

SHORE SCRIPTS

5 WAYS TO PLOT YOUR STORY

INTRODUCTION

You've got a great story idea, you kind of know who your major characters are, and you possibly know how it ends or at least how it begins, but now you need to figure out all the stuff that happens in between and that can be a pretty daunting thought. 95-115-pages doesn't sound like a lot, especially when you compare that to a novel or short story, but once you start to write your screenplay, filling up those pages can quickly become difficult for many.

When planning a story, writers tend to fall into three categories: plotters, pansters, or those who do a mixture of both. Plotters like to do a lot of outlining before they even begin to write the script and often have a fairly fleshed-out blueprint of their story first. Pantsers take the opposite approach and feel restricted by already knowing where their story is headed as well as losing their passion for it too, so use more of a 'fly by the seat of your pants' approach.

They both have considerable advantages and disadvantages, and really, there's no one-shoe-fits-all approach here, so it's about finding whichever way works best for you. That usually means some experimentation, getting out of your comfort zone, and spending time to develop your own plotting approach, so let's look at five different ways to help you plot, structure, and brainstorm your entire story.

The essential thing to remember is that **you don't need to work through every method in order**. If you get stuck when plotting your story (and we all do!) yes, you can stay there a while and try to figure your way out of it, but you can also move on, work on another part of the story and come back to it later.

THE BEDTIME STORY

This technique was devised by screenwriting consultant, Pilar Alessandra in her excellent book *The Coffee Break Screenwriter*, which should be on everyone's bookshelf. This method is great for those of you who don't want to spend a great deal of time on outlining as it doesn't require you to go into too much detail, it's a fun way to ignite your creativity without many restrictions, it helps you create a simple uncomplicated story that's easy to understand, and it's a fast way to beat out a potential plot too.

Again, things have been broken down into acts, to help you see the overall structure as well as make things more manageable. Re-do this as many times as is necessary. You may want to stop at one act and use that as a means of spring boarding your story off into another direction, or you may want to go back to the beginning and chose a different action/reaction for your character. It's a little like a choose your own adventure story here, with unlimited possibilities, which is why Pixar also likes to use this approach when structuring story.

STORY STRUCTURE

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS _____ EVERY DAY _____

ONE DAY _____ BECAUSE OF THAT _____

BECAUSE OF THAT _____ UNTIL FINALLY _____

Use this template and see where your story takes you.

ACT 1

Once upon a time there was a _____ (describe your main character) _____ who was _____ (describe their character flaw) _____ when _____ (create an obstacle) _____ happened, he/she _____ (what's the flaw-driven strategy that they come up with to deal with the obstacle?) _____. Unfortunately, _____ (your character screws up in some manner) _____. So, he/she decided _____ (set a goal) _____ and had to _____ (describe the action they take that begins a new journey) _____.

ACT 2A

In order to take this action, he/she decided to _____ (write down what your character's next strategy is) _____. Unfortunately, _____ (another obstacle) _____ happened, which caused _____ (an unexpected complication) _____! Now he/she had to _____

(think of a new task) _____ or risk _____ (describe what personal stake your protagonist stands to lose) _____.

ACT 2B

Where he/she once wanted to _____ (your character's old desire) _____, he/she now wanted _____ (new desire) _____. But how could that happen when _____ (obstacle, either new, old, or bigger) _____? Filled with _____ (whatever emotion is driving your hero) _____ he/she (_____ took a new action) _____. But this only resulted in _____ (generate a low point for your protagonist here) _____.

ACT 3

Fortunately, this helped he/she to realize _____ (the solution) _____! All he/she had to do was _____ (detail what action they must take using the lessons they've learned along the way) _____! Using _____ (other characters) _____ (skills) _____, and (tools from the journey) _____ he/she was able to _____ (victorious action) _____. Unfortunately, _____ (come up with a final hurdle here) _____. But this time, he/she _____ (insert a clever strategy) _____! This resulted in _____ (whatever the change in situation is) _____.

