



**Write
Content**

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Story Scenes Workbook

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The Trellis Method's

Story Scenes Workbook

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SCENES:

Write for Your Target Audience

Think Like a Reader

Write scenes from the reader's perspective. For example:

- A lifetime of TV shows, films, and books has saturated audiences with the details of what to expect from a story.
- Readers select books based on those expectations.
- Characters with relatable traits draw readers into the story.
- When characters react to story events, the audience enjoys the emotions (e.g., love, hate, joy, anger, excitement, etc.).
- Characters inspire readers by overcoming life's obstacles.
- Readers love stories that keep them turning pages.
- The audience likes it when stories take them to different places and teach them new things.
- The audience reads a story from beginning to end, so they expect the narrative to move forward in a logical sequence.
- Readers express what they like and dislike in their reviews of popular books.

Use What Top Writers Have Figured Out

Top authors recognize readers' preferences and expectations. They also understand that the writing process doesn't work linearly. Instead, writers combine all the story elements into the patterns readers expect. They accept this principle because they know how writing projects work and put in the extra effort to make every scene a short story readers will love. Top writers recognize there are no shortcuts, just time-proven patterns and techniques you can use to engage readers.

Use the Process as a Guide

The audience reads from the beginning to the end of a story. However, writers don't work like that. Instead, writers are free to create, working on any part of the story until they complete the entire narrative. The Story Beats serve as a guide, helping writers make sure they complete all the details readers expect. It's not a one-and-done process, but iterative. Like sharpening a knife, you keep honing until you've achieved the keen edge. This takes time and diligence, which is why it's a process instead of a task. Keep in mind that there are no shortcuts, just hard but enjoyable work.

Using and Arranging the Gathered Details

As you write scenes, you'll use the previously gathered details about characters, plots, and themes. For example:

- **Genres:** Key Scenes, Conventions, and Themes
- **Plots:** Events and Settings
- **Themes:** External, Internal, and Philosophical
- **Scene Structure:** Purpose, Goal, Obstacle, Point of View, Date, Time, Turning Point, Stakes, Intensity, Character Details (e.g., Want, Need, Try/Fail Cycle, Appearance, Senses, On/Off Stage Names/Roles), Supporting Details (e.g., Clues, Red Herrings, Character/Writer Misdirection, Foreshadowing, Questions, Symbols, Motifs, & Objects, Setting & Weather)

The process breaks down the gathering and use of details, helping you entertain, inform, and inspire readers.

Writing Lenses Focus Your Efforts

The Trellis Method's writing lenses focus your efforts.

- Create a narrative necklace, connecting one scene to the next.
- Organize the details and scenes into expected patterns.
- Engage readers one scene after another.

