



Story
Structure



Story Beats Workbook



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The Trellis Method's

Story Beats Workbook

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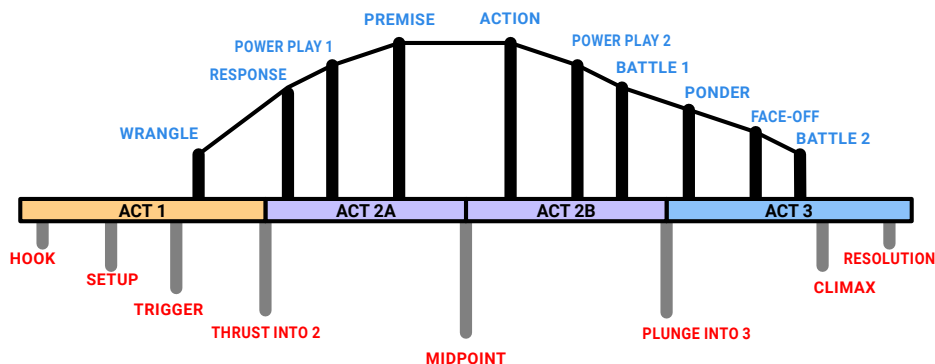
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BEATS:

Story Structure Writing Tools

The Bridge Between Story Idea and Scenes

The Trellis Method uses three writing tools to bridge the gap between recording story ideas and creating actual scenes. The worksheet prompts for the details you'll use to write content.



- 1. Story Spine:** This writing tool uses an intuitive format to build a Story Spine, and like the supporting piers of a bridge, the Story Spine allows you to envision the entire story.
- 2. Story Body:** Based on prompts, you'll build the Story Body on the foundation of the Story Spine, creating a HOOK-to-RESOLUTION synopsis of your entire narrative.
- 3. Story Beats:** If pleased with the Story Body synopsis, the Story Beats prompt you to create detailed notes designed to help you write engaging scenes with confidence.

What Is the Story Spine?

Like bridge piers, a well-constructed narrative is supported by the Story Spine, comprising 8 of the 18 Story Beats. The Story Spine also helps you decide whether to continue with your initial story premise or search for a more appealing idea.

Story Spine History: Once Upon a Time...

The Story Spine enables writers to improvise a narrative quickly and to identify what it's about. As background, Kenn Adams came up with The Story Spine around 1991¹. He worked with the Freestyle Repertory Theater, the New York home for TheatreSports and created it as a tool both for working on Play by Play, the full-length improvised-play structure, and for teaching storytelling and creative writing to kids in school.

Kenn didn't initially name it The Story Spine, he simply called it "Once upon a time..." It was his friend and fellow improviser Kat Koppett who dubbed it The Story Spine several years later when she began using it as a training tool in her story-based corporate training workshops.

¹ <https://www.aerogrammestudio.com/2013/06/05/back-to-the-story-spine/>

A Story Spine Example

The Story Spine jump-starts your storytelling process. The simple format enables you to assess the quality and potential of your storyline. If you decide the story has potential, you'll use the details from the prompts to complete the Story Body. To better understand how the process works, consider this example of a Story Spine based on the 1999 classic animated film, *The Iron Giant*.

Once upon a time, there was a damaged giant robot from outer space who fell to Earth but did not remember its capabilities as a weapon of mass destruction. [**HOOK**]

Every day, the robot foraged for iron as fuel, causing random damage and raising the fear of villagers. [**SETUP**]

But one day, the robot got tangled in the lines of a power plant. A boy saved it by turning off the electricity, creating a loving bond between the young human and the giant machine. [**TRIGGER**]

Because of that, while in hiding to avoid authorities, the boy shared his Superman comic books with the curious robot. [**THRUST INTO 2**]

Since that happened, the boy's efforts to conceal the machine came to the attention of an overly ambitious government official, and it was clear the robot was not safe unless it stayed out of sight—not a simple thing for a 50-foot tall machine. **[MIDPOINT]**

