

# The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

## Checklist 22 – Writing a Synopsis

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing a Synopsis</b></p> <p><i>You may not need to worry about writing a synopsis if you are publishing your own book. However, most authors use various forms of a synopsis to help promote or sell their books. Some authors use a 'working synopsis' as an aid to plotting: this kind of synopsis changes as the story develops. Basically, a synopsis is a summary of your book, in the TONE of your book.</i></p> | <b>Your Assessment</b> |                   |             |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
|  | <i>Works Well</i>      | <i>Needs Work</i> | <i>Poor</i> |
| Do you tell the whole story in an entertaining way? (A synopsis is a sales tool as well as a story summary.)   |                        |                   |             |
| Does the opening paragraph hook the reader and immediately interest him/her in the story?  |                        |                   |             |
| Have you included the ending? (A synopsis is not the same as a book blurb, which 'hooks' the reader without giving away the main plot points or the ending.)   |                        |                   |             |
| Do you clearly identify the lead character(s) and what their goals/problems are?   |                        |                   |             |
| Will the reader relate to your characters and want to read their story?  |                        |                   |             |
| Does one paragraph flow logically and entertainingly to the next?  |                        |                   |             |
| Have you hit the high points of the story, showing the main scenes and major conflicts, without getting lost in the minor plot points?   |                        |                   |             |
| Does the reader have an overall sense of how everything unfolds and how everything is resolved - or has something vital been left out?   |                        |                   |             |
| Have you written your entire synopsis in the present tense?  |                        |                   |             |
| Have you checked your synopsis to ensure there are not mistakes with spelling, grammar and punctuation?  |                        |                   |             |
| Have you used paragraphs effectively? (No long, dense chunks of text!)   |                        |                   |             |
| Have you avoided all grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes?  |                        |                   |             |
| Have you written your synopsis in different lengths, ready for different purposes? (You may be sending your synopsis to different people for different reasons - when you want them to read a review copy, arrange a radio interview, etc. Practice writing a synopsis in these lengths: half a page, one page, two pages.)  |                        |                   |             |
| <p><b>Other Aspects of Writing a Synopsis:</b></p>   |                        |                   |             |