Plot Lens

The plot lens helps you analyze and organize the story structure

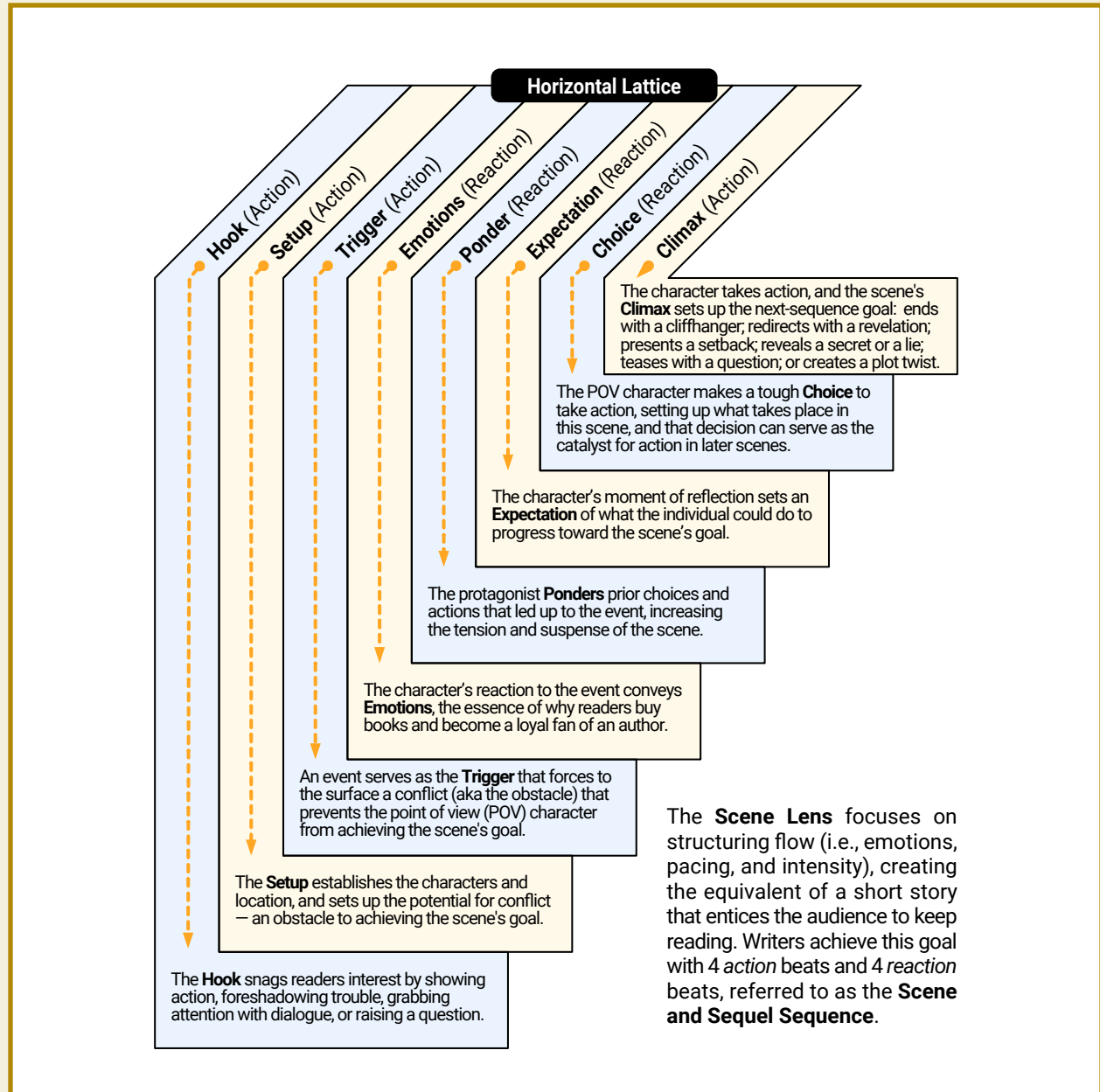
Based on the common elements of popular story structures, the Plot Lens focuses on 18 Story Beats made up from single scenes and scene sequences.

