

Simple Outline for Nonfiction Books

Title:

Make it catchy and capture the essence of your book.

Author:

Make it co—oh, wait your name goes here.

Initial Questions

These are questions that you need to answer prior to writing. They help to identify intent, plan out your process, and harmonize the elements of your book. Think of it as an entrance exam to a prestigious school.

1. What is the subject of your book?

2. What is the point of your book?

3. How can the audience benefit from reading your book?

4. How can *you* benefit from writing your book?

5. What structure are you going to use?

- Chronological
- Question-and-Answer
- Topic List
- Story-driven
- Story / Anecdote Collection
- Others, specify: _____

6. What style should you use?

- Narrative / Essay
- Memoir / Autobiography
- Exposition-driven / Descriptive
- Investigative
- Self-help / Instructional
- Academic / Analytical
- Others, specify: _____

7. Who are you writing for?

Be as specific as possible.

8. What are the challenges that you can anticipate?

Include research to be done, possible pitfalls in writing, etc. Add to this as you flesh out your outline.

Introduction

Projected
Number of
Chapters

First impressions are important, and a reader may put down a book if the first chapter is subpar. So bring your A-game, pull out all the stops, and let me think of other expressions about putting in effort while you fill this out.

Pick one, or up to three:

- Personal story
- Metaphor or allegory
- Historical event or context
- Introduction of core subject
- Presenting a problem
- Presenting a statistic
- Others, specify: _____

Things to include:

- A hook
- Subject and background introduction
- Author introduction, or why should they read to you
- Thesis statement, or why you're writing this in the first place
- Benefits of reading your book
- Scope and limit of your book

Notes / Sample / Structure / Research / References (use additional sheets if necessary)

<h1>Body</h1> <p><i>This is where the magic happens. Put down everything you want to write and play connect-the-dots.</i></p>	<p>Projected Number of Chapters (Total)</p>
<p>We'll start with writing down your major and supporting subjects. You'll give each subject a projected number of chapters based on how much focus you want it to have. Don't worry about sequence; you can iron that out later. I suggest you limit the major subjects to 4 to 7 as some books benefit from having a tighter scope. Expand or scale down as needed.</p>	
<p>Major subject 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>
<p>Major subject 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>
<p>Major subject 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>

<p>Major subject 4 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>
<p>Major subject 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>
<p>Major subject 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>
<p>Major subject 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: → Supporting subject: 	<p>Projected Number of Chapters</p>

Preferred Sequence

Remember to arrange them in an order that makes sense for you and the reader.

Notes / Sample / Structure / Research / References (use additional sheets if necessary)

Conclusion

Projected
Number of
Chapters

Here we are, at the end of your book. Take everything you've written down and close them out in a concise and meaningful way.

Tips on how to close (based on your chosen introduction)

- Personal story: end with continuation or conclusion of the story
- Metaphor or allegory: show how it applies to the context of your book
- Historical event or context: discuss the implications and consequences of the event
- Introduction of core subject: review your core subject
- Presenting a problem: present the solution to the problem
- Presenting a statistic: discuss the significance of the statistic

Things to include:

- Callback to your core subject
- Make a summary of topics discussed
- Discuss limitations and topics that were not covered
- Include a CTA (call-to-action)

Now go back to the Initial Questions, review your outline, and make sure that all questions have been answered and the data and presentation matches the vision for your book.

Notes / Sample / Structure / Research / References (use additional sheets if necessary)

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