

HOW TO PLOT A STORY

Start by summarizing the three acts:

ACT 1

The protagonist, setting and conflict are introduced.

ACT 2

The protagonist confronts the conflict and solves it.

ACT 3

The protagonist reaps the (usually positive) consequences of his actions.

Once you've summarized the 3 acts, expound on them by dividing each act into 3 parts:

ACT 1

PART 1

The protagonist and the setting are introduced

PART 2

The antagonist takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist

PART 3

The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

ACT 2

PART 1

The protagonist identifies a solution to the problem.

PART 2

The protagonist applies the solution

PART 3

The solution neutralizes the antagonist completely.

ACT 3

PART 1

The protagonist gets the prize.

PART 2

The protagonist uses the prize.

PART 3

The protagonist disappears into the sunset.

Once you've expounded each act into 3 parts, expound each of those parts into 3 segments:

ACT 1

PART 1

The protagonist and the setting are introduced.

SEGMENT 1

We see a snapshot of a day in the life of the protagonist.

SEGMENT 2

We see a snapshot of the kind of conflict that epitomizes his life and his dreams.

SEGMENT 3

We see the typical outcome of how he normally handles conflict.

PART 2

The antagonist takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.

SEGMENT 1

An event knocks the protagonist's life off track in the worst possible way.

SEGMENT 2

He reacts to the conflict in his typical manner.

SEGMENT 3

He fails to prevent the event from cutting him off from his dreams.

PART 3

The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist asks what he can do to fix the problem.

SEGMENT 2

He weighs his options.

SEGMENT 3

He makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

ACT 2

PART 1

The protagonist identifies a solution to the problem.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies a clue/path/opportunity to help him solve the problem.

SEGMENT 2

He follows the clue.

SEGMENT 3

It leads to the antagonist, who the protagonist is too weak to overcome.

PART 2

The protagonist applies the solution

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies the source of strength he needs to overcome the antagonist.

SEGMENT 2

He pursues the source of strength.

SEGMENT 3

He attains the source of strength.

PART 3

The solution neutralizes the antagonist completely.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist approaches the antagonist with his new strength.

SEGMENT 2

He engages the antagonist.

SEGMENT 3

He defeats the antagonist.

ACT 3

PART 1

The protagonist gets the prize.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist emerges from the battle.

SEGMENT 2

He reaches for the prize that will fix his life.

SEGMENT 3

He attains the prize.

PART 2

The protagonist uses the prize.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies the wrongs left over from the conflict.

SEGMENT 2

He goes about using the prize to set them right.

SEGMENT 3

We see the result of him setting things right.

PART 3

The protagonist disappears into the sunset.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies his plans for the future.

SEGMENT 2

He steps into the sunset.

SEGMENT 3

He disappears into the sunset.

Finally, expound each segment into 3 scenes.

ACT 1

PART 1

The protagonist and the setting are introduced.

SEGMENT 1

We see a snapshot of a day in the life of the protagonist.

SCENE 1

Show the protagonist in his natural setting.

SCENE 2

Show him doing something that defines where he's at in life.

SCENE 3

Show him doing something that defines where he's going in life.

SEGMENT 2

We see a snapshot of the kind of conflict that epitomizes his life and his dreams.

SCENE 1

The protagonist is hit with a problem typical of his life.

SCENE 2

He responds to the problem as is normal for him.

SCENE 3

He succeeds or fails as is normal for him.

SEGMENT 3

We see the typical outcome of how he normally handles conflict.

SCENE 1

Show the immediate consequences of the protagonist's success or failure.

SCENE 2

The protagonist reacts emotionally to his success or failure according to his values.

SCENE 3

Show how this affects his long term plans/outlook.

PART 2

The antagonist takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.

SEGMENT 1

An event knocks the protagonist's life off track in the worst possible way.

SCENE 1

The worst thing that could happen to the protagonist begins to happen.

SCENE 2

The event continues to unfold.

SCENE 3

Show how this event will prevent the protagonist from continuing his life as normal if it is not stopped.

SEGMENT 2

He reacts to the conflict in his typical manner.

SCENE 1

The protagonist decides to take action to stop the event or its repercussions.

SCENE 2

He takes action.

SCENE 3

He fails to stop the event and it irrevocably prevents him from continuing life as normal.

SEGMENT 3

He fails to prevent the event from cutting him off from his dreams.

SCENE 1

The protagonist emerges from the event.

SCENE 2

He reacts emotionally to the event according to his values.

SCENE 3

He acknowledges that his life is forever changed.

PART 3

The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist asks what he can do to fix the problem.

SCENE 1

The protagonist asks what he can do to address the conflict.

SCENE 2

He weighs his options.