			Position
Vertical Lattice	ACT 3	RESOLUTION	The last scenes tie up loose ends to satisfy readers with the emotions they expect from the Changed World. 98%-100%
		CLIMAX	The scene concludes with the chief protagonist achieving a positive or negative outcome tied to both the Story Goal and the character's Need. 98%
		BATTLE 2	The chief protagonist and the chief antagonist fight intensely, knowing only one will survive the second battle. 88%-98%
		FACE-OFF	This scene includes a face-off between the chief protagonist and the chief antagonist, brought on by the main character's prior choices. 88%
		PONDER	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist ponders prior choices, goal dedication, self worth, and personal abilities. 75%-88%
		PLUNGE INTO 3	In this scene, the victory at the end of Act 2 is reversed, plunging the chief protagonist into an all-is-lost state. 75%
	ACT 2B	BATTLE 1	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist fights the chief antagonist, and appears to win (or lose) BATTLE 1. 62%-75%
		POWER PLAY 2	This scene hints at what is coming when the chief protagonist PLUNGES INTO 3, emphasizing the ever-increasing stakes. 62%
		ACTION	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist takes action based on discovery, changing the character's trajectory (i.e., up or down). 50%-62%
	ACT 2A	MIDPOINT	This scene shows the chief protagonist's status, increases the stakes, and gives the protagonist insight, shifting the focus from want to need. 50%
		PREMISE	This sequence of scenes fulfills the novel's premise, giving readers the events and emotions they crave. 37%-50%
		POWER PLAY 1	This scene shows the chief antagonist's power, provides clues, and establishes the core conflict. 37%
		RESPONSE	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist responds to the unstable world, and meets who will help the character learn the theme. 25%-37%
	ACT 1	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. 25%
		WRANGLE	In this sequence of scenes, the hero wrangles with the move-forward choices, but resists need for change. 12%-25%
		TRIGGER	Halfway through Act 1, a major event triggers the disruption of the chief protagonist's stable world, stopping the character from staying as before. 12%
		SETUP	This sequence of scenes in the stable world establishes the characters, their wants, the stakes, story theme, and the need for change. 1%-12%
		HOOK	The first scene introduces essential aspects of the story and grabs readers with an intense need to know what happens next. 0%-2%

Beats take place within sentences, paragraphs, scenes, and scene sequences. **Story Beats** are the scene actions that move the story forward and these plot events force characters into conflicts. The Story Beats marked in red support the **Story Spine**.

