

Novel Outline Template

When I do an outline edit for my editorial clients, I like for submission to hit some of the points below in this novel outline template. Use this to jog your creative juices! Do realize, though, that there are many ways to write an outline, and this is just one we use at Good Story Company to get writers thinking in a productive novel outline direction.

Act I

1. Inciting incident:
2. Character's situation at the beginning of the story:
 - a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:
3. Character's objective and motivation:
 - a. Objective:
 - b. Motivation:
4. Important piece of character backstory:
5. Primary sources of stakes and tension:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
6. Important secondary characters:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
7. Important elements to know about, or conflicts with, other characters, respectively:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
8. Antagonist (even if we haven't met them yet):
9. Five crucial plot points/scenes in the first act:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

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- d.
 - e.
10. Three subplot events:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
11. Position in character arc at the end of Act I:
- a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:

Act II

- 1. Turning point that launches act:
- 2. Character's situation at this point in the story:
 - a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:
- 3. Character's objective and motivation (have they changed?):
 - a. Objective:
 - b. Motivation:
- 4. How the important piece of character backstory plays a part, changes things, or has evolved:
- 5. Primary sources of stakes and tension:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
- 6. Important secondary characters or antagonists and their arcs in Act II:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

7. Important elements to know about, or conflicts with, other characters, respectively:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
8. What is the antagonist's development in this act?
9. Five crucial plot points/scenes in the second act:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
10. Three subplot events as they track into the second act:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
11. Position in character arc at the end of Act II:
 - a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:

Act III

1. Turning point that launches act:
2. Character's situation at the end of the story:
 - a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:
3. Character's objective and motivation (have they changed?):
 - a. Objective:
 - b. Motivation:
4. How the important piece of character backstory plays a part, changes things, or has evolved:
5. Primary sources of stakes and tension:

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- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
6. Important secondary characters or antagonists and their arcs:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
7. Important elements to know about, or conflicts with, other characters, respectively:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
8. Five crucial plot points/scenes in the third act:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
9. Protagonist physical and emotional considerations of the climactic scene:
10. What is at stake in the climactic scene?
11. Character of the antagonist in the climactic scene:
12. Character of the protagonist in the climactic scene
 - a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:
13. How does the antagonist get resolved:
14. How do the three subplots get resolved:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
15. How do the three main secondary characters get resolved, respectively:
 - a.

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- b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
16. Position in character arc at the end:
- a. Mental:
 - b. Emotional:
 - c. Physical:
 - d. Situational:
17. How is the main theme resolved:

About Good Story Company

We provide services and advice for writers in all categories and of all writing abilities. [We're a passionate team of writers, editors, marketers, and more](#), founded in 2019 and led by Mary Kole.

Join [Good Story Learning](#) to find a new critique partner and take self-paced writing classes, or sign up for our six-month writing intensive, [Story Mastermind](#). These are just some of the programs and services we provide, with many more to come.

About Mary Kole

Former literary agent Mary Kole provides [consulting and developmental editing services](#) to writers of all categories and genres, working on children's book projects from picture book to young adult, and all kinds of trade market literature, including fantasy, sci-fi, romance, and memoir.

She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and has worked at Chronicle Books, the Andrea Brown Literary Agency, and Movable Type Management. She has been blogging at [Kidlit.com](#) since 2009. Her book, [Writing Irresistible Kidlit](#), a writing reference guide for middle grade and young adult writers, is available from Writer's Digest Books.

More Writing Craft Resources

"Mary is a masterful speaker, very engaging, and I loved the intimate, casual format. I'm sure I'll revisit the webinar many times in the future." – Wendy H.

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