

# Research & Outlining

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Author & Speaker **Sara R. Turnquist**

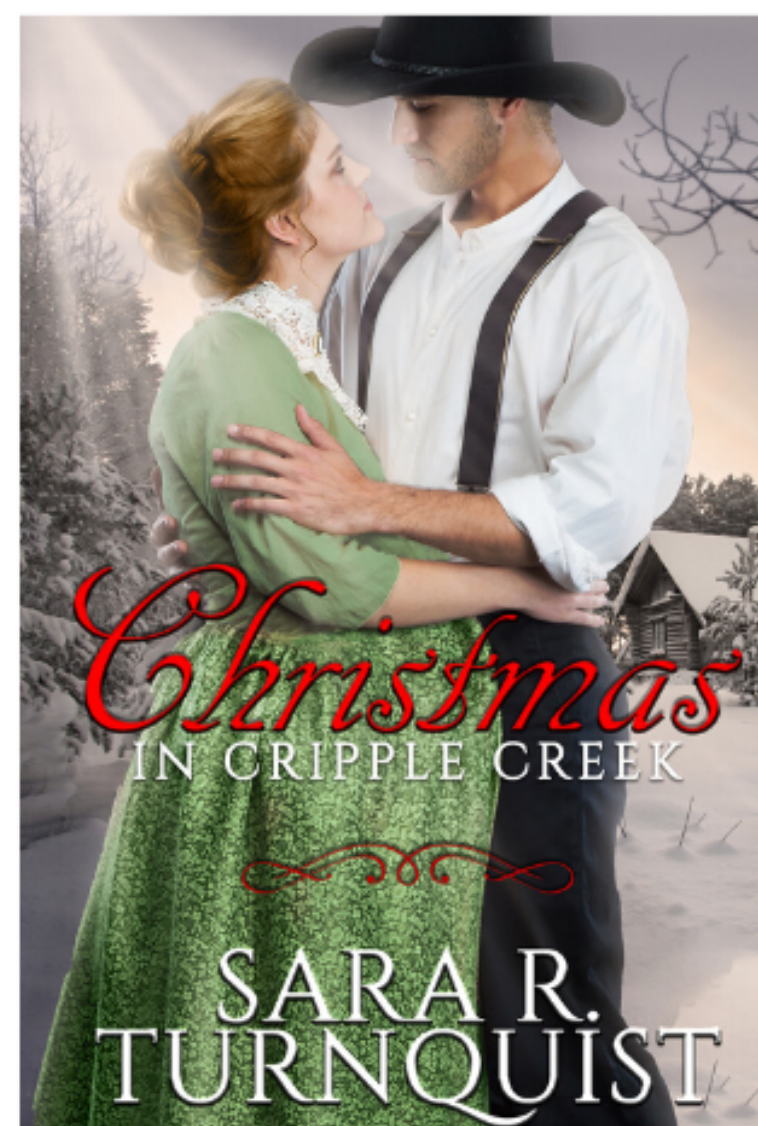
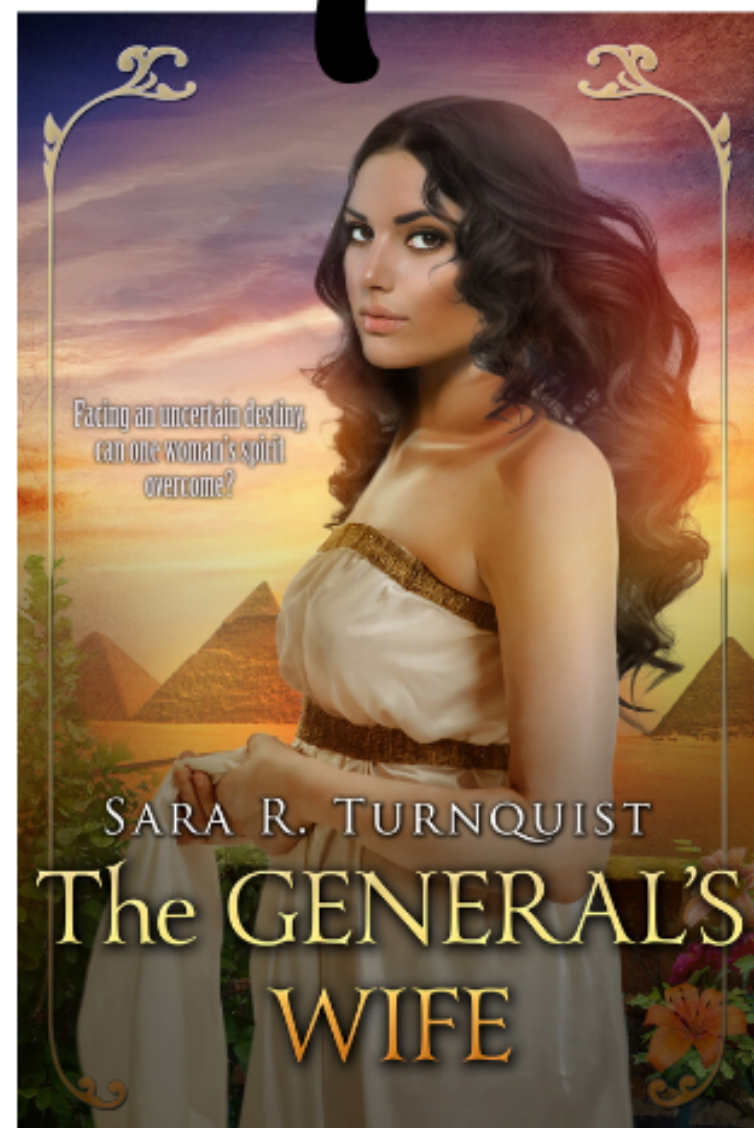
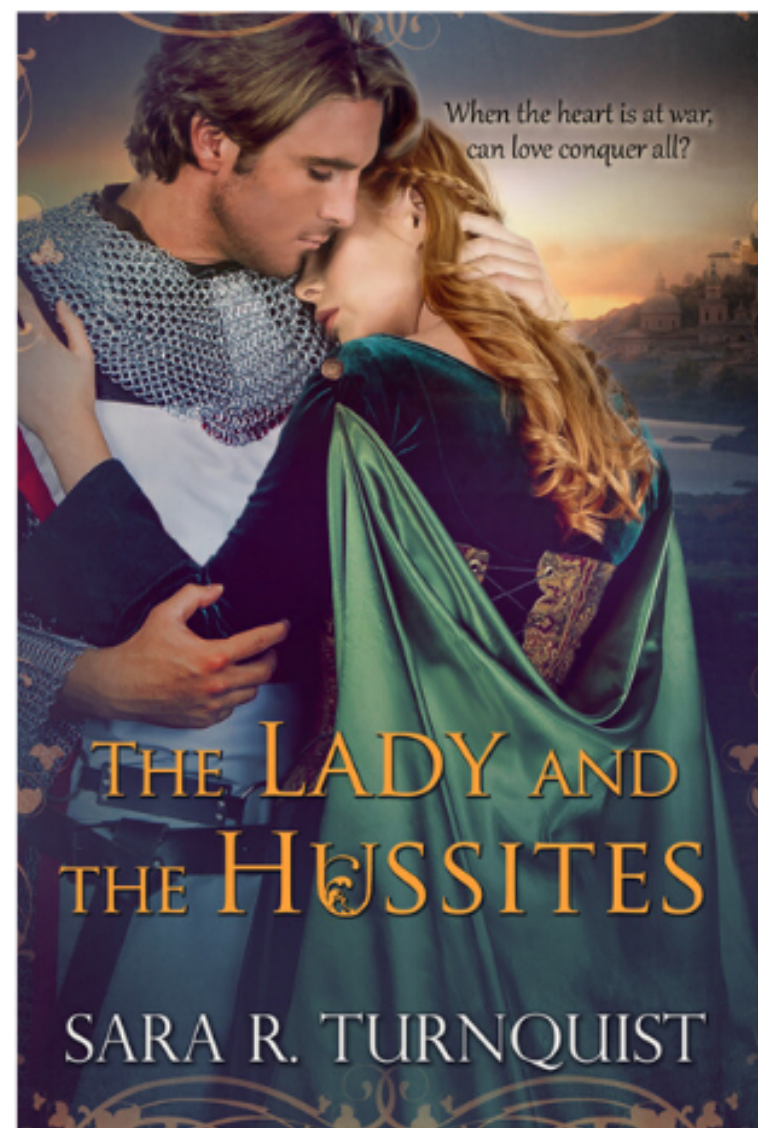
# sara r. turnquist