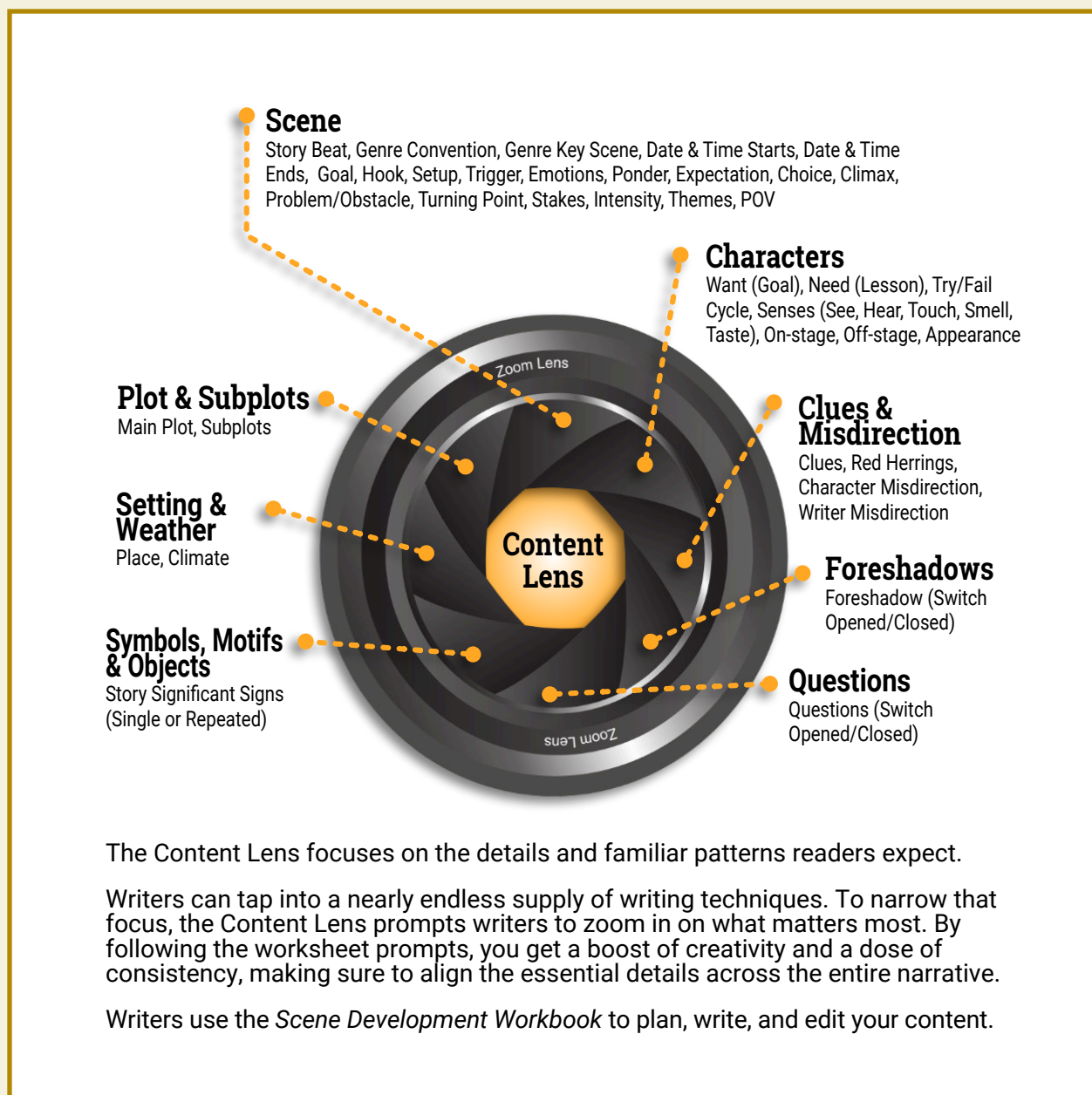
Scene Lens

Use the Scene and Sequel Sequence to organize the content.



