

On one end of the prewriting spectrum lies Steven Pressfield's foolscap method.

Basically, everything you need to launch your first draft should fit on one page.

Here are his steps:

**Step 1:** Divide your page into three parts: beginning, middle, end. Or...Act I, Act II, Act III

Based on his video demonstration, you might want to leave set aside a little space on the right side of the sheet to allow for Steps 2-5.

**Step 2:** Determine your narrative device. How do you want to tell your story? Through whose point of view? And in what time frame? [i.e. in real time vs. in recollection]

**Step 3:** Decide on your story's theme. What is the story about? Quote from Pressfield: "The theme will lead you to the climax, the antagonist, and all of the events from back to front." Pressfield admits this is a very challenging step and that he, and many other writers, have written entire stories without addressing theme.

**Step 4:** Determine your story's inciting incident. Defined as 'the moment when the story begins.' Pressfield uses Apollo Creed's decision to fight Rocky, The Italian Stallion, as a clear example of an inciting incident. Often, an inciting incident doesn't occur immediately. [i.e. The writer may need to set the stage and introduce characters.]

**Step 5:** Determine your story's climax, which, according to Pressfield, should be directly linked to the inciting incident. These are points when the story is resolved. The actual boxing match between Creed and Rocky provides the crisis/climax and is the logical outgrowth from the inciting incident of Creed issuing the challenge.

Key points:

1. Pressfield credits documentarian Norman Stahl with teaching him this method.
2. This manageable approach reduces the fear and resistance many of us face in the early days of a project.
3. Pressfield suggests that, even if you prefer creating a fully fleshed-out outline, you use the foolscap method first. "You have a spine all the way through that story."

4. Here are the links to Steven Pressfield's demonstration of the foolscap method.

Video 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8sqO\\_p6aR8&t=313s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8sqO_p6aR8&t=313s)

Transcript:

[http://www.stevenpressfield.com/blackirishbooks/the-authentic-swing/Steven-Pressfield\\_Foolscap-Video-1.pdf](http://www.stevenpressfield.com/blackirishbooks/the-authentic-swing/Steven-Pressfield_Foolscap-Video-1.pdf)

Video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2ZwVMMU4PI&t=185s>

Transcript:

[http://www.stevenpressfield.com/blackirishbooks/the-authentic-swing/Steven-Pressfield\\_Foolscap-Video-2.pdf](http://www.stevenpressfield.com/blackirishbooks/the-authentic-swing/Steven-Pressfield_Foolscap-Video-2.pdf)