



## PLOT AND SCENE ANALYSIS

Do your scenes drive your plot?

Critically approaching your manuscript's revisions requires you to step back from the "author" role and objectively evaluate the elements within your book using an editorial lens. Use this tool to analyze your plot and supporting scenes to ensure that the scenes drive the story forward and keep readers engaged.

### ORIGINALITY

When reading through your novel, highlight anything you may have read in other books, seen in movies or television, or heard in stories. Then, brainstorm ways to alter those plot points to produce a more original piece of writing. Can you change a few small but critical details to transform a tired and unoriginal plot into something new and fresh?

### PREDICTABILITY

While telling your story, consider how you reveal the necessary information to lead your reader along. Make notes where you may have given too much detail and threaten to spoil the ending or bore your readers. Then, evaluate the detail provided to determine whether it is critical to reveal at that moment or whether your readers should infer the information from context over time.

### ENGAGEMENT

Boring stories usually include rambling dialogue, overly descriptive narrative summaries and expositions, little action, and long scenes. Brainstorm ways to pare down what was overdone and bring better balance to the story. Is your dialogue doing double duty effectively? Does the mood of the conversation match the spirit of the scene? Is there too much action that the viewpoint character gets lost, or does the reader experiences whiplash?

### COMPLEXITY

There is a fine balance between building a plot that is so complex getting to resolution is difficult and building a plot that is so simple the story loses its focus and meaning. Too many subplots, flashbacks, or dream sequences can make it difficult for writers to tie up all the loose ends necessary to achieve a satisfying ending. And all the witty dialogue and symbolism in the world cannot make up for a meaningless book. What is your story about? What is its purpose? And how do you relay that message to your readers?

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Is the chronology believable and logical when considering the order of chapters and scenes within your story? Or does the story come off as far-fetched and disorganized? If the order of events isn't quite right, consider ways to rearrange or alter them, or even eliminate scenes (even entire chapters!) that don't suit the best outcome possible for your book.

### ENDINGS

Each scene in your novel should end in a way that entices the reader to continue reading. Are you finishing your scenes effectively to persuade the reader to continue, such as ending a scene when a major decision is coming or something bad is about to happen? What about ending a scene with a strong display of emotions or a rhetorical question raised? Does your conclusion satisfy you, or does your gut tell you something is lacking? If something is lacking, determine what "it" is and ensure it gets into the conclusion of your story.