IFWA MEETING
## Thursday, June 2, 2016, 7:00 PM
Sentry Box
MINUTES

Information Items:

New Members: Philip Vernon – writes fantasy

Time	Topic	Person
7:00 PM	**Crits for June, 2016** • Crit 1: Richard – Pursuit Plot Novel Ch 1 Crit by Krista, Swati • Crit 2: Ron – Post Apocalyptic China short story Crit by Liz Brassard, Edward	Shannon Krista / Swati Liz / Edward
	Crits for July, 2016 • Crit 1: Swati – fantasy thriller Crit by Erin, Rick • Crit 2: Justin – space police procedural Crit by Colin, Steve Swanson	Shannon
8:00 PM	**Skills Session** Plot Structure – Craig DiLouie • Great session given and a full copy of the power point presentation available by emailing Craig at cdilouie@shaw.ca or on his website at www.CraigDiLouie.	Craig DiLouie
8:30 PM	**Call for Agenda Items** • Artists for RHMSSC – Have 6 artists right now but in need of 4 more. If anyone is interested or would like to do a piece please let Richard know ASAP.	Renee Richard C.
8:35 PM	**Brags** • Chris Chupik – sold a story • Ron – sold a story • Patrick – published a weekly alternative history blog • Craig D. film option letter for Suffer the Children • Gary – books have a new cover, launch on June 14th at Owls Nest. • Chris D. Marss – short story won a national book prize • Swati – has started a website for writers, see IFWA website for details.	Renee
8:40 PM	**Discuss / Decide** • Poor Man's Writing Workshop – Committee Report • This will be a short story clarion workshop open to 10 people. It will be held at the Fish Creek Library on October 15th and 16th at a cost of aprox $15.00. Short stories only, no scripts, screen plays or chapter excepts. First 10 in with payment to Lesley (librarygoddess2@gmail.com) will secure a spot.	Lesley Renee

| Time	Topic	Person
	Have until August 1 to produce piece for workshop. • Enigma Front: Burnt – The official launch date is August 13th, 2016 at WWC at 2pm. See program for location. Next year's theme: The Monster Within.	Justin Acton
8:55 PM	**Announcements** • Write Off – Writers in the House – Delta Calgary South – Fireside Room – last weekend in September – Fireside Room – cost $0.00 – Social Writing – food from Boomtown Pub – we had 22 at the peak writing time. • **Prix Aurora Awards** voting is now open here: http://www.prixaurorawards.ca/2016-aurora-award-ballot/	Renee Ron
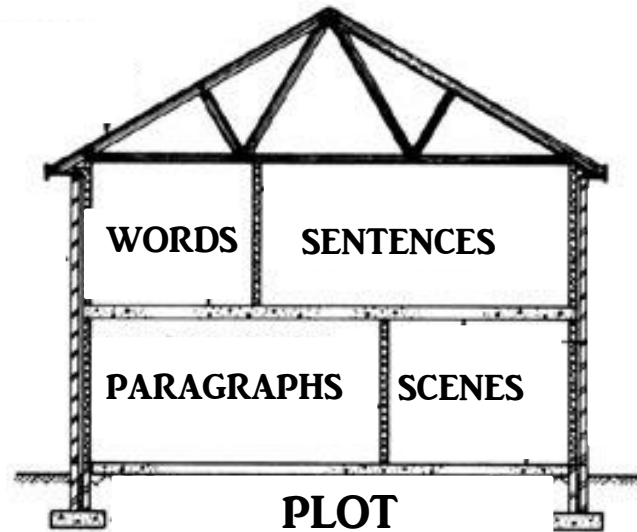
Story Architecture

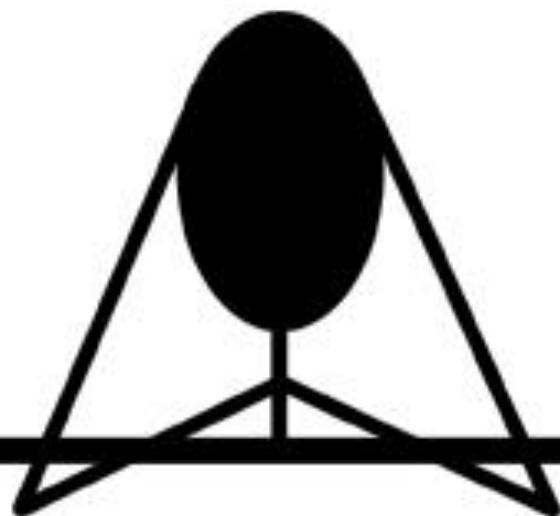Tips and tricks for building compelling commercial fiction

By Craig DiLouie

"Writing is easy. You just sit down at a typewriter and open a vein..."
-Red Smith
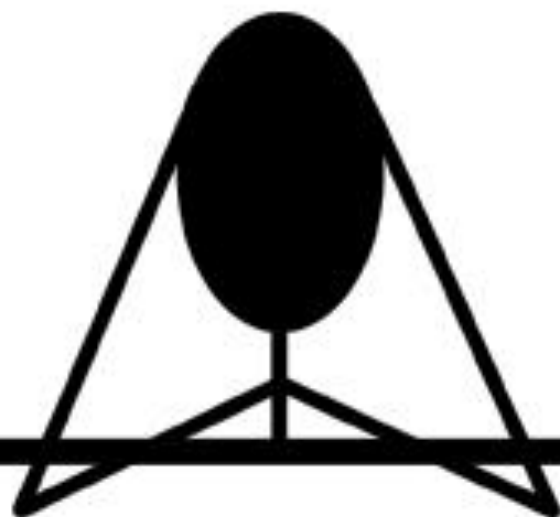
"Writing is easy. You just sit down at a typewriter and open a vein..."
-Red Smith

"...with a chainsaw."
-Jim C. Hines

What we're going to talk about

Words make

Sentences make

Paragraphs make

Scenes make

Stories

What we're NOT going to talk about

Dialog and

Character and

Setting and

Point of view and

Everything else

"Writers will be inspired to pick up their pens." –*Boston Globe*

Writing Tools

50 Essential Strategies
for Every Writer

✻

Roy Peter Clark

---

the
Writer's *little*
helper

everything you need to know to
write better and get published

JAMES V. SMITH, JR.

