

Subplots: A List of Best Practices

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

[*The Importance of Subplots*](#)

1. **Limit the amount of subplots you include in your novel.** If you have more than three subplots, it risks overwhelming your reader with too much information.
2. **Break accordingly.** When delving into a subplot, consider breaking into a separate chapter.
3. **Test whether or not the subplot is effective by taking it out of your story.** If editing it away doesn't affect your story, don't keep it. If editing it away weakens your story, consider keeping it.
4. **Be willing to kill your darlings.** Even if you personally love the subplot, it may weigh the story down. If a subplot doesn't add to your story or your characterization, don't hesitate to edit it out.
5. **Use at least one subplot to either mirror or contrast what's happening in the main story.** This gives your story more dimension.
6. **Complete your subplot before you finish your main story.** Tie up all loose ends before you reach the climax of your central plot.
7. **Don't let your subplot distract from the main story.** The heart of your story follows the central plot. Subplots are used for characterization, theme resonance, and pacing/ tension. They should never usurp the main series or events in your story.