I've saved the cat. Now I'm saving the writer. Learn more about my new book, Page One to Done!

PAGE ONE TO DONE

Quick Start

HOW TO FINISH EVERY NOVEL YOU START... FASTER THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE

by Jessica Brody
Bestselling author of *Save the Cat! Writes a Novel* & *Page One to Done*

Hey there!

Did you know that 97% of writers who start a novel never finish it?

If you've ever struggled with half-finished drafts, rewriting spirals, or year-long slogs with little to show for it, you're not alone. And it's not your fault. **You've just been using a method that was never designed to help you finish.**

But what if I told you there's a community of writers out there—myself included—who are consistently finishing first drafts and doing it in as little as a few weeks?

They're using a collection of powerful strategies and mindsets that I call the "Novel Fast Drafting method." I've taught this method to thousands of writers in my Writing Mastery Academy and it's now available as a book in *Page One to Done*.

In this guide, I'm not just going to tell you how Fast Drafting can help you. **I'm going to show you.**

In the pages that follow, you'll discover:

- **The destructive belief that causes 97% of writers to quit (or take years to finish a single draft)**
- **A simple mindset shift that will turn you into a "chronic finisher" (someone who finishes every project they start)**
- **My revolutionary strategy of "invisible revisions" that will save you months (or years!) on your first draft**

> **My mind is BLOWN . Please, pretty please #writingcommunity listen when I say this is a game-changer!**
> – Monica L.

> **I completed my 85,000 word first draft in 8 weeks! I'm over the moon!**
> – Megan H.



You, too, can finish your novel faster than you ever thought possible and free yourself from the trap of endless rewriting, perfectionism, and self-doubt that causes 97% of writers to quit.

Ready to defy the odds and finish your first draft?

Let's go!

Jessica

DOES THIS SOUND LIKE YOU?

Think about your experience writing a first draft—whether you're working on one now, or you've tried writing one in the past and it didn't go so well.

Do any of these sound familiar?



You get stuck re-reading, second-guessing, and polishing every sentence, unable to build or maintain momentum.

The Result: You spend more time judging the story than actually writing it, which slowly drains your motivation.



You can't move on until the current scene or chapter is exactly right, no matter how long it takes.

The Result: By the time you do move on, you've lost momentum and connection to the story and characters.



Every time the story feels "off," you tear it apart and rearrange chapters, beats, and plot threads to make it work.

The Result: You often make a bigger mess than you started with, lost in the clutter and unable to see the forest for the trees.



You're constantly inspired by new ideas on how to improve the story, but each one forces you to rewrite from page 1.

The Result: The further you get into the draft, the longer this takes, and you start to lose excitement for a story you once loved.

If any (or all!) of these sound familiar, you're not alone. **These are the most common pitfalls of the first draft.** They represent a near-universal experience among writers.

And they all stem from a single destructive belief that lurks in our subconscious and sets us up to fail. This destructive belief is the reason 97% of novels are never finished.

The Belief

THE REASON 97% OF NOVELS ARE NEVER FINISHED

I've worked with thousands of writers over the years and here's what I can tell you.

The mindset most writers have when starting a first draft is some variation of:

- It has to be good on the first try or what's the point?
- I should rewrite every single word until it's perfect before moving on
- If it's not good, it means I'm a bad writer and I'll never succeed

Wow. That's a lot of pressure to put on a first draft. And here's something I've learned the hard way:

Creativity doesn't thrive under pressure. It dies under pressure.

Sadly, this is the reason 97% of novels are never finished. Because the writer started with the expectation that they had to write a perfect (or even good) first draft and they just couldn't do it.

My student Rachel used to struggle to make progress on her novels because, as she said, "I was overthinking every word that I put down. **I was so focused on writing a clean and perfect first draft that I gave up halfway through multiple times."**

Kathy assumed she should be able to sit down and write something good on the first try. When she couldn't, she said, **"I thought there was something wrong with me."**

Nearly every writer I speak to with a half-finished novel in their proverbial bottom drawer reports the same thing: **"It wasn't good enough, so I quit."**

That's the real reason we try to polish every sentence, perfect every scene, endlessly rearrange the plot, and obsessively rewrite from page 1. Because we're trying to write a "good" first draft.

But what if I told you...

The first draft doesn't have to be good.
It's not even *supposed* to be good.

Trying to write a perfect—or good—first draft is a near-impossible task.

Let Me Tell You Why

WHY THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A GOOD FIRST DRAFT

First drafts, by nature, are a discovery process. They're not supposed to be good. They're supposed to be uncovered. And that doesn't happen in a nice, tidy, sensical order. Often, the results are messy, disjointed, and gloriously imperfect.

