

First Chapter Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure your novel's first chapter grabs readers' attention and sets your story up for success.

- Does your story start in the middle of the action (in medias res)?
- Is your protagonist introduced within the first few paragraphs?
- Does your main character do or want something that reveals who they are?
- Have you established the tone and voice of the novel?
- Is there a hint of the main conflict or problem?
- Have you avoided info dumps and excessive backstory?
- Is your first line compelling and attention-grabbing?
- Do readers understand what's at stake (or at least sense the tension)?
- Is your world-building minimal but immersive?
- Do you end the chapter with a page-turning moment or emotional hook?