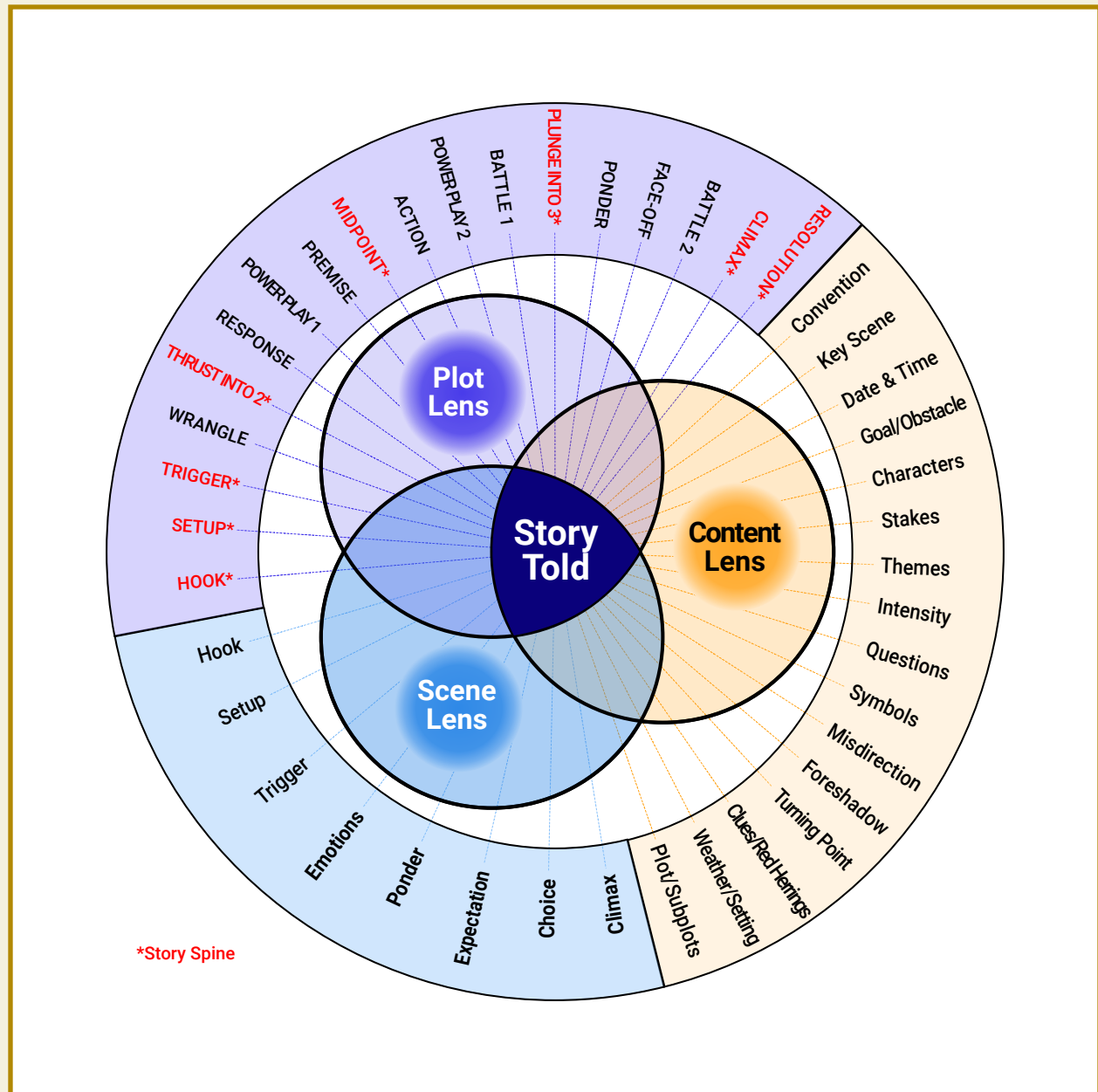
Content Lens

The content lens brings into focus all the elements of the story.



Lenses Intersection

The intersection of the three lenses moves the narrative forward.



The Power of the Scene and Sequel Sequence

The Scene and Sequel Sequence gives readers the emotions they crave. With this technique, you can pace the story by choosing the amount of *action* and *reaction* within a scene.

- More action increases the pace, while more reaction slows it down.
- Similarly, you can increase emotional intensity with more reaction and decrease with more action.

Use the 8 Scene and Sequel Sequence prompts to achieve the goal of creating the equivalent of a short story rich with emotions.

Readers expect the scene sequence to have a logical beginning, a middle, and an end. For example:

- Some writers create one scene for the action and another for the reaction, while other authors combine all the parts into one scene.
- Each writer decides whether to combine or divide the action and reaction based on their preferences and their chosen genre.

Use the Scene and Sequel Sequence to emphasize the traits that encourage readers to care about your characters.

The Power of the Scene Worksheet

The Story Scenes Worksheet prompts for input, and its use will emphasize creative writing opportunities.

- Writers can use the worksheet before, during, and after writing.
- Because the worksheet prompts for so many details, you may feel more comfortable using it for editing instead of writing.
- You can complete the worksheet in a writing app, or transfer the prompts to a spreadsheet for comparing side-by-side scene details.

The prompts will help you make each scene sequence the equivalent of a short story that entices your target audience to keep reading—the very definition of a page-turner!

