

SKELTON DRAFT IN 5 EASY STEPS

Skeleton drafting is the technique you can use to plot intricate, action-packed, emotionally-charged books quickly – while enjoying every word you write.

Step 1: Get psyched

You're creating a draft of 10-20,000 words for a standard-length novel (70-90,000 words when finished). You're going to do it fast, and you're going to do it messy. Let's do this!

Step 2: Lay the bones

You only need three things to begin:

1. A character. You need a sense of your protagonist. You'll learn more about them as you write.
2. A hook. This is the spark that interested you in the story idea in the first place. A great hook has: a character, a conflict, and a genre.
3. An ending. You need to know how the book will resolve. Your genre will give you a clue.

Step 3: Let your character roam

Plots come from characters. Start your skeleton draft by writing your beginning, which comes from your hook. Move to the next scene by asking, "what will my character do next?"

Step 4: Use set-pieces to build your plot

Set-pieces are the scenes readers expect in your story. Some set-pieces are based on your book's genre and tropes. Other set pieces are based on the Chekhov's Gun principle, or because of your character and their emotional wound. Use your protagonist to stitch together these set-pieces into a cohesive story.

Step 5: Revise your skeleton draft into something workable

By the time you write THE END on your skeleton draft, you'll have a messy stream of half-finished dialogue and random notes to yourself. It's time to start from the beginning of the book and revise. As you edit, keep a second file open on your computer. Use this document to make notes on plot points to wrap up, character traits you need to refer back to (like eye color), and deleted text.