STORY ENGINEERING

MASTERING THE
6 CORE COMPETENCIES
OF SUCCESSFUL WRITING

LARRY BROOKS
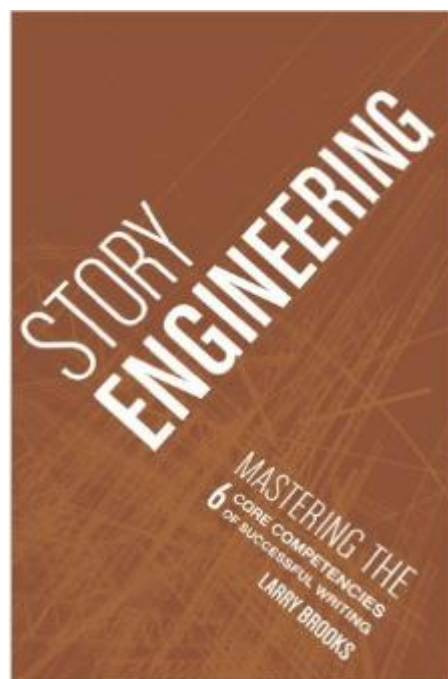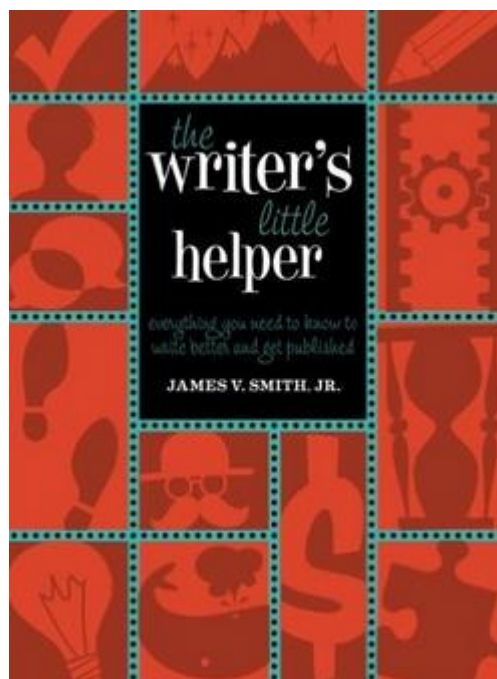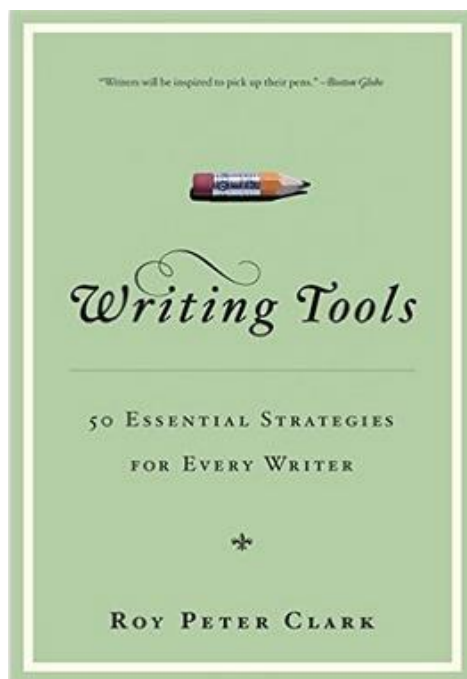
Tips

"Prose is architecture, not interior decoration."
—Ernest Hemingway

"Good prose is like a window pane."
—George Orwell

"If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it."
—Elmore Leonard

Tips

If a short, simple word will do the job, use it.

Short Saxon-based words are usually preferable to long Greek- and Latin-based.

A: "I took the cookie from the container and masticated it."

B: "I took the cookie from the jar and ate it."

Tips

A surprising word can add richness or express voice.

A: "I took the cookie from the jar and popped it in my mouth. Ah, sweet mastication."

B: "I took the cookie from the jar and promptly flung it in my mouth."

Tips

Avoid generic nouns and verbs when a more descriptive word will work.

A: "I entered the room and gave her the flowers."

B: "I limped into the room and handed over the roses."

Tips

A well-timed adjective can appeal to the reader's senses and make the story come alive.

A: "He picked up the sword."

B: "He picked up the ancient sword."

B: "He picked up the red sword."

B: "He picked up the snarling sword."

B: "He picked up the heavy sword."

Tips

Be specific when going for description, inventive when going for imagery.

GENERAL	SPECIFIC		IMAGE
Food	Eggs	Fried eggs that smelled like	Sunday morning
		Greasy fried eggs served up like a	Breakfast special heart attack
		Mangled fried eggs splashed across the plate like	Humpty Dumpty road kill

Tips

Avoid dead weight words like almost, suddenly, nearly, that, of, etc.

A: "It was almost time for class."
B: "Class started in one minute."
A: "All of the students attended."
B: "All the students attended."
A: "Suddenly, the lights went out."
B: "The lights went out."
A: "He knew that the monster had come."
B: "He knew the monster had come."

Tips

Avoid repeating a distinctive word unless it's intentional for dialog, link paragraphs, etc.

A: "The door was ajar, so I entered. I took the cookie from the jar and ate it. The texture was odd, jarring."

B: "Yes," I shouted, "I ate the cookie. Not just ate it, I savored it. Savored it as if it were the last cookie on Earth. The last cookie in the galaxy. I savored each crumb."
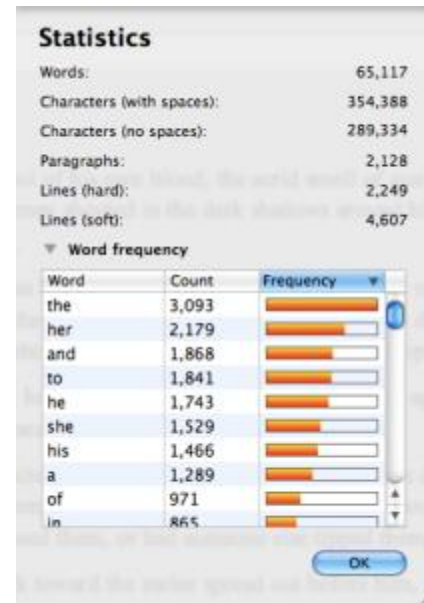
Tricks

How to find repeat words in Word:

- **Step 1:** Click the "Home" tab at the top of the Word window if it's not selected already.
- **Step 2:** Click the small arrowhead next to Find in the Editing group at the top and select "Advanced Find" from the drop-down menu. The "Find and Replace" window pops up.
- **Step 3:** Type the word you want to search for in the Find What box.
- **Step 4:** Click the "More" button at the bottom of the window to view more options.
- **Step 5:** Place a check mark in front of the "Find whole words only" option.
- **Step 6:** Click the "Reading Highlight" button and then "Highlight All" to find all duplicate words and highlight them.
- **Step 7:** Click "Close" to close the Find And Replace window. The results remain highlighted.
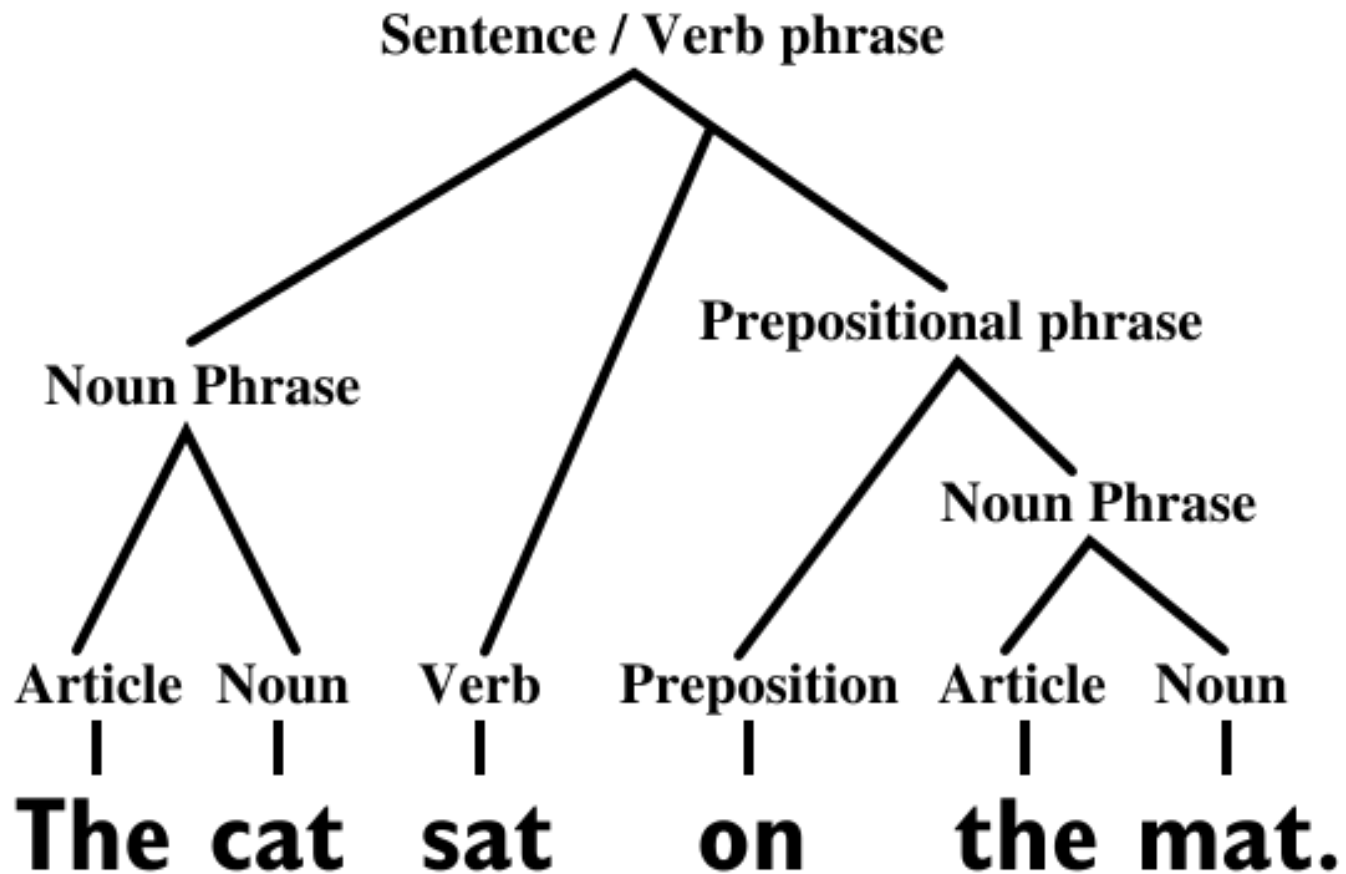
Tricks