As a result of that, the boy led the robot to a junkyard where they played a game of space ranger versus evil Atom. At the sight of the boy's drawn ray gun, the robot reacted to its defensive programming as a powerful weapon, almost killing the boy. **[PLUNGE INTO 3]**

Until finally, the robot faced the threat of annihilation from the military. It defended itself by turning into an advanced weapon. When forced to choose between its programming (its nature) or change (what it can become), it chose the latter and sacrificed itself to save the boy. **[CLIMAX]**

And ever since then, the bond with the boy remained intact, and the changed robot began the process of reassembly—to be Superman, not a gun. **[RESOLUTION]**

The Story Spine Is Merely a Writing Tool

In his blog post², Kenn Adams wrote: “... when stripped down to the Story Spine, the movies in question lose many of their characters and much of what makes them so brilliant and memorable. That’s because the Story Spine is not the story, it’s the spine. It’s nothing but the bare-boned structure upon which the story is built. And that’s what makes it such a powerful tool. It allows you, as a writer, to look at your story at its structural core and to ensure that the basic building blocks are all in the right place.”

The Story Spine helps you create the narrative’s basic structure with 8 of the 18 Story Beats, useful for making sure you have the “bare-bones narrative” before progressing further. That’s why the Story Spine’s worksheet has a Go/No Go Decision. If you feel your story has sufficient appeal, then you’ll “go” forward and complete the Story Body. If you choose to go forward, you will put to use the information collected from the Story Spine prompts as you complete the Story Body.

² Ibid.

What Is the Story Body

The Story Body builds on the Story Spine by using all 18 Story Beats to create a front-to-back narrative summary with minimal time and effort. Do you recall as a child how your mind engaged with fairy tales? Each transitional phrase served as a cliffhanger, opening up a switch in your mind that you longed to close. Like a familiar story from childhood, the Story Body presents you with prompts, and you fill in the blanks. The Story Body encourages writers to tell their stories from beginning to end, putting flesh on the Story Spine's 8 beats and then building out the rest with the additional 10 Story Beats.

After Creating the Story Spine, Build the Story Body

Kenn Adams clarified that the Story Spine doesn't include the details that make the narrative brilliant and memorable because it's merely the bare-boned structure. The 18 Story Beats require many creative details to complete the narrative. Without those additional details, it's a wide chasm to jump from the Story Spine to the Story Beats. Thus, the Story Body prompts for beat-by-beat details that will bridge that gap. After completing the Story Body, you'll want to assess whether to continue the narrative or search for a more appealing idea.

Evaluate Whether the Narrative Will Work

It's your story, and you control the storyline. Building the Story Body after creating the Story Spine guides your writing efforts. The Story Body guides you like a map, and you still control whether to follow the route or take a detour. The information recorded for the Story Spine and Story Body simplifies completing the Story Beats—*a crucial step before you write scenes*. After completing the Story Body, the most important thing to consider is whether the overall story is working, and if it's not, decide if you should revise or start over with a different idea.

What Are Story Beats?

Story Beats give writers a structure to show what happens within the narrative (i.e., the 'plot'). Readers know the story patterns they prefer, even if they can't name specific genres. Your chosen genre (or mix of genres) jump-starts the creative process. Writers use the premise to connect content strategically across the Story Beats. Those 18 beats help plotters and free writers to construct tales based on the expected (i.e., familiar) patterns while generating content that surprises and delights readers. Using Story Beats is a step-by-step process for completing the prompts.

Answer the Step-by-Step Main Plot Questions

Story Beats prompt for plot details with questions. For example:

- What events will take place early that create tension, causing readers to engage as their concerns increase for the lead character?
- Which of those events will create a story problem that captures readers' attention?
- What dramatic event will engage the lead character within the novel's first page or two?
- What emotion-laced events in the initial scenes will encourage readers to bond with the lead character and experience the chief protagonist's emotions?
- What are the stakes that will become clear to both the lead character and the readers?
- What mixture of narrative and action will focus the lead character's efforts on solving one escalating and unavoidable problem?
- How will the lead character's pursuit of a difficult goal create conflict and tension?

