

Story Structure Overview

Story Structure is an approach for constructing your work and helping with pacing.

The structure is made up of four **parts**, each about 25% of the work.

Each part is separated by **turning points** (these are **plot points** and the **mid-point**).

The second and third part contain, about halfway through, **pinch points**.

Original Source

You can find Larry's original work, with far more background and guidance, at the following address:

<http://storyfix.com/category/story-structure--series>

Visual Overview

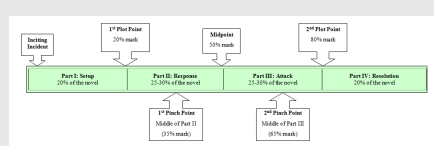


Image from [The Friendly Editor](#)

Part One: The Set-Up

Where we make the story meaningful, where we (the reader) start rooting for the hero.

Includes a killer story hook in the first 10 pages.

The aim is to introduce the **story problem**.

Where you introduce key themes, characters, and places. What are the hero's inner demons, secrets and strengths?

The hero may have a goal in Part One, but by the end of Part One that will likely have changed to their "real" goal.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)



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Turning Point One: First Plot Point

This is sometimes called the **Inciting Incident**.

This is where we formally pose the **story question**. This is the most important moment in the work. It is what the story is all about.

In asking the question, the whole world gets turned on its head. Everything must stop until this problem is addressed.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Part Two: The Response

Part Two is where we make Part One useful by placing what we've come to root for in jeopardy.

The hero responds to the first plot point, often with shock and denial. They are still trying to preserve the status quo.

The hero isn't attacking the problem yet, just reacting to it. They are running, hiding, analyzing, observing, recalculating, planning, recruiting etc.

In the middle comes Pinch Point 1.

At the end of Part Two, the hero thinks they have a plan, but then everything changes.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Turning Point Two: Mid-Point

Before this both the hero and the reader experience the story with limited awareness of the real truth behind what's going on.

New information enters the story and changes the contextual experience and understanding of either the reader, the hero, or both.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Part Three: The Attack

Part Three raises the drama to a higher level.

The hero is ready to go on the offensive. They progress from naive and bumbling to knowledgeable and direct.

In the middle comes Pinch Point 2.

The hero usually discovers their plan won't work. They need something more.

Part Three usually ends with a lull, with the hero reaching an obstacle which requires more information to overcome.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Turning Point Three: Second Plot Point

The final injection of new information into the story, after which no new expository information may enter

This last revelation is often the key to solving the mystery or fixing the problem.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Part Four: The Resolution

In Part Four, the hero solves the **Story Problem**.

The hero has all the knowledge they need to solve the Story Problem at the start of Part Four. If something appears here, it must have been foreshadowed, referenced or already in play.

This is where the hero steps up. They take the lead, pass their tests, solve the problem and grow as a person.

The hero should conquer any inner demons here. This is where they earn the right to be called the hero.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

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The Story Problem and Question

The **story problem** is the thing the hero is trying to solve.

The **story question** is what the reader asks themselves.

Problem

Child is kidnapped.

Question

Will the hero save the child?

The statues in the museum come to life at night.

Can the hero survive the night and keep his job?

The Cowboys have taken over Tombstone.

Will the Earps ever be able to find peace?

Parts

A part is a section of the story, around 25% of the total length of the work.

This method relies on the story being split into four parts.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Story Milestones

The opening of your story.

A hooking moment in the first 10%.

The first Plot Point, at about 20-25%.

The first Pinch Point, at about 35%.

A context-shifting Mid-Point.

A second Pinch Point, at about 65%.

The second plot point, at about 75%.

The final resolution scene, or scenes.

Here are the story milestones you'll need to conceive, construct and execute in your story. Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)

Turning Points / Plot Points

Turning points are where the story changes direction.

Usually, they will involve the hero getting some new information.

In this method, the three turning points can be classified as:

1. Introduction. We find out what the story is actually all about.
2. Education. We find out some additional information that indicates the question is probably solvable.
3. Revelation. The last piece of information needed to solve resolve the question.

Pinch Points

At pinch points, we need to see and experience the antagonistic force for ourselves, directly.

They are something bad that we get to see happen, showing us how bad the bad guy is, raising the stakes.

Read more on [Larry Brooks' Blog](#)



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