

## **THREE ACT STRUCTURE FOR SCREENPLAYS**

ACT I  
SETUP, ORDER IN THE WORLD

INCITING INCIDENT (ALSO CALLED THE CATALYST): USUALLY WITHIN THE FIRST 10-MINUTES OF A FEATURE FILM. IT'S THE EVENT THAT STARTS THE STORY.

SET UP PROTAGONIST/S AND THEIR GOAL CLEARLY  
PUT OBSTACLES IN THEIR WAY; INTRODUCE ANTAGONIST/S

ACT I TAKES UP APPROXIMATELY 1/4 OF THE FILM

TURNING POINT I AT END OF ACT I. TURNING POINTS CAN ALSO BE CALLED PLOT POINTS.

CHARACTER IS FORCED INTO ACTION  
THIS LAUNCHES ACT II

---

ACT II  
CONFRONTATION, CHAOS IN THE WORLD  
RAISING THE STAKES, MORE OBSTACLES  
THROUGHOUT ACT II CHARACTER/S MUST LEARN HOW TO  
OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND LEARN ABOUT HIM OR HERSELF

APPROXIMATELY 1/2 OF THE FILM  
MIDPOINT DIVIDES ACT II APPROXIMATELY IN HALF

TURNING POINT II AT END OF ACT II  
CHARACTER/S SUFFERS GREAT DEFEAT

CHARACTER MUST RECOVER FROM TURNING POINT II  
AND REDEDICATE HIM OR HERSELF TO OBTAINING THE GOAL  
THIS LAUNCHES ACT III

---

ACT III  
RESOLUTION OF STORY, RESTORATION OF ORDER IN THE WORLD  
APPROXIMATELY 1/4 OF THE FILM

CLIMAX--PROTAGONIST/S MUST BE IN GREATEST DANGER AND  
FACE SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES

RESOLUTION--KEEP IT SHORT (1-3 PAGES)