Story Beats Also Apply to Subplots

The main plot gets a lot of attention, but top movies and best-selling novels weave several subplots into the storyline.

- The main plot is a thread of crucial events that comprise the narrative of what happens within the story, forcing characters into conflicts.
- Subplots add more events and characters, amplifying and building out the main plot.
- Subplots can have crossover scenes with the main plot, including supporting characters who have their own wants, desires, and arcs.

Note: Refer to the Parallel & Merge Plot Example in the infographics to see the interaction between the main plot and the subplots.

Use Story Beats to Gather and Structure Information

Story Beats are based on the classic three-act structure. The second act is divided into parts A and B. Thus, Acts 1, 2A, 2B, and 3 each comprise approximately 25% of the story. Organized within the acts, the Story Beats represent a combination of single scenes and scene sequences. The Story Beats are time-tested principles that help writers fulfill readers' expectations using familiar story patterns.

Story Beats Descriptions

This overview describes each of the Story Beats.

Act 1: STABLE WORLD

1. HOOK

This scene introduces essential aspects of the story and grabs readers with an intense need to know what happens next. These critical details convey what the story is about, establish the actions required for upcoming events (e.g., characters and settings), and entertain readers (i.e., maintain interest). The HOOK is an opportunity to make the chief protagonist appealing (i.e., likable), doing something that humanizes the character and hinting at one or more flaws through the lead character's thoughts, choices, conversations, or actions. *Note: The HOOK is part of the SETUP, and it can appear before, within, or after the sequence of SETUP scenes.*

2. SETUP

This sequence of scenes in the stable world establishes the characters, their wants, the stakes, the story's theme, and the need for change. The scenes introduce the supporting cast of

characters, the chief protagonist's goal (i.e., the "want"), the lead character's reluctance to change (i.e., the "need" to learn a life lesson), hints at the stakes (i.e., the bad things that will happen if unsuccessful attaining the goal), and something happens that makes the lead character appealing to readers. A character (typically not the chief protagonist) hints at what the lead character must learn to satisfy the need (e.g., forgiveness, love, acceptance, faith, fear, trust, survival, selflessness, responsibility). The SETUP combines elements intended to resonate with the audience's emotions.

3. TRIGGER

A major event triggers the disruption of the protagonist's stable world, stopping the lead character from continuing as before. The event is so disruptive, it will eventually thrust the chief protagonist into Act 2's unstable world, and the lead character cannot return to the way things were before the TRIGGER event.

4. WRANGLE

In this sequence of scenes, the protagonist wrangles with move-forward choices but resists the need for change. As the lead character debates the situation within self and with others, this scene leverages the doubt and resistance established in the

TRIGGER scene. These scenes open switches (i.e., questions) in readers' minds about what they can expect as the story unfolds. The content can layer in aspects of the lead character's backstory without an information dump.

5. THRUST INTO 2

In this scene, the chief protagonist acts on the choices made in the WRANGLE sequence, thrusting the character into an unstable world of Act 2A. The epic moment happens when the lead character moves forward, leaves the comfort of the stable world, tries something new, or thinks in different ways. It's a decisive action scene that separates the stable world of Act 1 from Act 2's unstable world. Throughout Act 1, the chief protagonist grows more aware of what will become the story's goal—the effort it will take to resolve the story's problem. This event solidifies the story goal as the lead character is THRUST INTO 2, an irreversible action—a point of no return. The big event that compels the lead character to accept a call to action (i.e., the lead character chooses the story goal to resolve the story problem).

Act 2A: UNSTABLE WORLD

6. RESPONSE

In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist responds to the unstable world and meets who will help the lead character learn the internal theme. The new character (e.g., often referred to as the 'helper') can be a co-protagonist, love interest, a nemesis, a mentor, a family member, or a friend. Whoever fills this role has a story that will provide a departure from the lead character's story, often creating a subplot.

