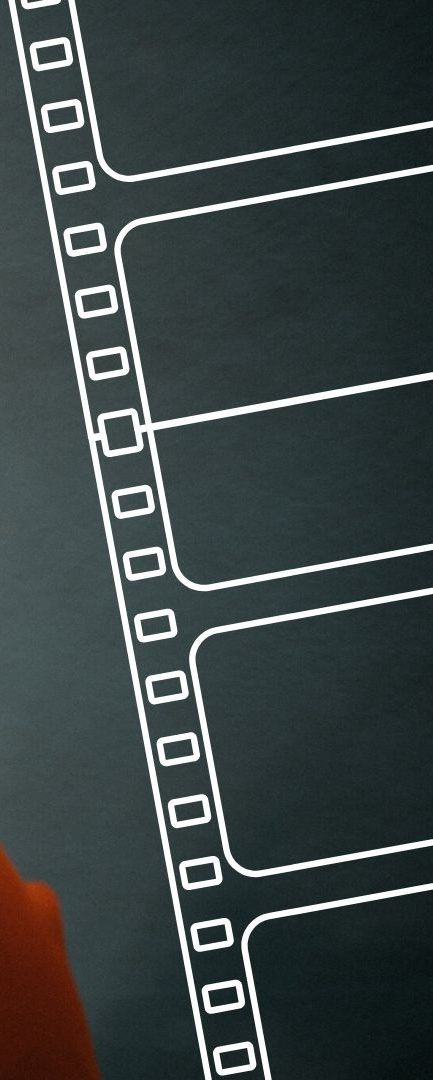
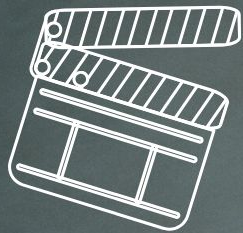
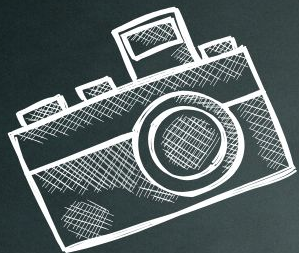


STORYTELLING: 101



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Why is storytelling important?

"(Stories) fulfill a profound human need to grasp the patterns of living, not merely as an intellectual exercise, but within a very personal, emotional experience."

- Robert McKee

"Cinema therapy can be a powerful catalyst for healing and growth for anybody who is open to learning how movies affect us and to watching certain films with conscious awareness. Cinema therapy allows us to use the effect of imagery, plot, music, etc. in films on our psyche for insight, inspiration, emotional release or relief and natural change."

-Birgit Wolz, PhD. MFT

What makes a compelling story?

A relatable protagonist finds themselves faced with a conflict that only they can overcome.

When they do overcome the conflict, they grow in the process and are not the same person they were in the beginning.

Relatable Conflict and Growth
Makes A Story Compelling

Why?

We want to see that same growth
in our own lives.

Every Good Story Has A Universal Theme

What is a universal theme?

Universal Theme

A universal theme is an idea that applies to anyone regardless of cultural differences, or geographic location. It is all about the human condition, a generalization about life or human nature.

Where do I begin?

It all starts with a logline.

What's a logline?

A logline, or log line, is a brief (one to two sentence) summary of a movie, tv show, etc. that hooks the reader in and describes the central conflict of the story.

If someone asks you what your screenplay is about, you respond with a logline.

Can you name the film
based on the logline?

TITANIC

Two star-crossed lovers fall in love on the maiden voyage of the Titanic and struggle to survive as the doomed ship sinks into the Atlantic Ocean.

JURASSIC PARK

A group of survivors struggle to escape from a revolutionary wildlife park filled with dinosaurs after a bribed employee sabotages the predators' security gates.

STAR WARS

A science-fiction fantasy about a naive but ambitious farm boy from a backwater desert who discovers powers he never knew he had when he teams up with a feisty princess, a mercenary space pilot and an old wizard warrior to lead a ragtag rebellion against the sinister forces of the evil Galactic Empire.

Every great story has an
authentic protagonist.

The Protagonist

The lead character of a story.

The one who needs to overcome the struggle.



But what makes a good protagonist?

1. Make Them Relatable (That Means Flawed)

Protagonists just aren't interesting if we can't relate to them somehow. And if we can't relate, we can't be emotionally invested in their stories.

One way to make a character more relatable is by highlighting their flaws (rather than hiding them), and presenting both internal and external struggles.

Even Superman, who is nearly perfect in every way, has Kryptonite as a weakness.



