Cheatography

# Writing Cheat Sheet Cheat Sheet

by yombo (yombo) via cheatography.com/20407/cs/4614/

## 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 us 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." - @neilh-imself

"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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