

Get Into Your Reader Brain

Your role as a writer isn't to cater to your readers' taste, but to the experience that your readers will have while reading your story. We designed this worksheet because, as writers, we have so much swimming around in our heads—character and relationship backstories, worldbuilding, plans for future chapters, etc.—that it can be easy to forget what your readers know about your story, when they know it, and what they expect going forward. These questions are meant to help you get out of your writer brain and into the brain of your readers by momentarily erasing all the context you have for your story that your readers aren't privy to.

This worksheet can be used when thinking about any single chapter of your story, except for the first chapter. Try your best to forget anything you have planned for future chapters and anything you have yet to explicitly show or tell your readers about your story. Unlike some of our previous worksheets, these questions are most useful when filled out in order. Be detailed in your responses to the prompts, and try to forget everything you know about your story, except for the words on the page.

Before the chapter starts:

What questions do you have going into this chapter because of how the previous chapter ended? What are you expecting to happen in this chapter?

What is the problem the character is trying to solve? Or, what is the conflict they are trying to overcome? Will they be able to solve it or overcome it in this chapter?

During the chapter:

What actions is the character taking to solve their problem or overcome their conflict?

Are the character's actions successful in helping them get closer to their goal?
Why or why not?

What is the moment in the chapter where everything changes? [What is the “It Happens” moment on the story coaster?](#) Remember, this doesn't have to be a loud moment; one very small, almost insignificant action can be the point around which the scene turns.

What emotions are the characters experiencing in this chapter? Do their emotions change because of the “It Happens” moment? How are the characters showing their emotions to you through their thoughts, feelings, and actions?

After the chapter ends:

Have the questions you had at the start of the chapter been answered? If not, why?

Having finished this chapter, what questions do you have going into the next chapter? What are you expecting to happen in the next chapter? What are you expecting to happen in the story?

What am I thinking? What am I feeling? Is this the same reaction you are hoping your readers will have?