7. POWER PLAY 1

This scene shows the antagonist's power, provides clues, and establishes the core conflict. This scene represents a small but important turning point in the story, reminding readers of the antagonist's ability to thwart the chief protagonist's goal.

POWER PLAY 1 shows a mixture of internal and external obstacles. The lead character's 'need' is an internal obstacle to this person's external 'want', and the antagonist also represents an external barrier to the chief protagonist's goal. The scene provides additional information for the plot and serves as the setup for the MIDPOINT and POWER PLAY 2. Each POWER PLAY foreshadows what will happen in BATTLE 1, BATTLE 2, and

CLIMAX. *Note: POWER PLAY 1 and POWER PLAY 2 scenes help with pacing, increasing the suspense by reminding readers what is at stake. Also, the POWER PLAY 1 scene plants a seed of tension—a denial of an expected or desired action. This inaction embeds a detail that contributes to more tension in a later scene.*

8. PREMISE

This sequence of scenes fulfills the novel's premise, giving readers the events they expect and emotions they crave. The PREMISE delivers on the book's implied promise and increases the intensity of events until the MIDPOINT. In the thick of things, the chief protagonist either loves or hates the action. From the POWER PLAY 1 scene, the lead character gained a sense of what might happen, but not the details. The PREMISE gives readers those details, and the scenes increase tension and fear, growing the 'seed of tension.' The events challenge the lead character's ability to handle things in the unstable world, and throughout these scenes and up to the MIDPOINT, it's not clear if the chief protagonist will fail or succeed.

9. MIDPOINT

This scene shows the chief protagonist's status (i.e., winning or losing), increases the stakes, and gives the lead character insight,

shifting the focus from *want* to *need*. At the MIDPOINT, the PREMISE sequence culminates in either a false victory (the lead character has been succeeding) or a false defeat (the chief protagonist has been floundering). By the end of the MIDPOINT, something raises the stakes and the lead character's "insight" subtly shifts the focus from the external goal to the chief protagonist's need for change (i.e., the need to learn the theme). A character from the RESPONSE scenes contributes to this shift in the lead character's focus. The lead character shifts from reaction to action, concentrating on how to overcome the antagonist's obstacles. The chief protagonist gains some insight into what it takes to master the person's flaws. The lead character's insights gained in the MIDPOINT scene represent the shift from reaction to action, but it's only the beginning of the long process because the chief protagonist's newfound knowledge does not equate to applied wisdom. *Note: A familiar pattern in stories is the identification of what culminates at MIDPOINT in the lead character's false victory or false defeat, raising stakes and forcing the chief protagonist to continue toward genuine change. That progressive change requires the chief protagonist to move beyond mere awareness of the 'need,' and to apply the life lesson to achieve the story's goal.*

Act 2B: UNSTABLE WORLD

10. ACTION

In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist takes action based on some discovered truth (i.e., the insights at MIDPOINT), changing the lead character's trajectory (i.e., up or down). The MIDPOINT influences the ACTION scenes:

- **False Victory:** If the MIDPOINT was a false victory, the ACTION sequence will be a downward path where things get progressively worse for the lead character.
- **False Defeat:** If the MIDPOINT was a false defeat, the ACTION sequence will be an upward path where things seem to get progressively better for the lead character.

The lead character's discovery of truth at the MIDPOINT inspires action despite the external obstacles and internal flaws. But regardless of the up or down trajectory, the lead character's continuing flaws and antagonists' unrelenting attacks take a toll. The bad guys never give up, and neither do the lead character's inner issues. The chief protagonist must brave internal demons and external forces until the PLUNGE INTO 3.

11. POWER PLAY 2

This scene hints at what is coming when the chief protagonist PLUNGES INTO 3, emphasizing the ever-increasing stakes. The second POWER PLAY 2 reminds readers and the lead character of what's at stake. This scene focuses on a 'Moral Choice' question. For example: *How far will the lead character go to defeat the antagonist and achieve goal?* The scene also forces the chief protagonist to choose between battle preparation (i.e., 'fight') or turning tail (i.e., 'flight'). The lead character's choice influences the resolve to do whatever it takes to achieve the story's goal. The information in this scene introduces what the lead character does to prepare for the upcoming events, but it's not the battle.