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- multi-published clean Historical Romance author
- member of My Book Therapy, ACFW, Word Weavers, and co-leader of Clarksville Christian Writers
- superpower: converts caffeine into novels



# SaraTurnquist.com





outlining

pantser OR plotter?

# “pantser” or “organic” writer

- “flies by the seat of their pants”
- don’t plan anything out (or plan little)
- also known as “winging it”
- writing without a fixed outline

# PROS

- freedom to take novel in any direction
- flexibility, not stuck following an outline
- can let the characters take control
- if they don't like something, can change it

# CONS

- having no (or little) plan - makes it easier to get stuck or write oneself into a corner
- if stuck, have to dig themselves out
- writer's block
- will often abandon old projects for new ones

# “plotter” or “outliner”

- plans out their novel before they write
- create an outline
- create a plan for how the novel will flow

# PROS

- planning ahead - they know what will happen  
- easier to bust through writer's block
- after planning - tend to write faster or more smoothly
- able to pull elements of the manuscript together more easily



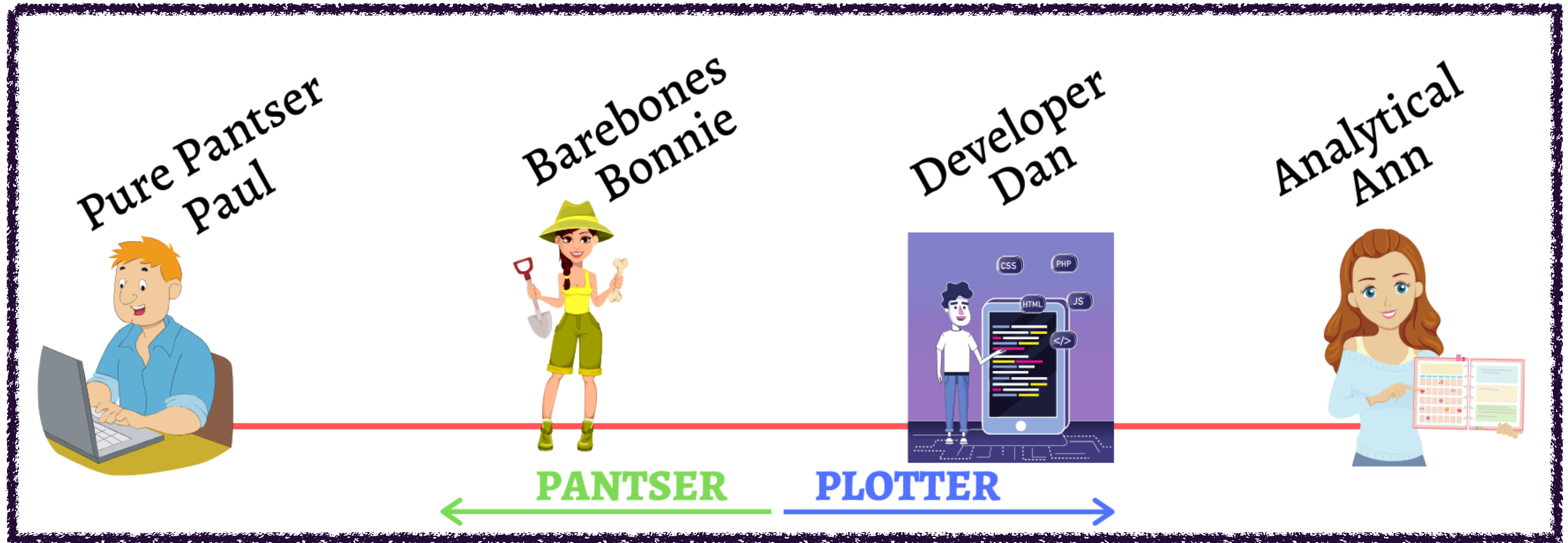
# CONS

- perhaps confined to their plans
- typically if stuck, or want to change something, they often have to redo the whole outline

which am i?

“planters”

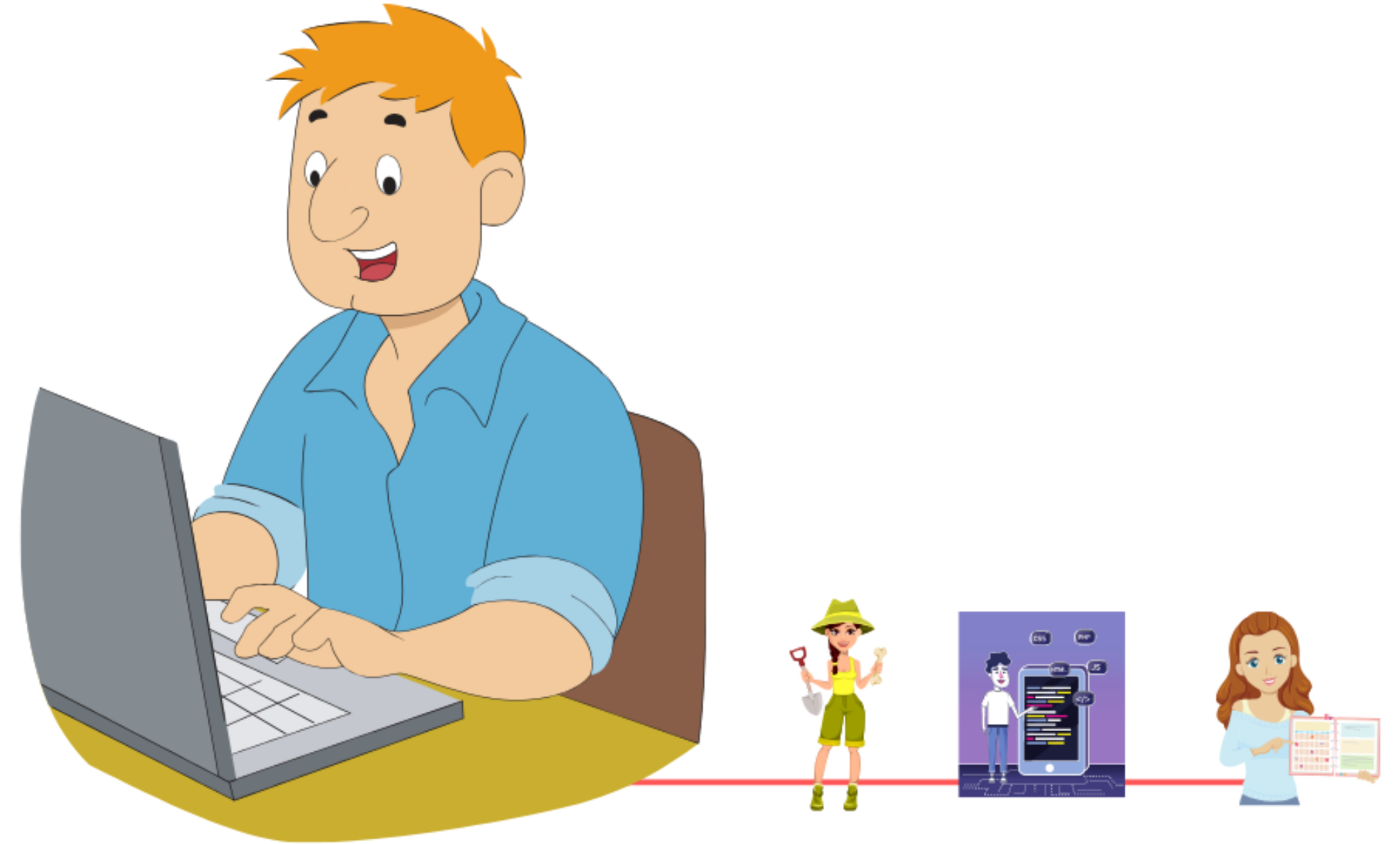
# the spectrum of outliners



# pure pantser paul

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- no planning
- sits down and lets the story (or work) unfold from beginning to end
- first draft = very detailed outline (?)