How to find repeat words in Scrivener:

- **Step 1:** Select the scene or scenes you wish to view.
  (As always, shift+click for contiguous selection, cmd+click for non-contiguous selection.)
- **Step 2:** Click Edit Scrivenings.
- **Step 3:** Click inside the editing window and press cmd+A (or Edit, Select All), to select all of the text in the window.
- **Step 4:** From the View menu, choose Statistics, Text Statistics.
- **Step 5:** If necessary, click the triangle next to Word frequency to display the chart.
- **Step 6:** Click on either the Count or Frequency header to sort the words in descending order.

Statistics

Words:	65,117
Characters (with spaces):	354,388
Characters (no spaces):	289,334
Paragraphs:	2,128
Lines (hard):	2,249
Lines (soft):	4,607

▼ Word frequency

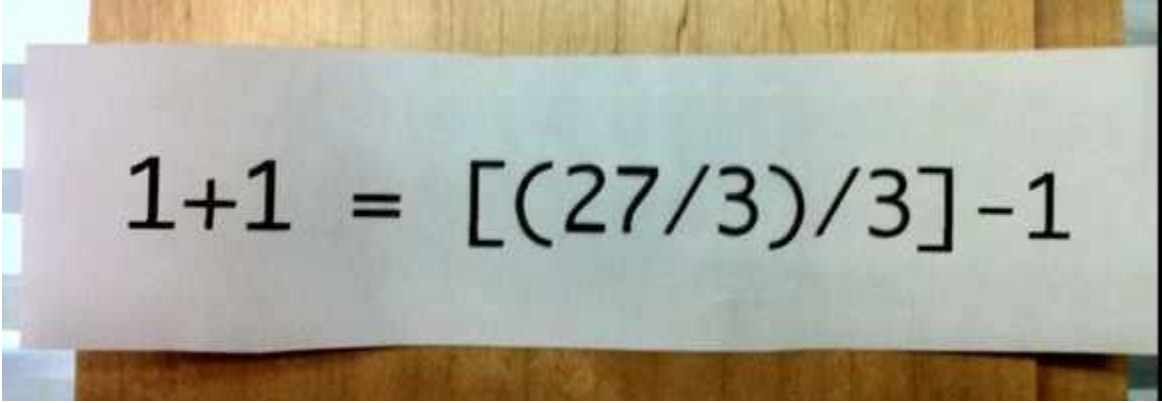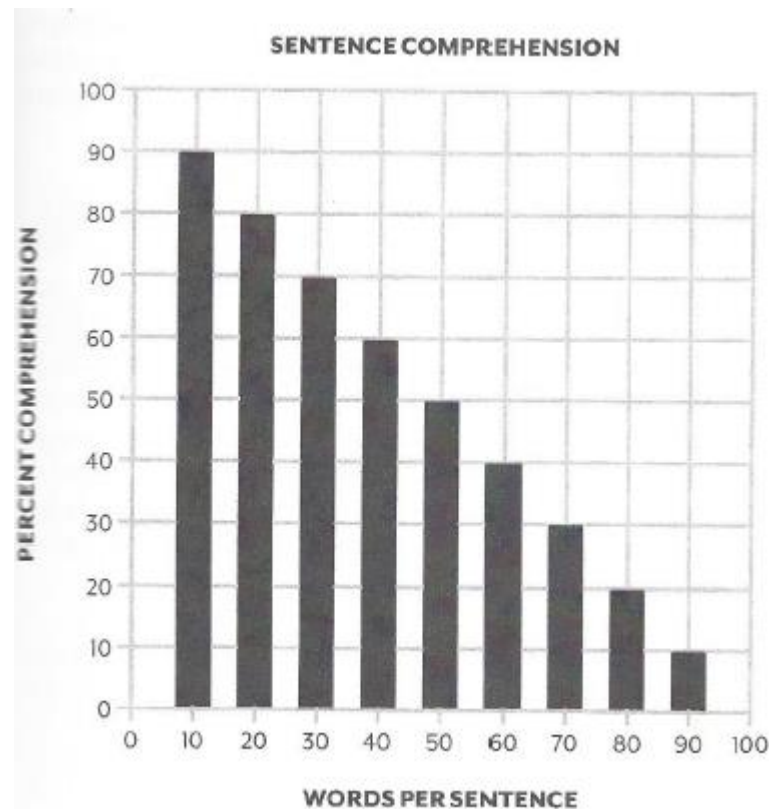| Word	Count	Frequency ▼
the	3,093	
her	2,179	
and	1,868	
to	1,841	
he	1,743	
she	1,529	
his	1,466	
a	1,289	
of	971	
in	865	

OK

sentences

Tips

The most effective sentences are short and simple.

$$1+1 = [(27/3)/3]-1$$

Tips

Short sentences are more likely to achieve comprehension.
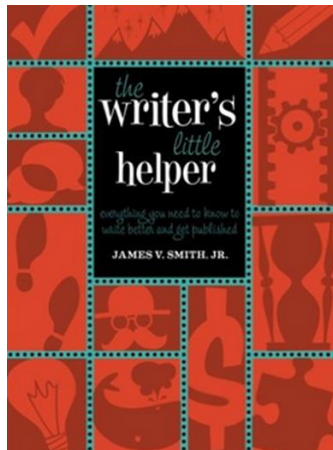
James Smith provides a rule of thumb that sentences should be an average of 12 words. He recommends a maximum of 20. Twenty-five for compound sentences.

Tips

And so are simple sentences.

James Smith (*Writer's Little Helper*):

"A sentence works best when it expresses a single idea, using no more words than necessary to express that idea."

"The effective simple sentence states a fact, portrays an act, or paints an image."

The sentence should contain one subject and one verb. Try to start and end the sentence with a strong word.

Tips

Tips

But wait, that sounds like a recipe for boring.

Good writing features diversity and rhythm. More complex sentences enrich the story but remain economical and focused on a singular idea.

A: "`The knight extended his sword toward the wizard, who grinned back at him.`" (dependent clause)

B: "`The knight awoke and mounted her horse.`" (dependent clause)

C: "`The two knights swung, and their blades rang.`" (compound sentence)

Tips

Use active voice whenever possible.

subject | verb | object

A: "The wizard cast his spell."
(active)

B: "The spell was cast by the wizard." (passive)

Here, passive voice results in softer impact and 40% more words to say same thing.

Tricks

How to determine incidence of passive voice in Word 2010:

- **Step 1:** Highlight section or do nothing to check whole document.
- **Step 2:** Click Review tab.
- **Step 3:** Click spelling and grammar.
- **Step 4:** Click Show Readability Statistics box.
- **Step 5:** Click OK.