There's a reason a first draft is also called a **rough** draft.

Stories unfold within us, evolving in our minds. Even with careful plotting, we can't ever know what will come out on the page each day. Expecting to write a perfect first draft is like expecting to learn a new instrument without ever hitting a wrong note. Musicians know that practice is what makes perfect. Not first tries. And what musicians call practice, we writers call *revising.*

But drafting and revising are two different jobs that require very different skills.

Trying to write a good first draft is essentially trying to do two different jobs at once....

Drafter

- **Discovers the story—gets ideas out without overthinking**
- **Writes forward, no matter what**
- **Embraces messy, imperfect, and incomplete**
- **Experiments, plays, and follows curiosity**
- **Ignores perfection (word choice, structure, and logic can wait)**

vs

Reviser

- **Shapes the plot into something clear and compelling**
- **Implements new ideas to improve the story**
- **Enhances scene structure, flow, and pacing**
- **Refines language, dialogue, and prose**
- **Turns the rough draft into something polished and powerful**

THE DRAFTER AND THE REVISER

The drafter builds the house. The reviser decorates it. And you can't decorate a house until it's built.

The problem is, far too many of us try do both jobs at once. We try to discover the story and perfect it simultaneously, which is just wasted time.

How can we perfect something we haven't seen in its entirety? How can revise something we don't yet fully understand? We can't. Yet we try anyway, which quickly leads to:

- **Second-guessing every sentence (spending more time judging the work than actually writing it)**
- **Trying to perfect scenes without knowing how they fit, which kills momentum and disconnects us from the story.**
- **Attempting to rearrange the plot without fully understanding what we're rearranging, then getting lost in the clutter**
- **Starting over from page 1 with every new idea, uncertain how it affects the whole story, draining our excitement with every rewrite**

These are the same first-draft pitfalls we identified on page 2! They happen when we try to draft and revise simultaneously, which leads to wasted time and frustration.

Because we're revising in the dark.

This is the very definition of "slow drafting." **It's like trying to drive a car with your foot on the accelerator and the brake at the same time.** You start and stop and go nowhere.

Here's the Shift →

THE CRUCIAL MINDSET SHIFT

The sooner you stop trying to draft and revise at the same time, the faster you'll finish the first draft, the more clarity you'll have to revise it, and the more liberating and joyful the entire process will become.

Of course we want to polish our sentences until they shine! Of course we want to perfect our scenes and rearrange elements of our plot so they tell the best version of the story.

We just can't do any of that effectively until we have a finished draft to work with.

This is the essence of Fast Drafting—and the reason writers find it so powerful:

Once you give yourself permission to just draft—not perfect—a huge weight lifts. You can let the rough draft just be rough. **You're not failing. You're succeeding at the job you're meant to do right now.**

And here's what happens when we let ourselves just draft:

> **"I have been stalled on a first draft for months. The breakthrough realization is that I've been trying to draft and revise at the same time and then criticizing the result. Now I can't wait to start drafting again, knowing that I'm just supposed to be discovering, not making it good."**
> – Johnney R.

- The pressure lifts, allowing us to **create more freely**
- We **get into flow** quicker, because our attention is focused on one job at a time
- We **enjoy the writing more,** because we're not trying to revise in the dark
- We have **more delightful epiphanies** about our story, because we give our brain more space to create them

Mindset Shift: **First drafts are a process of discovery, not perfection. Discover the story first so you can later revise it with clarity.**

PUTTING YOUR MINDSET INTO PRACTICE

A mindset on its own is pretty useless without a strategy to apply it.

That's why **in *Page One to Done* I've included an entire chapter called "The Fast Drafting Playbook,"** full of strategies for staying in flow every day without stalling out, overthinking, or getting trapped in endless rewrites. (It's the juiciest chapter of the whole book!)

Today, I'm going to teach you one of the core fast drafting strategies.

This single strategy will save you months (or years!) on your first draft!

The Strategy →



INVISIBLE REVISIONS

Be honest. When you read the mindset shift on page 5, did you think something along the lines of: *Great! I'll discover the story first, then revise later. But wait...*

What if I discover something that requires revision for the story to make sense?

Ah! You've found the plot hole in the "Draft First, Revise Later" mindset: What if you get a revision idea that changes how you draft? How do you keep moving forward?

Allow me to introduce you to my revolutionary strategy of Invisible Revisions.

Invisible Revisions are changes you make to your manuscript... but only in your mind.🤯

Here's how it works:

Let's say you're working on a story about a high-powered lawyer. You're 20% into the first draft (roughly 60 pages) and you get an idea:

This plot would work so much better if she were a teacher, rather than a lawyer!