The CHOSEN

A relatable Jesus.

407,782,912
Views



Laughs
Cries
Dances
Makes Jokes
Worries
Gets Upset
Loves

What are some flaws
a Protagonist could have?

2. Outline Their History

As you start to construct your protagonist, imagine their back story and try to form the most complete picture possible. Imagining their history in full will help you to craft a more complete and realistic protagonist.

Ask important questions about their past.

3. Find Their Motivation

As the central character, your protagonist will need a reason for doing what they do. Their motivating force should be strong enough that they persist even despite serious challenges. If your readers don't understand your protagonist's purpose, they'll have less incentive to root for him as the story progresses.

Good protagonists are also driven by a more universal, internal motivation—everyday wants, hopes, or fears that most of us can understand or relate to.

4. Give Them Something to Lose

There must always be a risk that your character will fail in his quest. Therefore, the challenges your protagonist faces should feel not only realistic, but also greater than them.

When readers see that the odds are stacked against the protagonist, they'll have more reason to root for them.

5. Make Them Evolve

Now that you have a clear challenge in mind for your protagonist, think about what they'll have to do in order to overcome it and reach their goals.

The ideal answer should involve some change.

Leave room for them to grow and evolve. This evolution usually marks a key turning point in the story and can enrich the plot and help build the story's climax.

But someone is in their way...

The Antagonist

A person who actively opposes the protagonist
and what they want.



The Antagonist can cause the conflict within the story, no matter how big or small it might be.

What makes a good antagonist?

1. Give Your Antagonist Motivation

If your antagonist is just evil for the sake of being evil, they're not a strong character. They're going to need a believable motivation. Not one you can agree with, necessarily, but one that's believable.

2. Make Your Antagonist Intimidating

An antagonist your main character can defeat with a snap of their fingers is not a strong antagonist. Make your antagonist somehow stronger than your protagonist or else there's no real threat. There's no tension if the protagonist can defeat the antagonist whenever he wants.

3. Make Them Human

As mentioned in the "motivation" section, chances are your character is not a remorseless robot who exists solely for the purpose of destroying the world. They're going to have hobbies, people they care about, things that make them happy, etc. Give them relatable characteristics. Maybe even make them redeemable. The antagonist has feelings and a life and passions just like the protagonist.

4. Give Your Antagonist Boundaries

Even the most evil of antagonists is likely to have a line they don't cross.

5. Give Your Character a Backstory

For any person or character, good or bad, their past has shaped who they are now. Backstory is crucial to knowing a character and their current personalities and motivations, and that's just as important for an antagonist as for a protagonist.

(BONUS) Give your antagonist history with the protagonist.

How To Put It All Together

Act 1

The beginning.

The main purpose of this act is to gain the attention of the viewers and introduce them to the story.