Tricks
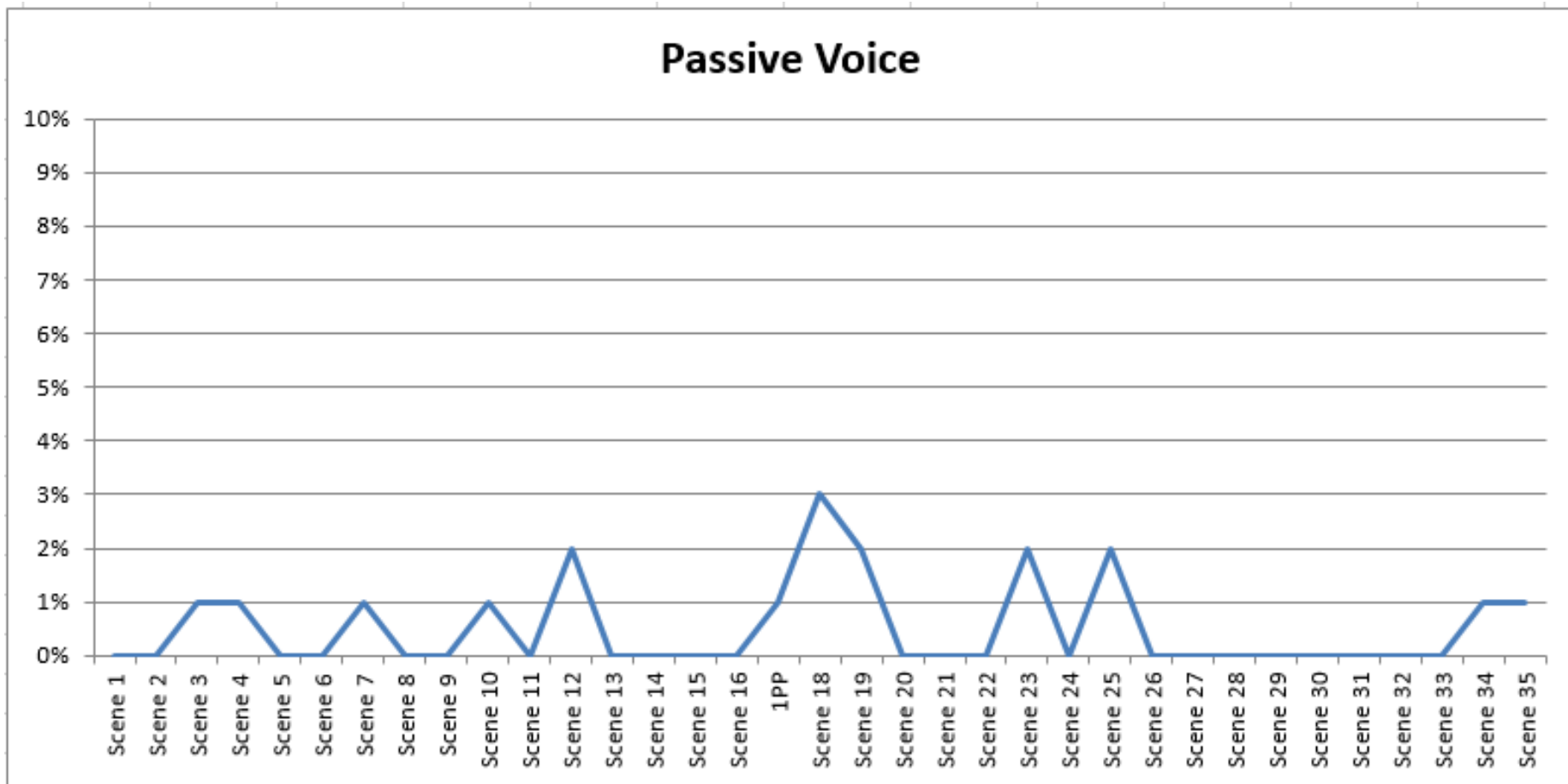
paragraphs

Tips

Paragraphs are units of thought that provide cohesion to the story.

They give the reader a rest between ideas.

Tips

Very long paragraphs can be tedious. Shorter paragraphs improve readability.

An endless series of single-sentence paragraphs can be annoying, however.

Be sparing, inject variety, be aware of effect, respect rhythm.

Tricks

Words, sentences, paragraphs: readability statistics

- **Flesh Reading Ease:**

$$206.835 - 1.015 \left(\frac{\text{total words}}{\text{total sentences}} \right) - 84.6 \left(\frac{\text{total syllables}}{\text{total words}} \right)$$

Score	Notes
90.0–100.0	easily understood by an average 11-year-old student
60.0–70.0	easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old students
0.0–30.0	best understood by university graduates

- **Flesch-Kincaid Score:**

$$0.39 \left(\frac{\text{total words}}{\text{total sentences}} \right) + 11.8 \left(\frac{\text{total syllables}}{\text{total words}} \right) - 15.59$$

The resulting score corresponds with U.S. grade level comprehension. A score of 6 is considered ideal.
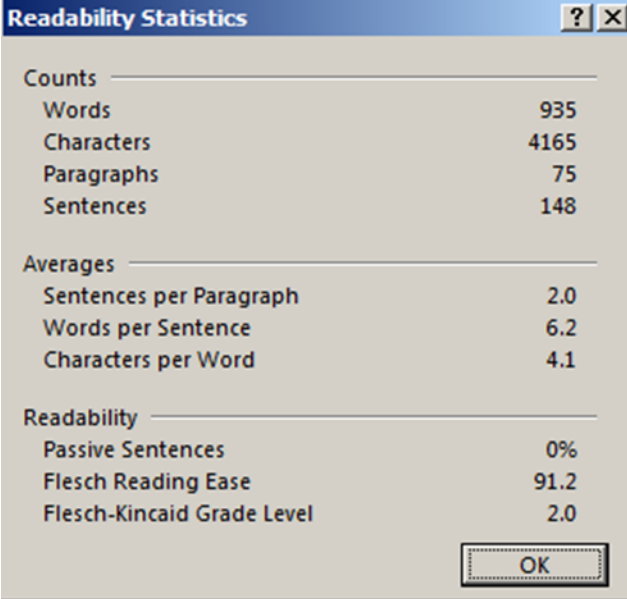
- **Reader Ease Ideal (a pacing tool):**

Flesch Reading Ease minus Flesh-Kincaid

Tricks

How to determine Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid scores in Word 2010:

- **Step 1:** Highlight section or do nothing to check whole document.
- **Step 2:** Click Review tab.
- **Step 3:** Click spelling and grammar.
- **Step 4:** Click Show Readability Statistics box.
- **Step 5:** Click OK.

