



15 Priceless Plot Spots

Welcome to the eWritersCoach community! What you hold in your hand is priceless plotting tool that can be used for movies, plays, memoirs and novels. You can use this tool to identify the most important moments in your piece to ensure that the reader will experience a story that:

- Has a clear beginning, middle and end
- Builds in suspense and tension until it reaches a climactic moment
- Has a satisfying character arc

Think of this tool as your personal writing roadmap, something you can refer to, to avoid getting lost during the “words on the page” stage of your writing!

Here are a few notes to help you with the tool:

Your Story's Logic

Always be aware of the logic of your story. Every story has its own logic and integrity. Use this plotting tool as a guideline. Feel free to add or subtract in areas that make sense for your story.

Moments and Sequences: Some Plot Spots work better as moments, "single events," or specific beats to hit. Then again, some Plot Spots work better as sequences → or longer series of moments and events.

Moments will be coded as (M)

Sequences will be coded as (S)

If the plot spot can be a moment or a sequence (author's choice) it will be coded as (M or S)

Revelations and Obstacles

Revelation: A new piece of information comes to light, or the character thinks of a new conclusion.

Obstacles: Roadblocks, interference or disruption of your hero along his or her path. Anything that gets in the way of the hero's progress.

Both revelations and obstacles will be found throughout your plot. You may find yourself placing a revelation or an obstacle (or both) in between the designated 15 Plot Spots. You can always ask the question: *What does the story need?* Then, let that guide where you place important revelations and obstacles.

Writing tip: Use a Revelation/Obstacle to create tension or in some way UP the climb toward the climax. According to the logic of your story, you can select just one revelation or obstacle or many. The most important aspect is that the revelation or obstacle raises the stakes or UPS THE CONFLICT toward the climax. Leave out any moments that do not UP the climb toward the climax.

FAQs:

Q: How many times does a writer usually attempt their 15 Plot Spots until they are happy with it?

A: On average, about five times. So don't get discouraged as you plan, fight with, massage and ultimately love your plot spots. Just give it your best shot then take the time to rework it until you feel confident. No need to rush this part of the writing process. You will be grateful when you are smack in the middle of writing that you took your time to create a solid road map.

Q: Do you have examples of completed 15 Plot Spots?

A: Yes, you can find them on the website under XX or in the *7 Essential Writing Tools* book. More are being generated all the time, so stay tuned.

Q: What if I get stuck and need more information?

A: *7 Essential Writing Tools* has a more complete and detailed breakdown of each Plot Spot. But know that learning to plot takes time and patience. If you are in a writing group, I suggest bringing your completed Plot Spots to the group to see if they are intrigued, interested, and hooked through the entire plot.

Q: Anything else I need to know that will help me with my plotting?

A: Yes, do your best to lighten up! Be playful. Experiment, risk, and go for it. Remember this tool is just for you and can always be adjusted. Ready to try it out? Let's go!

15 Plot Spots

1. The Grabber:

First page to first five pages (M or S, Usually M)

Do something interesting and do it quick.

Hook us.

Grab us and tell us why we should get involved in this world.

2. Old Self in Old World:

1st Quarter of the Story. Act 1 continues here. (S)

Introduction of hero's Old Self → fears, flaws, weaknesses, desires and needs. Highlight hero's flaws that he/she will need to face. Show don't tell.

Hero's Initial Want → most of the time the hero wants to avoid change.

Bond us to the hero → why do we love or care about the hero? Or, what makes the hero compelling to watch?

Introduction of the Old World → Set the stage, where and when does the story take place, who are the surrounding major characters, how are they living, what kind of conflict is happening in the Old World? (What is not working in the Old World?)

Leave Us Curious → not too much backstory if you can help it.

Identify the Evil Beast → an external element (antagonist, part of society) or an internal element (part of self) that needs fixing.

3. This Changes Everything/The Catalyst: at 10-15%

Early on in beginning section. Act 1 continues here. (M or S, usually M)

The event that launches the journey.

The knock on the door, the call to adventure.

Old Self is challenged to start looking into the possibility of becoming New Self.

Start the rising action here.

Note: Some stories call for the catalyst to be placed in between two sections of Old Self in Old World. So the structure looks like; The Grabber, A Bit of Old Self in Old World, The Catalyst and more Old Self in Old World.

4. Struggles and Prep

The aftermath of the catalyst (S). In this section, the hero may:

Struggle with the journey: The hero wonders whether or not to go on the journey or enter the new world. "Should I take the call?" The hero may express positive or negative thoughts/feelings about the information presented in the catalyst. If the hero is running from the journey, he may be trying to stay entrenched in old ways (even though the need for a change may be obvious). Think: denial, anger, reluctance, hiding, rejecting the journey, rejecting the need to change.

Prepare for the journey: If and when the hero decides to go on the journey, the next step is for her to meet with the mentor/wise person for training, advice and to get supplies for the journey.

Note: Often, the hero runs from the journey, then prepares for it.

End ACT 1

Act 2 Begins Here

5. Here we go: at 25%

We are leaving Act 1/Act 2 begins. The end of the beginning. (M)

The hero launches himself into a new world: journey begins.

The hero often has a new, specific want or goal (hero is on a mission).

The conflict and/or tension are real and present.

The action has begun to rise.