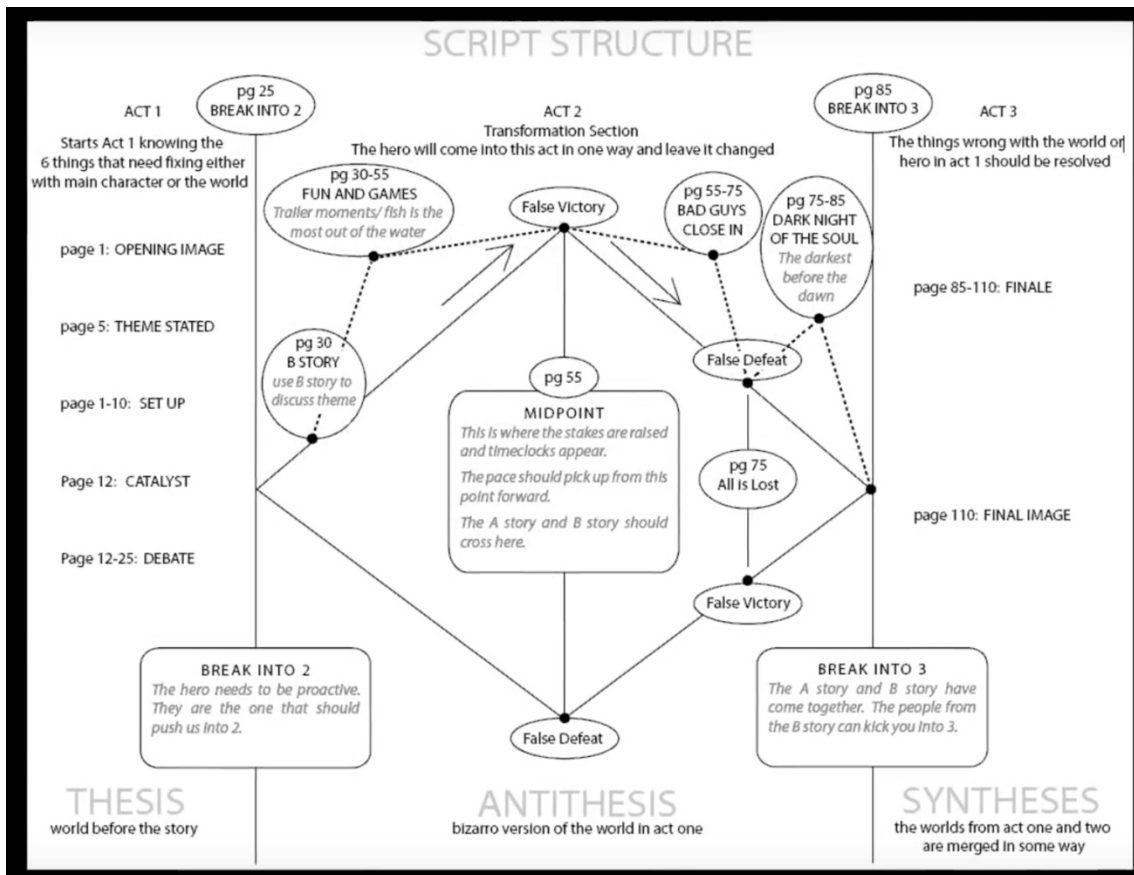
THE BEAT SHEET

This technique won't help you outline every single scene in your story, but it'll get you pretty close to it. Between the beginning and the end of your story, there needs to be interesting things happening, dramatic moments for your characters, tension & release, all of which serve to take the audience on a rollercoaster of emotions. These ups and downs can be plotted in order to ensure that you're creating an engaging story for the viewers and a beat sheet can help you pinpoint those exact moments.

American screenwriter and consultant, Blake Snyder, devised an easily digestible beat sheet in his best-selling book, *Save the Cat*. Some writers argue that it's led to a lot of formulaic movies. Others see it as the very useful tool it's supposed to be. As with all of these methods. They're guides, suggestions, and models for you to play around with, but there's certainly a lot of value in being able to plot a reliable way to satisfy the audience.

The page numbers are again, just rough guides. Every story runs at a different pace, but the closer you can stick to these when writing, the more dramatic momentum you can create for the audience, and if you get stuck, move onto the next beat, filling in as many as you can before going back.

Don't just stick to the first thing you think of. Keep brainstorming ideas. Fill in multiple beat sheets. Some people work better visually, so turn this list into a bubble mind-map, or jot them down on index cards on a pinboard with one idea sprouting off into numerous other possibilities, whatever works best for you.



1. **OPENING IMAGE (1):** What's the first thing that you want the audience to see on screen? This is liable to change throughout the writing process, so don't worry too much about defining this moment too much, but brainstorm some visuals that quickly and effectively sum up your central struggle as well as the tone of your story. Could it be a location, your main character, a pivotal event in the timeline? What picture paints a thousand words?

2. **SET-UP (1-10):** This might lead on from your opening image, or it could be completely separate, but here's where you're going to introduce the audience to the 'normal world' of your protagonist. What action could they be taking that tells us everything we need to know about them in that moment? Can you show us the MC's central flaw? Or can you show us their inner need aka what's been holding them back in life all this time? Show us the MC in their normal life, but also show us that there's something missing from it too.

3. **THEME STATED (5):** This usually comes in the form of a line of dialogue and it's often spoken to the MC by another character or in their presence, except at this stage, the MC doesn't quite understand its significance. They'll need to go on a journey to understand this truth. The theme might not be something you figure out until the end, so don't get too bogged down in discovering this at the beginning (of course it helps if you know it straight up).

