MY PUBLISHING PLAN *for*

Title: _____

STAGE:	DATES:
OUTLINE	
FIRST DRAFT	
BREAK (WORK ON OTHER THINGS)	
EDIT - FAST READ THROUGH	
EDIT(S) - DEVELOPMENTAL	
REQUEST BETA READERS	
EDIT FOR BETAS	
BETA READERS	
EDIT BASED ON BETA FEEDBACK	
EDIT FOR EDITOR	
EDITOR – SEND & WAIT	
COMPLETE EDITORS NOTES	
FORMATTING	
ORDER PROOF(S)	
PROOFREAD (SELF & OTHERS)	
MISCELLANEOUS: - **HIRE COVER DESIGNER** - **HIRE EDITOR** - SYNOPSIS/BACK BLURB - COVER REVEAL - ANNOUNCE RELEASE DATE	
BUFFER TIME/LAST MINUTE TO-DO	
PROJECTED RELEASE DATE:	

MY PUBLISHING PLAN *for*

Title: _____

Stage:	Book 1:	Book 2:	Book 3:
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HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE:

Fill in your working title for your WIP and let's get started!

STEP 1: OUTLINE

I like to use the beat sheet in a book called Save the Cat. I have a YouTube video on [How I Outline and Brainstorm](#) as well, if you're interested! This can take as much or as little time as you want. Sometimes I will wait to chart out the full publishing schedule until I have finished outlining, but generally I'd say you'd only need 2-4 weeks (or less), depending on how much time you put into it.

STEP 2: DECIDE ON TIMELINE FOR FIRST DRAFT

It's important to choose a timeline for your first draft so that you're working towards a goal. More people finish their novels during NaNoWriMo than any other time because there's a clear, defined goal.

So the first thing you're going to do with this chart is plot out how long it will take you to write your first draft and set a deadline.

Ask yourself these questions:

- **What is the average word count for a novel in my genre?**
    - Google to get an idea of the range.
    - Choose a target word count for your story.
    - Keep in mind this will not be exact, it's just giving you something to aim for.
- **What is a good DAILY word count to aim for?**
    - What is your current average daily word count?
    - How far can you stretch yourself (without stretching too far)?
    - Keep in mind that as you grow as a writer, your daily word count will also grow, but it's wise to start smaller in the beginning.

Divide your novel's target word count by your daily word count goal to find how many days you need (for example: a 70,000 word novel divided by 1,000 words a day = 70 days to finish the first draft).

Finally, use a calendar to track how many days you will need *including* non-writing days. For example: I don't write on Sundays, so I won't count any Sundays. I also like to give myself a catch up day every so often, so I will make Saturdays my catch up day. Which leaves five days out of the week as actual writing days.

2018

<- SEPTEMBER   NOVEMBER ->

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 FIRST DAY: 1,500 WORDS	**2** 1,500 WORDS	**3** 1,500 WORDS	**4** 1,500 WORDS	**5** 1,500 WORDS	**6** CATCH UP DAY	**7** DAY OFF
8 1,500 WORDS	**9** 1,500 WORDS	**10** 1,500 WORDS	**11** 1,500 WORDS	**12** 1,500 WORDS	**13** CATCH UP DAY	**14** DAY OFF
15 1,500 WORDS	**16** 1,500 WORDS	**17** 1,500 WORDS	**18** 1,500 WORDS	**19** 1,500 WORDS	**20** CATCH UP DAY	**21** DAY OFF
22 1,500 WORDS	**23** 1,500 WORDS	**24** 1,500 WORDS	**25** 1,500 WORDS	**26** 1,500 WORDS	**27** CATCH UP DAY	**28** DAY OFF
29 1,500 WORDS	**30** 1,500 WORDS	**31** 1,500 WORDS	1	2	3	4

(34,500 WORDS SO FAR)

2018

<- OCTOBER   DECEMBER ->

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
29	30	**31** (34,500 WORDS SO FAR)	**1** 1,500 WORDS	**2** 1,500 WORDS	**3** CATCH UP DAY	**4** DAY OFF
5 1,500 WORDS	**6** 1,500 WORDS	**7** 1,500 WORDS	**8** 1,500 WORDS	**9** 1,500 WORDS	**10** CATCH UP DAY	**11** DAY OFF
12 1,500 WORDS	**13** 1,500 WORDS	**14** 1,500 WORDS	**15** 1,500 WORDS	**16** 1,500 WORDS	**17** CATCH UP DAY	**18** DAY OFF
19 1,500 WORDS	**20** 1,500 WORDS	**21** 1,500 WORDS	**22** 1,500 WORDS	**23** 1,500 WORDS	**24** CATCH UP DAY	**25** DAY OFF
26 1,500 WORDS	**27** 1,500 WORDS	**28** 1,500 WORDS	**29** 1,500 WORDS	**30** 1,500 WORDS	1	2
3 1,500 WORDS	4 1,500 WORDS	5	6	7	8	9

HIT OVER 70K BY DECEMBER 4TH

OCTOBER 1ST - DECEMBER 4TH

TO WRITE A FIRST DRAFT

STEP 3: SCHEDULE A BREAK

This will be different for every writer. The idea is to get rid of "writer's blindness" which is just my word for when you no longer see errors in your story because you're too close to it.

