

Scene-by-Scene Plot Planner with Pacing Guide and 8-essential Plot Elements:

Chapter	Day/Time/Purpose	Scenes
	<p>Act I PlotPoint 1: Status Quo and inciting Incident</p>	<p>Pacing Guide: Act I constitutes ¼ of the novel (or 8/32 chapters—or 80/320 pages) Each chapter is <i>about</i> 10 pages—give or take. There are 3-5 scenes per chapter (this can vary, of course). This outline provides 3 scenes per chapter—but you can add more/delete as needed.</p> <p>PlotPoint 1: Establishes the central character, his or her normal life before changes and shows the status quo of the world. Usually ends with the inciting incident—a point of attack, which can also start the novel.</p> <p>Examples: <i>Good Will Hunting</i> shows status quo—he lives alone in squalor; his friends pick him up in a junker car and we learn about his world; <i>Indiana Jones and Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>, opens with action. Indiana steals a golden idol and nearly loses his life; he is betrayed and must use ingenuity to escape. This also shows his status quo—his world.</p>
Prologue	If no Prologue, write “no prologue”	
<p>1 10-11 pgs Each scene 3-3.5 pgs</p>	<p>Act I Begins PlotPoint 1 See explanation above</p>	<p>Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:</p>
2		<p>Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:</p>
3		<p>Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:</p>
4		<p>Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:</p>
5		<p>Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:</p>

6		<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
7		<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
8	<p>Act I Ends PlotPoint 2 Predicament & Lock In See explanation below</p>	<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
Chapter 8 Explained	<p>PlotPoint 2: First Obstacle & Raising the Stakes</p>	<p>Pacing Guide: End of the Beginning—to page 85 of 320 (1/4 of the novel or)</p> <p>PlotPoint 2: Sets up the predicament central to the story and possible obstacles. Ends with main character locked in—no way out. Forces main character in a new direction toward goal.</p> <p>Examples: <i>Back to the Future</i>, Marty is chased in the parking lot, hits the accelerator and arrives in the past</p> <p><i>Alien</i>: The alien attaches itself to the face of a crew member and is brought back aboard the ship</p> <p><i>Good Will Hunting</i>: Will is in court, out of options and about to go to jail. He must either accept Professor Lambo’s offer of court mandated counseling and math work or go to jail.</p>
Chapter 9 Explained	<p>Act II PlotPoint 3: First Obstacle & Raising the Stakes</p>	<p>Pacing Guide: Act II constitutes ½ of the novel (or chapters 9-24 of 32 chapters or pages 90-240 of a 320 page novel)</p> <p>PlotPoint 3: The central character faces the first of many obstacles, and the choices are narrowed as he/she moves forward. Since there is no turning back, the stakes are increasingly more difficult.</p> <p>WARNING—do not simply plot from “situation to situation”—do not think “what can I have happen to my character next—use “character driven” plotpoints. The character (due to his/her character traits) decides to do A. Because he/she chose A, B happens. The character is then compelled to deal with B and decides to do C. Etc. DO NOT simply make stuff happen “to” your character and force him/her to dance on your puppet string. The character must make choices that get him/her deeper into trouble before he/she gets out—this creates character arc. Remember too—things do not always go as planned.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Example:</p>

9	Act II Begins See explanation above	Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
10		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
11		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
12		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
13		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
14		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
15		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
16	Act II cont. (Midpoint) PlotPoint 4: First Culmination See explanation below	Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:

Chapter 16 Explained	<p>Act II cont.</p> <p>PlotPoint 4: First Culmination (Midpoint)</p>	<p>Pacing Guide: Act II continues, but you're halfway through the novel</p> <p>PlotPoint 4: There is a higher obstacle to be overcome. The First Culmination usually parallels the outcome of the novel. If the story is a tragedy, this is a low point, but if it ends well, this is a high point—the central character thinks he/she is winning.</p> <p>Example: Example:</p>
Chapter 17 Explained	<p>Act II cont.</p> <p>PlotPoint 5: Subplot & Rising Action</p>	<p>PlotPoint 5: This is where subplots weave their magic into the story. DO NOT drop the ball on the main story. The central character continues to face rising action—the paths narrow and force a worse and worse possible outcome. This should lead to the Main Culmination in PlotPoint 6—but remember, the road there is not a straight line. It is full of surprises and complications.</p> <p>Example: Example:</p>
17	<p>Act II cont.</p> <p>PlotPoint 5: Subplot & Rising Action</p> <p>See explanation above</p>	<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
18		<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
19		<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
20		<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>
21		<p>Scene 1:</p> <p>Scene 2:</p> <p>Scene 3:</p>

22		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
23		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
24	End of Act II PlotPoint 6: Main Culmination See explanation below	Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
Chapter 24 Explained	End of Act II PlotPoint 6: Main Culmination	Pacing Guide: Act 11 closes. You're $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the novel (24/32 chapters or 255/320 pages). PlotPoint 6: The highest obstacle, the last alternative, the highest or lowest moment in the story, the end of the main tension arrives. But there is a new tension. Since the midpoint usually parallels the ending—this is the complete opposite. If a tragedy, the hero is on top of the world; if a happy ending, the hero is at his/her lowest point or suffers the greatest loss. Example: Example:
Chapter 25 Explained	Act III Begins PlotPoint 7:	Pacing Guide: Act 11 closes. You're $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the novel (24/32 chapters or 255/320 pages). PlotPoint 7: Rapid short scenes and no elaborate set-ups. The twist can end this sequence or come at the start of the eighth sequence. Example: Example:
25	Act III Begins PlotPoint 7: New Tension & Twist See explanation above	Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
26		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:

27		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
28		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
29		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
30		Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
31	Act III cont. PlotPoint 8: Resolution See explanation below	Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
Chapter 31 Explained	Act III cont. PlotPoint 8: Resolution	Pacing Guide: End of novel. PlotPoint 8: Will the pointed gun go off? Will it kill or miss? Will he get the girl, defuse the bomb, be eaten by sharks?
32	Act III Ends PlotPoint 9: Denouement See explanation below	Scene 1: Scene 2: Scene 3:
Chapter 32 Explained	Act III Ends PlotPoint 9: Denouement	Pacing Guide: End of novel. PlotPoint 9: Denouement is a French word, meaning to “unknot.” In English, we say the opposite—tie up loose ends. Same thing. In French, it means to loosen the tension, finally. It is NOT an explanation to the audience—it is an integral scene that suggest an outcome. If you’re writing a series, this wraps up the first novel, but it leaves a cliffhanger to the next novel in the series. Example: <i>Good Will Hunting</i>: He leaves a note for Robin Williams saying he’s going for the girl. The audience knows that he’s learned and is ready to go forward in life. Example: