

1 CONCEPT

LARRY BROOKS' 6 CORE COMPETENCIES of STORYTELLING

(Story Element) The main "idea," behind the story that has evolved into a "what if?" proposition, expressible in a single sentence that inspires other "what if?" questions that lead to a story. Add character to that idea to get the premise. Should be fresh, original, specific, compelling, & set the stage for an unfolding dramatic story.

5 STRUCTURE

(Story Element)

1.setup



Part One Mission: Set up the plot by creating stakes (what the hero has to lose), backstory (including inner demons) and character empathy, while perhaps foreshadowing the forthcoming conflict. Part one ends when the hero is made aware of something new in his life through decision, action, or off-stage news. The arrival of the FPP at the end of part one is the first full view of the story's primary antagonistic force. 5 Goals of setup: 1) Killer hook, 2) Introduce hero, 3) Establish stakes, 4) Foreshadow coming events, 5) Prep for FPP Launch

FPP DEFINITION: The moment when something enters the story in a manner that affects and alters the hero's status and plans and beliefs, forcing him to take action in response, and thus defining the contextual nature of the hero's experience from that point forward, now with tangible stakes and obvious opposition in place. **FPP MISSION:** Define Conflict: The hero's need and quest going forward. FPP, MP, & SPP are 3 major story tent poles - all else sags from or rises to each of these points.

1st
PLOT
POINT

INCITE.
INCID.

Something huge, dramatic and game-changing, Differs from FPP, because FPP bestows "meaning" on the hero, reader or both. Inciting incident simply presents the one-way doorway the hero passes through to future.

HOOK

Tension and conflict presented in the first few pages simply to "hook" the reader. Reader does not know what it means yet.

tension

6 CHARACTER

(Story Element)

ORPHAN

The hero is unsure of what will happen to him next. We empathize with him, and care about him. The story, the quest you give the hero, is what adopts him going forward.

2 THEME

(Story Element) What the story means. How it relates to life in general. It may be contextual, or the story's centerpiece. It is how you touch your readers. "What's your story about?" Answer points to how closely you've targeted your theme (or themes). A theme can sell a point of view, or simply explore it.



2. response

Part Two is the hero's response to the introduction of the new situation (the conflict) presented by the FPP. Part Two is about a reaction, through action, decision or indecision, to the antagonistic force, and the launch of a new quest to fulfill a newly defined need. Determine why the reader will empathize with the hero's response to this force.

MP DEFINITION: New information that enters the story squarely in the middle of it that changes the contextual experience & understanding of either the reader or the hero, or both. MP parts the curtain of superior knowledge for hero and reader. Shifts context and thereby pumps up tension and pace. MP activates new decisions, behaviors, and actions stemming from a new perspective. After MP, hero begins to pursue antagonistic forces, who respond in kind. Inner demons begin to have a bearing on this initial attack.

**MID
POINT**

An example, or a reminder, of the nature and implications of the antagonistic force, that is not filtered by the hero's experience. The reader sees for herself in a direct form.

PINCH PT. 1

WANDERER

The hero is a wanderer, staggering through a forest of options and risks, not sure where to go or what to do next. He is no longer an orphan

3 SCENE EXECUTION

(Narrative Skill) Scene Definition: A unit of dramatic action or exposition (which includes narrative review, overview or connective tissue) that stands alone in location and time. Scene Mission: Deliver a piece of story information (exposition) that moves story forward. (Optimally, only one piece of information.)

3. attack



Part Three the hero begins to try to fix things. He becomes proactive, courageous and ingenious in the quest to attain his goal. (Which continues to evolve and get stronger and more adaptive to the sudden heroics.) The hero attacks both the objects before him and his inner demons. He understands that he needs to change if he is to succeed. The Midpoint provides him with the new information and/or awareness that serves as the catalyst to inspire his attack.

The Final injection of new information into the story, after which no new expository information may enter the story other than the hero's actions, and which puts a final piece of narrative information in play that give the hero everything she needs to become the primary catalyst in the story's conclusion. Spurs hero to wrestle with (conquer?) inner demons. (SPP is the last piece of the puzzle you can include.)

**2nd
PLOT
POINT**

OPTIONAL All-Hope-Is-Lost lull right before 2nd PP

**PRE
SPP
LULL**

In the second pinch point, the antagonistic force may be experienced through the perceptions of the hero rather than directly by the reader. (Reader feels hero's pain, invests in his hopes.)

PINCH PT. 2

WARRIOR

The hero has stopped reacting and started pursuing. He escalates his courage and creativity to respond to the antagonistic forces instead of running from them.

4 VOICE

(Narrative Skill) The writer's unique style, somewhere on the continuum between poetic & technical. It must evolve, rather than be "engineered." Best rule to follow during evolution: Less is more.

4. resolution

climax



Part Four (10-12 scenes) shows how the hero summons the courage and growth to come forward with a solution to the problem, to reach the goal, to overcome the inner obstacles in order to conquer the story's antagonistic force and achieve his goal. Stakes raised in story should be paid off in the end. Answers to questions of who wins, and what does he win?, who loses and what does he lose? RULE: 1) No new information can enter the story from the Second Plot Point on. GUIDELINES: The hero needs to be the primary catalyst in the resolution of the story. We should see evidence of how he's grown throughout. Writer's goal by the end of the story is to have the reader, cry, cheer, and applaud.

Beat Sheet Story Planning

- 1) For each scene, create a single, bullet list that defines the scene's mission (why it's there, how it serves to further the story's exposition) and content
- 2) Expand each bullet into a descriptive sentence.
- 3) Expand each sentence into a summary paragraph.
- 4) Write the novel from the summary paragraphs.

Storyfix website: storyfix.com
Wiggins website: brywig.com

Total Story Length: 40-70 Scenes

MARTYR

The hero does not have to die (he might) but he does have to do whatever is necessary, to be willing to die to achieve his goal. That is what makes him a martyr.