# barebones bonnie

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## FICTION

- some character research
- lists characters, their relationship to each other
- then “pantse” her way through the story





# barebones bonnie

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## NON-FICTION

- idea of the overall message
- she knows intro and conclusion (what she'll say)
- not sure how she will say it, so she “pantises” her way through it

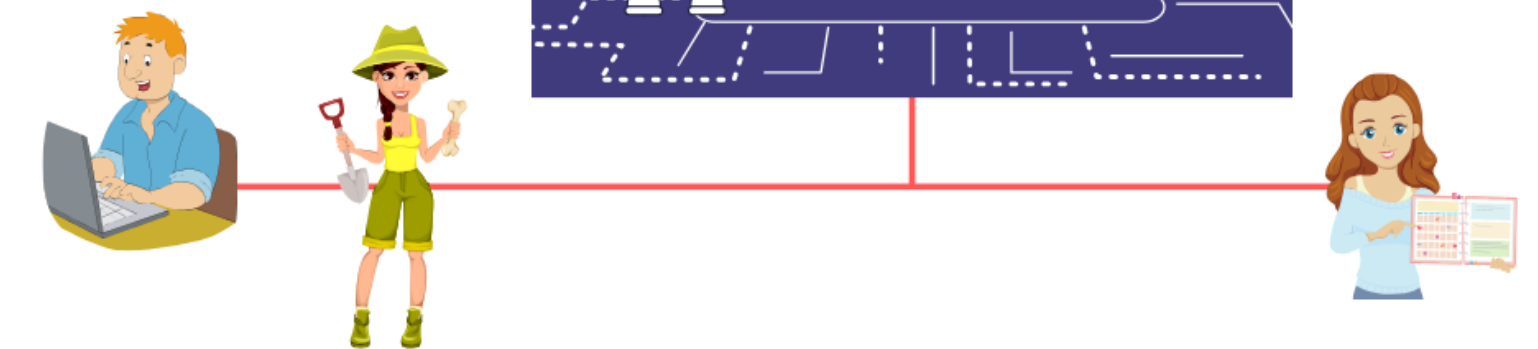


# developer dan

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## FICTION

- character profiles & other research
- plot points outline with 3 Act structure or another basic outline



