

Writing the Logline

Session by Anosh Irani : Spiral Bound October 27, 2022

Importance of a Logline:

- Helps catch attention of producers
- Distinguishes you as a writer
- Guides the writing process by reminding you of the basic intention of the story
- If you cant articulate the idea in a logline, you probably are not ready to tell that story

10 essentials of a logline:

1. INCITING INCIDENT
2. Protagonist
 - Try not to name the Protagonist
 - Give them a quality, e.g. an Idealistic journalist, a war-weary army officer
3. Want
 - Should be external
 - Visible
 - Urgent
 - Specific
 - Clearly stated
 - Insurmountable
 - Noble/relatable
4. Antagonist
5. Conflict
6. Stakes
7. Time & Place/Era
8. Hook
9. Inciting Incident
10. Theme

Attempt sharp one or two word answers of these essentials before attempting the logline.

It's a great litmus test for your story.

Logline of Argo

During the 1979 Iranian revolution, a CIA officer plans to help six American diplomats escape the country disguised as a Canadian film crew, but with the Revolutionary Guards closing in and no support from his superiors, he must move fast to avoid being caught and executed.

Greame Shimmin

Elements of the logline:

During the 1979 Iranian revolution	Time and place
A CIA officer	Protagonist
Plans to help six American diplomats escape the country	Want
Disguised as a Canadian film crew	Hook
But with the Revolutionary Guards closing in	Antagonist, Ticking clock
and no support from his superiors	Conflict
He must move fast to avoid being caught and executed	Stakes

Logline of Apocalypse Now

During the US-Vietnam war, Captain Willard is sent on a dangerous mission into Cambodia to assassinate a renegade colonel who has set himself up against a god among a local tribe.

Want:	Assassination
Antagonist:	Renegade Colonel
Protagonist:	Capt Willard
Time and place:	Vietnam War
Conflict:	Target has the status of a local God
Stakes:	Duty to country?
Inciting Incident:	sent on a mission

Logline of Alien

A space crew aboard a cargo ship investigates a distress signal allowing a deadly alien lifeform to stow aboard the ship, intent on killing them off one by one.”

Protagonist:	A space crew
Setting:	A cargo ship in space
Inciting Incident:	investigates a distress signal
Antagonist:	a deadly alien lifeform
Conflict:	antagonist stows onboard
Stakes:	Killing them off one by one

Tagline vs Logline

A Logline is part of the writer’s process and the project pitch for the producers/financiers.

It should clearly outline an inciting incident, the protagonist, their visible external want, the central conflict, high stakes, the time & place of the story, and perhaps a unique feature, hook for the story.

A Tagline is used in the marketing and promotion of the film, intended to draw in the audience.

Tagline of Alien:	In Space, nobody can hear you scream
Jaws:	You’ll never go in the water again
The Social Network:	You don’t get to 500 million friends without making a few enemies