

*Synopsis

-by Josi S. Kilpack

❖ **Synopsis:** A condensed, narrative, and concluding summary usually no more than two pages or one thousand words.

*Compressed until only the main characters and plot moving events are left. It should flow and read easily, yet be whole, not missing imperative portions of the story.

***Condensed:**

- ❖ Write in story form.
- ❖ Follow Book Chronology.
- ❖ Contain no lists, bulleted points, dialogue, or lengthy descriptions.
- ❖ ALWAYS third person, present tense.
- ❖ Do not write as if you are one of the characters.

***Narrative:**

It feels SO wrong, but tell how the story ends.

***Concluding:**

- ❖ You—know how to tell your story.
- ❖ Agent—needs to see how the story arc works.
- ❖ Editor—needs to see how the story arc works.
- ❖ Marketing Department—needs a quick way to become familiar with your book.
- ❖ Art designers—needs a quick way to become familiar with your book.

***Who Needs it?**

Before you write the book:

- * For submissions.
- * Serves as an outline.
- * Easier to write since the details aren't there.
- * Always on hand.
- * Revisable.

When Do I write it?*After you've written the book:**

- * Self-publishing.
- * Contests.
- * Assists in revision.
- * The story is finished.
- * Can reflect more details of the story.

***When do I Write it?**

- * 12 pt. Times New Roman Font
- * 1 inch margins
- * White paper
- * Identifying information in the upper left hand corner
- * Third person
- * Double space multiple pages

Basic Formatting:*The Dos and Don'ts of a Synopsis**

By Josi S. Kilpack

"A condensed, narrative, concluding summary of a novel"

DO—

- 1) Single space one page synopsis.
- 2) Double space multiple pages.
- 3) Begin with main character and main conflict.
- 4) Write in present tense.
- 5) Write in third person.
- 6) Use the same name when referencing a character.
- 7) Weave conflict as it happens in the story.
- 8) Keep flow easy to follow.
- 9) Transition between paragraphs.
- 10) Present a clear view of what characters care about.
- 11) Present a clear view of what's at stake for the heroes.
- 12) Present a clear view of what the heroes stand to lose.
- 13) Make synopsis fully conclusive.
- 14) Include pertinent info in the upper left hand corner:

Title here (in italics)
 Genre here—novel word count here
 Synopsis Word count here
 Author's name here

Tips and Tricks

- *Include a "hook" in the first paragraph.
- *One or two paragraphs per chapter makes a "Chapter Outline."
- *Condense your "Chapter Outline" to create your synopsis.
- *Follow the submission guidelines EXACTLY for each editor/agent you submit to.

DON'T—

- 1) Single space your synopsis unless it is one page or less.
- 2) Flush paragraphs—always indent the first line.
- 3) Space between paragraphs.
- 4) Use a cover page.
- 5) Use any fancy headings, fonts or font sizes. (12 point New Times Roman only)
- 6) Leave out any conflict that moves the story forward.
- 7) Leave out any characters that have an important role.
- 8) Include minor events of your story that don't move story.
- 9) Forget to proofread and edit.
- 10) Write the synopsis as if you were a character.

Your Synopsis is Your Sales Pitch—Polish it!

<http://www.josiskilpack.com/synopsis.html>

***How to Condense:**

- ❖ What is essential information?
- ❖ Eliminate extra words ~ that, just, was
- ❖ Do you need to mention secondary characters?
- ❖ How much background information is necessary?
- ❖ Thoughts and motivation.
- ❖ Setting and description.
- ❖ Transition paragraphs after the info is there.

The Hunger Games – Chapter Outline
words
YA Dystopian

Chapter One

Katniss Everdeen wakes up on the morning of reaping day and goes illegally into the woods surrounding District 12, where she lives among other coal mining families, to hunt for food. With her father dead, and her mother only barely functional, she feels responsible for her family and mostly, her little sister Prim who is sweet and innocent—and part of reaping day for the first time. In the woods she meets up with her best friend Gale, another illegal hunter, and they talk about reaping day and the country where they live, Panam. Every year two kids ages 12-18 are chosen to compete in a fight to the death competition of survival. The winner lives in luxury and fame the rest of his life, other losers stand as an example of the war between the districts and the capitol. This is Prim's first year and Katniss is glad that she only has one entry. All the youth gathers in the square, segregated by age. When the girl tribute's name is drawn, it's Prim.

