

The art of telling a story is more than just having an interesting character or how you use punctuation. It is also in how your characters get from point A to point B or C. In the western world a three act story is the standard with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The story is set up in the first act, giving your characters their reasons to be doing anything. In the second act, you introduce the problems they will need to confront. Everything is brought to a conclusion in the third act, where you wrap up the story narrative. Every good story follows this structure even if they have one scene or twenty.

The first act, the beginning, establishes your primary characters and the tone of the narrative. Who are your characters and what makes them interesting, or if you so choose uninteresting? That's where Character Development happens. The first act is also where the conflict confronting your protagonists is introduced. Think of Luke and gang's discovery of the Death Star after Luke's step-parents are murdered by The Empire. We know that Luke is good and therefore he must fight the evil Empire's giant planet-exploding super weapon. This is called the First Plot Point. The Antagonist, the force most actively opposing your main characters (the Protagonists), can be introduced in the first act as well.

The second act, the middle, involves the Protagonists getting involved in the conflict of the story. Further development of your characters should continue through this portion as they learn more and do more to fight the conflict and/or the Antagonist(s). Regarding A New Hope again, the Gang effects a rescue of the Princess from the Death Star, and they fight their way off. We see the Protagonists actively combating the Empire, throwing a wrench in their plans, and come up against the second act's most important moment: the Second Plot Point. This plot point is usually a low point for the heroes so that when they finally succeed in the third act, it has a greater importance. Obi-Wan dies in a duel with Vader leaving Luke without his mentor and guide, and he must now return to fight The Empire on his own (with his friends).

The third act brings everything to a conclusion; whether that conclusion is a beneficial one for your characters is entirely up to you. Traditionally, the Protagonists finally confront the primary conflict and/or the primary Antagonist(s) in the final act leading to the Third Plot Point. This is called the Climax. The final battle between Protagonist(s) against their Antagonist(s) and, in most circumstances, is their overcoming of the conflict. Luke joins the Rebellion and helps their attack against the Death Star, eventually destroying it with his trench run on the exhaust vent. Vader is shot down by Han, returning to help Luke. The heroes defeated Vader, the Antagonist, and the Empire's Death Star (the conflict) they were successful, and we were treated to a happy ending even with the greater conflict, the Galactic Civil War, still playing on.

For this week's training event I want you to write me a 1500 word short fiction that has three clearly defined Plot Points (a Beginning, a Middle, and an End/Climax). The Story may be about anything at all as long as it meets these parameters.