

Syd Field Story Structure Template

Use the prompts to outline your own film. Add or remove sections to suit your project. The worked example follows the blank worksheet.

Project _____ Writer _____

Setup

What dramatic situation introduces the protagonist and the problem?

Plot point 1

What event redirects the story into its main conflict?

Confrontation and midpoint

What relationships, obstacles and central shift develop the story?

Plot point 2

What event sends the story towards its resolution?

Resolution

How does the central action conclude?

Worked film example

The Shawshank Redemption (1994)

Framework credited to Syd Field. This original Cineview visual summarises Field's published film worksheet; spoilers follow. No affiliation or endorsement is implied.

Setup Andy is convicted and enters Shawshank.

Plot point 1 Andy asks Red for a rock hammer.

Confrontation and midpoint Andy adapts, helps inmates and plays music over the prison speakers.

Plot point 2 Andy escapes from prison.

Resolution Andy and Red meet again in Mexico.

How to use the worksheet

Describe the dramatic context. Write what each act is doing for the character and the audience, rather than starting with a fixed page count.

Choose turning points. Identify events that change the direction of the action. Explain why the story cannot simply continue as before.

Use timing flexibly. Feature-screenplay page ranges are illustrative conventions, not requirements for every short, documentary or experimental film.

References

Syd Field — Official Shawshank Redemption paradigm worksheet
<https://sydfield.com/paradigm-shawshankredemption.pdf>

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