

# STORY

## ***Writing on Wattpad 101***

*It's no small feat, but digital and social storytelling comes with its own set of challenges. Upping your skills with these simple pointers will give your story its best chance for success. Ready? Let's do this!*

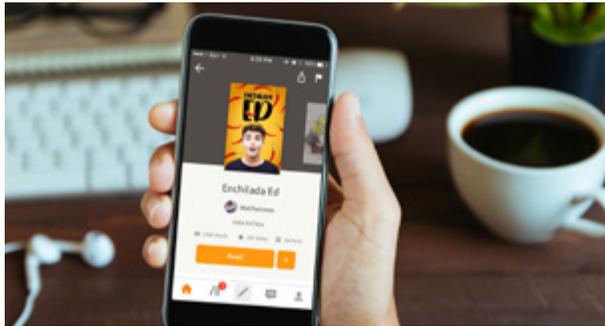
**wattpad**

# Appearance

*They say not to judge a book by its cover. But when prospective readers are browsing stories, first impressions matter. Stories with covers get 23x more reads than those without. Your best shot at getting a reader's attention? A striking, click-worthy cover that is a clear reflection of the story you've written. A great cover will tease what's inside, or speak to one of the major themes of the work. Here are some tips on how to maximize your story's appearance.*

## Design for a thumbnail

Over 85% of readers on Wattpad are using mobile devices. Despite the optimal cover dimension (512 x 800 pixels), in some mobile situations, your cover may appear as small as a finger. Contrast between your type and imagery will become more important the smaller your cover scales, so keep this in mind. Also, **make sure your title is clear and obvious**, so readers understand it immediately. Because let's face it, it doesn't matter how great your title is if no one can read it.



## Aim for bold imagery

Iconic designer Dieter Rams put it best when he said, "Good design is as little design as possible." While he wasn't a book designer per se, his advice holds up. Try to stick with simple, bold imagery that speaks to the content within your story. If we're staying with the **less-is-more** design philosophy, it's a good idea to ask yourself: is everything you've included absolutely essential? If not, scrap it. Also, you use your words to create a tone within your story, your imagery should too. Angsty drama? Try something moody and dark. Cute and feel-good? Try something bright and sweet.

## Choose a typeface carefully

Your typeface (or font) should pair perfectly with the imagery. It can be tough to pick a type when you're not a professional designer, but as a starting point, use a more 'traditional' font for traditional, straight-forward images, or a more evocative or playful font if the story and imagery calls for it. When it doubt: **keep it legible and keep it simple**. Steer clear free novelty fonts and "grungy" fonts and choose from the professional fonts that you likely already have on your computer. You can also download free (professional) fonts from Google Fonts.

## Keep it current and contemporary

Fresh covers attract new readers so it's a good idea to update your cover every so often to give it a renewed shelf-life. Even the shiniest covers can fade over time, and design sensibilities can shift and evolve over the years. A new, different-looking story cover can help entice new readers. It's a great way to reinvigorate the community and entice readers who first passed the story to check it out again. Think of it as a refresh!

## Run visual experiments

Wattpad is a great way to test the waters on what appeals most to people. With the help of our community, you can learn, iterate, and improve upon your story's appearance until you've reached perfection, or close to it! Try variations of your cover to see what style or mood attracts more eyeballs, or turn your friends or fans into an ad-hoc focus group by asking them to pick which one they like best.

## Learn by example

Take inspiration from cover designs you love. Look at your bookshelf or take a scroll through Wattpad. What drew you to certain covers? How can you incorporate similar elements into your own cover design to really make your story stand out?

## Find resources

The Wattpad community has tons of free resources and services. Graphic storytellers and groups, photoshop phenoms, and creative peers are everywhere. Many of Wattpad's top cover generators gather in the Multimedia Designs Club, eager to help create beautiful graphics for Wattpad writers. If you want to take a crack at it yourself, Canva is an excellent free image editor. Bonus: it has a Wattpad cover section, with exact sizes and proportions.

