THRE ACTIVITY Great Story Structure

nibbles blueprint series

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SJ is the credited writer of several documentaries for PBS and a feature film, consults on numerous projects, and coaches authors.

READY TO OUTLINE?

Ready to begin outlining your movie? Begin by filling in this simple **Beat Sheet**, based on what you've learned in *Three Act What*? Then, you will be ready to move on to **Step Outline**. Don't forget, first, to study character development in *Character Matters*. And join us on Twitter <u>@storyrhetoric</u> if you have questions or would like to schedule a review of your outline over Skype.

Title	Date
Logline	

OPENING IMAGE This is the point of attack of your movie. You'll want to true four in order to pick a good that heat introduces the
This is the point of attack of your movie. You'll want to try a few in order to pick a scene that best introduces the premise and themes of your movie.
The World As We Know It or Ordinary World
The World As We Know It, or Ordinary World It's time to build a sequence of scenes to introduce the reader (and audience) to your protagonist. Remember, show
don't tell. Actions and interactions are more powerful than background and exposition .
As part of this sequence, you want to signal that a storm is brewing . Things may seem well in the ordinary world,
but we are on the brink of a change.

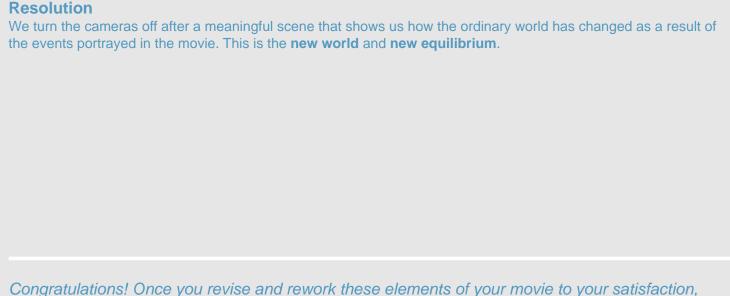
Inciting Incident, or Catalyst One day, everything changes. Remember that we're just lighting the fuse here. The stick of dynamite hasn't exploded yet. But this is the day everything changes, even if the protagonist doesn't know it yet.
Dilemma By p. 17 at the latest, you want to up the ante: the stick of dynamite explodes. The protagonist is now faced with a decision, should I stay, or should I go?
Protagonist Must Commit to Crossing the Threshold It's time to commit to the quest! (Reread Christopher Vogler's <i>The Writer's Journey</i> if you need a refresher on this beat.) Something happens that prompts the protagonist to a pro-active decision. Remember, the protagonist cannot be swept along in the action. A decision must be made and clearly presented in the story.

Adventure Sequence We're in the extraordinary world and it's time to engage us in the adventure. Remember, you don't want to up the stakes until the midpoint. This is your opportunity to present us with the rules of the new world and present us with events that will allow your protagonist to grow along the arc. (See Character Matters for details on the additional beats for character development.)
Gaining Support Don't forget to introduce your B-character. Their main purpose is to present a new influence for the protagonist. Interacting with this character will help your protagonist grow through the character arc. (By p. 30)
Adventure Sequence Continues The adventure sequence continues to build towards the critical midpoint.

Midpoint At the midpoint, the tide turns. If the movie is to end with the triumph of the underdog values, the midpoint represents a setback. Most importantly, the protagonist moves from passive to active. This decision changes the course of the movie, and is a direct cause of the brick wall (although the protagonist doesn't know that yet.)
All Downhill: Attack of the Dominant Values Things go from bad to worse. The second half of act two represents a series of ever-increasing setbacks for the protagonist.
The Brick Wall Blake Snyder, in Save the Cat, likes to think of this as the "All Is Lost." The Brick Wall represents the ultimate low for the protagonist. But most importantly, the protagonist now faces a decision that amplifies the commitment to the quest at the end of act one: it's time to pick up the sledge hammer, break through the wall, and recommit to the (redefined) quest. The protagonist finally gets the big picture and is ready to enter act 3.

The Final Face-Off

ct 3 is defined by three major movements: (1) the beginning: the protagonist enacts their plan; (2) middle: the plan eems to work, but often reveals a trap (3) end: the protagonist becomes isolated and moves to confront the ntagonist in a final face-off. Each of your parts must push us towards the ultimate confrontation , no matter the enre of your script. Conflict is at an all-time high and culminates in the climax of the movie.



you're ready to move to **Step Outline**. If you like these ideas, wait until your read SJ's whole book on three act structure.

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