In the "Slow Drafting" method, you'd go back to page 1 to replace courtroom scenes with classroom scenes, change professional jargon, add new colleagues, quirky students, and meddlesome parents. (And fix any plot holes.) This will probably take a few days (or more) before you're ready to move forward again.

But then, you reach the 30% mark (page 90) and you get another idea:

Maybe she should be a dog groomer instead! Then I could add charming dog scenes.

So, you back up to page 1 again and change the classroom to a grooming facility, the students to quirky pups, the parents to nitpicky dog-owners, and figure out how to replace all that dialogue because dogs can't talk back (usually). Then finally, a week or two later, you're ready to move forward again.

But then at the 40% mark, you think:

Actually...what if she's a lawyer who <u>becomes</u> a dog groomer as part of her character arc!

I think you get the picture.

INVISIBLE REVISIONS

Before you're even halfway through the novel, you've already sunk a month into this one change. (Not to mention any other revision ideas you have along the way.) It's no wonder most writers give up before the midpoint!

The further you get into the story, the longer this process takes, the slower you move forward, and the more frustrating the whole thing becomes.

With Invisible Revisions, you avoid all this wasted time.

When you get an idea to make a change, instead of going back to revise, you:

1. **Write down the revision idea somewhere (like in an ongoing revision list)**
2. **Leave yourself a comment in your manuscript like "Change main character from lawyer to teacher. Update all previous scenes."**
3. **Keep writing forward as if you've already made the change**

It's an invisible revision.

From that point forward in the story, your character is simply a teacher, or a dog groomer, or whatever else your creative mind dreams up (and it will dream up a lot!)

Every time you change your mind, add the new idea to your revision list and continue writing forward as if you've already implemented that change.

Here's the Magic →

INVISIBLE REVISIONS

With Invisible Revisions, this same progression...

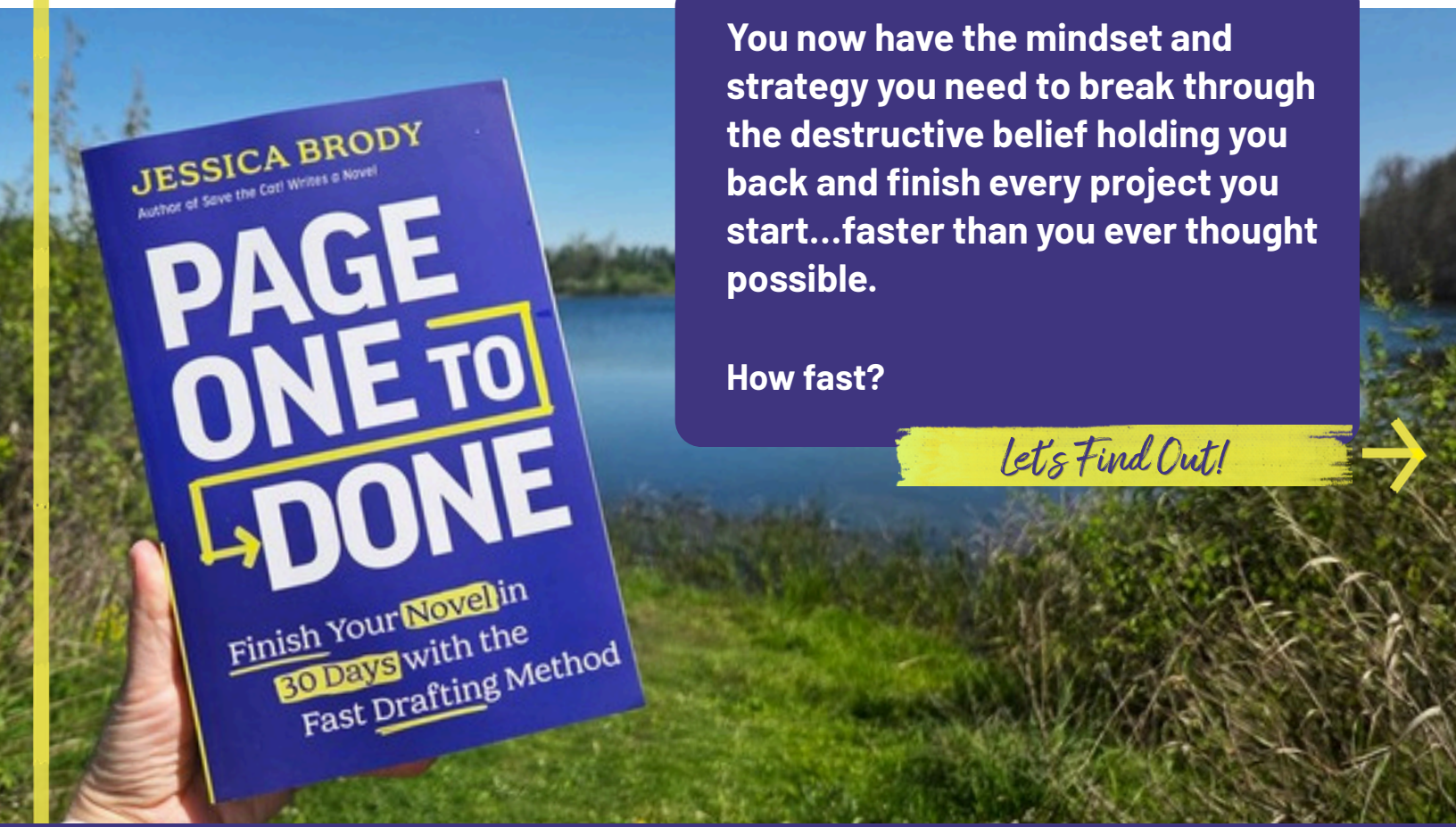
lawyer > teacher > dog groomer > lawyer who becomes dog groomer

