

Creative Writing Worksheet

This worksheet is a template to develop your own story, characters, and scenes.

Scenes are the building blocks of stories. If you want to write a novel readers love, you'll need to craft page-turning scenes.

How do you do it?

First, you'll need to identify what the story outline or plot is about.

That's the story event. It's the way the scene contributes to the plot of your novel. No story event? No story.

Second, you'll need to structure your scene with foolproof story structure, characters, and scenes.

Compelling stories include seven essential elements.

This worksheet will help you:

- Find your scene's story event.
- Identify all seven scene structure elements.
- Spot the gaps where you have opportunities to edit your scene.

Hint: if any of the questions below are difficult to answer, that's a sign that you have a chance to clarify them and improve your scene!

Part 1: Story or Plot

A story event is when something changes in the story. What kind of change? Look for a value shift for one or more characters that happens as a result of conflict. For instance, a child might go from happy to sad if another child refuses to share their toy.

A working scene contains at least one story event. Use the following questions to find the story event of a scene.

What is the broad outline of your story? What is going to happen?

What is the protagonist's goal? *The protagonist wants to achieve X without Y (that is, to do/get/experience/etc. something desirable without having to do/get/experience/etc. something undesirable).*

- TO:
- WITHOUT:

What tactic are the characters using to get what they want?

What values change for one or more characters? *List several changes you notice in the scene.*

What is the most important change in the scene? *Review the changes you listed and choose the one change that is most important to the larger plot of the whole book.*

Put it all together: what's the story event? *Combine the literal action, tactics, and change in one sentence describing the scene. Example: Abel thinks Alice should sacrifice her needs and work for the family which Alice thinks is unjustifiable.*

Part 2: 7 Elements of your Story

Effective scenes (and effective stories) include the following elements of story structure.

Introduction or Exposition

Begin this part with the current status quo of your characters. Like the world is normal and it is as it is and they're going about their life normally in their own ways. This sets the context for various characters and what is happening in their life.

Incitation

The inciting incident or incidents is the first major event in the story. It is the disruption that happens to your character that disrupts their normal life or provides them some sort of a purpose. Now, the characters will start moving towards reacting and in a way to solving their life to take it back to normalcy from this disruption.

Rising Actions

In these characters trying to react to the disruption before, these characters will be doing some actions that are rising into (or preparing) them into a larger complication or crisis. These rising actions are the background buildup in the disrupted world for these characters. These are the smaller problems that the character is facing before the big complication arises. Like they're preparing for a war or they're preparing to go on a voyage or preparing to do something else. This is the rising action before they face the most difficult battle or challenge.

Complication or Crisis

This is the crux of the story. This is the main crisis of the story. This is where the characters and scenes come together and a main scene of crisis emerges. The protagonist and other characters react to the crisis that the reader barely notices the reaction as by this time the reader is completely indulged in the crisis world. Every character is challenged to make a crucial decision - to jump or not be kind, sometimes without fully understanding the consequences.

Climax

There is no going back here - it is a do or die for your characters. Some characters live through it and some die at the end. But this is the fire through which they went through and they're not the same anymore forever. They're changed characters forever.

Key Takeaway

This is the resolution for the climax - the good vs bad or the rude vs. the kind or the hardworking vs. the taking for granted kind of battle that provides a lesson to be learnt in life. It is usually a philosophical lesson about the way of life that came over the top in this story.

New Status Quo

This is not always required, but this is the new status quo. The new status quo in terms of the new world that is again the new normal for your characters. The crisis is resolved and there is a new world that is happening for all your characters.