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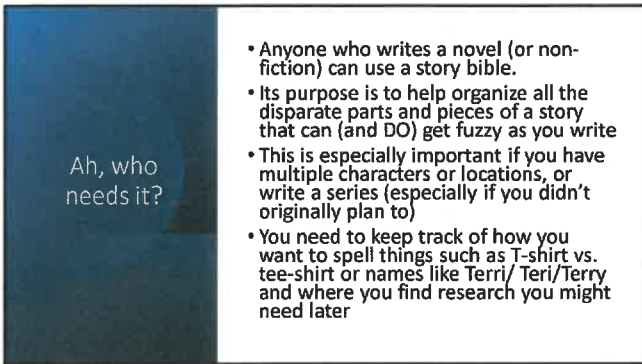
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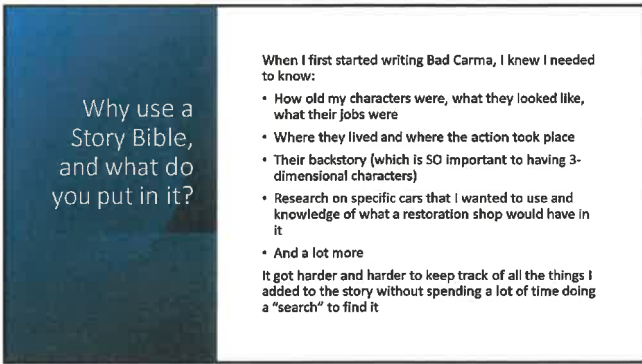
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Formatting a Story Bible

I use an Excel spreadsheet because it's easy to add rows/columns

There is no PERFECT bible format – pick what works for you

- Update the Bible whenever you add material info such as characters (even a minor character or place might become important and it's a pain to try and find where you used them initially), keep track of new research sites you've used
- Keep the Bible open but minimized so you can easily reference it, and will be more likely to update it regularly

A Story Bible won't do any good if you don't update it; if you're really into the story and don't want to take much time, copy and paste the info into a new top row of the Bible and move it to where it belongs when you stop for the day.

SAVE IT OFTEN.

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Tips for making the most use of the Bible

- Including a timeline as part of the bible will keep your action, time of day, meals, etc. straight, as well as make sure characters appear when they should, and look the same as you first described them (i.e. wearing same clothes)
- You'll easily see if too many characters names start with the same first letter, or end in the same sound (i.e. ...ie, ...y, etc.)
- Events occurring out of order
- If you have multiple POVs in a chapter

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Consider if you want photos of what your characters look like, or a map, or other visuals like a draft book cover included

- You can always create another "sheet" in your Excel (or if using a 3 ring binder, just add more pages)
- You can paste images (not PDF but .jpg and others) into Excel and still have space for any notes you want to include

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Build a list of potential important contacts

- An expert you might want to ask questions
- Names/contacts of someone you'd like to have beta read, blurb, or review your story
- Who you want to remember to acknowledge in your book, etc.

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What does a story bible look like?

- Because there is no “right way” to do this, you can use any format you like.
- These are my formats as examples – find what works for you

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Story Bible Template	Identifying these before you start will focus your research and make the actual writing a bit easier - even for pastwits know!
Timeline	past/present/future - this is critical to research <small>Keep track of time passing</small> You may need to have Chapter 1 (Fall, 1888, or Monday, August 30, 1889), etc. to help you keep track as you go along.
Location (area)	Geographic Area/Time Period/Season/Other <small>Use other notes areas if they are far enough away to need their own research</small>
Worship/Religion/Spirituality/Other	Worship/Religion/Spirituality/Other <small>Some holidays, organizations, events, number, rank or other related info.</small>
Main Characters	Appearance (what's common for the time period) <small>Height/Build/Color, Hair/Style, Clothing, Shoes, Height/Weight, Undergarments (or lack thereof)</small> Job <small>Notes for rules/policies, potential if break rules, A can be included</small> Home <small>House/Location/Map/Name/Color/Style</small> Holidays <small>Events/Activities/Season/High/Low/Other/Other/Other</small>

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Characterization	What are the main themes of the text?	What are the main themes of the text?
Context	What is the historical and cultural context of the text?	What is the historical and cultural context of the text?
Structure	How is the text organized?	How is the text organized?
Style	What are the main stylistic features of the text?	What are the main stylistic features of the text?
Language	What are the main linguistic features of the text?	What are the main linguistic features of the text?
Genre	What is the genre of the text?	What is the genre of the text?
Author	Who is the author of the text?	Who is the author of the text?
Publication	When and where was the text published?	When and where was the text published?
Reception	How has the text been received?	How has the text been received?
Interpretation	What are the main interpretations of the text?	What are the main interpretations of the text?
Significance	What is the significance of the text?	What is the significance of the text?

