

DAN WELL'S SEVEN-POINT SYSTEM

Building a Story

1. Have a story in mind.
 - a. Once you have a premise, develop a general idea by asking yourself the following questions:
 - i. Who are the characters?
 - ii. What is the setting?
 - iii. What is the major conflict?
2. Start at the end.

SEQUENCE	PLOT POINT	
STEP 2	HOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now that you know where you're going, figure out where you start. One simple trick is to start with the opposite state: if a character is going to end strong, he should start weak. This creates an arc of progress. This is another reason it's so vital to know your ending.
STEP 4	PLOT TURN 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just as the midpoint moves you from beginning to end, Plot Turn 1 moves you from beginning to midpoint. Introduce the conflict The character's world changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet new people Discover new secrets Follow the white rabbit.
STEP 6	PINCH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply pressure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Something goes wrong Bad guys attack Peace is destroyed Force the characters into action Often used to introduce the villain.
STEP 3	MIDPOINT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The midpoint is the exact center between the two states. It is the point at which the characters begin moving from one state to the other. The characters move from reaction to action.
STEP 7	PINCH 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply more pressure until the situation seems hopeless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plan fails A mentor dies, leaving heroes alone The bad guys seem to win These are the jaws of defeat from which your hero will be snatching victory. Make sure the teeth are sharp.
STEP 5	PLOT TURN 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move the story from midpoint to end. At the midpoint you decide to do something, at the resolution you do it. So Plot Turn 2 is where you obtain the final thing you need to make it happen. "The power is in you!"
STEP 1	RESOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything in your story leads to this moment What is your story about? Where is your story going? Make sure you know what kind of resolution you want.

The story is not complete! The above is a skeleton that needs to be fleshed out with: round characters, rich environments, the "ice monster" prologue", try/fail cycles, subplots (depending on size).