
John Truby, *The Anatomy of Story* 22 Steps

Self-Revelation, Need, and Desire

What will the hero learn? What does he know at the beginning?
What is he wrong about at the beginning?

Ghost-Backstory-Story World

Only focus on essentials:

1. Event from the past that still haunts the hero—the hero's internal opponent.
2. A device that lets you extend the hero's organic development backward—do not overwrite by providing too much info, withhold a lot of information. And don't put ghosts at the beginning of the story. The story world should be an expression of your hero.

Weakness and Need

Include both psychological and moral weakness. Need is what the hero must fulfill in order to have a better life. Problem is crisis hero faces at the beginning.

Inciting Event

Event from the outside that causes the hero to come up with a goal and take action. Connects need and desire to make hero think he has just overcome the crisis he faced at the beginning but is now in the worst trouble in his life.

Desire

Start the goal at the low level—build to increasing importance.

Levels of desire: 1. Survive (escape)

2. Take revenge
 3. Win the Battle
 4. Achieve something
 5. Explore a world
 6. Catch a Criminal
 7. Find the truth
 8. Gain love
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	<p>9. Bring Justice and Freedom</p> <p>10. Save the Republic</p> <p>11. Save the World.</p>
<i>Ally or Allies</i>	<p>Give allies goals—but never make them more interesting than the hero.</p> <p>Subplot—acts as a separate plot but can improve character and theme. Must affect the hero’s main plot, not usually an ally, and drives a different but related plot that compares to the main plot.</p>
<i>Opponent</i>	<p>Best opponent is a necessary one who is best able to attack hero. A mysterious opponent is more difficult to defeat.</p>
<i>Fake-Ally Opponent</i>	<p>Plot is driven by revelations; may be turned into true ally.</p>
<i>Changed Desire and Motive</i>	<p>First revelation and decision: new information that forces hero to make a decision. Best when the hero gets information about an opponent. Change in desire must be a bend in desire. Each revelation must be explosive and progressively stronger than the one that preceded it. Must build in intensity. The more revelations you have the more complex the story.</p>
<i>Plan</i>	<p>Guidelines or strategies the hero uses to overcome the opponent and reach the goal. Don’t let the hero simply play out the plan. First attempts must fail.</p>
<i>Opponent’s Plan and Main Counterattack</i>	<p>The opponent comes up with a strategy to attack the hero—may need to keep hidden. The more intricate the opponent’s plan and the better you hide it, the better your plot will be.</p>
<i>Drive</i>	<p>Series of actions the hero performs to defeat the opponent—largest section of the plot—begins with a plan and goes to apparent defeat. Change his plan. Don’t keep hitting the same plot beat. The hero must react to new information.</p>

<i>Attack By Ally</i>	When the hero starts taking immoral actions to succeed. the ally confronts him—or in essence, the ally becomes hero's conscience.
<i>Apparent Defeat</i>	2/3 or 3/4 of the way through the story, hero experiences apparent defeat—hero hits bottom. Should be explosive and devastating for the hero. May have many setbacks but only one moment of clear defeat.
<i>Second Revelation and Decision</i>	Just after the apparent defeat, hero should have another major revelation. The hero may become tyrannical in quest to win or may continue moral decline. Also needs change.
<i>Audience Revelation</i>	The audience— but not the hero —learns an important piece of new information such as the identity of a fake ally-opponent.
<i>Third Revelation and Decision</i>	Could reveal fake ally opponent to hero here.
<i>Gate, Gauntlet, Visit to Death</i>	Conflict becomes unbearable. Hero has to pass through a gauntlet, either psychological, physical, or both Can be moved elsewhere in the plot.
<i>Battle</i>	Determines who wins but should not emphasize superior force, but which ideas and values win out. Everything converges here—hero fulfills his needs and gains his desire. Theme is clearly shown which way of acting and living is best.
<i>Self-Revelation</i>	The crucible of battle changes the hero. He must face the truth about himself or be destroyed. Should be sudden, shattering, and new—something the hero didn't know about himself. Needs to be meaningful. Don't have the hero tell the audience directly what he has learned. That's a mark of bad writing.
<i>Moral Decision</i>	He must make a decision between two courses of action, each of which stands for a set of values and a way of living that affects others.

New Equilibrium

Hero is now at either a higher or a lower level, but don't close everything. Keep the story alive by showing that change is just on the horizon.