To Plot or Not Handout
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A debate has been raging in the writing world for probably as long as there has been pen and paper, and perhaps longer, between plotters and pantsers.

The pros and cons

Plotting

Pros	Cons
The story has direction.	Plotting takes time.
You'll probably need to do fewer rewrites.	It's hard work.
You'll have focus. You'll know what you need to write.	There's no word count by which to measure progress during the plotting stage.
You'll probably get through it quicker because you won't get stuck as often.	Some people feel plotting robs them of their creativity.
You can write whenever you have time, without waiting for inspiration to strike.	There's less freedom to make changes to the story.

Pantsing

Pros	Cons
A journey of creativity and discovery.	Pantsing involves a lot more staring at a blank page and a lot more writer's block.
The characters make stuff up as they go along.	More rewriting. Sometimes a lot more rewriting
There's more more freedom to make spontaneous changes.	You only write when you have inspiration. When you run out, you get stuck and give up.
Pantsing's fun and exciting	Pantsed stories often go unfinished

The Plotter	The Pantser
engineer architect organized detail oriented	free spirit writes by the seat of his/her pants Follows the story, wherever it goes Hollywood's favorite stereotype for writers

The first the first thing a plotter usually does is determine the story's plot, then she usually creates the outline.

A plotter	A pantser
does a lot of the work up front	doesn't
-Character development	finds the plot as they go
-story plot line	develops the characters as they go
-character relationships	builds the world as they go
-chapter planning	discovers the theme as they go
-the inciting incident	uses edits to put plot points in the right places
-the major plot points	
-the climax	

You might be a plotter if…
•The concept of "just diving in" without a scene-by-scene breakdown leaves you colder than a hairless cat in a blizzard.
•Coming up with a detailed plan is the first thing you think of when creating a new novel … or a new anything.
•You love planning things, down to the smallest detail.
•Before you start writing, you do the Meyers-Briggs test for all your characters.
•Your friends use words like "anal-retentive" or "OCD" to describe you, but you know you're just detail-oriented and you like it that way.

You might be a pantser if…
•The concept of outlining gives you a panic attack.
•You really enjoy the sound of your fingers on the keyboard.
•You prefer writing that matures organically.
•What's a Meyers-Briggs test?
•You'd rather scrub the toilet than do an outline.
•Write the synopsis or query before the book is done? Really? You're kidding, right?

Famous anecdote:
Stephen King, the most famous of pantsers, says he likes to put characters in stressful situations and see where the story takes him.

One of the most famous plotters, who also happens to be the top selling author of our time, is James Patterson. His outlines are quite extensive and read like little stories by themselves.

Stephen King famously said James Patterson is a terrible writer. Mr. Patterson then wrote a book called "The Murder of Stephen King" (The book launch was cancelled before it went to press).

Tips for successful pantsing:
1.Don't stop. If you're going to pants, go all in. Do. Not. Stop.

2. For that first draft, use narrative and dialogue to drive your story forward

3. Know your genre.
        know the conventions that your readers might expect
                Hero or heroine
                Action and tension
                Twists and turns

4. Don't edit
        that's what rewrites are for, and there will be rewrites.

5. Do research later. Later drafts are where you get technical if necessary.

6. Stop mid-sentence or mid-paragraph in order to save some precious flow for the next time

7. Write in scene/sequel units

Tips for successful plotting:

1. The three-act structure:
originates from the early theatre and is most often used in screenwriting
        Good reference book: Syd Fields's *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*
                Setup, the Confrontation and the Resolution.

2. The four-act story line:
        breaks the huge, messy middle where most writer get lost into two smaller parts.
                A good reference book for this is Larry Brooks's *Story Engineering*

3. The Snowflake method:
        developed by physicist, Randy Ingermanson, PhD.
                based on the principle of fractals in nature.
                uses nine steps to design and plot out the entire story
Randy Ingermanson's site, https://www.advancedfictionwriting.com/articles/snowflake-method/

4. The Hero's Journey:
Joseph Campbell was a comparative mythology and comparative religion professor at Sarah
Lawrence College
        actually based on an eight-page memo by Christopher Vogler while he was working at
        Disney Studios

5. The Dramatica Method
        the most difficult to master
                provides the most complete way of designing a novel
        no "hero" or "villain". There is
                the protagonist (the character who drives the plot forward)
                the antagonist (the character or force that attempts to thwart the protagonist)
                a main character, who may or may not be the protagonist - think *Sherlock &*
                Holmes)
        over 32,000 potential plot variations based on structural decisions

*There's a free 340-page PDF here: http://dramatica.com/resources/assets/dramatica-theory-book.pdf
*There's an interactive software program here: http://www.write-bros.com/dramatica-pro.html.

A few more helpful tips for Plotters ('cause we're all about being organized)**:**

1.Index cards:

2. Blank business cards in card sleeves for 3-ring binders

3. Scrivener software:

4. Spreadsheet:

5. Outline in reverse:

6. Structure each scene (scene/sequel):

Conclusion:
There is no debate, there is no conflict. There is no spoon (*Matrix* reference).

The difference, if there is one, lies not in the 'how', but in the 'when'.
Plotters are pantsing, but they do the pantsing after figuring out the story, or adjust as they go.
Pantsers are plotting, but they do it as they go, or after the first draft.

BOTH methods arrive at a point where they have a big lump of a story that now needs refining and sharpening into a real story.

At this point, the pantsers will work on their plot, the plotters will re-plot or work on their character arcs, strengthening elements of theme and emotional engagement.

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