...takes you roughly 30 minutes instead of a month! And when it's actually time to revise (after you've discovered the whole story), you have a clearer perspective on how the character's job affects the entire plot and can make the final decision with confidence. (Instead of second guessing every 30 pages.)

But here's the best part: When you finish the first draft and look back at your revision list, you'll likely find that more than half the items on it don't even apply to your story anymore—and **you've just saved countless hours of unnecessary work!**

While this might not make for the prettiest document, we now know that's not the point. Remember, the goal of the first draft is just discovery. Not perfection. You write it quickly so you can get to the end and get the clarity you need to make it shine.

And Invisible Revisions are your shortcut to the finish line.



You now have the mindset and strategy you need to break through the destructive belief holding you back and finish every project you start...faster than you ever thought possible.

How fast?

Let's Find Out!

LET'S START FINISHING STUFF!

I've taught this same mindset shift and strategy to thousands of writers. Here's what happened:

RICHARD

Finished his 62,000-word middle-grade novel in under 7 weeks.

His previous 2 manuscripts averaged a year each.

ALISON

Finished her 90,000-word first draft in 9 weeks.

Her previous first drafts took over a year.

RON

Finished his first-ever novel (80,000 words) in 27 days.

PEGGY SUE

Finished her 55,000-word middle-grade novel in 22 days.

She later revised it and landed her first literary agent!

"Invisible Revisions" is just one strategy from an entire Fast Drafter's Playbook in Page One to Done.

And "Draft first, revise later" is only one of 7 simple yet powerful mindset shifts that will turn you into what I call a "chronic finisher," someone who finishes every novel they start.



I invite you to explore all the mindsets, strategies, and tools of fast drafting in *Page One to Done*, available wherever books are sold.

Hi, I'm Jessica



I help fiction writers cut through the chaos and uncertainty of the writing process and finish their novels with clarity, confidence, and ease.

I've sold over 20 novels to major publishers like Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, and Macmillan. My books have been translated into more than 20 languages, and several have been optioned for film and TV. I'm also the founder of the Writing Mastery Academy where I've taught thousands of writers how to finish their first drafts in as little as 30 days with the Fast Drafting method.

But finishing novels wasn't always easy for me.

For years, it took me 8-12 months to finish a first draft—and the process was agonizing! I spent my days trapped in cycles of rewriting and second-guessing, obsessing over every word and every decision. By the end, I felt emotionally drained, creatively depleted, and swearing I'd never write another novel again.

Then a new idea would pop up, and I'd promise myself this time would be different. It never was.

I created the Fast Drafting method for myself. Because I desperately needed another way. Now I finish my first drafts in 3-12 weeks. I wake up every day excited to write. And I haven't started an unfinished novel since.

Here's how I can help you do the same:

→ 📖 **Get the book, *Page One to Done*** - The complete 3-phase Fast Drafting method: all 7 mindset shifts, the preparation phase, the full Fast Drafting Playbook, the troubleshooting guide, and more. Everything you need to become a chronic finisher.

→ 🎓 **Get guidance through the entire novel-writing journey in my Writing Mastery Academy** The complete Fast Drafting method plus accountability, community, and step-by-step support—including unlimited access to my Novel Fast Drafting course, my Save the Cat! plotting course, my revision course, and everything else to go from idea to finished novel!

You can defy the odds and finish that novel. I'm rooting for you every step of the way!