- Susie May Warren's LINDY HOP
- James Scott Bell's Super Structure

# developer dan

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## NON-FICTION

- plans out chapter topics
- outlines the coming together of the book



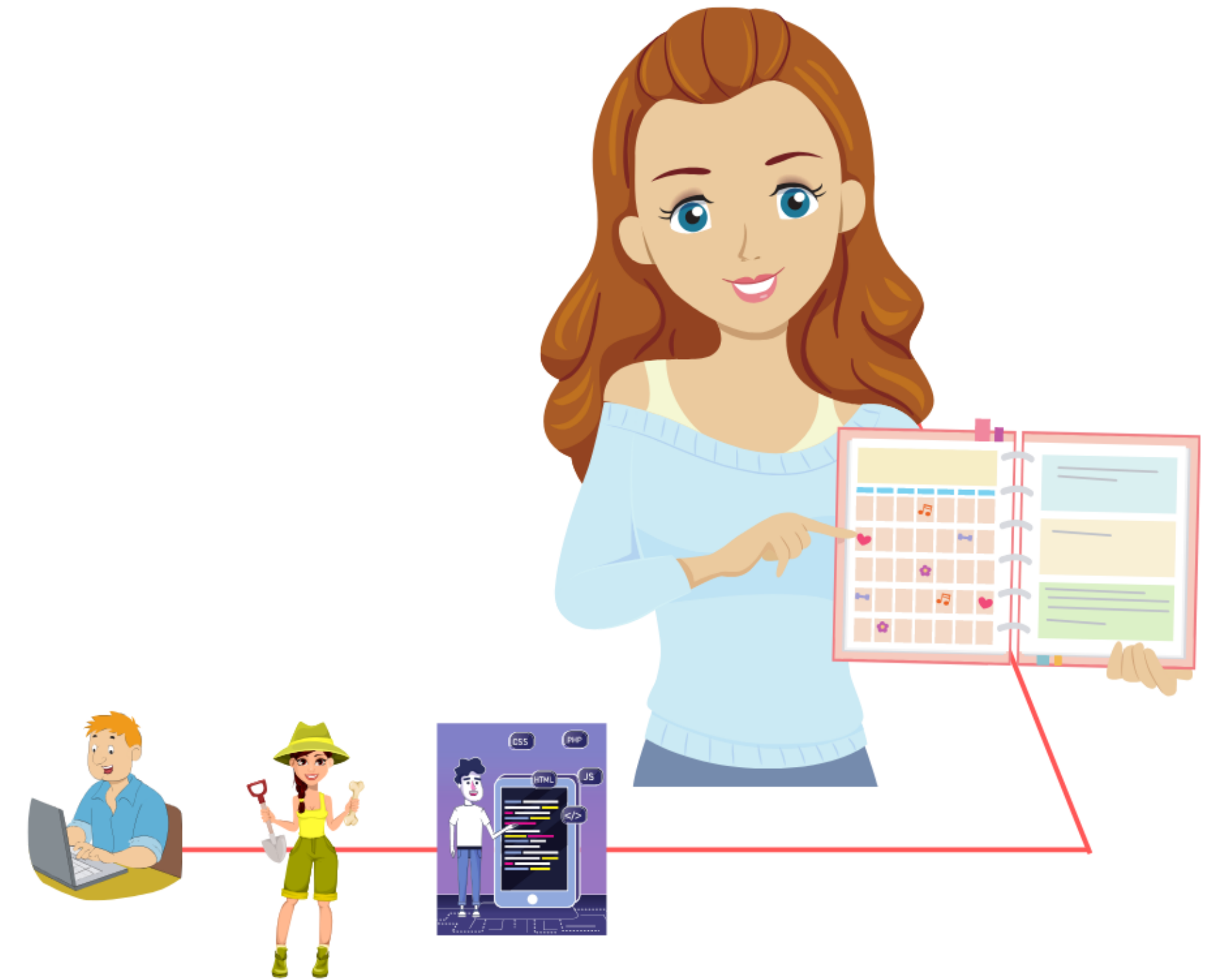


# analytical ann

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## FICTION

- deeper character research
- writes out summaries for chapters
- plans out necessary scenes

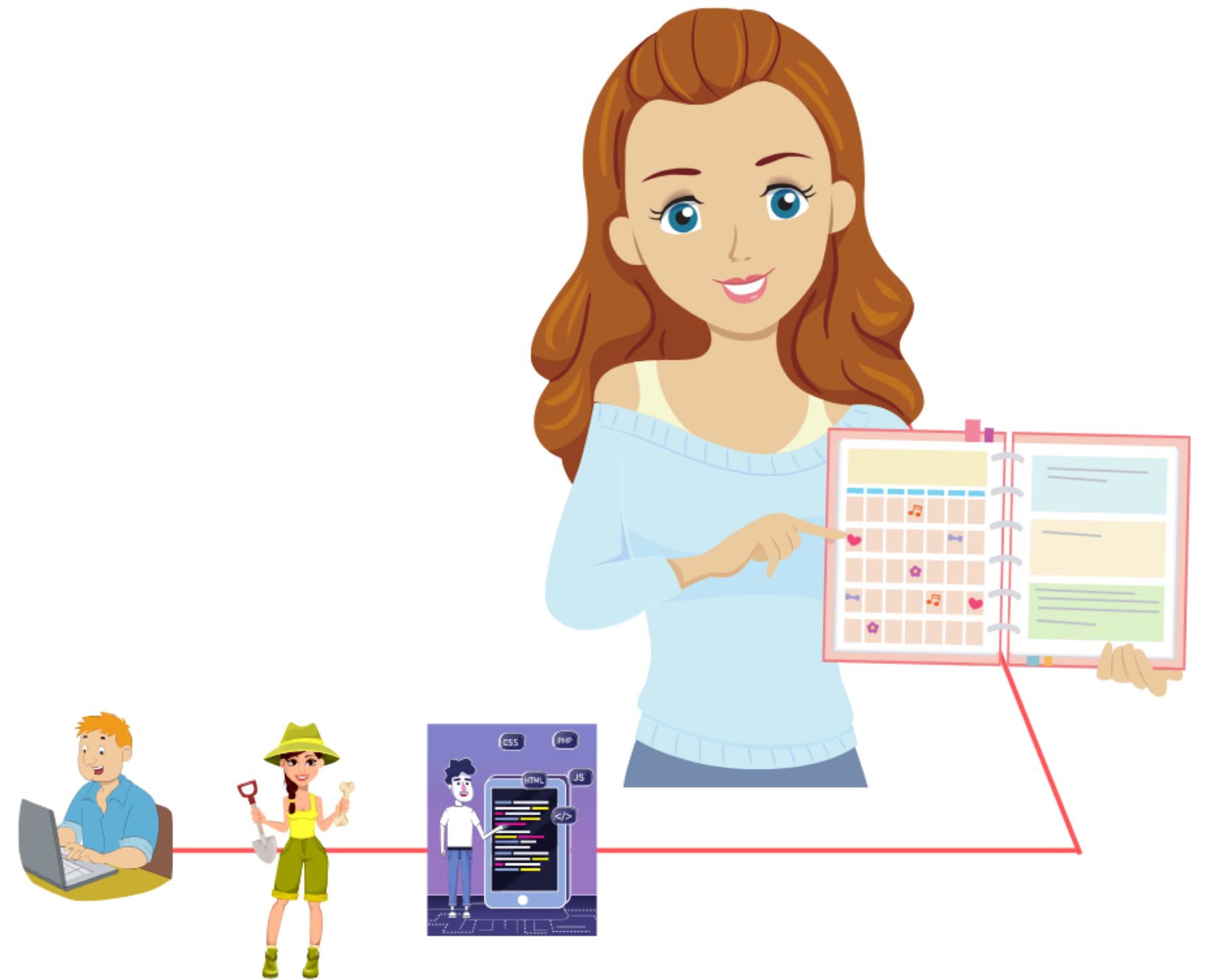


# analytical ann

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## NON-FICTION

- plans out chapter topics
- sketch out subsections



research

all writers do some amount  
of research

setting

music

historical events

art

characters

gender issues

culture

political climate

religion

good resources

vs

not-so-good resources

watch out for modern views...