Chapter Two

Katniss is shocked that Prim's name is drawn but as soon as she realizes it's actually happened, she volunteers to go in Prim's place. She is marched up to the stage next to the speaker—Effie—and presented to her district as the female tribute. Still in shock with what's happened, she's even more stunned when the male tribute is drawn—Peeta Mellark. Katniss remembers a time shortly after her father was killed in a mining accident when the family was starving. Her mother was nearly comatose with grief over her father's death and hasn't gotten a job. Katniss was scrounging for food when he threw her some burned bread from his families bakery. The bread was meant for the pigs, but he's thrown it to her instead and saved her life and her families. With a full belly she could think of other options and that's when she decided to sneak into the woods to forage for her family. She had never talked to Peeta, but never forgotten his kindness. Now, she and he would be against each other in the arena. There was ever only one winner of the Hunger Games.

The Hunger Games – Chapter Outline
words
YA Dystopian
Suzanne Collins

Chapter One

It's reaping day and Katniss Everdeen's sister, Prim, is entered into the reaping for the first time. Two kids ages 12-18 will be chosen from District 12 and go on to compete against kids from the other 11 districts in a fight to the death where only one person wins. Against all odds, Prim's name is drawn.

Chapter Two

Katniss volunteers in Prim's place and joins the boy tribute, Peeta Mellark, on the stage. He once gave her bread when she was starving.

The Hunger Games – Chapter Outline
words
YA Dystopian
Suzanne Collins

It's reaping day in District 12, where one girl and one boy will be chosen to compete in a fight to the death against the tributes from the other districts. There is only ever one winner and when KATNISS EVERDEEN'S sister, PRIM, is drawn, Katniss volunteers to take her place. The boy tribute is PEETA MALLARK, a boy who once gave her bread when she was starving.

Her Good Name
LDS Romantic Suspense—83,000
637 word synopsis
By Josi S. Kilpack

CHRESSAIDIA JOSEFINA SALAZAR, or Chrissy, gave up believing in fairy tales a long time ago, and she only agreed to the blind date with MICAH HEET, a divorced father of three, because her best friend, AMANDA, promised her a pedicure if she'd go. She has no delusions that Micah is the man that will change her life. However, the actual date changes the lives of both of them when the cashier who rings up their dimers also sells their identities.

Micah's identity is used solely for money, whereas Chrissy's identity becomes the final detail needed for a new CHRESSAIDIA to come to the US, have her child, and earn the respect of her father; a militant leader in Guatemala intent on overthrowing the current democratic government of their country. The new Chressaidia arrives in southern California, eight months pregnant and resentful of the role forced upon her. She infiltrates the drug trade of her husband, FREDERICO, and makes herself right at home with the new name she's taken on.

Chrissy continues to live her life in Idaho Falls; helping care for her niece and nephew, looking for a new career path, ignoring the dreams that never quite came true in her life, and completely unaware of the identity crisis looming over her. When Chrissy finally discovers the theft of her identity, she finds herself with a police record, tens of thousands of dollars worth of debt in her name, and an empty bank account. Amanda convinces her to go to Micah for advice, since he's recently dealt with his own attempts of proving his innocence, and with their paths crossing once again they both wonder if perhaps there is room for second impressions.

Back in California, Chressaidia is anxious to finish her mission and return to her father, but when her baby is born with serious birth defects she determines to find another way to prove her worth. Abandoning her child at the hospital, she becomes intent on proving Federico's failings and showing her father the extent of her abilities by finding an arms shipment that was lost months earlier. She manages to transport a portion of the guns across the Mexico border and makes plans to ship the rest of them as soon as the details can be arranged. Nothing will stop her.

Meanwhile, Micah and Chrissy begin unraveling the facts of their circumstances and making up for that first date-gone-bad until Micah's ex-wife's announcement of her divorce from her current husband forces Micah to admit he no longer has room for a relationship when his children need his stability so much. Following Micah's explanation, Chrissy's patience runs out. She heads to California, intent on proving to the police that the woman they arrested is a fraud. However, upon arrival she decides to first gather enough facts to make her argument indisputable. Micah joins her after his identity is accessed once again, and together they realize

- * Character motivation, conflict, and goals.
- * A hook.
- * Actions, reactions, and decisions that fuel your plot.
- * Revise, revise, revise.
- * Follow submission guidelines
- * Style and voice—match it to your book.
- * Transitions to keep the narrative flowing

***Don't Leave out:**

- * **Book summary**= Elevator speech about your book, the back cover, the concept statement.
- * **Chapter outline**= Numbered and titled chapters of the book with one sentence of explanation if needed.

- * Tell all—no suspense
- * Convey enthusiasm

Non-Fiction Synopsis=