Act 2

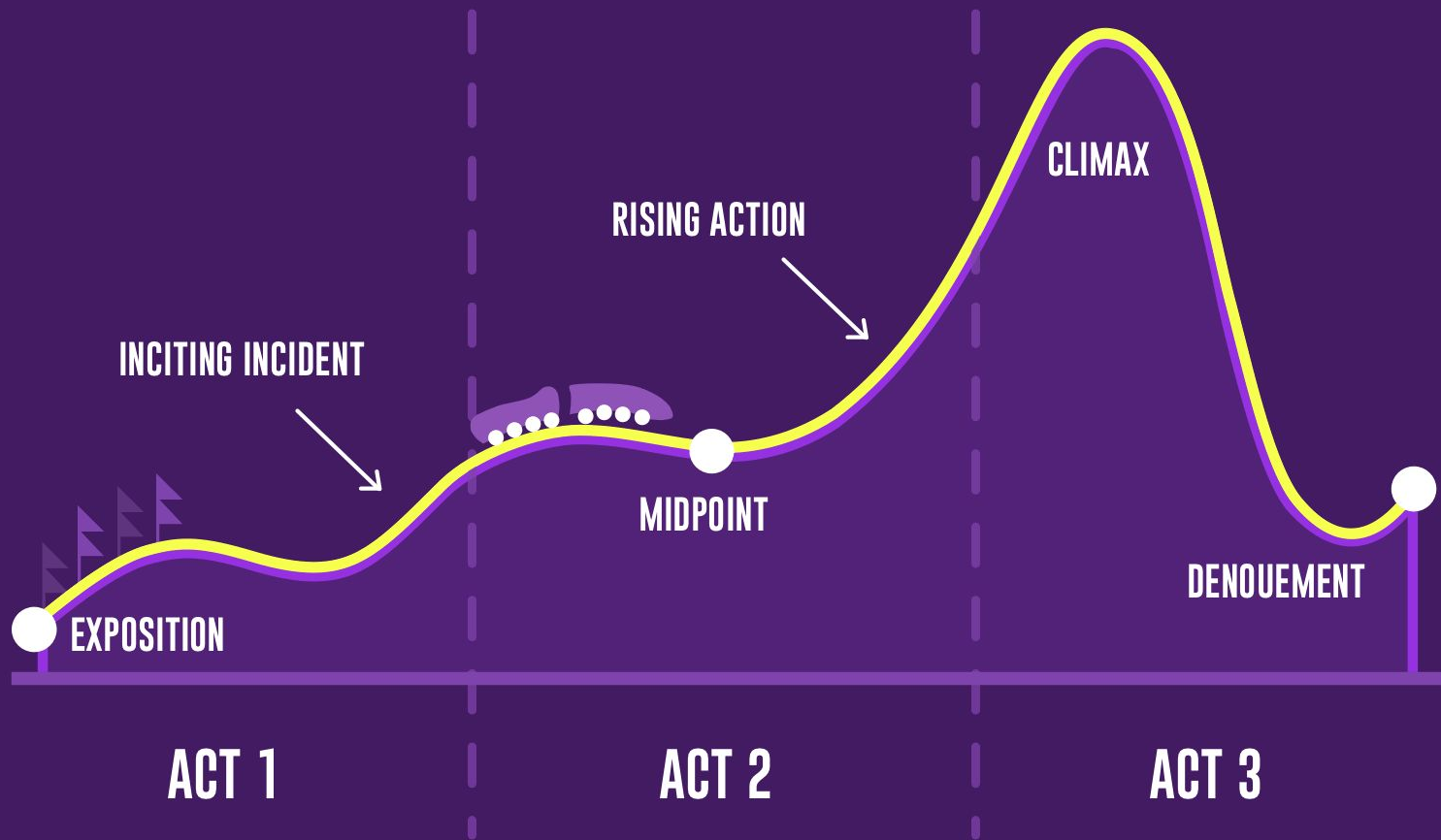
The middle of the story.

This plays off of its core idea. Whatever main plot you wrote in your logline is going to primarily be occurring in Act 2. This act will take up the majority of your film.

Act 3

The end of the story.

Act 3 can end in the middle of the climax or it can contain a falling action and resolution.



Exposition

The purpose of exposition is **to reveal details around the circumstances that surround a film's narrative**. This can be character traits, motivations, background information or themes that all allow the audience to further comprehend the central narrative of a film.

Inciting Incident

An inciting incident is **an event that hooks the viewer into the story and sets everything else that happens into motion.** This moment is when an event thrusts the protagonist into the main action of the story.

Rising Action

The rising action **starts right after the period of exposition and ends at the climax.** Beginning with the inciting incident, rising action is the bulk of the plot. It is composed of a series of events that build on the conflict and increase the tension, sending the story racing to a dramatic climax.

Climax

The climax is the high point of the movie where the protagonist, based on the knowledge gained from the rising action, determines what the final action needs to be taken in order to resolve the conflict.

