

Scene & Structure

This handout was created by reading just the introductions to William Nobel's books on creating a scene.

1. The scene is the basic building block of the entire story. It should build a chain of events that carries the reader through the book.
 - A Make it scene, sequel, scene, sequel because every scene must have a statement of the short term goal of the character.
 - B It also must introduce some conflict that will keep the character from attaining that goal.
 - C The character must think about it and talk about it.

2. Cause and effect is used to bring the reader to the next scene.
 - A Popular novels are the chronicles of a character or group of characters.
 - B Each scene must make sense, and move the story forward.
 - C A scene that has conflict at its heart will not be a static scene.
 - D Each scene moves the character one step closer to his goal by prevailing over impossible odds.
 - E Each scene must have cause and effect to keep the scene moving, and it must be here and now cause and effect.

3. Whether you have difficulty writing a scene or not, try writing it from different angles to see how it improves.

4. The characters form goals by the difficulties that are thrown up in front of him. And the villain is the person who thwarts that goal.
 - A It is important to keep your characters identifiable. That goes for your plot too.
 - B Believable characters will have: first a natural, then a spiritual reason for their motivation.

5. To move the conflict you must have clearly stated, specific goals.
 - A These goals must be answerable with a yes or no answer from the characters.
 - B You must keep it simple so it can go beyond knowledge to understanding.
 - C Conflict is necessary to keep the reader interested, and the scene from collapsing.

6. Never use a Prologue as a major hook.
 - A Know your characters, and your locations and make the opening strong enough to be a first chapter.
 - B Each Plot development must have a reason for happening.

- C Each scene must follow the Scene, sequel, Scene, sequel format to keep up the interest.
 - D Every turn of event must have a consequence.
 - F Every story is built like a painting, layer upon layer, and is nothing without contrast and hope for every character.
 - G Every sentence must have energy as well as contrast to be of value to the story.
7. As cause and effect, stimulus and response are every bit effective because they are immediate.
- A The stimulus and the response must be external.
 - B For every stimulus there must be a response, it also holds that for every devised response there must be a stimulus.
 - C If there is a subdued response there must be an explanation.
8. Fiction must be more than life. Each word of dialogue must contain something of value for the reader.
- A Dialogue moves the plot for the reader
 - B Dialogue is not conversational.
9. For a story to catch the reader it has to start at a point of change, where the characters self concept has been challenged.
- A It must use the tightest conceivable time frame for the story.
 - B It must also show the internal conflicts of the characters. But keep it simple to keep the story on track.
 - C Play the characters internal realizations to the reader to strengthen weak reactions or transitions.
10. At the end of every scene there should be a subtle cliffhanger that is the final twist that both character and reader experience together to push the story along.
- A A scene must end badly for the character.
 - B Sometimes you can either use a yes/no or a no/furthermore situation.
 - C Each of these can create reader sympathy for the character.
 - D Remember, over development of a scene can always be cut down, where under developed scenes are harder to fix.
 - E Use tactical disasters to unanticipated events that set the character(s) back and keep them from answering the scene question.
11. The length of a scene depends on how long it takes to develop the scene.
- A Try focusing the scene from the outside of the situation or character rather than the inside.