4. **CATALYST (12):** This is just another word for the **INCITING INCIDENT** and the **CALL TO ADVENTUURE** and it basically means the exact same thing. What happens to kick-off your protagonists' journey? It can be anything from receiving new information,

5. DEBATE (12-25): This usually comes in the form of the protagonist questioning whether they should take on whatever challenge they've been presented with. We naturally avoid conflict, so it's normal for your characters to be afraid of change too. Maybe they look for ways to back out here, maybe they doubt their own capabilities, maybe they flat out refuse. Not every single story needs this moment, especially if the MC is left with no choice but to continue here, but it's certainly a plot point worth including.

6. BREAK INTO 2 (25): With the debate over, a decision to forge on has been made, effectively starting the adventure. Something happens to force this decision, making them change their mind or overcome whatever feelings were holding them back. This is also a great opportunity to increase the stakes!

7. B STORY (30): Again, you may want to flesh out your main plot before deciding on which subplots might best fit in with that, but take a moment to brainstorm what's happening with your secondary characters here. Again, this part is related to theme, so if you're unsure of what that is in your movie, this might be better left to last. Otherwise, brainstorm some potential storylines for the best friend, the love interest, or the antagonist to be involved with along the way. The BREAK INTO 3, which is further down the list is where anything that starts here is paid off.

8. FUN AND GAMES (30-55): Snyder also calls this 'the promise of the premise', which means what you said was going to happen in your logline (if you haven't written one yet, check out the Testing your Concept workbook or Fast Track your First Draft). The main objective is to keep the audience entertained by throwing a series of obstacles at your MC, all of which need to get in the way of them achieving their goal. It's the hilarity that ensues when the bank teller discovers that he's an NPC inside a brutal open world video game in *Free Guy*, it's when two kids begin to discover their connection to their grandfather who happens to be an original Ghostbuster in *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, and it's the media tour that two low-level astronomers must go on after discovering a comet that's going to destroy the planet in *Don't Look Up*.

9. MIDPOINT (55): This is a pivotal moment that script readers look for when reading screenplays, so it's got to be very clear on the page when it happens. Something happens that means your MC can no longer stop and go back to their old life because they have no choice but to forge on. The MC's goal can either become monumentally much harder to achieve or it can change completely, but there's a moment where the character must recommit to the challenge. Again, this is another great place to heighten the stakes and often a ticking time clock element is introduced here.

10. BAD GUYS CLOSE IN (55-75): No more fun & games, things are getting serious! There's more of everything here, with further obstacles that are increasingly difficult to overcome. Here, whatever the MC's talents, gifts, or skills are, become less effective and plans are foiled, and trusted characters betray the MC because the old ways of solving problems aren't working any more. Things start to look bad for the hero here.

11. ALL IS LOST (75): This is the MC's lowest point. Everything that has been gained up until this point has been lost, so much so that the audience may start believing that your protagonist can't possibly win anymore. This is where you can showcase your antagonists' true power. Have them throw an unexpected spanner in the works or have them make your MC's worst nightmare come true, anything to now make the MC's path seem impossible.

12. DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL (75-85): After such a crushing blow, understandably, your MC has reached their lowest ebb. Often a mentor or side-kick character is there to give the hero some support. Much like in the DEBATE moment, your MC is struggling to rationalise the events around them, only here, they have a revelation. They figure out what they need to do in order to win. It's probably been staring them in the face the whole time. It's realizing what was holding them back during the SET UP and changing!

13. BREAK INTO 3 (85): With this realization comes a new way of thinking or behaving for your MC. They're not giving up and decide one final attempt. It's all or nothing. A new plan is formed (usually kept hidden from the audience and revealed one step at a time on screen). This is also where your subplots start to come together, each adding to part of the plan.

14. FINALE (85-110): Also referred to as the CLIMAX, this is the final confrontation the MC has with the antagonist (or antagonistic force). Now, your MC has grown. They now know the truth behind the central theme and they're going to implement all of the lessons they learned along the way to help win the final battle. Your MC doesn't always have to win, but they do need to have changed. That's what's important there.

