Teachers Note for Plot & Structure

These notes accompany Kathryn Evan's Plot & Structure video workshop.

Every student will need paper and pen or the worksheet to go with the video.

The video is 45 minutes long, designed to be delivered over 60-90 minutes when pauses for writing time are included. It can be split in two and delivered in two sections – Ideas & Plot/Structure if you allow more time to develop ideas. If you split the video and you still have time in your class, allow students to develop the work they have already done.

The Video

I use Harry Potter for examples because most are familiar with either the books or the films.

The first part of the video takes 22.45 minutes without the pauses so it's up to you how much time to give for each discussion period to take it to a lesson time. The whole video is 45 minutes without the breaks.

Generating ideas:

There are a few places to pause the video to allow time for students to write down their ideas. You need to judge the time but it's probably about 5-10 minutes. If you're splitting the video in half, give them time to discuss their ideas with each other, it can really help those who are struggling.

Plot Types

There are a few spots to pause for discussion about plot type examples. You can add more if you want. They're discussed in this order

1. **Overcoming the monster** story lines. The big one is that Harry needs to kill Voldemort in Harry Potter.
2. **Rags to riches'** story lines, do it here. Lots of classic story lines are rags to riches, such as Cinderella
3. **Quest** stories –examples are getting past all the obstacles in The Philosophers Stone in order to fight Voldemort , The Goblet of Fire* tri-wizard cup, destroying all the Horcruxes in order to ultimately defeat Voldemort and Jack and the Beanstalk * (* both examples used in structure).
4. **Voyage & return** storylines are both very simple and quite complex
5. **Comedy** (unrequited love) Ron Weasley and Hermione is a good example, also The Georgia Nicholson books, in Shakespeare think Twelfth Night, Malvolio.
6. **Tragedy** (riches to rags) tragic storyline in Harry Potter I'm thinking of Snape. King Lear, Hamlet are classic tragedies.
7. **Redemption –** in Harry Potter this is Draco Malfoy's storyline

PAUSE to think about the ideas from the 'What's in the bag' exercise in terms of plot

Now is a good time to break if you want to do this in two parts. In the second half we talk about…

Structure

We start with a silly drawing exercise. You'll need to **PAUSE** the video to fold a piece of paper into quarters. RESTART when paper is folded and complete exercise along with the video.

We break down 2 stories to look at 3 act structure – Jack & The Beanstalk and Harry Potter & The Goblet of Fire. There are several places to pause the video here as we begin to really plan in detail how our story is going to go. The pauses are clearly marked in the video but you can use your judgement.

For info, in **Act 1** (Beginning) 3 things must happen.

1. Establish your character's ordinary world
2. Something must happen, sometimes called the inciting incident.
3. Make a decision you cannot turn back from – sometimes called the doorway of no return.

PAUSE to develop these plot points, allow 5 to 10 minutes, this is notes , not detail.

For info, In Act two, the middle, we have rising points of tension, and ease off with comic/gentler moments.

PAUSE plot at least 2 high points (exciting things that happen) and 2 eases of tensions (funny or tender things that happen)

For info, Act three, the end,

PAUSE to write the final plot points

1. False climax – looks like the hero will win but we then have
2. A rug pulling moment, where the rug is pulled from under our hero
3. Actual climax
4. Tie up loose ends

Final tip

For info, sometimes endings and beginning mirror/are opposite to each other. If you have time at the end of your session, suggest your students write the first scene and the last scene of their story as mirrors.