Don't Let the Process Steal Your Joy

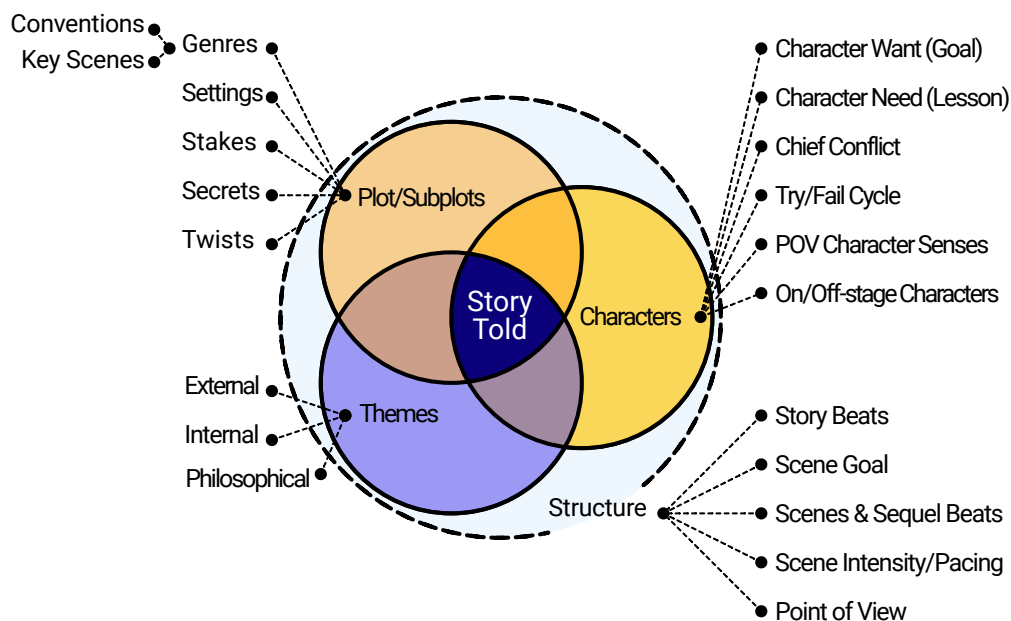
Writing novel-length fiction is a complicated task, and writers can feel overwhelmed by the many details. If you're feeling overwhelmed by the process, then *do what's right for you*. If that means you're better served by writing first and using the worksheet as an editing tool, by all means, write.

SCENES: Infographics

Use these visual aids to focus on what matters most to readers.

Story Elements

Story elements make up the basic building blocks of storytelling. For example, characters react to plot events, giving readers the emotions they crave. Story themes often resonate with audiences long after they finish the book. Understanding story elements helps you master story structure.



The use of story elements relies on principles, *not* rules. As you look at the many details, consider how the mix influences not only the book you write but also how you gather and track the information. The Trellis Method helps you organize and manage the tasks required to produce a full-length novel.

Scene Details

The audience reads a book from beginning to end, but writers don't work that way.

Characters take on lives of their own. Scenes dance randomly through the writer's mind. Plot insights come at unexpected moments, and not in a linear order.

Writers order scene flow and key details based on their notes from Story Beats.

<p>Framework Details: Track the story and scene flow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Event (Plot/Subplot) • Genres (Conventions, Key Scene) • Scene Purpose (Story Beats) • Scene Structure (Hook, Setup, Trigger, Emotions, Ponder, Expectation, Choice, Climax) • Scene Goal & Obstacle • Point of View 	<p>Scene Details: Provide the details from your Story Beats notes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date & Time (Start/End) • Turning Point • Stakes • Intensity • Theme (Introduced/Reinforced)
<p>Character Details: Provide the character details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want (Goal) • Need (Lesson) • Try/Fail Cycle • Appearance • Senses (See, Hear, Touch, Smell, Taste) • Names (On-stage/Off-stage) 	<p>Additional Details: Supply additional details that support the scene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clues, Red Herrings, Character Misdirection, Writer Misdirection • Foreshadowing (Switch Opened/Closed) • Questions (Switch Opened/Closed) • Symbols, Motifs, & Objects • Setting & Weather • Plot & Subplots

Writing Principle: Writers who stay focused on giving their target audience what they want are more likely to write a book readers will love.

The Trellis Method Checklist

Phase I: Plan.

- ☐ Choose your **genres**.
- ☐ Define conventions & key scenes for each **genre**.
- ☐ Create the story **premise** (GO/NO GO Decision #1)
- ☐ Validate your story **premise**.
- ☐ Develop dynamic **characters** for essential roles.
- ☐ Define beginning to end **character** transformation.
- ☐ Plan your main **plot**.
- ☐ Create supporting **subplots** & define cross-overs.

Phase II: Outline.