I prefer to err on the longer side, rather than not wait long enough, but that may change in the future, and you also may not need as much time as me. Personally, I like to say a good break could be anywhere between 2-6 weeks.

**NOTE: like I say in the video, this does NOT mean you're not working on something! This is a great time to look into your Print On Demand companies, consider hiring a cover designer, consider and interview different editors, and even consider placing your novel into a formatted template if you're like me and prefer to do this near the beginning. You could even plot another novel while you're taking a break!

STEP 4: FAST READ THROUGH EDIT

If you want to hear my full editing process, I have a video on How to Edit Your Novel in Five Steps. But generally I like to start by reading through the entire novel as fast as possible. This helps me see it as one cohesive book the way a reader will see it, and helps me spot the most obvious, glaring errors.

To do a fast read through, I print my entire document and make notes on the pages as I read. I try hard to avoid making in-depth changes or re-writes since that will slow me down, but I do make enough notes that I can remember what I want to re-write/change later.

I also keep a notebook handy in case I need to make more extensive notes than will fit on the page. But I avoid editing on the computer this round because 1) it makes it too easy to start doing more detailed edits and lose track of the fast read through, and 2) seeing it in a different format can also help remove some of the writers blindness I mentioned.

STEP 5: DEVELOPMENTAL EDITS

Now I go back over all my notes from the fast read through and complete each edit, one at a time, starting with the

biggest changes, and working my way down to the smallest.

Developmental means focusing on the story itself versus line edits which are spelling errors, weird grammar, strange sentence structure, etc.

I will often do a mixture of both. But the idea is to *try* to do bigger picture "developmental" edits first. This way you don't waste your time editing the grammar on a page you may end up deleting altogether.

STEP 6: REQUEST BETA READERS

I have an entire series on YouTube about my beta reader process, so I won't go into a ton of detail, but basically there is no "right way" to request betas.

I like to think of it from a planner perspective. More people are likely to sign up to read if they know:

- what genre they're signing up for
- the time commitment/reading schedule they're signing up for
- your expectations (the clearer, the better!)
- and have advance notice (aka a few weeks to prepare)

Even more people will likely want to sign up if you share a short excerpt of your work. (A chapter or two should be enough.) More importantly, this will encourage the *right* people to sign up, people who are excited about your story.

If you'd like more info about this step, here is my first video all about [How to Find Betas and Why You Need Them.](#)

STEP 7: EDIT FOR BETAS

This step is just like my other self-edits. I like to make notes on everything I want to change, and then work from big picture issues to the small stuff, crossing each fix off as I go.

The difference here is that I'm no longer looking at it through the angle of "what would I enjoy?" or "what do I think is best?"

Now I'm editing with readers in mind. What will they think of this scene? How will they react to this conversation or that choice? It's surprising how much I change when I think of readers (usually a lot of cheese gets deleted...)

STEP 8: SEND CHAPTERS TO BETA READERS

Again, I have a video on this step as well, which I'll link below.

But the summed up version is: I send approximately 30-40 pages out to betas once a week, asking them to answer a short set of questions every couple chapters, which they will then return to me before the following round. For my novels, this has typically taken between 5-6 weeks.

Depending on how long your novel is this could take longer or less time. The reason I don't send it all at once is that this can often feel overwhelming to betas. Sending it in chunks can make it feel more manageable, as well as weed out which betas are committed to helping.

On the template, this step is in bold because it depends on OTHERS. This means that it's a bit out of your control compared to the other steps. You may want to plan a bit of buffer time simply because people do tend to have situations come up that interfere with reading. It's so normal. It'll help your stress level if you give them a little extra time, even if you're the only one who knows about it. ;)

Here's my video on [How to Work with Your Beta Readers.](#)

STEP 9: EDIT BASED ON BETA FEEDBACK

I have a full video on [What to Do with Beta Feedback](#) because it's overwhelming!

Take it a section at a time. Use the Rule of 3 - which is that if three or more people say the same thing, then you should take the suggestion seriously, but if only 1 or 2 people say something than it's okay to see it as more of an outlier opinion than a general reader consensus.

There are many ways you can gather up everyone's info to find this general consensus. In the past I have typed up everyone's answers into one single word document so that I can put similar answers next to each other and find where opinions repeat.

