

A POSTMORTEM TEMPLATE FOR WRITERS



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These questions are meant for after you've finished a project, yet before you dive into a new one. Be honest, and don't judge yourself. The only way to improve is to learn from the past. 😊

WHAT WENT WELL



1. Off the top of your head, what are you most proud of from the latest project?
2. What went better than you anticipated? i.e. What was easier than expected?
3. Were you early or ahead of schedule at any point in the project?
4. Name three moments from the project that, while happening, made you feel good -- good about the project, good about yourself, whatever. Just name three moments that were positive.
5. List any challenges that you set for yourself/your writing that you also know you met. These can be as simple as "I finished an entire book!" or as complex as "I wrote a book with no clear villain."

WHAT DID NOT GO WELL



1. Off the top of your head, what was the most frustrating part of this project?

2. Were there any aspects you that thought would be easy but that were ultimately difficult?
3. Were you behind schedule at any point?
4. List any challenges that you set for yourself/your writing that you did NOT meet.
5. What recurring issues with the story did people such as your editor, critique partner(s), agent, trusted reader(s) raise with regards to the story?
6. Rank in order from what went SMOOTHEST to what went WORST:

Idea Generation
 Planning/Outlining
 Drafting New Words
 Spotting Problems to Fix
 Fixing Problems/Revising
 Taking Criticism
 Applying Criticism/Editing
 Staying Motivated
 Time Management

OTHER QUESTIONS



1. Did you end up with a product you are proud of?
2. Did you have adequate help to complete the project? i.e. Did you have critique partners, editorial/publishing support, family support, people to brainstorm with, etc.?
3. Based on the previous questions, were your deadlines realistic for the project?
4. Why do you think your highest ranked (smoothest) step went well?
5. Why do you think your lowest rank (worst) step was difficult?

TIMELINE RECAP



Try to recap, as best you can, what the timeline for the project was. When did you begin? What were the deadlines? What progress did you make, when were things difficult, when did you finish a first draft, etc.?

Once you have a timeline, make note of areas where life might have interfered and negatively impacted (or positively!) your creative output.

For future projects, I suggest keeping general track of progress, deadlines, emotional noise *while* the project is unfolding. That way, when it is time for your next postmortem, you'll already have a timelines to assess and analyze!