

Three-in One Plotting

You might choose to use one, or integrate all three structures: The Hero's Journey (in green) the classical 3-Act structure (typically used in plays and screenplays) in red, and/or the nine-cube plotting strategy - numbered cubes in black.

	Hero's Journey				
3-Act	1. Ordinary World	2. Call to Adventure	3. Refusal of the Call	4. Mentor	5. Crossing the First Threshold
Act One - the two most important structural moves in the story: The complications in place, and the adversaries in action	#1.Triggering Event <i>First things first. The main characters and conflicts are introduced.</i>		#2. Characterization <i>What make yr. protagonist - and major characters - tick? The reader learns about the characters by how they react to #1.</i>		#3. First major turning point (=HJ #5) Reader invested because of #2. <i>The TP can be a positive of negative event for the MC, but lays the groundwork for the neg. TP in #6. #3 may introduce the motivation of the antagonist, which then justifies the event in #6.</i>
	6/ Tests/allies/enemies		7. Approach to the innermost cave		8. The supreme Ordeal
Act Two - complicates the initial problem and it defeats the protagonist at its end.	#4 Exposition. <i>Sheds light on #1 and forshadows MC's darkest hour'. #4 often reveals relationship character flaw / personal history that contributes to dark times ahead.</i> Major complication at the beginning of Act Two		#5. Connect the dots. Midpoint. <i>Trickest point, must connect in some way with all the boxes that surround it. This # gives the false impression of resolution, before heading like a freight train for #6. PLUS, provides foreshadowing for the MC's revelation in #8</i>		#6. Negative Turning Point (= HJ #8). <i>'The bomb explodes and all hell breaks loose";. Luckily, groundwork laid in #3 and #9 will deliver 'just deserts'.</i> Second Act curtain - destruction of the MC's plans.
	9. Reward		10. Road Back		11. Ressurrection
Act Three - the resolution of the problem. From the rubble laying around him/her, the protagonist picks up a piece of string and follows it to the eventual conclusion of the story.	#7. Antagonist Wins. <i>MC defeated, antagonist appears to have won. How the MC deals with the 'darkest hour' depends on traits and/or story developed in #4</i>		#8. Revelation <i>The MC's revelation turns the tide. Here s/he connects the dots, overcomes the obstacles of # 6& 7 via the device introduced in #5.</i>		#9. Protagonist Wins. <i>The negative turning point in #6 is rectified while the MC's resolve from #8 is brought into full bloom.</i>
					12. Return with the Elixir

Hero's Journey

1. The Ordinary World - Establishing the ‘status quo’ - the point at which the story begins.
Could be a whole scene, or just one line, ‘On Monday morning, as Jake dressed to go to work...’ Establishes chraaters and context
2. Call to Adventure - The ‘inciting incident’ - what happens to get the protagonist moving.
Again, this could be a whole scene, a major event, or something someone says, does, a small word or gesture. Catalyst moment.
3. Refusal of the Call - What prevents the protagonist from taking action (internal or external force)?
This could be memory, physical/emotional limitation, person, action, etc. Creates conflict and tension.
4. The Mentor - Encounter with the character (present or absent) who supports the protagonist's decision.
Again, could be a major character, a memory of a person, their words, ... Chance (for third party) to clarify what's at stake, etc.
5. Crossing the First Threshold - The moment when the protagonist commits to taking action.
A major scene, or one small action, word of acceptance, commitment. End of second act.
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies - Characters who present obstacles, and/or those who come on side.
More characters who are either present, or recalled in memory, a voice on a phone... continues through second act.
7. Approach to the Innermost Cave - The point of no return
Similar to five, but showing more commitment, less likelihood of changing mind, distracted from goal. Character's worst fears realized.
8. The Supreme Ordeal - Engaging the challenge The major dramatic scene. 'Death and rebirth'
9. Reward (Seizing the Sword) - The MC gains something they can use in later dramatic scene.
Temporary relief from conflict. Provides cliffhanger...
10. The Road Back - The consequences: Makes sense of the ordeal
How the protagonist's life/situation will change – big scene or just one liner, a bridge to the next scene.
11. Resurrection - Transformation of the protagonist How does the protagonist change?
12. Return with the Elixir - Insight, lesson learned, what's been gained by the protagonist's experience
Big scene or one-liner, e.g. and they all lived happily ever after. Insight, Understanding. Success
- NOTE: Often one scene can serve to cover more than one of these steps. Sometimes if a story does not ‘work’ you can go back and discover that by