

How to write a novel outline

How to write a novel outline: start with these eight

What the book is about, in one sentence

Who wants something

What they want

What they need instead

What stands in the way

The decision that starts it

The decision that ends it

How long it runs

Who tells it

Three-act structure

Act one: the world as it is

Act one: the inciting incident

Act one: the decision to engage

Act two: the first attempt

Act two: the midpoint that changes the question

Act two: the low point

Act three: the choice

Act three: the climax

Act three: the world as it is now

Save the Cat beat sheet

Opening image

Theme stated

Setup

Catalyst

Debate

Break into two

B story

Fun and games

Midpoint

Bad guys close in

All is lost

Dark night of the soul

Break into three

Finale

Final image

The hero's journey

Ordinary world

Call to adventure

Refusal of the call

Meeting the mentor

Crossing the threshold

Tests and allies

Approach

The ordeal

Reward

The road back

Resurrection

Return with the elixir

Seven-point structure

Resolution, written first

Hook, the opposite of the resolution

Plot turn one, the world changes

Pinch one, pressure applied

Midpoint, from reacting to acting

Pinch two, the worst pressure

Plot turn two, the means to resolve it

Fill it in, or keep it in Draftly at joinraftly.com, where each of these becomes a Codex entry that opens beside the chapter the character appears in.