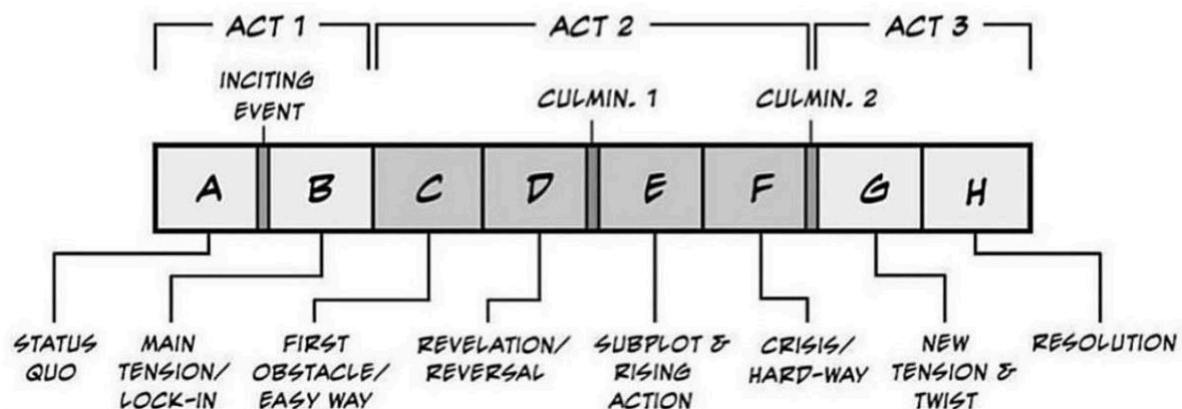
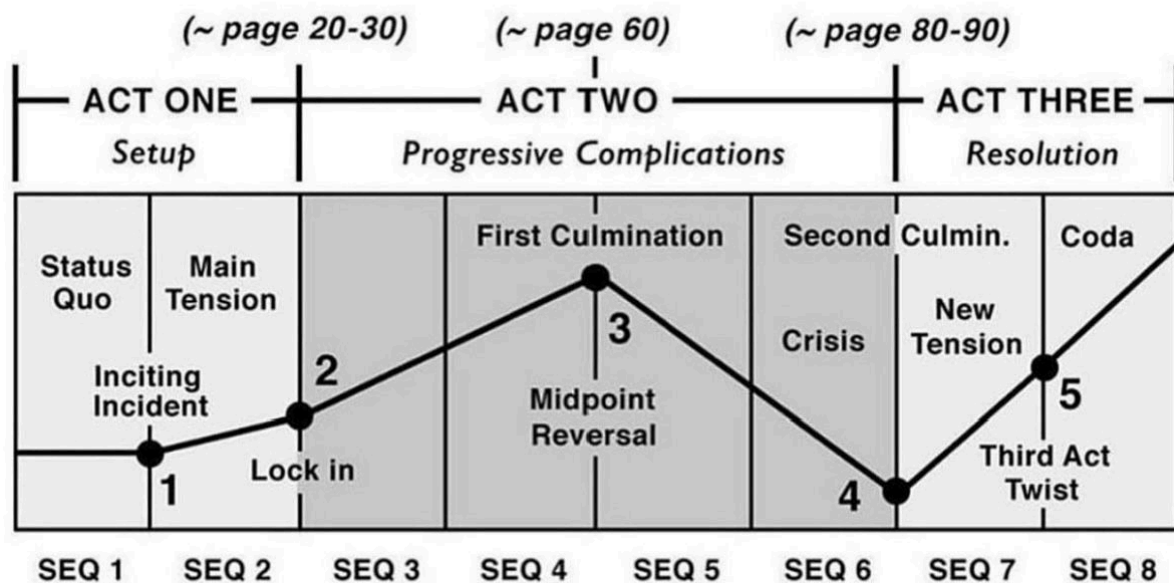
15. FINAL IMAGE (110): This works well when it's a mirror image of the OPENING IMAGE, showing us the opposite and thus showing us how things have changed. It's a visual representation of whether the MC failed or succeeded.

As you can see, as the beat sheet goes on, things become less specific, with longer pages of script to fill out in between beats. That's one of the down sides of using this (and a few other) method, but looking at THE BEDTIME STORY or the 8- SEQUENCE APPROACH should give you some ideas on how to help fill in these areas.

THE 8-SEQUENCE APPROACH

This way of plotting your story is similar to the 3-Act structure but it allows you to break down your story into eight smaller chunks, which can make the entire process that little bit more manageable. Again, there's those 4 different acts; Act 1, Act 2A, Act 2B, and Act 3, but we're going to split each act in half, creating 8 sub sequences.

EIGHT SEQUENCE STRUCTURE



Much of the same things that occur in both the 3-ACT STRUCTURE and in the BEAT SHEET also apply here; the rising conflict, the plot progression, the dramatic stuff that need to happen along the way, so use those as a guide when looking for more specific ideas on needs to happen and when during your MC's journey. What the sequence approach is great for is using a simple equation to use along the way.

In every sequence there needs to be a GOAL, an ACTIVITY, and a COMPLICATION.

SEQUENCE 1
GOAL: _____
ACTIVITY: _____
COMPLICATION: _____

Think of each sequence being roughly 12-15 minutes of screen time (which is approximately 12-15-pages of script) and as a series of short scenes strung together. List 8 sequences in a new document, in a notebook, or on scraps of paper, and get creative.

What is your MC trying to achieve (the goal)? This is going to be the driving force behind every action, reaction, or line of dialogue that they say.