12. BATTLE 1

In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist fights the chief antagonist, and in most stories, appears to win BATTLE 1. When the antagonist seems positioned to win, the lead character's internal flaw presents the most significant obstacle to defeating the external force, reinforcing the need for the chief protagonist to change. Despite the flaw, in most stories the lead character rebounds and claims victory. In terms of action, it's a slugfest, building tension and excitement with each scene. Even though

the lead character emerges as the winner in this sequence, it's the story's FALSE ENDING. The upcoming PLUNGE INTO 3 will wipe out the victory and emphasize a reversal of fortune.

Act 3: CHANGED WORLD

13. PLUNGE INTO 3

In this scene (in most stories), the victory at the end of Act 2 is reversed, plunging the chief protagonist into an all-is-lost state (i.e., a looming sense of physical, professional, or psychological death). It's the lead character's lowest point in the story.

Screenwriter Blake Snyder likened it to that moment when a caterpillar wraps itself in a cocoon. The antagonist somehow rises from defeat and reverses the lead character's victory.

Although not physical, it still feels like death, plunging the chief protagonist into a desperate state. The lead character confronts the "lie" that perpetuates the person's primary flaw and, up to this point, has prevented the resolution of the story problem. Faced with the "truth," the chief protagonist vows to make whatever personal changes are necessary to overcome any lingering self-sabotage (i.e., change to defeat the power of the "lie" or to overcome the inner "flaw"). But this scene does not permit the lead character time to debate what to do next (while still wrapped

in Snyder's analogy of the cocoon). It's the setup for the PONDER sequence. Like the THRUST INTO 2, the PLUNGE INTO 3 is an unavoidable and irreversible event, creating an impression that this might be the end of the chief protagonist, giving the audience a sense that the CLIMAX is on the way.

14. PONDER

In this sequence of scenes, the lead character ponders prior choices, goal dedication, self-worth, and personal abilities. The scenes show the lead character processing everything that has happened so far, like a caterpillar preparing to burst from the cocoon and become a butterfly. At the end of the sequence, the lead character knows how to overcome the personal flaw and has come up with an idea of how to get past the antagonist's obstacles — it's that point in the journey when the lead character clearly understands what must be done. The emotional sequence shows how the lead character questions everything and summarizes regrets. But it's also where the chief protagonist turns past negatives into future positives, leveraging the emotions into an immediate force for both change and action. An essential character (e.g., love interest, mentor, or helper.) often influences the realization of required actions. The sequence shows how the lead character reflects and then understands what must be done

to fix the challenges from Act 2, committing to not just learn the universal life lesson (i.e., internal theme) but to make the needed change.

15. FACE-OFF

The scene includes a face-off between the chief protagonist and the antagonist, brought on by the lead character's prior choices. This turning point in the story forces the lead character and antagonist to re-engage. It is not a fight, but the setup for the upcoming BATTLE 2.

16. BATTLE 2

In this sequence of scenes (see examples A through E), the chief protagonist and antagonist fight intensely, knowing only one will survive (e.g., psychologically, professionally, physically) the second battle. These scenes emphasize what the lead character must go through, similar to how a butterfly must struggle to emerge from the cocoon—essential to life and the story's plot. For example:

- A. The lead character faces the potential for either psychological (emotional), professional, or physical death. But going into BATTLE 2, things are different because the

chief protagonist has learned the internal theme and has prepared a plan.