Readability Statistics

Counts	
Words	935
Characters	4165
Paragraphs	75
Sentences	148

Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	2.0
Words per Sentence	6.2
Characters per Word	4.1

Readability	
Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	91.2
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	2.0

OK

MY FLESCH- KINCAID SCORE

IS 30

Tricks

Tricks

REI Score
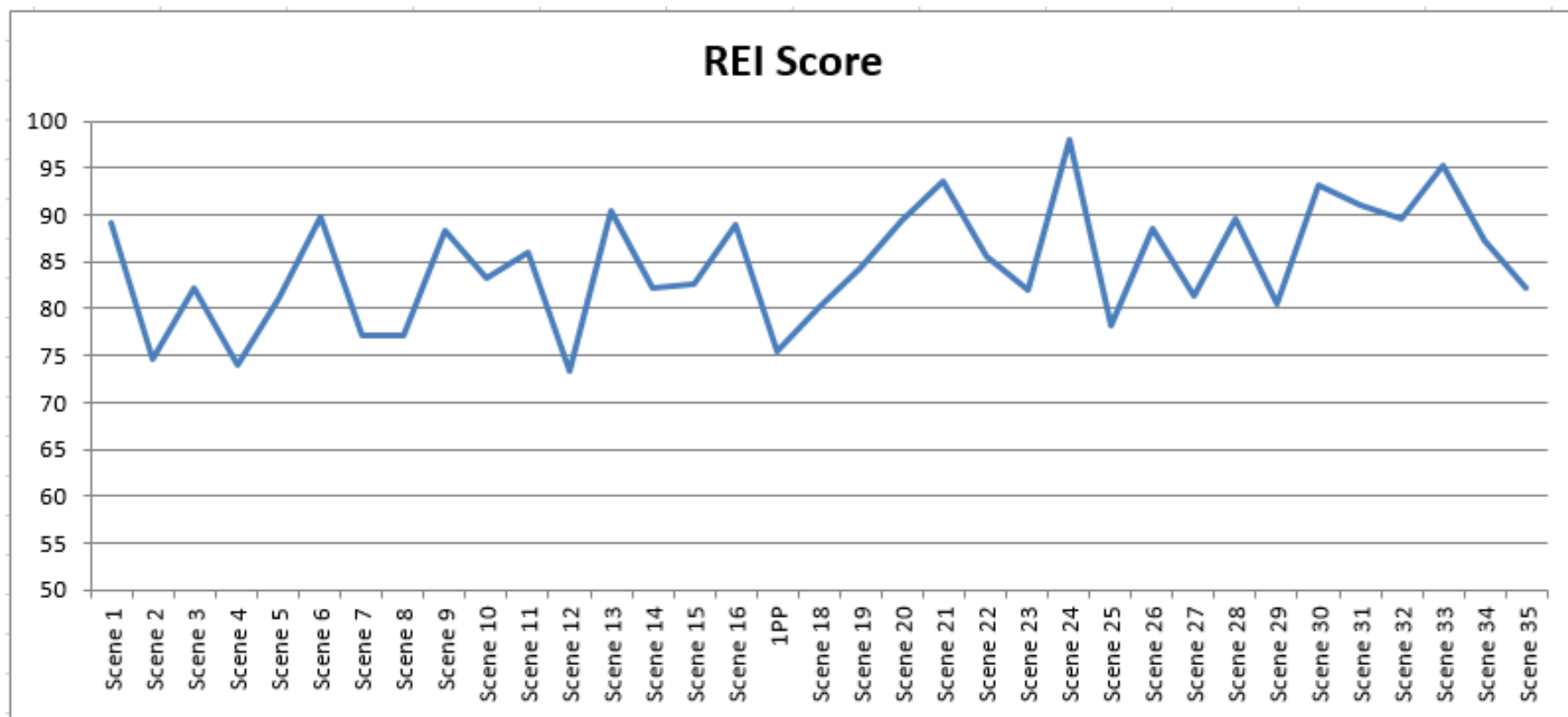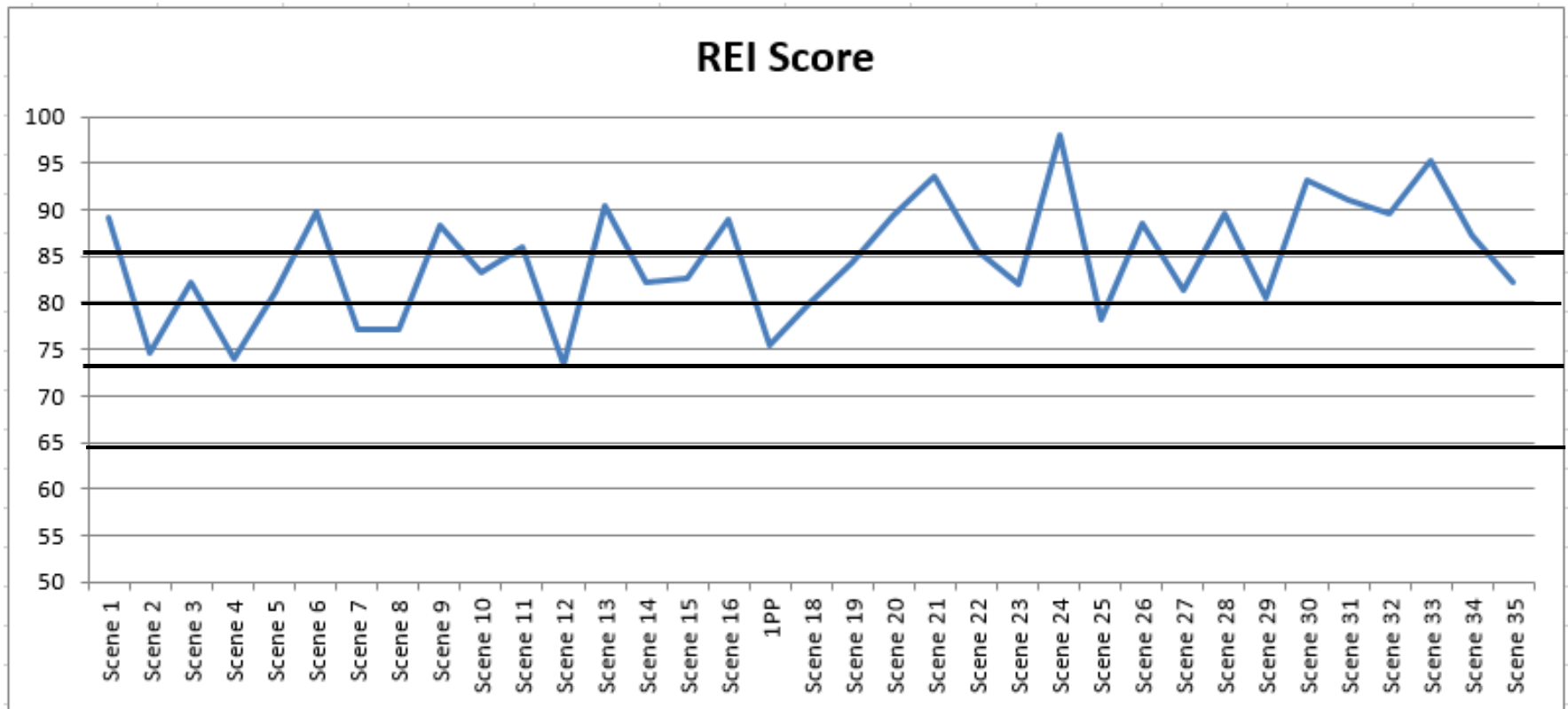
86+: breakneck pace 74-79: compelling pace

80-85: thriller pace   64-73: downshift in pace

scenes

Tips

```
┌──────────────┐      Goal,         ┌──────────────┐    Reaction to disaster, resulting
│ SCENE        │───▶  conflict, ───▶ │ SEQUEL       │──  dilemma (choices), decision
└──────────────┘      disaster       └──────────────┘    (new goal)
```

Tips

Tips

```
┌─────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
│ SCENE       │────────│ Start +, ++, -, --│        ┌──────────┐│                  │
└─────────────┘        └──────────────────┘    ┌──→ │ Conflict ││                  │
       │                         │            │     └──────────┘│                  │
       │                         └────────────┤          │       ──────────────────
┌─────────────┐                               │          ↓
│ Time        │                               │     ┌──────────┐
│ Place       │                               └──→  │ Reveal   │
│ Circumstance│                                     └──────────┘
│ Viewpoint   │
└─────────────┘
```

