

Choosing the Perfect Title *for your story*

Coming up with the perfect title for your story can be powerful in a number of different ways. Your title is the very first thing that your reader will see, and if it's powerful enough, it will be the magical factor that's necessary to draw them in and keep them reading until the very end.

All the same, choosing the perfect title can often be more challenging than writing the actual story.

It should be all-encompassing in a way that offers readers insight into what they'll be devoting their next 15–30 minutes to. The best titles are catchy, intriguing, and memorable.

Here are just a few tips to keep in mind when you are creating a title for your story.

- + **Opt for intrigue and mystery.** While an obvious title (e.g., “What I Learned from My Divorce”) will give your reader an inkling of what they're about to read, a single but hard-hitting word, a mysterious phrase, or a poetic quotation that they won't fully understand until they get to the end of the story can be a great attention grabber (e.g., “Slipping Quietly Out the Back Door”).
- + **Consider the deeper themes of your story.** Is it about redemption? Birth? Death? Family? Choose a title that evokes the themes you'd most like to express (e.g., “Falling into Grace”).
- + **Offer a description of the main character (you).** Is there anything about the “you” in this story that stands out? What sets you apart from other people? Do you have a specific quality that defines the trajectory of your story (e.g., “The Woman Who Sleepwalked Her Way into a New Life”). Remember, the more mysterious and quirky, the better.
- + **Use action-oriented words.** Titles with strong verbs tend to be energetic and to rouse interest in readers (“Eat, Pray, Love,” “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”).
- + **Choose an epic title.** This will offer readers a bigger, grander picture of what the story is about (e.g., “The Year of Unconditional Love”).
- + **Go with a paradoxical title.** If your story contains contrasting ideas and scenarios, this can be powerful. Words and phrases that don't usually go hand in hand are sure to raise eyebrows and get someone reading further (e.g., “Blood and Chocolate,” “Pretty Monsters,” “Wicked Lovely”).
- + **Add a subtitle that'll help your reader make sense of the story before reading it.** A title is meant to be attention-grabbing, but it should also give the reader an indication of what she's getting herself into. A clarifying subtitle (e.g., “How I Found My Voice During a Three-Month Silent Meditation Retreat”) can offer profound and important context, especially when it's attached to a mysterious title.
- + **Make sure it means something to you.** Above all else, your title should be significant and evocative to you, and should refer to the main theme in your story.