



YOUR STARTER OUTLINE CHECKLIST

Hey there, fellow scribe!

Here's a convenient, printable checklist of all the action steps covered in *Sizzling Story Outlines*. Together, the steps form a practical, systematic way to map out your story.

This checklist doesn't include explanatory descriptions of each action step. If you need further clarification, you can always consult the relevant chapter in *Sizzling Story Outlines*.

I encourage you to follow all the steps, in sequence, at least once. Then modify them to suit your taste. Remember, the method you follow doesn't matter—as long as you get reliable results!

I wish you much success on your storytelling journey.

PS: In Part II of *Sizzling Story Outlines*, you got a basic overview of story structure. If you're interested in taking your knowledge further, consider enrolling in my online course, Smarter Story Structure.

With it, you'll learn practical tips for overcoming plot problems that audiences often gripe about. For example:

- the story starts too slowly (according to a Goodreads survey, 46.4% of readers abandon novels for this reason)
- the story doesn't get going until halfway through (this happened in almost a quarter of scripts read by a studio reader in a year)
- the middle "runs out of gas" (even John Grisham admits this is a tricky issue)
- the climax doesn't deliver fireworks, merely sparklers
- the story is the right length...but isn't a good read (uh-oh)

Because this multimedia course is online, you can take it from the comfort and convenience of your own home. (It'll be like getting all the great takeaways from a weekend writing seminar...without dealing with bad traffic, hotel fare, and airport lines.)

Enroll today and learn how to use story structure to **get on audiences' good side!**

Click here for the details: <http://scribemeetsworld.com/3AS/>

PART I: POPPING THE STORY KERNEL

- ☐ 1. Isolate your story kernel (situation-, character-, or theme-based).
- ☐ 2. Design your SMART goal and the protagonist who will pursue it. (S – specific, M – measurable, A – actionable, R – realistic, and T – time-bound.)
- ☐ 3a. Create the main antagonist of your story.
- ☐ 3b. Refine your protagonist accordingly.
- ☐ 4. Tackle your credibility strategy (this assumes your protagonist achieves victory).
- ☐ 5. Create an additional antagonist, if necessary (e.g. if you're writing a plot with a love triangle).
- ☐ 6. Determine your story stakes.
- ☐ 7. Cast your plot into a genre mold.
- ☐ 8. Settle on a setting (place, time, and season).
- ☐ 9. List all of your story's intrinsic hooks (setting, character, origin of material, tone, title, and irony).
- ☐ 10. Using one of the five irony combinations from chapter 6 (or one of your choice), amplify your story idea's quotient of irony.
- ☐ 11. Evaluate the hooks in your story, together, as a group.
- ☐ 12. Using the template from chapter 7, summarize your story in one sentence (the logline).

PART II: CRACKING YOUR STORY CODE

- ☐ 13. Determine the first-act break.
- ☐ 14. Figure out what goes on your need-to-know list.
- ☐ 15. Working backward from the first-act break, choose an inciting incident.
- ☐ 16. Find your opening image, i.e. your point of entry into your story.

- ☐ 17. From the eight midpoint fulcrums listed in chapter 11, choose one to build the middle of your story around.
- ☐ 18a. From the master list in chapter 12, pick an obvious candidate for your trough type.
- ☐ 18b. Working backward from a random trough type, find a way to fit it into your story's framework.
- ☐ 18c. Combine the trough types from action steps #18a and #18b.
- ☐ 19a. Briefly describe the climax of your story.
- ☐ 19b. Incorporate an element of momentousness (i.e. setting, urgency, or choice) into the climax.
- ☐ 20. Analyze the climax's compatibility with the trough.
- ☐ 21a. Determine your story's resolution (happy, tragic, or bittersweet).
- ☐ 21b. Designate a hallmark of change.
- ☐ 22. Get a jumpstart on your accounting.

PART III: EXCAVATING STORY FOSSILS

- ☐ 23. Organize your notes from Parts I and II (i.e. logline, genre, opening image, first-act break, midpoint, trough, climax, and resolution). If you wish, use this convenient worksheet, which is available on my website: <http://scribemeetsworld.com/wwp-worksheet/>
- ☐ 24. Following the instructions from chapter 15, conduct walkenwright session #1 and plot Act One, a.k.a. the beginning of your story.
- ☐ 25. Conduct walkenwright session #2 and plot Act 2A, a.k.a. the first half of the middle of your story.
- ☐ 26. Conduct walkenwright session #3 and plot Act 2B, a.k.a. the second half of the middle of your story.
- ☐ 27. Conduct walkenwright session #4 and plot Act Three, a.k.a. the end of your story.
- ☐ 28. Conduct walkenwright session #5 (this is optional) and celebrate (this is not).

PART IV: WRAPPING UP

- ☐ 29. Assemble a full outline from the keeper micro-iteration from each of your walkenwright sessions.
- ☐ 30. Review plot point ideas outside the scope of each day's walkenwright session.
- ☐ 31. Evaluate your midpoint fulcrums.

~ Optional Action Steps ~

- ☐ 32. Expand the time frame (potentially).
- ☐ 33. Review your need-to-know and accounting lists.
- ☐ 34. Inspect your seed bank.
- ☐ 35. Discover and/or refine your story's theme.
- ☐ 36. Define the fork in the road and your closing image.
- ☐ 37. Worldbuild away!