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**NEVER ASSUME!!**

watch out for what you think you know





**WIKIPEDIA**  
*The Free Encyclopedia*

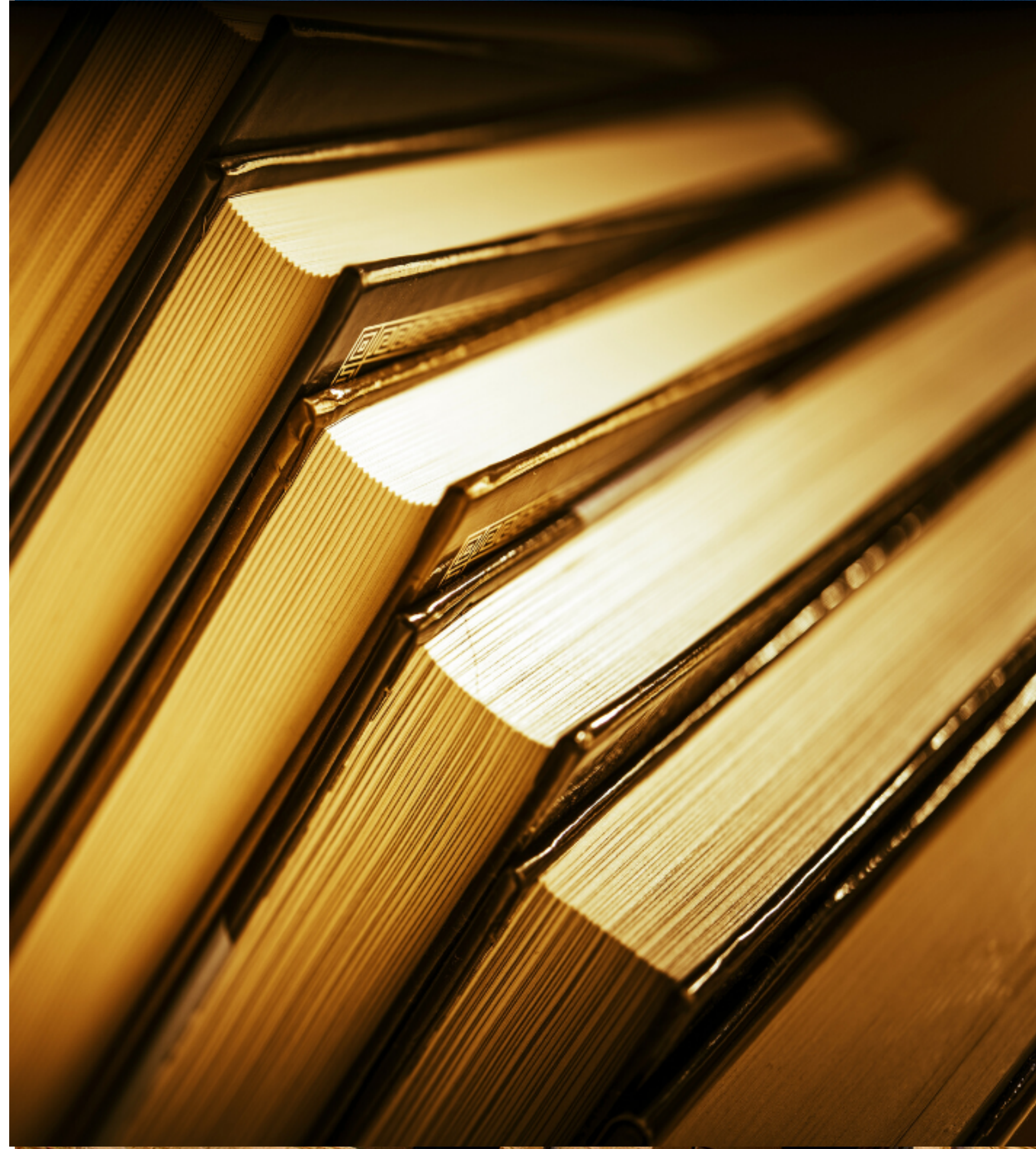
wikipedia | reliable or not?



primary sources

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what they are...







the internet



[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

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- names
- occupations
- income
- housing info
- agriculture
- business
- industry