SCENE

Start +, ++, -, --

Time
Place
Circumstance
Viewpoint

Conflict

Reveal

End new +, ++, -, --
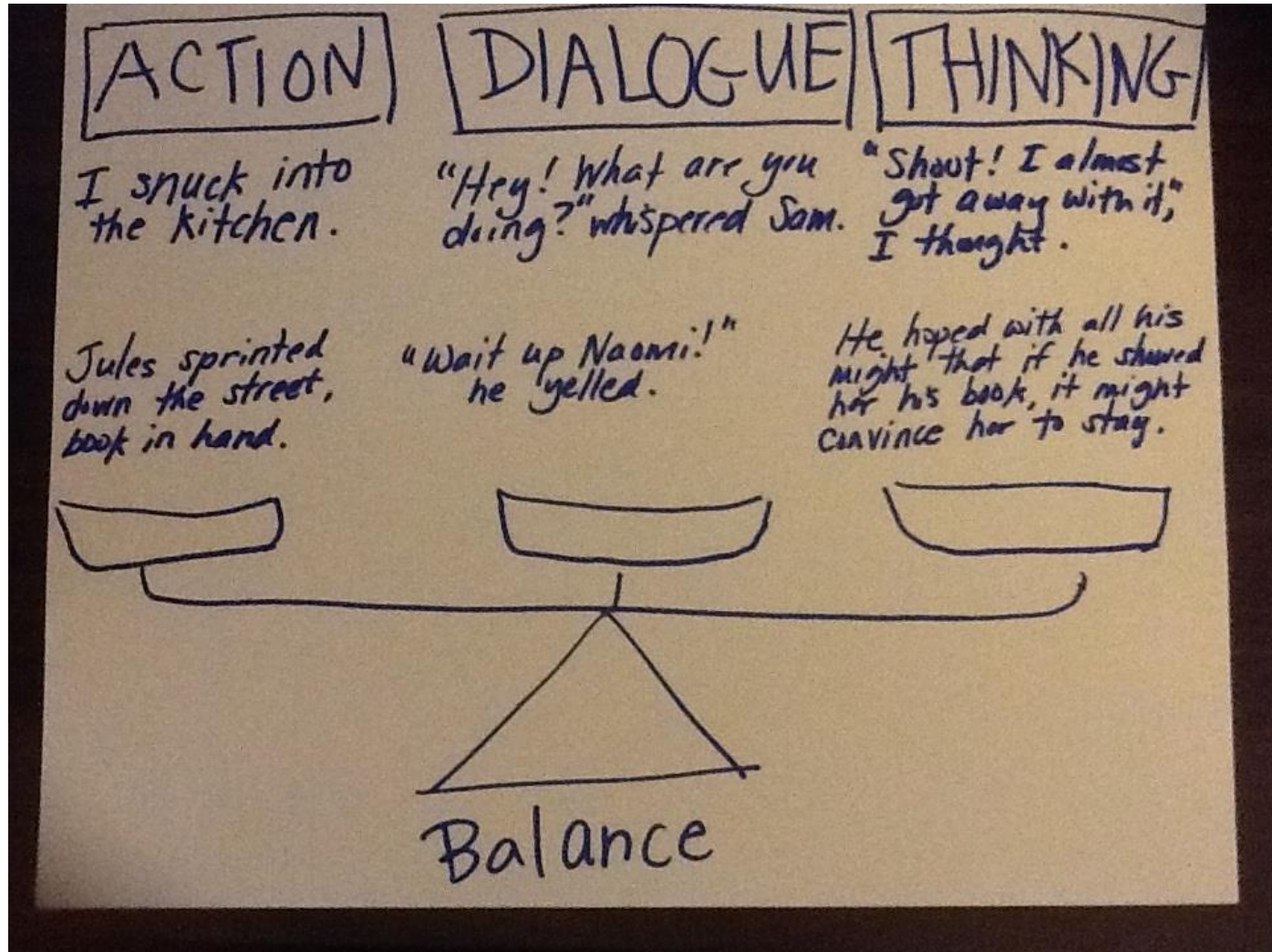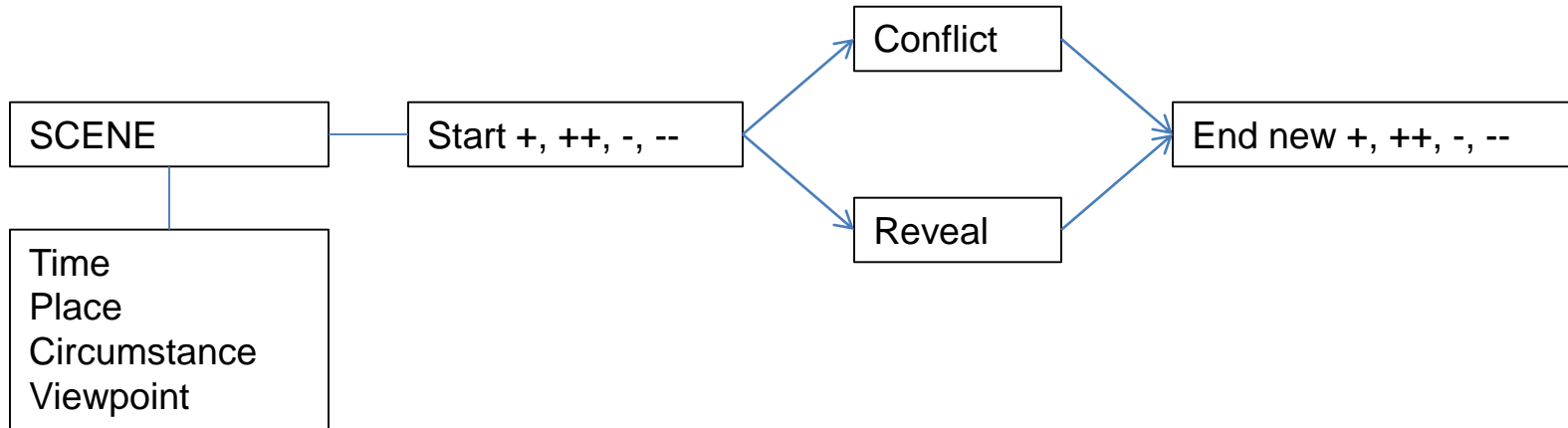
Tips

How much detail?

When the topic is serious, understate.

Understating respects the reader's imagination. Allow white space between ideas.

When less serious, exaggerate.

Tips

Avoid stage direction. Sometimes, a "smash cut" is in order, even if what's being cut is what might otherwise be interesting action.

"I'm warning you," she said. "Not another word."

He laughed and yelled, "Ha! You wouldn't—"

Then he moaned, seeing stars. He touched his nose. His fingers came away bloody.

She leaned close and whispered, "I warned you."

Tricks

ACT I

MIDPOINT

PLOT POINTS II

plot 90

Tips

What's the non-fiction concept of your book? This is the story's operating theme.

Can you build your story around a key question? This is the story's engine.

Tips

How are you going to write your novel?

Dash it off and done?
Dash it off and completely revise?
Write and revise as you go?

Tips

CLIMAX

RISING ACTION

FALLING ACTION

CONFLICT

PLOT

EXPOSITION

RESOLUTION

Tips

3 Act Structure

Tips

Three-Act Structure

Beginning — Inciting Incident — Second Thoughts — Climax of Act One — Obstacle — Obstacle — Ascending Action — Midpoint (a big twist) — Obstacle — Disaster — Crisis — Climax of Act Two — Decending Action — Climax of Act Three — Wrap-up — End

Act One (set up)

Act Two (confrontation)

