

After reading "[Outline your Novel in Thirty Minutes](#)" by Alicia Rasley in the *Article of the Month*blog, I realized I had several gaps in my story. My writing had come to a standstill. There are nine important questions that cover key points that most writers know are essential to story building, Alicia Rasley puts these points in an order that helps form an working outline. When you do this exercise, she suggests you set a timer for thirty minutes. Spend three minutes on each question. Write freely, turn off critical editor self. If you don't know an answer, just go on to the next question. Be creative.

## The questions:

- 1. What makes your protagonist unique? What are his/her strengths? How do they backfire?**
- 2. In start of the novel, what is she on the brink of doing? Why? What does this represent?**
- 3. What external situation must the protagonist participate in throughout the story? Does this connect or interfere with #2?**
- 4. What is her goal in this story, and how does it connect with situation she's in- or does it interfere? Is there a deeper, yet unknown, motivation?**
- 5. What external conflict or problem does the situation present? How can it be resolved?**
- 6. List *at least* 3 obstacles in the way of resolving this conflict.**
- 7. How will she grow as she confronts these obstacles?**
- 8. What do you want to happen by the novel's end?**
- 9. What can happen to the protagonist *against her will* to make your ending happen?**

Using this method, you'll find your plot and fill in the missing scenes. You will come to know your character, goal and conflicts.

If you have a work-in-progress you're struggling with or you are just starting a project. Give [Outline your Novel in Thirty Minutes](#) by Alicia Rasley a try. The original post goes far beyond the steps I've listed in helping you flesh out the story, so it's worth visiting the blog. It's also helpful to read the examples she offers after each of the nine steps. There

thousands of blogs on the internet concerning Alicia Rasley's method. All of them give excellent examples and samples of answers to help you in your writing journey.

Just remember your ending is going to determine the message your reader will take from your book. The ending must be satisfying and make the reader want to read your next book.

And keep in mind, this is only an exercise, not a set of rules. Use what works for you and discard everything else.

"Your novel should find its own path. But knowing where you're going and some of the landmarks you'll pass on the way can make the journey a little less daunting."-Alicia Rasley.

What are you waiting for?!