

The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

Checklist 9 – Sub-Plots

Aspect of Subplot	Your Assessment		
	<i>Works Well</i>	<i>Needs Work</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Have you decided on the main purpose for your subplot? (Does your subplot (a) mirror the main action? Does it provide relief from non-stop action? [e.g. a humorous subplot] Does it develop a romance? Does it heighten suspense?)			
Have you used the subplot to maintain pace in your story when the main plot has to slow down? (Complications from the subplot can restrict the main character's ability to act, or take his attention away at a critical time.)			
Does your subplot shed light on the personality of one or more of the characters?			
Are your plot and main subplot interwoven from the beginning of the story? (A second subplot can be introduced slightly later.)			
Have you given your readers a chance to get to know the people in both your plot and subplot before the story gets underway? (Readers care more about what happens to people they "know".)			
Is your subplot closely related to the main story? (The story should be able to stand alone without the subplot, but don't, for example, make it about two minor characters that the reader doesn't care about.)			
Have you shown how the events in the subplot can affect the action in the main plot and vice versa?			
Does your subplot follow the same basic pattern as the main plot? (Developments and setbacks; crisis and resolution.)			
Have you made sure that the subplot doesn't overshadow the main plot?			
Is the subplot interesting to readers or an annoyance that drags them away from the main action?			
Have you structured your story so that when the main plot is going through a calm period, the reader is given something of interest to read about via the subplot?			
Have you ensured that your subplot doesn't have a 'tacked on' feeling to pad out the story? (Introduce it near the beginning and weave it in neatly.)			
Have you made sure that everything is resolved in the subplot by the end of the story? (All loose ends need to be tied up, just as they do in the main plot.)			
<i>Other Aspects of my Subplot I want to check:</i>			