Before you start writing

☐ Decide the genre
>   Romance
>   Crime
>   Fantasy
>   Literary
>   Memoir
>   Popular non-fiction

☐ When are you going to write it?

☐ Why are you going to write it?

☐ How are you going to write it?

☐ Is there a deadline?

Developing the characters

☐ How many characters?

☐ What is each character's role and function?

☐ Are any characters related?

☐ How do they relate to each other – what are the threads between them?

☐ Create a resume for each character
>   Fast Facts – height, weight, eye colour, education level, favourite pet, location etc
>   Descriptions – how do they dress? What do they sound like? Can you trust them?
>   Dig down deeper – how do they feel? What are their life experiences?
>   Insights – how much information will each character have?

Length

☐ How many words should I write?

☐ How long is a 'typical' book for adults?
>   Under 40,000 generally considered a novella
>   Typical novel 70,000 to 120,000 words
>   Romance – 70,000 to 120,000 words
>   Crime – 80,000 to 130,000 words
>   Fantasy – 100,000 to 200,000
>   Literary – 60,000 to 150,000
>   Memoir – 70,000 to 120,000
>   Popular non-fiction – 90,000 average

How long are children's books? Much shorter!

☐ A story is as long as it needs to be

Beginning, middle and end

☐ Beginning – 25% of book
    Set the scene – 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times' (Charles Dickens)
    Introduce the characters – 'You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter' (Mark Twain)
    Provide background information – 'It was a wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of night, and the voice on the other end asking for someone he was not' (Paul Auster)
    Develop the storyline – in 'Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way' (Leo Tolstoy)
    Compelling and interesting – 'They shoot the white girl first' (Toni Morrison)

☐ Middle – 50% of book
    Principle action – good and bad
    Characters' responses to action
        Internal conflict and resolution
        Emotional response and reaction
    Develop storyline
        Build tension
        Convey different messages
    Sub-plots
        Create depth and intrigue
        Give colour and texture
        Provide sense of realism – life events run in parallel
        Function and purpose is to reveal information about other characters
        'Gritty underworlds'
    'Fall off a cliff'
    Epiphany/turning point (can also form part of the end)

☐ Ending
    All storylines and threads are tied up
    Satisfying/unsatisfying ending
    Openers for following books in s a series
    Cliff-hangers and nail-biters

☐ Types of structure
    Path of progression – linear or reflective, journeys
    Journey – actual or metaphorical, emotional or physical, quest or undertaking
    Step by step – clues, stepping stones, chain of events, one thing leads to another
    Russian dolls – stories within stories, multiple stories and multiple characters
    Inverted – start with an ending, death, arrest, resolution, forward in time
    Full circle – history repeating, patterns repeating, quests unfulfilled