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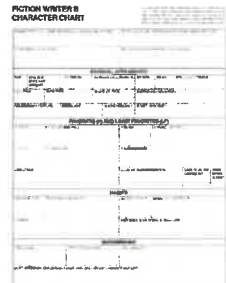
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This is an image off the internet to show you how many different options are available – it’s copyrighted

You can develop your own, with the details that are important to you, and have a version to cover locations, etc.



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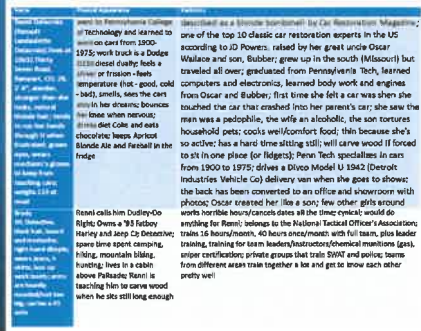
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This is just an example of how much info I have in my story bible about some of the characters.

Following are a few more pages, again, just to give you an idea how much you can put in and still use



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Not everyone gets the same amount of Info – just add what you need/use



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**My cars are as much characters as most of the people are**

1973 Ford Mustang pickup	modified to all wheel drive by the Mennonite/Mormon Motor Company; purchased at an auction in Standing Rock (impounded in Spanish Fork)
7 identical '68 Packard # 902 Coupes	
Resto Mod	Ford; purchased from a local yard sale \$45K value;
WWII motorcycle	
Cherry Red Oldsmobile Lightnin'	1967; red and tan leather seats
Black/White Explorer	brody's police vehicle
Olivo	1968 AWD; painted to match the travel trailer
1969 Ford Side Lisa	1968 and woman/child died in Viet Nam
Teardrop trailer	5m Dandy plans
FJ Bronco Candy	1930 V16 Cadillac Coupe; Vermillion Red paint chip
1950s	
Pumpkin (Newspaper by the Pumpkins)	situated off Palisade, western Colorado, high desert valley, close to Inhabited/Unpopulated; Fuzzy Head Distillers and Rampart Brewery
Ranger	
Restaurants Mentioned	Family medical restaurant (hand made Margaritas)
RiverSide Park on the Colorado River	

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**This is just so you can see how I handle a lot of information and research that I don't know if I'll need, but don't want to have to look for it later. This section is all about tools and things to do with restoration.**

Light wheel (pressed steel) bolts, shockers, struts, press hammer, plinking hammer, big wheeled tool box, Machine gloves, sanding blocks and boards, rollers for frame off work, chaper head roller, roller drill press, pneumatic plinking hammers, mallets and sandbags, leveling rocks, welding inert, plasma shades, chain pulley, sprockets and sockets, rolling jacks, platform (scissor) benches, stainless workbenches, parts washer, carbide/ceramic sheet metal (fabrication, beam clamps) and dip (tool expense); dry to heating is cheap/further for end users; the handling team off road and paint; late car parts; photograph parts, set parts in bags, catalogue where they come from, email each day by logging the photos and the vehicle numbers.	1961 or 1960 Ford car if concrete quality is good or better than mine (only); if a steel tool, look the original but has been updated (bolts, nuts that were modified in the 1950's are really hard to work on because there were a lot of shops that did one-off modifications; So Cal Speed Shop was one of the first to start doing much right after WWII; long group done high end restoration; Halfbrat Wheels are cool just like they did in the 1950's/first aftermarket/only other thing available was steel/wheel; Hooker Street Rods; Glass shops come to the workshop and do their measurements/repairs; Hammer Action does insure and comparable to find parts swap meets, pickers, car hoarders (many cars of the same year/B's who you know/connections; Fabrication is expensive for parts, body and finish; due to retail cost; many different hardware/dishes/welder/rider; paint specialists is required for a real/very stressed/expensive to a lot of chemicals and tends to drink/unhappy and grumpy/perfectionist and perfectionist; Advertising: search at big group/brand of mouth; Arizona Street Rods (Phoenix), some people won't tell how they got things/have secrets/full in love; most cars only go to show and aren't ever driven; A/E (valing, PHS Hirschberg Paint & Glass, DuPont, Detroit 2000 (can't handle the old style acrylic enamel and lacquer); 1930's Ford's used dip (synthetic enamel) users through solvent evaporation, doesn't have to be polished to be glossy/can speed up the curing process with baking; spray painted; new paint has isocyanates/harden in the king and like you; older cars can use three/layer lower/paint; \$300 per gallon; paint/hard; not/brush; it was 1970's.
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**Very simple timeline**

This allows you to know if action is out of order (move chapters around), where you might need research, etc.

Also allows you to leave blanks to fill in once the details get worked out (day, weather, etc.)

