



Step 7: Write Scenes

Each scene conveys to readers essential characters, settings, and events, and when those sequences are strung together like pearls, they form your story's narrative necklace.

Enhance Your Story Using Structured Scenes

Your scenes show readers the story, varying the content and style based on its place within the overall narrative.

- Your chosen genre influences the word selections and sentence structures.
- Each scene serves to move the story forward, revealing something essential to the audience's understanding of the overall narrative.
- It matters how you structure a scene and where you place it.
- How you link one to the next influences the story's emotional impact.

That's why each scene uses a pattern to please readers and you use the Story Beats to determine its logical location within the overall narrative.

Inconsistent Scene Structure Causes Problems

Each scene is like a short story within the novel's overall narrative.

The best scenes build toward and link to the next scene. This structure result in 'narrative drive,' that subtle compulsion to keep reading and find out what happens next. Without this drive, the audience often abandons a book.

The solution to the problem is a structure called the 8-beat Scene and Sequel Sequence.

The Worksheet Guides You to Use the Sequence

On the surface, the 8-beat Scene and Sequel Sequence may seem like an unnecessary process.

However, you'll find the worksheet actually enhances your creativity. The prompts draw out those small but important details readers love. That's by design, and you'll learn scene structure while you write.

Because you've already outlined the Story Beats, you're aware of which scenes need to be written and where you'll place them within the overall story structure.

A Scene Writing Pattern You'll Use Repeatedly

A process you can learn once and reuse many times offers a world of possibilities, and it's not that complicated.

The 8-beat Scene and Sequel Sequence is divided into two parts:

- **Part One:** The **scene** part is a plot event where something happens (action). The scene event shows an action that

progresses the story's plot. It justifies a conflict (aka obstacle) and denies the character's achievement of a goal.

- **Part Two:** The **sequel** part is the character's emotions (reaction) to the event. The sequel shows how the denied goal registers emotionally with the character. The sequel bonds your character to the reader through emotions.

The 8 beats fulfill specific functions with the sequence.

Scene/Action:

1. **Hook:** The hook snags readers' interest.
 - Shows action,
 - Hints at trouble,
 - Dialogue grabs attention, or
 - Raises a question
2. **Setup:** Early information establishes the characters and location, and includes the setup for potential conflict (i.e., an obstacle to the protagonist achieving the scene's goal).
3. **Trigger:** An event serves as the trigger that forces to the surface a conflict (aka an obstacle) that prevents the character from achieving the goal.

Sequel/Reaction:

4. **Emotion:** The character's reaction to the event conveys emotion.
5. **Ponder:** The protagonist ponders those prior decisions and actions that led up to the event, and may include a dilemma comprising two choices that have different but equally unfavorable consequences.

6. **Expectation:** The character's moment of reflection sets an expectation of what the individual could do to progress toward the scene's goal.
7. **Choice:** The protagonist makes a tough choice to take action.

Scene/Action:

8. **Climax:** The character takes action, and the outcome sets up a new goal for the next scene and sequel sequence. For example, the scene:
 - Ends with a cliffhanger,
 - Redirects with a revelation,
 - Presents a setback,
 - Reveals a secret or a lie,
 - Teases readers with a question, or
 - Creates a plot twist.

The worksheet guides you through the process of writing each sequence.

Read the Workbook and Complete the Worksheet

You'll find more insights and useful information within the workbook.

The worksheet prompts you for the details needed to complete as many scenes as your story requires. A long journey begins by taking a step. Arrival at the destination occurs after repeating that first step many times.

Likewise, you'll take many steps to produce your novel's first draft, and you control the pace.

Follow the Process to Avoid Problems

When you write a full-length novel of 50,000 to 100,000 words, it's like a marathon, and easy to get lost if you don't have markers to follow.

- Step 6, Outline Beats, gave you a structure to follow.
- The 8-beats Scene and Sequel Sequence in this lesson gives you a process to produce content for your novel.
- As you use the process, you'll find it produces a familiar scene pattern while inspiring more creativity.

Follow the process to avoid getting lost, or worse, growing so frustrated that you give up on producing that all-important first draft.

Way Forward

Story scenes convey to readers essential characters, settings, and events.

While there are no strict rules for writing scenes, you can adopt proven practices that satisfy readers' expectations. The 8-beats Scene and Sequel Sequence creates a bond between your readers and characters, giving your audience the actions and emotions they crave.

Read this step's workbook and complete the worksheet, including the spreadsheet to estimate the words and scenes.