

Procedural Creativity

AI-Assisted Drafting

Forward

Dropping all pretense—there are many people enrolled in this event that are entirely underqualified. I am one of these people.

That said, I would propose that engineering one's way into an event far above their level of expertise for the purpose of actually completing the assignment is very on-brand for something called a "Hackathon".

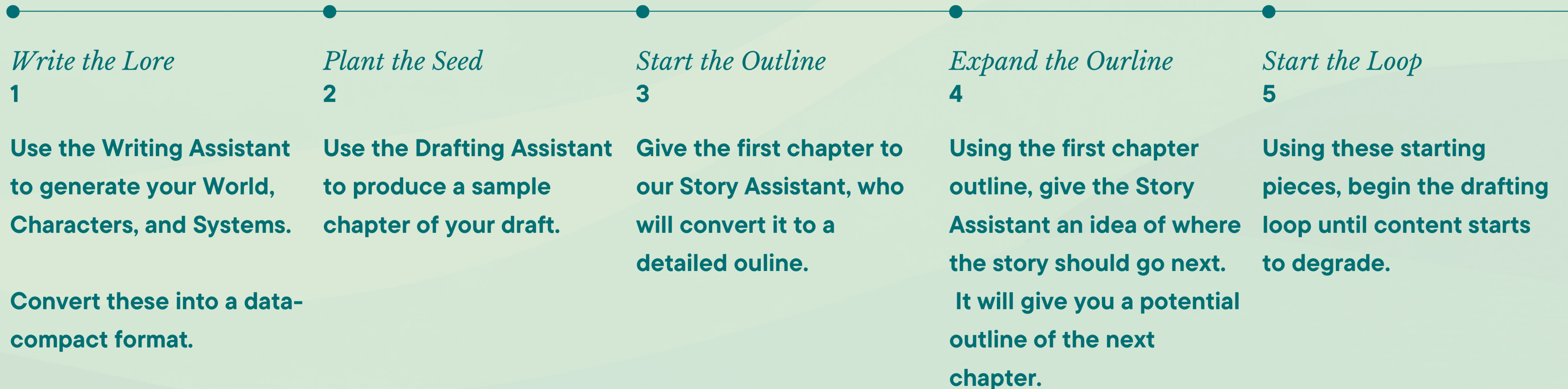
With that in mind, I give you the results of my efforts: a good-faith attempt at a system of rapidly producing first drafts of full novels.

Introduction

The quickest way to write a good book is to write a bad draft, as soon as possible.

Because the first draft is often the gatekeeper of any finished work, my goal in this event was to design and demonstrate a system of rapid drafting. **I have a 50,000 word first draft of a novel, and Claude helped me write it in 3 days.**

Overall Workflow



Chats? Why Chats?

-Framing a discussion as a roleplay implies the existence of an author separate from Claude. This gives us inherent control over tone and flow that would otherwise require separate systems, which produces ***better prose as a result.***

-Writing a draft is as personal as it is complex, with writers using wildly different organizational systems and software. Using chats and framing each “tool” as a separate character is a more flexible system than any single app, offering multiple simultaneous conversations and easy organization

Compact Character Notation, or “ComCards”

Compact Character Notation is an attempt to facilitate the creation of fully realized, complex characters for use in AI-Assisted Fiction. To do this, several goals must be balanced:

The characterization must be robust enough for a sufficiently-advanced AI to produce smooth and enjoyable prose.

The notation must be easily parsed and edited by humans without AI assistance.

Information should be as compact as possible, to ensure consistency over time through efficient token usage.

Characters should be self-contained, for easy use across multiple projects.

The same system should allow for creation of large “main characters” with complex personalities and goals, as well as more focused “side characters” with smaller token counts.

With these goals in mind, I give you a Compact Card:

Character Name[

(Gender) (In-universe descriptor 1) (In-universe descriptor 2 if needed)

2-3 Physical Description tags

4-8 Personality tags, with at least one “negative” trait.

2-4 Secondary appearance tags, such as clothing or body language

In-universe special characteristics.

(Optional Tags can be added as needed)

(Organize additional tags with newlines)

]

Individual tags are separated by commas, and categories by newlines.

This ComCard can be utilized anywhere that the character’s personality will influence the prose, in most cases without any special instructions—the AI can figure it out!

World Axioms

Before we can begin designing characters and concepts, there are some broad-stroke decisions we need to make about the world.

These World Axioms will be the predefined rules for tone and background that we'll use to create our first characters. As an example, a World Axiom for a Young Adult fantasy novel might be:

The world is magical high-fantasy.

Character Creation

With these Axioms in mind, we'll create our first character. This is the first introduction to our first layer of content creation—the topic editors. Meet Harmony, the Character Creator.

Harmony is the first of our “Critique” style creators. These are fantastic for the following reason: Critique of unclear details is **biased towards questions**. This means that you can give Harmony a very rough character idea, and she won't make up details—rather, she will ask you follow up questions to better define your character. The idea at this point is not to write, it is to facilitate writing.

World Creation

Flint is our World Creator. Like Harmony, he is biased towards questions. His overall workflow is similar to Harmony—the major difference between the two is how they prefer their ComCards. Use Flint to create magic systems, organizations, political conflicts, or any major “abstracts” of your story.

Seed Chapter

Before we can automate the outlining and drafting process, we need to produce a sample of what your writing will look like. It doesn't need to be polished—this is merely a rough template for the Outliner to work with. To create our first chapter, we'll work with Eithne, our Scribe.

Eithne, unlike our previous tools, is not biased towards questions. Rather, Eithne is biased towards **content production**. Writing this chapter is going to be the most “hands-on” portion of this exercise, though Eithne's proclivity towards word count should push us forwards regardless.

Prompt Eithne to tell your story however you'd prefer, though my style is usually 2-3 sentence prompts. Feel free to make editing suggestions now, since we'll want to avoid them until the end otherwise.

The Outline

Once we have a seed chapter generated, we'll begin our story outline. Work with T'Sha, our Outline Creator, to write a series of prompts that could have generated the story that you wrote.

The purpose of this step is to create an outlining style tailored to:

- Your writing style.
- Your story.
- The capabilities of your language model.

The Loop

Once we have a single template outline, let T'Sha know how you'd like your next chapter to go. She will convert your idea into a series of 5-6 prompts that you'll then give to Eithne. Depending on your writing style and model capabilities, in my experience this might produce anywhere from 500-1500 words per prompt.

Once you've completed your series of prompts with Eithne, take a look through the draft and make sure nothing has changed drastically—sometimes Claude likes to be a bit too creative, and other times you'll want to change specific things here and there. If the outline in your records doesn't match the content of your story, give the text of your chapter back to T'Sha to convert into a new outline.

From there, you'll repeat until done. Generate your next outline, expand the outline into full text for your draft, update the outline, and so on.

It sounds simple... but it just works.

Conclusion

And... there it is. My contribution to the future of AI storytelling. It's not much, but I believe that two specific pieces are worth at least a passing glance:

- Token-efficient summaries to keep characters consistent over time.
- The outline-draft-outline loop.

If that is sufficient to count as an actual submission to this event, then I'll continue to use my API access to improve the system and publish my findings. If not, then it's been quite a ride.

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