Can also be used as an initial outline for the story

You can make this as simple or detailed as you like, just don't spend more time playing around with the timeline than you do writing the story. This tool can help you keep the storyline straight, maintain continuity, make sure you don't have multiple POVs in a chapter, etc.

Chapter	Month/year	Day of Week/time	Weather	Location	Action	POV
1	April 1977	Monday/afternoon	Hot, sunny fruit blossoms (apple) dandelion sky	townsquare in shop	she is overheard; she touches it and sees scary stuff	Ranni
2	July	Monday/late afternoon	same	uptown in brody comes	brody comes over and starts story; makes fun of her ability	Ranni
3	July	Monday evening	Same	Police station	brody finds things that don't make sense	brody

Whatever you use, make sure it can grow and change with the story

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Other sites to learn about Story Bibles

Be aware that your 2<sup>nd</sup> story bible might be a lot different than your 1<sup>st</sup> as you learn what works and what doesn't

- [The Story Bible: What It Is and Why You Need One | Jane Friedman](#)
- [Creating Your Very Own Story Bible \(farahoomerbhoy.com\)](#)
- [Tips on Creating a Story Bible | Celebrating Independent Authors \(indiesunlimited.com\)](#)
- [How to Create A Series Bible for Your Fiction \(lornafaith.com\)](#)
- [The Story Bible: Needs, Wants, Must-Haves \(theladynerds.com\)](#)

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### About Me



If you're at all interested, my website is [www.terribensonauthor.com](http://www.terribensonauthor.com), and I have an author Facebook page at [terri\\_benson author](#)

- An Unsinkable Love, in e-book and paperback on Amazon
- The Angel and the Demon/Book 1 of Lead Me Into Temptation, in e-book now (paperback 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2022) on Amazon
- Coming Soon, Pickup Artist/A Bad Karma Mystery, releasing 4/1/22

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Story Bible Template	Identifying these before you start will focus your research and make the actual writing a lot faster - even for pantsers (I should know!)	
Timeframe	past/present/future - this is critical to research	Keep track of time passing
	what year/month/season	You may need to have Chapter 1 (Fall, 1889, or Monday, August 30, 1889), etc. to help you keep track as you go along
Location (main)	Geographic area/city/town/continent/planet	List other major areas if they are far enough away to need their own research
Season/Date (beginning)	Winter/Halloween/Solstice/day/night /temperature	Know holidays, temperatures, sunset/sunrise, rain or snow, wind, etc.
Main Characters	Appearance (what's common for the time period)	Beards/mustaches, hairstyles, clothing, shoes, height/weight, undergarments (or lack thereof)
	Job	Norm for male/female; potential if break rules & can be explained
	Home	House/apartment/flat/cave/RV/crib
	Hangouts	Bars/café/el centro/ High Street/market/Grange Hall



	Transportation	foot/bike/subway/rocket/style of car/dirigible/antique railcar & engines
	Education	none, few years, university, religious, illegal - what was in the area?
	Family/Friends	age of elders, education/jobs, illnesses
	Language	real or made up (still have to have "rules" that make sense to reader)
	Slang	for period/language/location/education
	Age	age-appropriate language, behavior, activities
	Skills	age-appropriate for education, gender, era
	Quirks/Imperfections/Flaws	untreated illness/injury, available medication/treatment, disfigurement, stutter, tic, Tourette's, dyslexia
	Architecture	Limestone/brick/mud/wood/plaster/cut stone/3D printed
	Building Style	era-appropriate tools, knowledge/skills, architects known in era, horse drawn/water powered/steam engine
	Famous Buildings	Hospital, government buildings, churches - what was there?

Neighborhood	Country	What was the name of the county in that time frame; village/shire/city/town/urban/suburban/undergrown/planetary
	City	Real city or made up; size, race/color/gender make up; transportation modes, air quality, water quality, waste management
	Ruler of area	king, president, aristocracy, totalitarian, oligarch, monarchy, despot, necrocracy
	Agriculture	field crops/orchard crops/organic/engineered/aquaponic
	Manufacturing	Large factories/robot labor/hand labor/strikes
	Water	lakes, rivers, streams, underground, none, wells, delivery method, cost
	Weather	temperature for the time of year/average rainfall, snowfall/ice age, humidity
Story specific	Titanic	When, where, who, how - get multiple resources
	Cowboys & Indians	Right Indian/right place; clothing and horse tack, parts of horses, dialect
	Stars/Galaxies/space travel	Can be made up, but you still have scientific rules to follow
	YA/childrens	Make sure you have correct slang/clothing/discipline/education for your era
	Regency	VERY specific; readers know their stuff

	WWI, WWII, Korean, Desert Storm, etc./Warfare	
	Weapons	ammunition, weight, concealed,
	Food/Recipes	Period/location correct; available/affordable ingredients
	Creature Feature	what are the "rules" for non-human characters