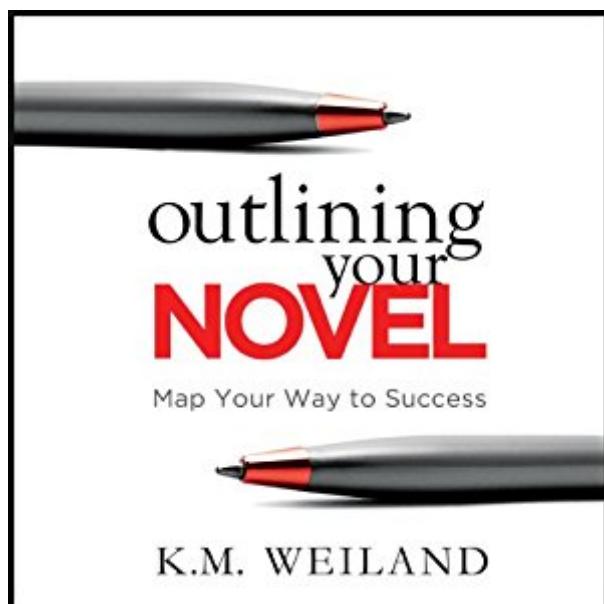


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# Outlining Your Novel: Map Your Way To Success



## **Synopsis**

Let outlines help you write a better book! Writers often look upon outlines with fear and trembling. But when properly understood and correctly wielded, the outline is one of the most powerful weapons in a writer's arsenal. *Outlining Your Novel: Map Your Way to Success* will help you choose the right type of outline for you. It guides you in brainstorming plot ideas, aids you in discovering your characters, shows you how to structure your scenes, explains how to format your finished outline, instructs you in how to use your outline, reveals the benefits, ensures cohesion and balance, prevents dead-end ideas, provides foreshadowing, offers assurance and motivation, dispels misconceptions, requires formal formatting, limits creativity, robs the joy of discovery, and takes too much time.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

As a writer who has attempted a handful of novels in the past without an outline, I knew it was something I would need going forward with my newest work-in-progress. I wasn't sold on the idea of an outline at first, though. They seemed restrictive, boring, and frankly too much work BEFORE starting the real work of writing a book. But after reading "Outlining Your Novel" my mind is completely changed. In fact, I doubt that I'll ever go back to "pantsing" it with novels. Weiland's guide not only walks you through the steps necessary to set up a functional, useful outline, but it also explains WHY having a road map will make your story better. She's absolutely right-- when I try to write without a guide, I only get so far before I panic and stop working altogether. I would never

head to a new city without directions, so it makes no sense to write a new story without a guide either. Both are new, unfamiliar territory. Both can be conquered with some planning. I read this book in less than 24 hours, highlighting points that resonated with me so I can revisit them again and again. I read it a second time to begin working on my outline. However you read it-- at the speed of light or slow and steady-- you will come away with practical tools to get your outline started. If you're a writer, you can't afford to NOT read this!

Look, I graduated with a degree in English way, way back in the late 90s, so I know all about outlining, which is exactly why as a writer I used to want to skip over that part and dive right into the fleshing-out-the-story part. As it turns out, though, I've already been doing some of what Weiland suggests in her book without really thinking of it as "outlining," albeit in a much less consistent and organized way. *Outlining Your Novel* has given me lots of new ideas to take my story plotting and note-taking to a whole new level. It's a relief to know that there is no need to confine "outlining" to the box that my fifth grade teacher put it in. Instead, what Weiland describes as outlined means "at least to me" is mapping out the story in a systematic way, gradually delving deeper into the various characters, plot points, scenes, etc., until there is a fully fleshed out story that can then be written out into a first draft. She uses college-ruled composition books. LOTS of them, and not only writes about her characters, her premise, and her plot points, but also asks lots of "What if?" questions to get the creative juices flowing. She uses highlighters to create "links" in her written notes that will point to pages to be further developed in subsequent pages. I am kind of visualizing this kind of outlining as the offspring that would result if the old-school method (Roman numerals, letters, numbers, sequentially laid out according to a very strict form) married Wikipedia and had a baby. You know how Wikipedia has pages about different people, events in history, places, concepts, etc., but within those pages has countless links to related items mentioned within the article? That's how I see Weiland's method of outlining. If you've ever worked with a wiki, you know that when you create an article, you can go ahead and insert links for related articles that should be made that upon clicking on them lead to the page that will house the future article. (It's sort of like how visionaries laid thousands of miles of railroad track before the first trains were even built.) If I had done things this way when I started working on my first attempt at a novel years ago, maybe I

wouldn't have either realized it wasn't going to work before I wasted time writing 70,000 words that went nowhere, or I'd have already finished the thing and moved on. Not only does this book give me a whole new perspective on what it means to outline my novel, I also found some other surprisingly good tips inside, like creating a calendar for the events in my novel, something that definitely comes in handy if you're writing historical fiction, like me. Disclaimer: This write-up first appeared at my blog, but I'm trying to provide my fellow readers and writers with reviews for books I've found especially helpful while planning, writing, and editing my first novel, *The Smuggler's Gambit*.

Everyone's writing style is different. There is no correct way to write, much less plan a novel. For anyone who prefers to plan their story, I highly recommend 'Outlining Your Novel'. I've tried pantsing (which was disastrously unproductive) and outlining. My problem with outlining was I didn't know which questions to ask in order to elicit the forward motion on a novel. *Outlining Your Novel* solved that problem for me. K. M. Weiland knows the right questions to ask in order to tease out richer characters, broader scope to plots, and figure out the large conflicts for an entire story, as well as the small conflicts needed for scenes and chapters. She recommends ways to keep track of these answers and how to synthesize them into an outline you can use for writing as well as for a synopsis for agent and publisher queries. I've bought a lot of books on writing and paid for writing courses. Weiland's book helps tie together a lot of what I've learned into one neat, easy-to-follow package for outlining. I'd recommend this for new writers looking for information on how to put the ideas in their heads on paper and, eventually, into a coherent story outline that makes writing the first draft more productive and enjoyable. I also recommend this book to pantsers willing to try a little planning. The methods discussed in this book allow the pantser the freedom to explore tangents and ideas in a free-from way before sitting down to write the first draft. Weiland actually encourages chasing down whatever flights of fancy capture your imagination in the moment in service to creating the story you love the best. Because, when you love the story it's so much easier to write and edit.

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