

Nonfiction chapter outline workbook

Free editable version available in the author resource library.

BUILD AN ARGUMENT ONE READER QUESTION AT A TIME

Use this workbook after you have chosen a reader and central book promise. The companion CSV gives you one editable row per chapter. The completed CSV uses a fictional business book, *The Useful Meeting*, by invented author Mara Ellis. It illustrates structure; its situations are invented and do not establish research findings or client results.

1. SET THE BOOK'S BOUNDARY

Working title: _____

One reader and their situation: _____

The change or decision the book helps them make: _____

The central argument in one sentence: _____

Questions deliberately outside this book's scope: _____

2. WRITE THE READER'S QUESTIONS

List five to eight questions in the order the reader needs them answered. Start with the decision or problem, then explain the method, test its limits and help the reader act. Move a chapter if it depends on a concept you have not explained yet. Combine two chapters doing the same job.

3. COMPLETE A CHAPTER CARD

Chapter number and working title: _____

Reader question: _____

What the reader can decide or do by the end: _____

The one key idea this chapter develops: _____

Evidence needed, with source and verification status: _____

Example to use; real or fictional; permission status: _____

Practical exercise or next action: _____

Draft status and next reviewer question: _____

4. CHECK THE CHAPTER PROMISE

Weak: This chapter explains meetings.

More useful: By the end, the reader can turn a vague meeting topic into one decision question and identify who must approve that decision.

This is an editorial planning example, not a claim of proven outcomes.

5. KEEP EVIDENCE HONEST

Label your experience, external research and illustrative examples.

Record where a quotation, number or factual claim came from. Mark missing evidence as a task. Do not replace it with an invented statistic.

Before using real people or organizations, resolve permissions and confidentiality. Keep sensitive source records outside a shared outline.

6. REVIEW THE WHOLE SEQUENCE

[] Each chapter answers a distinct reader question.

- [] The chapters progress toward the book's central promise.
- [] Each chapter has a concrete reader takeaway.
- [] Examples fit the intended audience.
- [] Research claims have sources or a visible verification task.
- [] Real examples have a permission decision.
- [] Repetition and missing steps are marked before drafting.

EDITABLE COMPANIONS

Blank CSV: <https://greenfieldpublishers.com/resources/nonfiction-chapter-outline.csv>

Fictional completed CSV: <https://greenfieldpublishers.com/resources/nonfiction-chapter-outline-example.csv>

Build an outline in your browser:

<https://greenfieldpublishers.com/tools/nonfiction-chapter-outline.html>

Read the outlining guide:

<https://greenfieldpublishers.com/blog/how-to-outline-a-nonfiction-book.html>

The supplied CSV files contain plain text and no formulas. Add your own rows as needed. Keep account credentials and confidential interview material out of a workbook you plan to share.

Prepared with AI assistance. This original worksheet is a planning aid.

You may share an unmodified copy with the Greenfield name and resource link.

greenfieldpublishers.com/pages/author-resources.html