What actions are your MC doing (the activity) in order to achieve that goal? This ensures that your protagonist is being active, rather than passive, but pushing the plot forward.

And what gets in the way (the complication) of them achieving their goal while doing those activities? Put obstacles in your MC's path, give them challenges, reveal unexpected information, and create as much conflict as you can.

To give you a bit more focus when brainstorming each sequence, apply these rules:

SEQUENCE 1: Have a character FLAW trigger CONFLICT

SEQUENCE 2: Have that CONFLICT trigger a PROBLEM

SEQUENCE 3: have that PROBLEM trigger a STRATEGY

SEQUENCE 4: have that STRATEGY trigger an EMOTIONAL EVENT

SEQUENCE 5: have that EMOTIONAL EVENT trigger a MAJOR ACTION

SEQUENCE 6: have that MAJOR ACTION trigger a MISSTEP

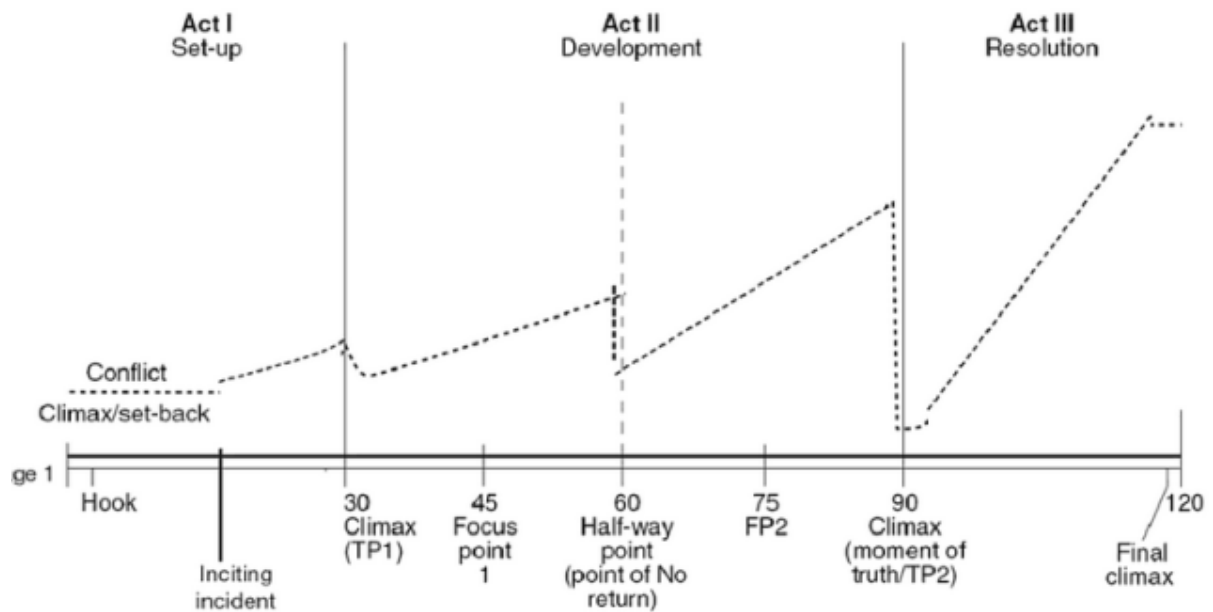
SEQUENCE 7: have that MISSTEP trigger the BATTLE

SEQUENCE 8: have that BATTLE trigger the FINAL CHALLENGE

Using this sequence approach is a great way to play around with the structure of your story before committing to writing it. What happens if you place Sequence 4 at the beginning, for example? Which exciting event might be a more interesting place to start your story?

THE THREE-ACT STRUCTURE

This is by far the most recognisable method to structure your feature film. At its most basic level, it means Beginning, Middle, and End, so it can also be easily adapted to be used to write short films, tv pilots, and fiction podcasts etc, too.



The diagram above is probably very familiar to you, but what exactly does it all mean and more importantly, how can it help you plot your story?

Let's break it down to make it a bit easier.

First off, those 3-Acts are really 4-Acts!

That middle bit is pretty long and it's easy to lose momentum in there (you may have heard of the post mid-point lull where a writer can easily run out of steam), so it can be more helpful to think of it as Act 1, Act 2A, Act 2B, and Act 3.

ACT 1 BREAKDOWN

This is the most important act in your story. Often if there's a problem occurring in Act 3, it's because there also a problem in Act 1, so this is the section that needs to be the most airtight.

There's a lot happening at the beginning of your script. You've got to establish the story world, tell us who we're supposed to be following, and why, but there's a limited amount of time to do this, often making this very challenging, so what do you all need here?

