



Adapted from the BLAKE SNYDER's "BEAT SHEET"
From the book, *Save The Cat*, by Blake Snyder

The Screenplay Method Hero's Journey Cheat Sheet / Outline

Now that you understand the basics of the hero's journey, and how it can apply to any story, I want you to consider some of these elements in terms of how great screenplays are written and how it might spark ideas when writing your book.

To help you organize your story you could look at it through the lens of images, such as opening images, middle images, and closing images of a movie.

Opening Image:

- A starting point.
- The hero/ protagonist gets the call to action.
- Image: the first impression of the hero.
- A good story is about change.
- What might be your closing scene to compare to your opening scene?
- What is the hero like as the story opens?

Theme Stated:

- What is this story really about? (Remember a good story is "about a character that wants something and is willing to go through any struggle or conflict to get it" – Donald Miller)
- Make a declaration of what you are about to tell the reader/audience.
- You're basically going to prove something. (Internally, externally)
- Set out to do it and prove it.

The Set-Up:

- Introduce your characters or people who are the main characters of your story. Don't create too many characters. Readers can't follow too much all at once.
- Show every behavior of each character that makes them unique.
- Show how and why the hero will need to change in order to evolve.
- Introduce tension and conflict, or an internal strife or struggle.



The Catalyst:

- The Call to action is for real. The protagonist is confused.
- Something happens to make a turn.
- This is where "real life hits" - "Oh crap I'm really doing this" , "Oh my God I can't believe this is happening"
- These are moments that happen to all of us: divorce, getting fired, catching the husband in bed, news you have three days to live, knock at the door, the messenger.
- You begin to knock down the old world (the known world) and bring the reader/ audience into the new world.

The Debate:

- The debate must ask a question of some kind, the hero / protagonist is unsure of him or herself.
- This is the last chance for the hero / protagonist to turn back.
- You convince the reader/audience to realize that the journey is crazy and dangerous – but also that it is his/her choice to move ahead.
- The hero answers the debate question by moving ahead.

Possible Option - Break into Two Stories (this is better for longer books, but can be done in a short book)

- This is optional in short book writing, but has been used well in many books (fiction and nonfiction) you could stop the main story to introduce a "B" story (falling in love with someone, something that happens during the main story that distracts the main character)
- This can happen naturally with writing. (If you're interested in this process you would want to read the book, "Save The Cat" for examples.)

The B Story:

- This is where you take a break from the main story and "talk" about something else.
- This could be a flashback that you keep referring back to, something that took you off your path temporarily, a love affair, a haunting in your mind that becomes an internal dialog.
- It's something you want to wrap into your main story that is pertinent to the overall epiphany of the hero.



Fun and Games:

- This is the heart of the story, where you have the most fun telling your story and all the details by "showing" versus telling.
- Pretend you are the director and describe all the scenes in intricate detail
- Bring the reader into all the scenes using the five senses.

Midpoint:

- It's either an "up" where the hero seemingly peaks to his/her first epiphany, followed by some sort of disillusion when the world seems to collapse all around the hero (though it is a false collapse.)
- Or this is where all hope seems lost and you take the reader on a false collapse to keep the tension. (Dark night of the soul)

"Bad Guys" Close In:

- The midpoint to the "all hope is lost" moment, this is the toughest part of the story.
- The "Bad guys" can be a real person, a system, the person's inner critic, etc.
- It's the point where internal dissent, doubt, jealousy, major disillusion begin to disintegrate the hero's dream.

"False Defeat" of All Is Lost

- The hero's life in shambles. Wreckage abounds. There seems to be no hope.

The True Dark Night of the Soul:

- This can last five seconds or five minutes. The darkness before the dawn. We must believe the hero is beaten down. This creates a page-turner. It makes the reader think, "No way! This can't end like this!"

The Shift / Climax :

- Some kind of answer is found. Both the external story and an internal story collides.
- The synchronicities make sense and looking back we see how everything happened for the lesson to be learned. The "ah-ha" has emerged.



Finale:

- It's the turning over of the old world and a creation of a new world.
- There is some shift that the hero has become a new person because of the journey.
- This does not have to be a "happy ending" of sorts, but it is a new world and there is a shift.

Final Image of the Protagonist:

- What is the final image of the hero at the end? How can you show the shift in an image for the ending?

Things to Consider:

- What are the major turns in the story?
- Don't overload the chapters or the story with too many details or characters.
- There should be an emotional change and some conflict.
- You must take the audience by the hand every time and get them in sync with your main character and your story.
- The protagonist and the main characters in your story must change in the course of your story. The only characters who don't change are the bad guys. The hero and his friends change and evolve!