

NEWS BRIEF ON: THE SYNOPSIS

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While an editor might request an outline of your story, a synopsis is more common. A synopsis is a narrative summary of the main action in your manuscript. Some authors write the synopsis before they tackle their story. Some write it afterwards. Use whichever method you feel comfortable with.

All margins should be indented 1 to 1 1/2 inches. In the upper left hand corner, be sure to include your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. In the right hand corner, state the approximate number of words, and the target publishing line or type of story, i.e., Regency.

Write the synopsis in the present tense, third person, active voice. As with your manuscript, the synopsis should always be double-spaced.

If you are writing under an alias, this is placed on the first page of the synopsis—centered under the title. Your true name is at the top, as well as on the header.

Focus on: Your main characters, the internal and external conflicts, character growth, and the resolution. If you have a sub-plot, weave it in.

On length: Different editors have different requirements. Some have strict guidelines for the length; others say "as long as it needs to be." Write for the tip sheet or consult the Romance Writers' Report.

Other tips: Remember, Using dialogue from the manuscript can be frowned upon. And tell the entire story, including the ending. Never leave the editor hanging.