THE SETUP (1-12): This is pretty much the same as the SET UP in the beat sheet. Establish the world in which we meet the protagonist. Let us see how they might be struggling with fulfilling an 'inner need' that they don't yet realise. What's holding back both emotionally and physically? Make sure that you state the theme during the setup too.

THE HOOK (1): Technically, this can also be the INCITING INCIDENT if you use it early enough (if you do this, make sure to follow it up with another powerful story beat 12-15-pages down the line too). Something needs to grab the reader on page one, so brainstorm how you can start your story with a bang. What compelling image, action, or dialogue is going to pique our interest and make us want to know more?

THE INCITING INCIDENT (12-15): Again, this is the same as the CATALYST or the CALL TO ADVENTURE, meaning that it's an essential moment that your story needs to have. Something happens that causes a problem that your protagonist must resolve or restore. It's also a good time to tell us what's at stake should they fail here too. The more that's at risk, the more we'll be invested in your characters.

TURNING POINT 1 (30): Something happens to pivot your MC's plans into a completely different direction here. There's perhaps a false victory here, where the initial problem seems to have been solved, but no! There's a bigger one on the horizon. Raise the stakes, heighten the conflict, keep up on the edge of our seats.

ACT 2A BREAKDOWN

After you've taken time to establish the story world, introduced us to your protagonist, and given them a big problem to solve, now's the time to increase the drama, the action, and the conflict. The hero is trying new ways to achieve their goal, and most likely failing in the process. This is how they learn and grow - eventually.

FOCAL POINT 1 (45): There's usually a large failure for the MC here, but it's not as traumatic as on TURNING POINT 1 because they've started to grow/change/learn. Plus, it's not quite a matter of life and death yet. The MC can still turn back and return to their old life if they want to, but that would be defeatist.

MIDPOINT (60): The MC's plan has failed yet again, (notice how that's a reoccurring element?), now it really is the moment of no return. Something has happened which means that the MC has no choice but to continue. This is a big story beat that should be very clear on the page when you come to write it, so make it dramatic, emotional, and compelling.

ACT 2B BREAKDOWN

Notice that after every major story beat that there's a drop in the conflict in the above diagram? This is to allow the audience to take a moment to catch their breaths a little (and

your characters too). You need to learn how to juggle the tension and the release on this rollercoaster ride. It's all about manipulating how you want the audience to feel.

FOCAL POINT 2 (75): Another big low point for the protagonist here. Possibly their lowest point, in fact, which is why it's called the ALL IS LOST moment in the beat sheet. Your MC might be isolated, without any hope, and left with no possibility of succeeding. This is a great moment to play with the viewers emotions, especially if they've become heavily invested in your hero. Follow this moment up with a pick-me-up speech by a secondary character, in order to keep your MC going.

TURNING POINT 2 (85-89): aka THE BREAK INTO 3 or MOMENT OF TRUTH, is much bigger than turning point 1, the protagonist is going to win or lose everything here (most likely lose!), in an all or nothing conflict which is bigger than anything that's come beforehand. The crushing defeat of the MC here should lead to a renewed sense of determination and for them to have a greater sense of purpose here. They know exactly who they are, lessons have been learned, skills acquired, flaws have become strengths.

ACT 3 BREAKDOWN

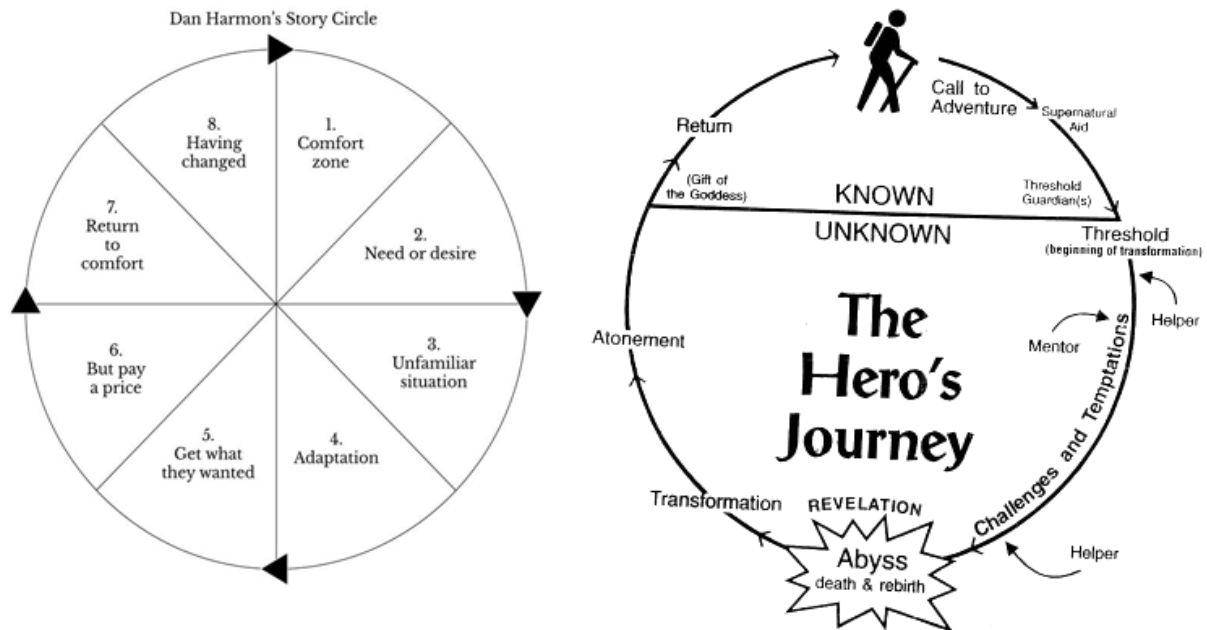
You should be gearing up to resolve the central conflict of your story here. All loose ends need to be tied up, a satisfactory conclusion to your story must be created, and a memorable climax will help achieve this.

