

SESSION 1: 3-Act Structure

1. A FRESH look at 3-act structure. We expect:

An opening that tells us *where* we are, *when* we are, and *what's* going on.

A buildup of suspense.

A climax.

A satisfying ending.

2. What goes in each Act helps you build your story.

- What goes into ACT 1?

Introduction into the story

- “Once upon a time...”
- The Ordinary World
- Place - This world?
- Time – This century?

The Story Problem

- The Villain's Plot
- Creates an Impossible Dilemma

Most films: introduce or mention every main character in the story.

Ends with Inciting Incident / Launches Act 2

- Inciting Incident

A clear choice with consequences.

- What goes into first half of ACT 2?

The Heart of the Story / Why you're telling the story

- Mid-Point Reversal

Story spins off in a new direction

- What goes into second half of ACT 2?

Finish the heart of the story.

Leads to point of no return.

- What goes into ACT 3?

The showdown.

After the dust settles, a quite seen showing new “ordinary world.”

All loose ends tied up.



About 40 index cards. One card per scene.

3. Example: The Greatest Story EVER is etched upon our souls – Hebrews 12:2: The Author of our faith...

Act 1: “Once upon a time...” = In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...”

Inciting Incident: The Villain’s Plot: Satan deceives Eve and Adam. Creates Divine Dilemma

First half Act 2: The Hero’s Quest: The promise of a Messiah. Meanwhile: Old Testament sacrifices.

Midpoint Reversal: The Hero comes in disguise to win back the hearts of His beloved; dies on a cross. Then resurrected! This changes *everything*.

Second half Act 2: The church age. Christians/Gentiles following Jesus. Age of grace.

Act 3: The Final Conflict. End Times/Armageddon/Judgements. 1,000-year millennium rein.

Resources:

- *Save the Cat: The Last Book on Screenwriting You’ll Ever Need* by Blake Snyder
- 3’ x 5’ cork board. 3x5 index cards. Push pins.