My presentation for NH Writers' Project Writers' Week 2015.

The One Thing You Need to Finish the First Draft of Your Book: Workflow

Time & Place, Tools, Tactics -- What Works Best for You? Time & Place Regular schedule or grab time where you can?

Private or public? Keep a log: Date, Time, Place, word-count, comments Tactics Outline or improvise? Write from front to back or random order? Use a timeline?

Edit as you go or just keep going?

Tools

Scrivener Aeon Timeline Instant Text Scapple FreePlane TIP:

Don't try to learn a complicated new tool like Scrivener when working under a deadline.

Summary

A workflow gives you something to rely on -- or to deviate from Be flexible, adjust as you learn

I'll elaborate a bit on each point.

Time & Place, Tools, Tactics -- What Works Best for You?

Time & Place

Regular schedule or grab time where you can? Most writers agree that a regularly scheduled writing time is best. Make an appointment with yourself; put it on your calendar; show up, sit down, and write. But that may not work for you. You may have to grab time whenever you can: riding the bus, waiting for a meeting to start, after the kids are in bed.

Private or public? Quiet or noisy?

Some writers like peace and quiet, others like a noisy public place. I have a quiet office at home, but I have found that I am sometimes more productive in a coffee shop or pub. However, I need to block out the house music (which I usually abhor), and block out the conversations of people sitting near me, so I use earbuds. I've found that the only music I can write to is Baroque music.

Keep a log: Date, Time, Place, word-count, comments You can keep this on paper, in a spreadsheet, or a database. I prefer a database, because that allows me to run reports on my productivity.

Tactics

Outline or improvise?

The terms often used are *plotter* and *pantser* - the latter meaning flying by the seat of the pants. I do a bit of each. For over 40 years I made notes and sketched scenes for my novel. A couple of years ago I organized those, using Scrivener, and created an outline. But I'm still developing the plot by the seat of my pants.

Write from front to back or random order?

Most writers recommend starting with the first chapter and working through to the last. I work on whatever chapter interests me at the moment. But every few days I go back to the outline and try to complete a first draft of incomplete chapters, starting at the front of the book.

Use a timeline?

If you are writing historical fiction or a memoir, a timeline can be helpful. The action in my novel covers a very limited timespan -- late 1968 to early 1969 -- but alludes back to the American Revolution, and even as far back as Ancient Egypt. So I find Aeon Timeline very helpful.

Edit as you go or just keep going?

Many writers recommend plowing on and completing the first draft, and then going back to edit. But some have great success starting each writing session by editing the previous day's writing.

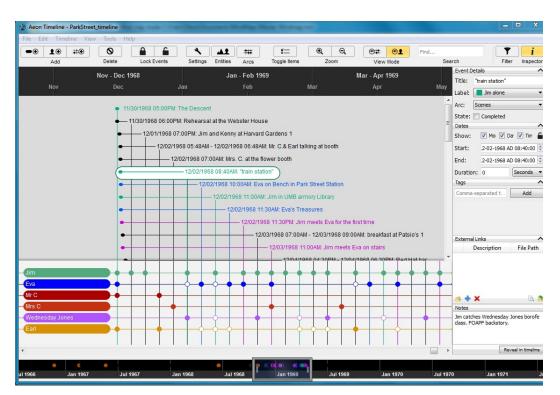
Tools

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Table of Contents	Table of Contents					0	4
Descent and Dissent	🗉 🔺 🏬 Descent and Dissent		First Draft		5,50	0	
 The descent Rehearsal at Webster House Jim and Kenny at Harvard Gardens 1 	The descent	Crosses Common - First encounter with Curbstone - Passes Mr. C Passes Earl - Gets on Green Line car. Jim sees Eva in the crowd as car pulls out.	First Draft		1,50	0	1,2
Encounters Mr. C.& Earl talking at booth 1 Mrs. C. at the flower booth	Rehearsal at Webster House	Green Line - Miz, amp, bass purchases - Stairs up to Webster House - Interaction with BC - Jim's love life	First Draft	-	2,00	0	2,4
FOAPF Forms of American Prose Fiction	Jim and Kenny at Harvard Gardens 1	Jim and Kenny discuss the rehearsal, the band, school, Beacon Hill life, their uncertain future.	First Draft		2,00	0	1,7
Eva on Bench in Park Street Station	Encounters					0	
📓 Jim in UMB armory library	Mr. C.& Earl talking at booth 1	Curbstone. Wanda. Sacrifice for the T.	First Draft		1,00	0	1,1
Eva's treasures Jim meets Eva for the first time	Mrs. C. at the flower booth	Flower Shop sign. Flowers, spring. Thinks of "Howie." Sees Curbstone.	First Draft	-	50	0	4
Covering - Uncovering	Train station"	Jim thinks of Eva, goes to meet Wednesday Jones.	First Draft		50	0	4
Image: Breakfast at Patsio's 1	FOAPF Forms of American Prose Fiction		First Draft		1,00	0	1,0
Little Walter gig	Eva on Bench in Park Street Station	Eva. Little girl. Doll. Cuz.	First Draft	-	50	0	5
Im meets Eva on stairs	Jim in UMB armory library	worms subway gas poetry	First Draft		2,00	0	
4 📙 Red Hat bar	Eva's treasures		Sketched		1,00	0	3
Hemorhoids the duck	tokens					0	1
a 🏙 Jim walks to Granary Burial Ground	heart-shaped stones					0	
Beacon Street Mall	III dolls					0	1
The Great Elm	umbrella					0	
Parkman Bandstand	elephant teeth					0	
Be-in on Common	ankh					0	
Liberty Tree	📰 spoon					0	1
Introverts	Jim meets Eva for the first time	Do you live on the Hill? Not exactly.	Sketched	-	1,00	0	2
Brimstone Corner	Covering - Uncovering					0	
Central Burial Ground Osiris Granary Burial Ground	Breakfast at Patsio's 1	Jim and Ralph [Swain] discuss Montage, poetry publications. Little Walter gig backstory.	First Draft		2,00	0	1,9
Granary Burial Ground		Diver Children hands Linde Made	Circle Durch		2.00	0	1.0