CLIMAX (90-120): The MC's new plan is put into place here, utilising subplot characters and payoffs to earlier setups. The antagonist doesn't know what they're walking into, and neither do the audience, as this new plan is going to unfold before our eyes rather than us being privy to it beforehand. Consider using a big set piece to host where the final battle takes place, such as the newly bought factory in *Nobody* which is where the 'docile family man' takes on a Russian crime boss or Laurie Strode's family home that that she turns into a trap to end Michael Myers (yeah, right) in *Halloween (2018)*. Not all movies need a set piece, but they do need that moment when there's a do-or-die event for the MC.

TWIST (110): This is an optional extra. Adding an end twist seems to come and go in movie fashion, and in some genres, such as horror, it's almost become a cliché, as no one really believes that the monster is really dead after the climax anymore, which sort of means it's no longer a twist to see the serial killer have one last stab. And sometimes an extra twist can have a detrimental effect on the climax, as it suddenly becomes the only thing the viewers remember. But when a good twist works, it's great. The key here is to know what audiences are expecting and to reverse it somehow. Create the unexpected!

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

This is another well-used method of plotting out a story, created by professor Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero's Journey*, where he looked at noticeable patterns in classical literature and epic mythology, but be warned, not every story can be outlined in this manner. Ensemble movies don't particularly adhere to this, not do stories that focus on anti-heroes, but if you think of the hero's journey more as a series of components that you can choose from to apply to your story instead, then there's still value in exploring this paradigm.



Much like THE BEAT SHEET, the journey have also been broken down into several steps, 17 to be precise. The journey is split up into three sections, departure, initiation, and return, and you'll notice this path comes full circle, with the hero leaving their starting point and arriving home, having changed along the way.

There's lots of interpretation to be had here, so only sue what's helpful to your own story. The journey your MC undertakes can be physical, mental, emotional, or personal, meaning that your protagonist doesn't even have to leave the room. It's all about change, growth, and completing the character arc here, so experiment if you need to.

DEPARTURE

The is the SET UP part of your story where you set the scene, introduce us to your protagonist, and we meet them in their 'normal life. In essence, we need to know where your MC has come from before we see where they go.

THE CALL TO ADVENTURE: This is akin to the **INCITING INCIDENT** and the **CATALYST**. It's the moment that the adventure starts. Normally you'd expect there to be some sort of **SET UP** before this moment, and while yes, that can be very helpful, but modern scripts are calling for the inciting incident to happen as quickly as possible in order to grab the reader, so staring on this beat can be very effective on its own.

REFUSAL OF THE CALL: Again, this is very much **THE DEBATE**, where the MC doubts their ability to take on the challenge or flat out refuses to do it. You don't always have to have this moment in your story but it's a great way to tell us about your protagonist here. Why wouldn't they want to face this problem?

SUPERNATURAL AID: This is another element that doesn't always need to come into play, but if you've got the refusal of the call, you might want to consider adding in an external element that helps push your MC into making their mind up. Don't take 'supernatural' literally here. Yes, it can absolutely be a fairy godmother's aid or a genie's wish granting abilities, but it can also be the weather changing, a religious figure's words, or a freak accident. It's basically the 'universe' giving your MC a sign that they need to start their journey.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD: This is the moment that the Hobbits leave Bag End in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The decision to take action has been made and the MC is stepping out of their 'old world' and into the new. This part of the journey absolutely has to happen. It's not one you can skip.

THE BELLY OF THE WHALE: As soon as your MC crosses the threshold, they're into the belly of the whale. Here we get to see how your characters react when they're out of their comfort zone. There's a little bit of death and rebirth happening here for the MC, like when Neo takes the red pill in *The Matrix*, thrown into a terrifying experience, he emerges anew, born in the 'real world'.

