

PLOT SKETCH WORKSHEET (WIESNER)

SOURCE: Karen Wiesner, *First Draft in 30 Days* (Writer's Digest Books, 2005).

Understanding Story Threads

Your outline will consist of the following seven to eight threads (nine or ten for a romance novel), all of which work together to form your plot sketch:

- [Story goal](#) (or theme)
- [Romance thread](#) (optional, depending on genre)
- [Subplot threads](#)
- [Plot tension](#)
- [Romantic/sexual tension](#) (optional, depending on genre)
- [Release](#)
- [Downtime](#)
- [Black moment](#) (or climax)
- [Resolution](#)
- [Aftereffects of resolution](#) (optional)

Remember, at this stage you probably won't be able to fill in all of these sections, but it's important to start thinking about them. Simply write in whatever you can for each section and remember you can go back and add more later.

[Jump to Plot Sketch Worksheet](#)

Story Goal [\[Jump to worksheet\]](#)

A story goal is the central idea of a novel. You will relate it to your readers through the plot, major conflict, and character interactions. **In all genres of fiction, the story goal is the catalyst of the book—the reason why the characters are there, the reason why the story evolves, the reason why the reader opens the book, starts and keeps reading.** All other threads and characters are involved in achieving the story goal.

In some books, the story goal seems more like the theme in that the main characters are not striving to accomplish any single major goal and there is no clear-cut course of action. Instead, such books rely on overarching central concepts that are represented through the plot and characters. However, especially commercial fiction, there is a clear-cut story goal that