“**A good cover invites everyone to the party. The story is why people stay.**”

- @nonfictionalex, Wattpad Star

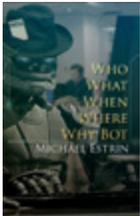
# Description

*The description of your story is your elevator pitch to every reader. You don't get the chance to have a personal conversation with everyone who opens your work, so you have to make sure your description draws in your target audience and gives them a brief understanding of what's in store when they turn to the first page. This is your shot to impress. Make it your best! After all, stories with descriptions get on average 108x more reads.*

## Say it in 100 words

Keep your story's secrets (no spoilers!), but don't keep readers in the dark. Anyone who reads your story is making an investment of their time. Make that investment worth it by giving them something to care about right away. If your main character turns into a werewolf halfway through the story, you can keep that as a twist. But if your story is about werewolves right from the start, you should probably mention it in your description.

Think of your story like a rollercoaster. Riders want to know what they're getting into. They are in it for the ride, they want to feel the dips and the excitement, but they won't get on if they have no idea what's coming. That's why you usually want to see a rollercoaster before you get on. Descriptions work the same way. Readers need to be able to evaluate what they're getting into. They want to invest in your story. Let them know what they're investing in—taking them for the ride of their lives is what the rest of the story is for.



Story: [Who What When Where Why Bot](#)  
by [@mestrin](#)

“ Daniel Guzman is a lazy sports reporter who invents a robot journalist to write his stories for him. Obviously, Daniel never read FRANKENSTEIN, because if he had, he would've known that it's only a matter of time before the monster escapes the lab and wrecks the damn place. Then again, maybe the newsroom needs wrecking, and perhaps, Daniel's creation, Mike Computica, is exactly the kind of technological disruption journalism has been waiting for. ”

## Spark their interest

Try embellishing your description with a juicy quotation right from your story, but don't rely on pull-quotes to describe the whole thing. A quote or a short excerpt is useful, but it's not substantial enough to inform your audience about your story's content. Quotes are very good as catalysts or for emphasis. They boost a feeling, they reveal a style, they punch up a moment. But even the most eloquent quote can't stand alone. This isn't the time for mystery. If you include a quote with no description, readers will have trouble understanding what your story is about.

## Be distinct

What is your story's hook? What's the one thing that's different from every other story on Wattpad? Everyone is writing a story that is special and brilliant in its own way. However, sometimes when we boil our ideas down to a few points, the unique nature of your work can get lost. Your story doesn't exist in a vacuum on Wattpad; there are millions of others readers can choose from and compare with. If yours doesn't look or sound different, what will make them pick it up?

## Add content warnings

Wattpad's rating system is sorted into Everyone and Mature (17+). When it comes to mature stories, we have thorough [content guidelines](#) in place to help you properly rate your story. But stories are nuanced, and adding specific warnings to your description will attract the readers you want and avoid potentially surprising others in a negative way. Graphic violence, sexual content, or other trigger warnings are a responsible and courteous way to categorize your work.

## Write a logline

A logline is a quick summary of the who, what, where, and why of your story. It covers the basics and leaves us with a hook. What's so special about your story? A logline will let us know the central conflict of your story and an emotional “hook” to get readers interested. Keep loglines to a few sentences.



Story: [Rosehead](#)  
by [kseniaanske](#)

“ A misunderstood and over-medicated 12-year-old discovers a carnivorous rose garden in her grandfather's Berlin estate and must unravel the secrets behind it—before her entire family is devoured. ”

## Include a tagline

If your story was a movie, what would the trailer or poster say? Or if it was a new product, what would the commercial promise? Think about a line that will tease your readers and leave them wanting more.



Story: [Textrovert](#)  
by [Lindsey Summers](#)

“ Can you fall in ❤️ with someone you've never met? ”

# Tagging

If you had to describe your story in a handful of words, which ones would you choose? Wattpad uses tags to tell readers what your story is about. Tags also make your story more discoverable by allowing it to appear in several different locations across Wattpad—from search, to tag pages, to the home page. Optimize your discoverability by using words that are accurate and relevant to your story. Try this breakdown to effectively tag your story:

## Start with the big picture basics

First and foremost, you should capture the genre of your story through tags. Are you writing [romance](#) or [mystery](#)? An intergalactic [sci-fi](#) or world-building [fantasy](#)?

## Specify the theme

What unifying idea pervades your story? Is it [friendship](#), [family](#) or [redemption](#)? Are you telling a [coming-of-age](#) tale, one of [self-discovery](#) or even a [firstlove](#)? Indicate what themes are examined within your work.