INITIATION

Here's where we see your MC begin to change. Knowing where they've set off from, this is the journey part of the story where new knowledge is gained, lessons learned, and character growth occurs.

THE ROAD OF TRIALS: By 'trials' we mean obstacles, of which you need to throw plenty. Make sure that every obstacle offers your MC the chance to learn something useful, no matter how small, that they can use further down the line, but you also want to start testing your protagonist here too. Expose their character flaws, strengthen or weaken your MC in some manner, push their buttons etc.

THE MEETING WITH THE GODDESS: Think of the goddess as a character who has a positive effect on your MC. A friendly face that's there to help heal, recuperate, give strength to etc. It's more of a checkpoint for your MC (and the audience) to catch their breath before setting off again.

WOMAN AS THE TEMPTRESS: Again, this is Campbell's dated description that uses gender specific labels that you don't necessarily need to stick to anymore. This applies to the femme fatale in a noir movie, but it can also be a trusted friend that betrays the hero, or any other unexpected reversal that the MC was totally unprepared for aka another big obstacle.

ATONEMENT WITH THE FATHER/ABYSS: This is another step that won't always apply to every story (you'll have noticed by now that there's a fair amount that are like this). This moment is when your MC has perhaps grown enough to ask for forgiveness from a mentor or parental figure who had tried to warn them initially, but was ignored by the MC. This can lead to a strengthening bond between two characters or it can do the opposite, where an MC now starts to second guess their mission, not trusting anyone!

APOTHEOSIS: The hero becomes the best version of themselves here, which can often be the most rewarding moment for the viewers too. It's the moment when faced with certain defeat that the hero finds the inner strength or resolve, such as Luke Skywalker finding the force within himself just at the right time and it's the moment when it looks like Captain American won't be able to defeat Thanos, but all the portals open and everyone that was clicked from existence returns for the final battle in *Avengers: End Game*.

THE ULTIMATE BOON: the goal is achieved here. Everything that's happened before this point comes together; the lessons learned, the growth in character, new skills obtained, the subplots, etc, are all used in the final battle against the antagonist. This is where the 'external goal' is either won or lost.

RETURN

The hero now returns back to their old home but now as a changed person with a new mindset.

THE REFUSAL OF THE RETURN: Just as there may have been a refusal of the call to action, there can be a similar refusal to return home. Maybe your MC doesn't want to go back the old life that they hated. Maybe the crime case they've just solved was so traumatic that they don't want to do the job any more. Or maybe it's simply a case of them not wanting to leave the new world they've found for themselves. Note that your MC doesn't have to physically return home here, it can lead to a new ending instead.

THE MAGIC FLIGHT: This is when the hero returns home with the rescued person or item that they initially set out to free, or it can be more metaphorical in that it can be the hero returning with their newfound traits and beliefs. This is another step that's often skipped in movies, which instead simply cut to the future rather than us watching the journey.

RESCUE FROM WITHOUT: This can be used to add an additional twist at the end of the story. It's when the hero accidentally slips off the edge of a building at the end but is grabbed by a hand and pulled to safety by a long-lost character who went missing earlier in the story but

thankfully shows up just in time. This event doesn't have to happen at this exact point in the journey either.

THE CROSSING OF THE RETURNED THRESHOLD: If the hero does return home, this is that moment. We get to see a changed character back in their old territory and get to find out how those changes have altered the way they're going to act there now. The hero has been changed forever by their journey, so everything isn't quite going to go back to normal.

MASTER OF THE TWO WORLDS: Regardless of whether the hero returns back to their old world or not, they now have the ability to travel between both worlds should they need to without problem. Think of this as a soldier returning home as a hero, but also being welcomed in the country he helped to liberate too.

FREEDOM TO LIVE: The MC's previous worries are no more. Whatever was holding them back in their old life, either subconsciously or physically, is now gone. They've fulfilled their 'inner need' and this is pretty much the happy ever after moment that gives the audience a warm glow as they leave the cinema.

To reiterate, your character doesn't have to go through every single of these steps, but it's worth knowing and understanding all of them before considering whether any of them can be useful in plotting out your own story.

CONCLUSION

These are five different methods to plot out your story, but they're by no means the only ones. Don't see them as rigid rules to follow, which can restrict your creativity, but do use them as a helpful guide when stuck or to ensure that you're going to develop an emotionally rewarding story for the audience, which should ultimately be your overall goal.

Even if you prefer to sit down and start writing your screenplay straight away, letting the character and scenarios to take you into unexpected directions, it's also worth cross-checking your final story up against these various structures, just to make sure that there's dramatic momentum when you need it. Test out each method, borrow and steal from one to add to another, and experiment, but it helps to know the rules before you start to break them.

Happy plotting!