Act Three (resolution)
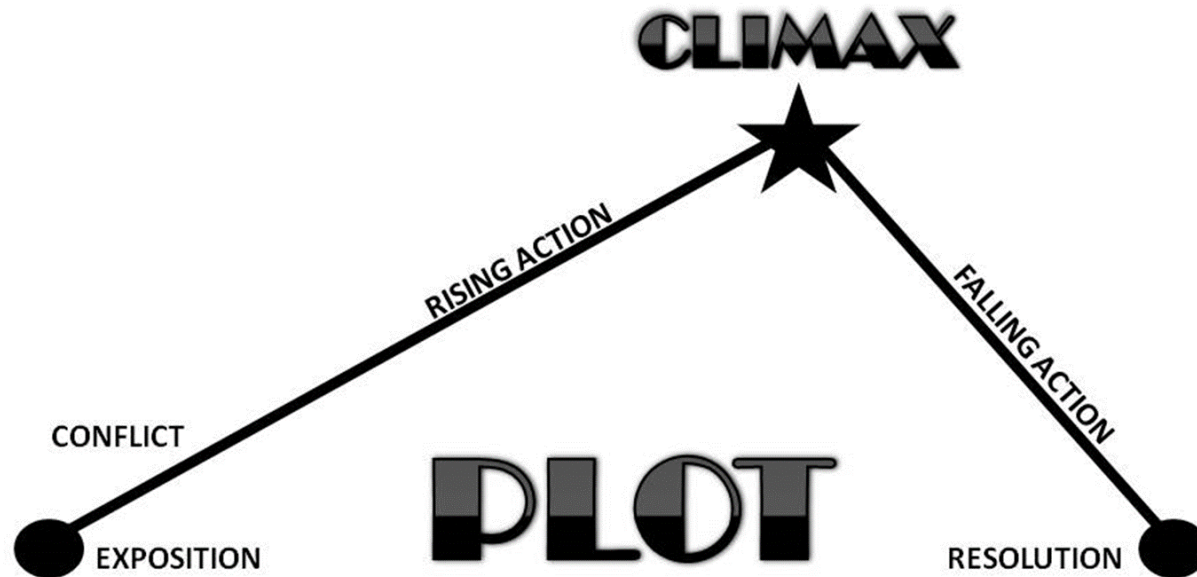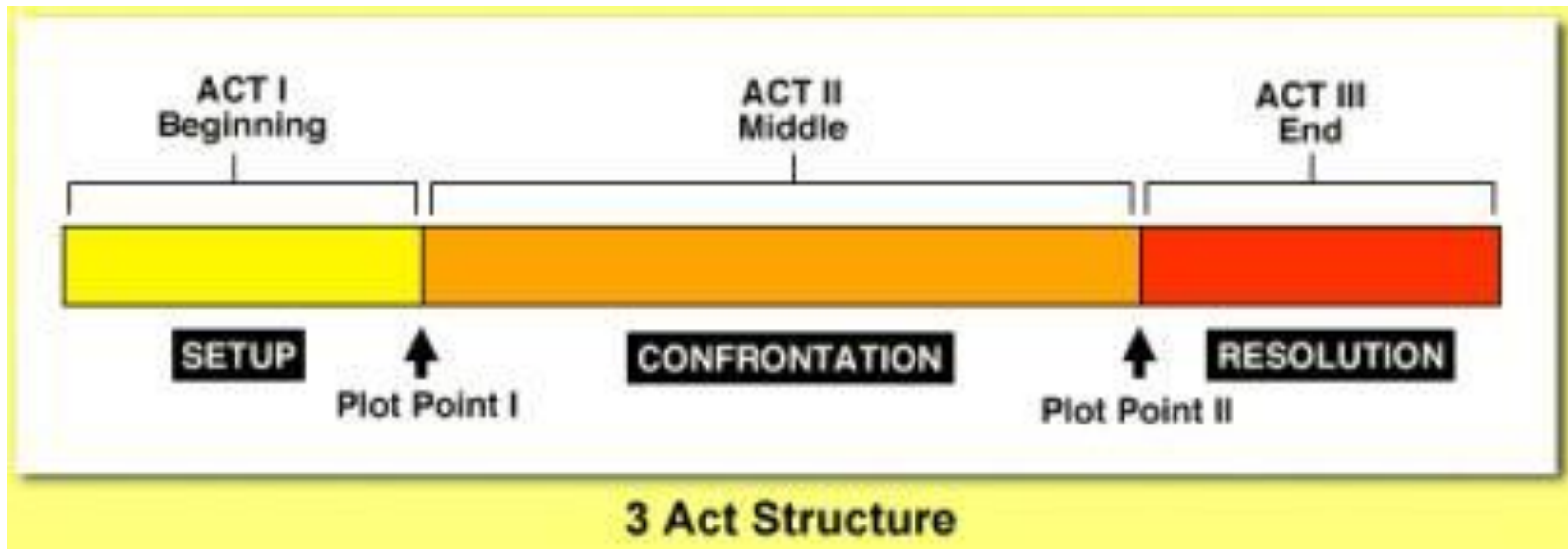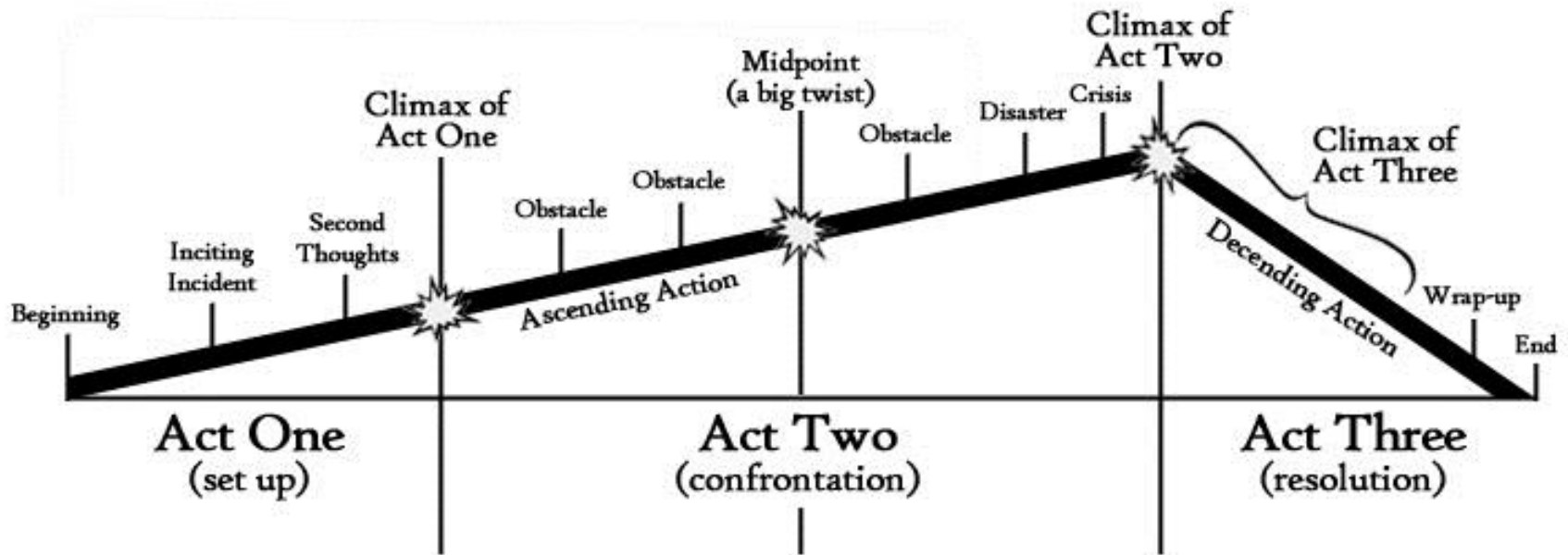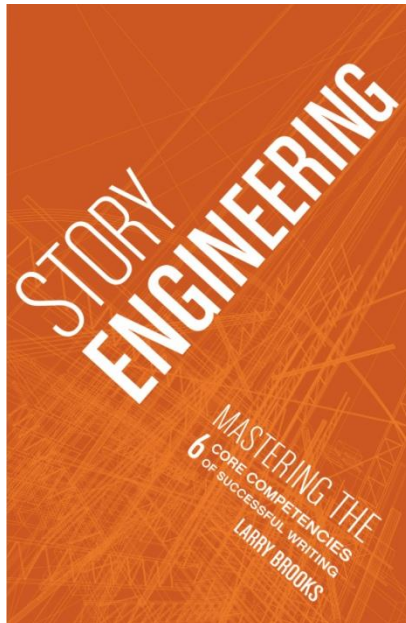
Larry Brooks' Story Structure