6. Rough Landing/Small Victories:

Beginning of the middle section. (S)

After the hero has a goal, has walked through the door into the New World and launches himself into the journey, he will experience some Small Victories (initial success) or Rough Landing – or a little of both.

Small Victories → the hero may experience some initial success and may think it's going to be a piece of cake in the New World. She may actually have a lot of fun initially, sometimes encountering tests, allies and enemies but sailing through. These small moments of victory may give the hero bits of confidence – thinking they can ace the journey.

Rough Landing → people may not like the hero in the New World; he is a stranger in a strange land.

Encountering small moments of defeat, tests and enemies often make the audience want the hero to get in there and fight.

Note: Whether it's a rough landing or a small victory, in the New World the hero will encounter tests, allies and enemies. The hero may develop a new mini-goal based on their overall goal.

7. The Gut: at 50% (Middle of Your Story)

Smack in the Middle of Act 2/Midpoint. (M or S, Usually M)

Hit us in the gut.

Often in comedy/happy ending the Midpoint is a false defeat. Think → Old Self is winning.

Often in tragedy/sad ending the Midpoint is a false victory where the New Self is winning.

Hero has lost hope or is on top of the world.

Keep the tension/conflict rising.

8. Do a Little Dance/Danger Looming:

After the Midpoint (S)

Celebration – but danger looming. Hero might have temporarily defeated inner or outer demons. May party, make love, be joyous – but it is temporary.

Doubts begin, either within the team or the hero.

The antagonist is not through yet, not by a long shot.

9. Revelation and/or Obstacle

(M or S) New piece of information, new event or new obstacle that pushes the hero toward the crisis moment. Options:

Someone that the hero thought was an ally turns out to be an opponent.

The audience may learn something that the hero does not know.

The hero learns something about himself or his history that he did not know.

The hero learns something about the opponent or major conflict in the story that he did not know → the new information pushes the hero to a mini crisis.

Note: Revelation may pertain to the subplot or love story.

End Act 2

ACT 3 Begins Here

10. Mini Crisis: at 75%

You are now leaving the Act 2. Act 3 begins here (M or S)

This is a major turning point.
Think: bad news, failure, rising conflict.
Think: the antagonist is visible or has upped his game.

11. New Self Emerging: (M or S)

Can be a moment where the hero finally understands how to vanquish the evil beast, how to conquer her inner demons and solve her problems.

While the hero now has the idea of how to win the final battle, it is still just an idea and putting it into action will be challenging.

The hero takes the lessons and new tools gained along the journey and tries them out. It's difficult, but the new tools enable the hero to take on old problems and foes in new ways.

The biggest challenge is still ahead and the hero, whether he knows it or not, is in for a big battle. This often leads to deep contemplation.

12. It's Not Looking Good:

The story is heating up and the tension is high. The moment in the ending half of the movie when my dad would always squeeze my hand and say, "Marn, it's not looking good." (S)

May be New Self – but the problem still exists. Nothing is going our hero's way and we have no idea how they might solve the problem.

The false defeat has sunk in. The hero thinks it's a real defeat and that there is no way out.

A hero faces biggest choice of their life → be a victim and give up or face their greatest fears to become the hero of their own story.

The last battle with the antagonist, opponent or old self is on!

Good vs. Evil may be fighting it out and Evil is strong.

Hero begins to face deepest, darkest fears – and it's tough.

Hero has lost all hope.

Old Self has the upper hand.

13. Last Big Decision: Old vs. New Self

Right before the climax/close to the climax (M or S, usually M)

This is truly it – the hero must make a decision here, either to return to what they know (the Old Self) or make that last, final transition to → the New Self.

If it's a happy ending or a comedy then the Old Self is destroyed, the New Self is winning.

If it's a tragedy, the Old Self is winning.

14. Climax: 98%

Top of the mountain – the height of the conflict. (M or S)

Good vs. Evil Forces duke it out here and only one can win.

The ultimate confrontation.

Hold up the tension and the stakes, until the peak of the climax – for after the climax, the tension of the story is released.

Usually, the place when the New Self wins.

15. The Wrap Up: The Final Pages, Falling Action

(S or M, usually S)

Now we know, the hero has either chosen to shed his Old Self and embrace the New Self or did not embrace the New Self and has remained the same.

If the Hero has chosen the New Self → how has this experience changed the hero? What has he learned, how has she grown or become fully realized? How does the hero act in his Old World? How will he make an impact in the Old World?

If the hero has chosen the Old Self → how has this experience impacted the hero, if at all? What has he refused to learn? Will anything change in the hero's life or is he doomed to repeat the same mistakes over and over again?

What is the new normal for our hero?

Okay, your turn. Give it a shot! Remember: it takes a few drafts to whip it into shape.

15 Plot Spot Worksheet

- 1. Grabber_____
- 2. Old Self in Old World_____
- 3. This Changes Everything/The Catalyst_____
- 4. Struggles and Prep_____
- 5. Here We Go_____
- 6. Rough Landing/Small Victories_____
- 7. The Gut (Middle)_____
- 8. Do a Little Dance/Danger Looming_____
- 9. Revelation/Obstacle_____
- 10. The Mini Crisis_____
- 11. New Self Emerging_____
- 12. It's Not Looking Good_____
- 13. Last Big Decision_____
- 14. Climax_____
- 15. Wrap Up_____

Congratulations! You now have your official roadmap for writing success. Time to get crackin' and write, write, write...