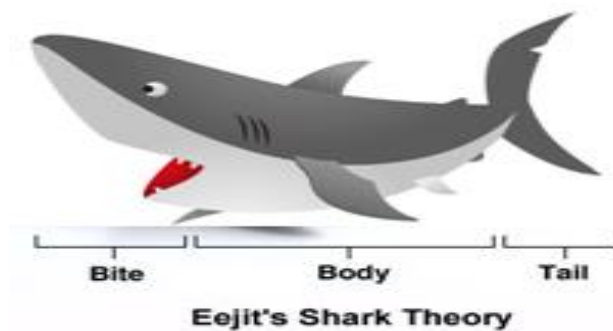
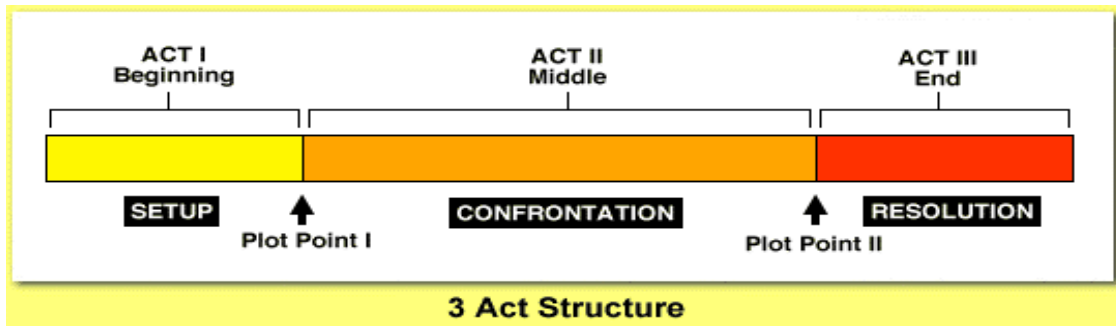


Three-Act Narrative Structure¹



Act I

Beginning

We create a problem for a character and/or the audience.

Who's the protagonist? What's his problem? How does it become his mission in the story?

Who's the antagonist?

- First $\frac{1}{4}$ of story
- Establish the locale
- Establish the major characters
- What is (are) the major conflict(s)/problem(s)?
- What is the narrative question— Will the boy get the girl? Will the planet be destroyed?

¹ Adapted by Joseph Sigalas; original: <http://www.indiana.edu/~audioweb/T206/three-act.html>

Plot Point I: "the plot thickens"

- The "inciting incident" or catalyst
- Turn the story in a new direction
- Sets up what Act Two is going to be
- Raises the stakes - protagonist has something to lose
- Reminder of the narrative question; presents the possibility of a different outcome

Act II: "the longest mile"

Middle section of the story

- At least $\frac{1}{2}$ the entire story
- Struggle to achieve the solution to the problem
- Further complications to finding the solution
- The cycle of struggles and complications are called reversals

Plot Point II

- The "Climactic Turning Point"
- Protagonist's quest reaches critical mass
- Possible solution is presented but is frustrated
- Biggest cliffhanger: will the protagonist win or lose?

Act III: The End

The Protagonist achieves his mission (usually)

- No more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the story, usually less
- The conflict or problem is resolved
- Final crisis (or "rising action") plays out to climax; then to resolution
- Narrative closure