I'm still honing my methods, so I may try survey monkey in the future to save on this typing step (I hear it will gather similar answers together for you!) but we shall see!

STEP 10: EDIT FOR EDITOR

While the previous step of editing based on beta feedback is very much focused on story development and making

sure big picture stuff is working, characters make sense, the plot lines up, etc... NOW I do much more focused line edits.

Which is exactly what it sounds like. I go line by line, checking for spelling errors, grammar issues, weird sentence structures, etc. I want to make it as perfect as I possibly can.

A good editor is not going to rewrite for you, so unless you want to pay for another full round of edits after you go in and make changes, I'd suggest making it as much of a final product as you can!

STEP 11: SEND TO EDITOR AND WAIT

Every single editor is different, so it's hard for me to give a time frame for this step. My first editor took only a few weeks. My second editor took over two months, but also did two rounds of edits that were much more comprehensive.

Ultimately, you're going to need to talk to your editor once you hire them to find out an expected time frame.

But the one thing that is for sure during this step is to *leave your manuscript alone!!!* Don't edit!

It would be a migraine inducing experience to edit on your own and then try to line up the changes you've made with the changes your editor makes. Better to give your brain a break and give it a chance to get rid of the writer's blindness again.

STEP 12: COMPLETE EDITOR'S NOTES

Once you receive your manuscript back, you can usually make the changes in just a few days, depending on how much time you're prepared to set aside for this project. Usually after so much time off, you're dying to get back to the story. However, I like to give myself a full week, just to be safe.

STEP 13: FORMATTING

This step can be done at any point in the process, but once you have completed all your edits, you will want to review your formatting and finalize everything.

I have a whole tutorial on How to Format Your Novel if you're interested.

STEP 14: ORDER PROOFS

Up to this point I have used Createspace to order proofs, which is now merging with KDP and will no longer exist, so you will need to look into time frames for your POD company.

But at the time of this writing, it took Createspace 24 hours to approve a manuscript after it was submitted. Occasionally (mainly in the beginning when I was learning) Createspace will return with errors and ask you to fix and resubmit, which will take another 24 hours. Once they approve a proof, you can order a copy and it can take up to 10 days for processing and shipping. This means that each proof copy takes roughly 11-12 days. And you may need to order more than one proof. (I typically need about three rounds of proofs before I'm satisfied, which would equal about a full month for this stage.)

STEP 15: PROOFREAD (AND ASK OTHERS TO PROOFREAD)

I proofread with an actual proof copy for two reasons.

1) They highly recommend you do so to check for any printing errors, and 2) because the different format is extremely useful for removing writers blindness, which at

this point is very strong after you've read your work so many times.

As far as time frame, it will depend on how fast you read. You shouldn't need to be making many changes, so this will be just like your fast read through in the beginning. I typically allow for a week.

STEP 16: BUFFER TIME

Typically I try to give myself a month to two months of buffer time between when I expect to finish my novel and my projected release date. This is mainly because *things go wrong.*

Just a few examples of things that can happen (and have happened to me):

- your cover design could take longer than expected (even up to two months longer in my case)
- your editor could need more time because you have a higher word count than previously stated (three weeks longer in my case)
- you could need to do a massive re-write (for example, I needed an entire extra month to re-draft the entire second half of Pearl's Number)
- the beta reader process could end up taking longer due to holidays, emergencies, betas needing more time, etc

- you could run into issues with Createspace, KDP, Ingramspark, or the print on demand company of your choice (most notably, this happens to me frequently with Ingramspark)
- and finally, each stage of writing, both drafting and editing, can take longer than expected

It's extremely normal to run into little things along the way, since this is only an "estimate" of how long you expect things to take you. Not only is every writer different, but every story is different.

Be flexible! Up until you announce your release date, this schedule can be very fluid. (After you announce your release date, I encourage you to stick to it and honor your commitment for your readers, but you know that!)

PROJECTED RELEASE DATE:

This is what everything has been leading up to! If you've filled in each box in your template with your expected time frame, then your projected release date should actually be very easy to see - right at the end of your buffer period!

The exact date can be important, so let's talk about that a bit...

In the publishing world, it's very common to publish on a Tuesday. The second best day tends to be Wednesday. There are some studies that go into this, such as which days of the week people are most likely to be online and noticing your launch day excitement, but of course, in the end it's completely up to you!

If you find that there is a significant day in your life right around the end of your buffer period, you could consider that. Or you could simply go with the next closest Tuesday.

A couple dates I recommend AVOIDING:

- Saturdays/Sundays... people just aren't online as much
- ANY holidays... same reason
- Any CURRENT significant events (such as weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, vacations - basically anything where your attention would be divided and you would have other duties that would pull you away from your author duties.)