## Choose your subgenres

Stories are complex and often fit within multiple niches that appeal to varied audiences. Get specific about which subgenres, if any, your story explores. Is your story set in a [dystopian](#) world or is it written for a [newadult](#) audience? Let us know.

## Set the mood

What can readers expect from your story on an emotional level? Set an emotional expectation or mood with tags like [angst](#), [slowburn](#) or [feelgood](#).

## Establish the time and place

From 17th century French court to a far-off future, the setting of Wattpad stories are pretty much limitless. Tell us when and where your story takes place. For example: [France](#), [1940s](#), [contemporary](#) or [alternateuniverse](#).

## Get creative

Leave a few tags open as wild cards for those super-specific things that set your story apart, like [dragons](#) or [pingpong](#).

# Chapters

Reading online is different than reading in print. If you want to keep your audience hanging on every word you write, we suggest you follow these tips for maximizing eyeballs.

## Update often

Serialization is a great way to hook your readers and keep them coming back, chapter after chapter. When you release your story one chapter at a time, you're rewarded with continual encouragement and real-time feedback from your audience, excited to join you for the ride. We recommend updating two to three times per week, if you can. It will help keep readers satisfied and engaged, while still building anticipation. And excitement.

## Keep it concise

Chapters are a tricky science. The rule of thumb is that a chapter should only be as long as it takes to deliver the scene. However, there are some trends and notes to go along with mobile reading, which is a totally unique experience. Digestible chapters of between 2000 and 2500 words seem to be the best length with some shorter paragraphs.

## Pay attention to aesthetics

When in doubt, take a look at your own story on the Wattpad app to see how it looks there. The **overall aesthetics of the page are important to mobile readers**. Long paragraphs with very few breaks in between can overwhelm the screen. On the opposite end of the spectrum, stories with too much whitespace can appear underdeveloped or lacking. Stories should have a careful balance of dialogue and description.

# Publish

*There is nothing more exciting than hitting the Publish button for the first (or hundredth!) time. Here are some tips and tricks to help you craft more engaging, binge-worthy content.*

## Customize your story

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Your story is yours, and you're free to personalize it as you see fit. We've seen writers create prologues, epigraphs, playlists, cast lists... the list goes on. Take advantage of Wattpad's inline multimedia capabilities to **create visual interest within your stories**. Get creative and build a world around your story to truly capture your reader's imagination. It's awesome to stock your story with supplementary material, just make sure it's not keeping readers from the good stuff—the story itself!

## Polished isn't perfection, and that's OK

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We get it: most Wattpad stories are first draft, spilling out from your heart and imagination at a thousand miles per hour. There might be things you want to change later on. And that's okay! These are all small details and your readers will totally understand. They're here for the story. Avoid prefacing your story with apologies, excuses or self-deprecating comments—don't give readers an excuse not to click on it!

## Mark it as “complete”

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You did it! The hard part is over and you've reached the end of your story. Not many writers get here so take a moment to celebrate. But don't forget to mark your story complete via “Story Details.” Stories marked “complete” attract 4x as many reads as stories that aren't. Remember: readers are choosing to invest their limited time in a story and they want the payoff of an awesome ending!

Got a story with over 40,000 words? Celebrate some more, since only a tiny fraction of writers finish stories over this word count.

# Conclusion

In a sea of stories, making yours stand out is a careful balance of aesthetics and mechanics. When it comes to appearance, your cover is the first impression readers get of your content. Make sure your title is clear and obvious. Design it with the less-is-more philosophy and aim for striking imagery that will grab readers' attention. You can also encourage prospective readers by telling them why your story is worth it upfront. Treat your story's description as an elevator pitch to your target audience: it should be succinct but persuasive.

Wattpad is a product with plenty of levers at your disposal that can help get your story seen. Not only are tags a great way to categorize your work, but they also make your story more discoverable in Wattpad's search, tag pages, and homepage. Be mindful that most of your readers interact with stories on mobile devices, so serializing shorter chapters is the best way to maximize engagement.

**Remember:** storytelling is a continuous and iterative process! We hope these tips have provided a strong foundation to make your Wattpad experience the best one possible!