novelist's unfinished manuscript. For single mom Risa Marr, the competition is the opportunity of a lifetime. At stake is a million dollars and a contract to continue the famous novelist's bestselling thriller series.

[This is her elevator speech]

Back Cover Copy [107 words]

Five authors, each with their own secrets, are chosen to complete a deceased novelist's unfinished manuscript. For single mom Risa Marr, the competition is the opportunity of a lifetime. At stake is a million dollars and a contract to continue the famous novelist's bestselling thriller series.

Transported to the tropical paradise of Key Island, the finalists are cut off from the world and given seven days to draft their best ending for the book. But when one of them turns up dead, theories and accusations abound. Accident? Suicide? Or Murder? To what lengths will competitors go to win? And who, if anyone, will leave the island alive?

[Note the first paragraph is the Log Line and elevator speech]

The Deepest Grave (Fiona Griffiths Crime Thriller Series) by [Harry Bingham](#)

An ancient battle. A dead researcher. And a very modern crime. (Tag line)

It's been more than a year since Detective Sergeant Fiona Griffiths had any sort of murder case . . . when all of a sudden, she gets the call. A local archaeologist has been found bloodily murdered. Her head severed from her body. Her eyes apparently fixed on a fragment of Latin text. The crime seems to summon the ghosts of Dark Age Britain - and the shade of King Arthur. But why are those ancient enmities alive once again? Why are armed burglars raiding remote country churches? And how many more people will die before these clues are unraveled? Fiona thinks she knows the answers to these questions . . . but the crime that underlies them all is so utterly unexpected, so breathtakingly audacious in its execution, that it hasn't yet been committed. (Back copy blurb)

How To Win Friends and Influence People

by [Dale Carnegie](#)

You can go after the job you want—and get it!
You can take the job you have—and improve it!
You can take any situation—and make it work for you! } **Tag line**

Dale Carnegie's rock-solid, time-tested advice has carried countless people up the ladder of success in their business and personal lives. One of the most groundbreaking and timeless bestsellers of all time, *How to Win Friends & Influence People* will teach you:

- Six ways to make people like you
- Twelve ways to win people to your way of thinking
- Nine ways to change people without arousing resentment

And much more! Achieve your maximum potential—a must-read for the twenty-first century with more than 15 million copies sold! **(Back copy blurb)**