

Writing Stories! What makes a good story, and what is the format?

First, decide what **Genre** you want?

What is a genre? A genre is a category that is united by style and subject. For example, Harry Potter and Percy Jackson are fantasy. A Series of Unfortunate Events is a Mystery. Cinderella is a fairytale.

Second, decide on the **Setting** of your story. If you are writing a Mystery, what town will it be set in? If you are writing fantasy, what is the world like? If you are writing a historical fiction, where and when will it be?

Now that you have setting, think about the **Characters** that you want to have. What do they look like, what is their personality like? Who are their parents, what are their hobbies! You can fill out this chart to help you out!

**Name:**

**Nickname:**

**Kind of being (human, animal, extraterrestrial, fantasy or fairy-tale creature):** Human

**Age:**

**Sex:**

**Appearance:**

**Occupation, if applicable:**

**Family members:**

**Pets:**

**Best friend:**

**Describe his/her room:**

**Way of speaking:**

**Hogwarts House:** Slytherin

**Physical characteristics (posture, gestures, attitude):**

**Items in his/her**

**pockets or backpack or purse:**

**Hobbies:**

**Favorite sports:**

**Talents, abilities, or powers:**

**Relationships (how (s)he is with other people):**

**Fears:**

**Faults:**

**Good points:**

**What (s)he wants more than anything else:**

**History:**

Now that you have your genre, setting, and characters? What do you do now? Now you can begin outlining your story. Think of a story as different parts. Some stories are complicated, and have a lot of different parts. Some stories are simpler, and have less parts. For example, a simple story would be Cinderella.

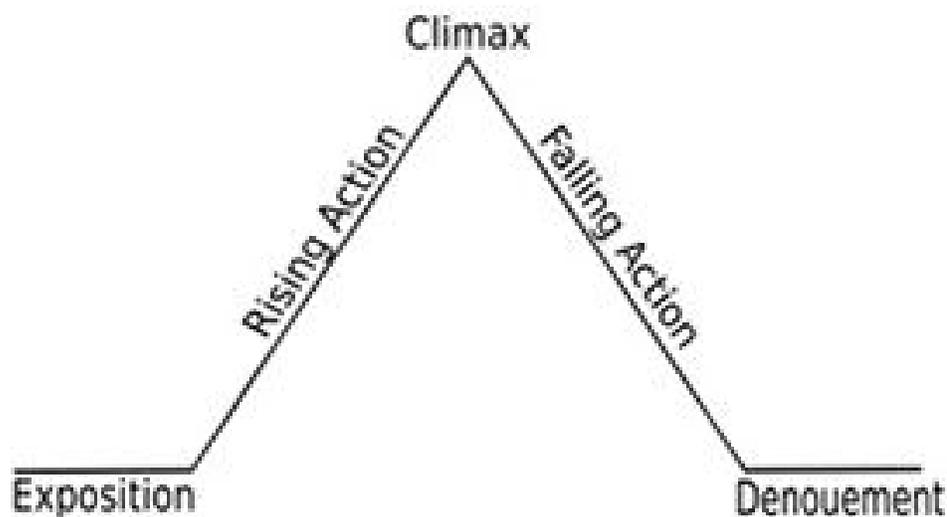
**The Setup** would be Cinderella's mother dying, and her father marrying her step-mom. This allows us as the reader to understand the circumstance that Cinderella is in.

**The Rising Action** would be the build up to the main conflict. So her step-mother's abuse would be the rising action.

**The Climax** would be the most exciting part of the story. So both Cinderella meeting her Fairy Godmother and going to the ball, meeting her prince, would all be a part of the Climax.

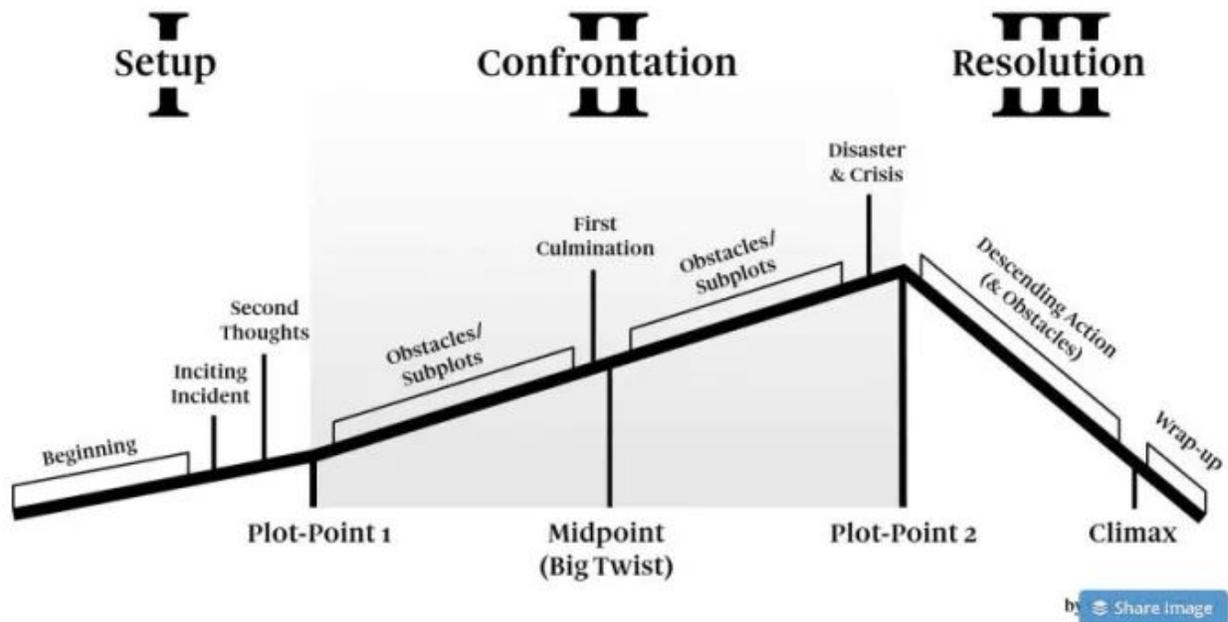
**Falling Action** is the part of the story when things begin to slow down. Cinderella running away and going home would be the falling action. It is the part before we conclude the story.

**Denouement** or also known as the **Resolution** is our happy ever after. It is the ending, whether happy or not. In our case, it will be the part where Cinderella fits the shoe on her foot and marries the Prince.



This is the basic formula for a story. It can be skewed either way, but most stories follow this pattern. Another way to look at it, but also a more complicated way, is a Three Act Structure, which is used in a more complicated and long story such as a novel or a movie.

## Three-Act Structure



Ways to better understand story structure is to think about your favorite book or movie. Consider how the story progresses and what scenes follow what pattern. It can be fun! Try it out!

NOW for YOUR story? If you already have one in mind, start plotting and writing. If you do not, here are some ideas that may inspire you:

- Write a story about one of your characters who has magic. The other wants nothing more *than* to have magic. How far is that one person willing to go to make that magic theirs?
- Your character boards a ship to sail across to a newly discovered land. What they find when they get there are undiscovered species – both animal and humanoid.
- Write a story about a character who lives in a world where every single person's DNA is carefully genetically designed for something to help the community. Your main character despises what they were created for. This has never happened before.
- Your character develops a new device you implant in your ear that reads the minds of those they focus on. After light testing, they accidentally discover that the local baker has a massive, dangerous, potentially even *deadly secret*.

If you don't like these, there are plenty of other prompts online! Dig around and find what you like. And most importantly

**HAVE FUN!**