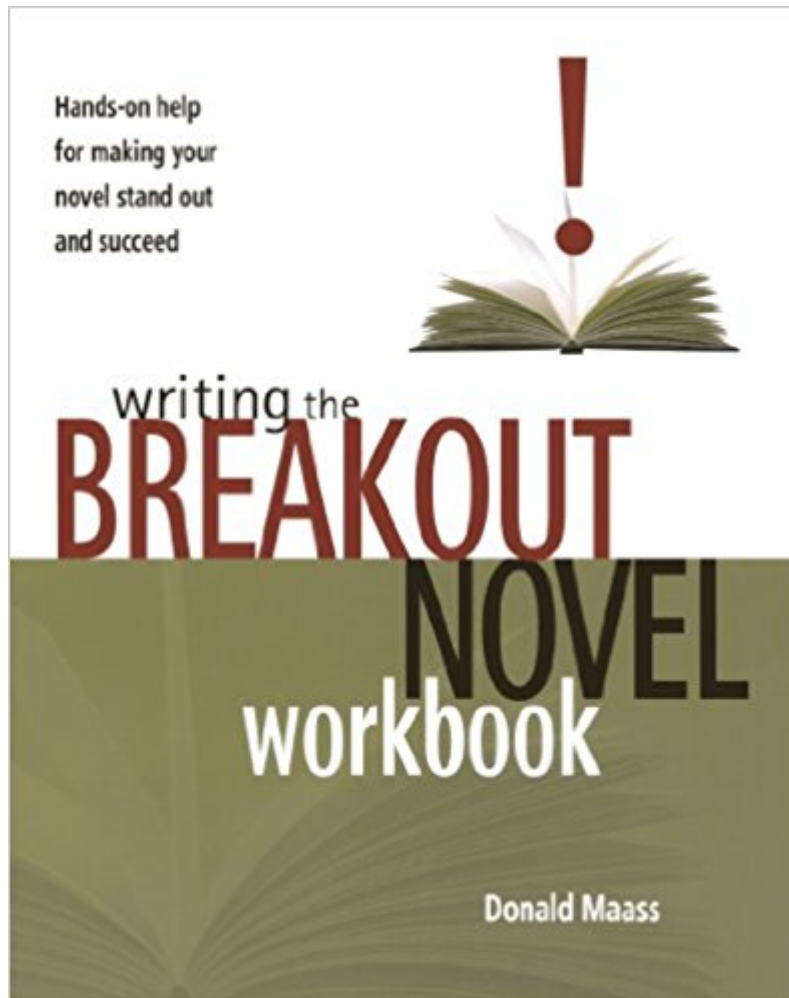




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Writing The Breakout Novel Workbook



Synopsis

Make Your Novel Stand Out from the Crowd! Noted literary agent and author Donald Maass has done it again! His previous book, "Writing the Breakout Novel," offered novelists of all skill levels and genres insider advice on how to make their books rise above the competition and succeed in a crowded marketplace. Now, building on the success of its predecessor, "Writing the Breakout Novel Workbook" calls that advice into action! This powerful book presents the patented techniques and writing exercises from Maass's popular writing workshops to offer novelists first-class instruction and practical guidance. You'll learn to develop and strengthen aspects of your prose with sections on: Building plot layers Creating inner conflict Strengthening voice and point of view Discovering and heightening larger-than-life character qualities Strengthening theme And much more! Maass also carefully dissects examples from real-life breakout novels so you'll learn how to read and analyze fiction like a writer. With authoritative instruction and hands-on workbook exercises, "Writing the Breakout Novel Workbook" is one of the most accessible novel-writing guides available. Set your work-in progress apart from the competition and write your own breakout novel today!

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (80 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

If you have "Writing the Breakout Novel," you don't really need the workbook. If you don't, this might be enough. It condenses "Writing the Breakout Novel." Each chapter deals with a topic (such as Exposition or Characterization) with some "workbook" pages at the end of each. The workbook exercises are basically questions with blanks (as opposed to charts or tables), which could just as

easily be accommodated at the end of any book. You certainly don't need both books. In either case, neither book will take you from idea to finished product. More accurately, both expect that you at least already have a work-in-progress, so an accurate title would be "REVISING the Breakout Novel." I bought both books and I would suggest only one or the other. If you want some in-depth on topics, buy the book. If you want just the essence and a few questions for thought, buy the workbook.

