

Plot Bones

How to Make a Plot Skeleton to Build Your Story On
Thewritersaurus.com

Plot Points – ‘Story Bones’

Plot Point 1 – This plot point is the incendiary incident that starts it all. This event changes the MC’s life – without this event, they would simply carry on with their normal, everyday life. This is the first domino that begins the story’s chain of events. Plot point 1 needs to happen as close to the beginning as possible, at least within the first scene – don’t lose readers in pages and pages of backstory. You want them to get to that hook ASAP.

Example: *In Roald Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Willy Wonka Announces that he has hidden five golden tickets inside chocolate bars all over the world.*

Midpoint Plot Point (Plot Point 2) – The midpoint plot point ends act one. It is usually a profound change of circumstances for the characters; after this event, things can never go back to the way they were before.

Example: *Charlie Bucket finds a golden ticket. His life will never be the same afterwards.*

Minor Plot Points – Minor plot points comprise the bulk of Act Two. They represent complications standing between the MCs and their goal, and help develop and reveal personality and character motivations. They’re not necessarily *essential* to the plot, but they make it a hell of a lot more interesting, and keep the reader reading.

Example: *All the bad children fail to make it to the end of the tour due to their own specific character flaws.*

Plot Point 3 – Plot point three is a reversal of fortune, the MC’s situation now seems dire and hopeless.

Example: *Willy Wonka tells Charlie that because he drank the fizzy soda when he wasn’t supposed to, he is no longer entitled to receive a lifetime of free chocolate.*

Final Plot Point (Plot Point 4) – The resolution; how the characters triumph.

Example: *Charlie returns the everlasting gobstopper to Willy Wonka, proving that he is good and not selfish, and worthy to inherit the chocolate factory.*

3 Major Acts

All stories have 3 basic acts – the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Act 1 (the beginning) – Act one will start with **plot point 1**, and end with the **midpoint plot point**. It contains as little backstory as possible. Act 1 will comprise about 25% of the novel, and about 15 scenes averaging 1,500 words per scene.

Act 2 (the middle) – Act two comprises the meat of the story. It begins directly after the **midpoint plot point**. It contains as much backstory as necessary (but not more) to develop character and explain motivations. It contains all the stories **minor plot points** and ends with **Plot Point 3**. Act two comprises 50% of the novel, about 30 scenes, averaging 1,500 words per scene.

Act 3 (the end) – Act three contains the **Final Plot Point**. It contains the climax, the resolution, and the end. It should contain no backstory. Act 3 comprises 25% of the novel or less, 15 scenes, 1,500 words per scene.

Worksheet Directions:

Fill out the worksheet on the following page, starting with the major plot points. Then fill in the rest of the sheet by asking yourself, *what needs to happen to get from this plot point to that one?*

Novel Bones Worksheet

Act 1 – 25% of story. 17,000- 22,000 words, 15 scenes, about 1,000 words per scene:

1. Plot Point 1 (major scene):

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 2. | 9. |
| 3. | 10. |
| 4. | 11. |
| 5. | 12. |
| 6. | 13. |
| 7. | 14. |
| 8. | |

15. Midpoint Plot Point (major scene)

Act 2- 50% of story; 30,000-35,000 words, 30 scenes, 1,500 words per scene:

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 16. | 26. | 36. |
| 17. | 27. | 37. |
| 18. | 28. | 38. |
| 19. | 29. | 39. |
| 20. | 30. | 40. |
| 21. | 31. | 41. |
| 22. | 32. | 42. |
| 23. | 33. | 43. |
| 24. | 34. | 44. |
| 25. | 35. | |

45. Plot Point 3 (major scene):

Act 3 17,500- 22,000 words, 15 scenes, 1,500 words per scene:

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 46. | 53. |
| 47. | 54. |
| 48. | 55. |
| 49. | 56. |
| 50. | 57. |
| 51. | 58. |
| 52. | 59. |

60. Final Plot Point (major scene):