



The Essentials of Story

The usual definition of story is that it must have a **Beginning Middle and End**. Obviously this is oversimplified as it can apply to almost anything. These are actually the building blocks of a story and are essential for a complete tale. Each of these blocks have constituents that are needed to build a complete story.

The Three C's of Story

- ✓ Character – with the goal (**Protagonist**).
- ✓ Conflict – resistance to achievement of the goal (**Antagonist**).
- ✓ Closure – goal achieved or not.


The protagonist is the central character in the story; the one most affected by the action and events that transpire and one changed by the time the story ends.

The antagonist represents the resistance to the protagonist's journey throughout the story and may be a character, the society, a natural phenomenon or internal conflicting desires and ambitions.

The goal is the overarching desire of the protagonist that must be put to rest at the story's end by either accomplishing or abandoning it.

The Narrative Structure (Story Arc)

The normal day – The inciting incident – Escalating conflict – The resolution – The new normal



- ✓ The normal day – the abeyant life of the protagonist.
- ✓ The inciting incident – the event preceding the moment the protagonist recognizes and commits to solving the story problem.
- ✓ Escalating conflict – every action has consequences, sometimes causing additional conflict.
- ✓ The resolution – problem solved, conflicts resolved.
- ✓ The new normal – the abeyant life of the protagonist resumes with a different perspective.

Story problem: This is what gets your protagonist involved, a murder, a storm, or meeting a new lover; solving the problems requires the protagonist to fix something, find something, prevent something, or do something.

Story question: Arises out of the problem; Will your protagonist find the murderer, survive the storm, or fall in love? There can be a complex relationship develop between the story problem and the story question as the narrative progresses; the story problem drives your protagonist's actions. Needing the answer to the story question is what keeps readers turning pages.

Story premise: The assertion, assumed to be true, that is illustrated by the story.

Moral of the story: The lesson of a story.

The Seven Sentence Story Structure

- ✓ Using it, you can introduce the protagonist (and other characters) with the **Once Upon a Time** phrase
- ✓ The **And Every Day** phrase describes the ordinary day.
- ✓ The **Until One Day** phrase shows the inciting incident and begins to describe the conflict story problem and story question.
- ✓ The **And Then** (Because of that) phrase (s) identifies the Antagonist and escalates the conflict.
- ✓ The next **And then** (Because of that) ...
- ✓ The **Until Finally** phrase describes the resolution and move to Closure.
- ✓ The **And Ever Since** (happily ever after) phrase describes the new ordinary day.

My Seven Sentence Story

1. Once Upon A Time _____
2. And every day _____
3. Until one day _____
4. And because of that (and then) _____
5. And because of that (and then) _____
6. Until finally _____
7. And ever since _____