- B. The chief protagonist enters the fight and executes the plan.
 - C. But just when the lead character's victory seems at hand, the antagonist introduces some twist that upsets the plan's execution, and despite best efforts, the chief protagonist fails.
 - D. To keep up the fight, the chief protagonist regroups and taps into an inner strength and boldness.
 - E. At the end of this sequence, the lead character feels the burden of the outcome and improvises a new plan.
-

17. CLIMAX

This scene concludes with the chief protagonist achieving positive or negative results tied to both the story's goal and the lead character's *need*, generating either a win/win, win/lose, lose/win, or lose/lose. For example:

- The scene begins with the execution of the lead character's improvised plan. The protagonist takes on the antagonist one last time with renewed strength.
- After the TRIGGER event in Act 1, the lead character resisted engagement. But at the CLIMAX event in Act 3, the chief protagonist commits to doing whatever it takes to defeat the antagonist.

- Act 1 established an open-switch question in readers' minds. The CLIMAX sets up the closing of that switch, and readers expect full closure with details explained in the RESOLUTION.
 - In a mystery, the TRIGGER event typically asks:, Who done it?
 - The CLIMAX identifies *who*, but it's the RESOLUTION that explains the *why* plus other details to fully close the switch.
- Usually, the lead character wins in the CLIMAX. But sometimes the chief protagonist loses to emphasize what can happen in a cautionary tale. The struggle to escape from the cocoon is over, and like a butterfly, the lead character emerges (e.g., psychological, professional, and physical life), but the ultimate survival details depend on the writer's preferences and the storyline. *Note: Based on the subplots, the CLIMAX may include multiple scenes.*

18. RESOLUTION

The last scenes tie up loose ends and satisfy readers with the emotions they expect from the Changed World, which can include an optional epilogue. The CLIMAX resolves the core conflict (i.e., either a win or a loss), but other questions may remain open.

Therefore, the RESOLUTION ties up those loose ends and pays off all promises established by the writer. For example, all foreshadowing and dramatic questions before or within the RESOLUTION. This Changed World is not the same as the Stable World, and the RESOLUTION scene shows the contrasts between the two. The Changed World combines aspects of the Stable World and Unstable World, plus it may offer previously unseen elements. In most genres (e.g., romance), readers expect a transformation of the chief protagonist, and sometimes the co-protagonists, too. Each writer chooses the right level of change (e.g., none to full transformation) for the characters based on a combination of personal preferences, chosen genres, and storyline. *Note: In a series, the RESOLUTION often serves as the subtle setup for the next book, avoiding the cheesy cliffhangers that most readers dislike.*

BEATS:

Story Elements

Reinforcement and Support

Characters

Strong characterization of the chief protagonists and antagonist keeps readers focused on the storyline despite introducing cast members and conflicts. Use the Story Characters Worksheet to create profiles of essential cast members.

Plot

Completion of the Story Beats helps writers to envision the entire plot and create a 1,000 to 1,500 words synopsis. Use your answers to the worksheet prompts to compile a beat-by-beat synopsis.

Themes

Use Story Beats to identify and refine the narrative's themes. For example:

- The **external theme** gives meaning to the overarching narrative relating to what your book is about.

- The **internal theme** gives insight into the protagonist's life, amplifying conflicts, experiences, discoveries, and emotions, including the change required for the lead character to solve the story problem.
 - The **philosophical theme** taps into the audience's collective knowledge of a universal truth, and typically provides the lead character with the motivation to learn the internal theme's life lesson.
-

Structure

The order of scenes creates a pattern that challenges the protagonists to go through repeated try-and-fail cycles.

- Each cycle raises the stakes, escalating the potential for psychological, professional, or physical death.
- The chosen genres influence the pacing and intensity, but the writer bears the responsibility for putting the scenes in the order with the most potential to satisfy the audience's expectations.
- Tension occurs as readers expect more conflict.
- Suspense grows as the conflict remains unresolved.

Successful placement of strategic try-and-fail cycles (emotional and not just tactical actions) helps to create an ebb and flow of tension until released in the story's resolution.

Point of View

The character's point of view (POV) used in the story varies based on the writer's preference and influences of both the chosen genre (or mix of genres) and the target readers' tastes. A consistent style of POV simplifies the storyline and satisfies readers' preferences.

