

# The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

## Checklist 2 – Plot

| Aspect of Plotting  | Your Assessment |            |      |
|---|-----------------|------------|------|
|   | Works Well      | Needs Work | Poor |
| What is at stake? Will the main character care? Will the reader care? Do you need to raise the stakes?  |                 |            |      |
| Have you started your story at a turning point or crisis for the main character?  |                 |            |      |
| Does your main character have a clear plan of action throughout the story? When challenged, does he/she opt for a logical change of plan?   |                 |            |      |
| Does the main character have a worthy adversary?  |                 |            |      |
| Is your main character believably motivated?  |                 |            |      |
| Are you clear on whose story this is? Is this made clear by the viewpoint chosen? Is the viewpoint you've chosen the best to tell this story?                                     |                 |            |      |
| Are the main characters interesting and well-developed, with clear goals?   |                 |            |      |
| Are your secondary characters clearly motivated? Is this believable?  |                 |            |      |
| Problems/Challenges/Complications: can you identify them? How will the character overcome them? Are they too easily solved? Are there enough of them for the length of the story? |                 |            |      |
| Is the story plausible? Could it happen to any of us?   |                 |            |      |
| Genre: is it clear to readers which genre this falls into?  |                 |            |      |
| Is the conflict immediate?  |                 |            |      |
| Are any subplots closely related to the main plot?  |                 |            |      |
| How will the story appeal to your readers' emotions?  |                 |            |      |
| Does the pacing work? (Is there too much non-stop action? Too many slow sections?)  |                 |            |      |
| Is action followed by reaction?   |                 |            |      |
| Does the story build to a climax?   |                 |            |      |
| Is there a moment when all seems lost?  |                 |            |      |
| Mood and Tone: Is the general tone of the book clear at the beginning? (Humorous, suspenseful, romantic etc.)   |                 |            |      |
| Setting: Is there a clear and vivid geographical setting? Is there a convincing professional setting (if applicable)?   |                 |            |      |
| Time: Is it clear WHEN the story takes place? On reflection, is the time span of the story appropriate, or too long/short?  |                 |            |      |
| Is there a satisfying ending? (Everything comes together and the goal is reached.)  |                 |            |      |
| <i>Other Aspects of Plotting to Consider:</i>   |                 |            |      |