

Serious About Serials

Are you seriously thinking about writing a serial? Did you write a book and then want to write another in a series? Do you have ideas about a storyline that go on and on?

When I wrote my first book I was pretty well organized. But I had not intended to write a series. When I decided to continue the storyline and write a series I realized I needed to be much more organized. I had my plot summary and basic ideas, characters with basic histories, and a timeline. It was fortunate that I had created a timeline. I found this to be the most important document supporting my series.

In a prior article, "Timeline for Your Book," I wrote about how to build a timeline. In that article I talk about using a spreadsheet program for developing your timeline. I know that some writers are not as familiar with spreadsheet programs as I am, but I encourage you to learn to use one. It makes it easier to insert new ideas, add to the plot, add characters, and you can also extend your timeline to cover your entire series. Most of the spreadsheet applications have a tutorial so learning the basics is easy. And remember, you are using a program that is designed for number crunching but can also be used successfully for text.

It's also important to be consistent when using the same characters from one book to another. Keeping a summary of your characters, their development and events involving each one, makes it easier than trying to go back and search through your prior book or books. Short notes about people, places and events can jog your memory of what happened to whom, where and when. All of this information can go into your timeline workbook, which can have several pages making it easy to flip back and forth between your character, events, locations and your timeline.

A serial can also expand on prior events or characters. Maybe you left something unsaid in your prior book and can now explain it because it fits into your new story better. Or you thought of a good twist to add that makes readers think about events in your last book and relates it to your new book. These are the kinds of things that keep readers interested in reading your books. It can also make readers who start in the middle of your series go back and read the entire series.

You can start writing your book not ever intending to continue your storyline into a series. Every good story has a beginning, middle and an end. But there are many opportunities to continue the story, whether it be the same characters or new characters, like sons and daughters, or even grandchildren of the characters from your original book. Or maybe you set out to write a serial and have the basic ideas in mind. Just make sure to take good notes and create your timeline so that you can be organized, consistent and still be able to expand your ideas and story.

If you want to write a series and be a truly prolific writer, I can give no better advice than to be organized, keep good notes, and be creative. If something doesn't flow, you can always re-write it and make it better. Have fun and be a serious serial writer.

About the Author

Peggy Somers is a passionate romantic who lives in a lovely coastal community north of San Diego. She always dreamed of writing books and took several writing courses in college. Her years at two prominent San Francisco Bay Area universities included studying drama, dance, music, economics and math. And her travel adventures to China, Hong Kong, Europe, Australia and New Zealand provided inspiration for her writing. Visit [Romance Novels](#).

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