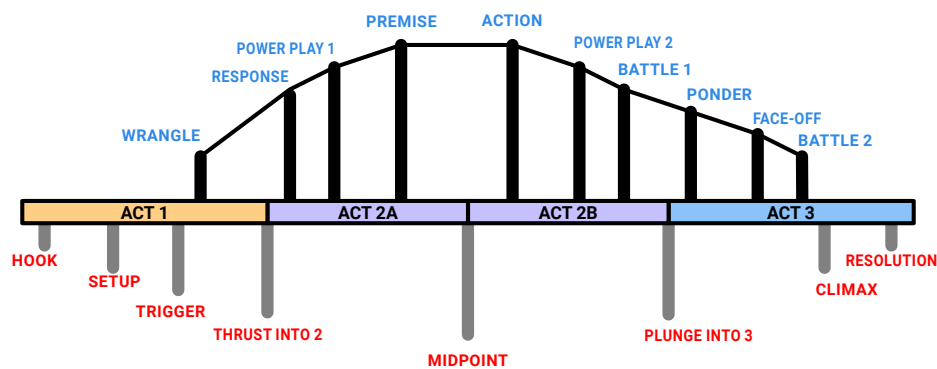
BEATS:

Infographics

Story Beats are the familiar structure readers expect, but they're a framework, *not* a formula. Like a roadmap, you're free to detour based on the storyline or because of your writing preferences.

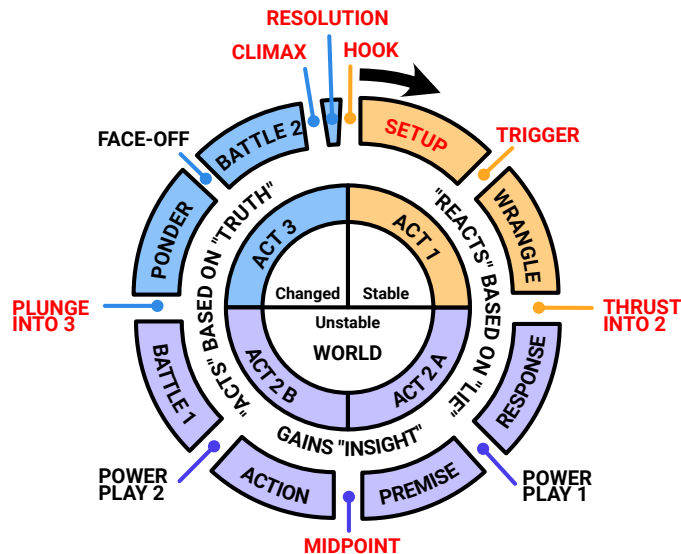
Story Structure Bridge

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2. **Story Body:** Based on prompts, you'll build the Story Body on the foundation of the Story Spine, creating a HOOK-to-RESOLUTION synopsis of your entire narrative.
3. **Story Beats:** If pleased with the Story Body synopsis, the Story Beats prompt you to create detailed notes designed to help you write engaging scenes with confidence.

Story Beats



1. HOOK (0% to 1%): The first scene introduces essential aspects of the story and grabs readers with an intense need to know what happens next.

2. SETUP (1% to 11%): This sequence of scenes in the stable world establishes the characters, their wants, the stakes, story theme, and the need for change.

3. TRIGGER (12%): Halfway through Act 1, a major event triggers the disruption of the protagonist's stable world, stopping hero from continuing as before.

4. WRANGLE (13% to 24%): In this sequence of scenes, the hero wrangles with move-forward choices, but resists the need for change.

5. THRUST INTO 2 (25%): In this scene, the hero acts on the choices he made in the Wrangle sequence, thrusting him into an unstable world.

6. RESPONSE (26% to 36%): In this sequence of scenes, the hero responds to the unstable world, and meets who will help him learn the theme.

7. POWER PLAY 1 (37%): This scene shows the bad guy's power, provides clues, and establishes the core conflict.

8. PREMISE (38% to 49%): This sequence of scenes fulfills the novel's premise, giving readers the events and emotions they crave.

