

THE 5-MINUTE GUT-CHECK

Is Your Book Idea Worth Writing?

Most people don't have a story yet—they have a **premise fragment**. Before you spend a year (or more) writing, score your idea against the five signals that make readers, agents, and publishers lean in.

Rate each one from **1 (not yet)** to **5 (nailed it)**. Be honest—a low score isn't a “no,” it's just where to aim your next bit of work.

★ The Winning-Idea Scorecard

Adapted from “Spotting a Winning Idea” in the full Starter Kit.

Genre clarity Could a bookseller instantly tell which shelf it belongs on?	LOW 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH
Strong comps Can you name two comparable titles—“for readers of X and Y”?	LOW 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH
Tropes & expectations Do you know the “promise” your genre makes to its readers?	LOW 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH
Passion & staying power Still excited to talk about this every week for the next two years?	LOW 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH
Story or topic depth A real arc (fiction) or 10–12 strong chapters' worth of questions (nonfiction)?	LOW 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH

YOUR SCORE

/25

20–25 · Strong

13–19 · Promising

12 or under · Park it

This one's worth writing. Build the hook on the next page.

You've got something—sharpen the lowest-scoring signals first.

Plant it in your “idea garden” and test a different one.

TURN THE IDEA INTO ONE IRRESISTIBLE LINE

1 Build Your Hook

If you can't say it in a sentence, it isn't ready to write yet.

FOR FICTION — THE LOGLINE

When _____ happens, a _____ must
_____ before _____, even though _____.

Example (Jaws): To save a tourist-packed island on July 4th, a water-phobic sheriff must defy a greedy mayor and hunt the killer shark terrorizing the town before it strikes his family.

FOR NONFICTION / MEMOIR — THE PROMISE

This book is for _____ who struggle with _____. It shows
them how to _____ by _____.

Tip: Lead with the reader's transformation, not your framework—readers buy the outcome they want, not your process.

2 Pick Your Lane

A directional choice now—not a contract. Check the one you're leaning toward.

☐ **Traditional**

A publisher invests in the book. Less cost up front, more time and patience, wider bookstore reach.

☐ **Self**

You're the publisher. Full control and a bigger share per sale—you fund and run it like a business.

☐ **Hybrid**

Shared cost and control with a vetted partner. Higher royalties than traditional—avoid vanity presses.

YOU JUST DID THE FIRST PAGE OF THE WORK

Ready for the whole roadmap?

So You Want to Be an Author? takes you from “I have an idea” to a real plan—choosing your one book, picking a publishing path, a simple **30-day plan** to start drafting, the early mistakes that sink first-time authors, and exactly how readers find your book.

Get the complete Starter Kit

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