**3, 4 and 5 Act Structures**

**3 Act** **(https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-three-act-structure)**

* **Act One**:

**Exposition (Orientation)** - one or more scenes that establish the world of the story. If the story contains supernatural elements, the rules of the supernatural world would be established here.

**Establish the Ordinary World** - of the story’s main character.

**Inciting Incident** - something that pulls the protagonist out of their normal world and into the main action of the story.

**Turning Point** – A point where the direction of the story/protagonist’s life changes. Can be because of a decision they have made

* **Act Two**:

**Rising Action** – incidents that lead to the midpoint

**Subplot** - second storyline that adds to our understanding of main story. May introduce new characters.

**Midpoint** – Something life changing that raises the stakes. A big twist

**Crisis** – incident that makes it seem the protagonist will fail. This is sometimes called the “dark night of the soul.”

* **Act Three**:

**Pre-climax** - The characters dig down deep inside themselves and find a new way to overcome the challenges they face

**Climax** – Confrontation in which the protagonist faces defeat or victory

**Denouement** - where the events of the climax wind back down into normal life

**4 Act (https://www.masterclass.com/articles/four-act-structure)**

* **Act One**: Same as 3 Act Structure’s first act

**Exposition (Orientation)** - one or more scenes that establish the world of the story. If the story contains supernatural elements, the rules of the supernatural world would be established here.

**Establish the Ordinary World** - of the story’s main character.

**Inciting Incident** - something that pulls the protagonist out of their normal world and into the main action of the story.

**Turning Point** – A point where the direction of the story/protagonist’s life changes. Can be because of a decision they have made

* **Act Two**:

**Rising Action** - complications arise that get in the way of the main character accomplishing their goal

**Subplot –** second storyline that adds to our understanding of main story. May introduce new characters.

**Midpoint -** the stakes are raised and the audience finds out the true capability of the characters and the potential drama that awaits.

* **Act Three**:

**Crisis** – point where the protagonist must make a choice or decision that is a defining moment in the character’s life

**Conflicts – increase leading toward the major setback at the end of the act**

**Major Setback** - toward the end of act three, the main characters have reached a low point. The characters believe they have truly lost, and there is no hope for redemption—although, in reality, it's only a temporary defeat.

* **Act Four**:

**Pre-climax** - the characters dig down deep inside themselves and find a new way to overcome the challenges they face

**Climax –** Confrontation in which the protagonist faces defeat or victory

**Denouement -** where the events of the climax wind back down into normal life

**5 Act (https://www.masterclass.com/articles/five-act-structure)**

* **Act I**:

**Exposition (Orientation)** - one or more scenes that establish the world of the story. If the story contains supernatural elements, the rules of the supernatural world would be established here.

**Establish the Ordinary World** - of the story’s main character.

**Inciting Incident** - something that pulls the protagonist out of their normal world and into the main action of the story.

* **Act II**:

**Rising Action** - the conflict begins to increase as the characters try to achieve their goals and the narrative builds toward the climax

* **Act III**:

**Climax** - the moment where the tension reaches its peak in a major scene. In the other structures this is the equivalent of the midpoint, a turning point where things start to change. Some modern writers delay the “climactic moment” until later in the story—usually act four—or instead opt for a [three-act structure](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-three-act-structure).

* **Act IV**

**Falling Action** - the series of events that lead to the resolution. The audience should experience doubt about their expectations of how the story will unfold.

* **Act V**

**Resolution** - tie up loose ends and bring the narrative to a close, writing either a tragic or happy ending. Freytag called the fifth act “the catastrophe,” the point in a tragedy where most of the characters die.