- ☐ Complete the **Story Spine** worksheet.
- ☐ Make the **Story Spine** GO/NO GO decision #2.
- ☐ Complete the **Story Body** worksheet.
- ☐ Make the **Story Body** GO/NO GO decision #3.
- ☐ Complete the **Story Beats** worksheet.
- ☐ Revisit and update Phase I: Prepare as needed.
- ☐ Make the **Story Body** GO/NO GO decision #4.

Phase III: Write.

- ☐ Complete the worksheet for each **scene**.
- ☐ Track **scene** details in spreadsheet or writing app.
- ☐ Compare **scenes** to Story Beats.
- ☐ Rewrite & rearrange **scenes** to achieve story flow.
- ☐ Evaluate each **scene** for details (e.g., senses).
- ☐ Assess & update **scenes** until satisfied with story.
- ☐ Read story to ensure **scenes** connect like a chain.
- ☐ Adjust **scenes** to speed up/slow down pacing.
- ☐ Adjust **scenes** to increase/decrease intensity.
- ☐ Rearrange **scenes** to tell the best story.
- ☐ Insert/delete **scenes** for the greatest impact.
- ☐ Inspect **scenes** for consistent point of view.

Next Steps: After you finish your novel...

- ☐ Edit your work (e.g., ProWritingAid/Hired Editor).
- ☐ Arrange for beta readers to critique your work.
- ☐ Establish a return date for beta reader feedback.
- ☐ Determine which suggestions to accept.
- ☐ Update the manuscript.
- ☐ Repeat the edits (e.g., ProWritingAid /Hired Editor).
- ☐ Choose publishing method (e.g., self; traditional).
- ☐ Make sure your book is ready for release!
- ☐ Follow a book-launch process & schedule.
- ☐ Promote your book (e.g., guest posts; ads).
- ☐ Write your next book, repeating Phases I-III.

Note: The Trellis Method guides like a roadmap, but feel free to detour as needed.

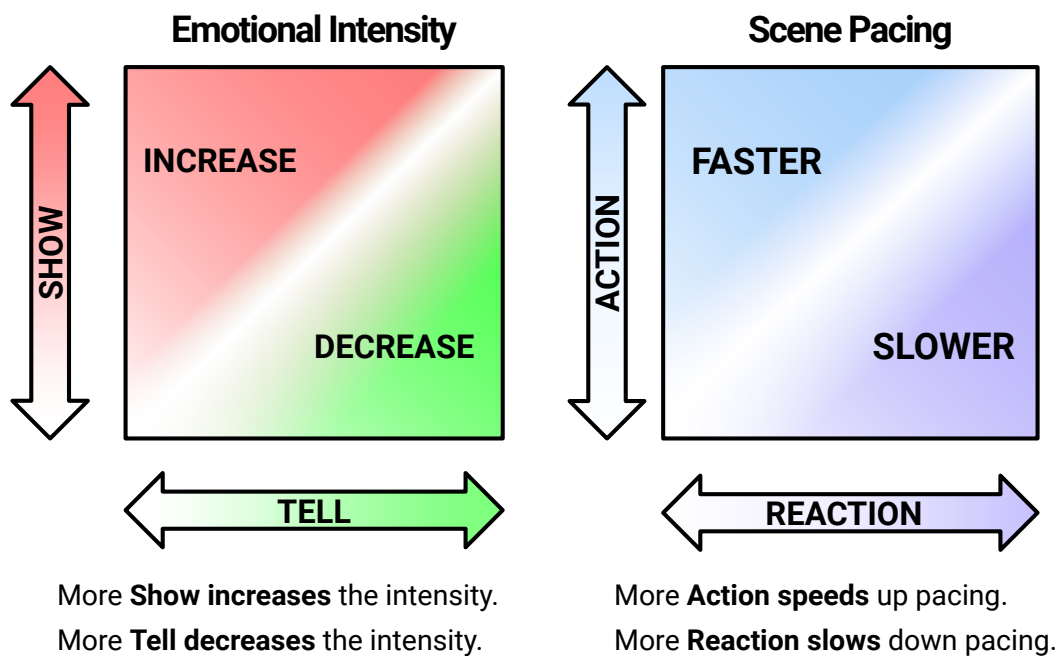
Scene & Sequel Sequence Influences

A **scene and sequel sequence** is an **action** followed by a **reaction**.

