

# 10 Tips to Nail Your First Chapter

*This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:*

[How to Write a Chapter](#)

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1. Avoid prologues. Start your first chapter as close to the action as possible. Prologues tend to slow down the reader.
2. Resist the urge to “set the scene.” Starting with a description of the novel’s world can also drag the story to a snail’s pace.
3. Develop a strong narrative voice. The reader connects with a unique voice. Make sure that voice is present from the first word of the first chapter.
4. Define the inciting incident that starts your story. Then, start your first chapter right before the incident begins.
5. Introduce the protagonist in your first chapter. However, don’t feel as if you need to peel all of the layers of your protagonist right away.
6. Set the stakes. What happens if the protagonist doesn’t act?
7. Give the reader a glimpse into the protagonist's motivation. What does the protagonist want to happen? What does the protagonist *not* want to happen?
8. End the first chapter on a page-turner. Give the reader a reason to stay with your story.
9. Don't forget to structure the chapter like a mini-story with an arc.
10. Edit out anything in your first chapter that doesn't propel the story forward.