memoirs

journals

letters

interviews



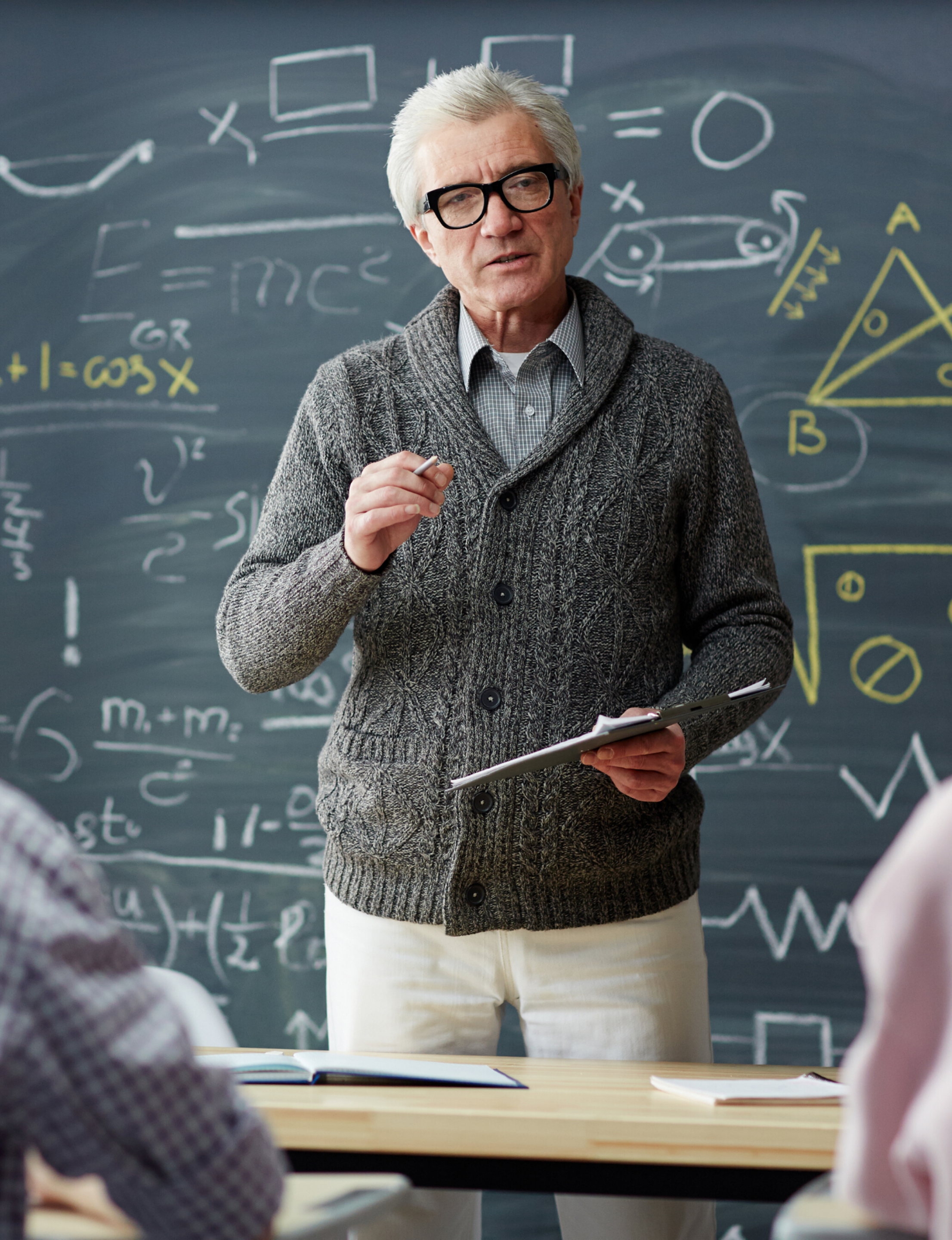
experts

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in their field







experts

knowledgeable in  
that subject matter

museums

universities

national parks

online communities

reenactment groups



period language



# rule of 3

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- not always possible
- consider the importance to the story
- consider the “weight” of the source