0%	**Setup**	**Opening scene**	**Orphan**
	Hook reader Introduce hero Establish stakes Foreshadow	**Hooking moment** **Setup inciting incident** (OPTIONAL) Major plot twist - does not establish hero's need and quest	Establish demons
25%	**Response**	**First plot point**	**Wanderer**
	Retreat, regroup Doomed fight back Opposition reasserted	MUST define need and quest. Opposition defined Actions to come flow from this point **First pinch point** Antagonistic force asserts itself	Reacts and runs Unsuccessfully strikes back Failures related to character flaws
50%	**Attack**	**Midpoint**	**Warrior**
	Hero proactive Shows initiative Opposition pushes back	New knowledge creates new context Must be game changer Hero empowered **Second pinch point** Antagonistic force hits back hard **"All hope is lost" lull**	Attacks the problem Overcomes flaws
75%	**Resolution**	**Second plot point**	**Martyr**

	Beyond plot point:
	  No new information
	  No new characters
	Problem resolved
	  (for good or ill)
		Final injection of information
		Game changer once again
		Last piece of puzzle
			Risks all
			Conquers inner demons
			Must be catalyst
			Never rescued or passive

100%		**Final resolution sequence**	

STORY ENGINEERING

MASTERING THE
6 CORE COMPETENCIES
OF SUCCESSFUL WRITING

LARRY BROOKS

Tips

RISK   FREEDOM

Write from idea and Point A   High

Write from idea and
Point A -> Point B
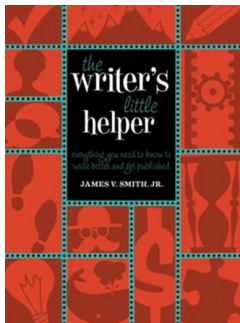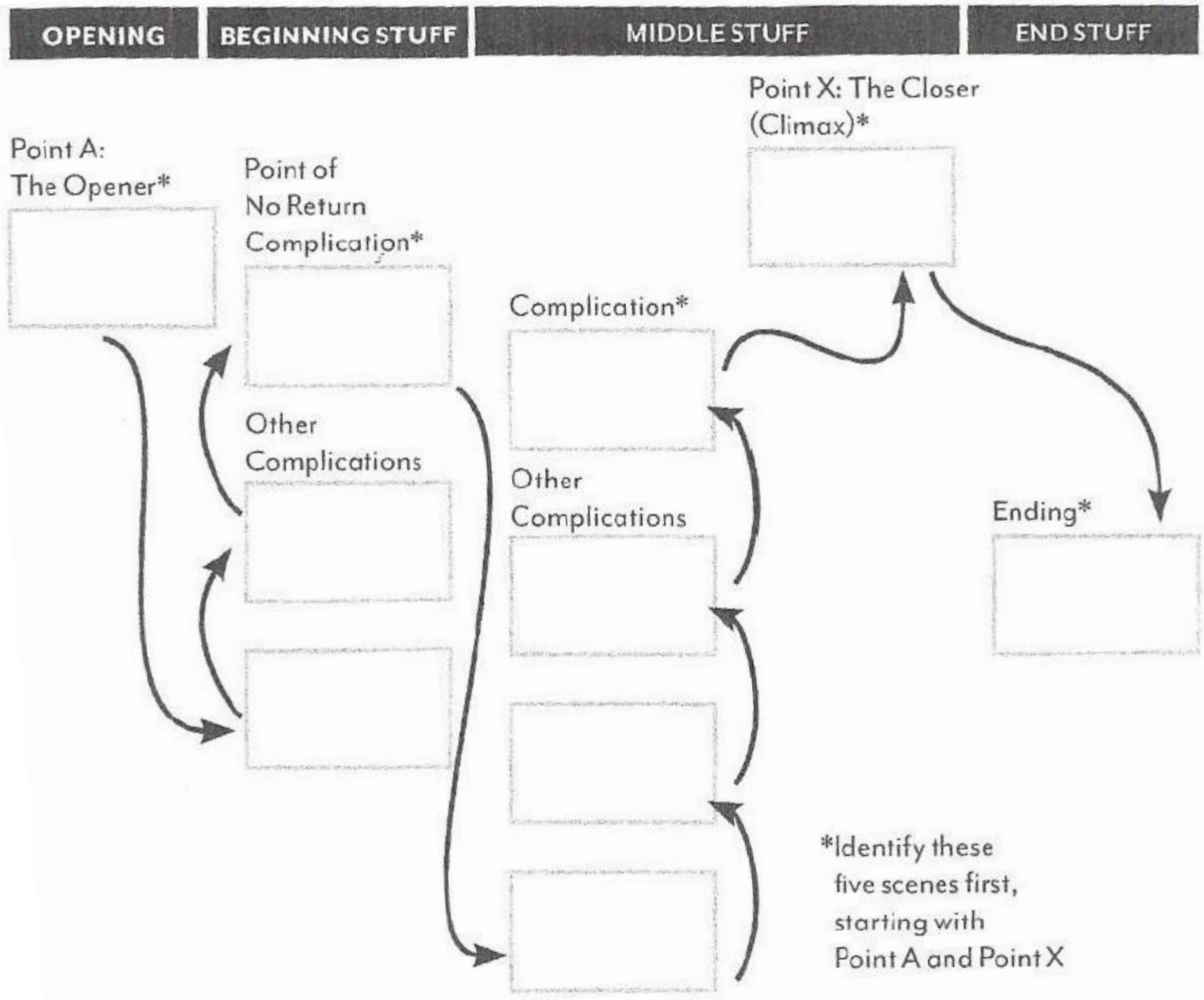
Above and then
revise completely

Outline 10 key scenes

Outline in detail   Low

Tricks

| OPENING | BEGINNING STUFF | MIDDLE STUFF | END STUFF |

Point X: The Closer
(Climax)*

Point A:
The Opener*

Point of
No Return
Complication*

Complication*

Other
Complications

Other
Complications

Ending*

*Identify these
five scenes first,
starting with
Point A and Point X

the writer's little helper

everything you need to know to write better and get published

JAMES V. SMITH, JR.

Tips

How you end the book is as important as how you start it.

Resolve the conflict and clean up the mess.

But leave an open question, something for them to imagine or puzzle over.

Let's sum this up

Write short sentences.

Use active voice.

Variety keeps readers stimulated.

Use concrete nouns and verbs where possible.

Follow the principle of singularity—single idea to a sentence, single topic to a paragraph, single purpose to a scene, single dominant storyline.
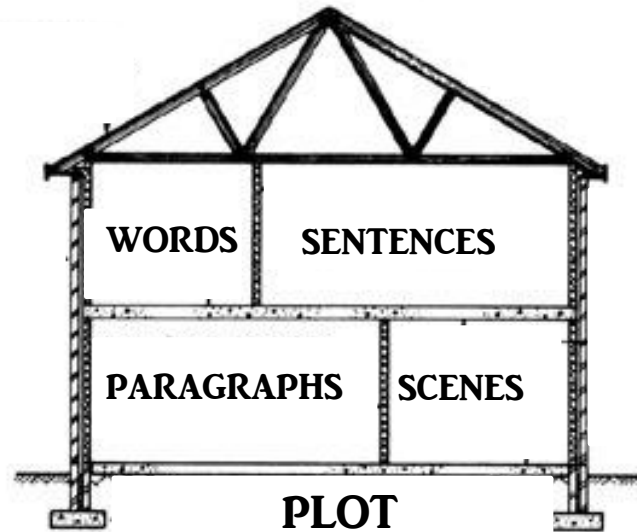
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Story Architecture

Tips and tricks for building compelling commercial fiction

By Craig DiLouie