MISCELLANEOUS EXTRAS:

There is no "right time" to do these steps, but here are a couple things you can consider as you decide on a deadline for yourself:

- **HIRE COVER DESIGNER**
    - How long is their wait list? If they're an in-demand cover designer, they may have a very long wait so it's good to do some research, reach out to a few designers, and find out when they have openings. It's possible you will have to book them a few months in advance, and it could take them anywhere between a couple weeks to a couple months to complete the cover, at which point you may want to have enough time left before publishing to do a cover reveal and use it for some promotion.
    - Do you have a full first draft? A cover designer will want to know what your story is about, and while you might feel like you know the gist of it from what you're imagining, stories often have a mind of their own and change quite a bit once written down.
    - The more edited, the better, so my happy medium is to hire a cover designer somewhere around the

2nd or 3rd draft, to actually do the work closer to when I finish working with betas and am editing for my editor. That way I have the peace of mind knowing I've booked a designer, but have time to flesh out the story a lot more before actually working on the cover.

- **HIRE AN EDITOR**
  - I use a company called Reedsy to find editors and ask for sample edits, pricing, and availability
  - Just like with cover designers, a good editor could be booked for months, so I always try to hire someone as soon as I feel comfortable
  - However, since editors usually price their services based on word count, you definitely need to have at least completed a first draft to be able to tell them a true word count estimate
  - FYI: your word count can also easily change throughout the process (for example, I was an overwriter for my first novel and deleted over 20k, but or my second novel I was an underwriter and ended up adding almost 36k!)
- **WRITE SYNOPSIS/BACK BLURB**
  - I like to write the rough draft of my synopsis prior to beta readers so I can use it when I ask them if they want to read
  - You will need the final draft for your cover designer to create the cover, which means at the latest you'll need it when they start the back cover

- I *try* to finish my final blurb about two weeks before my cover designer will need it
- I have a video all about how to write a [Killer Back Blurb](#) if you're interested!

- **COVER REVEAL & ANNOUNCING RELEASE DATE (AND BLURB)**
  - This can be the moment you receive your final design or the day you publish or any day in-between
  - My current sweet spot for the reveal is between 2-3 months before the release date

- **SEND ARC COPIES**
  - ARC copies are 100% optional!
  - If you choose to do them, make sure you budget carefully, they can get expensive fast!
  - You can send only ebooks or only paperbacks or a mix of both
  - Ebooks can be sent as a gift via Amazon
  - Paperbacks you will obviously need to mail (FYI use "media mail" to save money, and avoid overseas unless you're comfortable spending approximately $25 per package.)

- **MARKET (SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWSLETTER, ETC)**
  - I'm not going to go into detail here because this should have its own page or book! (Hint at one of my future book plans!) But feel free to add

marketing deadlines to this template outside of what I've already mentioned, such as:

- o Monthly newsletters
- o Social Media goals
- o Website plans/deadlines
- o Book Trailer
- o Etc.

Phew! That's everything!

I'll share a photo below of my template filled out from the video, as well as the video links if you'd like to watch and follow along as you create your own publishing plan.

I'm SO excited for you to nail down these goals - feel free to reach out with any questions and tag me if you share a photo so I can see!

<3 Bethany
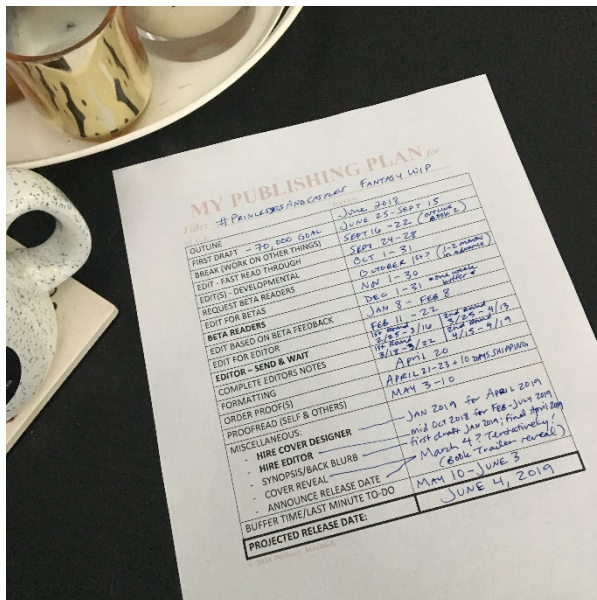
Watch my [Step-by-Step Publishing Plan](#) here:

Watch my [Tutorial](#) on how to use this Publishing Plan Template:

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I created a [Patreon](#) page where I can help you further, whether in our online writing community, social media and marketing tips for authors, frequent live writing sprints and chats, one-on-one coaching calls, or more! Click the photo or link to check it out and see if it would be a good fit for you!