SCENE 3

He states his conclusion.

SEGMENT 2

He weighs his options.

SCENE 1

Focusing on that one course of actions, he asks if it's worth it or even possible to pursue.

SCENE 2

He does the cost/benefit analysis.

SCENE 3

He states his conclusion.

SEGMENT 3

He makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SCENE 1

He steps up to the point of no return.

SCENE 2

He crosses the point of no return.

SCENE 3

He emerges on the other side.

ACT 2

PART 1

The protagonist identifies a solution to the problem.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies a clue/path/opportunity to help him solve the problem.

SCENE 1

The protagonist identifies a clue left over from the cataclysmic event.

SCENE 2

He analyzes the clue.

SCENE 3

He gains some advantage from it.

SEGMENT 2

He follows the clue.

SCENE 1

The protagonist decides to follow the trail the clue revealed.

SCENE 2

He follows the trail.

SCENE 3

He reaches the end of the trail and finds an obstacle.

SEGMENT 3

It leads to the antagonist, who the protagonist is too weak to overcome.

SCENE 1

The protagonist approaches the obstacle.

SCENE 2

He engages the obstacle.

SCENE 3

He fails to overcome the obstacle.

PART 2

The protagonist applies the solution

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies the source of strength he needs to overcome the antagonist.

SCENE 1

The protagonist asks why he wasn't strong enough to overcome the obstacle.

SCENE 2

He analyzes the question.

SCENE 3

He finds the answer.

SEGMENT 2

He pursues the source of strength.

SCENE 1

The protagonist identifies the source of strength he needs to overcome the obstacle.

SCENE 2

He pursues the source of strength he needs.

SCENE 3

He arrives at the source.

SEGMENT 3

He attains the source of strength.

SCENE 1

The protagonist approaches the source of strength.

SCENE 2

He reaches for it.

SCENE 3

He attains it.

PART 3

The solution neutralizes the antagonist completely.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist approaches the antagonist with his new strength.

SCENE 1

The protagonist approaches the obstacle with his new strength.

SCENE 2

He engages the obstacle.

SCENE 3

He overcomes the obstacle.

SEGMENT 2

He engages the antagonist.

SCENE 1

The protagonist approaches the antagonist directly.

SCENE 2

He engages the antagonist.

SCENE 3

The antagonist defeats the protagonist.

SEGMENT 3

He defeats the antagonist.

SCENE 1

The protagonist decides to make one last strike.

SCENE 2

He strikes the antagonist.

SCENE 3

He defeats the antagonist completely.

ACT 3

PART 1

The protagonist gets the prize.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist emerges from the battle.

SCENE 1

The protagonist rises from the battlefield.

SCENE 2

He reacts emotionally to the battle according to his values.

SCENE 3

He steps off the battlefield.

SEGMENT 2

He reaches for the prize that will fix his life.

SCENE 1

The protagonist identifies the prize.

SCENE 2

He acknowledges the prize's significance.

SCENE 3

He reaches for the prize.

SEGMENT 3

He attains the prize.

SCENE 1

The protagonist takes the prize.

SCENE 2

He absorbs or releases its power.

SCENE 3

The protagonist and/or the world is transformed by the prize.

PART 2

The protagonist uses the prize.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies the wrongs left over from the conflict.

SCENE 1

The protagonist asks what loose ends are left over that need to be set right.

SCENE 2

He analyzes the question.

SCENE 3

He identifies the answer.

SEGMENT 2

He goes about using the prize to set them right.

SCENE 1

The protagonist focuses his attention on setting that/those thing/s right.

SCENE 2

He uses the prize to neutralize those problems.

SCENE 3

He succeeds at neutralizing them.

SEGMENT 3

We see the result of him setting things right.

SCENE 1

Show the consequences of the protagonist neutralizing the problems.

SCENE 2

The protagonist reacts emotionally to his success.

SCENE 3

The protagonist experiences the consequence of everything that has happened.

PART 3

The protagonist disappears into the sunset.

SEGMENT 1

The protagonist identifies his plans for the future.

SCENE 1

The protagonist asks what he should do in the future.

SCENE 2

He analyzes the problem.

SCENE 3

He states his conclusion.

SEGMENT 2

He steps into the sunset.

SCENE 1

The protagonist asks what he needs to do to achieve his goal/s for the future.

SCENE 2

He analyzes the problem.

SCENE 3

He states his conclusion.

SEGMENT 3

He disappears into the sunset.

SCENE 1

The protagonist steps towards the point of no return.

SCENE 2

He crosses the point of no return.

SCENE 3

He emerges on the other side.

Once you've finished plotting all your scenes, simply write the story in long form using only the scene summaries. Your story will flow seamlessly from beginning to end.