

Award Winning Author

**GINGER HANSON**

## **Ten Steps to Planning A Romance Novel**

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I consolidated information from six sources to create this “To Do” list for writing a romance novel. It gives me a starting point for the story.

1. **Premise:** (Think of premise as what you believe to be true or false and you want to prove it via characters, actions, theme, and events.)
2. **Theme:** (Forms the spine of your story). Finish the following sentence in 25 words or less:

This book is about

3. **Inciting Incident:** (The spark that sets everything into motion.)
4. **Main Dramatic Question:** What question does your story ask and answer?

5. **Five story elements** (*Techniques of a Selling Writer* by Dwight Swain)

For heroine:

- a. Character:
- b. Situation:
- c. Goal:
- e. Opponent:
- f. Disaster:

For hero:

- a. Character:
- b. Situation:
- c. Goal:
- e. Opponent:
- f. Disaster:

6. **Character lesson learned or character arc.**

What does the heroine need to learn by the end of the story?

How does heroine get from Point A (believing what she does now) to Point B (growing into what she needs to believe)?

What does the hero need to learn by the end of the story?

How does hero get from Point A (believing what he does now) to Point B (growing into what he needs to believe)?

**7. Drilling down into the hero and heroine's character.**

- a. What is the heroine's conscious need?
- b. What is her unconscious need?
- c. What psychological strength does the hero lack that the heroine fulfills?
- d. What is the hero's conscious need?
- e. What is his unconscious need?
- f. What psychological strength does the heroine lack that the hero fulfills?

**8. How do the hero and heroine deal with the conflict as they fall in love?**

**9. Make sure they are the Right Match**

- a. What makes the hero wrong for the heroine and why is he really perfect for her?
- b. What about the hero makes the heroine face her biggest fear.
- c. What makes the heroine wrong for the hero and why is she really perfect for him?
- d. What about the heroine makes the hero face his biggest fear.

**10. Write a goal, motivation, and conflict summary that leads to the climax.****Sources:**

Dixon, Debra. *GMC: Goal Motivation and Conflict: The Building Blocks of Good Fiction*. Gryphon Books for Writers, 1996.

Hutchinson, William. *Writers Digest*, February 2001.

Mondello, Lisa. "The Perfect Pitch." *The Rock* ezine, 13 September 1998.

Rasley, Alicia. "The Hi-Concept Synopsis." Painted Rock Online Classes, December 1999.

Ratliff, Robyn. "Theme & Premise." *The Bards Scroll*, (Hearts Through History Romance Writers) October 2003.

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