

BASIC PLOT ELEMENT OUTLINE

Chapter 1

Establish current situation (ordinary world) for at least one main character.

- Inciting incident (what brings the character into the story, or introduces the characters (or sleuth).
- Disclose the crime and mystery to be solved. (Mystery genre)
- Ground the reader in the time and place where the crime happened. (Mystery genre)
- Establish at least one goal.
- Introduce at least one external conflict.
- Introduce at least one internal conflict.
- Begin introducing clues to the physical and psychological aspects of the initial crime. (Mystery genre)
- Introduce a hint of attraction and of resistance. (Romance genre)
- Hook ending. (what will drive the reader to read further into the story)

Chapter 2

Adapting to problem

- Establish ticking clock. (for the importance of reaching the goal at a certain time)
- Introduce plausible suspects to the crime. (Mystery genre)
- Give more depth to the goal introduced, possibly introduce another goal.
- Give more depth to the external conflict, possibly add another one.
- Give more depth to the internal conflict, possibly introduce more.
- Introduce secondary characters.
 - Establish how these characters will add to the story.
- Introduce first complication. (first need to readjust path or goal)
- Strengthen the attraction/resistance. (Romance genre)
- Hook ending.

Chapter 3

First turning point

- Introduce a problem to the ticking clock.
- Add depth to the complications and problems for reaching the goal(s).
- Intensify the internal conflicts.
- Introduce a possible subplot. (Romance genre)
- Introduce a subplot for the sleuth to deal with. (Mystery genre)
- Show less resistance to the attraction. (Romance genre)
- Hook ending.

Chapter 4

Adapting to the new problem

- Turn focus to the short range goal.
- Intensify the external conflicts.
- Reveal facts about the suspects through interrogations and discovery of clues. (Mystery genre)
- Characters get along for the moment. (Romance genre)
- Show a cautious acceptance of the relationship. (Romance genre)
- Frustrations are mounting for the character(s).
- Introduce problems in the subplot.
- One or more suspects disappears. (Mystery genre)
- Hook ending.