- The **scene** is a plot event where something happens.
- The **sequel** is the character's emotional reaction to the event.
- The **sequence** can occur in either one or two scenes.

Show and Tell techniques influence the scene's **emotional intensity**.

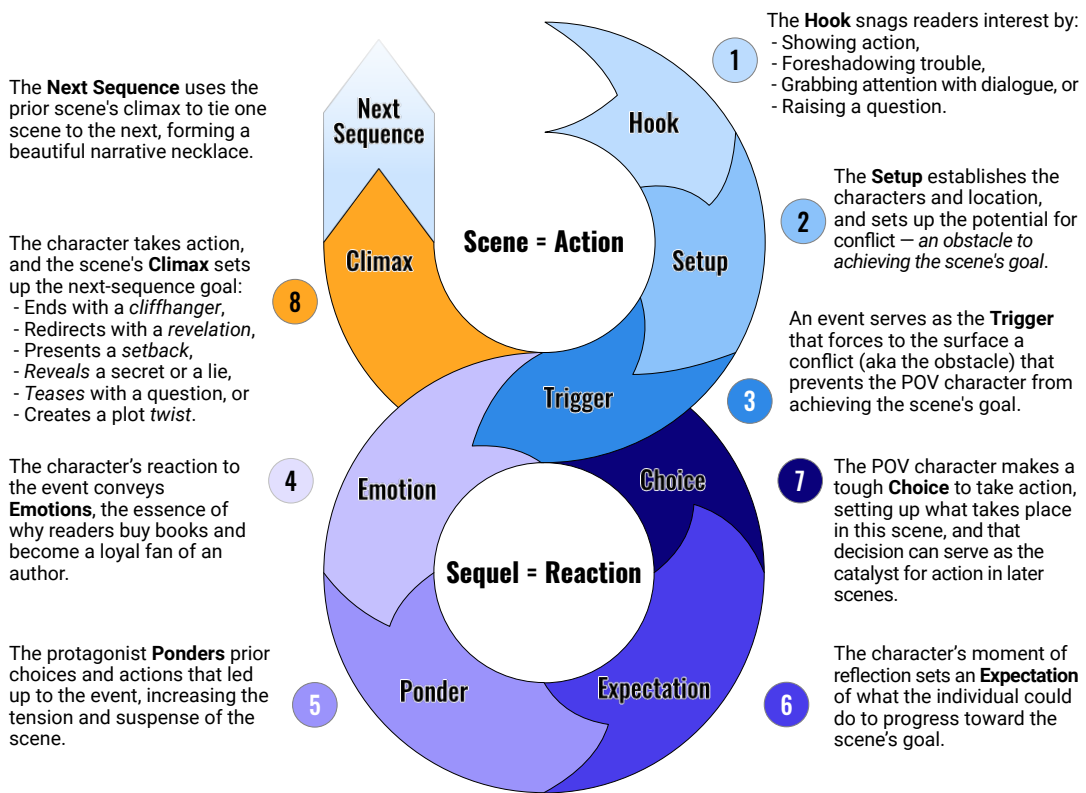
Varying the amount of **Action and Reaction** influences **scene pacing**.



Scene Flow

A **scene and sequel sequence** is an **action** followed by a **reaction**.

- The **scene** is a plot event where **something happens**.
- The **sequel** is the character's **emotional reaction** to the event.
- The **sequence** can occur in either **one or two scenes**.



Beats take place within sentences, paragraphs, scenes, and scene sequences. **Scene & Sequel Sequence Beats** are the *actions* and *reactions* within the scene.