Scrivener (literatureandlatte.com)

Great for outlining, organizing chapters and scenes. You tag scenes with keywords and metadata, search and sort. Compile to Word for your readers and editors, PDF for your printer, EPUB and MOBI for your ebook -- and much more.

Aeon Timeline (www.scribblecode.com)



You can track your story timeline & backstory, filter by story arc or characters, and more. Syncs with Scrivener.

Instant Text (www.textware.com)

	Notes Jim gets dubbed Clucky Im plays bass for Eva Jim plays bass for Eva Jim plays guitar on Comm Anti-war protest on Com The Frog Story Beau's Home Jim's dad Ggs Jig night		mysel expos would	Jim rembers conversations rap sessions between musicians. Topics? 2015-11-07 That picture of me in the big blue stuffed chair with the ukelele. I was not old enough for a guitar, Dad told be. Ti Dog Has Fleas. Ar-thur-GodFrey. Grim look of determination on my face. Dad taught me nothing. Figured it out fo f. That gadget that clamped on to the neck, press a button, C, press another button, G7. Took ti off, turned it over et the underside, plastic nodules that came down, pressed down the strings. Figured out where on the neck the press, figured if I could put my fingers in those places, could throw the gadget away worked. Grim look of initation on my face in the photo. The joy of music. Make it my own.	r
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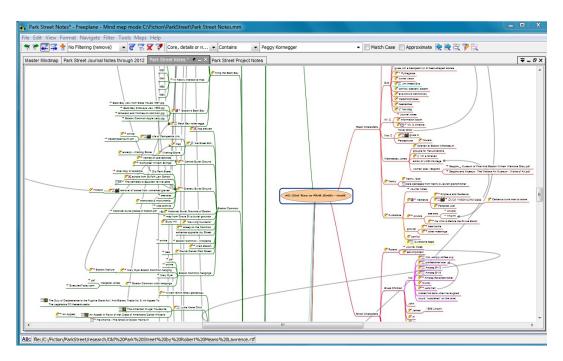
Text expansion -- type a few letters and get a whole phrase or a whole paragraph. Reads your documents from disk and builds a glossary for you, so your most-often-used words and phrases can be entered with a few keystrokes.

Covering Uncovering - Scapple Covering - Uncovering uncover cut & cover subway dig ---- "I dig, man! " worms, worm farm filling of the Charles graves dug up, bones moved ibrary scene Jacques at Walsh's fish weir ---subsidence burial grounds Roland at The Sevens fish can't escape spaces underground ---- abandoned subway tunnels tunnel under House Rock no escape Eva uncovers groceries box ventilation shafts -h fallout shelter (bomb shelter) escape the draft (Vietman War) Mary Dyer Eva covers groceries box NOTE: most of these things go from cover to uncover, but Eva's action goes from uncover to cover -- as does cut & cover method of subway Kerberos prevents the dead from escaping from underworld construction. 28 notes Zoom: Reset

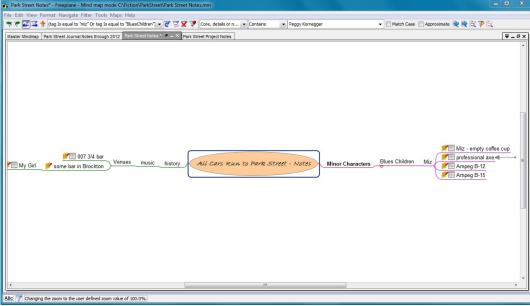
Scapple (<u>www.literatureandlatte.com/scapple.php</u>)

Brainstorming tool. Enter words and phrases as you would on a whiteboard. Connect them and group them. Integrates well with Scrivener.

FreePlane (freeplane.sourceforge.net)



Powerful mindmapping tool. Great for organizing research. Don't let the complexity of this screenshot intimidate you -- you can collect your research spontaneously, and impose order on it later, or just use the powerful searching, sorting, and filtering to focus on what you need at the moment.



This is the previous screenshot, filtered.

Summary

A workflow gives you something you can rely on -- or deviate from!

Be flexible, adjust as you learn what works best for you.