9. MIDPOINT (50%): This scene shows the hero's status (i.e., winning or losing), increases the stakes, and gives the protagonist insight, shifting the focus from want to need.

10. ACTION (51% to 62%): In this sequence of scenes, hero takes action based on insight, changing the protagonist's trajectory (i.e., up or down).

11. POWER PLAY 2 (63%): This scene hints at what is coming when the hero Plunges Into 3, emphasizing the ever-increasing stakes.

12. BATTLE 1 (64% TO 74%): In this sequence of scenes, the hero fights the bad guy, and appears to win the first battle.

13. PLUNGE INTO 3 (75%): In this scene, the victory at the end of Act 2 is reversed, plunging hero into an all-is-lost state.

14. PONDER (76% to 87%): In this sequence of scenes, the hero ponders his prior choices, goal dedication, self worth, and personal abilities.

15. FACE-OFF (88%): The scene includes a face-off between hero and adversary, brought on by the protagonist's prior choices.

16. BATTLE 2 (89% to 95%): In this sequence of scenes, the hero and bad guy fight intensely, knowing only one will survive the second battle.

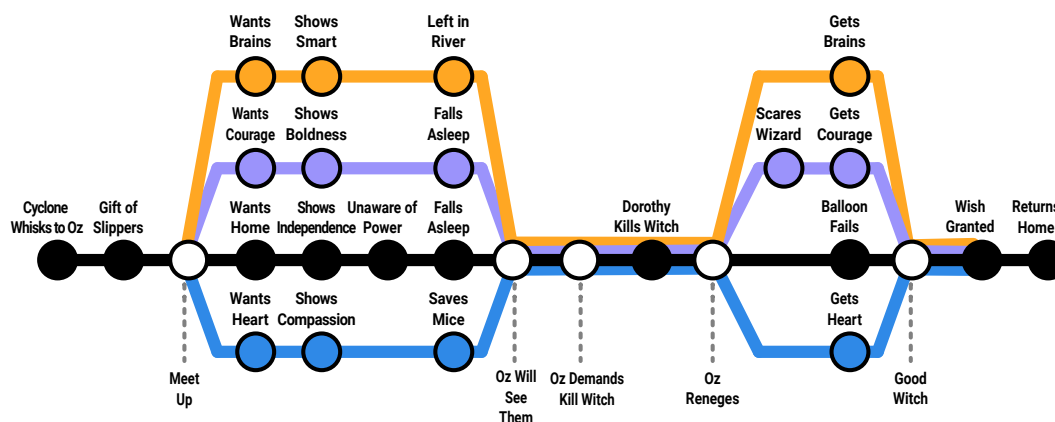
17. CLIMAX (96-98%): The scene concludes with hero achieving one of four results tied to his want and need: win/win, win/lose, lose/win, or lose/lose.

18. RESOLUTION (99% to 100%): The last scenes tie up loose ends, satisfying readers with the emotions they expect from changed world.

Parallel & Merge Plot Example

The **Main Plot** is a thread of crucial events that comprise the narrative of *what* happens within the story, forcing characters into conflicts. The **Subplots** add more events and characters to amplify and build out the main plot.

Book Example: *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum



- **Plot (Dorothy):** Will Dorothy learn inner-power and return home?
- **Subplot (Scarecrow):** Will Scarecrow get brains?
- **Subplot (Cowardly Lion):** Will Cowardly Lion get courage?
- **Subplot (Tin Woodman):** Will Tin Woodman get heart?
- **Merge (All Threads):** Will they work together to achieve their goals?

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz offers an excellent example of a "Parallel & Merge Plot." It starts with the main plot (Dorothy) followed by three subplots (Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, and Tin Woodman) that merge at strategic points. The subplots influence the main plot. Dorothy recognizes an inner strength to achieve her goal and return home.

Writing Principle: Subplots serve as support to the main plot, connecting key points and amplifying essential details.

How-to: Begin a Parallel & Merge Plot using the 8 Story Spine beats.