Donald Maass is a New York literary agent who seems to spend as much time promoting himself as he does his clients. Maass also does workshops on novel writing throughout the country, and this book, a companion publication for the more-in-depth *WRITING THE BREAKOUT NOVEL*, incorporates some of the exercises he assigns during those workshops. I have read dozens of writing books over the years; just about always I glean some valuable nuggets from each of them. Maass's workbook is no different. For instance, he suggests that the beginning novelist put off back story as long as possible to add tension and suspense. Maass stresses *THERE CAN'T BE TOO MUCH TENSION* in a novel. He suggests the writer add tension on every page! Another segment I found useful was his section on plot development. He recommends using layers and subplots to add texture and believability to your work. Subplots are plot lines given to characters other than the protagonist; layers are additional plot lines given to the main character. He uses *Mystic River* as an example. Sean Devine is a homicide cop who must investigate the murder of his boyhood friend Jimmy Marcus's daughter; his wife has also left him, taking their baby daughter with her; he also flashes back to the day when the principal suspect, Dave Boyle, was kidnapped by child molesters while he and Jimmy stood by and watched. Maass reinforces his advice by furnishing a sample outline in an appendix. He insists that every novelist, whether he uses an outline in actual practice or not, must provide one for a possible agent or film producer eventually anyway, so he might as well learn how to do one. Beginning writers should understand that writers never quit learning and that they should continually practice their craft. Baseball players and piano players practice continually, why not novelists? *WRITING THE BREAKOUT NOVEL WORKBOOK* will help you practice and head off possible mistakes.

Since he published *Writing the Breakout Novel* in 2001, Maass has taught a seminar of the same name at many writers conferences, and naturally learned from these experiences. The original book is here expanded by nearly three dozen exercises, which seem quite sensible, not hokey as are some by other teachers I've read. I own the Breakout book and just now am comparing the

workbook that I checked out of the local library. They're not the same, not by a long shot, despite what one reviewer here says. Though many sections have identical headers (such as Inner Conflict), they are completely rewritten, using different examples. The original book is 259 pages of 6x9, the workbook is 230 pp. of 8-1/2x11 format, thus it is by no means a condensation as TheCafeWriter asserts, and the original book is not necessarily more "in-depth." Some sections are, some aren't. The structure is substantially rearranged. Yet the concepts and the really fundamental points -- keep your story charged with tension, and so on -- do remain identical. These are essentially two complementary treatments of the same material by the same author. Maass asks his seminar participants to bring their in-process novels to perform exercises on, so the workbook is particularly useful if you are well into writing a novel already. With the discipline of the exercises, Maass teaches you to be your own draft doctor. For me, there appear to be easily enough new perspectives and ideas here to warrant buying the workbook even though I have read the original and have it on my bookshelf.

What does an aspiring novelist do when they've read just about all the how-to books out there? This has become my own dilemma, since I've read over 30 of the best fiction writing books (often twice) and am still looking for new insights and pearls of wisdom. It's not a bad idea to read the basics of fiction writing multiple times, since repetition is the surest way to permanently absorb and remember all the many details one must know to succeed in the novel writing market. This is why I heartily recommend Maass' new workbook IF YOU HAVE MASTERED THE BASICS AND ARE READY TO TACKLE THE ADVANCED ASPECTS OF NOVEL TECHNIQUE. Reading his previous book, "Writing the Breakout Novel" is imperative, and having read it twice is even better preparation. By expounding on his previous book's instructions and providing over 500 individual tasks to aid in improving and refining what you've already written, Maass has written a workbook that should make a big difference to anyone willing to spend the time and energy required to write a truly great story. This book is not for beginners, and it's not for sissies, but if you are thoroughly committed to succeeding and have already written a substantial part of your manuscript, it can give you the help you need to put you over the top. Bookstores are full of mediocre novels that somehow got published. Donald Maass has set a new standard for excellence. If you're serious, get "Writing the Breakout Novel" and "The Writing the Breakout Novel Workbook," and go for it!

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