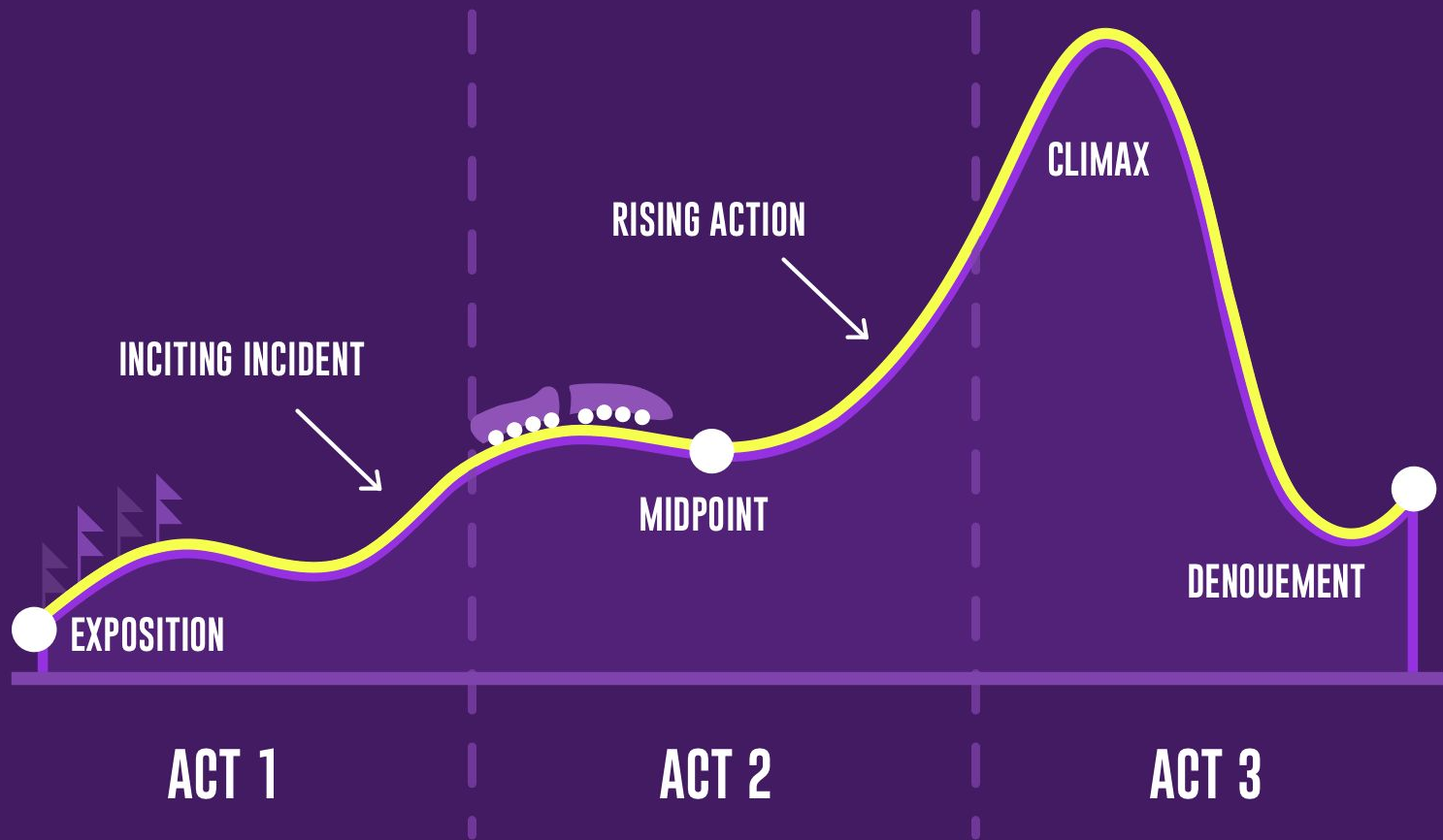
Denouement

Denouement is **an aspect of narrative that gives context and resolution to a major theme, relationship or event in a story.** This resolution can be explicit, implicit or both. Unlike a story's epilogue, the denouement is essential.

How does this apply to short
form content?



How did this ad make you feel?



Universal Theme

Loneliness & Connection

What did the protagonist do to overcome loneliness?
Faked his own death.

Did he overcome loneliness?
Yes.



What do you think
this company does?

They're the Walmart
of Germany.

What did they create with this
ad?

An emotional tie to their company.

Whenever someone sees their logo, they'll
subconsciously think of how this ad made
them feel, and therefore, have those same
feelings for the company itself.

What were they trying to sell?

Food. Candles. Christmas Decorations.

When you connect with someone on an emotional level, you can build stronger relationships with them, and they will keep coming back.

Storytelling connects people.

Recommended Reads:

"Story" by Robert McKee

"Storynomics" by Robert McKee

"Whoever Tells The Best Story Wins" by Annette Simmons

"Save The Cat" by Blake Snyder

"How To Write Everything" by David Quantick

"The Nutshell Technique" by Jill Chamberlain



THE MUSTY CREATIVE

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Podcast

CITING

Forbes

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimberlywhitler/2019/01/27/5-ads-that-tell-great-stories-insight-from-a-pixar-movie-writer/?sh=326db90f4241>

The Film Fund

<https://www.thefilmfund.co/short-film-structure-how-it-differs-from-feature-films/#.YrEUNS-B3UY>

Studio Binder

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/three-act-structure/>

Screen Skills

<https://www.screenskills.com>

RMarcher Blog

<https://rmarcher.com/2019/01/5-traits-every-good-antagonist-should-have/>

TCK Publishing

<https://www.tckpublishing.com/how-to-write-a-protagonist/>

FADE TO BLACK.