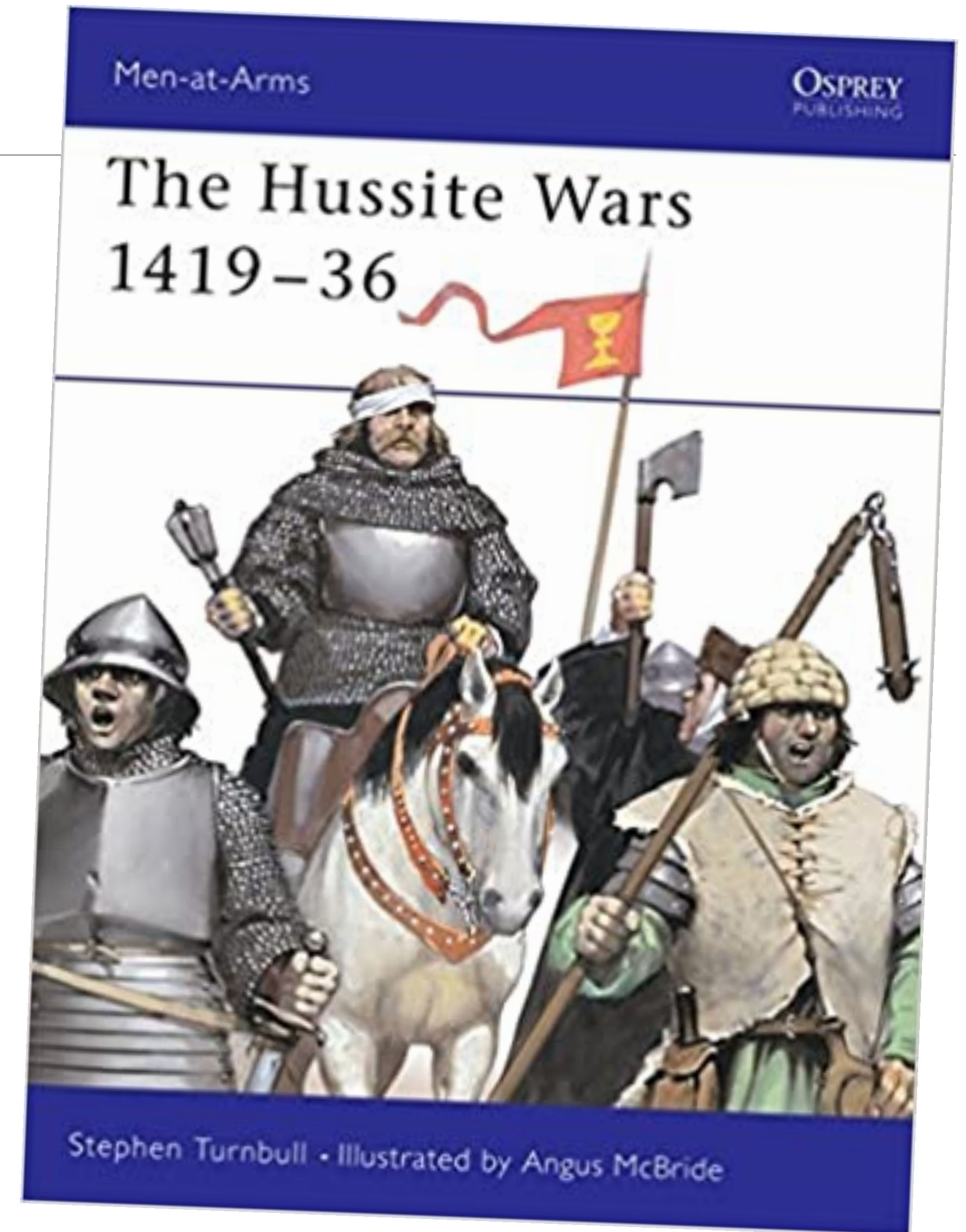


*researching for your information*

*researching the subject*

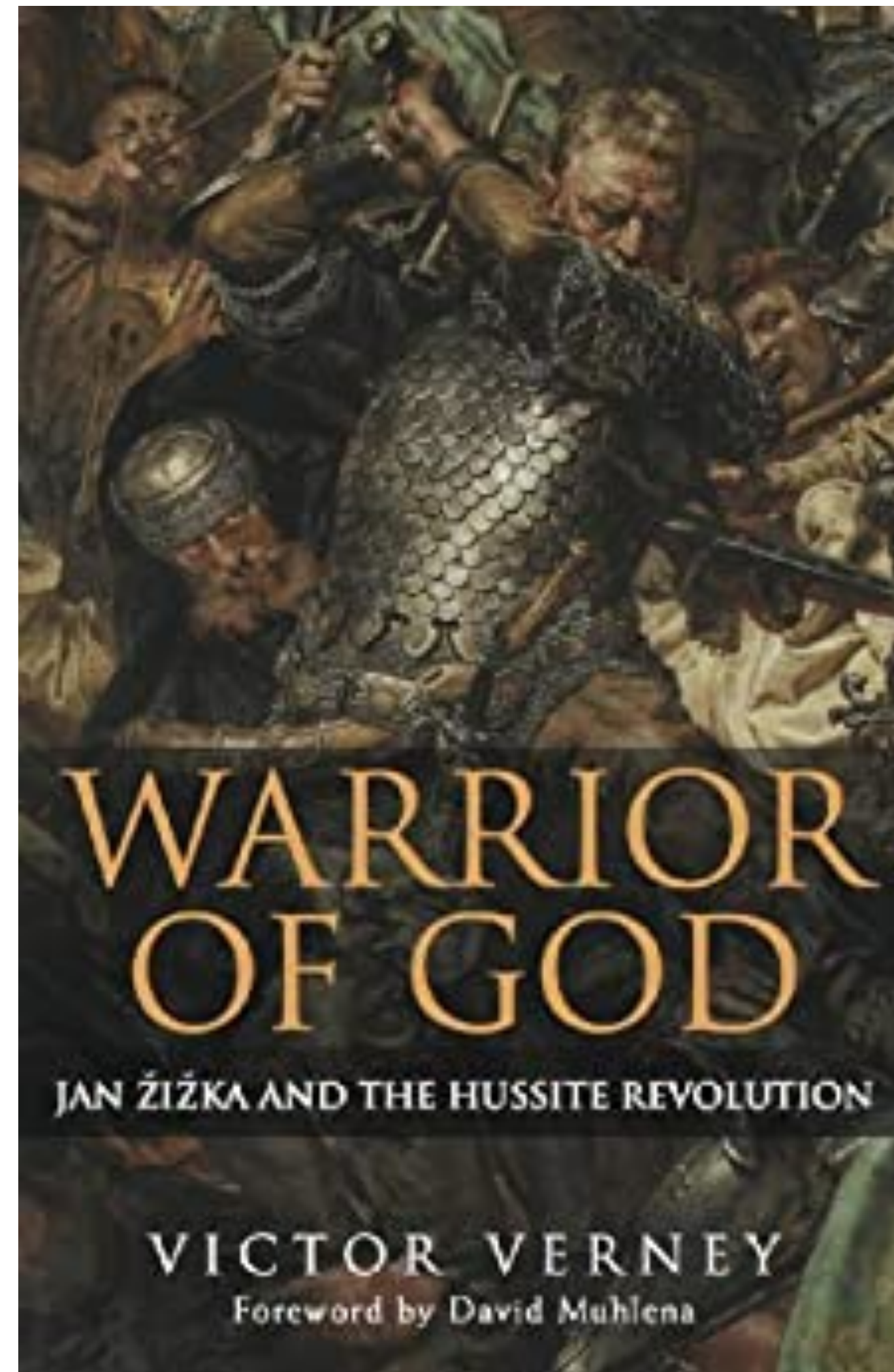


# bird's eye view





# worm's eye view





rabbit trails...



***Is this important to my manuscript?***



# organizing your research

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- series “bible”
- binder
- scrivener
- evernote
- dropbox





# tools for researching

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- search engine
- notebook page or processor doc page
- blank calendar pages
- library card
- research assistant



do your best...

but don't obsess!



happy writing!

# connect with sara

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website - <http://SaraTurnquist.com/>

facebook - [AuthorSaraRTurnquist](#)

twitter - [@sarati701](#)      instagram - [@sarato103](#)

pinterest - [www.pinterest.com/saravturnquist/](http://www.pinterest.com/saravturnquist/)

# questions

how much research do you do?

in other words, when do you  
know if you are done?

# questions

is there a resource which gives the basics  
of good research for a fiction book?



# questions

do you hire fact checkers to make sure  
you have used your research properly?

# questions

how do you handle “hearsay” details,  
such as family diaries or letters or  
stories handed down?

other questions?

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