

Save the Cat beat sheet

Opening Image

Theme stated

Set up

Catalyst

Debate

Break into two

"B" story

Fun and games

Midpoint

Bad guys close in

All is lost

Dark night of the soul

Break into three

Finale

Final image

"A" Story == external

"B" Story == internal

Save the Cat

Dwight Swain's Scenes and Scenarios

Proactive Scene Goal

Conflict

Disaster

Reactive Scene Reaction

Dilemma

Decision

Writing the Perfect Scene

Dwight Swain's Motivation Reaction Units

Motivation External and objective

Reaction Internal and subjective

Writing the Perfect Scene

3 Parts of a Reaction

Feeling "A bolt of raw adrenaline shot through Jack's veins." *You show this first, because it happens almost instantly.*

Reflex "He jerked his rifle to his shoulder . . ." *You show this second, as a result of the fear. An instinctive result that requires no conscious thought.*

Rational Action and Speech ". . . sighted on the tiger's heart, and squeezed the trigger. 'Die, you bastard!'" *You put this last, when Jack has had time to think and act in a rational way. He pulls the trigger, a rational response to the danger. He speaks, a rational expression of his intense emotional reaction.*

12 Techniques to improve your writing

Get rid of "that"

Avoid other filler words

Eliminate adverbs and adjectives

Show, don't tell

Use metaphors and similes

Practice dialog

Stop talking to your reader

No more business jargon

No infinitives or gerunds (eliminate -ing)

12 Techniques to improve your writing (cont)

Avoid nonsexist language

Use specific examples, not vague generic ideas

12 techniques to improve your writing

Chuck Palahniuk

"In six seconds, you'll hate me. But in six months, you'll be a better writer. From this point forward—at least for the next half year—you may not use "thought" verbs."

These include: Thinks, Knows, Understands, Realizes, Believes, Wants, Remembers, Imagines, Desires, and a hundred others you love to use.

The list should also include: Loves and Hates. And it should include: Is and Has, but we'll get to those later.

Lit Reactor

7-point structure by Dan Wells

Hook	Scene 1 or 2	2
Plot Turn 1	Scene 12	4
Pinch 1	Scene 20, 21, 22	6
Midpoint	Scene 30	3
Pinch 2	Scene 36,37	7
Plot Turn 2	Scene 45	5
Resolution		1

The third column is the order in which you should write these scenes. Dan Wells and Storyfix

Editing advice

Remove the character as acting

Remove "sense" words

Make the action the subject of the sentence

Break down the verb to add variety to your sentences



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The Story Grid

1. Inciting Incident
 - Causal
 - Coincidence
2. Progressive Complication
 - Active Turning Point
 - Revelatory Turning Point
3. Crisis
 - The Best Bad choice
 - Irreconcilable goods
4. Climax
5. Resolution

5 Commandments

Remove these crutch words

a couple, a few, absolutely, actively, all, alleged, am, amazing, appeared, are, awesome, bad, basically, be, been, being, both, brainstorm, careful, carefully, certainly, comparatively, considerably, could, dazzle, decidedly, deeply, definite, definitely, emotional, even, every, extremely, eyes, fortunately, generally, get, getting, good, got, grin, have, he's, hear, here's, herself, himself, honestly, hopefully, I'm, in fact, in general, incredibly, inevitably, inherently, is, it's, journey, just, keep, lay, look, mindfully, namely, necessarily, nice, okay, only, overall, particularly, per se, perhaps, personally, positively, presently, pretty, quickly, quiet, quietly, quite, rather, really, relatively, reportedly, resonate, saw, see, seemed, seriously, she's, simmer, simply, since, sit, slowly, smile, smirk, so, so-called, some, somewhat, spoke, stand, stood, stride, strode, suddenly, that, that's, there's, they're, thing, totally, truly, unfortunately, various, very, was, we're, weird, were, what's, whatever, who's, you're.

Orwell's Rules

Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

Never use a long word where a short one will do.

If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

Never use the passive where you can use the active.

Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word, or jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Heinlein's Rules

You must write

Finish what you start

You must refrain from rewriting, except to editorial order

You must put your story on the market

You must keep it on the market until it has sold

Start working on something else

Quotes

"The first thing a writer must write is a thick skin." - @elmwriting

"Before you can write anything, you have to notice something." - John Irving

""(It's) like death... something you do on your own & nobody can help you." - @neilhimsel

"Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on" - Louis L'Amour

"Get bored. Only when our mind stops being constantly engaged will story machines in our subconscious get to work." - @mightymur



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